

# Iranian Ambassador Tells Russia Sanctions Significance 'Overrated'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

March 03, 2014



Iranian Ambassador to Russia Mehdi Sanaei speaking at a conference. **Mehdi Sanaei**

The Iranian ambassador in Moscow expressed support for Russia as it faces threats of sanctions from Western countries for using its military in Ukraine, and called for increased economic ties between the two nations if sanctions are passed.

Tehran's ambassador Mehdi Sanaei assured the Russian government that when it comes to Western economic sanctions, "the psychological impact of sanctions and pressure from the U.S. and the West on economic institutions are worse than the sanctions themselves," Interfax reported.

The statement follows stern warnings from U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, who said Sunday that "Russia is going to lose, the Russian people are going to lose, and he's [Putin's] going to lose all of the glow that came out of the Olympics, his \$60 billion extravaganza," if Russia does not withdraw its forces from Crimea.

Kerry elaborated, saying that economic sanctions, travel restrictions, visa bans, asset freezes and "isolation with respect to trade, investment" are all on the table.

Sanaei, whose nation has seen various sanctions measures from the UN, EU and U.S., said that the significance of Western sanctions is overrated. He said the restrictions led to the closure of many possibilities, but that the psychological atmosphere surrounding sanctions on Iran are fading, paving the way for sanctioned nations to work together.

The diplomat urged Russia to increase economic ties with Iran, saying, "We hope that our friends' trade and economic institutions are not left behind in this process,"

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