

Iran Takes Control of Russian Built Nuclear Power Plant

By [The Moscow Times](#)

September 24, 2013



Russia and Iran signed a protocol Monday transferring control of the Bushehr nuclear power plant to Iranian specialists. **Jason Hickey**

With news of a potential meeting between U.S. President Barack Obama and his newly-elected Iranian counterpart President Hassan Rouhani raising hopes that the stalemate over Iran's nuclear program might finally come to an end, Russia has handed over control of Iran's single nuclear power plant to domestic specialists.

Russia and Iran signed a protocol Monday transferring control of the Bushehr nuclear power plant to Iranian specialists, 37 years after construction on the facility began and two years after operations were launched under international supervision.

Russian specialists will remain on the premises for two years to offer advice and technical support, Itar-Tass reported.

That same day, Iranian foreign minister Ali Akbar Salehi announced that the two governments plan to cooperate on the construction of new power plants as well.

"At the last meeting of the intergovernmental commission of Iran and Russia on economic questions the parties came to an agreement on the building of new nuclear power plants," Salehi said, the government-controlled Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

One of these new reactors will be built in Bushehr "in the near future," Salehi said.

Meanwhile, the new, politically moderate Iranian regime is making major diplomatic inroads with the West at the highest levels of governance.

Following positive meetings with the British Foreign Secretary William Hague and the EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton last week, Rouhani may meet Obama over lunch Tuesday at the United Nations, which would be the first meeting between the two countries' heads of state in 33 years, The Telegraph reported Monday.

Even if this meeting does not occur, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is definitively scheduled to meet Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who will also discuss Iran's nuclear program with Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council Thursday.

However, some Western observers are still suspicious that Iran's nuclear program could be aimed at producing atomic weapons.

A meeting will take place this Friday between Iranian officials and the International Atomic Energy Agency, which announced earlier in September that it is not yet satisfied with Iran's level of transparency.

Yukia Amano, general director of the agency, said that Iran "is not providing the necessary cooperation to enable us to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities," such that his organization "cannot conclude that all nuclear material in Iran is in peaceful activities."

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