

US Expert: Trump Won't Reconfirm Iran JCPOA Compliance

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The administration of US President Donald Trump is giving "strong indications" that it is preparing a case to decertify Iran's compliance with the international nuclear agreement, a US expert said. If that happens, though, some analysts believe it risks isolating the US from its allies. In addition to the United States and Iran, the 2015 nuclear agreement was signed by Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China and the United Nations.

The White House sent Nikki Haley, US ambassador to the United Nations, to Vienna on Wednesday to meet with officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is responsible for monitoring and verifying Iran's commitments under the 2015 agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

On Thursday, IRNA quoted from a letter sent by Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to the UN agency saying the country "is abiding by its duties and responsibilities" with regard to the accord. He said Washington is using the issue "for ill-wishing political means."

During her visit, Haley "discussed the IAEA's verification and monitoring of Iran's nuclear-related commitments", according to a statement by the agency. It provided no additional information. The Trump administration has certified Iran's compliance twice under a law that requires it to notify Congress of Iran's compliance every 90 days. The next review ends in October.

Analysts say recent actions by the US demonstrate that Trump plans to renege on the Iran nuclear agreement. During the election campaign, he threatened to rip up the agreement, calling it "the worst deal ever."

The actions include new US sanctions imposed on Iran and a comment last week by a US official claiming that Iran is in breach of "the spirit" of the nuclear accord. New sanctions were designed to punish Iran for its alleged human rights record, rocket launches as well as its alleged role in terrorism and arms smuggling.

Int'l Community Won't Play Along

"He's given strong indications that he's just not going to recertify it," said John Glaser, director of foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute, the libertarian think tank, according to CNBC.

"If we were to leave the deal or deliberately abrogate it, we'd be isolated internationally and we wouldn't be able to do anything like reapply sanctions that would do any kind of damage on Iran. That's because the rest of the international community would not sort of play along," he added.

Glaser said the other parties to the agreement "agree that Iran is in compliance with the deal and agree that the deal should be kept in place because it's a robust, non-proliferation agreement. It has kind of taken military conflict against Iran because of the nuclear program off the table."

Last week, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani threatened to quit the nuclear pact, if the White House issues new sanctions. Iran maintains that those sanctions were a violation of the nuclear accord.

Some analysts believe Iran has an incentive to comply with the agreement because of the lifting of years of sanctions, which had hurt its economy. Since the agreement, Iran has enjoyed strong oil exports and benefited from increased foreign trade and signed billion-dollar investment deals.