

Iran Announces Plan to Develop 'All Kinds' of Nuclear Centrifuges

Late Wednesday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Iran's atomic energy agency would begin research and development on "all kinds" of centrifuge machines that can more quickly enrich uranium.

His comments expanded on hints he dropped earlier in the day that Iran would take a "third step, which is highly important in nature and will accelerate the activities of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI)."

This move is yet another in a series of steps Iran has taken over the summer away from the 2015 nuclear accord.

Under the nuclear deal, Iran has been limited to operating 5,060 older-model IR-1 centrifuges. A centrifuge is a device that enriches uranium by rapidly spinning uranium hexafluoride gas.

The country is allowed to test no more than 30 of the stronger, IR-6 centrifuges once the deal has been in place for 8 1/2 years. The deal is murky about limits before that point, which will arrive in 2023.

Among other acts Iran has taken in violation of the nuclear deal is to restart its enrichment of uranium, resume activities at the Arak heavy-water nuclear reactor and to stifle a U.N. probe of its alleged storage of nuclear equipment and radioactive material in Tehran.

It is generally agreed that Iran is making these threatening moves in order to pressure the European signatories to the nuclear deal to work to save it. A recent attempt by France to

help Iran by extending it a \$15 billion line of credit was rejected by the U.S. on Wednesday.

The Trump administration pulled out of the agreement in May 2018. President Donald Trump called the deal, which had been negotiated with the Obama administration and major European powers, “decaying and rotten” and said it was “an embarrassment” to him “as a citizen.”

Trump, in pulling out of the deal, was fulfilling a campaign promise, having attacked it throughout his run for president. He also reimposed sanctions on Iran.

Iran, feeling the economic bite from sanctions, has taken more aggressive steps to try and relieve the strain, including hijacking two oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. {eoa}

This article originally appeared at World Israel News.