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Putin Warned That Russian Science Falling Behind Iran

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The head of the Russian Academy of Sciences Vladimir Fortov

Russian science has lagged so far behind other countries that it is in danger of falling behind Iran, the head of the country's Academy of Sciences told President Vladimir Putin on Thursday.

“We are seeing explosive worldwide growth in the scientific sphere, which, unfortunately, we are clearly falling behind,” Vladimir Fortov was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency.

Using the number of published scientific articles as an indicator of success, Fortov said that over the past 15 years Russia's output of scientific articles increased by 12 percent — compared to a tenfold increase in China and tripling in India.

“China overtook us in 1997, India in 2005 and Brazil in 2007. Iran is breathing down our neck,” he said.

Fortov was speaking at a meeting with President Vladimir Putin on a long-term research and

development strategy for Russian science. At the meeting, Putin extolled achieved progress and defined Russia's ability to produce its own advanced technology as “a key factor of the nation’s sovereignty and security.”

Russia retains cutting-edge technology in certain areas, such as weaponry and the nuclear industry.

But Fortov said some 20 development plans had been worked up in recent years and none had been implemented, according to Interfax.

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