Exploiting America’s Declining Pressure: Iran’s Nuclear Escalation Over Time

**Political Timeline**

**May 2018**
- U.S. leaves JCPOA

**May 2019**
- Iran announces plan to incrementally breach JCPOA

**Nov. 2020**
- Joe Biden elected president promising to return to JCPOA
- Iran’s Guardian Council approves new law calling for major nuclear advances

**Dec. 2020**
- Iran’s enriched uranium stockpile grows to >2,400 kilograms. Iran begins enriching uranium in advanced IR-2m centrifuges at Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP)

**Jan. 2021**
- Biden inaugurated
- IAEA reports Iran blocked access to two suspect sites and apparently sanitized them

**Feb. 2021**
- Biden rescinds Trump’s snapback of UN Iran sanctions under JCPOA implementing resolution 2231

**April-June 2021**
- PS+1 (U.S., France, Germany, UK, Russia, & China) hold six rounds of indirect nuclear talks with Rouhani government
- Ultra-hardliner Ebrahim Raisi selected to be president of Iran; nuclear talks stall

**June 2021**
- Raisi inaugurated

**Aug. 2021**
- Raisi inaugurated

**Nov.-Dec. 2021**
- PS+1 & Raisi government restart nuclear talks

**Nuclear Timeline**

**May 2019**
- Iran installs a greater number of IR-6 centrifuges than JCPOA permits. IR-6 is one of Iran’s fastest machines

**July 2019**
- Iran breaches JCPOA caps on uranium enrichment level & size of enriched uranium stockpile

**Sept. 2019**
- Iran begins enriching uranium using an array of advanced centrifuges at Natanz Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant (PFEP)

**Nov. 2019**
- Iran breaches JCPOA heavy-water cap, restarts enrichment at underground Fordow plant. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reports discovery of undeclared uranium at warehouse in Tehran, which Iran apparently sanitized. Total enriched uranium stockpile is >370 kilograms

**Mar. 2020**
- IAEA reports Iran blocked access to two suspect sites and apparently sanitized them

**Nov. 2020**
- Iran’s enriched uranium stockpile grows to >2,400 kilograms. Iran begins enriching uranium in advanced IR-2m centrifuges at Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP)

**Jan. 2021**
- At Fordow, Iran starts enriching uranium to 20 percent purity, or 90 percent of the effort necessary to reach weapons-grade uranium (WGU)

**Feb. 2021**
- Iran stops implementing Additional Protocol & JCPOA monitoring measures, which give the IAEA greater insight into Tehran’s nuclear activities. Absent these, IAEA access & monitoring at nuclear sites are restricted. Tehran threatens to destroy IAEA data & makes 3.6 grams of uranium metal (used in nuclear weapon cores). IAEA detects undeclared uranium at two sites

**Apr. 2021**
- At Natanz PFEP, Iran begins using advanced centrifuges to enrich uranium to 60 percent purity, or 99 percent of the effort necessary to reach WGU. At Natanz FEP, Iran uses 1,044 IR-2m centrifuges and 348 IR-4s to enrich uranium up to 5 percent purity

**May 2021**
- Iran’s enriched uranium stockpile grows to >3,200 kilograms. IAEA must estimate stockpile due to Tehran’s reductions in agency monitoring

**June 2021**
- Despite a temporary political arrangement it reached with the IAEA in February, Iran refuses to confirm that it continues to collect and hold in its custody IAEA monitoring and surveillance data at sites Tehran has barred the agency from visiting

**Aug. 2021**
- Iran produces 200 grams of uranium metal enriched up to 20 percent

**Nov. 2021**
- IAEA reports no progress in safeguards investigation into undeclared uranium & activities at three Iranian sites and concerns about activities at a fourth site. Independent estimates find Iran has enough enriched uranium to make WGU for four nuclear weapons within six months and could make WGU for one weapon in three weeks

**Dec. 2021**
- Iran starts enriching 20 percent uranium using a cascade of IR-6 centrifuges at Fordow plant, providing fast route to WGU production at a highly fortified facility