



## Russian Arms Sales to Iran?

**OE Watch Commentary:** As part of the 2015 deal to induce the Iranian leadership from pursuing nuclear weapons, a five-year ban was imposed on arms transfers to or from Iran. The time-limit on this embargo expires in October, and there is now considerable speculation on whether Iran will attempt to purchase advanced weapon systems from Russia, and whether Russia will sell them. The accompanying excerpt from an article in the moderate *Svobodnaya Press* discusses the prospects for military-technical cooperation between Russia and Iran after the arms embargo expires.

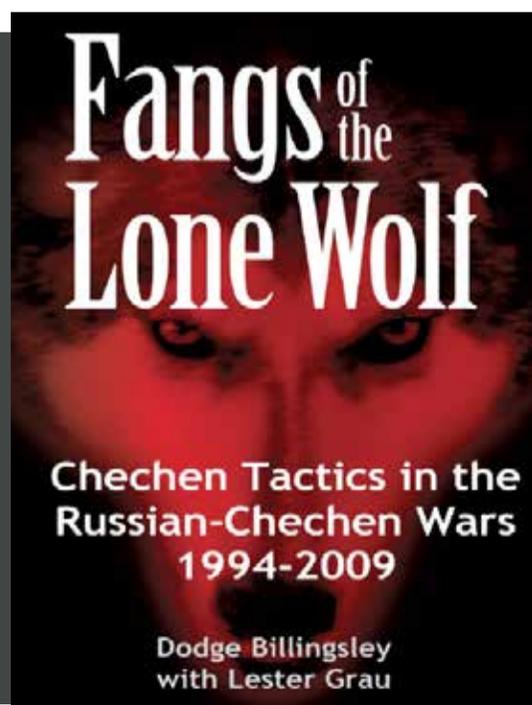
After reviewing the background to this arms restriction, the article cites the Iranian ambassador to Russia who claims that “there are already some plans... after lifting the arms embargo, Iran will be able to exercise its legitimate right to meet defense needs.” The article cites a source in the Russian foreign ministry who asserts that “Moscow will allow negotiations on the export of Russian arms to Iran to begin after the international legal obstacle in the form of an embargo is overcome.”



*5P85TM TEL for S-400 missile system at 2015 Victory Day Parade practice.*  
Source: Vitaly Kuzmin via Vitalykuzmin.net, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/April-22th-Alabino/i-3PjZTP2>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

The article also quotes two Russian military experts, one of whom is quite certain that “military-technical cooperation will develop,” and that “S-400 [advanced air defense] shipments are likely.” The other expert is less sanguine, pointing out that not only is China “the main competitor in Iran’s arms market,” but that given the depressed state of the Iranian economy, Iran “will not have much money... to buy the most modern types of weapons and military equipment.” The article concludes on a cautious note, pointing out that even after the arms embargo expires, the US will “impose sanctions against those countries that have military-technical ties with Iran,” and that therefore, “Russia will need to choose which is more profitable: to cooperate with other countries or... with Iran.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

***“In any case, contacts between Tehran and Moscow have always been maintained.... As soon as the embargo is lifted, negotiations will resume. And in the near future, I think, we will hear about the signed contracts...”***



Fangs of the Lone Wolf is about combat experience in urban, mountain and fairly open terrain. It is not a comprehensive history of conflict. This book is a series of snapshots — of vignettes — describing the difficulty, the hardship, the victories and the defeats of the participants. It is an examination of the raw data of combat in a foreign land, and is aimed to advance the professional military study of conflict.

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## Continued: Russian Arms Sales to Iran?

**Source:** Svetlana Gomzikova, “В октябре иранцы приедут в Москву за С-400 (In October, Iranians will come to Moscow for the S-400),” *Svobodnaya Pressa*, 15 May 2020. <https://svpressa.ru/war21/article/265345/>

...Recall that in October 2020, the time limit for the supply of arms to Iran, which was introduced by the UN Security Council as part of the so-called nuclear deal - the Joint Comprehensive Action Plan (JCPA) to resolve the multi-year issue of the Iranian atom, signed in July 2015, expires.... In addition, it included an agreement that the arms embargo would be lifted from Iran within five years.

That is, after October, Tehran will no longer need a special permission from the UN Security Council to supply arms. And, as stated a few days ago, Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali, his country in this respect there are already some plans. According to the diplomat, proposals for the supply of military equipment and defensive weapons came to Iran from a number of countries, however, “the existing restrictions did not allow the completion of transactions in this area.” Now, after lifting the arms embargo, Iran will be able to exercise its legitimate right to meet defense needs.

What is important for us: Russia is also ready here to provide the necessary assistance to the Iranian republic. In any case, the director of the second department of Asia, the Russian Foreign Ministry, Zamir Kabulov, recently said that Moscow will allow negotiations on the export of Russian arms to Iran to begin after the international legal obstacle in the form of an embargo is overcome. “Iran is a sovereign country, no less than Russia, and it is her right to contact us,” the representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry said....

...To comment on how Russian-Iranian military-technical cooperation will develop under such conditions after the lifting of the embargo, we asked an expert from Arsenal of the Fatherland magazine Alexei Leonkov: “Of course, it will develop. Moreover, the military-technical cooperation between Russia and Iran has a very long history....”

**“SP”:** - *What exactly can we offer the Persians?*

“First of all, we can talk about air defense and armored vehicles. In any case, contacts between Tehran and Moscow have always been maintained.... As soon as the embargo is lifted, negotiations will resume. And in the near future, I think, we will hear about the signed contracts....”

**“SP”:** - *There was talk that our S-400s were very suitable for the Iranians....*

“S-400 shipments are likely.... Of course, in order to protect itself from missiles, Iran needs to build a modern air defense system... Therefore, most likely, I think this will be the first priority that Tehran will set for itself after the lifting of the embargo. And just along the line of the air defense complex, our military-technical cooperation will develop further.”

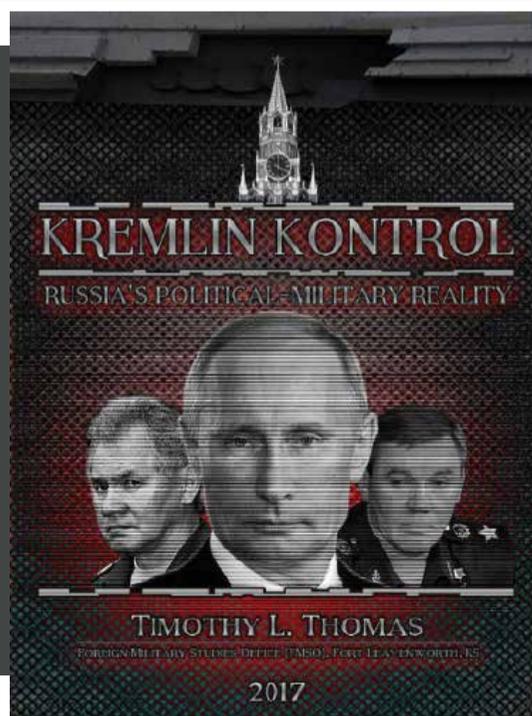
Vladimir Sazhin, a senior researcher at the Center for the Study of the Near and Middle East at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, is slightly less optimistic about the prospects for such cooperation:

“...China, of course, will do everything possible to ensure that the Iranians buy equipment only from them...”

**“SP”:** - *That is, China is the main competitor in the Iranian direction?*

“Yes, the main competitor in Iran’s arms market is, of course, China.... That is, sanctions will be imposed against companies, against certain individuals who are working on military-technical cooperation with Iran.... Iran, in general, will not have much money in order to buy the most modern types of weapons and military equipment. Therefore, I think, nevertheless, cooperation of Russia with Iran will not reach such a wide scale. The same holds true with China’s cooperation with Iran.

...So, Russia will need to choose which is more profitable: to cooperate with other countries or, after all, with Iran? And there the market is not so promising right now because of Tehran’s serious financial difficulties.”



In 2016, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov instituted sweeping changes that have reorganized the country’s security forces and reestablished the nation’s military prowess. This study, *Kremlin Kontrol*, aims to describe how control over the security services and the military have hastened those changes.

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