

# Ahmadinejad: Iran Reaches Target of 3,000 Operational Centrifuges

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Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says his country has reached a key nuclear target of operating 3,000 centrifuges for enriching uranium.

Ahmadinejad: Iran Reaches Target of 3,000 Operational Centrifuges  
By VOA News  
07 November 2007

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says his country has reached a key nuclear target of operating 3,000 centrifuges for enriching uranium.

Mr. Ahmadinejad spoke Wednesday at a public rally in the eastern Iranian city of Birjand.

Iran has said previously that it successfully installed the thousands of centrifuges at its nuclear facility in Natanz. Wednesday's announcement is the first official statement that the centrifuges are fully functioning.

Western experts say 3,000 centrifuges operating in ideal conditions could possibly make enough enriched uranium for an atomic bomb in about a year. The United States and other Western nations accuse Iran of seeking to develop nuclear weapons, a charge Tehran denies.

Speaking Tuesday in Washington, French President Nicolas Sarkozy said the idea of nuclear weapons in the hands of Iran's current leaders is unacceptable to his country.

Iranian state media quote Mr. Ahmadinejad as saying Iran will continue what he calls "its peaceful nuclear activities" under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. He was quoted making the comment Tuesday in talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Tehran.

Six world powers have agreed to move forward later this month on a third set of sanctions against Iran if it does not resolve the IAEA's concerns about its sensitive nuclear work.

Some information for this report was provided by AFP, AP and Reuters.

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This is what Iran said this past Jan 27, 2007, Denying reports that they were installing 3,000 Centrifuges. Deny then, and acknowledge now - After the Fact. CRNews.

Iran official denies centrifuge report  
By ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TEHRAN, Iran

An Iranian nuclear agency official has denied claims made by a top lawmaker that the Islamic Republic had begun installing 3,000 centrifuges at a uranium enrichment plant, Iran's state-run news agency reported.

Hossein Simorgh, head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization public relations department, said "no new centrifuges have been installed in Natanz," referring to the nuclear facility in central Iran, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported late Saturday.

It was not immediately clear why the two officials made contradicting statements. Iranian officials have in recent weeks said the country was moving toward large-scale enrichment involving 3,000 centrifuges, which spin uranium gas into enriched material.

Earlier, Alaeddin Boroujerdi, head of the Iranian Parliament's Foreign Policy and National Security Committee, said the installation of centrifuges at an Iranian uranium enrichment plant "stabilizes Iran's capability in the field of nuclear technology," the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

"We are right now installing 3,000 centrifuges," Boroujerdi was quoted as saying by IRNA.

Large scale use of centrifuges is necessary to enrich enough uranium for use in a nuclear reactor. Highly enriched uranium is required to make nuclear weapons.

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Boroujerdi's comments came a day after UN officials said Iran plans to begin work next month on an underground uranium enrichment facility, as part of a plan to create a network of tens of thousands of machines to enrich uranium.

Iranian officials have said repeatedly that work would start soon on the uranium enrichment facility at its Natanz underground plant. There had been speculation the leadership might launch the project next month to celebrate the 28th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution that brought the clerical leadership to power.

But the timing of the work may in part be a gesture of defiance. The Security Council's 60-day deadline for Iran to suspend uranium enrichment runs out next month, paving the way for further sanctions.

"I understand that they are going to announce that they are going to build up their 3,000 centrifuge facility ... sometime next month," IAEA head Mohamed ElBaradei told reporters at the World Economic Forum said Friday.

Iran ultimately plans to expand its program to 54,000 centrifuges, a large operation more enriching uranium within a shorter period of time.

The United States and some of its allies accuse Iran of trying to produce atomic weapons. Iran denies this, saying its program is only for generating electricity, not a bomb.

In enrichment plants, centrifuges are linked in what are called cascades. For now, the only known assembled centrifuge cascades in Iran are above ground at Natanz, consisting of two linked chains of 164 machines each and two smaller setups.