

Trouble between Moscow and Tehran?

By [The Saker](#)

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While the granting of the use of the Iranian airbase in Hamedan to the Russian Aerospace forces was greeted with a lot of coverage, the recent departure from Hamedan of the Russian Tu-22M3 has attracted much less attention. The official Russian line on this was very neutral, as shown by [this article](#) in Sputnik.

What really took place, however, deserves some further scrutiny.

First, it should be said that the Russians had been using that airbase for a quite a while already, but that the deal between Russia and Iran had been kept secret. [According to Russian sources](#), it appears that the Iranians were completely surprised when this information was made public and that some factions inside the ruling elites of Iran were outraged at what they saw as a public admission of a compromise of Iranian sovereignty. First, it was the Iranian Defense Minister, Hossein Dehghan, who expressed his outrage at what he saw was a Russian leak made without Iranian agreement. According to Dehghan, the Russians wanted to show that they were an influential superpower and that is why they made that information public. Soon after that, both the Iranian Foreign Ministry and the Russian ambassador to Tehran confirmed that the Russians had left Hamedan and that they would only come back when the two countries would agree to their return.

However, there might be more to this than meet the eye.

According to the same Russian sources, what might be taking place is an internal struggle between different Iranian factions, specifically the Iranian armed forces and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps ([IRGC](#)). The Russians believe that the website which initially released this information, Warfare Worldwide, is linked to the Iranian Armed Forces who, according to the Russians, leaked this info (and pictures) through Warfare Worldwide in order to embarrass the Iranian government. Once this information was made public, the Russians had to confirm it, and that resulted in some very heated exchanges in the Iranian Parliament. Russian experts have stated that the decision to offer the use of Hamedan to the Russian Aerospace forces could not have been made without the person approval of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, and the Russian Aerospace forces had been using the Hamedan airbase since last year, but the (fully understandable) hyper-sensitivity of the Iranian public to the issue of sovereignty made the publication of this information highly embarrassing for the Iranians, especially the conservatives. A second problem is that the Russians were mostly working with the IRGC, since they are the ones fighting inside Syria, while the Iranian Armed forces were unhappy with this arrangement.

Whatever may be the case, in the short term this is definitely bad news, not only because

this complicates the execution of Russian air strikes against Daesh, but also because it shows that all is not perfect and sunny in the informal alliance between Russia and Iran. In the mid to long term, I fully expect both sides to mend fences and workout a series of mutually acceptable collaboration protocols between the two countries. In that sense, this is good news.

In truth, neither Russia nor Iran have any options but to work together. The Iranians in particular absolutely need a strong partnership with Russia to keep the US-Takfiri-Zionist-Wahabi (what a combo!) alliance at bay and to continue to be the backbone of the resistance against the AngloZionist Empire in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and elsewhere. If this leak was truly an effort of the armed forces to sabotage an IRGC run operation, than the Supreme Leader will have to “clean house” and make sure that all the factions of the Iranian government work together rather than against each other. Considering the kind of vicious infighting taking place for years (and still continuing) in Russia between the Atlantic Integrationists and the Eurasian Sovereignists, I think that Vladimir Putin will have a very great deal of understanding for the difficulty to run a covert operation in a country in which different factions compete against each other.

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