

Russian, Iranian Foreign Ministers to Discuss Nuclear Plan, Syria

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif will meet on Monday to discuss the Iranian nuclear program and peace efforts in Syria, Russia's Foreign Ministry said on Saturday.

The ministry said in a statement that the meeting would take place during a working visit by Zarif to Moscow.

Relations between Russia and Iran have warmed over recent years, with both countries sharing hostility to U.S. foreign policy and backing for Syria's President Bashar Assad in Syria.

Moscow sees the recent nuclear deal, which offers Iran relief from sanctions in exchange for curbing its nuclear program, as opening the way to selling Tehran missile defense systems and winning lucrative new nuclear energy contracts.

The two ministers will discuss bilateral relations, "taking into account the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for regulating the situation around the Iranian nuclear program," the statement said.

"An exchange of opinions will take place about key problems on the global and regional agenda, including overcoming the crisis in Syria."

Monday's meeting also comes amid a general diplomatic push by Russia in the Middle East, where Moscow is seeking to curtail U.S. influence and assert itself as an important peace-broker.

On Tuesday, Lavrov met with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir in Moscow, and earlier in the month he travelled to Qatar, meeting al-Jubeir and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.

The recent meetings also focused on efforts to forge an international coalition against the Islamic State, which have floundered because of differences over Syria.

Whereas Russia and Iran support Assad, he is strongly opposed by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

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