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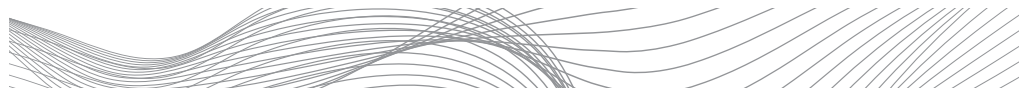
Global Edition

Darya Kheyrie

**Russia and Iranian nuclear
program: what steps are to be
made to secure nonproliferation
core principles and values?**



MOSCOW, 2022



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Amid the anticipated resolution of the deadlock at the Vienna talks on the restoration of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Russia acts as a committed defender of the NPT regime and vocal supporter of the JCPOA as a means to preclude Iran's potential joining the nuclear weapon states club. In this research paper, the author analyzes Russian and Iranian stances on the key issues regarding Tehran's nuclear ambitions in both peaceful and military fields. The overview of 30 years of peaceful nuclear cooperation, as well as ups and downs around the Iranian nuclear dossier, vindicates Russia's persistent line of action to promote collaboration with Iran when and if possible, with major points of contention being kept under close consideration. Today Russia and other members of the P5+1 negotiation with Iran could utilize this balanced Russian position. As a corollary, combination of Russia's experience in the diplomatic problem-solving and technical assistance could help to restore the JCPOA, facilitate its implementation and contribute to the nonproliferation regime integrity in the end.

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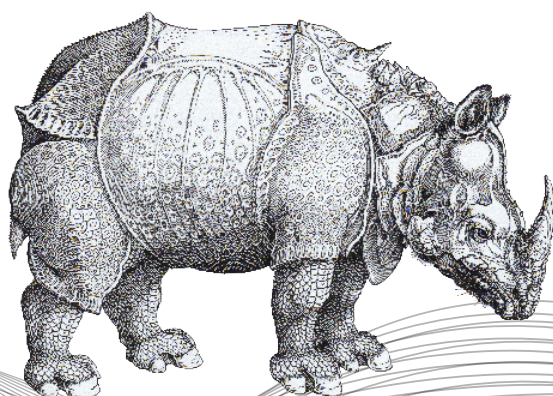
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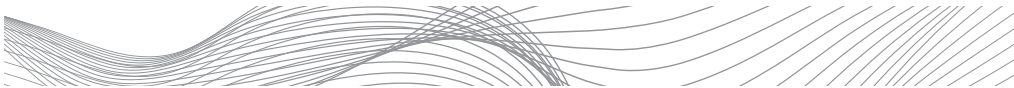
Graduate student at the International Master's Dual Degree Program in Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies (MGIMO University, MIIS at Monterey, PIR Center). In 2021, graduated with honors from MGIMO University with BA major in International Relations, Regional Studies. In 2021, was honored to be one of 100 fellows of the IAEA Marie Sklodowska-Curie Scholarship promoting women in the nuclear-related education. In 2021, did an traineeship at PIR Center Education & Training Program. Participated at 2020 PIR Center International School on Global Security. In 2019, participated in Summer language courses in Persian organized by the Saadi Foundation in Tehran (Iran), Churkin Moscow International Model UN, student conferences with speeches on various international and security issues. Speaks Russian, English, Dari and Tajik.



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Highlights

- Russia is historically involved and interested in the geostrategic situation around Iran since its geographic proximity and strategic importance includes this country in the area of vital national security interests of Russia.
- Being a strong advocate of the nonproliferation regime and the IAEA safeguards and verification system, Russia is not interested in Iran's joining the nuclear weapon states club.
- Russia will need to have a detailed and solid dialogue track with Washington in order to avoid possible U.S. sanctions against Russian companies (mainly Rosatom) which will provide technical assistance to bring the Iranian nuclear program into compliance with the JCPOA.
- Moscow should promote the creation of an international consortium to deal with the Iranian nuclear energy and efforts to tackle the issue of the WMD Free Zone in the Middle East.
- Combination of Russia's diplomatic efforts and technical assistance could help to restore the JCPOA, facilitate its implementation and contribute to the nonproliferation regime integrity in the end.



Russia and Iranian nuclear program: what steps are to be made to secure nonproliferation core principles and values?

Darya Kheyrie

Iranian nuclear issue has been occupying minds of Russian experts and diplomats for several decades and throughout last 15 years it managed to become an example of both daunting threat of nuclear proliferation and finest diplomacy at the moments of crisis. For Russia it concerns issues of strategic stability, national security along its borders, preserving and strengthening of nonproliferation regime and promoting peaceful nuclear energy abroad. Moreover, dealing with Iran requires Russia's skillful diplomats to create synergies with Europe, the U.S., China, regional actors in the Middle East and international organizations, with each of them pursuing their own interests. The JCPOA – or the Iranian nuclear deal – appeared to be a triumph for all these efforts but the world did not have much time to celebrate because the deal remained intact only for two years as the U.S. withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018, and the most significant achievement regarding the Iranian nuclear issue is at risk.

WHERE RUSSIA AND IRAN STAND IN NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION?

Since the Nonproliferation Treaty entered into force in 1970, Iran has been a member of the nonproliferation regime. Even before the Islamic Republic appeared as a new form of Iranian state the country's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with IAEA had taken effect. After major revelations about Iranian nuclear developments in 2003 and its inability to provide the Agency with an accurate data Iran was pressured with the participation of Russia to sign the Additional Protocol but never ratified it¹. However, Iran implemented the Additional Protocol from 2003 to 2006 before announcing it would no longer implement the agreement, however, eventually under the JCPOA provisions agreed to implement the AP without any sunset clauses². Since the JCPOA was finally negotiated in 2015, the IAEA leadership has numerously claimed that the Iranian nuclear deal has imposed the most comprehensive system of monitoring and verification ever devised by the Agency³. As of February 2022, after

¹ Марьясов А. Будущее СВПД и его влияние на регион Ближнего и Среднего Востока. ЦЭБ. URL: http://ceness-russia.org/data/doc/19-06-04_Mariyasov_RUS.pdf

² Timeline of nuclear diplomacy with iran. arms control association. November 2021. URL: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/timeline-of-nuclear-diplomacy-with-iran>

³ Zak, C., Sabet, F. From the Iran nuclear deal to a Middle East Zone? Lessons from the JCPOA for an ME WMD FZ. UNIDIR. URL: <https://unidir.org/JCPOA>

RUSSIA AND IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM: WHAT STEPS ARE TO BE MADE TO SECURE NONPROLIFERATION CORE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES?

the Trump Administration withdrawal from the JCPOA Iran has voluntarily extended its compliance with the AP and agreed to keep the IAEA cameras on the nuclear-related sites in operation. At the same time, Iran continues to participate in multilateral negotiations of the restoration of the JCPOA which are held in Vienna. Russia remains a dedicated party of the nuclear deal and makes every effort to advocate principles of nonproliferation upheld by the JCPOA.

Russia is historically involved and interested in the geostrategic situation around Iran since its geographic proximity and strategic importance includes this country in the area of vital national security interests of Russia. From the very beginning of the crisis of Iranian nuclear program in 2003 the nuclear issue has occupied one of leading places in Russia's policy towards Iran. Russian foreign policy was always well-balanced and based on pragmatic rationale: supporting nonproliferation principles no matter what country is under consideration and promoting technical assistance as much as possible. Iranian case presented a good opportunity: in 1995 Russia signed a deal to finish the construction of Bushehr nuclear power plant, since 2005 Russia has been actively facilitating international efforts to tackle Iranian nuclear crisis, in 2015 Russia became a key element of forging and implementing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – the nuclear deal under which Iran was obliged to cap its uranium enrichment capabilities, enriched uranium stockpiles, repurpose the facility in Fordow, and disable the heavy water reactor in Arak⁴. Russia was a key partner who technically helped to implement these parts of the deal. Along with defusing tensions around Iranian nuclear dossier Russia proceeded with promoting its economic cooperation with the Islamic Republic and further advertised the idea that Iran as other member states of the NPT deserves to have peaceful nuclear energy industry and science⁵.

For Russia Iran was never an easy and open partner – long history of relations during the Russian Empire and Soviet periods bred both frictions and a ground for cooperation, with Iran considering Russia as a neighbor with whom it was destined to cooperate, clashing interests notwithstanding⁶. Both countries have already devised their strategies towards each other and have a clear vision on how to benefit most from this neighborhood. Russia is interested in relations with Iran due to its important role and proximity to the regions of the Middle East, Central Asia and South Caucasus, where Russia has its own strategic interests. In particular, Russia recognizes Iranian factor as an issue of its national security as far as military nuclear capabilities of Iran would trigger an armed conflict in direct proximity to Russian borders. Moreover, Iran recently became a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization manifesting its stance as a significant element of the security system in Eurasia⁷.

Economic cooperation with Iran goes next in Russia's list of

Russia remains a dedicated party of the nuclear deal and makes every effort to advocate principles of non-proliferation upheld by the JCPOA

⁴ The Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action (JCPOA) At A Glance. Arms Control Association. November 2021. URL: <https://www.armscontrol.org/Factsheets/Jcpoa-At-A-Glance>

⁵ Write, R. The Looming Threat of a Nuclear Crisis with Iran. The New Yorker. December 27, 2021. URL: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/01/03/the-looming-threat-of-a-nuclear-crisis-with-iran>

⁶ Parker, John W. Russia and the Iranian Nuclear Program: Replay or Breakthrough? Strategic Perspectives, No. 9. INSS, National Defense University. March 2012. URL: <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-9.pdf>

⁷ Heydarian, J. Russia's Iran Nuclear Solution. The Diplomat. November 16, 2011. URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2011/11/russias-iran-nuclear-solution/>



priorities, with bilateral trade being concentrated in military and agricultural fields. Iran's nuclear development has been a subject of Russia's interest since early 1990s. Russia traditionally occupies a reserved position towards Iran's ambitions and supports imposing international sanctions on Iran only if it sees no other options to resolve a crisis. Russia does not believe that Iran has made or plans to make a political decision to pursue nuclear weapons but it recognizes the possibility of such a scenario if Iran's relations with the regional and international community continues to deteriorate.

However, Moscow considers Tehran a rational actor that could be a constructive negotiation vis-a-vis if appropriate incentives are on the table. After the JCPOA and UN SC Resolution 2231 prevented escalation of Iranian nuclear crisis and showed that the P5+1 and Iran were capable of employing diplomacy as a tool of nonproliferation, Russian officials and diplomats have become one of the most dedicated supporters of the nuclear deal and today continue to facilitate diplomatic process to mitigate consequences of the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA⁸. In general, being a strong advocate of the nonproliferation regime and the IAEA safeguards and verification system, Russia is not interested in Iran's joining the nuclear weapon states club⁹.

From both nonproliferation and economic perspectives, since early 1990s Russia and Iran has viewed it mutually beneficial to cooperate in the field of peaceful nuclear technologies. Direct involvement of Russian state corporation Rosatom in Iranian nuclear energy industry dates back to 1992 when Russia became the only country that agreed to finish the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant started by Germany in 1974. 1,000 MWe Bushehr-1 NPP was linked to the Iranian energy system in 2011 and became operational in 2013. Rosatom continues to provide technical services and supplies fuel for this power plant. In 2014, Russia and Iran agreed on the construction of Bushehr-2 and Bushehr-3 which is expected to last about a decade. However, this bilateral cooperation is not flawless: Iran has already owed Russia around 500 million euro for Bushehr-1¹⁰. News about developing peaceful nuclear partnership came amid Russian president Vladimir Putin's meeting with Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi in Moscow in January 2022. The Iranian official claimed that the two countries are planning to promote strategic cooperation in the field of energy and non-energy peaceful uses of nuclear technologies¹¹.

The two presidents also invoked lasting bilateral interactions with regard to implementation of the JCPOA. After the JCPOA was finalized in 2015, Russia completed transportation of 8,5 tons of low-enriched uranium from Iran and later supplied 140 tons of yellow cake for the Iranian nuclear energy industry. In 2017, Rosatom and



Head of ROSATOM Alexei Likhachev and Vice President of Iran Ali Akbar Salehi gave start of work at the foundation pit of Phase 2 of Bushehr NPP, October 31, 2017

Source: www.rusatom-energy.com

⁸ Russian Approaches Towards the Iranian Nuclear Program. Russian Embassy in the UK. URL: <https://www.rusemb.org.uk/in4b/>

⁹ Notte, H., Azizi, H. Where are Russia's Red Lines on Iran's Nuclear Brinkmanship? Carnegie Moscow Center. February 19, 2021. URL: <https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/83915>

¹⁰ Иран задолжал России 500 млн евро за АЭС «Бушер». Neftegaz.Ru, 29 June, 2021. URL: <https://neftegaz.ru/news/nuclear/686648-iran-zadolzhal-rossii-500-mln-evro-za-aes-busher/>

¹¹ Иран и Россия намерены развивать стратегическое сотрудничество в атомной сфере. TASS. 20 January, 2022. URL: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/13481621>

RUSSIA AND IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM: WHAT STEPS ARE TO BE MADE TO SECURE NONPROLIFERATION CORE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES?

Iran signed a deal to conduct modification of uranium enrichment cascades at Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant for medical purposes. But after Iran resumed enrichment at Fordow facilities in 2019, Russia terminated the agreement.

In 2005, Russia launched an initiative to engage Iran in multilateral cooperation on nuclear materials supply and provide the Islamic Republic with a share in the International Uranium Enrichment Center (Angarsk, Russia). This project was aimed at providing Iran with necessary nuclear fuel without transferring sensitive technologies or restricting development of national nuclear fuel cycle program. However, having started its operations in 2007, the IUEC did not transform in a venue for cooperation with Iran due to the Islamic Republic rejection.

Deliberating on Tehran's stand on nuclear issues, we should consider that Iran is a regional actor with many challenges to face deriving from complicated relations with neighboring Arab states and nuclear Israel, massive U.S. military presence in the Middle East, and a long history of ideological and geopolitical conflict with the U.S. after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. The purpose of this article does not provide an opportunity to delve into Iran's rationale to pursue nuclear weapon capabilities but it does allow to say that the nuclear issue occupies a significant place in the Iranian foreign policy agenda. In fact, throughout last two decades this issue has been used as a bargaining chip to gain international respect and enjoy regional superiority. Both Iranian officials (with the Supreme Leader issuing a fatwa banning WMD per se) and many international experts claim that nuclear weapons could not enhance Iran's security and could only further water down the existing conflict lines in the region, with an open military conflict today being a more plausible option than ever¹². The official stance of Iran in nuclear issues provides that the Islamic Republic does not seek nuclear weapons, with its nuclear industry pursuing solely peaceful energy and medicine purposes. However, in practice Iran is ready to use its nuclear knowhow, which has been growing since the Trump administration withdrew from the JCPOA, as a leverage and a proof that Iran could go further if needed¹³.

Having said that, we however should keep in mind that peaceful nature of the nuclear development in the Iranian context has its own reading and red lines which Iran will never be ready to concede. Iran is not ready to abandon its uranium enrichment capabilities; as the JCPOA experience demonstrates, it can agree only to limit its enriched uranium stockpiles and a number and quality of operating centrifuges. Iran is not ready to cease its scientific research and development program fairly claiming its right to peaceful nuclear technologies and international cooperation under Article IV of the NPT. Iran is not ready to bind its obligations deriving from the nuclear talks and agreements with other issues of concern for the West – namely issues of missile program, regional military and proxy activities, human rights, or allegations of supporting terrorism. Iran holds to its initial position of 'compartmentalization'¹⁴ – separating

Iran is ready to use its nuclear know-how, which has been growing since the Trump administration withdrew from the JCPOA, as a leverage and a proof that Iran could go further if needed

¹² Russia And Iran See Progress In Vienna Nuclear Talks. Iran International Newsroom. December 28, 2021. URL: <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202112287130>

¹³ دہدیمن ناریا ہب ہطس او اب ارزای تم اکی رم آ درک یسی ساس ا رکف دی اب یج راخ طب اور یارب. Etemad Online News Agency. December 28, 2021. URL: <https://www.etemadonline.com/ار-زای-تم-اکی-رم-آ-درک-یسی-ساس-ا-رکف-دی-اب-یج-راخ-طب-اور-یارب-529025-17-ل-ل-م-ل-ن-ی-ب-ش-خ-ب-د-د-ی-من-ناریا-ہب-ہطس-او-اب>

¹⁴ Zak, C., Sabet, F. From the Iran nuclear deal to a Middle East Zone? Lessons from the



nuclear issues as an independent negotiation track and limiting a number of parties involved. The issue of the JCPOA remains within the purview of P5+1 group, while the issue of WMD Free Zone in the Middle East, as well as a broader regional security architecture, should be a subject of regional actors' negotiations. Concerning the restoration of the JCPOA, Iran's leadership has also claimed its priorities: sustainability of the JCPOA based on U.S. assurances or guarantees and promised economic dividends under the JCPOA, which means not only sanctions lifting but also the verification of economic effects of their lifting¹⁵.

WHERE RUSSIA AND IRAN GO IN NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION?



Mikhail Ulyanov, Permanent Representative of Russia to International Organizations in Vienna with Ali Bagheri Kani, the chief Iranian nuclear negotiator, February 28, 2022

Source: www.twitter.com/Amb_Ulyanov

Today Russia and Iran have overlapping interests and similar approaches to the restoration of the JCPOA. Both countries believe that the restoration means a comprehensive and full implementation and compliance to the deal by all initial parties. In particular, the U.S. should lift all unlawfully imposed sanctions and demonstrate commitment to its obligations under the JCPOA. Iran, in its turn, should roll back its nuclear program development to the metrics of the JCPOA and restore its full and clean-handed cooperation with the IAEA in accordance with the Additional Protocol to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. Luckily by now Russia assumes that all steps made by both Iran and the U.S. after 2018 are reversible, probably with the only exception of uranium enrichment knowhow¹⁶. Importantly, Russia and Iran are on the same page with regard to the modalities of the JCPOA restoration: no changes to the text of the JCPOA are acceptable¹⁷. Russia views possible scenarios of partial implementation of the JCPOA (in the format of "JCPOA-") as destructive for the nonproliferation spirit of the deal, while Iran focuses on the sanction part and a need to get tangible economic benefits envisaged in the agreement. Both Iran and Russia also agree that the nuclear issue should remain separate from other security concerns believing that this premise led to diplomatic breakthrough in 2015 and should not be neglected¹⁸.

2021 was marked by almost all state parties of the JCPOA return to the negotiation table in Vienna and witnessed 8 rounds of talks between Iran and P5+1 without direct involvement of the U.S. The negotiating process got through presidential elections in Iran, several acts of sabotage against Iranian nuclear and military facilities allegedly conducted by Israel, series of disputes between Iran and the IAEA leadership about access to monitoring but has not

JCPOA for an ME WMDFZ". UNIDIR. URL: <https://unidir.org/JCPOA>

¹⁵ Baklitskiy, A. Iran's Nuclear Superposition. Russian in Global Affairs. No. 3 2020 July/September. September 7, 2020. URL: <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/irans-nuclear-superposition/>

¹⁶ Smith, M. Russian Perceptions on the Iranian Nuclear Issue. Middle East Series, 07/33. Defense Academy of the UK. October 2007. URL: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/45593/07_Oct_Russian.pdf

¹⁷ Russian MFA rejects alternatives to JCPOA for Iran. TASS News Agency. 1 December 2021. URL: <https://tass.com/world/1369387>

¹⁸ Lynch C. A Last-Ditch Effort to Save the Iran Deal. Foreign Policy. December 28, 2021. URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/12/28/iran-nuclear-deal-jcpoa-vienna-capabilities-biden/>

yet yielded substantial results on the JCPOA restoration. As of late February 2022, parties have agreed to continue talks within the Joint Commission, on several bilateral and multilateral tracks and are discussing draft agreements on nuclear and sanction dimensions of the JCPOA “rising from the ashes”.

WHAT RUSSIA CAN DO TO SAVE THE JCPOA?

Russian representation in Vienna broadcasts a pragmatic and balanced approach to the prospects of the JCPOA restoration. While the EU “troika” is lining to putting more pressure on Iran and issuing warning statements about closing window of opportunity, Russia calls for proper reality check and patience. From the Russian point of view, with Iran’s uranium enrichment up to 60% being inconsistent with the JCPOA provisions, the very issue of growing stockpiles of uranium does not pose irreversible challenges to the restoration of the deal or to the nonproliferation regime since Iran does not have necessary warheads to make an actual nuclear bomb¹⁹.

At the same time, Russia proposes several technical solutions to this issue and, as seen from Moscow, should further stick to a constructive role in making Iran less nerve-racking and potentially dangerous. For instance, Russian permanent representative in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov said that the excessive stockpiles could be either destroyed, shipped out or sealed on the Iranian soil under the IAEA monitoring²⁰. In case of taking them out Russia could provide its assistance based on the successful experience in 2016. The same could be applied to the Iranian heavy water reserves exceeding the JCPOA limits. However, for the successful implementation of these steps Russia will need to have a detailed and solid dialogue track with Washington in order to avoid possible U.S. sanctions against Russian companies (mainly Rosatom) which will provide technical assistance to bring the Iranian nuclear program into compliance with the JCPOA²¹.

To uphold nonproliferation core principles and values Russia continues to play an essential role as a diplomatic facilitator to narrow the gap between extreme positions of the parties and defuse tensions between Iran and the IAEA. Moscow has recently demonstrated its capacity to build bridges when facilitated the agreement between the IAEA and Iran on providing access to video cameras installed at the Iranian reprocessing facility in Karaj. Further facilitating to an honest and dynamic dialogue of Iran with the IAEA serves the Russian interest in a “much better predictability and transparency” of Iranian behavior. Diplomacy could also break barriers to the JCPOA successful restoration as Russia shows its capacity to have a dialogue with all the parties involved despite their bilateral tensions in other issues. For instance, Russia’s representative at Vienna talks Mikhail Ulyanov holds meetings with the U.S. Special Envoy for

Both Iran and Russia also agree that the nuclear issue should remain separate from other security concerns believing that this premise led to diplomatic breakthrough in 2015 and should not be neglected

¹⁹ Batsanov, S., Chernavskikh, V., Khlopkov, A. Restoring the Effectiveness of the JCPOA: Principles and Approaches. A View from Russia. Russian in Global Affairs. December 7, 2020. URL: <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/restoring-effectiveness-of-jcpoa/>

²⁰ Interview: Prominent scholar outlines Iran’s likely JCPOA demands, concessions. Amwaj Media. December 22, 2021. URL: <https://amwaj.media/article/interview-prominent-scholar-outlines-iran-s-likely-jcpoa-demands-concessions>

²¹ Orlov V., Vinnikov A. The Great Guessing Game: Russia and the Iranian Nuclear Issue. The Washington Quarterly, 28:2, pp. 49–66. Spring 2005. URL: <https://www.pircenter.org/media/content/files/11/13649725070.pdf>



Pursuing its national security interests, Moscow should make sure that Iran remains a predictable and rational state which does not need to go nuclear and become a second DPRK to ensure its security

Iran Robert Malley proving Moscow's capacity to separate different issues and have a constructive dialogue track even with the most difficult vis-à-vis²².

Engaging in bilateral and trilateral meetings in Vienna on the margins of the Joint Commission sessions and coordinating with China, Russia is persuading Iran to abandon its most maximalist and rigid positions, including its insistence that the talks focus only on sanctions, not the nuclear issue. As a result, in November after a five-month silence the new Iranian negotiation team agreed to resume talks on the basis of a draft hammered out by the previous Iranian government in past spring.

As a more ambitious and, thus, complicated step, Moscow should promote the creation of an international consortium to deal with the Iranian nuclear energy and efforts to tackle the issue of the WMD Free Zone in the Middle East. Considering it as a ground for a holistic security architecture in the region, Russia could employ the experience of nuclear talks in the P5+1 format and enable its good relations with all regional actors to facilitate the international dialogue. As one of the masterminds of the NPT, Russia assumes a special responsibility to promote the implementation of the Resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference as a precondition for the NPT indefinite extension.

Russia has an important leverage on Iran from perspectives of military and nuclear technical cooperation. Pursuing its national security interests, Moscow should make sure that Iran remains a predictable and rational state which does not need to go nuclear and become a second DPRK to ensure its security. Potentially Russia could consider a strategic partnership and security assurances to defuse Iranian sense of vulnerability. However, this initiative will always have a limited probability due to Iran's foreign policy priorities and vigorous pursuit for independence.

CONCLUSION

Russia is interested in settlement the Iranian nuclear issue both from geopolitical, security and economic perspectives. The restoration of the JCPOA is viewed as the only way to address evolving crisis of the nuclear deal. Russia and Iran are mainly on the same page regarding the diplomatic track to revive the deal. Sometimes Russia acts as a more pragmatic and balanced facilitator in negotiations and manages to pull necessary strings between the EU, Iran and the IAEA. Russia's close coordination with China provides additional leverage and helps to balance the playing field on talks. However, mindful of the U.S. key role in the restoration and the very existence of the JCPOA, Russia needs to engage in coordination with Washington to help both Iran and itself in the long run. In general, what Russia can do now is pretty the same with what it was able to contribute in 2006 or in 2015, with one exception – today it is even more difficult. Combination of Russia's diplomatic efforts and technical assistance could help to restore the JCPOA, facilitate its implementation and contribute to the nonproliferation regime integrity in the end. ■

²² Mikhail Ulyanov Twitter (@Amb_Ulyanov). URL: https://twitter.com/Amb_Ulyanov/status/1476277535449178112

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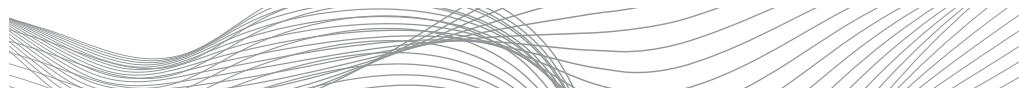
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SECURITY INDEX

Security Index Occasional Paper Series Global Edition - reports, analytical articles, comments and interviews that reflect the positions of Russian and foreign experts on the current challenges to global security and Russia's policy in this area. The aim of the series is to provide a clear analysis of international security problems and to offer specific and realistic solutions for them. The series replaced the *Security Index* journal published by PIR Center in 1994-2016.

The authors and editors of the series welcome comments, questions and suggestions, which readers can email: inform@pircenter.org.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND RUSSIA'S INTERESTS

This occasional paper was made within the framework of the project Iran's Nuclear Program and Russia's Interests, which is part of the Program Russia and Nuclear Nonproliferation. In this project, PIR Center monitors developments around the Iranian nuclear program and the JCPOA, preparing news digests, relevant expert materials and recommendations.

THE EVSTAFIEV SERIES

This occasional paper was produced within *The Evstafiev Series*. This is a series of research and analytical publications written by young, aspiring authors (primarily, MA graduates and post-graduates) from Russia and around the globe in the area of global security. For many, this is their first or one of the first peer-reviewed publications. All drafts are subjects to external evaluation by a panel at expert-level or educational seminars by PIR Center or in similar formats. Only drafts accepted by the expert panel are submitted for peer review and, if positive, for publication in the Series.

Annually, on November 15, *The Evstafiev Series* Selection Committee announces its decision on the Evstafiev Award.

Gennady Mikhailovich Evstafiev (1938 - 2013) is an outstanding Soviet and Russian WMD nonproliferation and global security expert. He devoted the last ten years of his life to PIR Center, where he worked as a Senior Advisor and Senior Vice President. Gennady Evstafiev paid special attention to the progress in creativity and analytical skills of young generation, considering this to be PIR Center's - and his own - most important mission.

To visit Gennady Evstafiev's memory gallery, please, go to: <https://pircenter.org/experts/194-gennady-evstafiev>

The Gennady Evstafiev Award was established in 2021. The Award winners list:

- Sergey Semenov (2021).