

Rouhani urges Trump to remain in nuclear deal or face 'severe consequences'



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani delivers a speech in Tehran on February 11, 2018

STRINGER (IRANIAN PRESIDENCY/AFP/File)

Trump threatened to pull US out of deal unless Europe agrees to supplement it with tougher controls

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani urged US President Donald Trump to remain in the 2015 nuclear deal or instead “face severe consequences” as the deadline for recertifying the accord edged closer.

“I am telling those in the White House that if they do not live up to their commitments, the Iranian government will react firmly,” Rouhani said in a speech broadcast live on state television.

“If anyone betrays the deal, they should know that they would face severe consequences,” he added.

An Iranian official said that Tehran may even consider withdrawing from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if the nuclear deal is cancelled.

Trump has threatened to pull Washington out of the agreement unless European capitals agree to supplement it with tougher controls on Iran’s missile program and future ability to return to nuclear fuel enrichment, which he believes the current “sunset clauses” permit.

But his partners continue to believe the implementation of the agreement under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) represents the best way to prevent Tehran from seeking the atomic bomb. Europe would see Trump’s withdrawal of support as a disaster, both in terms of the deal itself – a central plank in their non-proliferation strategy – and in terms of relations with Washington.



US President Donald Trump, right, and France’s Emmanuel Macron talk regularly, have shared memorable handshakes and claim an “unbreakable” friendship

ALAIN JOCARD (AFP/File)

Signalling support for his ally, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Tuesday that the deal “has to be either fully fixed or fully nixed.” He added, “Israel will not allow regimes that seek our annihilation to acquire nuclear weapons.”

Iran’s Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, encouraged the European signatories to the nuclear deal on Monday to convince Trump not to ‘nix’ the deal as he has continually threatened to do.

Zarif said that there is no “plan B” to the deal and that Trump should start implementing his “part of the bargain.”

“It is either all or nothing. European leaders should encourage Trump not just to stay in the nuclear deal, but more important to begin implementing his part of the bargain in good faith,” the foreign minister tweeted.

Rouhani’s comments come as French President Emmanuel Macron arrives in Washington for talks likely to be dominated by the nuclear accord.

“I don’t have any Plan B for nuclear — against Iran,” Macron told *Fox News Sunday* in an English-language interview, arguing that working to curb Tehran’s missile program and contain its regional influence could be accomplished in addition to the 2015 accord.



Trump in January set a 120-day deadline for US lawmakers and European allies to “fix” his predecessor Barack Obama’s main foreign policy achievement of the Iran nuclear deal or face a US exit

STR (afp/AFP/File)

“So that’s a question we will discuss,” he said, as he prepared to head to Washington.

In addition, the agreement was the fruit of months of intense diplomacy between Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States — under EU auspices. Only Trump wants to rip it up.

Russia and China have agreed to work together to thwart any attempts to sabotage the nuclear deal with Iran.

“There are attempts to interfere with the international order upon which the United Nations depends,” Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said after talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing. “We said clearly with China that we will stop attempts to sabotage these agreements that were passed in a UN Security Council resolution,” he added.

If the United States buries the deal, Iran is unlikely to stick to the agreement alongside the other signatories — Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia.

Iran has vowed to “vigorously” resume production of enriched uranium — a key bomb-making ingredient — if the US quits the deal.

Source: <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/173073-180424-rouhani-urges-trump-to-remain-in-nuclear-deal-or-threatens-severe-consequences>

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