Dear President Biden,

We write to extend our gratitude for your courageous diplomatic efforts to free the American citizens who were unjustly detained in Iran. The images of these five Americans reuniting with their loved ones is a poignant reminder that the highest responsibility for any president is to protect the American people. We thank you for your relentless commitment to rescuing Americans trapped overseas, and we stand fully behind your administration’s actions.

This important work not only brings home five Americans, but also reflects the improved environment for continued diplomatic initiatives with Iran, including reducing the risk posed by Iran’s nuclear program. Diplomacy and dialogue are among the strongest tools your administration can deploy in the face of threats to our nation and our citizens. Given the range of risks to U.S. security posed by Iran’s advancing nuclear program and other destabilizing activities, we ask you to act with urgency.

Polling shows that across our political divides, Americans everywhere strongly oppose another military entanglement in the Middle East and overwhelmingly want to see a peaceful resolution to the Iranian nuclear crisis. With diplomatic momentum on our side, now is the time to double down and work toward achieving creative solutions to curb Iran’s nuclear program once again. But the window is closing fast.

As you well know, the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) struck by the Obama-Biden Administration placed airtight restrictions and the most stringent monitoring regime ever negotiated on Iran’s nuclear activities, and blocked all pathways to acquiring a nuclear weapon. Today, however, thanks to President Trump’s reckless decision to withdraw the U.S. from the deal, Iran’s nuclear program is more advanced than at any point in its history. Tehran is currently days away from being able to produce enough weapons-grade nuclear material for a nuclear weapon, should it choose to do so.

We believe that the current course is untenable and requires guardrails to avert further escalation, including the risk of attacks against Americans and our allies. The best way to protect American interests is for the United States to lead now with bold and sustained diplomatic action.

Diplomacy with Iran to protect American lives should not be equated with condoning the regime's brutal repression of its citizens and its dismal human rights record. Unfortunately, opponents of diplomacy, the
same people who ripped up the Iran nuclear deal when it was verifiably working, are growing louder in their calls for the United States to ramp up pressure.

But their ideas – reckless, untargeted sanctions and military saber-rattling – have failed over and over again. These tactics will not make Americans more safe and only embolden hardliners. We urge you to reject those voices and continue to engage in strong diplomacy to re-establish verifiable methods that can once again successfully curb Iran’s nuclear program.

Now is the time, Mr. President. No administration has more experience nor is better equipped to make the hard decisions we need to end this nuclear crisis.

Sincerely,

Andrew Albertson, Executive Director, Foreign Policy for America

Andrew Bacevich, Board Chair, Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft

Barbara Slavin, Distinguished Fellow, Stimson Center

Catherine Lutz, Thomas J. Watson Jr. Family Professor Emerita, Brown University

Daryl G. Kimball, Executive Director, Arms Control Association

Dr. Emma Belcher, President, Ploughshares Fund

Dylan Williams, Senior Vice President for Policy and Strategy, J Street

Hassan El-Tayyab, Legislative Director for Middle East Policy, Friends Committee on National Legislation

Iris Bieri, Advisor, The Iran Project

Jamal Abdi, President, National Iranian American Council

Jeremy Ben-Ami, President, J Street

Jessica Mathews, Distinguished Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Joel Rubin, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

Joseph Cirincione, National Security Analyst and Author

Kelsey Davenport, Director for Nonproliferation Policy, Arms Control Association
Lora Lumpe, CEO, Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft

Nancy Okail, President and CEO, Center for International Policy

Paul R. Pillar, Former National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and South Asia

Perry Cammack, Program Director, Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, Director, Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice at Union Theological Seminary

Sara Haghdooti, Executive Director, Win Without War

Sina Azodi, Adjunct Faculty, George Washington University

Sina Toossi, Senior Non-resident Fellow, Center for International Policy

Stephen Heintz, President and CEO, Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Stephen Miles, President, Win Without War

Stephen Walt, Robert and Renee Belfer Professor International Affairs, Harvard University

Suzanne DiMaggio, Senior Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Thomas R Pickering, Senior Counselor, Albright Stonebridge

Trita Parsi, Executive Vice President, Quincy Institute

*affiliations listed for identification purposes only