

MEMMO

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Russia Blocking Efforts to Curtail Iranian Threat

Russia is preventing the U.N. Security Council from taking meaningful steps to discourage Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons while helping Tehran develop its atomic program and further expand its advanced military capabilities. Moscow's reluctance to support sanctions aimed at restraining Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs comes as Iran continues to accelerate its nuclear activities in defiance of previous Security Council demands. The United States should make clear to Russia that it must cease its support for the Iranian nuclear program if Moscow hopes for better U.S.-Russia relations.

Russia is stonewalling efforts to curtail Iran's nuclear activities.

- For several months, Russia has slowed Iran's referral to the Security Council at the same time Tehran is advancing its nuclear program.
- Russia bogged down negotiations over a March Security Council statement and a July resolution that called on Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities.
- Russia is now opposing an American and European draft U.N. Security Council resolution sanctioning Iran even though it had previously agreed to the imposition of sanctions if Tehran did not meet the August 31 deadline to suspend its uranium enrichment.

Russia continues to help Iran develop its nuclear and military capabilities.

- Russia recently agreed to begin supplying fuel next March for Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant. Once operational, Iran could divert plutonium from the reactor for nuclear weapons.
- In addition to the Bushehr reactor, Moscow and Tehran continue to discuss the possibility of Russia constructing additional nuclear reactors for Iran.
- In 2005, Russia sold 29 advanced surface-to-air defense systems to Iran to protect its nuclear facilities and agreed to upgrade Iranian aircraft and battle tanks.
- Russian entities have a history dating back to the 1990s of assisting Iran's nuclear and missile activities. In August, the United States imposed sanctions on two Russian state-owned companies for exporting sensitive technologies to Iran.

Tehran has used the delay in sanctions to accelerate its nuclear and ballistic missile development.

- Iran recently doubled its capacity to enrich uranium, launching a second cascade of 164 centrifuges, or machines that enrich the uranium needed to produce nuclear fuel for reactors or bombs.

- Iran announced in August that it has doubled production at its heavy water plant at Arak, bringing Tehran one step closer to having the capability to produce plutonium for use in nuclear weapons.
- Iran recently test-launched its Shihab-3 ballistic missile during ten days of provocative military exercises. Iran has extended the missile's range and is currently augmenting it to potentially carry a nuclear warhead capable of striking Europe, Israel and the United States.

Russia must cease its support for Iran if Moscow wants better relations with Washington.

- The United States and Russia reached agreement on steps that would clear the way for Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and are currently negotiating a civil nuclear cooperation agreement that would generate tens of billions of dollars for Russia.
- Conclusion of both a civil nuclear cooperation agreement and permitting Russian accession to the WTO should be contingent upon enhanced Russian support for U.N. Security Council action against Iran and an end to Russian nuclear cooperation with Tehran.
- The United States should continue to use all the tools at its disposal, such as the Iran Nonproliferation Act, to prevent Russian entities from further aiding Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Basic Facts Summary

- Russia is stonewalling efforts to curtail Iran's nuclear activities.
- Russia continues to help Iran develop its nuclear and military capabilities.
- Russia's obstructionist policies and cooperation with Iran come as Tehran accelerates its nuclear and ballistic missile development.
- Russia must cease its support for Iran if Moscow wants better relations with Washington.