

## **Trump sanctions target Tehran**

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Donald Trump's reimposition of full-scale sanctions on Iran from today provides a timely opportunity for European and other countries to reconsider their support for Barack Obama's flawed nuclear deal. With oil exports that make up 80 per cent of Iran's revenue the main target of the swingeing new sanctions regime, the International Monetary Fund has predicted Iran's economy will go into recession and shrink by 3.6 per cent this year. Oil exports have declined from 2.5 million to 1.5 million barrels a day since May when Mr Trump announced he was pulling out of the nuclear deal. His ambition is to see them reduced to zero within months.

Reduced oil sales have been accompanied by a sharp decline in the value of the Iranian rial.

The hurried departure of multinational companies that entered the Iranian market after the Obama deal was signed in 2015 and limited sanctions announced by Washington last August have led to increased unemployment, already at 13.1 per cent, with an estimated 40 per cent of university graduates unemployed. This has contributed to growing civil unrest in cities across Iran.

Mr Trump wants the new sanctions to force Iran to agree to negotiate a new deal that puts inviolable limits on its nuclear and missile-building programs. He wants new negotiations to include a pledge by Tehran to halt its aggressive, hegemonic actions across the Middle East in Syria, Yemen and elsewhere, and an end to its support for the Hamas and Hezbollah terrorists hellbent on annihilating Israel, as well as conspiracies such as those by official Iranian entities disclosed recently and aimed at carrying out state-sponsored terrorist attacks in Denmark and France against Iranian exiles.

Continued European support for the nuclear deal — led by Britain, France, Germany and the EU as co-signatories — has done much to sustain Tehran's defiance of Mr Trump. As Colin Rubenstein of the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council has pointed out, things have changed significantly since the nuclear deal was signed.

Just as Scott Morrison is right to have announced an updated review of Australia's support for the deal, so should Europe do the same.

Archives of smuggled Iranian intelligence documents revealed by Israel have shown that, contrary to assertions Tehran has been complying with the deal's terms, it has pursued "a (secret) strategy of noncompliance and incomplete disclosure of its nuclear capabilities and ambitions in violation of the (deal's) letter and spirit", according to Dr Rubenstein.

Eight countries, including Japan, India and Turkey, have been granted extra time to comply with Mr Trump's tough new sanctions regime. But after that, nobody whose companies trade in the global US dollars payments system (and that's just about all) will be able to buy Iran's oil or engage with its banks. Mr Trump has shown he means business when he says he is determined to halt Iran's nuclear ambitions, its destructive proxy wars and support for terrorism. That is a reality no country can afford to ignore.