

OPINION

Iran nuclear deal and the European way

By Hossein Ziaee*

Josep Borrell, the Spanish foreign minister under socialist Pedro Sanchez since June 2018 who will replace outgoing European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on November 1, has, during his confirmation hearing at the European Parliament, described the 28-nation political bloc as the cornerstone in safeguarding the 2015 Iran nuclear deal – officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

This is while French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian recently set forth a plan by the EU that called for Iran-US negotiations and envisioned a 15-billion-dollar credit mechanism, officially called the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), which would enable non-dollar commercial exchange between the bloc and Iran.

This is while considering the political scene in Europe and the US perspective toward the nuclear talks reveals the difficulties ahead in protecting the JCPOA based on the European model.

However, maintaining the nuclear agreement and its survival remains one of the undeniable necessities of international security.

A look at the remarks by the two European foreign ministers points to the difficulty of the path ahead and little impact of Europe in saving JCPOA. Most of all, it undermines the "credibility of European diplomacy" in global interactions.

On the other hand, while Europe has to spend more on the JCPOA in order to safeguard it, it is always seeking the most out of Iran and the US through its crafty pressuring tactics. That is to say that the real problem in implementing JCPOA is Europe's insistence on spending the least to save the deal.

It is not without reason that creating pressure and costs for Iran has now become a "political trend" by Europeans.

This is while in fact neither the American nor the European interpretation of the JCPOA is capable of setting Iran back from its true rights under the international deal.

Furthermore, the credibility of JCPOA and Europeans has turned into a major political issue in the public opinion of Iranians.

Thus, Europe should not pass its important responsibility and underestimate Iranian "willpower" and lose the most important power in the Middle East – Iran.

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Iran opposes any Turkish military operation in Syria

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"As I have stated strongly before, and just to reiterate, if Turkey does anything that I, in my great and unmatched wisdom, consider to be off limits, I will totally destroy and obliterate the economy of Turkey (I've done before!)" Trump tweeted.

"I have told Turkey that if they do anything outside of what we would think is humane... they could suffer the wrath of an extremely decimated economy," he said.

Ankara brushed aside the threat on Tuesday, with Vice President Fuat Oktay saying, "Turkey is not a country that will act according to threats."

Trump's remarks also met an angry response in Turkey, including from opposition party politicians such as Iyi Party leader Meral Aksener who said it was a day to put aside domestic politics.

"Threatening Turkey's economy is a diplomatic catastrophe," she told her party's lawmakers in a speech in Parliament. "The best response to this insolence is to go into the east of the Euphrates and break the terror corridor."

The United States expects Turkey to take responsibility for captive Daesh terrorists in northeastern Syria if Ankara's planned incursion seizes areas where the detained terrorists are held, a senior State Department official said.

The captives are held in SDF facilities south of a safe zone initially proposed by Turkey.

Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy said overnight it was Turkey's fundamental right to take necessary measures for its national security against terrorism threats from Syria.

"Turkey is determined to clear terrorists from the east of the Euphrates and protect its own security and survival while implementing a secure zone in order to achieve peace and stability," Aksoy said in a written statement.

Russia, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's strongest foreign ally, said it was not told in advance by Washington or Turkey about any agreements to pull US troops from the northeast, adding it was watching the situation very closely.

Germany and Britain expressed concern about Turkey's plans for military action. German government spokeswoman Ulrike Demmer said a military intervention would "have fatal security, political and humanitarian consequences".

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said Turkey plans to resettle two million refugees in northern Syria and Turkish media has said the draft resettlement plan involves a 151-billion-lira (\$26 billion) construction project. Turkey hosts 3.6 million Syrian refugees.

Reuters, AFP and Press TV contributed to this story.

Incoming top EU diplomat:

Europeans' unity crucial in keeping JCPOA going

The European Union's incoming top diplomat Josep Borrell said the 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran must be preserved, stressing that "the political unity of the Europeans will be crucial" in keeping the agreement going.

During a parliamentary confirmation hearing to become the next EU foreign policy chief, Borrell said Monday that "we have to keep this agreement alive in order to defend our interests, our security and avoid something worse," according to AP.

Borrell, who is currently foreign minister in Spain's caretaker government and set to take over in Brussels from Federica Mogherini on Nov. 1, said "the political unity of the Europeans will be crucial" in keeping the agreement going.

Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council – the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China – plus Germany signed the JCPOA on July 14,

2015 and started implementing it on January 16, 2016.

Under the deal, Iran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions.

However, the pact has been on life support since US President Donald Trump pulled his country out of the international nuclear deal in May last year and stepped up sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Since May, Iran has rowed back on its nuclear commitments three times in compliance with articles 26 and 36 of the JCPOA.

Iran says its reciprocal measures will be reversible as soon as Europe finds practical ways to shield the Iranian economy from unilateral US sanctions.

The European signatories to the JCPOA have so far failed to uphold their commitments. They have expressed vocal support for the deal, but failed to provide meaningful economic incentives as required under the nuclear agreement.



Incoming European foreign policy chief Josep Borrell answers questions during his hearing at the European Parliament in Brussels on Oct. 7, 2019.

US coercion jeopardizing global trade system: Iran

Iran said Tuesday that the United States' illegal sanctions and coercion tactics have jeopardized the international trade system, and that the world must break its silence over America's "unprecedented threat".

The remarks were made by Iran's deputy ambassador to the UN Eshaq Al-e-Habib in an address to a meeting of the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly held in New York on Monday, Press TV reported.

"One cannot deny the fact that commitment to multilateral cooperation as a basis and foundation for global treaties and agreements is currently under unprecedented and growing pressure," the Iranian diplomat said.

"Sanction-based poli-

tics have made multilateral financial and trade system very inefficient, and now it is upon the international community to guarantee that the financing of development is not taken hostage by certain countries through unilateral coercive measures," he added.

"The illegal and illegitimate coercive and unilateral measures of the US, including its unprecedented and unjustifiable sanctions against certain developing countries, Iran in particular, amid the international community's silence have increased in an unprecedented way and threaten the foundations of multilateralism," Al-e-Habib said.

Tensions have been running high between Iran and the United States since May 2018, when US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew his country from the nuclear deal, and unleashed the "toughest ever" sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Trump is a stern critic of the deal, which was clinched in 2015 by Iran and six world powers, including the United States, Russia, Britain, China, France, and Germany.

Under the agreement, nuclear-related sanctions put in place against Iran were lifted in exchange for curbs on Tehran's nuclear program.

In his Monday speech, Al-e-Habib also criticized the World Trade Organization for blocking Iran's membership for two decades because of the political pressures of certain

member states, saying that unilateral behaviors are currently targeting the WTO, jeopardizing the entire trade system of the world.

Iran, the largest economy not yet member of the WTO, has been requesting to join the organization since 1995, and was admitted to it as an observer in 2005, but sanctions began to hit Tehran afterwards and certain countries – especially the US – opposed its membership.

The WTO is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations and ratified in their parliaments.

Iran to sue US over breach of nuclear deal: VP

Political Desk

The Iranian vice president for legal affairs said the Islamic Republic will push court action to seek damages caused by the United States after Washington's violation of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

In an interview with ICANA, Laya Joneydi said the legal department of the administration has called on relevant government bodies to assess the damages caused by the deal violations.

She said Iran will bring charges against the United States and seek an undisclosed amount of damages as a result of America's "breach of the nuclear deal".

Iran has already sued the Trump administration in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over the imposition of sanctions.

Tehran is also set to meet the court with documentation about Iran's loss of revenue under the Trump administration sanctions and will argue that the country deserves to be compensated for these losses, according to the latest statements by Iranian officials.

Referring to Iran's complaint, the vice president said a temporary order was also issued in favor of Iran.

On October 3 last year, the UN's top court issued a ruling, reprimanding the US over its re-imposition of sanctions on Iran, and ordered Washington to lift restrictive measures linked to humanitarian trade, food, medicine and civil aviation.

The court's "unanimous order was a clear testament to the illegality of the US sanctions against our country and its people," Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi said at the time.

According to the legal department of the government, Tehran is seeking compensation for damages; therefore, we are working to document all the damages and provide the conditions for compensation," the vice president, Joneydi added.

US President Donald Trump withdrew from the nuclear accord in May 2018 and re-imposed the sanctions that had been lifted under the nuclear deal. He also ordered fresh sanctions.

On the first anniversary of the US withdrawal from the deal, Tehran in return started the reduction of its commitments to the nuclear deal, based on Articles 26 and 36 of the international agreement officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

UNHCR welcomes Iran's new law allowing women to pass citizenship to children

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in a statement on Tuesday welcomed a recent move by Iranian government's amendment of a law allowing children born to Iranian women and non-Iranian fathers to acquire Iranian nationality, regardless of whether they are born on Iranian territory.

The law was signed by the Parliament and submitted to the government for implementation on Tuesday, marking a major step towards reducing statelessness in Iran and around the world, the statement added.

On Wednesday, Iran's Guardian Council ratified the law more than four months after the proposal was passed by



the Parliament.

According to the new law, even children under 18 will now be able to obtain Iranian citizenship if their Iranian mothers files the application. Those

who are 18 and above can apply for Iranian nationality themselves. The law further specifies that persons without nationality can also apply for Iranian citizenship once they turn

18, if the individual and one of his or her parents was born in Iran.

A survey conducted by the government in 2017 indicated that there were nearly 50,000 children who, because they are born to Iranian mothers and non-Iranian fathers, couldn't obtain the official identity document known as 'shenasنامه'.

"No child chooses to be stateless," said Ivo Freijson, UNHCR representative in Iran. "Without an identity and official documents, stateless people are often excluded from society. The Iranian government is leading by example through its new law. It is a hugely positive move for these children and their families."

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