

*U.S. secretary of state says U.S. will 'crush' Iran with 'strongest sanctions in history'*

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Washington, May 22 (RHC)-- U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo threatened Monday to impose what he called the "strongest sanctions in history" against Iran if it did not accept a series of unilateral demands from the Donald Trump administration, which includes effectively giving up nuclear power initiatives and its conventional ballistic missile program.

Weeks after the Americans pulled out of an international nuclear deal with Iran, Pompeo spelled out a hard-line approach towards the Islamic Republic, potentially setting Washington and Tehran on course for further confrontation. He said: "The sting of sanctions will only grow more painful if the regime does not change course from the unacceptable and unproductive path it has chosen for itself and the people of Iran." Pompeo, in his first major foreign policy speech since becoming secretary of state, warned: "These will be the strongest sanctions in history by the time we are done."

Pompeo warned that if Iran fully resumed its nuclear program, Washington would be ready to respond and said the administration would hold companies doing prohibited business in Iran to account. "Our demands on Iran are not unreasonable: give up your program," Pompeo said. He added: "Should they choose to go back, should they begin to enrich, we are fully prepared to respond to that as well," declining to elaborate.

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