
RUSSIA: TRUMP 'VIOLATED' IRAN DEAL

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President Trump "violated" the Iran nuclear agreement when he refused to declare the pact consistent with U.S. interests, a top Russian diplomat said Tuesday.

"[Trump administration officials have] violated not only the spirit but also the letter of the JCPOA, as it appears to us, with a number of their actions," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told reporters, per state-run media.

That's a more aggressive critique of Trump than Iran or other European proponents of the nuclear deal have leveled. Trump's team made a point of criticizing the deal without taking steps, such as the renewal of economic sanctions, that would abrogate the agreement. The president and his allies hope that the threat of sanctions will convince Iran to agree to additional restrictions on their nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program.

"I'm tired of being taken advantage of as a nation," Trump said Monday. "[Iran] negotiated a phenomenal deal for themselves, but a horrible deal for the United States."

Iran hawks in the United States have a series of concerns with the nuclear deal, including the difficulty international monitors have getting access to military facilities and the fact that the deal allows the regime to keep a substantial nuclear program beyond the lifetime of the pact.

"In other words, we got weak inspections in exchange for no more than a purely short-term and temporary delay in Iran's path to nuclear weapons," Trump said Friday when he refused to certify the deal's utility to American national security. "What is the purpose of a deal that, at best, only delays Iran's nuclear capability for a short period of time?"

European officials countered that the deal allowed for a rollback of the regime's program, such

that Iran is no longer mere weeks away from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Instead, U.S. officials estimate that it would take Iran eight months to a year to build a bomb — long enough for the West to intervene to prevent it.

"Iran knows that their economy remains fragile, and crippling, embargo-like sanctions would probably run the clock on regime stability faster than they could get to nuclear breakout," Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., told the Washington Examiner in a recent interview.

With that in mind, Iran hawks hope that Trump's formal denunciation of the agreement will cause the regime to fear new sanctions and thus agree to additional nuclear concessions. But European leaders see the move as a high stakes gamble that could lead to a nuclear crisis in short order.

"For us, it is a matter of security, it is a matter of keeping channels of engagement, dialogue and cooperation with Iran opened; from the economic cooperation to the cooperation we have in other sectors — following the [deal's] implementation," Federica Mogherini, the European Union's top foreign policy official, said Monday.

Trump is keeping up the pressure by threatening to impose U.S. sanctions unilaterally if the deal cannot be modified. "In the event we are not able to reach a solution working with Congress and our allies, then the agreement will be terminated," Trump said Friday. "It is under continuous review and our participation can be canceled by me at any time."

Kaynak/Source: