

U.S. Helsinki Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

Iran's Support for Russia and Lessons Learned from Ukraine

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Introduction

Chairman Wicker, Co-Chairman Wilson, and distinguished members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), thank you for the invitation and opportunity to testify. It is a privilege to present my analysis alongside scholars like Ilan Berman and Aaron Zelin and unpack the challenges Russo-Iranian cooperation poses to America, as well as to the security of our partners in Europe and the Middle East.

My written testimony will first situate this relationship against a backdrop of new state-based threats before offering a precis on the origins and evolution of Russia-Iran ties. It will then assess Iranian support to Russia and Russian assistance to Iran since the start of the war in Ukraine before pivoting to offer policy options.

Understanding the Strategic Landscapeⁱ

We are living in an era of great-power competition and facing an interconnected web of strategic threats. While the focus of this Commission is on Ukraine, it would be a mistake to disconnect the dots between Russia and Iran and look at these threats in silos.

The first lesson is that there is a rising authoritarian and anti-American Axis of Aggressorsⁱⁱ — consisting of Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran — increasingly looking for low-cost ways to magnify their power against the United States and our democratic partners. This Axis may be composed of states with different political systems and ideologies, but these predatory regimes are linked by their oppression of their own people at home and their harboring of revisionist intentions abroad.

The second lesson is that so-called U.S. “overreach” and maintenance of robust partnerships do not catalyze the formation of this new Axis. Rather, Moscow, Beijing, Pyongyang, and Tehran sensed opportunity and undertook political decisions at the highest levels. These regimes chose to work together to contest and roll back U.S. power and influence. U.S. timidity and indifference are therefore likely to accentuate the threats posed by these states rather than work to offset them.

The third lesson is that while the support these actors offer one another can and has ebbed and flowed over time, that does not make it any less strategically significant. Like all political ties, these relationships are subject to external pressures, creating opportunities for Washington to press upon fault lines and impose costs. Seen in this light, Russia not delivering strategic systems like advanced fighters or long-range air defenses to Iran is not a testament to historical mistrust between Moscow and Tehran, as is often asserted, but rather is a cost-benefit analysis at play. First, the primacy of the war in Ukraine for Putin puts a hard limit on the kinds of platforms that can be diverted to the Middle East. Second, Russia may not want to so overtly cross escalation thresholds with other actors in the Middle East. Third, Russia might not want to advertise how easily its military hardware, which still has customers globally, could be shredded by advanced Western weapons wielded by America and Israel. As the rest of this testimony will show, none of this means Russia has forsaken Iran.

The Kaleidoscopic Iran-Russia Relationship

As I noted in my testimony on Russia-Iran ties to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2024,ⁱⁱⁱ Iran's relationship with Russia over the past five centuries can be described as first turbulent, then transactional, and more recently, transformational. There is indeed a history of mistrust and competition between Russia and Iran that spans multiple regime types in both countries over centuries. But the Iran-Russia relationship of today is a story of choices, not structural forces. Conscious choices pursued by leaders in Tehran and Moscow following the collapse of the Soviet Union and one decade after the establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran provided the space for a new framework. Both actors would compartmentalize the "ghosts of history" and deconflict and collaborate more than they would compete.

In the 1990s, Iran leaned heavily on imported Russian conventional weapons in a bid to rearm and rebuild following the end of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988). It was during this time that Tehran sought assistance from Moscow on its nuclear and missile programs. While this afforded Russia the opportunity to generate significant revenues and keep select industries alive during a turbulent decade, it was also quickly met with meaningful American diplomatic pressure to cease or limit this assistance. With the advent of the Iranian nuclear crisis, Russia oscillated between looking to support Tehran diplomatically as a source of pressure against the West and holding the line internationally against the Islamic Republic to defend nonproliferation norms whose erosion might undercut Russia's status as a nuclear power. During the nuclear crisis, Russia ultimately voted for every major sanctions resolution against Iran at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) from 2006 to 2010. It also supported international efforts for a diplomatic resolution to the Iranian nuclear crisis that led to the flawed Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal. But the shared experience of operating in the Syrian theater to save — if only for a decade — the regime of Bashar al-Assad from collapse paved the pathway for Tehran to take bigger leaps to support Russia. Iran's drone exports in 2022 built on this experience and should be seen as an attempt to have Moscow view Tehran as an equal rather than a junior partner.

Iran and Russia have since deepened their ties in significant ways. A leaked video from 2019/2020 shows Iran's then-Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Aerospace Force (IRGC-AF) commander meeting his Russian counterpart and offering a mutual exchange: Iran would help Russia build a drone command if Russia would help Iran with a space command.^{iv} Also starting in 2019,^v Russia and Iran began participating in trilateral maritime drills with China, often in or around the Gulf of Oman, just outside the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 percent of the world's seaborne oil trade passes on a daily basis. Despite the interoperability issues that persist between these forces, the drills have been sustained over the years^{vi} and constitute an important political message. Other signs of Iran's enmeshment into this anti-American axis are its 2023 entry into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and its 2024 entry into the BRICS bloc.^{vii} In 2025, Iran and Russia even signed a 20-year strategic agreement^{viii} to cement their security, energy, economic, technological/cyber and political cooperation and is notably silent on the issue of mutual defense.^{ix} In many ways, the agreement revealed the limits of the Russo-Iranian partnership as much as it did the intent to grow it based on shared views about sovereignty, technological prowess, and a commitment to an anti-American order.

Despite the Islamic Republic’s founding foreign policy motto being “Neither East, Nor West, Islamic Republic,” so long as the regime prioritizes survival of a political system based on Khomeinism and enmity with America, Israel, and the rest of the West, it will always be seeking ways to build bridges with America’s near-peer ideological and strategic competitors like Russia and China in the East. This incentive creates worrying trendlines for future U.S. policy when it comes to devising ways to use diplomatic pressure, coercive economic measures, and even military force against the Islamic Republic due to potential Russian (and Chinese) support, no matter how slow, occasional, or opportunistic it may be to manifest.

Iranian Support for Russia (2022-Present)

Tehran’s decision to provide material support to Moscow represents a critical juncture not just in Russo-Iranian relations but also in the four decades of the Islamic Republic’s strategic and ideological enmity with the West. After all, since 2022, Iran can be considered an active participant in a war on the European continent. Conservative open-source estimates indicate that Iran has provided Russia with at least 3,000 one-way attack (OWA) or Shahed-type drones since 2022.^x The Shahed-136 can reportedly carry a 50-kg warhead up to 2,500 km and costs a reported \$40,000. The smaller Shahed-131 is cheaper, carries a lighter warhead, and has a shorter operational range of about 900 km. These exports have been paired with unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) like the Mohajer-6, which can carry guided munitions and offers battlefield intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR).^{xi}

Early in the conflict, Tehran reportedly sent trainers to Moscow for these platforms.^{xii} Iran also enabled Russia’s indigenous production of OWA drones modeled on the Shahed-136, called the Geran-2,^{xiii} which are fashioned with more Russian and Chinese component parts and feature improved guidance. Iran’s Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL) has specifically been involved in the effort to ship drone parts and conduct business with Russia to support industrial production of these systems on Russian territory.^{xiv}

This localized production is supported by Russian recruitment of young migrant women under false pretenses to support Putin’s war machine.^{xv} Russia now also domestically produces a copy of the Iranian Shahed-238, dubbed the Geran-3, which has a turbojet engine rather than a propeller and can travel up to 1,000 km at speeds up to 370 km/h.^{xvi} As of late 2025, Russia has fired an estimated 50,000 OWA drones at Ukraine,^{xvii} largely at civilian and critical infrastructure and other static targets. These OWA drones function as the “poor-man’s cruise missile” — giving Russia cheaper long-range strike systems and allowing it to conserve other (more expensive) weapons like land-attack cruise missiles (LACMs) and ballistic missiles — can be used in both swarms and layered attacks, and, at least initially, imposed financial costs on Ukraine for intercepting them.^{xviii}

Following years of reporting hinting at the transfer of short-range ballistic missiles (SRBM) to Russia, in 2024, Iran furnished Russia with solid-fuel close-range ballistic missiles (CRBMs) of the Fath family, such as the Fath-360.^{xix} One estimate indicates that Iran transferred 350 of these CRBMs to Russia, though there is still no battlefield evidence of their use.^{xx} Iran has also inked a deal with Russia to send launchers for these systems.^{xxi} Reportedly, the Islamic Republic (and North Korea) are also believed to

have supported Russia with 100 million rounds of bullets of various calibers and 300,000 other munitions, to include artillery shells and 122 mm rockets.^{xxii}

The provision of these capabilities means that Iran is, at the very least, a participant in and underwriter of Russian aggression against Ukraine, as well as Ukraine's European supporters. This has led to a profound backlash against the Islamic Republic in Europe, with several rounds of EU sanctions against Iranian persons and entities for supporting Russia's war effort,^{xxiii} as well as a European-led effort last year to "snap back" or reinstate UNSC resolutions containing sanctions on Iran.^{xxiv}

But Tehran has also supported Moscow in non-kinetic ways. The Islamic Republic, a regime long subject to U.S. and international economic measures and a pioneer of sanctions evasion measures, has been able to assist^{xxv} Russia by enabling the export of its sanctioned oil through the use of "ghost fleets."^{xxvi} These fleets consist of older vessels with opaque ownership structures that have often undergone multiple name and flag changes and engage in deceptive practices like forging documentation, underinsurance, and turning off or spoofing automatic identification system (AIS) transponders and signals.^{xxvii} Russia's initial use of Iran's ghost fleet and now its replication (at scale) of similar sanctions-busting activities is no accident.

Russian Support to Iran (2022-Present)

Although Russian military support to Iran has not been as extensive as the reported \$4 billion worth of weaponry that Iran has been able to furnish Russia with since 2022,^{xxviii} zooming out, the breadth of what Russia has and can offer the Islamic Republic remains significant. For starters, following Iran's drone transfers, reports of contracts^{xxix} for advanced fourth-generation Su-35 fighter jets, Mi-28 attack helicopters, and Yak-130 trainer aircraft emerged, but to date, only the Yak-130^{xxx} and Mi-28 have been transferred.^{xxxi} Despite persistent media hype,^{xxxii} there remains no evidence of Russia providing Iran with the Su-35, and to date, the most significant evidence of cooperation involving the Su-35 between Russia and Iran came from the Biden administration, which alleged in 2022 that Iranian pilots were undergoing training on the Su-35 abroad.^{xxxiii} Beyond these agreements, press reports indicate that in exchange for Iranian drones, Russia stepped up with cash, captured Western weapons from Ukraine flown to Iran for potential reverse engineering,^{xxxiv} and even four metric tons of gold as payment.^{xxxv}

In the ensuing years, select Russian military systems for which the Islamic Republic was not known to have agreements were spotted in Iran. These included Russian sniper rifles like the Orsis T-5000M^{xxxvi} and the Spartak armored vehicle.^{xxxvii} Russia watchers have noted that these sightings predate a recent rise in cargo flights to Iran from Russia,^{xxxviii} which may have contained military equipment or components to help Iran rebuild or repair damaged systems after the 12-Day War.^{xxxix} Given that much of Russia and Iran's defense and security ties remain beneath the surface, these flights could also have been facilitating an altogether different capability or weapon. But one capability that is now reported to have been requested by Tehran after the 12-Day War is the 9K333 Verba, an advanced man-portable air defense system (MANPAD).^{xl} The contract is for 500 shoulder-mounted units costing an estimated \$589 million that is scheduled to be delivered between 2027 and 2029.^{xli}

Broadening the aperture, Russia has supported Iran’s space and satellite program for years,^{xlii} having helped Iran launch its first imaging satellite, dubbed the Sina-1, into low-earth orbit (LEO) in 2005 on a Russian carrier rocket from the space center at Plesetsk.^{xliii} But since 2022, the pace of Russian-assisted launches for Iranian satellites has grown,^{xliv} with at least eight known launches for Iranian satellites from Russian carrier rockets with zero failures, a record of success Iran’s liquid-propellant space-launch vehicles (SLVs) do not have. In 2022, Russia built a satellite for the sanctioned Iranian Space Agency (ISA) dubbed the Khayyam.^{xlv}

Russian Assisted Iranian Satellite Launches^{xlvi}

Year	Satellite Name	Built By	Satellite Type	Launcher Type	Launch Location
2022	Khayyam ^{xlvii}	Russia	Imaging	Soyuz	Kazakhstan
2024	Pars-1 ^{xlviii}	Iran	Remote-Sensing/Research	Soyuz	Russia
2024	Kowsar	Iran	Imaging	Soyuz	Russia
2024	Hodhod	Iran	Telecommunications	Soyuz	Russia
2025	Nahid-2 ^{xlix}	Iran	Telecommunications	Soyuz	Russia
2025	Tolou-3 (Paya)	Iran	Imaging	Soyuz	Russia
2025	Zafar-2	Iran	Imaging	Soyuz	Russia
2025	Kowsar-1.5	Iran	Imaging	Soyuz ^l	Russia

Taken together, these satellites can help Iran begin to establish a more modern and militarily applicable space architecture, enabling both communications and ISR for future conflicts. Per the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in 2023, Russia is also believed to be supporting Iran’s domestic SLV capability with “technicians” who could also help the regime with its missile program.^{li} SLVs contain nearly identical technologies to those needed to produce an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).^{lii} Previous U.S. intelligence assessments about Iran’s ability to develop an ICBM were predicated on “foreign assistance,”^{liiii} and in the intervening years, North Korea surged, according to U.S. and UN sanctions reporting, as one of the most important foreign supporters of Iran’s missile program,^{liv} not Russia. But a 2025 DIA assessment of missile threats to the U.S. homeland noted that within a decade, Iran, which currently has no ICBMs, could develop 60 ICBMs, which would be more than North Korea.^{lv} That report, plus a recent Iranian missile launch against Diego Garcia, which proved the regime could double its previously declared missile range radius,^{lvi} should ring alarm bells, particularly if any foreign actor is deemed to be assisting the regime in this space.

On the nuclear file, Russia’s role has not been limited to serving as Iran’s lawyer in international organizations like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the UNSC to thwart increased pressure and oversight.^{lvii} Rather, recent reporting indicates that it might be a more active participant in Iran’s nuclear quest. Twice in the last two years, Russia has hosted Iranian delegations that were fronts

for the sanctioned Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (SPND),^{lvi} a subsidiary of Iran's MODAFI and a direct heir to Iran's pre-2004 nuclear weapons work.^{lix} These visits reportedly entailed meetings with military experts and research into work relevant to the production of a nuclear weapon.^{lx} Both trips serve as a useful reminder that Russo-Iranian cooperation operates well beneath the surface of press reports and high-level weapons transfers.

On the civilian side of Iran's nuclear industry, prior to the start of the conflict, Russia had an estimated 700 staff working at Iran's Bushehr light-water reactor and on developing new facilities.^{lxi} Last year, Russia and Iran inked a memorandum of understanding for a \$25 billion deal to build four new nuclear power plants in Iran's southeast.^{lxii} Russia has positioned itself as the main conduit of support for Iran's civil nuclear program and has been a net economic beneficiary of Iran's interest in nuclear power. While Russia sensed tensions escalating earlier this year, it did not withdraw most of its staff from Iranian nuclear sites as it had offered to do earlier in January.^{lxiii} Only after several strikes near the Bushehr reactor^{lxiv} was Russia forced to evacuate most of its staff from the site,^{lxv} hinting at the economic and political importance of Russian involvement in Iran's nuclear program.

Another understudied vector of Russian assistance to Iran's authoritarian regime is help given to survive protests and surveil/crackdown on dissent. While certain Russian platforms like the Spartak were spotted in Iran during nationwide protests in Iran this January,^{lxvi} Russia is not known to have materially supported Iran's crackdown. Rather, Russia watchers infer that Putin has built on years of cybersecurity cooperation agreements with Iran^{lxvii} and helped share lessons from support to other authoritarians to make the Islamic Republic more resilient in the face of protests and domestic discontent.^{lxviii} In 2023, it was reported that Russia provided Iran with digital surveillance software and other cyber tools to surveil domestic dissidents and foreign adversaries.^{lxix}

Most recently, during Operation Epic Fury, despite Iran's previous drone exports to Russia, Putin reportedly armed Iran with drones, though the number and type remain unknown.^{lxx} And while also unconfirmed, European sources appear to believe that Iran is receiving these drones via land and rail transfer through the Caucasus.^{lxxi} Russia has improved Iran's Shahed-class of OWA drones with anti-jamming equipment known as Kometa. This component was found in the downed Iranian drone fired at a UK airbase in Cyprus from Hezbollah-controlled territory in Lebanon.^{lxxii} More importantly, Russia is believed to be supporting Iran with satellite imagery to enable more precise drone and missile targeting of U.S. regional assets,^{lxxiii} as well as targeting information.^{lxxiv} In the clearest indication of Russian support for Iran in this war, Putin reportedly sought a quid pro quo from Washington to cease supporting Ukraine in exchange for Russia terminating its assistance to Iranian targeting.^{lxxv}

Russia is also believed to be aiding or coordinating in the cyber domain with known Iranian hacker groups during the war, some of which have shown signs of learning from past patterns of Russian hacker activity. Both groups have used social media channels to post about their targets as well as to interact. Iranian hackers have also reportedly used Russian virtual private servers to register domains.^{lxxvi}

Policy Options

- **Devalue the Islamic Republic in Putin’s Eyes:** The greater a menace the Islamic Republic of Iran can be to Western interests, the greater its utility as a tool to be employed by Russia.^{lxxvii} This is especially the case after the regime extorted the international community in the Strait of Hormuz. Conversely, if Putin sees supporting Tehran as more of a liability than an asset, that may limit the extent of his partnership with or support for Tehran. The most proximate way to do this is to militarily roll back the Islamic Republic’s ability to project power in a sustained fashion and to have a robust containment regime that hinders Iran from being able to rebuild post-conflict.
- **Support Iranian Freedom and Internet Freedom:** Ultimately, the Russia-Iran relationship is a function of its leaders. For three-plus decades, Iran’s former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and the IRGC supported deepening ties with Russia as they simultaneously strengthened their grip on Iranian society. So long as anti-American autocrats and theocrats rule Iran, Washington will have to contend with this Axis. To pull the rug out from under the Axis, Washington should support the Iranian people’s quest for representative government and freedom. This is consistent with a policy of Maximum Support to the Iranian people^{lxxviii} paired with a policy of Maximum Pressure on the regime in Iran. This requires creating a bipartisan protest policy playbook with ideas that can be ready to go the next time when, not if, the Iranian people take to the streets.^{lxxix} In the near term, this can be done by supporting internet freedom and internet access in Iran, which, at the time of this writing, is subject to a 50-day internet blackout. Congress should seriously consider supporting the FREEDOM Act (H.R. 6469), the Iran Human Rights, Internet Freedom, and Accountability Act (H.R. 7622), and the Internet Reach and Access Now (IRAN) Act (H.R. 7380).
- **Don’t Be Afraid of the Bully Pulpit:** Congress and the administration should not miss an opportunity to point out any tension in the Russo-Iranian partnership, be it economic, political, historical, or ideological, and use them to press on the fault lines of the debate over the partnership. Similarly, Washington needs to spotlight every instance of this deepening partnership, using it as an opportunity to name, shame, and punish Russo-Iranian cooperation via diplomatic and economic means whenever the opportunity presents itself.
 - As a corollary, Congress should task the relevant Department of Defense (DOD) or Intelligence Community (IC) organs with developing and executing information operations against both Russia and Iran based on lessons learned about adversarial vulnerabilities from four years of war in Ukraine and 40 days of war against the Islamic Republic.
- **Draw on Battlefield Lessons Learned by Ukraine:** Ukraine is already deepening defense ties with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, which have been on the front lines of the drone threat from Tehran.^{lxxx} Washington should facilitate these exchanges between our partners and learn from the Ukrainians, who have developed low-cost counter-drone systems that the Pentagon and other U.S. allies should consider.^{lxxxi} Those lessons will be of value not just to U.S.

partners but also to the United States itself, which faced significant challenges operating and defending against continuous Iranian drone attacks during the 40-Day War.

- Congress should consider building on the Joint Interagency Task Force 401 (JIATF-401) established by the National Defense Authorization Act of FY 2026^{lxxxii} when reauthorizing it next year by calling for an independent congressional review but with specific reference to lessons from the Ukrainian theater for defeating Iranian and Russian unmanned aerial threats.
- **Step Up the Pressure on Russia Elsewhere:** In addition to continuing to support Ukraine with what it needs to win (or, at a minimum, hold off and impose costs on the Russians) on the battlefield, Congress should consider new ways to increase the economic squeeze on Russia, particularly after the boon it experienced due to price spikes during Operation Epic Fury. To that end, Congress should consider supporting the GHOST Act of 2025 (S. 1490), the SHADOW Fleet Sanctions Act (S. 2904), as well as sanctions against the Russian nuclear industry contained in H.R. 8106.^{lxxxiii}
- **Exercise More Congressional Oversight:** In 2024, the U.S. Congress passed critical supplemental funding for Ukraine, which also contained legislation on counter-missile proliferation sanctions, human rights sanctions, and energy sanctions against the Islamic Republic under the auspices of the Fight CRIME Act, the MAHSA Act, and the SHIP Act. All the provisions in those bills are now law, but neither the outgoing Biden administration nor the second-term Trump administration appears to have used these authorities against Iran to their fullest extent.
- **Build on Multilateral Victories, Don't Let Them Atrophy:** In 2025, the E3 (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) worked successfully to restore UNSC sanctions resolutions on Iran, a move many in the U.S. Congress had sought for years. Russia has flatly said it will not honor the restoration of these sanctions and penalties on Iran. Washington must now work with its European partners to make the most of “Snapback” and call for sanctions committees and panels of experts to be restored to put a spotlight on Iranian and Russian violations. And should efforts to generate multilateral pressure at the United Nations fail, Washington should consider replicating the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT) framework that exists outside the United Nations for North Korea sanctions^{lxxxiv} but now with a broader audience focused on Iran.
- **Support America's Defense Industrial Base:** The recent conflict with the Islamic Republic has stressed U.S. supply chains and production lines needed to meet future U.S. defense needs and the current ones of U.S. partners given the high munitions expenditure rate in the Middle East.^{lxxxv} This matter should be the canary in the coal mine for Congress to take steps to bolster and revitalize the defense industrial base for an era of great-power competition against economies and adversaries far stronger than the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On behalf of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), thank you for your time, attention, and the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.

ⁱ This builds on the themes first raised in my testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2024:

ⁱⁱ <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA13/20240417/117148/HHRG-118-FA13-Wstate-BenTalebluB-20240417.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.fdd.org/events/2025/10/09/countering-the-axis-of-aggressors-with-ltg-ret-hr-mcmaster-and-gen-ret-laura-richardson/>

^{iv} <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA13/20240417/117148/HHRG-118-FA13-Wstate-BenTalebluB-20240417.pdf>

^v <https://www.etemadonline.com/بخش-سیاسی-640616/9-فرماندهی-یپهیدی-ایران-فضایی-روسیه-سر-دار-حاجی-زاده/>

^{vi} <https://www.cnn.com/2019/12/27/asia/china-russia-iran-military-drills-intl-hnk>

^{vii} <https://www.twz.com/news-features/what-irans-naval-exercise-with-china-and-russia-in-the-strait-of-hormuz-actually-means>

^{viii} <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202307046948> and <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/493180/Iran-joins-BRICS-group-formally-in-2024>

^{ix} <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/518651/Landmark-Iran-Russia-partnership-treaty-officially-takes-effect>

^x <https://apnews.com/article/russia-putin-iran-pezeskian-treaty-partnership-71a20990373851741d1fe76a81699036>

^{xi} <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202411197064>

^{xii} <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/08/29/iran-drones-russia-ukraine-war/>

^{xiii} <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/18/us/politics/iran-drones-russia-ukraine.html>

^{xiv} <https://c4ads.org/reports/airborne-axis/>

^{xv} <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2117> and <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2295>

^{xvi} <https://www.fdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/fdd-memo-russia-recruits-young-migrant-women-from-latin-america-to-build-iranian-drones.pdf>

^{xvii} <https://military.com/en/news/ukrainian-intelligence-releases-detailed-analysis-of-russian-geran-3-jet-powered-uav-series-u/>

^{xviii} <https://www.kyivpost.com/post/71888>

^{xix} <https://breakingdefense.com/2022/07/iranian-drones-could-make-russias-military-more-lethal-in-ukraine/>

^{xx} <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/irans-ballistic-missile-gift-russia-and-vice-versa-213290>

^{xxi} <https://kyivindependent.com/exclusive-iran-gave-russia-over-350-fath-missiles/>

^{xxii} <https://www.reuters.com/world/iran-send-russia-launchers-short-range-missiles-sources-say-2025-05-09/>

^{xxiii} <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2023/03/how-much-can-iranian-artillery-ammo-help-russia.php>

^{xxiv} <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/01/29/iran-council-adopts-new-sanctions-over-serious-human-rights-violations-and-iran-s-continued-support-to-russia-s-war-of-aggression-against-ukraine/>

^{xxv} <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/e3-joint-statement-on-iran-activation-of-the-snapback>

^{xxvi} <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10885777/Iran-helping-Russia-evade-sanctions-using-ghost-armada-transport-oil-researchers-claim.html>

^{xxvii} <https://www.ft.com/content/955389bf-d01b-4acb-bd15-b764425a8a18>

^{xxviii} <https://www.fincen.gov/system/files/FinCEN-Advisory-Illicit-Oil-Smuggling-508.pdf>

^{xxix} <https://www.iranwatch.org/news-brief/iran-reportedly-sold-4b-worth-arms-moscow-2021>

^{xxx} <https://www.asiriran.com/fa/news/921537/جانشین-وزیر-دفاع-خرید-جنگنده-سو-۳۵-و-بالگر-د-میل-۲۸-از-روسیه-قطعی-شد/>

^{xxxi} <https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-news/defence/iran-receives-yak-130-advanced-jet-trainer-light-attack-aircraft>

^{xxxii} <https://theaviationist.com/2026/01/30/iran-mi-28-helicopters/>

^{xxxiii} <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/480210/Russia-set-to-supply-Iran-with-Su-35-fighter-jets-in-near-future> and

^{xxxiv} <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/484677/Iran-to-get-first-shipment-of-SU-35-warplanes-next-week>

^{xxxv} <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-12-09/us-warns-of-expanding-russia-iran-military-partnership>

^{xxxvi} <https://www.cnn.com/2023/03/10/politics/russia-iran-ukraine-weapons/index.html>

^{xxxvii} <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/security-aviation/2024-02-21/ty-article-magazine/gold-for-drones-massive-leak-reveals-the-iranian-shahed-project-in-russia/000018d-bb85-dd5e-a59d-ffb729890000>

^{xxxviii} <https://x.com/IranIntl/status/1892699497005817882>

^{xxxix} <https://www.tbnisrael.com/news/russian-amm-590951-spartak-armored-vehicle-seen-in>

^{xl} <https://aircargoweek.com/heavy-airlift-flights-in-operation-between-russia-and-iran/>

^{xli} <https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2026/02/russia-iran-military-support>

^{xlii} <https://www.ft.com/content/d034cc1a-f5fb-494e-a3c1-466e8e80ed82>

^{xliiii} <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-agreed-secret-shoulder-fired-missile-deal-with-russia-ft-reports-2026-02-22/>

^{xliiii} <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA549116.pdf>

^{xliiii} <https://www.iranwatch.org/our-publications/weapon-program-background-report/history-irans-ballistic-missile-program> and

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