

Lobbyist Says Libyan Contracts Valid

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian companies will have the opportunity in post-revolution Libya to work under contracts granted by Moammar Gadhafi in exchange for writing off \$4.5 billion in debts, should Moscow insist on those commitments being honored, a business lobbyist said Thursday.

Libya could even award new contracts to Russia as part of the same agreement, Alexei Mikoyan, a representative of the Russian-Libyan Business Council, a lobbying group, said Thursday.

When Russia forgave the debt in April 2008, Libya agreed to provide Russian companies with what Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin described as "billions of dollars" worth of contracts. The value of the contracts was supposed to measure double the amount of debt, Mikoyan said.

The issue of honoring Libyan contracts gained urgency after Gadhafi lost power in a revolution that Russia was slow to support. The riots thwarted Russia's plans to supply arms, build a major railroad and continue to produce oil and gas in Libya.

Some Western powers, including the United States, France, Italy and Britain, which played a key role in the success of the Libyan rebels, are seen as having priority now in doing business with the country.

If the new rulers respect previous agreements with Russia, it will be "a signal that the current government in Libya is capable of civilized forms of cooperation," Alexei Sukhov, director of the Energy Ministry's international relations department, said at a news conference Thursday.

"The Energy Ministry hopes for restoration and expansion of cooperation," he said.

Russian companies enjoyed no favors when winning the contracts from the Gadhafi government, he said, although he admitted that the "political background" was positive for Russia.

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