

Is there a New Secret Side Deal with Iran?

Introduction

A [recent article](#) by the Associated Press highlights a confidential document between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which critics claim could unravel the nuclear agreement struck between the United States, its international negotiating partners, and Iran last year, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). In its originally published form, the article frames this document, which elaborates on Iran's plan to introduce advanced centrifuges after the 10-year restriction is lifted, as a secret and destabilizing new discovery, but this is not the case.

Was It Secret?

No. This document has always been a publicly acknowledged component of the nuclear agreement. Under the JCPOA, Iran was required to submit a Long-term Enrichment Research and Development proposal to the IAEA. Although an agreement between an inspected country and the IAEA is typically confidential, the United States and its negotiating partners have had access to the documents.

According to the State Department's Deputy Spokesperson, Mark Toner, Congress has also had access to the substance of the documents, both before and after the JCPOA was implemented.

The article itself has since removed the claim that the documents were secret.

Is it a Threat?

No. Iran's plan to introduce more advanced centrifuges into its nuclear energy program after 10 years is not a threat because critical restrictions on Iran's nuclear material stockpile and enrichment will still be in place as part of the JCPOA:

- For 15 years, 5 years beyond the 10-year centrifuge limitation, Iran's uranium stockpile is capped at 300kg, which is significantly less than is needed to produce a single nuclear weapon.
- For the same 15-year period, Iran's uranium enrichment is capped at 3.67%.
 - 90% enrichment is considered weapons-grade.
- For 20 years, 10 years beyond the 10-year centrifuge limitation, the IAEA will monitor Iran's centrifuge production.
- For 25 years, 15 years beyond the 10-year centrifuge limitation, Iran's uranium ore production and purchases will be monitored by the IAEA.
- Permanently, the IAEA will be granted greater access to monitor Iran's nuclear activity through Iran's ratification of the [Additional Protocol](#).

While the introduction of more consistent and advanced centrifuges (ten years from implementation of the agreement) does increase Iran's enrichment capability, the above restrictions prevent Iran from producing the material necessary to produce a nuclear weapon. In addition, the IAEA and international community will have greater knowledge of and access to Iran's nuclear program, increasing the effectiveness of monitoring and detection efforts even after the most stringent restrictions of the agreement have subsided.