

Trump Administration is Working to Kill the Iran Deal

Trump Preparing to Dismantle the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

- Trump must certify to Congress every 90 days that Iran is in compliance with the JCPOA; failing to do so will trigger an expedited Congressional procedure to reinstate sanctions.
- Trump has indicated he will not certify Iranian compliance on the next certification deadline, October 15.
- Trump reportedly spent fifty-five minutes of a meeting on July 17 refusing to re-certify Iran's compliance with the JCPOA despite the urging of his top national security advisers.¹

Despite Trump's Claims, Iran Has Complied with the JCPOA

- The IAEA has verified that Iran is in compliance with the JCPOA through six separate reports dating back to January 2015.²
- The Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Paul Selva, testified before Congress in July: "Based on the evidence that's been presented to the intelligence community, it appears that Iran is in compliance with the rules that were laid out in the JCPOA."³
- Representatives of the P5+1 – including the U.S. – "welcomed the latest report from the IAEA verifying Iran's continued adherence to its nuclear-related commitments" in a statement issued at the July meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission.⁴
- Trump's recent remarks urging the G-20 to stop doing business with Iran may have been a U.S. JCPOA violation. Under the accord, the U.S. is obligated to refrain from any policy that would undermine the normalization of economic ties with Iran.⁵

¹ Trump Recertifies Iran Nuclear Deal, but Only Reluctantly, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/us/politics/trump-iran-nuclear-deal-recertify.html>

² IAEA and Iran - IAEA reports, <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/focus/iran/iaea-and-iran-iaea-reports>

³ U.S. Military Chief: Tehran Has Complied With Iran Deal, <https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2017-07-18/us-military-chief-tehran-has-complied-with-iran-deal>

⁴ Chair's statement following the 21 July 2017 meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/30249/chairs-statement-following-21-july-2017-meeting-jcpoa-joint-commission_fr

⁵ Press Briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Sarah Sanders and Director of Legislative Affairs Marc Short, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/07/10/press-briefing-principal-deputy-press-secretary-sarah-sanders-and>

The Trump Administration is Using the Iraq War Playbook on Iran

- A team of hawkish White House advisers has been tasked by Trump with laying the groundwork to refuse certification by the next 90 day review on October 15.⁶
- Trump's team is searching for intelligence to fit the chosen policy as well as manufacturing a crisis over WMDs without any evidence similar to the "Office of Special Plans" that built the case for the Iraq invasion under Bush II.⁷
- An *Associated Press* report indicates the administration is seeking military site inspections in Iran without convincing evidence of any illicit Iranian nuclear activities at the sites. This effort is solely an attempt to force Iran to reject the request and create a basis to withdraw from the accord.⁸

Decertification Would Fatally Undermine the JCPOA While Isolating the U.S.

- If Trump refuses to certify Iran's compliance with the JCPOA in October, he will trigger an expedited Congressional process to reinstate sanctions that had been lifted or waived under the JCPOA. Alternatively, he could snap back sanctions using his own Executive power.
- If the U.S. snaps back sanctions, Iran would likely use this as a pretext to withdraw from the JCPOA while pinning the blame on the United States. Sharp limits on nuclear activities and expansive monitoring over Iran's entire nuclear program would end, while the threat of war would greatly escalate.
- If Trump kills the deal he would isolate the U.S. as our fellow negotiating partners would not follow us and could take steps to limit the reach of U.S. sanctions. With Iran moving toward an undetectable nuclear breakout capability and the U.S. and Iran moving toward war, the U.S. would be left with little leverage and no good options.

⁶ Trump Assigns White House Team to Target Iran Nuclear Deal, Sidelining State Department, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/07/21/trump-assigns-white-house-team-to-target-iran-nuclear-deal-sidelining-state-department/amp/>

⁷ Will Trump follow the Bush playbook and start a war with Iran?, <http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2017/06/cherry-picking-intelligence-war-middle-east-here-we-go-again/139030/>

⁸ AP sources: US seeks to test Iran deal with more inspections, <https://apnews.com/721fdd1bf86d4c9aa8b3b18c603ea60e/AP-sources:-US-seeks-to-test-iran-deal-with-more-inspections>

Further Reading:

- ***New York Times* Editorial Board, Avoiding War With Iran, Editorial Board— July 20, 2017**

“The last thing the United States needs is another war in the Middle East. Yet a drumbeat of provocative words, outright threats and actions — from President Trump and some of his top aides as well as Sunni Arab leaders and American activists — is raising tensions that could lead to armed conflict with Iran.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/20/opinion/donald-trump-war-iran-.html>

- ***Los Angeles Times* Editorial Board, “Stop playing games with the Iranian nuclear deal” July 22, 2017**

“It’s time for Trump to stop playing games with U.S. support for the nuclear agreement. So long as Iran complies with the terms, the U.S. should live up to its obligations.”

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-trump-iran-20170722-story.html>

- ***USA Today* Editorial Board, “Iran nuclear deal is working” July 20, 2017**

“The agreement is working. With a few minor exceptions that have nothing to do with proliferation — each quickly corrected when discovered by inspectors — [Tehran has abided](#) by limits on stockpiles of low-enriched uranium, heavy water for nuclear plant operation and centrifuges for enriching uranium. Last year, for example, Iran poured concrete into the core of its [only heavy-water plant](#) capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium, ruining it.”

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2017/07/20/iran-nuclear-deal-working-editorials-debates/488460001/>