

US to offer Iran new nuclear deal, sanctions relief this week - report

The US proposal would ask Iran to stop some of its nuclear activities in exchange for some relief from US economic sanctions, Politico reported.



Iran holds military drills as tensions rise with US - (photo credit: REUTERS)

The United States is trying to break the nuclear deadlock with Iran and is planning a new proposal that would include some sanctions relief for the Islamic Republic, according to a report in Politico.

Biden administration officials plan to put forth a new proposal to restart nuclear talks between Washington and Tehran as soon as this week, two people familiar with the situation told Politico.

According to the report, the American proposal would ask Iran to stop some of its nuclear activities, such as work on advanced centrifuges and the enrichment of uranium to 20 percent purity, in exchange for some relief from US economic sanctions, said one of Politico's two sources.

However, the details of this potential deal are still being worked out by the US and it's not at all certain that Iran will accept the terms. Indeed, Tehran rejected a US proposal earlier this year, saying it was "unacceptable", countering with their own idea, which the Biden team declared a non-starter.

The Biden administration has been seeking to engage in talks with Iran about having both sides returning to compliance with the deal, under which American-imposed and other economic sanctions will be removed in return for curbs on Iran's nuclear program to make it harder to develop a nuclear weapon - an ambition Tehran denies.

"Iran is poised to blow through additional nuclear deal restrictions in the next few weeks. This is the crucial time to avoid an escalation of the situation," Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, an organization that has closely tracked nuclear negotiations involving Iran, told the news website.

Moreover, as Iran will hold presidential elections in June and given the sensitive politics in Iran surrounding the 2015 nuclear agreement, the theocratic regime is unlikely to allow any major changes to it amid a campaign.

The American proposal slated to be set forth this week is "about trying to get the conversation started" between the United States and Iran, one of the sources

familiar with the situation told Politico.

The identity of the country which makes the first step to resume compliance with the 2015 Iran nuclear deal is not an issue for the United States, a US official said earlier this year, suggesting greater flexibility on the part of Washington. "That's not the issue, who goes first," the official told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

"Like, we are going to go at 8, they are going to go at 10? Or they go at 8, we go at 10? That's not the issue," the official said. "The issue is we agree on what steps are going to be taken mutually."

Asked for official comment at the time, a senior Biden administration official declined to discuss details of diplomatic conversations, Politico reported. "We have been clear that we are ready to pursue a mutual return to the [Iran deal]," the official added. "We have also been open that we are talking with our [international] partners ... about the best way to achieve this, including through a series of initial, mutual steps. We have been looking at options for doing so, including with indirect conversations through our European partners."

Reuters contributed to this report.

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