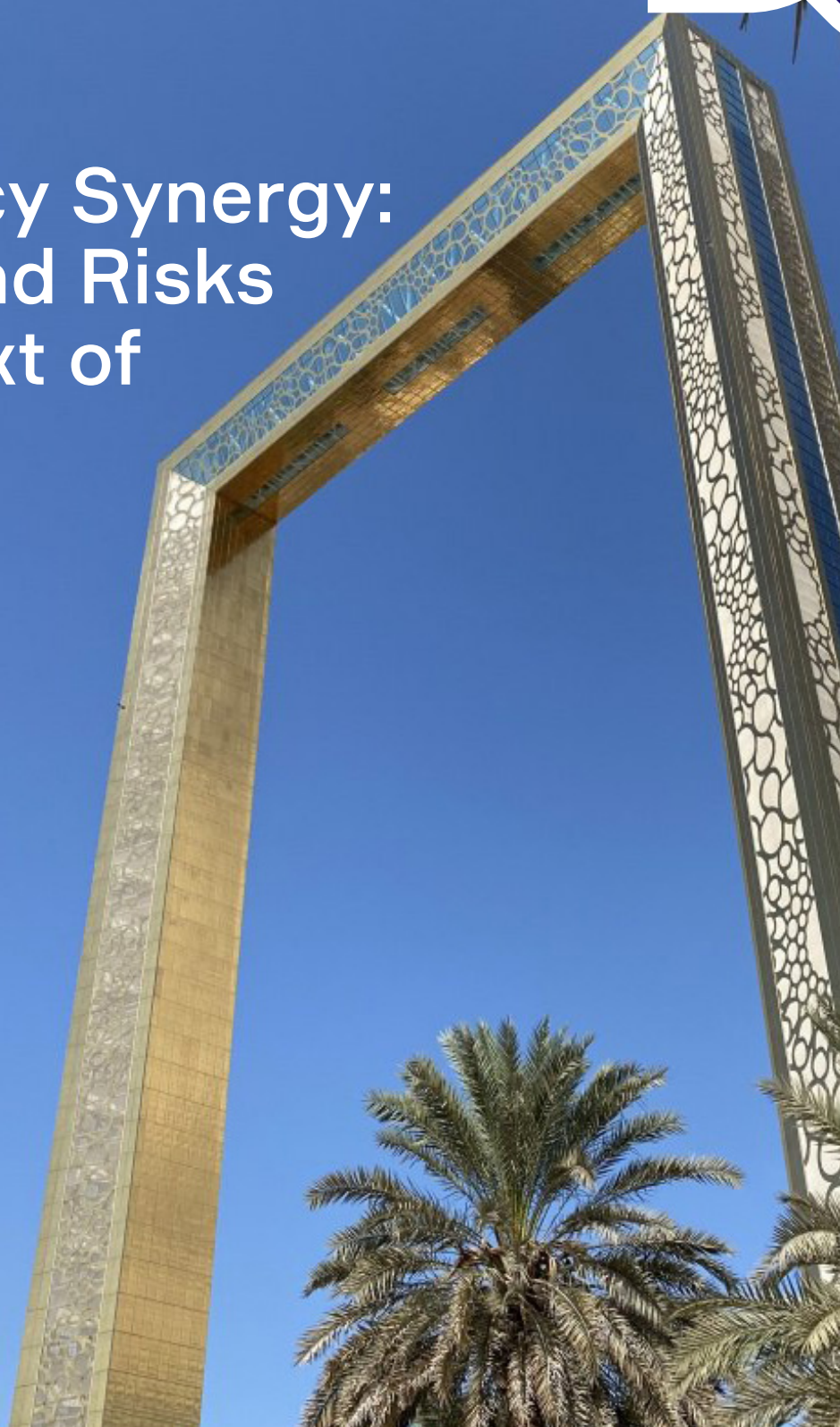
The Evgeny Primakov
Center for International
Cooperation

Policy brief

Russia–UAE Foreign Policy Synergy: Prospects and Risks in the Context of a Regional Crisis

A.I. Shelkovnikov



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Russia–UAE Foreign Policy Synergy: Prospects and Risks in the Context of a Regional Crisis

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Key points

- The Russia – UAE strategic partnership, which grew steadily from 2023 to 2025, is now under strain from the unprecedented conflict in the Persian Gulf. The war in Iran, sparked by coordinated U.S. and Israeli strikes on February 28, 2026, and Iran's retaliatory attacks, presented as targeting U.S. military facilities but also hitting critical economic and civilian infrastructure across GCC countries, are reshaping the context for bilateral dialogue.
- The foundation of Russia - UAE strategic alignment is their shared commitment to a multipolar world order, the diversification of economic ties, and the political settlement of regional conflicts.
- The core pillars of Russia - UAE cooperation in energy, investment (with mutual investments exceeding $40 billion), trade, and technical collaboration remain solid. Bilateral coordination in the energy sector, especially amid volatility in oil markets, continues to be a key channel of engagement. At the same time, the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz and disruptions to traditional maritime routes are opening up opportunities for new logistics corridors and partnership formats, including in adjacent regions.
- Russia's concept of collective security in the Persian Gulf is gaining renewed relevance, but it needs to be adapted to post-conflict realities and backed by concrete Russian mediation efforts in the regional crisis.
- In the current environment, Russia should maintain a stance of non-involvement while consistently positioning itself as a mediator and supporting a political settlement of the crisis. Its central task is to reassure its Arab partners in the Gulf that Russia's channels of communication with Tehran are intended to promote de-escalation.
- Looking ahead to a post-conflict settlement, Russia and the UAE should consider opportunities for joint participation in projects to rebuild infrastructure in Iran. Such initiatives could not only reinforce the conditions for de-escalation, but also help restore lost trust between Arab states and Iran, an essential prerequisite for any stable regional security architecture.

1. Strategic Priorities of Russia and the UAE: Areas of Convergence and Divergence

Russia - UAE relations are currently in one of the most dynamic phases in their fifty-year history of diplomatic engagement. The official visit of UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed to Moscow in January 2026, his second in six months and his fifth since 2022, underscored a consistent political commitment to deepening cooperation, grounded in a broad and expanding institutional framework. Over the past year, several major agreements have been concluded, including those on trade in services and investment (August 2025), the EAEU - UAE economic partnership (June 2025), and the avoidance of double taxation (February 2025, which entered into force on 1 January 2026). Together, these accords have further strengthened an already extensive architecture of bilateral cooperation.

Investment cooperation also continues to grow. According to Russian Minister of Economic Development Maxim Reshetnikov, mutual investments between the two countries exceeded $40 billion in 2024, including $17 billion in UAE investments in Russia and over $25 billion in Russian investments in the UAE.[1] Cultural and humanitarian ties are steadily expanding, and the annual flow of tourists continues to grow[2]. Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that the UAE has entered Russia's top ten largest trade and economic partners, firmly establishing itself as Russia's leading economic partner in the Arab world. By the end of 2025, bilateral trade turnover exceeded $12 billion.[3] This represents nearly a fourfold increase compared to the pre-pandemic level in 2019, when trade stood at $3.5 billion. Both sides have also set a target of doubling bilateral trade within the next five years.[4] The structure of trade is also becoming increasingly diversified: non-oil trade has grown more than

1 URL: https://economy.gov.ru/material/news/rossiya_i_oae_sozdadut_sovmestnuyu_rabochuyu_gruppu_po_razvitiyu_vzaimnogo_turizma.html (date of access: 09.06.2026).

2 According to official data, around 2 million Russian tourists visited the UAE in 2025, while more than 70,000 Emiratis visited Russia—making these the highest figures among the Arabian Gulf monarchies. URL: https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/25740791 (date of access: 09.06.2026).

3 URL: https://economy.gov.ru/material/news/tovarooborot_rossii_i_oae_prevysil_12_mlrd_dollarov.html (date of access: 09.06.2026).

4 URL: https://www.interfax.ru/world/1040107 (date of access: 09.06.2026).

four times over this period, with rising Russian exports of agricultural products, technology, and services. The UAE has become an important hub for Russian businesses and imports amid ongoing sanctions restrictions.

Economic convergence is underpinned by a notable overlap in the two countries' strategic visions of global transformation. Moscow and Abu Dhabi both advocate a more inclusive, multipolar international order. The UAE's accession to BRICS in January 2024, its status as a dialogue partner of the SCO, and its active engagement with EAEU structures all reflect Abu Dhabi's effort to diversify its external partnerships beyond traditional Western ties, while also contributing to a gradual rapprochement with Russia. Despite its deep strategic security relationship with Washington, the UAE consistently pursues a foreign policy grounded in autonomous decision-making. This approach broadly aligns with Russia's own vision of global governance.

A logical outcome of this policy has been the UAE's decision not to join Western sanctions against Russia and to maintain a broadly neutral stance on the Russia - Ukraine conflict[5]. This has reinforced Abu Dhabi's role as an actor capable of fostering mutual trust and confirmed its potential as a platform for diplomatic engagement. This approach has also translated into the UAE's repeated facilitation of prisoner and detainee exchanges between Russia and Ukraine[6], as well as the hosting of trilateral security talks between Russia, the United States, and Ukraine in Abu Dhabi in early 2026.[7]

At the same time, the UAE remains one of the leading actors in Middle Eastern politics, with broad interests across most countries in the region and various forms of involvement in regional crises (Syria, Libya, Yemen, Sudan), which often intersect with Russia's own engagements.[8] By promoting a security architecture based on balancing the interests of all regional actors, Russia inevitably engages with the UAE, recognizing that no stable or long-term conflict resolution mechanisms can be developed without taking the country's position into account.

Nevertheless, shaping Russia's regional foreign policy and maintaining effective engagement with an active actor such as the UAE requires a willingness to carefully balance relations with other regional centers of power. In early 2026, this was particularly evident in Russia's relations with the UAE and Saudi Arabia, two of its most important partners in the region.[9] Significant divergences

5 Although the UAE supported a number of anti-Russian resolutions in the UN General Assembly during the initial phase of the crisis, in most cases (including General Assembly resolutions ES-11/3, ES-11/5, ES-11/7, ES-11/8, and ES-11/9), it did not take an explicitly anti-Russian position and instead abstained.

6 URL: https://www.mofa.gov.ae/MediaHub/News/2026/2/5/UAE-Russia (date of access: 09.06.2026).

7 URL: https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/8401499 (date of access: 09.06.2026).

8 In particular, Russia's tactical cooperation with the UAE has been evident at various stages of the Syrian and Libyan crises.

9 URL: https://www.interfax-russia.ru/rossiya-i-mir/rossiya-rassmatrivaet-saudovskuyu-araviyu-kak-strategicheskogo-partnera-na-blizhnem-vostoke-lavrov (date of access: 09.06.2026).

in their interests across several regional crises (Yemen, Sudan, the Horn of Africa, and the UAE's continued engagement with Israel), combined with economic competition, have led to growing tensions between Abu Dhabi and Riyadh. This has, in turn, raised concerns in Moscow[10], which has no interest in taking sides in such disputes.

These developments were pushed to the backburner on February 28, 2026, with the outbreak of the war in Iran[11], triggered by coordinated U.S. and Israeli strikes and followed by Iranian attacks on GCC countries. The conflict highlighted a clear asymmetry in how the Iranian factor is perceived. For the UAE, Iran represents a central national security challenge, whereas Russia approaches the issue through the lens of a broader strategic balance. This framework involves maintaining relations with both Tehran and Arab states, which remain key strategic partners for Moscow in the region.

This approach by the UAE is not surprising. Relations between the two countries have long been complicated by the dispute over three islands in the Strait of Hormuz, which are controlled by Iran but claimed by the UAE as occupied territory. Historically, however, the UAE's position on Iran has not been monolithic. It has oscillated between a more hardline hawkish stance, primarily associated with Abu Dhabi's elites, and a more conciliatory approach, traditionally linked to Dubai's leadership. With the consolidation of power within the federal structures by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE has increasingly adopted a more assertive policy of containing Iran in the region[12], reinforcing its perception of Tehran as a security threat.[13]

At present, the situation is further complicated by Iranian attacks, which have become the most serious threat to the UAE's national security and to the stability of its economic development model. According to the UAE Ministry of Defence, the Emirates have been subjected to more than 2,000 strikes by Iran over the course of a month of conflict.[14] The attacks damaged civilian infrastructure in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Fujairah, and the northern emirates, affecting key tourist districts, hotels, airports, port

10 URL: https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/2069202/ (date of access: 09.06.2026).

11 Although these issues have not been fully resolved, they may once again become relevant after the current phase of the Gulf crisis subsides.

12 Moreover, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed had previously on several occasions advocated a military approach to the Iranian issue, as revealed in leaked U.S. diplomatic cables. However, since 2019, amid the escalation of regional crises, he has adopted a more cautious approach toward Iran.

13 Shelkovnikov A. The Evolution of the UAE's National Security Policy in Its Regional Dimension, 2011–2021. PhD dissertation in Political Science (5.5.4 – International Relations, Global and Regional Studies). Moscow, 2025. 349 pp.

14 UAE air defense systems have intercepted a total of more than 470 ballistic missiles, over 2,000 drones, and more than 20 cruise missiles. Iranian attacks have resulted in the deaths of more than 10 people and injuries to a further 200 individuals from 28 countries.

facilities, and oil infrastructure.[15] For the UAE's socio-economic model, which is built on stability, this represents a major blow not only to infrastructure but also to its international image. The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs has classified the Iranian attacks as acts of terrorism[16], while the President's diplomatic adviser, Anwar Gargash, stressed that the war must end with a long-term security settlement for the Gulf, rather than a temporary ceasefire.[17]

The current crisis has exposed the complexity of the UAE's position. On the one hand, Abu Dhabi understands that the escalation was triggered by Washington, which unilaterally supported Israel while disregarding warnings from Arab partners.[18] On the other hand, Iranian attacks, while presented as strikes against U.S. military targets, have hit civilian infrastructure in sovereign states, making it impossible to maintain the previous policy of de-escalation with Tehran.[19] Contrary to expectations, Emirati experts and officials note that the Iranian attacks have underscored the need to further develop defense relations with the United States. At the same time, this does not contradict the UAE's continued pursuit of a diversified and expanded network of external partnerships.[20]

Russia has adopted a position of strategic caution in the crisis. Moscow condemned the U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran, characterizing them as an act of armed aggression, and called for a ceasefire.[21] During the vote in the UN Security Council on Resolution 2817, which condemned Iranian attacks on Gulf countries, Russia and China abstained, without exercising their veto power.[22] At the same time, a Russian draft resolution calling on all parties to cease hostilities was blocked by the United States.[23] In early April, Russia and China jointly blocked a resolution drafted by Bahrain that would have authorized

15 URL: https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/uae-crude-output-falls-by-more-than-half-hormuz-closure-forces-shut-ins-2026-03-16/ (date of access: 09.06.2026).

16 URL: https://www.mofa.gov.ae/MediaHub/News/2026/3/19/uae-iran (date of access: 09.06.2026).

17 URL: https://gulfnews.com/uae/gargash-calls-for-lasting-gulf-security-beyond-a-ceasefire-1.500483096 (date of access: 09.06.2026).

18 Prior to the current escalation, the Arab Gulf monarchies (Oman, Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia) were actively engaged in diplomatic initiatives aimed at securing an agreement between the United States and Iran, repeatedly warning of the risks of a potential military resolution to the conflict. URL: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/1/16/gulf-countries-gear-up-diplomacy-to-stave-off-us-iran-escalation (date of access: 09.06.2026).

19 The Iranian attacks on GCC states were carried out despite repeated assurances and warnings from Arab capitals (including Abu Dhabi) to the Iranian side that their airspace would not be used for U.S. attacks against the Islamic Republic of Iran. URL: https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/mediahub/news/2026/1/26/uae-iran (date of access: 09.06.2026).

20 Anwar Gargash stated that the United States is no longer the sole shield, but remains a cornerstone of the UAE's defense strategy. URL: https://www.cfr.org/event/conversation-anwar-gargash-0 (date of access: 09.06.2026).

21 URL: https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/2083284/ (date of access: 09.06.2026).

22 URL: https://tass.ru/politika/26736781 (date of access: 09.06.2026).

23 URL: https://news.un.org/ru/story/2026/03/1467524 (date of access: 09.06.2026).

international forces to use all necessary means to ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, opposing any further escalation of the crisis.[24] Expert discussions suggest that this position has been received ambivalently in the Arab Gulf states. While Russia's strategic interests in maintaining relations with Iran are well understood, GCC countries, particularly the UAE, expect Moscow to exert greater influence on Tehran to halt the attacks. The situation is further complicated by Western accusations that Russia is providing intelligence support to Iran, claims that have been denied by the Russian Foreign Ministry.[25] Nevertheless, Arab think tanks and leading Emirati analysts have warned that, if such allegations were to be substantiated, they could have negative consequences for the strategic relations between GCC countries and Russia.[26]

Particular attention for Russia is warranted by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's visit to the UAE on March 28, 2026, and the resulting agreement on cooperation in the fields of security and defense.[27] Ukraine offered the UAE its experience in countering drones.[28] Similar agreements were also reached with Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The development of a defense partnership between the UAE and Ukraine, a country engaged in an armed conflict with Russia, creates additional pressure on Russia - UAE cooperation, although both sides are likely to seek to compartmentalize this track from their broader strategic partnership.

At the same time, this rapprochement carries risks for Abu Dhabi's mediating role in the Russia – Ukraine settlement, as it could raise questions about the perception of the UAE's neutrality. It should also be noted that Ukraine is unlikely to fully implement such initiatives while remaining in active conflict, and its proposals may also be aimed at demonstrating its strategic relevance beyond Europe in a media and diplomatic sense. Given the uncertainties surrounding such partnerships, one possible option for regional states, including the UAE, could be the acquisition of additional Russian air defense systems designed to counter ballistic missiles and UAVs.

24 URL: https://news.un.org/ru/story/2026/04/1467670 (date of access: 09.06.2026).

25 URL: https://tass.ru/politika/26903955 (date of access: 09.06.2026).

26 In particular, these warnings are reflected in the assessments of Ibtisam Al-Ketbi, head of the Emirates Policy Center, and Professor Abdulkhaleq Abdulla. URL: https://www.thetimes.com/world/middle-east/article/putin-iran-gulf-uae-ukraine-war-sk7slvhgj (date of access: 09.06.2026).

27 Previously, the UAE Presidential Diplomatic Adviser Anwar Gargash had also indicated the possibility of such cooperation. URL: https://www.cfr.org/event/conversation-anwar-gargash-0 (date of access: 09.06.2026).

28 URL: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/28/zelenskyy-signs-air-defence-deals-with-uae-qatar-on-gulf-tour (date of access: 09.06.2026).

2. Russia's Concept of Collective Security in the Gulf: Status and Prospects Amid the Crisis

Since the 1990s, Russia has consistently promoted the Concept of Collective Security in the Persian Gulf region. It is based on the principles of strict adherence to international law, multilateralism, inclusivity, and a phased approach. Its ultimate goal is to establish a dialogue-based mechanism for security and cooperation, conflict resolution, and dispute settlement involving the Gulf states, as well as external actors, including the permanent members of the UN Security Council, and regional organizations such as the GCC, the Arab League, and the OIC.

In the context of the current crisis, the relevance of the Concept has both increased and come under closer scrutiny. The war and large-scale Iranian attacks on all six GCC states and Iraq have exposed the structural vulnerabilities of the existing security architecture, which has been built primarily on bilateral defense agreements with the United States. For a long time, Gulf monarchies operated on the assumption that the presence of U.S. military bases on their territory would provide protection against the Iranian threat. However, Iranian and Israeli missile strikes on Qatar in 2025, as well as large-scale Iranian attacks on Gulf monarchies in February - March 2026, have once again demonstrated the limits of such guarantees. As a result of U.S. actions, regional states found themselves at the center of a conflict they did not initiate, while American military facilities on their territory have, in turn, become magnets for Iranian strikes.

Increasingly critical assessments of U.S. foreign policy are being voiced in Arab expert circles, while countries in the region are seeking to broaden their pool of defense equipment suppliers.[29] At the official level, questions are also being raised about the extent to which foreign policy decisions in Washington[30] are truly autonomous, given perceptions that they do not adequately account

29 URL: https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/17/world/middleeast/iran-war-gulf-saudi-arabia-qatar-emirates.html (date of access: 09.06.2026).

30 His refers to an article by Omani Foreign Minister Al-Busaidi, in which he directly suggested that Israel had pushed the United States into initiating the conflict. URL: https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2026/03/18/americas-friends-must-help-extricate-it-from-an-unlawful-war (date of access: 09.06.2026).

for the security interests of the Gulf monarchies. The situation has revived memories of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, which most GCC states opposed, as well as Washington's perceived inconsistency during the Arab Spring and its lack of coordination with Arab monarchies over the JCPOA in 2015.[31]

Against this backdrop, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov[32] has reminded regional partners of the relevance of the Concept amid the ongoing crisis. Russia's vision of a regional security architecture traditionally aligns with Oman's approach, which calls for an inclusive regional dialogue[33]. In a conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin on March 2, 2026, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman stated that "the Russian side can currently play a positive, stabilizing role, given the friendly relations it maintains with both Iran and the Gulf states[34]." Dialogue between Russia and the GCC also continues at the level of foreign ministers. During these meetings, Russia has repeatedly emphasized its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Arabian monarchies.[35]

At the same time, the promotion of Russia's Concept faces a number of obstacles. One of them is the erosion of trust in Iran in several Arab Gulf states (with the exception of Oman). According to UAE Presidential Diplomatic Adviser Anwar Gargash, regional states and the Islamic Republic had a "gentlemen's agreement, not formally written, that Iran would not strike the region, and that the region would not allow its facilities or airspace to be used for any attacks on Iran... Iran has effectively discarded this gentlemen's agreement by acting aggressively."[36] However, the Iranian side, in turn, argues that the territories of Gulf Arab states have for many years been used to launch attacks against Iran and Iranian interests. In such conditions, the prospects for incorporating Iran into regional security mechanisms remain limited. Another obstacle is the heightened scrutiny by Arab monarchies of Russia's actions, and of anything that could be interpreted as support for Iran. This perception is not only promoted by Western countries[37] but also partially reflected in concerns expressed by regional

31 URL: https://www.grc.net/single-commentary/368 (date of access: 09.06.2026).
32 URL: https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/2088330/ (date of access: 09.06.2026).
33 URL: https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2026/03/18/americas-friends-must-help-extricate-it-from-an-unlawful-war (date of access: 09.06.2026).
34 URL: http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/79245 (date of access: 09.06.2026).
35 URL: https://www.interfax.ru/russia/1081002 (date of access: 09.06.2026).
36 URL: https://www.cfr.org/event/conversation-anwar-gargash-0 (date of access: 09.06.2026).
37 URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/mar/27/european-intelligence-agencies-russia-supplying-drones-iran (date of access: 09.06.2026).

experts.[38] Such divergences weaken the perception of Russia as an impartial mediator and may, in turn, complicate the advancement of any Russian initiatives in the region.

Nevertheless, the implementation of proposals from the Russian Concept remains possible. Notably, even the UAE, despite its sharply critical rhetoric toward Iranian strikes, has not closed the door to future dialogue. UAE Presidential Diplomatic Adviser Anwar Gargash stated: "Despite ongoing tensions, the UAE is convinced that a political solution is the only path to ensuring sustainable security in the region, rather than temporary measures that could reproduce instability for decades[39]." At the same time, as Abu Dhabi emphasizes, any settlement with Iran can no longer be limited to the nuclear issue alone. "Missiles, drones, terrorist groups, and the blockade of international shipping lanes have become central elements of the negotiating agenda."[40]

In the context of the ongoing crisis, strengthening Moscow's position in the emerging regional security architecture requires addressing several key tasks. Russia must clearly demonstrate to Arab capitals that its channels of communication with Tehran are being used for de-escalation and potential future conflict resolution, rather than for supporting Iranian attacks. At the same time, the Concept needs to be adapted to the new realities of an ongoing military confrontation, while also taking into account the depth of the trust deficit between Iran and the Arab monarchies, a rift that could persist for decades.

Russia would be best served by consistently adhering to a policy of non-involvement in the conflict while reinforcing its role as a facilitator of political settlement. From the perspective of its strategic interests, this requires maintaining open diplomatic channels with both Tehran and the capitals of the Gulf Arab states, anchored in a clear and credible commitment to de-escalation. Mediation efforts could be strengthened through practical and verifiable steps, including support for humanitarian corridors, participation in diplomatic initiatives aimed at ensuring the security of maritime traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, and the advancement of negotiation formats that reflect the interests and security concerns of all parties involved. To preserve trust among its Gulf partners, Moscow should also avoid any actions or forms

38 Al Khatlan Saleh Bin Mohammed. Does Russia Support the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps? // grc.net 2026. April, 2026. URL: https://www.grc.net/documents/69cd0df098ef9DoesRussiaSupportIslamicRevolutionaryGuardCorpscompressed.pdf (date of access: 09.06.2026).

Al-Atrush S. Putin's bond with Iran could cost him friends in the Gulf // The Times. URL: https://www.thetimes.com/world/middle-east/article/putin-iran-gulf-uae-ukraine-war-sk7slvhgj (date of access: 09.06.2026).

39 URL: https://gulfnews.com/uae/gargash-says-uae-position-misread-by-some-media-amid-iranian-attacks-1.500489189 (date of access: 09.06.2026).

40 URL: https://www.wsj.com/opinion/the-u-a-e-stands-up-to-iran-ec229761 (date of access: 09.06.2026).

of assistance that could be interpreted as enabling military strikes against the territories of either Arab states or Iran, thereby safeguarding its image as a balanced and reliable intermediary.

3. Promising Areas for the Development of Russia–UAE Relations

The current crisis creates both risks and opportunities for new forms of Russia–UAE engagement, particularly in the energy market. The disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly 20% of global oil exports flowed before the war, has made coordination in this area even more critical. Oil prices surged by 50% in March 2026, while global oil consumption fell by 12 million barrels per day. Joint efforts by Moscow and Abu Dhabi to stabilize the market have become an important channel for maintaining strategic dialogue amid the ongoing regional crisis.

A promising but still underdeveloped area could be logistics cooperation. There are already agreements on investments in port infrastructure between Rosatom and the Emirati port operator DP World in the context of the Northern Sea Route. If successfully advanced, this initiative could be expanded to other regions.

In particular, the UAE is one of the largest investors in Africa, with a well-developed port infrastructure network, while Russia is expanding its presence on the continent and views African states not only as important political and economic partners, but also as a space for testing models of cooperation in a changing global order with friendly countries. Given Russia's limited financial and logistical capacities, cooperation with the UAE offers a strategic pathway to access key transport hubs and investment opportunities in Africa. Coordination could include the development of transport corridors, joint investment in port and warehousing infrastructure, and food logistics. In the context of the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz and ongoing disruptions to shipping in the Red Sea, alternative routes and African coastal corridors are gaining increased importance. There is also potential for cooperation in transport and logistics in Central Asia and the Caucasus, where EAEU transport projects could be integrated into the UAE's global logistics network.

Another promising area of cooperation is digitalization. The UAE has made artificial intelligence and the digital economy central pillars of its national development strategy. Russian technology companies are already present in the Emirati market, for example, Yandex is actively expanding its services

in the UAE. Further technological cooperation could include joint projects in big data processing, cybersecurity, fintech, and the development of digital infrastructure for smart cities. At the same time, this area is highly competitive: the UAE is simultaneously building large-scale technological partnerships with the United States and China, both of which possess broader capabilities and greater capacity to implement large-scale initiatives in the region.

In a post-conflict settlement scenario, Russia and the UAE should consider joint participation in economic projects aimed at rebuilding infrastructure in Iran. Russia could act as a facilitator of such initiatives, thereby not only strengthening the conditions for potential de-escalation but also contributing constructively to the region's future. Such engagement could help restore a degree of trust between the UAE and Iran, an essential requirement for both sides in establishing a sustainable and long-term regional security architecture.

***

The eventual resolution of the current crisis in the Persian Gulf, whenever it occurs, will open a window of opportunity for shaping new regional security mechanisms. Russia and the UAE share a strategic interest in establishing a predictable and stable order in the Gulf. Energy, logistics, technology, and humanitarian cooperation are areas capable of sustaining and further developing the partnership regardless of the complications arising from the current conflict.

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