

Trump administration says Iran complying with nuclear deal

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration has notified Congress that Iran is complying with the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal negotiated by former President Barack Obama, and says the U.S. has extended the sanctions relief given to the Islamic republic in exchange for curbs on its atomic program.

However, in a letter sent late Tuesday to House Speaker Paul Ryan, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the administration has undertaken a full review of the agreement, known as the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action.

“Iran remains a leading state sponsor of terror, through many platforms and methods,” Tillerson wrote. He said the National Security Council-led interagency review of the agreement will evaluate whether it “is vital to the national security interests of the United States.”

The certification of Iran’s compliance, which must be sent to Congress every 90 days, is the first issued by the Trump administration. The deadline for this certification was midnight.

As a candidate in the 2016 presidential election, Trump was an outspoken critic of the deal but had offered conflicting opinions on whether he would try to scrap it, modify it or keep it in place with more strenuous enforcement. Tuesday’s determination suggested that while Trump agreed with findings by the U.N.’s nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, that Iran is keeping to its end of the bargain, he is looking for another way to ratchet up pressure on Tehran.

Despite the sanctions relief, Iran

remains on the State Department’s list of state sponsors of terrorism for its support of anti-Israel groups and is still subject to non-nuclear sanctions, including for human rights abuses and for its backing of Syrian President Bashar Assad’s government.

The nuclear deal was sealed in Vienna in July 2015 after 18 months of negotiations led by former Secretary of State John Kerry and diplomats from the other four permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — Britain, China, France and Russia — and Germany. Under

its terms, Iran agreed to curb its nuclear program, long suspected of being aimed at developing atomic weapons, in return for billions of dollars in sanctions relief.

Opponents of the deal, including Israel, objected, saying it only delayed Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons and did not allow for the kind of inspections of its atomic sites that would guarantee it was not cheating. Obama, Kerry and others who negotiated the deal strenuously defended its terms and said the agreement made Israel, the Middle East and the world a safer place.



AP Photo/Gary Landers, File

In this April 2015 file photo, two members of the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders, retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Richard “Dick” Cole, seated front, and retired Staff Sgt. David Thatcher, seated left, pose for photos after the presentation of a Congressional Gold Medal honoring the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders in Dayton, Ohio.

WWII era bombers fly over Doolittle Raiders memorial service

DAYTON, Ohio (AP) — World War II era B-25 bombers have flown over an Ohio memorial service marking the 75th anniversary of the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders’ attack on Japan, credited with helping turn the tide of the war.

The last Raider living is 101-year-old retired Lt. Col. Richard “Dick” Cole. He attended Tuesday’s service at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force near Dayton. Lead plane co-pilot Cole came from his Comfort, Texas, home.

Among the speakers was the son of Staff Sgt. David Thatcher, who died last year

in Missoula, Montana. Cole planned a traditional toast to the 79th Raider to die, in a private ceremony with Thatcher relatives and others.

Three Raiders died trying to reach safety in China. Japanese soldiers executed three. One died in captivity after the daring attack.

Many of the 80 members of the Army Air Corps’ 17th Bombardment Squadron had been based in Pendleton for a time, and operated training and defense flights around the region.

A local commemoration of the anniversary is scheduled for April 29 at the National Guard Armory.

Vice President Pence to North Korea: ‘The sword stands ready’

YOKOSUKA, Japan (AP) — From the wind-swept deck of a massive aircraft carrier, Vice President Mike Pence on Wednesday warned North Korea not to test the resolve of the U.S. military, promising it would make an “overwhelming and effective” response to any use of conventional or nuclear weapons.

Pence, dressed in a green military jacket, said aboard the hulking USS Ronald Reagan that President Donald Trump’s administration would continue to “work diligently” with allies like Japan, China and other global powers to apply economic and diplomatic pressure on Pyongyang. But he told the sailors, “as all of you know, readiness is the key.”

“The United States of America will always seek peace but under President Trump, the shield stands guard and the sword stands ready,” Pence told 2,500 sailors dressed in blue fatigues and Naval baseball caps on a sunny, windy morning aboard the carrier at the U.S. Yokosuka naval base in Tokyo Bay.

“Those who would challenge our resolve or readiness should know, we will defeat any attack and meet any use of conventional or nuclear weapons with an overwhelming and effective American response,” Pence said.

Pence also said the U.S. would protect freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, the sea lanes vital to global shipping where China has been staking claim to disputed territory.

From two continents, Pence and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis warned that North Korea’s latest failed missile launch was a reckless act of provocation and assured allies in Asia that the U.S. was ready to work to achieve a peaceful denuclearization of the



AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, center, speaks to U.S. servicemen and Japanese Self-Defense Forces personnel at the U.S. Navy’s Yokosuka base in Yokosuka, south of Tokyo, on Wednesday.

Korean Peninsula.

Mattis denounced North Korea’s attempted missile launch as he began a Middle East tour, telling reporters traveling with him to Saudi Arabia, “the leader of North Korea again recklessly tried to provoke something by launching a missile,” he said. The term “reckless” is one the North Koreans have used to describe ongoing large-scale U.S. and South Korean military exercises, which the North calls a dress rehearsal for an invasion.

Mattis did not identify the type of missile but said it was not of intercontinental range, meaning it could not reach U.S. territory. He did not comment on what might have caused the missile to fail.

Another official, speaking on

condition of anonymity to discuss an intelligence matter, said the missile was a Scud variant that the U.S. calls a KN-17.

Mattis credited China with trying to help get the North Korea situation “under control” with the goal of denuclearizing the peninsula.

Pence’s speech on the aircraft carrier followed meetings Tuesday in Tokyo with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, where he noted that “all options are on the table.”

Trump and Pence, who stopped at the Demilitarized Zone dividing North and South Korea on Monday, have signaled this week a forceful U.S. stance on North Korea’s recent actions. But it remains unclear what might come next.

BRIEFLY

Former President George H.W. Bush hospitalized

HOUSTON (AP) — Former President George H.W. Bush has been hospitalized in Houston for four days with a recurrence of a case of pneumonia he had earlier in the year, a spokesman said Tuesday.

The 92-year-old former president has been in Methodist Hospital in Houston since Friday for observation because of a persistent cough, spokesman Jim McGrath said in a brief statement. He said doctors diagnosed a mild case of pneumonia that has been treated and resolved.

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