

Iran Rightfully Increases Uranium Stockpiles and Enrichment Beyond JCPOA Limits

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Iran recently increased its enriched uranium stockpiles and uranium enrichment levels beyond JCPOA limits in response to Washington's unilateral withdrawal and increased sanctions.

Fourteen months ago, Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the United States out of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreement, also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal. Soon after the withdrawal, the Trump administration started implementing a “maximum pressure campaign” which is meant to bring Iran back to the negotiating table. What it has done, however, is unnecessarily set into motion a series of events that could have negative global implications.

Washington's decision to pull out of the nuclear deal was met with criticism from many, including their European allies who urged the United States to reconsider and then when that failed, they pleaded with Iran to remain in compliance, while they mediated a solution.

Europe however, not only failed to bring about any relief to Iran, from Washington's sanctions, but also fell prey to Washington's bully tactics by not buying oil from Iran. Washington has stated that their goal is to [bring Iran's oil exports to zero](#).

Increased sanctions under the “maximum pressure campaign” have been referred to by Tehran as [economic terrorism](#), and have affected not only the private and public sectors, but ordinary Iranian civilians as well.

Within the past month, Iran has been accused by the United States of sabotaging numerous oil tankers in its vicinity without any proper proof. Iran denied involvement in the attacks and instead has said that it [saved forty-four sailors](#) from two tankers that were hit in the Gulf of Oman.

Another major development, which sent a strong message to Washington, was the downing of a US drone over Iran's waters. Iran has filed a [complaint](#) with the UN stating the violation was actually within its airspace. Trump was said to have approved a military response but then called it off.

Some say Trump notified Iran through an ally that he was preparing a limited military response. Iran responded that it would consider any such response to be an act of war which trigger a larger and dis-proportionate response. Some say that's the real reason why Trump called it off. Trump stated that it was because he didn't feel that risking 150 people's lives

was a reasonable cost for downing an unmanned drone. Whatever the real reason may be, it was a good idea to call it off.

The latest development however, is that Iran has now followed through with its pre-disclosed plan to [enrich uranium above the 3.67% limit](#) stated in the JCPOA to an unknown level. It also recently [exceeded the 300kg limit on its uranium stockpiles](#). These two actions were pre-disclosed in full transparency over sixty days ago and are in direct response to both Washington's increased sanctions and Europe's failure to resist US sanctions.

What the Trump administration fails to understand is that Iran is neither looking to negotiate a new agreement, nor are they interested in making any changes to the existing agreement. Essentially, they will they be bullied into making further concessions.

The JCPOA was born out of twelve years of negotiations through our global partners due to the lack of any direct diplomatic channels between the United States and Iran. Iran is not going to be appeasing the United States, and as [Professor Seyed Mohammad Marandi](#) (a politics professor at the University of Tehran) said on July 7th,

“If Europe does not stand up to the United States, then the deal will collapse. The ball is in Europe's court”.

On July 8th, Geng Shuang, spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry [stated](#) during a press briefing in Beijing,

“The maximum pressure exerted by the US on Iran is the root cause of the Iranian nuclear crisis.” He also stated, “The facts show that unilateral bullying has already become a worsening tumor.”

In a [tweet](#) on July 7th, Javad Zarif the Foreign Minister of Iran stated,

“Today Iran is taking its second round of remedial steps under Para 36 of the JCPOA. We reserve the right to continue to exercise legal remedies within JCPOA to protect our interests in the face of US #EconomicTerrorism. All such steps are reversible only through E3 compliance.”

Iran is neither a member of the EU nor subject to any European oil embargo.

Last I checked, EU was against extraterritoriality.

UK's unlawful seizure of a tanker with Iranian oil on behalf of [#B_Team](#) is piracy, pure and simple.

It sets a dangerous precedent and must end now.

— Javad Zarif (@JZarif) [July 8, 2019](#)

It's not only naive but reckless to think that Iran should stick to its obligations under the JCPOA while other parties fail to meet their commitments. In addition to exceeding its limit

of uranium stockpile and enriching uranium above the limit, Iran supposedly also plans to restore the Arak reactor to its original design which could produce plutonium. These measures are being taken to show that Washington's pressure, sanctions, and bullying will no longer be tolerated. If obligations are not met by all parties, then the deal will collapse entirely along with years of diplomacy, negotiation, full transparency and concessions on Iran's part.

Also on July 7th, Zarif [tweeted](#) the following,

“Having failed to implement their obligations under JCPOA—including after the US withdrawal—the EU/E3 should at minimum politically support Iran's remedial measures under Paragraph 36, incl at IAEA. E3 have no pretexts to avoid a firm political stance to preserve JCPOA & counter U.S unilateralism.”

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— Javad Zarif (@JZarif) [July 7, 2019](#)

Trump's response in the form of a warning that Iran had better be careful fell on deaf ears.

Despite Washington's heavy sanctions, Iran's [Oil Minister, Bijan Zanganeh](#) is hopeful that crude oil exports will improve. Iran simply wants to continue to export the same amount of oil as it did before Washington withdrew from the JCPOA.

Iran's latest actions are meant to send a clear message to members of the JCPOA and the international community as a whole, that Iran was in compliance before Washington withdrew, and stayed in compliance for over a year, and is entirely willing to scale back its uranium stockpiles and enrichment to the terms set in the nuclear deal IF other parties lift the sanctions on Iran's main source of income, and comply with their terms as well.

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