

PASCC

Research in Progress

FY19

PREVENTING NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST POST-JCPOA

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ABSTRACT:

The project will examine the impact of the eventual dissolution of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)—either when key provisions expire in 2025-2030, or sooner, if other parties withdraw from the deal—on efforts to contain Iran’s nuclear ambitions and prevent proliferation in the region. In doing so, it will: (1) assess plausible scenarios post-JCPOA; (2) identify challenges facing US strategy and posture; and (3) recommend ways for strengthening US and allied capabilities to prevent the proliferation, acquisition, and use of nuclear weapons by Iran or its neighbors.

Iran’s activities have inflamed regional tensions, resulting in proxy confrontations and increasing prospects for a nuclear arms race in the region. Following US withdrawal from the JCPOA, disagreements between the United States and the European Union over sanctions on Iran, and the possible deterioration of US-Saudi relations following the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, the United States needs to implement an alternative strategy—addressing Iran’s nuclear program, ballistic missile development, and regional expansion—and convince allies that maximizing pressure on Tehran is preferable to the status quo.

This study’s findings will highlight risks and opportunities associated with the JCPOA’s dissolution, identify its strategic implications, and examine policy options for preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and deterring regional proliferation in a post-JCPOA environment.

Research in Progress describes ongoing PASCC research. For more information please contact INSS@usafa.edu.