

Iranian Foreign Minister Says Tehran May Abandon Nuclear Deal if U.S. Withdraws



Tehran, September 29 (RHC)-- Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says Tehran may walk away from the 2015 nuclear deal with the P5+1 group of countries if the U.S. withdraws from the agreement. "If Washington decides to pull out of the deal, Iran has the option of withdrawal and other options," the Twitter feed of the Qatar-based broadcaster Al Jazeera quoted Zarif as saying in an exclusive interview.

The remarks came amid repeated threats by Washington to quit the nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China – plus Germany signed the JCPOA in July 2015 and started implementing it in January 2016.

Under the deal, Iran applied some limits to its nuclear program in exchange for the termination of all nuclear-related sanctions against it. The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, which took over in January 2017, one year after the JCPOA came into force, has been actively seeking a pretext to unilaterally withdraw from the deal or undermine it. All the other parties to the deal, in contrast, have

stressed that the nuclear accord must be sustained.

Earlier this month, Trump said the JCPOA was “an embarrassment to the United States” and “one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered into.” The Trump administration has twice certified Iran's compliance with the deal in notifications to the US Congress under an American law. But it has signaled that a third verification — due in mid-October — would not be forthcoming.

Last week, German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel warned that any U.S. move to scrap Iran's nuclear deal would discourage other countries from going to the negotiating table to discuss their nuclear activities. Germany's top diplomat said that a collapse of the nuclear agreement with Iran would send a “terrible signal” for other diplomatic efforts.

European Union's foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, also said last week that the nuclear agreement signed between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries worked fine and belonged to the entire world, not just the United States. “I have said many times that the agreement is working fine, [and] the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) [has] confirmed several times that Iran is fulfilling its obligations,” Mogherini said.

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