

As U.S leaves Iran nuclear deal, Britain and France isolate themselves from Trump

by The Region - 15/05/2018 08:49



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke to German, French and British counterparts in recent days to discuss cooperation over Iran, a State Department spokeswoman said on Monday a week after U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal. Britain and France continue to support the nuclear deal and are trying to protect companies from being targeted by the U.S.

"The Secretary underlined that the United States and our European allies share strong interests in preventing Iran from ever developing a nuclear weapon and in countering the Iranian regime's destabilising activities in the region," spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a statement.

"He is hopeful we can continue strong cooperation," she added.

The White House on Sunday threatened to impose sanctions on European

companies that do business with Iran after Trump withdrew the United States from the 2015 accord negotiated by the Obama administration.

Pompeo was in Pyongyang on Tuesday when Trump made the announcement and senior State Department officials said the secretary will try to persuade allies in Europe, the Middle East and Asia to pressure Tehran to return to talks.

White House national security adviser John Bolton said on Sunday U.S. sanctions on European companies that maintain business dealings with Iran were "possible" although Pompeo has remained hopeful Washington and its allies could strike a new nuclear deal with Tehran.

So far, China, France, Russia, Britain, Germany and Iran remain in the accord, which placed controls on Iran's nuclear program and led to a relaxation of economic sanctions against Iran and companies doing business there.

In a statement, British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said after talks with his French counterpart, Jean-Yves Le Drian, that both countries were determined "to conserve the essence of the Iran nuclear deal."

He said British and European officials would meet in Brussels on Tuesday to discuss ways to protect companies against U.S. sanctions on Iran, which will be phased in over the next six months.

"I want to stress that does not mean we are in any sense not going to be working with the Americans," Johnson said, adding: "it's vital that we continue to engage with the USA and continue to interrogate our friends in Washington about how they see the nuclear deal developing."