

If Iran Breaks the Deal, Obama's Confident Sanctions Could Be Reimposed

President Barack Obama said in an interview released on Tuesday he is confident sanctions against Iran could be reimposed if Tehran violates an agreement to restrict its nuclear program.

Obama told National Public Radio (NPR) that U.S. and European negotiators are trying to reach a deal with Iran in which sanctions could be reimposed without a U.N. Security Council vote, where Tehran-ally Russia would have a veto.

"We are absolutely convinced we can do it again," Obama said of the international sanctions, which have crippled Iran's economy.

He said a reimposition of sanctions would be triggered by a finding of the International Atomic Energy Agency that Tehran had broken the agreement.

After reaching a framework deal last week, negotiators face an end-of-June deadline to reach a final agreement meant to prevent Iran from being able to build a nuclear weapon.

Obama said a nuclear deal could help strengthen moderate elements in Iran.

"If they are shown to have delivered for their people, presumably it strengthens their hand vis-a-vis some of the hardliners inside of Iran," he said.

Obama also took a swipe at Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, a possible Republican presidential candidate in 2016, who has vowed to scrap any deal with Iran on his first day in office if elected.

Obama said if presidents were to withdraw from international agreements reached by their predecessors it would be a problem for U.S. allies and “embolden our enemies.”

“It would be a foolish approach to take, and, you know, perhaps Mr. Walker, after he’s taken some time to bone up on foreign policy, will feel the same way,” Obama said.

In an excerpt released on Monday, Obama poured cold water on an Israeli demand that a deal be predicated on Tehran recognizing Israel.

“The notion that we would condition Iran not getting nuclear weapons in a verifiable deal on Iran recognizing Israel is really akin to saying that we won’t sign a deal unless the nature of the Iranian regime completely transforms,” Obama said.

“That is, I think, a fundamental misjudgment,” he said.

Obama said a nuclear deal would not solve many of the other disagreements Washington has with Tehran.

“They’re still going to be financing Hezbollah. They’re still supporting Assad dropping barrel bombs on children. They are still sending arms to the Houthis in Yemen that have helped destabilize the country.”

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