Back to the Future
The Return of U.S. Economic Sanctions and Iran’s Response

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President Trump’s unilateral scrapping of the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), opens a new chapter in the adversarial relationship between Iran and the United States. The reinstatement of economic sanctions is a major setback to President Rouhani’s reformist policies, which aimed at taming high inflation and reducing unemployment while opening up the economy to much-needed foreign investment. It also emboldens the hardliners who use the sanctions as both a reaffirmation of their mistrust in the U.S. and a justification for reclaiming some of their lost political and economic influence. The economic hardship that accompanies such sanctions, meanwhile, is borne by ordinary Iranians who have suffered repeatedly from such crises.