



IRAN-RUSSIA TALKS COULD LEAD TO S-30 FIGHTER JET DEAL

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Iran and Russia are stepping up their military cooperation following meetings this week between the two countries defence chiefs.

Iran's Hossein Dehghan flew to Moscow on Monday to meet Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu

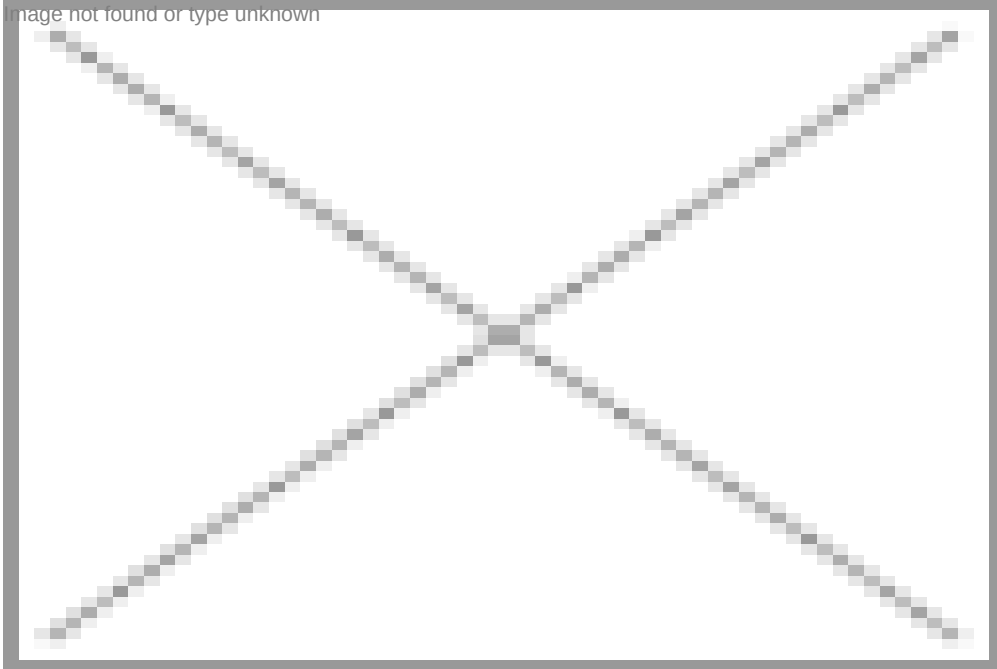
Dehghan also met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Deputy Prime Minister, Dmitri Rogozin. Sources in Iran have suggested that the Iranian air force could benefit from the new agreements by gaining access to fly – and assemble – the Sukhoi S-30 fighter jets.

Ahead of the visit, Iranian Mehr News Agency quoted Dehghan assaying that Tehran needs to focus on modernizing its air force. "Today we need to pay attention to air force and aircraft and we seek to seal a deal with the Russians upon which we will have partnership in the construction and manufacturing of the jet fighter," he said in a TV interview..

Russia has already authorised the delivery of S-300 anti-aircraft batteries to Iran, despite the strong opposition of the Western powers.

Iran is also widely expected to hold missile drills before the end of February.

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