Iran nuclear deal: Global powers stand by pact despite Trump threat
14 October 2017
From the section

Global powers, including key US allies, have said they will stand by the Iran nuclear deal which US President Donald Trump has threatened to tear apart. Mr Trump said on Friday that he would stop signing off on the agreement. The UK, France and Germany responded that the pact was "in our shared national security interest". The EU said it was "not up to any single country to terminate" a "working" deal.

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said the US was "more isolated than ever". "Can a president annul a multilateral international treaty on his own?" he asked. "Apparently he doesn't know that this agreement is not a bilateral agreement solely between Iran and the United States."

The deal, signed in 2015, is between Iran and six international powers - the UK, the US, Russia, France, Germany, and China. It imposed curbs on Iran's nuclear programme in return for an easing of international sanctions. In a combative speech on Friday, Mr Trump called Iran a "fanatical regime" and said it had violated the terms of the deal. He accused Iran of sponsoring terrorism, and proposed new sanctions.
"We will not continue down a path whose predictable conclusion is more violence, more terror, and the very real threat of Iran's nuclear breakout," he said.

International observers say Iran has been in full compliance with the agreement. China has not spoken since Mr Trump's speech but previously called on the US to preserve the deal. Russia's foreign ministry said it regretted Mr Trump's decision but did not expect it to stop the deal being implemented.

What does Trump's refusal to sign mean?
Congress requires the president to certify every 90 days that Iran is upholding its part of the agreement. Mr Trump had already recertified twice, but refused to sign a third time ahead of a Sunday deadline. Congress now has 60 days to decide whether to pull out of the nuclear deal by re-imposing sanctions.

Although some advocates of the deal had feared that Mr Trump would withdraw the US entirely, he has instead essentially referred the matter to Congress.

What changes does he want?
Mr Trump is seeking the end to the nuclear deal's so-called "sunset clauses", one of which allows for the lifting of restrictions on Iran's nuclear enrichment programme after 2025.
He announced treasury department sanctions on Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards, which he called the "corrupt personal terror force of Iran's leader", and called for restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile programme, which is not covered by the deal. Last month, Iran said it had successfully tested a new medium-range missile with a 2,000km (1,200-mile) range. The president said that congressional leaders were drafting amendments that would curb Iran's ballistic missile development and eliminate expiry dates on restrictions to the country's nuclear development.

How did other key players respond?

Yukiya Amano, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said Iran was implementing the deal and was subject to "the world's most robust nuclear verification regime".

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said Iran was implementing the deal.

European diplomats warned that any such unilateral changes to the agreement were likely to trigger the deal's collapse and a return to a nuclear standoff in the Middle East.

In other reaction:

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said Europe and the world "could not afford" to terminate a nuclear deal that was working

French President Emmanuel Macron assured Mr Rouhani of France's commitment to the deal in a phone call

"This deal lives to fight another day and that's a good thing," said UK Foreign Minister Boris Johnson
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu congratulated Mr Trump, who he said had "boldly confronted Iran's terrorist regime". Saudi Arabia also backed the US president's "firm strategy"

What has changed?

By Lyse Doucet, chief international correspondent

President Trump has recast the list of Middle East threats, with Iran replacing so-called Islamic State (IS) as Enemy Number One. That world view is shared by his strongest supporters in the region, including Israel and Gulf Arab leaders who have long seen Iran as their primary threat, and a rival with vast sway across the Middle East.

They resented Washington's focus on the Iran deal during President's Obama administration. Like President Trump, they want to undo his legacy. The new approach imposes new sanctions but stops short of designating Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist group - a step Iran says would be tantamount to a declaration of war.

The urgent question now is whether the new strategy will embolden Iran's hardliners including the Revolutionary Guards. Like US forces, they're involved in battles to defeat IS in Iraq and Syria, and may also see a new enemy.

Europe 'concerned' by Trump Iran threat

What do Trump's words on Iran mean for US/UK relations?

What is the nuclear deal?

Formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, it is designed to prevent Iran developing a nuclear weapon.

It lifted some sanctions that stopped Iran from trading on international markets and selling oil.

The loosening of sanctions is dependent on Iran restricting its nuclear programme. It must curb its uranium stockpile, build no more heavy-water reactors for 15 years and allow inspectors into the country.

Iran’s president fires back at Trump
on nuclear deal

Iran’s president, Hassan Rouhani, defended the international nuclear deal Oct. 7 and warned President Trump against violating it. (Reuters)

By Erin Cunningham October 13 at 6:05 PM

ISTANBUL — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani blasted the Trump administration Friday for moving “unilaterally” against the 2015 nuclear deal, denouncing the new U.S. policy but stopping short of announcing a withdrawal from the pact.

“We will continue to stick to the deal and to cooperate with the [International Atomic Energy Agency] within the framework of international law,” he said, referring to the watchdog tasked with monitoring Iran’s nuclear program. But if the deal’s other signatories “refuse to
abide by their commitments, Iran will not hesitate” to respond, he said.

Rouhani’s remarks came just hours after Trump announced his intention to “decertify” the deal in a report to Congress. The agreement, which was negotiated under the Obama administration, curbed Iran’s nuclear activities in exchange for major sanctions relief.

Trump hopes congressional leaders will ramp up pressure on Iran by legislating new restrictions on some of the deal’s provisions. Iran, Trump said, is “under the control of a fanatical regime.”

In his address, which was carried live on state television, Rouhani fired back, saying that the United

“The speech tonight showed that the [nuclear deal] is much stronger than what this gentleman thought during the presidential campaign,” he said, referring to Trump. Rouhani, a moderate leader who has pushed for Iran to open up to the world, was reelected for a second term in
May.

“This is an international, multilateral deal,” Rouhani said of the agreement, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA. “It is not a document between Iran and the United States that he can treat the way that he likes.”

In his policy speech Friday, Trump referred to Iran as a “dictatorship” with a “long campaign of bloodshed.”

“The regime remains the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism,” he said, adding that he would order the Treasury Department to designate Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps a supporter of terrorism.

The Revolutionary Guard is an official branch of Iran’s armed forces, although it commands proxy forces in the region and wields vast political and economic influence. Trump’s move, using an existing executive order on terrorism financing, falls short of the Foreign Terrorist Organization designation used by the State Department, which carries much harsher sanctions.
Still, the designation could have far-reaching consequences, both in Iran and the region. The Revolutionary Guard, which maintains land, sea and air forces, has threatened U.S. military bases in the Persian Gulf. Iran’s Foreign Ministry said Friday that Designating the Revolutionary Guard a terrorist group would provoke an unspecified “crushing” response.

The Revolutionary Guard “is a powerful force that is popular among the Iranian people,” Rouhani said. In recent months, Rouhani sought to curb the Revolutionary Guard’s role in a stagnant economy as part of a bid to woo further foreign investment.
But now, Rouhani said, Iran is united in the face of foreign aggression.

“You made us more united than ever,” he said, addressing the United States. “You can try to separate the government and the people, but you cannot sow discord.”

“The Iranian nation is not a nation that will easily retreat in the face of a dictator,” he said.

Iran nuclear deal: Trump vows not to
US President Donald Trump has condemned Iran as a "fanatical regime" and refused to continue certifying an international nuclear deal. He said he was referring the deal to Congress and would consult allies on how to alter it. He accused Iran of sponsoring terrorism and said he would deny the regime "all paths to a nuclear weapon". International observers say Iran has been in full compliance with the 2015 deal freezing its nuclear programme. But Mr Trump said the deal was too lenient, and Iran had "committed multiple violations of the agreement":

- On two occasions, he said, they had exceeded the limit of 130 tonnes of heavy water (a source of plutonium suitable for a nuclear bomb)
- Until recently, the regime had failed to meet expectations in its operation of advanced centrifuges
- It had also "intimidated international inspectors into not using the full inspection authorities that the agreement calls for"

Iran, he said, was spreading "death, destruction and chaos".

**Iran nuclear deal: Key details**

What do Trump's words on Iran mean for US/UK relations?
It was "not living up to spirit of the deal", he said, but was receiving the benefit of sanctions relief regardless.

His **new strategy** would fix that, he said.

He said that the US reserved the right to leave the deal at any time.

Within minutes of his address, EU's foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini insisted the deal was "robust" and that there had been "no violations of any of the commitments in the agreement".

She said it was not in the power of "any president in the world" to terminate the agreement, which had been established by a UN Security Council resolution.

Mr Trump had been under pressure at home and abroad not to scrap the deal between Iran and the US, UK, France, China and Russia plus Germany.

He also focused on Iran's non-nuclear activities, particularly those of the Revolutionary Guards, which he called the "corrupt personal terror force of Iran's leader".

Mr Trump said he would impose sanctions outside the Iran deal targeting both the Guards and "the proliferation of missiles that threaten global trade and freedom of navigation".

A key criticism of the Iran deal by Mr Trump has been that it fails to cover Iran's ballistic missile programme.

**Iran nuclear deal: Trump poised to withdraw support**

5 hours ago
Protesters outside the White House have urged Donald Trump to back the deal.

US President Donald Trump is expected to withdraw backing from the nuclear accord with Iran on Friday and lay out a more confrontational strategy.

The move would not withdraw the US from the deal but give Congress 60 days to decide whether to do so by re-imposing sanctions.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has been consulting with counterparts in Europe and China, officials said.

Mr Trump has been under pressure at home and abroad not to scrap the deal.

Under the 2015 accord, Iran agreed to freeze its nuclear programme in return for the partial lifting of sanctions.

President Trump has been a longstanding critic of the deal and pledged to scrap it during his campaign.

Media caption
A timeline of what Trump's said about the Iran deal

Congress requires the US president to certify every 90 days that Iran is upholding its part of the agreement. Mr Trump has already recertified it twice.

Speculation that Mr Trump might refuse to recertify the deal has caused alarm among US allies and some members of his own administration.

Defence Secretary James Mattis told a Senate hearing earlier this month it was not in the national interest to abandon it.

Analysis: Trump tries to 'fix' Iran deal

Barbara Plett Usher, BBC News, Washington

President Trump has called the Iran nuclear accord the "worst deal ever negotiated".
and threatened to tear it up.

It looks, though, as if he will first try to "fix" it. He is expected to tell Congress that Iran is not meeting certain conditions set by US law; that the deal's benefits are too meagre, for example, to justify continued sanctions relief.

Then it would be up to lawmakers to decide whether to re-impose sanctions.

Mr Trump is unlikely to advocate they do so now. Even critics of the deal fear this would isolate the US and weaken its credibility, because Iran is complying with the agreement.

Republicans have suggested they could use decertification as leverage to get the changes they want.

Ed Royce, Republican chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said that though the deal was "flawed, I believe we must now enforce the hell out of it".

Foreign leaders, including British PM Theresa May and French President Emmanuel Macron, have urged Mr Trump to keep the deal.

**What will Trump do about the Iran nuclear deal?**

**Key details of the Iran nuclear deal**

**Iran expects US to ditch nuclear deal**

Mr Trump recently reaffirmed his long-held opposition to the accord, calling it "one of the most incompetently drawn deals I've ever seen".

"They got a path to nuclear weapons very quickly, and think of this one - $1.7bn in cash," he told Fox News, referring to a decision by the Obama administration to settle a decades-long legal claim with Iran as part of the deal.

Mr Trump has repeatedly said Iran has broken the "spirit" of the deal, although the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Congress agree Iran is complying with the terms of the agreement.
The 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was designed to prevent Iran developing a nuclear weapon.

It lifted some sanctions that stopped Iran from trading on international markets and selling oil.

The lifting of sanctions is dependent on Iran restricting its nuclear programme. It must curb its uranium stockpile, build no more heavy-water reactors for 15 years, and allow inspectors into the country.

**US defence chief Mattis suggests backing Iran nuclear deal**

27 minutes ago
"I believe at this point in time, absent indications to the contrary, it is something that the president should consider staying with," Mr Mattis told the Senate Armed Services Committee in Washington.
"If we can confirm that Iran is living by the agreement, if we can determine that this is in our best interest, then clearly we should stay with it," he added.
Last month, President Trump said Iran was keeping to the spirit of the agreement "atrociously".
He also described the agreement - signed by Iran, the US, the UK, France, China, Russia and Germany - as the "one of the worst deals I've seen".

Iran nuclear deal: Key details
Trump extends 'worst' Iran nuclear deal
Why has Trump been so harsh on Iran?

In April, Mr Trump ordered a review into whether a suspension of sanctions on Iran, linked to the deal curbing its nuclear activities, was in the US national interest.
If the US president does not recertify by the set deadline that Tehran is complying with the agreement, he could withdraw his approval.
Congress would then have 60 days to decide whether to re-impose sanctions on Iran suspended under the deal.
Iran has always said it has the right to nuclear energy - and insists that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes only.
The International Atomic Energy Agency said last month that Iran was implementing the nuclear-related commitments from the deal.

Iran nuclear deal: Tehran expects US to ditch agreement, says FM
Iran's foreign minister has said he assumes that the US will abandon the international deal restricting his country's nuclear activities. But Mohammad Javad Zarif said he hoped Europe would keep the agreement alive. US President Donald Trump - a stern critic of the deal - will announce next month whether he believes Iran has adhered to its terms. If he says it has failed to do so, US Congress will begin the process of reimposing sanctions on Iran. Mr Trump said the agreement was an "embarrassment" in a speech to the United Nations this month.

What will happen to the Iran nuclear deal?
Why has Trump been so harsh on Iran?
Iran nuclear deal: Key details

France, Germany and the UK - which along with Russia and China signed the deal - have recently defended it.

In an interview with two British newspapers, Mr Zarif said that if the deal collapsed, Iran would no longer have to follow its limitations on uranium enrichment, centrifuge numbers and the production of plutonium. But he insisted Iran would only use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. "You either live by it [the deal] or you set it aside," Mr Zarif told the Financial Times and the Guardian. "You cannot be
"My assumption and guess is that he [Trump] will not certify and then will allow Congress to take the decision," Mr Zarif said during the interview at the Iranian UN mission's residence in New York. "The deal allowed Iran to continue its research and development. So we have improved our technological base. If we decide to walk away from the deal we would be walking away with better technology."

He said of Mr Trump: "I think he has made a policy of being unpredictable, and now he's turning that into being unreliable as well. He has violated the letter, spirit, everything of the deal."

Mr Zarif said Iran's options "will depend on how the rest of the international community deal with the United States"."If Europe and Japan and Russia and China decided to go along with the US, then I think that will be the end of the deal," he said. "Europe should lead."European Union officials have said they could act to legally protect European investors in Iran if the US reimposes sanctions. But, in line with the US, they have also criticised Iran over its non-nuclear activities in the region.

Iran tests missile despite Trump pressure

8 hours ago

Media caption
State TV broadcast footage of the missile test at an undisclosed location
Iran says it has successfully tested a new-medium range missile, in defiance of US President Donald Trump.
The launch of the Khoramshahr missile, which has a range of 2,000 km (1,242 miles), was shown on state TV. It is unclear when the test took place.
At the UN on Tuesday, Mr Trump criticised Iran's missile programme and the 2015 nuclear deal with the country.
On Friday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Iran would increase its military power "as a deterrent".
The Khoramshahr missile was first displayed at a military parade on Friday in Tehran. It is capable of carrying multiple warheads, Iranian media report.

Iran votes to boost its missile defence
What will happen to the Iran nuclear deal?
Key messages from Donald Trump's UN speech

Iran's Defence Minister, Gen Amir Hatami, outlined the missile's "unique specifications".
"The ability to evade the enemy's air defence line and to be guided from the moment of launch until the target is hit turns Khoramshahr into a tactical missile," he said.
Iran would "not seek permission from any country for producing various kinds of missile", he added.

A message to Trump
By Kasra Naji, Special Correspondent, BBC Persian

By test-firing a new missile, Iran is sending another signal of defiance taken straight from the North Korean textbook.
The missile test is arguably a borderline case as far as the UN Security Council is concerned. A resolution calls on Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons.
The test comes ahead of two significant dates in the US:

The Trump administration is due to announce the details of its strategy vis-à-vis Iran around the end of September

On 15 October, Mr Trump will have to certify to Congress that Iran is compliant with the nuclear deal it reached with world powers in 2015. If Mr Trump refuses to certify compliance, Congress will have 60 days to re-impose sanctions on Iran

Iran's test is a message to the US that it is determined to defend itself in any way it sees fit but it could also ultimately work against Iran as world public opinion will compare it to North Korea.
Missile tests in Iran are said to require the approval of Mr Rouhani, and now it seems he has been pushed into a corner with the hardliners in Iran who see the North Korean path as the best response to Mr Trump's rhetoric and his disdain for the nuclear deal.

The US announced fresh sanctions on Iran in July over its ballistic missile programme and what it said was Iran's support for terror organisations.
It also imposed sanctions on Iran after a ballistic missile test in January. It says such launches violate the spirit of the 2015 agreement between Iran and six world powers to limit its nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief.

Rouhani warns US against ‘political suicide’
Iran could restart nuclear programme ‘within hours’

Tehran insists its missile programme does not contravene the agreement. It says the missiles are not meant to carry nuclear warheads.

At the UN General Assembly this week, the US and Iranian leaders traded barbs.

Media caption
Trump and Rouhani trade insults in UN podium duel

Mr Trump included Iran among a "small group of rogue regimes", said its government was bent on "death and destruction" and said the nuclear agreement was an "embarrassment" to the US.

Mr Rouhani responded by referring to a "rogue newcomer to international politics" and deplored the US leader's "ignorant, absurd and hateful rhetoric".

He said his country would "not be the first" to violate the deal, which Mr Trump has threatened to pull out of despite other signatories and international monitors saying Iran has stuck by its terms.

On Wednesday, Mr Trump said he had already made up his mind but would not yet reveal his decision.

Iran's leader Rouhani slams Trump in
President Hassan Rouhani of Iran has used a speech to the UN General Assembly to hit back at Donald Trump over the US president's criticisms of his country and its 2015 nuclear deal.

In his debut speech to the UN on Tuesday, President Trump included Iran among a "small group of rogue regimes". He described the nuclear deal as an "embarrassment" to the United States.

Mr Rouhani responded by referring to a "rogue newcomer to international politics". He denied his country would be the first to violate the agreement but said Iran would "respond decisively and resolutely to its violation by any party". It would be a "great pity", he added, if the agreement were to be destroyed by Mr Trump.

**Iran nuclear deal: Key details**

**Why such heat?**

Mr Trump has long condemned the nuclear deal concluded under Barack Obama, his predecessor in the White House.

The White House said last month Iran was complying with the deal, but Mr Trump has said the country is violating its spirit.
On Tuesday, he **also accused Iran's government of being bent on "death and destruction".**

Iran, he said, was a "corrupt dictatorship" and an "economically depleted rogue state" that exported violence.

Addressing the assembly at UN headquarters in New York, Mr Rouhani deplored "ignorant, absurd and hateful rhetoric" which was "unfit to be heard at the United Nations".

**Will the US abandon the nuclear deal now?**

In 2015, Iran reached its landmark nuclear deal with the P5+1 group of world powers - the US, UK, France, China and Russia plus Germany.

Crippling economic sanctions on Iran were lifted after the International Atomic Energy Agency certified Iran had restricted sensitive nuclear activities.
Iran's uranium stockpile will be reduced by 98% to 300kg for 15 years.

Iran says it has the right to nuclear energy and insists its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes only.

The White House said at the time the deal would prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

Speaking on Wednesday, the US envoy to the UN, Nikki Haley, said President Trump's remarks were "not a clear signal that he plans to withdraw".

"What it is, is a clear signal that he's not happy with the deal," she told CBS News in an interview.

How is Iran curbing its nuclear programme?

There are two uranium enrichment facilities in Iran - Natanz and Fordo - where uranium hexafluoride gas is fed into centrifuges to separate out the most fissile isotope, U-235.

Low-enriched uranium, which has a 3%-4% concentration of U-235, can be used to produce fuel for nuclear power plants, but it can also be enriched to the 90% needed to produce nuclear weapons.

In July 2015, Iran had almost 20,000 centrifuges. Under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), it will be limited to installing no more than 5,060 of the oldest and least efficient centrifuges at Natanz for 10 years.
Iran’s uranium stockpile will also be reduced by 98% to 300kg (660lbs) for 15 years. It must also keep its level of enrichment at 3.67%.