



By: *Tomorrow's Affairs Staff*

Can Russia, through Iran and the US, turn from an aggressor into a peacemaker?



The rapprochement between the USA and Russia has taken on a new dimension with the frequent announcements about possible Russian mediation between Washington and Tehran in relation to the Iranian nuclear programme.

All three capitals are sending positive signals towards an outcome that was almost unimaginable until a few weeks ago, namely an American-Iranian dialogue on limiting Tehran's nuclear programme, in which Moscow would play an indispensable role in getting this process underway.

US President Donald Trump **told** Fox News that he sent a letter to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei last Wednesday calling for a nuclear deal while threatening a military option if such an agreement is not reached.

"I would rather negotiate a deal. We can make a deal that would be just as good as if you won militarily," said President Trump.

The regime in Tehran reacted very cautiously to such a sudden step. The Iranian mission to the UN announced last Friday that it had not yet received the letter from the American president.

This is understandable, as it will be some time before Tehran can formulate a position on Trump's initiative, given Ali Khamenei's earlier course that the Americans can neither be negotiated with nor trusted.

A new opportunity for Moscow

Moscow has recognised the opportunity to play a significant role in breaking the diplomatic ice between Washington and Tehran by offering its services to start a dialogue on Iran's nuclear programme.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov had previously **stated** that the US and Iran should "resolve all problems through negotiations" and that his government was "ready to do everything in its power to achieve this goal."

US-Iranian talks on limiting Tehran's nuclear potential are possible soon

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has not rejected the willingness of its Russian allies to mediate a dialogue with the US. "Given the importance of these issues, it is quite possible that many parties will show goodwill and willingness to help in solving various problems," Iranian diplomatic spokesman Esmail Baghai said last Monday, two days before President Trump sent a letter to Iranian leader Khamenei.

If everything falls into place, and there seems to be enough optimism among the participants that it would, US-Iranian talks on limiting Tehran's nuclear potential are indeed possible soon.

The outcome of such possible talks is unpredictable, but currently Russian mediation in establishing communication is very important.

Room for international rehabilitation of Russia

Moscow is investing in this matter the enormous trust it has built up with Iran during its three-year aggression against Ukraine. Russia and Iran have built a solid brotherhood in arms during this time and helped each other through the severe hardship of economic isolation they face together.

Moscow obviously believes that the window for exiting the circle of "axes of evil" is completely open due to Donald Trump's policies and will therefore be a strong incentive for Tehran to start talks with America.

Russia's willingness to accept this mission also testifies to its deep conviction that there is almost no difference with the new American administration regarding the war in Ukraine and that the moment has come to build a new, higher level of partnership with the US.

If it mediates in one of the biggest global crises, Russia will become a peace factor overnight

If the Trump administration accepts Moscow's good services in relation to Iran, Russia will receive a great gift for its previous unenviable position on the international stage.

If it mediates in one of the biggest global crises, Russia will become a peace factor overnight and not a disruptive factor. America will give Russia the chance to fully rehabilitate itself from the role of aggressor, which has also been assigned to it by UN resolutions for years, and to become an important factor in international peace.

Return to the Middle East?

Russia is paving the way for the restoration of its influence in the Middle East by engaging in the resolution of Iran's nuclear potential, even if only as a conduit for communication.

It has completely disappeared from this region, mainly because it is preoccupied with the invasion of Ukraine and, at the same time, with the regional influence of Iran, Russia's biggest ally in this part of the world, being decimated.



Israel may also be unhappy with Russia's offer to mediate between the US and Iran - Benjamin Netanyahu with Donald Trump

Russia's withdrawal from the Middle East culminated in the collapse of Bashar al-Assad's

friendly regime in Syria, his exile in Moscow, and the withdrawal of Russian forces from naval and air bases in Syria.

In the event of US-Russian diplomatic action regarding Iran, one of the dissatisfied parties will again be Europe, which would probably be side-lined in such a format and have no influence on the outcome.

The involvement of Europeans in the conclusion of the 2015 **nuclear deal** (JCPOA) was inevitable, and if the new dialogue takes place without them, it will mean a new marginalisation of Europe by the US.

Israel may also be unhappy with Russia's offer to mediate between the US and Iran, which will be the biggest challenge for the Trump administration if it accepts cooperation with Moscow over Iran.

Israel may rightly see the US acceptance of Russia as a mediator as a sign of yielding to Tehran, as it would be relying on the services of Iran's closest ally in the negotiations.

Moreover, a possible US deal with Iran on the nuclear programme could hardly come about without affecting Iran's proxy operations in the Middle East, on which Israel would certainly not want to compromise.