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Various effects have occurred from the withdrawal of the US from the JCPOA and the resumption of sanctions against Iran. In particular, Iran is suffering from severe economic deterioration accompanying sanctions. In Japan, since many companies had planned to resume trade with Iran, there have been many expressions of despondency. Also, fears that Iran will withdraw from the JCPOA due to this situation have expanded, and Iran is becoming increasingly cornered internationally. Accordingly, Research Fellow Kondo considers the possibility of Iran's withdrawal from the JCPOA given a summary and analysis of the important actions taken to this point.

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The Status of the JCPOA: Regarding the US Withdrawal from the JCPOA and the Resumption of Sanctions Against Iran

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Introduction

On May 8th, 2018, the US withdrew from the Iranian nuclear agreement (JCPOA).¹ Simultaneously, the US began to resume sanctions against Iran in two stages (timeline/first stage: August 6th, second stage: November 4th). Regarding these actions, much attention has focused on the question of whether Iran will withdraw from the JCPOA. In this paper, based on summarizing the movements of the relevant countries up to the time of

¹ The Iran nuclear agreement or JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action) was concluded in July 2015 between the UK, France, Germany, China, Russia, the United States (P5+1/EU3+3), and Iran. In return for Iran being placed under the surveillance of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency), it was agreed that sanctions against Iran imposed by each country and by the Security Council would be gradually lifted.

writing (September 19th), I will investigate the possibility that Iran will withdraw from the JCPOA.

The problem can be categorized into the following two points. Problem 1: The US has withdrawn from the agreement that was already implemented in a way that ignores the apprehensions of other countries and announced that it would impose “the highest level of economic sanctions.” Problem 2: All countries have been asked to adhere to the US sanctions against Iran. What effect are these problems having on each country right now? Actions that have occurred after the US withdrawal from the JCPOA shall be considered by being divided into three categories: US actions, Iranian actions, and the actions of other countries.

1. US Actions

Details of the actions of the US following its withdrawal from the JCPOA are shown in Table 1. These actions are all alike insofar as they are all anti-Iranian, but they seem to be subject to influence by the suggestions of President Trump, such as his inflammatory tweets and remarks.

Table 1: Primary actions after withdrawal from the JCPOA (US)

月	日	主な出来事
5月	8日	・JCPOA離脱
	21日	・ポンペオ国務長官が12項目の要求を発表
7月	9日	・グレネル駐独米大使が、独政府に対し、独銀行口座に保有されるイラン資産の引き出し阻止を要請
	22日	・トランプ大統領がロウハーニー大統領を名指して「魯すな」と大文字ツイート ・ポンペオ国務長官が反イラン会合に出席。イランの体制を「マフィアのようなもの」と非難
	24日	・トランプ大統領がロウハーニー大統領と条件なしの会談の用意があると発言
	30日	・トランプ大統領がイランとの交渉可能性を示唆
8月	6日	・トランプ大統領が対イラン制裁の第1段階を再開する大統領令に署名
	7日	・米東部時間午前0時1分（日本時間午後1時1分）対イラン制裁の第1段階再開
	16日	・国務省内にイラン行動グループ発足（代表：フック政務企画局長）
	22日	・イラン（+ロシア）の複数のSNSアカウントを強制閉鎖
9月	12日	・トランプ大統領が米国の中間選挙に介入した外国政府・団体・個人などに対し経済制裁を発動する大統領令に署名（想定：イラン、ロシア、中国、北朝鮮）
	19日	・イラン行動グループのフック代表が、弾道ミサイルを含む新たな核合意に向けた交渉の用意があると発表

Source: Produced by the author based on various information

[TABLE TRANSLATION]

Month	Day	Main Events
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May	8 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal from the JCPOA
	21 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary of State Pompeo announces the 12 demands
July	9 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The American ambassador to Germany, Richard Grenell, demands that Germany prevent the withdrawal of Iranian assets kept in German bank accounts.
	22 nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Trump tells President Rouhani to “NEVER, EVER THREATEN” the US in a tweet using only capital letters. • Secretary of State Pompeo attends an anti-Iran meeting and criticizes the Iranian system as “resembling the mafia.”
	24 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Trump remarks that there are preparations for a meeting with President Rouhani with no pre-conditions.
	30 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Trump suggests that negotiations with Iran may be possible.
August	6 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Trump signs an executive order that reimposes the first round of sanctions against Iran.
	7 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first stage of sanctions against Iran are reimposed at 12:01 AM EST (1:01 PM JST).
	16 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Iran Action Group is launched within the State Department (Representative: Director of Policy Planning Brian Hook).
	22 nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of Iranian (and Russian) social media accounts are forcibly closed.
September	12 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Trump signs an executive order that imposes economic sanctions on foreign governments, groups, and individuals who interfered with the US mid-term elections (Presumably: Iran, Russia, China, and North Korea).
	19 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Hook, the representative of the Iran Action Group, announces that preparations are being made for negotiations towards a new nuclear agreement that will include ballistic missiles.

The following two points should be noted as US actions. First point: The 12 demands of Iran announced by US Secretary of State Pompeo.² Second point:

² For details, see the “Middle East Briefing” 2018, No. 21 at <https://www.meij.or.jp/kawara/2018_021.html>

The resumption of sanctions against Iran over two stages. Regarding the first point, these 12 points can be read as a denial of Iran’s status as a regional power and include the possibility of systematic changes in Iran. These demands seek a new nuclear agreement under US leadership, and the Iran Action Group launched in August by the US State Department is working to realize this goal.

Regarding the second point, details on the objects of these sanctions are shown in Table 2. The most significant burdens for both Iran and countries doing business with Iran is, in addition to the broad range of these objects, the demand that the importation of oil produced in Iran be completely halted by November 4th. This demand is a major problem, particularly for countries such as Japan that lack such resources.

Figure 2: Objects of sanctions against Iran (partial selection)

第1段階制裁（8月6日期限）	第2段階制裁（11月4日期限）
イラン国債の購入・予約・発行及びその仲介	イランのエネルギー部門との取引
イラン通貨の売買に関する大規模取引や国外におけるイラン通貨での大規模資金又は口座の維持	イランの石油関連取引（特にNIOC, NICO, NITC）
イラン政府の米ドル取得・買い増しを援助する個人ないし企業	港湾オペレーター、海運、造船部門との取引（特にIRISL, SSLとその関連会社）
貴金属及び原料（黒鉛・石炭・アルミニウム・鉄鋼）又は半製品となる金属、工業生産過程制御のためのソフトウェアの取引	保険引受や保険金の支払い、再保険の提供
イラン自動車産業に関する取引	イラン中央銀行、もしくはNDAA1245指定の金融機関と外国金融機関との取引
高級品（絨毯・キャビア）及び関連する特定金融取引	イラン中央銀行やその他イランの金融機関への電信サービス
航空機及びスペアパーツ、サービスなどの輸出・再輸出及び関連する契約の履行	

Source: Produced by the author based on https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/faqs/Sanctions/Pages/faq_iran.aspx#ndaa; <http://www.hfw.com/downloads/HFW-Sanctions-Update-US-Sanctions-on-Iran-8-May-2018.pdf>; http://www.freehill.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/NYDOCS1-485611-v1-Client_Alert_on_Sanctions_Against_Iran.pdf; <https://www.piclub.or.jp/ja/news/24165>

[FIGURE TRANSLATION]

First Stage Sanctions (August 6 th)	Second Stage Sanctions (November 4 th)
The purchase, reservation, or issuance of Iranian bonds or intermediation in such acts.	Transactions with the Iranian energy sector.
Large-scale transactions concerning the sale of Iranian currency or the holding of lar	Transactions related to Iranian oil (in particular NIOC, NICO, and NITC)

ge-scale funding or bank accounts in Iranian currency outside of Iran.	
Individuals or companies helping the Iranian government to acquire or purchase US dollars.	Transactions in the sectors of harbor operations, shipping, and shipbuilding (in particular IRISL, SSL, and related companies)
Transactions dealing in precious metals and resources (graphite, coal, aluminum, steel), metal in the form of semi-processed goods, or software for industrial production process control.	The underwriting of insurance and payment of insurance funds and the offering of reinsurance.
Transactions related to the Iranian automobile industry.	Transactions with the Iranian central bank or with NDAA1245 designated financial institutions or foreign financial institutions.
Transactions dealing with luxury goods (carpets, caviar) and specific related finances.	Providing telecommunication services to the Iranian central bank or other Iranian financial institutions.
The export or re-export of airplanes, spare parts, services, and the execution of related contracts.	

2. Actions Taken by Other Countries (Other Than Iran)

With the withdrawal of the US, the other parties to the JCPOA convened a meeting at the foreign ministerial level (July 6th in Vienna). The results of this meeting can be summarized in three points. Result 1: To continue discussions towards the continuation of the JCPOA. Result 2: To put blocking regulations into effect. Result 3: To enact financing from the European Investment Bank (EIB).³

However, the results of this meeting stopped at the protection of European companies and did not suggest any specific guarantees regarding damage to Iran by the series of sanctions. Also, regardless of Results 2 and 3, large companies such as the PSA Group, Daimler, and Maersk decided to pull out of Iran one after another before, and after the resumption of sanctions, so the

³ The EU is planning to provide a total of 50 million Euros in support. On August 23rd the first round of support (18 million Euros) was announced by the European Commission.

effects of these results are still in question.

The effects of US dollar-based international business transactions and the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) on the international financial system are thought to provide context for this kind of indecisive attitude. Countries, organizations, and so on not following US sanctions become the targets of “secondary sanctions” and are kicked out of these systems. Consequently, at the time of the resumption of sanctions, although many countries criticized the US, they were nevertheless forced to withdraw from Iran due to fear of “secondary sanctions.”

However, there are also countries who asserted that they would continue to do business with Iran under these conditions. Those who have taken noticeable action include China and Russia, which have also been sanctioned by the US. Both of these countries, by inviting President Rouhani to the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) held directly after the US withdrawal from the JCPOA (June 9th and 10th), sought to position Iran as a symbol of anti-US sentiment.

Additionally, both of these countries are singularly devoted to using this as an opportunity to expand their national interest. Russia has sought to settle the “problem of the legal position of the Caspian Sea,” which has been an issue for 20 years, in a form advantageous to itself.⁴ China is advancing into Iran to fill the vacuum left by the withdrawal of other nations⁵ and plans to use this opportunity to accelerate its plans for “One Belt, One Road” through an expansion of its influence in the Iranian market.

There are other countries aside from these two that are also searching for a method by which to continue business with Iran. For example, Turkey, which is also subject to sanctions and is searching for a stable source of energy, has expressed support for Iran, and India, which hopes to strengthen collaboration with Iran to develop the port of Chabahar, has continued to evade requests from the US. However, most countries have had no choice but to yield to pressure from the US at this point.⁶

⁴ For details, see the “Middle East Briefing” 2018, No. 49 at <https://www.meij.or.jp/kawara/2018_049.html>

⁵ For details, see the “Middle East Briefing” 2018, No. 47 at <https://www.meij.or.jp/kawara/2018_047.html>

⁶ Japan has also negotiated with the US three times regarding exceptions to the ban on oil imports but has so far obtained no clear response. According to the Foreign Ministry, negotiations are scheduled to continue according to the following schedule. First round: June 19th (Loc.: Tokyo), Second round: Aug. 1-2 (Loc.: Washington D.C.), Third round: Sept. 10th (Loc.: Washington D.C.).

3. Iranian Actions

The details of the actions and affairs of Iran since the US withdrawal are shown in Table 3. The following two points should be noted in particular. Point 1: At present, Iran is attempting to maintain the JCPOA through diplomatic efforts. Point 2: The economic situation in Iran is deteriorating.

Regarding Point 1, many officials, beginning with President Rouhani and including Foreign Minister Zarif and other foreign vice-ministers, have been assertive in conducting foreign negotiations until now and are working to maintain the JCPOA. For Iran, the decision to join the JCPOA in 2015 was a historic event that united reformers and conservatives alike. It was realized as a response by Supreme Leader Khamenei to the persuasive efforts of President Rouhani, who seeks to use the JCPOA as a foothold to realize a return of Iran to international society. Consequently, the withdrawal of Iran from the JCPOA would be connected to a loss of legitimacy not only by the current administration but also by the current system.

For Iran, which has no real next step, the three diplomatic cards it holds in negotiations are Card 1: withdrawal from the JCPOA; Card 2: resumption of uranium enrichment; and Card 3: blockading the Strait of Hormuz. Regarding Cards 1 and 2, these have been repeatedly hinted at to the EU3 of the JCPOA, that is the UK, France, and Germany, and to the IAEA. Iran asserts that if the damage done to Iran by the withdrawal of the US is not compensated for then, there is no point in adhering to the standards set in the JCPOA. Also, to show that these threats are valid and to add pressure towards compensatory measures, Iran has continued to appear, both internally and externally, to be continuing with preparations for uranium enrichment that fall within the limits of the JCPOA.

Card 3 may be called Iran's old standard. The Strait of Hormuz is an important oil exportation route for the coastal countries of the Persian Gulf and is one of the most significant chokepoints in the world. Therefore, guaranteeing the security of this strait is an important challenge for the world economy and is consistently used by Iran as an important diplomatic asset.

Presently, President Rouhani remarked that "if Iran cannot export oil then it will mean that other places cannot export oil either"⁷ when he visited Europe in July. This has caused rumors to spread, as high officials in the

⁷ Electronic transmission by the ISNA on July 3rd <<https://www.isna.ir/news/97041206431>> (Last accessed: Sept. 18th, 2018)

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) have made some approving comments regarding this remark and have planned shows of strength such as moving up the date for holding annual military exercises in the Strait of Hormuz.

Table 3: Important actions and events before and after US withdrawal from the JCPOA (Iran)

月	日	主な出来事
6月	4日	・最高指導者ハメネイ師がウラン濃縮準備再開（JCPOAの履行範囲内）を指示
	24～25日	・リヤール暴落（最安値：1ドル＝9万リヤール）＊24日 ・イラン各地でデモ
7月	2～4日	・ロウハーニー大統領の欧州訪問
	2日	・ベルギー検察がイラン人外交官（在奥大使館勤務）を含む数名をテロ容疑で拘束
	6日	・JCPOA外相級会合
	16日	・イランが米国を国際司法裁判所へ提訴
	21日	・最高指導者ハメネイ師が米国との交渉拒否を表明
	22日	・ロウハーニー大統領が「イランとの戦争は、あらゆる戦争を引き起こすことになる」と発言
	23日	・ザリフ外相がトランプ大統領のツイートに応酬
	25日	・イラン中央銀行総裁にヘンマティを指名
	29～8月4日	・リヤール続落（最安値：1ドル＝11万9000リヤール）＊30日
	31～8月上旬	・イラン各地でデモ
8月	5日	・革命防衛隊がホルムズ海峡での軍事演習実施を公表
	8日	・ラビーイー協同・組合・社会福祉相、罷免
	12日	・第5回カスピ海沿岸5カ国首脳会合・法的地位協定調印
	21日	・国産戦闘機「コウサル」の公開飛行
	26日	・カルバースィヤーン経済相、罷免
	28日	・ロウハーニー大統領の国会召喚
9月	9月3～中旬	・リヤール続落（最安値：1ドル＝14万5300リヤール）＊18、19日
	4日	・3つの石油化学プロジェクト稼働
	7日	・イラン、トルコ、ロシア三国首脳会談

Source: Produced by the author based on various information; * in the table indicate the day when the lowest price was recorded

TABLE TRANSLATION

Month	Day	Main Event
June	4 th	・ Supreme Leader Khamenei suggests the resumption of preparations for uranium enrichment (within the boundaries of the JCPOA).
	24 th – 25 th	・ The rial drops steeply (Lowest point: 1 USD = 90,000 rial) *on the 24 th . ・ Demonstrations occur throughout Iran.
July	2 nd – 4 th	・ President Rouhani visits Europe.
	2 nd	・ Belgian investigators detain some people including an Iranian diplomat (working at the Austrian embassy) on suspicion of terrorism.
	6 th	・ Foreign minister meeting regarding the JCPOA.

	16 th	• Iran sues the US in the International Court of Justice.
	21 st	• Supreme Leader Khamenei announces the rejection of negotiations with the US.
	22 nd	• President Rouhani remarks that “war with Iran would cause all kinds of war.”
	23 rd	• Foreign Minister Zarif replies to President Trump’s tweet.
	25 th	• Abdolnaser Hemmati is appointed Governor of the Central Bank of Iran.
	29 th -Aug. 4 th	• The rial continues to lose value (lowest point: 1 USD = 119,000 rial) *on the 30 th .
	31 st – early Aug.	• Demonstrations throughout Iran.
August	5 th	• The Revolutionary Guard announces they will hold military exercises in the Strait of Hormuz.
	8 th	• Minister of Cooperatives, Labour, and Social Welfare Rabiei is dismissed.
	12 th	• The Convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea is signed at the Fifth Caspian Summit.
	21 st	• The Kosar, a domestically produced fighter jet, is test flown.
	26 th	• Finance Minister Karbasian is dismissed.
	28 th	• President Rouhani summons parliament.
September	Sept. 3 rd – mid-Sept.	• The rial continues to lose value (lowest point: 1 USD = 145,300 rial *on the 18 th and 19 th).
	4 th	• Three petrochemical projects are in operation.
	7 th	• Iran, Turkey, and Russia hold a three-nation summit meeting.

Presently, Iran has no cards to play other than these three. Therefore, Iran can only repeat these assertions in more threatening ways. If things continue as they are, it appears that even while continuing to make shows of strength Iran will not reach the point where it uses actual force. If Iran were actually to use any of these cards, it would undoubtedly mean the de facto collapse of the Rouhani administration.

Point 2 concerns the deterioration of the economic situation. The fact that dramatic drops in the price of the rial have occurred three times up to now must be considered. Iran’s economy is following a worsening path as prices have jumped steeply and the unemployment rate has increased due to the effects of the restarted sanctions. Also, as can be seen in Figure 4, the rial has significantly dropped in price, first in late June, then from the end of July to the beginning of August, and finally from the beginning of September to present. Each time the market exchange rate against the US dollar continues

to reach its lowest point. The first and second times these drops occurred, large-scale demonstrations also occurred in Iran’s major cities.⁸ It is currently unclear how the most recent (third) drop in the rial will affect Iran going forwards, and in what form these effects will appear, but in light of the reaction to the past two price drops, it is not hard to imagine that the situation will only worsen.

Table 4: Change in the rial/USD market exchange rate
(May 1st – Sept. 19th, 2018)



Source: <https://bonbast.com/graph/usd/2018-05-01/2018-09-19> (Red text added by author)

The current system and administration view the deterioration of the economy heavily. The summoning of the National Diet and dismissal of two cabinet ministers by President Rouhani in August are proof that calls have grown louder, even from within the system, that the current situation is the fault of the present administration. However, Khamenei and President Rouhani have repeatedly called for Iran to unite to overcome these tough circumstances and have attempted to ameliorate the domestic confusion. So far, the situation has not caused a rift between the administration and the system of government overall. Under such conditions, the current administration’s hopes are connected to financial policies, such as the development of a cash transfer system that is not mediated by the US dollar or the replacement of the governor of the central bank.

That Iran, which is suffering in such a way from the effects of sanctions,

⁸ For details, see the “Middle East Briefing” 2018, No. 21 at <https://www.meij.or.jp/kawara/2018_021.html> and 2018, No. 44 at <https://www.meij.or.jp/kawara/2018_044.html>

would refuse to hold direct negotiations with the US may seem mysterious at a glance. However, the question for Iran is why it must make concessions in the face of irrational US behavior. The US unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA without any clear reason, even though it was already in the implementation stage, and also chose to resume sanctions. Iran has strongly criticized the US behavior as being in contravention of international law, and in July sued the US in the International Court of Justice (ICJ). This series of actions have sought to expose, both domestically and internationally, the irrationality of the US in withdrawing from the JCPOA and resuming sanctions and has sought to reinforce the validity of the current administration and the current political system. It may be said that Iran is currently struggling to maintain its dignity as a regional power.

4. The Status of the JCPOA

From the above, let us consider the possibility that Iran will withdraw from the JCPOA. In light of the present situation, Iran is unlikely to withdraw. As stated, Iran believes that the JCPOA will work as a foothold to recover its standing in international society and shall, therefore, remain in the JCPOA even in the present adverse circumstances. Alternately stated, Iran is unlikely to withdraw from the JCPOA so long as it can persevere.

What would cause Iran to withdraw from the JCPOA? The following three points are thought to be capable of causing such an event. Deterioration factor 1: A forced new nuclear agreement under US leadership. Deterioration factor 2: The collapse of the Iranian economy. Deterioration factor 3: The rise of conservative hardliners in Iran and President Rouhani losing his position. Deterioration factor 1 is currently making limited progress within the US but should not be viewed as a dangerous possibility so long as other countries do not follow in US footsteps.

The beginning of the prohibition on importing Iranian produced oil on November 4th will be one turning point regarding deterioration factor 2. Since establishing its current government system, Iran has always been under some form of sanctions. Consequently, it can respond to such situations to a degree. However, if the exportation of oil, which supports the foundation of the Iranian economy, is shut off and the economy enters a state of collapse, then Deterioration factor 3 will abruptly become more likely. If President Rouhani, who represents the moderate faction of the government, were to lose

his position, then the hardline conservative faction would emerge domestically, and there would be a considerable possibility that a president who represents those views would come to power. If that were to occur, then the road to dialogue would undoubtedly shut.⁹

Therefore, what are the requirements for Iran to continue to remain in the JCPOA? These can be, as Iran has repeatedly claimed, summarized in the following four points. Condition 1: The damage done to Iran by the current sanctions must be compensated for to some degree by other countries. Condition 2: The US must continue to be admonished for its behavior (including preventing the establishment of another nuclear agreement under US leadership). Condition 3: The countries that can continue to hold commercial relationships with Iran, such as Russia and China, must do so. Condition 4: The Rouhani administration, which has cleared a path for Iran to reenter international society through the JCPOA, must continue to be positively appraised. Condition 4 is particularly important. The only faction that can adjust international and domestic opinions and maintain the road towards international cooperation is the Rouhani administration. If this administration resigns, it will inevitably invite a difficult situation not only for Iran itself but also for the various other countries. It will also have a certain effect in easing domestic dissatisfaction if various other countries praise the diplomatic efforts of the current administration.

Conclusion

The US withdrawal from the JCPOA and the resumption of sanctions against Iran have had a significant effect not only on Iran but also on various other countries that Iran does business with. It bears repeating that, for Iran, the JCPOA is a lifeline for returning to international society and it would like to maintain the status quo as much as possible. However, the situation has become something of a vicious cycle. Although the support of many countries is essential to the maintenance of the JCPOA, considering their relationships with the US, many countries have been driven into a situation in which they cannot provide concrete support. However, as Iran hints that it might use its diplomatic cards due to the pressure it is facing, fears are increasing that Iran

⁹ Iran has had similar experiences in the past. The route to international cooperation envisioned by the “smile diplomacy” of President Khatami (term: 1997-2005) was lost when President George W. Bush (term: 2001 – 2009) declared Iran to be part of the “axis of evil.” Conservative hardliners then gained traction in the government, paving the way for the appearance of President Ahmadinejad (term: 2005 – 2013).

will withdraw from the JCPOA and that it will militarize and close the Strait of Hormuz. It is also important to establish calmer attitudes and circumstances surrounding Iran so that large reactions do not occur in response to the words and actions of either Iran or the US.

Also, for countries such as Japan, which have no choice but to adhere to the US sanctions, it is important to prepare tactics for getting along with Iran after the end of the Trump administration. Presently, it appears that the current situation will continue until the next US president is elected. However, many of the Trump administration's policies are disadvantageous to the US position, such as the trade war with China and so on. As people who criticize this situation exist, it is possible that the next US administration will not inherit the ideas and inclinations of the current administration once it ends. It should be possible to measure the direction in which the US is moving during the mid-term elections on November 6th. It is necessary to begin considering now what actions should be taken if the US policy with regards to Iran changes and business with Iran is resumed.

On September 4th, the Iranian Embassy in Tokyo tweeted that countries following the US sanctions “shall in a sense be considered to be in opposition to the Iranian people.”¹⁰ Also, on the 6th, referring to the Nissho Maru incident, the embassy tweeted “Will history repeat itself?”¹¹ Both of these tweets imply that “the Iranian people will not forget the past, present, or future.” The second stage period of sanctions continues to approach. For Iran, this is a life or death situation. Countries that must follow these sanctions, including Japan, must make use of our resources in every field in continuing to search for policy measures by which we can avoid cutting off friendly relations with Iran.

(End)

¹⁰ https://twitter.com/iranembassy_jp/status/1036811141396099072; https://twitter.com/iranembassy_jp/status/1036840212356247552 (Last accessed: September 18th, 2018)

¹¹ https://twitter.com/iranembassy_jp/status/1037533462557650946; https://twitter.com/iranembassy_jp/status/1037533625078743040 (Last accessed: September 18th, 2018)