

Preliminary remarks made by Ambassador Mohammad Taghi Hosseini, Vice President of the IPIS for Education and Training

Presented at the 6th Iran-Russia Dialogue of the Valdai Discussion Club and the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS)

Moscow, June 3, 2024

At the beginning I would like to thank you for organizing this meeting and for the invitation and warm hospitality. First of all, I pay tribute to President Ibrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdullahian, who were martyred in a heartbreaking helicopter crash. Their memory will forever be remembered by our nation. Martyrdom of these personalities was indeed a great loss for Iran and for the region as a whole. The passion and emotion our people showed in mourning these characters and the international sympathy we received were well observed. It shows the national solidarity and international respect of Iran.

On the other side this incident manifested the strength, stability and resilience of the Iranian nation and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Despite the bitterness of this incident, the flow of affairs in the country was not disrupted even for a moment, and things continued as usual, and people have now left behind this great grief, which will of course never be forgotten, and have started the constitutional process for presidential election to be held on July 8. At the same date the new president will be elected and subsequently the new cabinet will be established to take over the affairs of the government quiet soon.

International relations professionals, regardless of their intellectual orientation, are largely in agreement that the current world order is in transition. This transition in the world order brings with it many opportunities and challenges. Each of the world powers or power blocs

seeks to play an effective role in shaping the future order. The United States and a group of its allies have taken many unilateral and hegemonic actions, thus playing a major role in delegitimizing and destabilizing the world order. Aggression to different countries, attempts to destabilize and overthrow legitimate governments, and the unlimited and brutal use of sanctions to advance goals and policies, which actually means collective punishment of people in different regions, are among the actions that caused the anger and resentment of many people around the world.

Iran and Russia are two important and influential countries in the region, and they face challenges in their various surrounding areas that affect both of them at the same time. Their cooperation is important and would produce significant results. The situation in the Central Asia and the Caucasus, the current situation in Afghanistan due to the withdrawal of the United States and the return of the Taliban, the threats emanated from the rise of ISIS in adjacent of our region and last but not the least, dealing with comprehensive, cruel and oppressive sanctions imposed by the West against the two nations, are just examples that necessitates the cooperation and coordination between the two countries in different spheres. The cooperation between the two countries in the Syrian crisis and the fight against ISIS terrorism and the persuasion of the political process to establish stability in this sensitive region was an example of a useful and practical cooperation.

Participation in BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization provides a good opportunity for Iran and the Russian Federation to promote multilateralism and strengthen regional and international cooperation.

Russia enjoys an important place Iran's foreign policy. Relations between the two countries significantly increased in recent years. But you probably agree with me that the volume of economic cooperation is not

up to the expectation of both sides. There are a lot of capacities in their economic relations that should be explored and promoted.

The current situation in the Middle East has created a regional and global threat. For about eight months now, the Palestinian people have been subjected to the most brutal and cruel operations of genocide and ethnic cleansing. In this widespread pervasive and cruel crime against humanity, not only the innocent civilian people of Palestinian including women and children are victims, but all the principles of human rights, humanitarian law and human ethics are at risk of destruction. The Israeli regime has shown that it does not adhere to any legal, moral or human principles. The aggression against Iran's diplomatic premises in Damascus is a flagrant violation of the diplomatic and consular rights and immunities that countries have been committed to for a long time.

The nuclear threat of the Israeli regime is a constant threat to our region, and with this regime's threats to use this deadly weapon, this concern is an existential and even greater than ever. The issue of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has become more vital than ever before. Establishment of a Middle East Zone free of nuclear weapons was suggested by Iran in 1974, and Iran is still seeking to achieve this goal. At the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference in 1995, the three nuclear powers members of the Treaty, namely the United States, Russian Federation and the United Kingdom, sponsored a resolution that pledged the three countries to try to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Since then, no meaningful progress has been made so far. Because Israel continues to carry out illegal nuclear activities outside the safeguarding in the development of nuclear weapons and also other weapons of mass destruction, and does not accept any international supervision to its activities. This situation certainly cannot continue like this forever. The countries of the region cannot sacrifice their security and only observe the ever-increasing

expansion of Israel's weapons of mass destruction. I emphasize that the only way out of this situation is the realization of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and making Israel committed to disarm and destruct its weapons of mass destruction as well as to adhere to international treaties in the field and the international safeguards.

I hope this meeting will propose effective steps to increase cooperation between Iran and Russia in this crucial areas.