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# Biden National Security Adviser Sees U.S. Rejoining Iran Nuclear Deal; In addition to Jake Sullivan, Rep. Cedric Richmond—tapped as a senior Biden adviser—also spoke at WSJ's CEO Council Summit

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WASHINGTON—President-elect Joe Biden's national security adviser said the incoming administration wants to put Iran "back into the box" by rejoining the nuclear deal and forcing Tehran to comply with the terms of the original agreement.

In return, the U.S. would be prepared to honor the terms of the 2015 deal, said Jake Sullivan, Mr. Biden's choice for national security adviser, at The Wall Street Journal's CEO Council Summit on Monday.

"We think that it is feasible and achievable," Mr. Sullivan said.

Mr. Biden will attempt to undo the damage his camp believes was done when President Trump pulled the U.S. out of the deal in 2018. Re-entering that agreement, which would mean lifting sanctions worth billions of dollars to Tehran, would lay the groundwork for a "follow-on negotiation" on broader issues, he said.

Mr. Sullivan, who hasn't spoken publicly much since being named national security adviser, spoke to the CEO Council on Iran and a range of other national security and foreign-policy issues likely to confront the Biden administration. He discussed reforming international institutions and strengthening ties with allies while confronting adversaries and global competitors like China. But all those efforts would be predicated on a strong domestic policy that focused on American workers to be competitive, he said.

WSJ CEO Council 2020

Mr. Sullivan discussed raising the level of U.S. investment in research and development in industries like clean energy, biotechnology and artificial intelligence so that the U.S. isn't surpassed, as it is now, by countries like China, he said.

"What we're envisioning is a formula that has worked to propel dramatic private sector growth and innovation in this country in the past," Mr. Sullivan said.

"The fundamental touchstone comes down to an international economic policy that is focused on creating jobs and raising wages here in the United States," he said. The government must help growth at home, if corporate leaders pledge to invest in their own workforce, he said.

Another top Biden official echoed the idea of investing in the private sector and building a dialogue between the administration and the corporate sector.

In a separate event at the WSJ CEO Council Monday, Rep. Cedric Richmond (D., La.), tapped to join the White House as director of the Office of Public Engagement, cast the incoming administration as one that would be friendly toward leaders in American corporations—even as Mr. Biden's plans to call for higher corporate taxes.

"For me, nobody's going to persuade me that—somehow, someway—that CEOs in this country are bad people," Mr. Richmond said. "CEOs in this country are creating jobs, they are supporting families, and they are doing all those things. And they deserve a seat at the table, and they will have a seat at the table," he said, adding that he wanted an "open-door policy" with corporate leaders.

Mr. Richmond said that he hoped to be that conduit straight into the White House for American corporations and said that he was looking into creating a role within his office for outreach to conservatives. However, he made plain that Mr. Biden would look to honor his campaign pledge to finance new social programs with higher taxes on the wealthy and corporations.

"It's not punitive. We will just do those things we find that are absolutely necessary to do. And if that means raising the corporate tax rate to achieve infrastructure investment, which is important to both business and to normal everyday citizens, I think that that may be some middle ground that everybody can support," he said, adding that the new administration didn't want to stymie research and innovation.

Mr. Sullivan said that kind of investment will help serve the Biden administration politically.

But international issues will still occupy the new administration's time, as it attempts to mend fences with some allies, help to reform international organizations, maintain security in the Middle East and elsewhere and counter China.

One area in which Mr. Sullivan acknowledged the Biden administration could help build on work the Trump administration has done overseas is in the Middle East. Republicans and some Democrats have lauded Mr. Trump for helping broker a deal between Israel and some Gulf nations to normalize diplomatic relations. Mr. Sullivan acknowledged the value of that deal and said the Biden administration would hope to build on it.

"Our hope is to strengthen and deepen and expand the normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab states," he said.

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