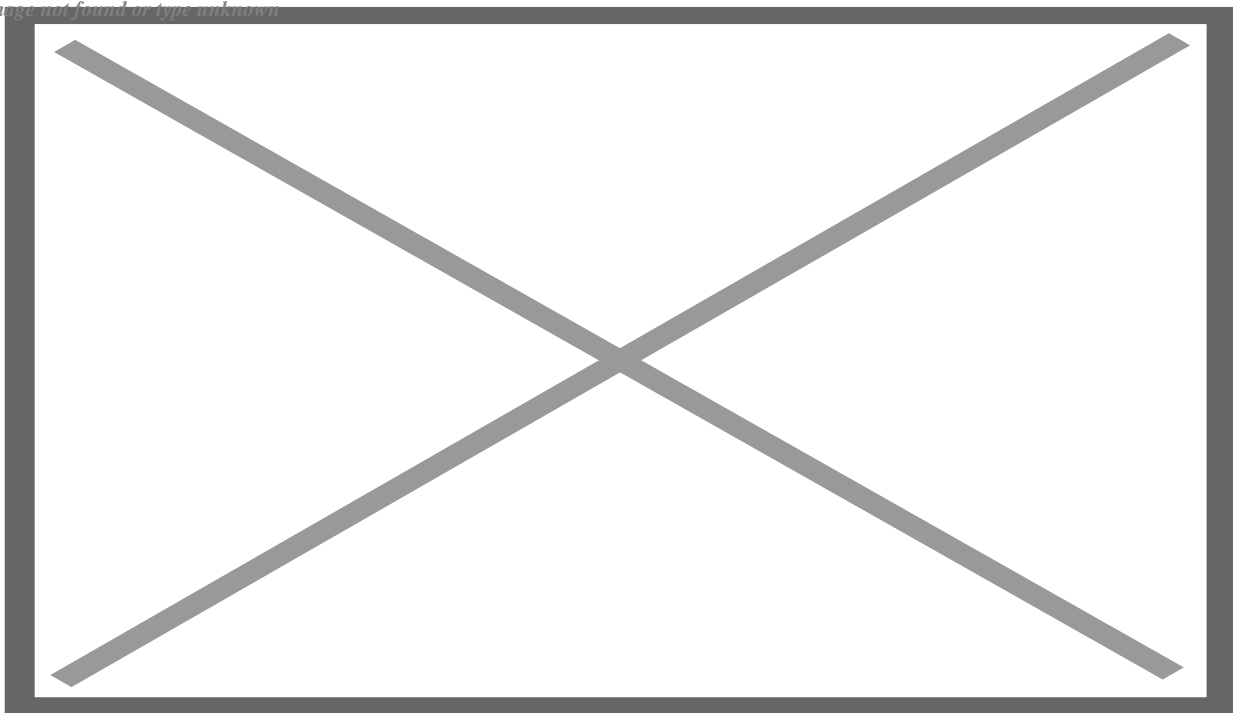


Pompeo threatens sanctions for arms sales to Iran despite ban lifting

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US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo speaks during a news conference at the State Department, October 14, 2020. (Photo: AFP)

Washington, October 19 (RHC)-- The United States has threatened to impose sanctions on any individuals and entities that get engaged in arms transfer to and from Iran, claiming that the sales to Tehran would be in breach of United Nations resolutions despite the lifting of a decade-long arms embargo on the Islamic Republic.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Sunday that arms sales to Iran would violate UN resolutions and result in sanctions, hours after Tehran announced that the longstanding UN embargo on arms trade with the Islamic republic had expired.

"The United States is prepared to use its domestic authorities to sanction any individual or entity that materially contributes to the supply, sale, or transfer of conventional arms to or from Iran," Pompeo said in

a statement.

The U.S. secretary of state also claimed: "Every nation that seeks peace and stability in the Middle East... should refrain from any arms transactions with Iran."

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced on Wednesday that Iran would be free to trade weapons as of October 18 after the United States failed in its attempts to secure an extension of the United Nations arms embargo against the Islamic Republic.

Rouhani congratulated the Iranian nation on the lifting of the "oppressive" 10-year arms ban on Tehran despite Washington's struggles to keep the restrictions in force, and said the ban expiry was a fruit of the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), for the country.

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump was dealt a heavy blow in mid-August as it failed to renew the Iranian arms embargo through a resolution at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The draft was supported only by the Dominican Republic, leaving it far short of the minimum nine "yes" votes required for adoption.

Iran's foreign minister says the country will meet its strategic needs by purchasing weapons from Russia and China, and has no need for European weapons once the UN embargo is lifted in October.

The following month, Washington suffered another embarrassing loss as it failed to trigger the so-called snapback provision in the JCPOA aimed at re-imposing all UN sanctions against Iran.

The UN Security Council member states challenged the US's rationale that it was still a participant state to the nuclear accord, citing its unilateral withdrawal in May 2018.

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