

# U.S. THREATENS TO IMPOSE MORE SANCTIONS ON IRAN

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

The U.S. on Wednesday threatened to impose more sanctions on Iran “very soon” and warned Europe against doing business with Tehran via a system of non-dollar trade to circumvent U.S. sanctions.

The Iranian government announced earlier on Wednesday that it was reducing curbs to its nuclear programme with steps that stopped short of violating its 2015 accord with world powers for now, but threatening more action if countries did not shield it from sanctions.

Tehran’s halt of compliance with some parts of the nuclear deal was “nothing less than nuclear blackmail of Europe”, Tim Morrison, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Weapons of Mass Destruction, told a conference in Washington. “Now is the time for the community of nations to strongly condemn Iran’s nuclear misconduct and increase pressure on the regime to comply with U.S. demands,” Mr. Morrison said, adding that Washington was not “done” with sanctions on Iran. “Expect more sanctions soon. Very soon,” he said.

## Special Purpose Vehicle

Mr. Morrison said the U.S. would move quickly against any attempt by European countries to undermine Washington’s sanctions pressure on Iran. He advised them against using the so-called Special Purpose Vehicle to facilitate non-dollar trade to get around U.S. sanctions. “If you are a bank, an investor, an insurer or other business in Europe, you should know that getting involved in the Special Purpose Vehicle is a very poor business decision,” Mr. Morrison said.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced changes that experts said seemed tailored to ensure that Tehran avoids triggering the deal’s mechanism to punish it for violations, at least for now.

Washington’s European allies opposed Mr. Trump’s decision to withdraw from the agreement and have failed so far to find ways to blunt the economic impact of new U.S. sanctions, which include an all-out effort to block Iran’s oil exports to starve its economy.

The Kremlin said on Wednesday that Russia remained committed to the Iran nuclear deal and denounced “unreasonable pressure” that led Tehran to suspend some of its commitments under the agreement. Reiterating Moscow’s “commitment” to the agreement, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denounced “ill-conceived and arbitrary decisions that put unreasonable pressure on Iran.”

China called on all parties to uphold the nuclear pact. “Maintaining and implementing the comprehensive agreement is the shared responsibility of all parties,” said Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang at a press briefing in Beijing. “We call on all relevant parties to exercise restraint, strengthen dialogue, and avoid escalating tensions,” he said, adding that China “resolutely opposes” unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran.

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