Iran's FM Extolls Country's Ability to Restore Nuke Program

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Iran's foreign minister on Tuesday extolled the country's ability to bring its nuclear program back on track as limits on the landmark 15-year accord between Tehran and world powers ease in the coming years.

Mohammad Javad Zarif said a document, submitted by Iran to the International Atomic Energy Agency and outlining plans to expand Iran's uranium enrichment program, is a "matter of pride."

He said it was created by Iran's "negotiators and industry experts" and that even foreign media have noted Iran is likely to strive for restoring its full enrichment after 10 years.

Zarif's remarks, carried by the semi-official Fars news agency, followed revelations the day before of the confidential document - an add-on agreement to the nuclear deal with world powers - that Iran gave the IAEA.

The document, obtained by The Associated Press in Vienna, outlines Tehran's plans to expand its uranium enrichment program after the first 10 years of the nuclear deal.

It's the only text linked to last year's deal between Iran and six world powers - the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China plus Germany - that has not been made public, although U.S. officials say members of Congress who expressed interest were briefed on its substance.

Zarif said the addendum to the nuclear deal will soon be made public, but he did not elaborate.

"God willing, when the complete text of the document is published, it will be clear where we will stand in 15 years," he said.

The document was given to the AP by a diplomat whose work has focused on Iran's nuclear program for more than a decade, and its authenticity was confirmed by another diplomat who possesses the same document. Both spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to share or discuss the document.

It says that as of January 2027 - a date which will mark 11 years after the implementation early this year of the deal, reached last July between Tehran and world powers - Iran will start replacing its mainstay centrifuges with thousands of advanced machines.

Centrifuges churn out uranium to levels that can range from use as reactor fuel and for medical and research purposes to much higher levels for the core of a nuclear warhead. From year 11 to 13, says the document, Iran will install centrifuges up to five times as efficient as the 5,060 machines it is now restricted to using.