

Isolated together

Russian-Iranian Military Cooperation

Erika Holmquist and Ismail Khan

As Russia's war against Ukraine has evolved into a war of attrition, one of the countries that Moscow has turned to in order to replenish its depleted stocks of military hardware is Iran. By the end of 2023, Moscow had become increasingly dependent on Iran, which in turn saw an opportunity to modernise key elements of its armed forces with Russian weapon technology. This warrants a closer examination of the military cooperation between Russia and Iran.

DESPITE A LONG history of mutual distrust, there are a number of reasons why Iran and Russia see advantages in cooperating more closely.¹ First, both countries need to circumvent Western sanctions and seek to do so bilaterally or within multilateral organisations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the BRICS group of states.

Second, Russia previously cooperated with the United States and Europe in negotiating the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which limited Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief. Since the US withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, Iran no longer follows the agreed stipulations, while the last of the UN-mandated restrictions on its military exports included in the agreement expired in the autumn of 2023. Although the United States and the European Union have replaced the UN sanctions with their own equivalents, Russia, which is already under sanctions due to its war against Ukraine, no longer sees any formal obstacles preventing it from buying Iranian weapons, including ballistic missiles. It now appears that it is seeking to do just that, for use in Ukraine.

Third, Russia's intensified ties with Iran reflect Russian foreign policy priorities, and tie in with Russia's outreach to the Global South to counterbalance what it sees as US world hegemony.² At the heart of Russia's invasion of Ukraine lies a deep, long-term confrontation with the West, especially with the United States. Iran shares this policy priority. As a result, the Iranian-Russian relationship has increasingly solidified as a united front against the United States.³

Finally, both Iran and Russia see military advantages to closer mutual cooperation. There are opportunities to learn how to defeat Western weapons systems both in Iran-supported military confrontations with the United States in the Middle East and in Russia's war against Ukraine. In addition, Russia has procured a variety of Iranian military hardware, particularly drones, which play an important role in Ukraine. Iranian-made drones now nearly overwhelm Ukrainian air defences. Iran has previously transferred weapons technology and hardware to its proxies and partners in the Middle East, but this is the first time Tehran is deeply involved in a war outside the Islamic world.⁴ The wish to procure Russian weapons systems is an important motivator for Iran in aiding Russia's efforts in Ukraine.

DEEPENING DIPLOMATIC TIES IN 2022–23

During 2022–23, the Russo-Iranian rapprochement was evident on many levels. Russia stated that the Iranian nuclear programme “does not pose any real problem” for the international community,⁵ and increased its diplomatic support for Iran in international fora.⁶ Russia also worked to bring Iran closer to its orbit by actively promoting Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and supporting Iran's ambition to join the BRICS. Iran ultimately joined both organisations in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

Diplomatic contacts between the two countries have been frequent. President Vladimir Putin's trip to Tehran in July 2022 was his first outside of the post-Soviet area since the beginning of the war against Ukraine.

Putin and Iran's president, Ebrahim Raisi,* also met on three other occasions in 2022, in both bilateral and multilateral settings.⁷ On the ministerial level, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian met five times and held nine telephone conversations in 2022.⁸ The Secretary of Russia's National Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev, travelled to Tehran on 8 November 2022, at the invitation of his Iranian counterpart, Ali Shamkhani, just a few days after Iran had officially confirmed that it had transferred drones to Russia. The majority of the talks focused on bilateral security, and the pressure Russia and Iran are under from the West. Patrushev stated that this pressure stems from both countries being "at the forefront of the struggle for the establishment of a multipolar world order."⁹

During the autumn of 2022, Mohammad Mokhber, Iran's First Vice President, visited Moscow twice within a few weeks, culminating on 6 October 2022, with the promise that Iran would supply Russia with additional drones as well as ballistic surface-to-surface missiles.¹⁰ Russian defence officials continued to meet their Iranian counterparts regularly in 2023. Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu led a high-ranking delegation to Tehran on 19 September 2023, meeting the Head of Iran's General Staff, Mohammad Bagheri.¹¹ A day later, Shoigu observed the launch of tactical and ballistic missiles, air-defence systems, and drones at an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Aerospace Force exhibition and training area.¹² Shoigu stated that the bilateral relationship had reached "a whole new level" and that sanctions directed against Russia and Iran "lacked perspective."¹³

The two countries issued a joint declaration on the "ways and means to counter, mitigate, and redress the adverse impacts of unilateral coercive measures", i.e., sanctions. On 5 December 2023, they signed a roadmap with 16 guidelines to "counter the sanctions regime directed against them both".¹⁴ A few days later, on 7 December, Putin held talks with Raisi in Moscow.¹⁵ According to the Russian Ministry of Defence, this meeting resulted in a new draft bilateral agreement on military-technical cooperation.¹⁶

WHAT RUSSIA WANTS FROM IRAN

Russia's 2015 military intervention in Syria expanded its military-security partnership with Iran, converging over the overarching goal of sustaining the government of Bashar al-Assad. Russia provided air support, which benefitted Iran and its proxies on the ground.¹⁷ Russia even utilised the Iranian Shahid Nojeh Airbase, north of the city of Hamadan, for strategic bombing and refuelling missions in Syria. The disclosure of this arrangement sparked criticism within the Iranian defence and security establishment; accusations were levelled against Russia for "showing off" its operations on Iranian territory.¹⁸ The Iranian constitution actually prohibits basing foreign forces on Iranian territory.¹⁹ Nonetheless, this was the first time since the Second World War that a foreign force used military facilities in Iran for combat support operations. The joint engagement in Syria fast-tracked an emerging defence and security partnership between Iran and Russia.²⁰

While it is impossible to verify the full spectrum of defence and security commitments, open-source intelligence indicates significant levels of cargo traffic between the two countries, both in the aerial and maritime domains. Iran supposedly shipped more than 300,000 artillery shells and more than a million rounds of other forms of ammunition to Russia between October 2022 and April 2023.²¹

Since September 2022, Russia has been using Iranian one way attack drones in its strategic bombing campaign against critical Ukrainian infrastructure, air defences, and energy facilities. The Shahed 136, renamed Geran-2 in Russia, is the system most commonly used. According to Kyiv, Russia used 2,800 Iranian drones in December 2023, of which Ukrainian air defences intercepted 2,400.²²

Dubbed the "flying moped" in Ukraine because of the noise its two-stroke piston engine emits and the simplicity of its design, the Shahed 136 is sufficiently precise for use against fixed targets. Its avionics systems are based on commercial-grade products, traded freely around the world.²³ It can carry up to a 40 kilogram warhead, has a maximum range of 1,000 kilometres, and a

* Shortly after this text was written, several unexpected changes were made to the Russian and Iranian governments. On 12 May 2024, it was announced that Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu would replace Nikolai Patrushev as Secretary of Russia's National Security Council. On 19 May 2024, Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian died in a helicopter crash. Raisi has been replaced by First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber.

cruising speed of up to 170 km per hour.²⁴ Deploying it is also a cost-effective way to degrade Ukraine's limited Western-supplied air defences, as the drone is cheaper to produce than the missiles required to intercept them.

Another Iranian drone frequently used in Ukraine is the Mohajer-6, equipped with more sophisticated systems than the Shahed. Produced by the state-owned Qods Aviation Industries, the Mohajer-6 is a multipurpose combat drone with a range of up to 1,900 km, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities. Because it carries laser-guided munitions, it offers its operator air-to-ground strike capabilities.²⁵ Reportedly, Russia is also finalising the acquisition of the upgraded, Shahed 107 drone, which has a 1,500 km range.

The short-range Iranian ballistic missiles that Russia wants to acquire are the Fateh-110 and Zolfaghar, with ranges of 300 and 700 kilometres, respectively.²⁶ Reports from February 2024 suggested that Russia had already acquired 400 of these short-range ballistic missiles. Yet this claim was rejected by Ukrainian authorities.²⁷ Both the Fateh-110 and the Zolfaghar could hit high-value targets within Ukraine's operational depth.²⁸

Iran claims that the shipment of drones along with accompanying Iranian instructors began prior to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. But, Iran has also contributed to the production of a Russian drone-manufacturing plant in the Alabuga Special Economic Zone, in the region of Tatarstan.²⁹ The Alabuga deal is intended to enhance Russia's domestic production capabilities and transfer technical knowhow from Iran. The increase in manufacturing capacity poses a threat to Ukraine. In April 2024, using its own drones, Ukraine attacked the Alabuga plant, some 1,200 kilometres from the Ukrainian border, making it the deepest attack into Russian territory to date.³⁰ While waiting for the US congressional deadlock over the military-aid package to be resolved, Ukraine rationed its ammunition and carefully managed its limited set of vital air-defence systems and interceptor missiles. The acquisition of additional Iranian drones and the potential procurement of surface-to-surface short-range ballistic missiles could enhance Russia's capabilities. It could enable Russia to target Ukraine's Western-supplied air-defence system more effectively, penetrate deeper across the frontlines, and potentially threaten critical energy infrastructure and the expanding defence industrial base.³¹

WHAT IRAN WANTS FROM RUSSIA

The current leadership in Tehran has decided to abandon the previous government's attempts to improve relations with the West, opting instead to prioritise relationships in the Middle East and strengthen ties to global powers such as Russia and China. Iranian politicians in the opposition camp criticise this approach as too risky, because it means putting all the eggs in one basket. Past experiences, such as Russia's exploitation of Iran as a pawn in its relationship with the United States, raise fears about Russia's trustworthiness. However, the sceptics have been sidelined from decision-making.

The Iranian regime favours a multipolar world order, and the current leadership sees the war in Ukraine as proof of waning US dominance and that the global power balance is shifting from the West to the East.³² In that vein, the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei, has remarked that the war in Ukraine is the result of the "irresponsible expansionist policy of the United States and NATO."³³ Supporting Russia's war in Ukraine is therefore a strategic and pragmatic choice, in line with the intensified outreach to China and the Global South. The war provides Iran with an opportunity to assist Russia at a crucial time. Tehran hopes that it will enhance cooperation in multiple arenas, despite some less successful attempts to expand the relationship in the past. Iran does not want to see a scenario where Russia's global position is weakened.³⁴

The war in Ukraine provides Iran with a chance not only to export, but also to showcase some of its drones and possibly also some of its ballistic missiles.³⁵ As mentioned above, the latter was a key item on the agenda during Russian Defence Minister Shoigu's visit to Tehran in September 2023.

Relaying Russian experiences from Ukraine and transferring seized Western military materiel to Iran could improve Iran's technological capacity through reverse engineering. Iran is studying how Russia utilises its drones in Ukraine, and any lessons learned could potentially be conveyed to Iran's proxies in the Middle East. Russia, in turn, analyses how Iranian drone strikes against US targets in the Middle East can penetrate Western air defence systems.³⁶

Enhanced military cooperation with Russia could possibly help solidify Iran's military industrial base, renew its ageing air force, and accelerate its space programme.

These remain heavily in need of modernisation after more than 40 years under sanctions. A modernised air force would strengthen Iran's resilience in a conventional war, with the Su-35 fighter jet at the top of the wish list. According to media reports, a deal for purchase of Su-35s, Yak-130 jet trainers, and Mi-28 attack helicopters has been finalised, but details surrounding their actual delivery remain unclear. Supposedly, only two Yak-130 jets have been delivered so far.³⁷ The acquisition is another sign of the deepening cooperation between the two states.

Other equipment that Iran would like to procure includes the S-400 ground based air defence system, missile boats, corvettes, and landing ships. Iran's current fleet of submarines is also in need of modernisation, making the Russian Project 636 improved Kilo submarines an attractive option.³⁸

As authoritarian states, Russia and Iran also share an interest in cooperating on digital technology used for social control. The two countries have increased their digital-surveillance cooperation since the beginning of the war in Ukraine. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Russia has delivered surveillance technology to Iran that will help the regime monitor its citizens.³⁹

The pursuit of a deeper relationship with Russia and the support of Russia's efforts in Ukraine has made Iran's relationship with the West even more tense than before, but it is likely that the benefits are deemed to outweigh the possible negative consequences. However, an important and still unanswered question is whether the war in Ukraine will impede Russia's ability to deliver the weapon systems that Iran wants.

CONCLUSIONS

The frequent bilateral meetings between Russian and Iranian officials during 2022-23, and the efforts to enhance pre-existing areas of cooperation as well as entering into new ones, show that the relationship between the two states is indeed growing. Russia's transfer of digital surveillance technology to Iran indicates that internal security is a potential area for closer collaboration.

A few key events during the past decade have paved the way for the increased levels of cooperation currently on display. 1) The war in Syria, where Russia and Iran both intervened in order to save the Assad regime, which created an unprecedented space for military cooperation. 2) The United States' withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, which led to Iran's decision to abandon improved relations with the West in favour of Russia and China. 3) Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which gave Iran the perfect opportunity to make use of its defence industry to aid Russia at a very important time.

A consistent influx of Iranian weapons to Russia will strengthen its military presence in Ukraine, while Iran's enhanced access to advanced military technology could potentially reshape the future power dynamics in the Middle East. As long as both Russia and Iran see more advantages than drawbacks, their cooperation is likely to continue.

Neither Russia nor Iran appear worried about the diplomatic and regional fallout from their intensified security ties. Their mutual desire to forge a closer relationship stems from pragmatic considerations, and is facilitated by a shared view of the world order and mutual experiences of being sanctioned by the West.

Both Russia and Iran would prefer a multipolar world where the United States does not dominate the international system and the West's ability to pressure authoritarian states is diminished. This is no longer an unobtainable dream as China shares this worldview. The three regimes can also bond over facing similar challenges, such as ensuring regime survival and keeping democracy away.

In tandem with its deteriorating relations with the United States and the West, China has become more prone to thwart Western attempts to isolate Russia and Iran by propping up their economies. China thus increasingly enables Russia and Iran, while Russia and Iran enable each other. Consequently, it has already become harder for the West to influence these states' behaviours. ■

Erika Holmquist is a senior analyst and head of the Middle East programme at the Swedish Defence Research Agency.

Ismail Khan is a military analyst with the Russia and Eurasia studies programme at the Swedish Defence Research Agency.

Endnotes

- 1 Ellie Geranmayeh and Nicole Grajewski, “Alone together: How the war in Ukraine shapes the Russian-Iranian relationship,” European Council on Foreign Relations, 6 September 2023, <https://ecfr.eu/publication/alone-together-how-the-war-in-ukraine-shapes-the-russian-iranian-relationship/>.
- 2 President of Russia, Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation [Kontseptsia vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii], adopted by Presidential Decree No. 229, 31 March 2023, www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70811, §4.
- 3 Nikita Smagin, “Front yedinyi i novyi. Kuda vedet voennoe sotrudnichestvo Rossii i Irana,” Carnegie, 22 February 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/91728>.
- 4 Erika Holmquist, Aron Lund, Samuel Neuman Bergenwall, “Proliferation of Iranian missile technology in the Middle East,” FOI Memo 8289, November 2023, <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI%20Memo%208289>.
- 5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, “Director of the Foreign Ministry’s Department for Non-Proliferation and Arms Control, Vladimir Yermakov’s answer to a media question about the situation around Iran’s nuclear programme, 26 December 2023, <https://mid.ru/ru/maps/ir/1923194/>.
- 6 Washington Institute For Near East Policy, “After Ukraine: Russia’s potential military and nuclear compensation to Iran”, 20 January 2024 *After Ukraine: Russia’s Potential Military and Nuclear Compensation to Iran* | Washington Institute.
- 7 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, “Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Activities of the Russian Federation in 2022: Overview of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation”, March 2023. https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1860242/#_Toc130229930.
- 8 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, “Ahead of the upcoming meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran H. Amir-Abdollahian”, 28 March 2023, <https://mid.ru/ru/maps/ir/1860008/>.
- 9 Marianna Belenkaya, “The Security Councils of the Russian Federation and Iran spoke the same language”, *Kommersant*, 9 November 2022, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5653639>.
- 10 Michael Georgy, “Iran agrees to ship missiles, more drones to Russia”, *Reuters*, 18 October 2023 *Iran agrees to ship missiles, more drones to Russia* | Reuters.
- 11 Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, “Sergei Shoigu discussed current issues of bilateral military cooperation with the Chief of the Iranian General Staff”, 19 September 2023, https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12479363@egNews; Vladimir Kuzar, “Russia and Iran strengthen Strategic Partnership”, Red Star Journal - Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, 20 September 2023, <https://ric.mil.ru/Novosti/item/512123/>.
- 12 Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, “Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu got acquainted with Iranian-made missiles and UAVs at an exhibition in Tehran,” 20 September 2023, https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12479428@egNews (Accessed 5 April 2024).
- 13 Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, “Sergei Shoigu, at negotiations with the Minister of Defense and Support of the Armed Forces of Iran, said that interaction between Moscow and Tehran is reaching a new level,” 20 September 2023, https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12479413@egNews (Accessed 5 April 2024).
- 14 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, “Declaration by the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Ways and Means to Counter, Mitigate and Redress the Adverse Impacts of Unilateral Coercive Measures,” 5 December 2023, https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1919257/?lang=en (Accessed 5 April 2024).
- 15 President of Russia, “Russian-Iranian talks,” 7 December 2023, www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72929 (Accessed 5 April 2024).
- 16 Telegram channel of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, Telegram FZ LLC and Telegram Messenger Inc., 15 January 2024, https://t.me/mod_russia/34692.
- 17 Ismail Khan, “The Aerial War Against Ukraine – The First Six Months,” Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI Memo 8133, <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI%20Memo%208133>.
- 18 Monavar Khalaj and Kathrin Hille, “Tehran halts Russian raids on Syria from Iran,” 22 August 2016, *Financial Times*, *Tehran halts Russian raids on Syria from Iran* (ft.com).
- 19 BBC, “Russia ‘showed-off’ over use of Iran airbase for Syria strikes”, 22 august 2016, *Russia 'showed-off' over use of Iran airbase for Syria strikes - BBC News*
- 20 Samuel Charap, Elena Treyger, and Edward Geist, Understanding Russia’s Intervention in Syria, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. 2019, p. 9–12, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3180.html (Accessed 1 February 2024).
- 21 Dion Nissenbaum and Benoit Faucon, “Iran Ships Ammunition to Russia by Caspian Sea to Aid Invasion of Ukraine,” *Wall Street Journal*, 24 April 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-ships-ammunition-to-russia-by-caspian-sea-to-aid-invasion-of-ukraine-e74e8585>.
- 22 Slovo i Delo Analytical Portal, “Dynamics of destruction of ‘shaheds’ by air defense forces,” 20 December 2023, <https://ru.slovoidilo.ua/2023/12/20/infografika/bezopasnost/dinamika-unichtozheniya-shaxedov-silami-pvo>.
- 23 Uzi Rubin, “Russia’s Iranian-Made UAVs: A Technical Profile,” *Royal United Services Institute*, 13 January 2023, www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russias-iranian-made-uavs-technical-profile.
- 24 Justin Bronk, Nick Reynolds, and Jack Watling. The Russian Air War and Ukrainian Requirements for Air Defence. Royal United Services Institute. 2022-11-07, p.32–33, *The Russian Air War and Ukrainian Requirements for Air Defence* | Royal United Services Institute (rusi.org) Accessed 1 February 2024).
- 25 Employed frequently by Iran and its proxies, Ukraine first downed the Mohajer-6 in the southern Ukrainian port city of Odesa in September 2022. For more details, see Ozkarasahin, “Iran’s Mohajer-6 Drones May Tilt the Battlefield Balance in Ukraine,” Jamestown Foundation.

- 26 The latter has a greater range than Russia's short-range ballistic missile Iskander-M 9K720. Erika Holmquist, Aron Lund, Samuel Neuman Bergenwall, "Proliferation of Iranian missile technology in the Middle East," FOI Memo 8289, November 2023, <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI%20Memo%208289>
- 27 "Ukraine's Defence Intelligence does not confirm transfer of Iranian ballistic missiles to Russia," *Ukrainska Pravda*, 25 February 2024, <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2024/02/25/7443618/>.
- 28 Emil Avdaliani, "Iran and Russia Enter a New Level of Military Cooperation Moscow" *Stimson*, 6 March 2024, <https://www.stimson.org/2024/iran-and-russia-enter-a-new-level-of-military-cooperation/>.
- 29 Dalton Bennett and Mary Ilyushina, "Inside the Russian effort to build 6,000 attack drones with Iran's help," *Washington Post*, 17 August 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2023/08/17/russia-iran-drone-shahed-alabuga/>.
- 30 "Missiles Hit Ukraine's Dnipro After Drone Attack On Industrial Targets Deep Inside Russia," *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, 2 April 2024, *Missiles Hit Ukraine's Dnipro After Drone Attack On Industrial Targets Deep Inside Russia* (rferl.org).
- 31 Michael R. Gordon, Gordon Lubold, Benoit Faucon, "Russia Moves Forward With Plans to Buy Iranian Ballistic Missiles," *Wall Street Journal*, 4 January 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/world/russia-moves-forward-with-plans-to-buy-iranian-ballistic-missiles-cf3560e4>.
- 32 Hamid Reza Azizi, "The Ukraine war: The view from Iran," *Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, Fall 2022/Winter 2023, *The Ukraine War: The View from Iran – The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*
- 33 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Interview of the Russia Ambassador to Iran A.Yu. Dedov MIA to Russia Today," 9 February 2023, <https://mid.ru/ru/maps/ir/1853221/>.
- 34 Masoumeh Mohammadi, "Bohran-e Ukrain forsats ya tahdid-e jadid dar ahyaye ravabet-e Iran va Rusiye," *Iranian Journal of International Relations, Krisen i Ukraina - en ny möjlighet eller ett nytt hot i återupprättandet av relationerna mellan Iran och Ryssland?* (iirjournal.ir) (Accessed 5 April 2024).
- 35 "Saderat-e taslihat jomhoriye Iran: forsats ha va zarfiat ha," *Center for Strategic Research*, 21 September 2020, (csr:ir) (Accessed 5 April 2024).
- 36 On January 29, 2024, a Shahed-101 targeted Tower 22, a US military outpost in northeastern Jordan, claiming the lives of three US military personnel and injuring more than 30. This was the first time in history that US military servicemen died as a result of an unmanned drone strike. Nikita Smagin, "Front yedinyi i novyi. Kuda vedet voennoe sotrudnichestvo Rossii I Irana," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 22 February 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/91728>.
- 37 "Iran finalises deal to buy Russian fighter jets – Tasnim," *Reuters*, 28 November 2023, *Iran finalises deal to buy Russian fighter jets - Tasnim | Reuters*; "Iran & Russia: Burgeoning Military Ties," *Iran Primer*, 5 September 2023, *Iran & Russia: Burgeoning Military Ties | The Iran Primer* (usip.org).
- 38 Johanna Mahbub, "Russia and Iran 2023: Results of the Past and Prospects for the Future," *Vestnik Kavkaza*, 18 July 2023, <https://vestnikavkaza.ru/articles/rossia-i-iran-2023-itogi-proslogo-i-perspektivy-budusego.html>.
- 39 Dov Lieber, Benoit Faucon and Michael Amon, "Russia supplies Iran with cyber weapons as military cooperation grows," *Wall Street Journal*, 27 March 2023, *Russia Supplies Iran With Cyber Weapons as Military Cooperation Grows - WSJ*.