

During Tehran visit, Russia's top defense official offers 'full cooperation' with Iran ahead of possible war with Israel

The Secretary of Russia's Security Council, Sergei Shoigu, visited Tehran on Monday, where he met with newly-elected Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and pledged "full cooperation with Iran."

During the meeting, Pezeshkian told Shoigu that the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, which Iran blames on Israel, was a blatant violation of international laws and regulations.

Israel has not claimed or denied responsibility for the assassination of Haniyeh.

The regime-controlled media quoted Pezeshkian as saying: "The Islamic Republic of Iran is in no way seeking to expand the scope of war and crisis in the region, but certainly this (Zionist) regime will receive a response for its crimes and audacity."

According to Iranian media, Shoigu described Iran as a key strategic ally of Russia in the region, and told Pezeshkian, "We are ready for full cooperation with Iran on regional issues."

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Shoigu, the former defense minister of Russia, visited Tehran

to meet Pezeshkian, the commander of the Iranian Armed Forces, . Mohammad Bagheri, and the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC).

According to the Secretariat of the SNSC, Shoigu's visit aimed to strengthen political and security ties and discuss regional and international issues. However, the timing of the visit, just as Iran has threatened to attack Israel, is cause for concern.

During Shoigu's meeting with Iranian Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Maj-Gen. Mohammad Baqeri, they spoke about the shift in global power dynamics away from U.S. dominance.

"The United States is well aware that the era of unipolar power is over," Baqeri said, according to state media.

Russia and Iran have been increasingly cooperating since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Iran has become the primary supplier of drones to Russia, and the two countries recently agreed to extend their military and intelligence cooperation.

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According to The New York Times, Iran recently requested advanced Russian air-defense systems as part of its preparations for a conflict with Israel.

In February, Reuters reported that Iran had provided Russia with a large number of ballistic missiles.

The Times reported that analysts believe Russia, heavily dependent on Iranian drones for its Ukraine campaign, cannot afford to reject Iran's request.

Last week, following the assassination of Haniyeh, Russia Today quoted Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov saying that Russia "strongly condemns this attack that resulted in the

death of Haniyeh.”

“Such actions are aimed against attempts to establish peace in the region and can significantly destabilize the already tense situation,” Peskov stated.

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