Keith Kellogg Defends US Strategy on Iran, Emphasizes Deterrence and Economic Pressure

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November 16, 2026



Retired Lieutenant General Keith Kellogg has outlined his views on the United States' approach toward Iran, arguing that a combination of economic pressure, military preparedness, and long-term defense investment remains essential to maintaining stability in the Middle East and protecting American interests abroad.

Speaking during a recent television interview, Kellogg discussed a range of issues, including Iran's regional influence, energy markets, military deterrence, defense spending, and broader national security priorities. His comments offered insight into how some current and former national security officials view Washington's strategy at a time of continuing tensions across the region.

The discussion comes as policymakers in Washington continue to balance diplomatic efforts with economic sanctions and military readiness, while monitoring developments related to Iran's nuclear program and regional activities.

Economic Pressure Remains a Key Component

Kellogg argued that economic measures continue to play a significant role in US policy toward Iran. He described financial restrictions and trade-related pressure as important tools designed to limit Tehran's ability to project influence across the region.

Supporters of this strategy maintain that economic restrictions can weaken state resources available for military and regional operations while avoiding direct military confrontation. Critics, meanwhile, have argued that sanctions can place broader pressure on civilian populations while producing mixed long-term political results.

During the interview, Kellogg linked the discussion of economic pressure to developments in global energy markets. He pointed to recent declines in crude oil prices and fuel costs, suggesting that energy market stability carries implications not only for consumers but also for geopolitical dynamics.

Lower oil prices have long been viewed by some policymakers as a factor that can affect the revenues of energy-exporting nations. However, economists generally note that multiple global factors influence energy markets, including supply levels, international demand, geopolitical events, and central bank policies.

For American consumers, fluctuations in fuel prices remain a closely watched economic indicator, particularly amid ongoing concerns about inflation and household costs.

Warning Directed at Iranian Leadership

A significant portion of Kellogg's remarks focused on deterrence and military readiness.

He emphasized that Washington must maintain a credible response capability when addressing threats to American personnel and allies in the region. During the

interview, he delivered a direct warning to Iranian hardliners and military leaders, arguing that any actions targeting US forces could trigger a strong response.

Kellogg framed deterrence as a central component of American foreign policy, contending that visible military preparedness can help prevent escalation by communicating the potential consequences of hostile actions.

His comments reflected a long-standing view among many defense officials that economic pressure alone is insufficient without a corresponding military posture capable of protecting national interests.

The retired general also discussed concerns surrounding Iran's nuclear activities. He reiterated arguments frequently made by US officials regarding uranium enrichment levels and the potential security implications of further advances in Iran's nuclear program.

The issue remains a major point of contention between Tehran and Western governments. While Iran has consistently stated that its nuclear activities are intended for peaceful purposes, several Western countries have expressed concerns about enrichment levels and monitoring arrangements.

Focus on Military Modernization

In addition to foreign policy, Kellogg devoted considerable attention to military modernization and defense funding.

He argued that continued investment in advanced military capabilities is necessary to maintain long-term strategic advantages. Among the priorities he highlighted were modernization efforts involving the US nuclear deterrent, next-generation aircraft programs, and emerging defense technologies.

According to Kellogg, sustaining military readiness requires consistent congressional support and long-term planning rather than short-term funding cycles.

He pointed to major modernization projects currently underway across the US military, including programs involving strategic bombers, missile systems, and

submarine fleets. Defense officials have frequently argued that many existing systems are approaching the end of their operational lifespan and require replacement or upgrading.

Kellogg also stressed the importance of supporting military personnel. He highlighted measures aimed at improving compensation for service members and expanding access to advanced medical treatments for wounded veterans.

Advocates for defense modernization often argue that investing in both technology and personnel is crucial to maintaining military effectiveness in an increasingly competitive global security environment.

Broader Strategic Competition

The interview also touched on wider geopolitical challenges facing the United States.

Kellogg argued that military readiness should not be viewed solely through the lens of Middle East policy. Instead, he described defense investments as part of a broader strategy intended to deter major competitors and reassure allies.

US policymakers have increasingly emphasized strategic competition with countries such as China and Russia, alongside managing regional security concerns involving Iran, North Korea, and other challenges.

In this context, proponents of expanded defense spending contend that maintaining technological superiority and operational readiness is essential for preserving international stability.

Looking Ahead

As Washington navigates a complex international landscape, debates over the effectiveness of sanctions, diplomatic engagement, and military deterrence are likely to continue.

Kellogg's comments reflect one perspective within a broader national conversation about how the United States should address security threats while balancing economic, diplomatic, and military tools.

With tensions in several regions remaining elevated and major international meetings expected to address questions of security and economic cooperation, policymakers face ongoing decisions about how best to advance US interests while avoiding further escalation.

For now, supporters of the current pressure-based approach argue that a combination of economic leverage, military preparedness, and continued defense investment provides the strongest foundation for addressing future challenges and maintaining stability in an increasingly uncertain global environment.