

Opinion

## A new Iran nuclear deal? Not so fast



By [Ari Heistein](#) and [Dr. Raz Zimmt](#) / Saturday 23 May 2020

Both US presidential candidates, Donald Trump and Joe Biden, have declared their intentions to reach an agreement with Tehran on its nuclear program. In his 2018 speech withdrawing the US from the JCPOA, Trump said, “The fact is, they are going to want to make a new and lasting deal, one that benefits all of Iran and the Iranian people. When they do, I am ready, willing, and able.” His challenger from the Democratic Party noted, “If Iran moves back into compliance with its nuclear obligations, I would re-enter the JCPOA as a starting point to work alongside our allies in Europe and other world powers to extend the deal’s nuclear constraints.” While these scenarios may technically be within the realm of possibility, recent developments in both the US and Iran make them highly unlikely.

The working assumptions underpinning these plans is that Iran will return to the negotiating table with the US. President Trump’s “maximum pressure” policy, which was implemented after the US withdrawal from the 2015 JCPOA nuclear deal, is based on the premise that by squeezing Iran economically more than President Obama did will enable Trump to reach a more stringent and comprehensive agreement with the Iranians. In contrast, Biden appears to believe that by shifting from “America first” to a more multilateral approach in coordination with allies, as well as defusing the crisis and then engaging in talks with Iran, his administration will be able to save the JCPOA from collapse and build on it with follow-on agreements.

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