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Realities moderate US hardline policy

Iranian president warns of 'war situation' as sanctions resume

By CHINA DAILY

The United States was caught between allies at home and abroad and the reality of global economics as it reinstated sanctions on Iran, forced to carve out exemptions for some economies and back off on measures that could have been even more punishing for Teheran.

It granted waivers to allow eight countries and regions to continue importing Iranian crude and other petroleum products without penalty, bowing to concerns that a complete end to Iran's exports would cause a major spike in world oil prices and cause other economic disruptions. US President Donald Trump conceded that reality on his way to a last-minute campaign event a day before midterm elections.

"We have the toughest sanctions ever imposed but on oil we want to go a little bit slower because I don't want to drive the oil prices in the world," he said. "I could get the Iran oil down to zero immediately, but it would cause a shock to the market."

The newly reinstated sanctions target Iran's energy, financial and shipping sectors.

The measures restore all the US sanctions that had been lifted

ed under the 2015 accord, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, that gave Iran billions of dollars in sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, a deal that critics had argued was too soft on Teheran.

In reinstating the measures, the US Treasury Department imposed penalties on more than 700 Iranian and Iranian-linked individuals, entities, aircraft and vessels.

Waivers granted

Yet, while the US seeks to cut off Iran's oil revenue, it is allowing China, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and China's Taiwan to continue purchasing Iranian oil as long as they work to reduce imports to zero.

"When I look at the list, it's obviously very large economies that still in many ways depend on Iran oil imports and at this time don't have any strong alternatives," said Brian Katulis, a senior fellow at Center for American Progress, a think tank. "This is part of the Trump team's trying to balance its maximum pressure campaign against Iran versus its concerns over where the global prices of oil might go and how that could negatively impact everyone,

including America. I don't support this policy, but if you are going down this path, it's a way to lessen the risk of economic blowback in America."

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said pressure on countries to stop buying Iranian oil had already reduced its exports by more than a million barrels of crude per day, costing the country \$2.5 billion in revenue.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that the US will not be able to stop Iran's oil exports, adding that Teheran will break the sanctions in an "appropriate" way.

"We are in an economic war situation. We are standing up to a bullying enemy," Rouhani told government officials in televised remarks, invoking Iran's war with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in 1980s.

"Yesterday, Saddam was in front us; today Trump is front of us. There is no difference. We must resist and win."

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said talks with the US over a new nuclear agreement remain open if Washington changes its approach to the 2015 deal.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu also criticized the US sanctions as unilateral, unwise and dangerous, calling for dialogue and engagement instead.

AP, Xinhua and AFP contributed to this story.

Rescuers in race against time



French rescue workers are seen near the rubble of two buildings which collapsed on Monday in the southern city of Marseille, to look for 10 people reported missing. As many as eight people might have died, officials said on Tuesday, while the cause of the collapse is still unknown. The incident — rare in a major city in France — has sparked a political row over the quality of housing available to the city's poorest residents. Marseille authorities launched a vast upgrade plan for the city center in 2011. But a 2015 government report said nearly 100,000 residents were living in housing that was dangerous for their health or security.

JEAN-PAUL PELISSIER / REUTERS

Pompeo to meet senior DPRK official in NY

By CHINA DAILY

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was scheduled for talks with his counterpart from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in New York on Thursday, a meeting a top United States military officer said may affect the country's attitude on the Korean Peninsula.

Pompeo and Kim Yong-chol, vice-chairman of the DPRK's ruling Workers' Party of Korea's Central Committee, are expected to discuss "all four pillars of the Singapore Summit joint statement", the US State Department said.

US Marine General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on

Monday that if the talks advance, the US may have to start making changes to its approach on the peninsula.

"This negotiation will take a form where we're going to have to start making some changes to the military posture on the peninsula. And we're prepared to do that in support of Secretary Pompeo," Dunford said. But he did not elaborate.

The Republic of Korea said last week that it and the US would decide whether to suspend more joint military exercises by December. Vigilant Ace, suspended this month, is one of several such exercises halted to encourage dialogue with Pyongyang, which has criticized joint

US-ROK exercises in the past.

Yonhap reported that ROK presidential spokesman Kim Eui-kyeom declined to comment on Dunford's remarks.

"I'd like you to remember that Chairman Kim Jong-un said there is no correlation between declaring the end of the Korean War and a pullout of US troops from South Korea (the ROK), or a weakening of the South Korea-US alliance, and President Moon Jae-in also said to that effect several times," Kim said.

Li Chengri, a researcher from Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said Dunford's words should not be interpreted excessively.

He noted although larger US-ROK exercises were sus-

pending, the two allies still continued their small-scale drills, including joint exercises under the Korean Marine Exchange Program which took place on Monday.

Li said Seoul depends on Washington's security guarantee while the US also needs its ally for a strong presence in East Asia.

Thus, he said it is unlikely the US will give up its military presence in the ROK, considering the US-DPRK talks were still at an impasse due to differences such as the scale of denuclearization, US sanctions and whether to issue a war-ending declaration.

Reuters and Xinhua contributed to this story.

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