



Written by [James Murphy](#) on July 2, 2019

## After Iran Breaches Uranium Enrichment Limit, Many Fear Israel Will Attack

Claiming that European nations have failed to keep their end of the bargain on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal — Iran announced on Monday that it has exceeded the 300kg cap on the production of low enriched uranium. Such uranium can be used to power nuclear plants, but would have to be much further enriched in order to make a nuclear bomb.



The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) — the international agency responsible for inspections of Iran’s nuclear program — has confirmed that Iran has breached the limit.

Iran’s current stockpile of uranium is enriched to a 3.67 percent concentration, which is the level necessary for civilian power-plant usage. The next step in making a nuclear weapon is further enrichment, ultimately reaching 90 percent concentration or more, which would make the uranium [“weapons grade.”](#)

That seems to be exactly where Iran is going. “Our next step will be enriching uranium beyond the 3.67 percent allowed under the deal,” Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday, “The Europeans have failed to fulfill their promises of protecting Iran’s interests under the deal.”

Under the [JCPOA](#), Zarif noted, a party may “cease performing its commitments ... in whole or in part,” in the event of “significant non-performance” by other signatories.

Zarif also said that Iran’s new actions are “reversible” should the Europeans begin abiding to their commitments.

Iran issued a deadline for the other signatories of the JCPOA, saying that enrichment beyond the 3.67 percent limit would begin in 10 days unless European signatories took “practical and tangible steps” in implementing new trade procedures, which would shield Iran from the effects of American sanctions.

President Trump ended America’s involvement in the JCPOA last year, calling the deal “horrible” and vowing that the U.S. “would work with our allies to find a real, comprehensive and lasting solution” to prevent the Iranians from developing nuclear weapons. America began [reinstating sanctions](#) shortly after leaving the JCPOA. The president also announced a round of new sanctions just over a week ago in response to the Iranian downing of a U.S. drone.

U.S. allies have warned that Israel is likely to attack Iran as soon as they cross the “red line,” which many believe is the uranium enrichment cap. Senator Lindsey Graham echoed that sentiment on Sunday.

“The most likely war would be between Israel and Iran if the Iranians started to reprocess and enrich, beginning July the 7th, in a manner that would accelerate their path to a bomb,” said Senator Grham on CBS’s *Face the Nation*. “Israel cannot tolerate a nuclear armed Iran. The world should not tolerate a



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nuclear armed Iran. And I hope the president understands that if they begin enrichment...that he needs to get ready to send the strongest signal possible that this cannot be tolerated.”

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz believes that Iran’s actions represent an imminent threat to his country. “Israel will not allow Iran to obtain nuclear weapons, even if it has to act alone on that,” Katz said. He added that mistakes by Tehran could lead to dire consequences, “mistakes in the gray area will lead it to the red zone — a war in which it will be hit hard.”

Katz went on to say that Iran’s actions should act as a “wake up call” to the European nations, still hoping to get Iran to back down so it can continue trade relationships with the Islamic state. “Feeding the Iranian tiger will not help; only an aggressive policy and sanctions and support for the U.S. policy will quickly show that it is a paper tiger,” Katz said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Iran’s actions were a “significant step” toward the acquisition of a nuclear weapon and called on European signatories to the JCPOA to “uphold your commitment.” [In a tweet](#), Netanyahu called for Europe to act. “You committed to act the moment Iran violated the nuclear deal; to impose the automatic sanctions set by the Security Council. I say to you: Do it. Just do it.”

When asked about the situation, President Trump said, “No message to Iran. They know what they’re doing. They know what they’re playing with, and I think they’re playing with fire. So, no message to Iran whatsoever.”

The White House has said that it will continue to apply “maximum pressure” on Iran “until its leaders alter their course of action.”

President Trump must tread carefully with this situation. With the American economy booming by most metrics and the Democrats in turmoil, one thing that could seriously derail his 2020 reelection hopes would be involvement in an unpopular military conflict, in which America’s interests are not truly at stake.

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