

UN ends travel and arms embargo imposed on Iran

written by iasexam.com | 19/10/2020



Iranian officials have hailed the lifting of a 13-year UN arms embargo on their military as a momentous day, claiming they were once again free to buy and sell conventional weapons in an effort to strengthen their country's security.

The embargo was lifted on Sunday morning despite US protests and was in line with the five-year timetable set out in the Iran nuclear deal, which was signed in 2015.

Key Highlights

- Russia and China are the two countries now most likely to offer arms to Tehran, making Iran less dependent on its own weapons industry – and smuggling.
- But Iran's parlous financial state, and the continued threat of US sanctions on anyone trading with the country, means Tehran is unlikely to go on a short-term buying spree, or reach anything like the defence spending levels of its chief Gulf rivals Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
- The European Union and the UK are to maintain a separate arms embargo on Iran despite the lifting of the UN one.

- In the summer, France, Germany and the UK rejected US efforts to impose a snapback of all UN sanctions on Iran, fearing Tehran would pull out altogether from the joint comprehensive plan of action (JCPOA), the official name for the 2015 deal. The three European powers believe the JCPOA is still holding Iran back from becoming a military nuclear power, the deal's primary purpose.
- The JCPOA included clauses that stipulated the lifting of the UN arms embargo five years after being signed on 15 October 2015. The European powers had hoped to negotiate a voluntary 18-month extension of the embargo, but were unable to persuade Russia and China to back the move at the UN security council.
- The three European powers will now rely on an EU embargo, which was first introduced in 2007, and is set to continue until 2023. The embargo covers conventional weapons and missile technology.
- But the US claims that by rejecting the reimposition of all UN sanctions, the EU has enabled the arming of Iranian terrorists. In a sign of the strain being placed on transatlantic relations, the US secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, said in June that the European powers were putting the capitals of Europe in the cross hairs of Tehran.

SOURCE: *The Hindu, The Guardian*