

India, Japan paid economic price for sanctions on Iran: Susan Rice

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Washington: With the US sealing a deal over Iran's nuclear programme, the Obama Administration has said countries like India and Japan have paid an economic price for sanctions against the Islamic republic and they may no longer feel obliged to do so if the pact is scuttled by the Congress.

US National Security Advisor Susan Rice has argued that if the deal is not approved by the Congress, countries like India and Japan would no longer be obliged to enforce US sanctions against Iran.

"Countries like Japan and India that have paid an economic price to implement these sanctions would no longer feel the obligation to do so," Rice told PBS News yesterday.

"Iran would say, look, we signed up for the deal, we're ready to do our part, but now, since there's no prospect of sanctions relief, we're going to pursue our nuclear programme unconstrained," she said.

"That would be a lose-lose situation. So it would be very unfortunate if the United States were the one to abrogate and therefore blow up a very good deal. And so, when the president said he would veto efforts to undermine this deal, he meant it," Rice said when asked about the statement made by US President Barack Obama after the deal was made.

Led by the United States the so-called P5+1 countries the US, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany reached the landmark agreement with Iran after more than 20 months of intense negotiations, mostly held in Vienna or Geneva.

Easing of sanctions would mean India can freely buy crude oil from Iran. Sanctions had meant that New Delhi could import no more than 9 million tonnes of oil this fiscal, the same volume it had shipped from Iran in 2013-15.

Earlier in the day, citing India, the White House made a similar argument for the deal to be passed by the Congress.

"If there was a decision taken by Congress to kill this deal, there is not a scenario that anybody could see whereby the rest of the world would sign up for additional sanctions. The world has had to make significant sacrifices, in some cases, to reduce their purchase of Iranian oil," a senior administration official told reporters during a conference call.

"They did that in support of this negotiation. So when we went around to Europe, to China, to India, to South Korea, to Japan, and got them and others to reduce their purchases of Iranian oil, the express purpose of that effort was to get this deal. So if, having gotten this deal, we then kill it, it is hard to see why those countries would then go back along with additional sanctions," the official said.

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