Iran’s Atomic Energy Chief Says Deal With World Powers Enabled Acceleration of Nuclear Activities

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A senior Iranian official said that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) signed with world powers enabled the Islamic Republic to accelerate some of its nuclear activities, Iran’s semi-official state news agency Mehr reported on Wednesday.

Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, said that, among other things, the JCPOA has allowed Iran to grow its reserve of “nuclear material” from 550 to 770 tons.

“Exploration, extraction, enrichment, research reactors, and R and D are the major components of the nuclear program; JCPOA did not completely stymied the program, and we have only been slower in terms of progress,” Mr. Salehi told a meeting of Iran’s Strategic Council on Foreign Relations. “In other activities even we have accelerated the pace, including in the volume of nuclear material which was 550 ton before, now we have 770 tons of nuclear material; this is a fact known to IAEA. With heavy water, we secured the project along with R and D, extraction and exploration.”

Salehi also stressed that claims of a complete suspension of Tehran’s nuclear activities were baseless. He noted that the JCPOA had left the main components of the program intact, in addition to providing Iran’s nuclear activities official UN Security Council recognition.