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Russia and Iran Sign Military Cooperation Agreement

By The Moscow Times

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Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu

Russia and Iran have signed a military cooperation agreement following Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu's visit to the Islamic Republic on Tuesday, news agency RIA Novosti reported.

Shoigu said after the signing ceremony in Tehran that Russia and Iran — both of which have been sanctioned by the West — had been growing closer in recent years, and that the new military cooperation agreement is "a significant step in strengthening these relations."

The agreement lays out "a theoretical framework of cooperation in the military sphere," he said.

Shoigu said the agreement featured an increase in naval cooperation, including visits by Russian and Iranian naval forces to each other's ports.

No mention was made of any breakthrough in arms trade negotiations, which was said to be

a part of Shoigu's official negotiations with his Iranian counterpart, Hossein Dehghan.

Analysts told The Moscow Times before the meeting that a breakthrough on arms sales would not happen if Russia continued to deny Iran's demand for the delivery of S-300 air defense systems, which were suspended in accordance with U.N. sanctions against Tehran in 2010.

Shoigu will next travel to India, where he is expected to hold similar negotiations with his Indian counterparts. Russia and India are much closer military and military-industrial partners than Moscow and Tehran.

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