

UK, Germany, France calls Iran nuclear moves ‘deeply worrying’

The U.K., Germany, and France on Monday released a statement calling recent moves by Iran in relation to its nuclear program “deeply worrying” — just as the fate of the 2015 nuclear deal, and the U.S. role in it, remains uncertain.

The three countries, which are founding participants to the 2015 agreement, have remained supportive of the deal (known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA) even after the Trump administration withdrew the U.S. from the deal in 2018 and as Iran has been breaching limits on its activity.

IRAN TO BOOST PRODUCTION OF OIL IF BIDEN RELAXES CRIPPLING SANCTIONS: REPORTS

But those efforts faced another blow this month when Iran announced it is expanding its enrichment and passed a law that will restrict monitoring by the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

“Iran’s recent announcement to the IAEA that it intends to install an additional three cascades of advanced centrifuges at the Fuel Enrichment Plant in Natanz is contrary to the JCPOA and deeply worrying,” the statement by the so-called E3 said.

It called the restrictions placed on the watchdog — the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) “incompatible with the JCPOA and Iran’s wider nuclear commitments.”

“If Iran is serious about preserving a space for diplomacy, it must not implement these steps,” the statement said. “Such a move would jeopardize our shared efforts to preserve the JCPOA and risks compromising the important opportunity for a return to diplomacy with the incoming US Administration.”

IRAN TO INCREASE NUCLEAR PRODUCTION, PROHIBIT INSPECTORS FROM US IF SANCTIONS NOT LIFTED: REPORTS

The reference to the incoming administration refers to a perceived change of policy on Iran likely to come when President-elect Joe Biden takes office in

January.

Biden, as well as members of his incoming administration, have called for the U.S. to re-enter the deal. It is likely that that would also be accompanied by an easing of the “maximum pressure” policy pursued by the Trump administration.

“We think that it is feasible and achievable,” Jake Sullivan, Biden’s pick for national security adviser, said at a Wall Street Journal event on Monday.

Iran has claimed that it will follow the JCPoA if the U.S. does in fact re-enter.

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“The U.S. must implement without preconditions its obligations under the JCPoA,” foreign minister Javad Zarif said recently, according to The Guardian. “It has to show its good faith, it has to establish its bona fides, then Iran will go back in full compliance with JCPoA.”

The E3 statement said they welcomed Biden’s statements on the JCPoA “and a diplomatic path to address wider concerns with Iran.”

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