

Iran warns of quitting global nuclear treaty if case goes to UN



Tehran, January 21 (RHC)-- Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said that Iran could leave the global nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if Britain, France, and Germany pursue their “unjustifiable behavior” and send the country’s nuclear case to the United Nations Security Council.

“If the Europeans continue their improper behavior or send Iran’s file to the Security Council, we will withdraw from the NPT,” Iranian news agencies quoted Zarif. The three European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal declared last week Iran in violation of the agreement and launched a “dispute mechanism” that could eventually see the reimposition of U.N. sanctions on the Persian country.

The 2015 pact, considered at the time of its signing a milestone achievement, has been in doubt since United States President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled his country out of it and reimposed draconian sanctions that devastated Iran’s economy.

The Islamic Republic has since been applying a set of countermeasures in reaction to the U.S.’s withdrawal, but also in response to European countries’ refusal to guarantee its business interests under the nuclear deal.

On January 5th, two days after U.S. drone strikes assassinated senior Iranian commander Qassem Soleimani, the situation further escalated and Iran announced it would no longer abide by any operational

limitations on its nuclear industry.

However, Tehran has clearly specified that its retaliatory steps fit within the nuclear accord's Paragraph 36, and are reversible if the other parties start following their obligations under the contract. "Despite the ill will that we see from some European countries the door of negotiations with them has not been closed and the ball is in the court of these countries," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said Monday.

The NPT entered in force in 1970 with the aim of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. It includes the 2015 deal Iran agreed to sign with world powers, curbing its atomic program, in exchange for access to global trade.

The 190-member NPT bans signatories other than the U.S., Russia, China, Britain, and France from acquiring nuclear weapons, allowing them to pursue peaceful nuclear programs for power generation, overseen by the U.N.

The only country ever to declare its withdrawal from the treaty was North Korea. Nuclear-armed India and Pakistan never signed up, nor did Israel, which does not say if it has nuclear weapons but is widely presumed to have them.

The West has long accused Iran of seeking to develop nuclear arms. Tehran denies accusations, saying its objective is to master the process of generating electricity from nuclear energy.

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