

# Preventing the Use of Chemical Weapons

The threat of chemical weapons is back today. The difference however is that chemical weapons have now reached the violent non-state actors. The willingness of the state and non-state actors to use the chemical weapons keeps growing with the increasing threats surfacing from different corners of the world. In order to prevent the threat of chemical weapons and the predictable future of the proliferation of the deadly weapons international community took up the initiative to stop the spread of chemical weapons. The only international convention for the purpose of eliminating chemical weapons is the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) which was signed in 1993 and entered into force in 1997. It works against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and employs a strong verification system for its signatories, although only four countries in the world haven't ratified it. CWC aims at eliminating the weapons by destroying the stockpiles and a set of binding is designed to which the signatory parties must adhere. In the present world with modern technology easily accessible, the threat of a chemical warfare remains undestroyed even after its first use almost 106 years ago in 1915 by the Germans and French. Today the leaders, especially those who are engaged in a war in Syria pay little regard to the consequences that the use of chemical weapons can result into. Killing of innocent civilians, unmindful of age and gender is abominable, yet leaders have made decisions to use chemical weapons on the humans, which after attack keeps intact the infrastructure in the surroundings but annihilates all the breathing creatures that are present in the radius of chemical weapon's target. Such a brutal use of chemical weapons, is crime against humanity and the world leaders must never normalize its use. In this regard, the efforts of Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) must

be appreciated, which has brought more than 90 countries on the same platform working together for disabling the use of chemical weapons, curbing its production and applying rigid international system of checks and balances. OPCW offers opportunities for those who are able to recognize those responsible for the use of chemical weapon. Moreover, OPCW offers investigation reports regarding the chemical weapon analysis, and has associated itself with worldwide laboratories where they work jointly for curbing the production of materials can that can used for a chemical weapon attack. To prevent the proliferation of chemical weapons certain measures must be undertaken by the states, as already laid in the charter of OPCW and CWC. Few of the preventive measures are as following:

- **Verification:** the toxic chemicals have many legitimate uses, such as they used in industrial processes but at the same time often these chemicals are used for the purposes which have been forbidden by the CWC. Thus the parties to CWC guarantee and verify that toxic chemicals are only being used for purposes that are not illegal under the CWC rules and regulations. A further step to this commitment is allowing the OPCW inspectors to visit the facilities where the chemicals and their precursors are produced. The inspection by the inspectors involves the verification process.
- **Managing the International Transfer of Chemicals:** The parties to CWC adhere to the rules and obligations for transferring i.e. import and export of the chemical weapons. The two elements of this obligation are: monitoring the transfer of chemicals between States and secondly, restraining the transfer of toxic chemical weapons to non-state actors. The weapons can only be transferred to a non-state party under the condition that latter provides the certificate for its end use and

pledges not to transfer it to any other party.

- **Developing the Capacity of State against Chemical Weapons:** It is significant that the states are able to defend their population against the chemical weapons, for this purpose the parties to OPCW must develop programmes for national protection. OPCW has given specific programmes for this purpose such as detection and alarm system, developing decontamination equipment, enhancing medical capabilities etc. this means improving the military, civilian and also involves international capacity building and cooperation against the possible danger of a chemical weapon attack.

The threat of a threat of a chemical warfare is very much existential and have grown over the years as more and more bloodthirsty and power hungry non state actors are emerging on the chessboard of international politics. The focus of the use of chemical weapons has shifted from being used by a state's military to the use of chemical weapons by an unknown violent actor, that has no home address to be held responsible and acts through strong network that can be transnational in nature. International peace, stability, and cooperation has become increasingly vulnerable to a terrorism through the use of chemical weapons. Many have been victim of its use in the modern world, especially the population of Syria who have experienced the horrors of the use of chemical weapons. The chemical attacks has no short term consequence, rather they are experienced by the victims for a long term. For example, it can result in eye damage which the victim will experience for a life time. The chemical weapon damages crops, which has a negative impact of national agricultural sector as well as

the consumers. The water is also contaminated by the use of chemical weapons which can disturb the supply of clean drinking water to the population. Considering all the impacts it has become of prime importance for the world leaders and organizations like OPCW and CWC to continue their efforts in preventing the proliferation of chemical weapons.

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# Trump administration sanctions Iran over missile test



By [Carol Morello](#) and [Anne Gearan](#)

The Treasury Department placed new sanctions Friday on Iran, the first move by the Trump administration in response to a ballistic missile test that led the White House to announce it was putting Iran “on notice.”

The sanctions were imposed on 25 people and entities involved in helping develop Iran’s ballistic missile program, or assisting the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ elite Quds Force in supporting groups that the United States considers terrorist, such as Lebanon’s Shiite Hezbollah militant group.

The administration said the sanctions are not a breach of U.S. commitments under a 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, that was negotiated by Iran and six world powers, including the United States.

“Iran’s continued support for terrorism and development of its ballistic missile program poses a threat to the region, to our partners worldwide, and to the United States,” said John Smith, acting director of Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control. “Today’s action is part of Treasury’s ongoing efforts to counter Iranian malign activity abroad that is outside the scope of the JCPOA. We will continue to actively apply all available tools, including financial sanctions, to address this behavior.”

Earlier Friday, Iranian officials responded to the Trump administration by calling the warnings and reports of new sanctions “provocative.” Iran’s foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, posted on Twitter that Iran is “unmoved by threats.”

The comments from Iran came before the official announcement of new sanctions but reflected the escalating tensions between the two sides over the past few days. A senior Iranian cleric, Ahmed Khatami, said Friday that if the White House expanded sanctions on Iran, it would be “a clear violation of the nuclear deal.”

“We are living in a world full of wolves, like the United States, and in such a world we need arms to defend ourselves,” Khatami said, according to Iran’s official Islamic Republic News Agency.

The sanctions are the first concrete evidence of the Trump administration’s intention to take a more aggressive and confrontational approach with Iran. The action was triggered by the Jan. 29 test of a medium-range ballistic missile, in what is widely considered to be Tehran’s probing of how far the new administration is prepared to go. Tehran denies that

its missile tests violate a U.N. Security Council resolution calling on Iran to abstain from testing weapons systems designed to be nuclear-capable.

But the sanctions could undermine the nuclear agreement and goad Tehran into declaring it dead. It would be difficult for the United States to walk away from the deal, as President Trump once vowed to do, without isolating itself from allies that want to do business with Iran.

During last year's presidential campaign, Trump repeatedly slammed the nuclear agreement, which restricts Iran's nuclear program in return for the lifting of nuclear-related international sanctions.

Trump has said the Obama administration turned a blind eye toward Tehran's continued ballistic missile tests and destabilizing activities, so as not to derail an agreement that was an important part of President Barack Obama's legacy. Iran has insisted it is not violating the nuclear agreement by conducting tests of missiles that it claims are purely for defensive purposes and not designed to carry nuclear warheads.

A senior administration official, speaking to reporters on condition of anonymity under its ground rules, characterized Friday's sanctions as an "initial" step in an ongoing effort to force the government in Tehran to act differently and stop being a threat to U.S. allies in the region.

"Iran has to determine its response to our actions," the official said. "Iran has a choice to make. We are going to continue to respond to their behavior in an ongoing way, at an appropriate level, to continue to pressure them to change their behavior."

The sanctions targeted several individuals allegedly involved in laundering money for Hezbollah in Lebanon. The administration official also criticized Iranian-armed Houthi

forces in Yemen for attacking Emirati and Saudi ships and acting aggressively toward U.S. ships transiting the Red Sea.

"They continue to threaten U.S. friends and allies in the region," the official said.

The sanctions won immediate praise from opponents and skeptics of the nuclear agreement.

Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called them "long overdue."

"This announcement makes clear that it is a new day in U.S.-Iran relations and that we will no longer tolerate Iran's destabilizing behavior," he said. "A coordinated, multi-faceted effort to push back against a range of illicit Iranian behavior is long overdue."

The sanctions followed a tit-for-tat exchange of threats between the United States and Iran on Thursday as both nations sought new footing in a power struggle that could jeopardize the landmark international nuclear accord, which Trump has called "the worst deal ever negotiated."

When asked whether his administration's tough new posture could mean a military strike, Trump answered, "Nothing's off the table."

That followed the White House broadside Wednesday in which national security adviser Michael Flynn warned that Iran is "on notice" over the test launch. He also cited Iran's support of the Houthi rebels, who are battling a U.S.-backed government in Yemen.

"This is not the first time that an inexperienced person has threatened Iran," Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior adviser to Iran's supreme leader, was quoted by Reuters news agency as saying Thursday. "Iran does not need permission from any country to defend itself."

Speaking to reporters, Velayati brushed off what he called Trump's "baseless ranting" and pledged that missile tests would continue as Iran sees fit.

The exchange surrounding the missile test is the most substantive between the two countries since Trump took office two weeks ago and suggests that each nation is willing to escalate tension at the outset.

The posturing on the U.S. side appears to be mostly an attempt to seize the upper hand in what Trump officials have said will be a far tougher, less forgiving relationship with Tehran. Flynn directly accused the Obama administration of emboldening Iranian aggression and regional ambitions, and Trump has ridiculed his predecessor for seeking more cordial, if wary, relations.

Trump is under political pressure to make good on campaign pledges to get tough on Iran, while Iran has a history of testing the resolve of new U.S. leaders. The Iranian leadership also faces domestic political pressures with a presidential election due this spring.

"It will take him a long time and will cost the United States a lot, until he learns what is happening in the world," Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said in a televised address Wednesday, in which he also accused Trump of discrimination and recklessness.

Rouhani, considered a cautious political reformer, presided over the partial warming of the three-decade freeze in U.S.-Iranian relations under Obama.

Rouhani said that Trump, in temporarily halting travel to the United States from Iran and six other Muslim-majority nations, is "trampling on all international principles and commitments."

Iran had earlier vowed "reciprocal measures" for the ban, and



the missile launch Sunday was widely seen as a test of the new U.S. administration.

It is not clear whether the launch violates a U.N. Security Council edict, but the Trump administration maintains that it does. The United States called an emergency Security Council review of what it called a “provocative” breach.

*Courtesy: The Washington Post*

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