

Russia Says Oil-for-Goods Deliveries to Iran to Start This Year Despite U.S. Warnings

By [The Moscow Times](#)

December 04, 2014



Sergei Kiriyenko (2nd R), head of the Russian state nuclear monopoly Rosatom, and head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization Ali Akbar Salehi (2nd L) attend a signing ceremony in Moscow on Nov. 11, 2014.

Russia could begin shipping materials to Iran this year under an oil-for-goods deal that the U.S. has said would force a response from Washington if it is found to violate international sanctions on the Islamic republic.

Moscow and Tehran — both of which are subject to Western sanctions — have been negotiating a barter deal to relieve the pressure on their economies.

"I don't exclude the possibility that realization [of the deal] will start before the end of the year," Russian Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukayev said Thursday, state news

agency RIA Novosti reported.

The value of the deal is unclear. Reuters reported in January that the swap would be worth \$20 billion annually, but more recent reports suggest it will be much smaller.

The agreement enables Iran to skirt Western measures curbing exports of its oil and would see Russia export grain and equipment, giving a much-needed boost to an economy slipping into recession amid the crisis in Ukraine.

The deal would also allow the Kremlin to strike back asymmetrically against Western sanctions.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said earlier this week that Washington was "aware" of the Russia-Iran talks, and said the U.S. would act if it thought the barter deal violated international sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program.

Russia is one of six countries — including the U.S., China, Britain, France and Germany — negotiating with Iran to make sure that the Islamic republic's nuclear ambitions remain peaceful.

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