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Atom Diplomacy

Rosatom state technological corporation is the most successful one at promoting the Russian agenda in the international arena. According to the head of the corporation, Alexey Likhachev, the share of the company he manages in the global market for the construction of nuclear power plants, as well as nuclear science centers, has exceeded 90%. Russian specialists are constructing 39 new power units in 11 countries. This is not counting experimental stations and scientific laboratories.

Under unprecedented sanction pressure on Russian companies, the state corporation is not just surviving—it is becoming the most effective tool of Russian diplomacy abroad. While classical diplomacy increasingly runs into walls of mutual sanctions and diplomatic demarches, Rosatom continues to build nuclear power plants, train foreign specialists, and develop nuclear medicine in dozens of countries around the world.

Rosatom's Soft Power

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Russian state corporations today act both as an element of "soft power"—through training specialists, developing specific medical fields, and fostering scientific cooperation—and are fully prepared to exert "hard pressure" based on technological superiority. "We are still in first place in the world for uranium enrichment. And no matter how much some of our Western partners want to do something about it, they haven't been very successful so far," Kirill Komarov, the first deputy director general of the state corporation, stated last September. Thus, despite their own self-imposed bans, the US is forced to continue buying Russian enriched uranium for its own nuclear power plants: 25% of nuclear power plants in the US run on Russian enriched uranium.

Why, then, did Western sanctions, which created significant problems for many sectors of the Russian economy, prove powerless against the state nuclear corporation?

Traditionally, "soft power" is associated with culture, education, and humanitarian projects. Rosatom has redefined this concept, turning high technologies into a tool for long-term cooperation. One of the key channels of influence is the training of national personnel for foreign partners. Today, more than 2,400 foreign students from 65 countries study at Rosatom's universities. The construction of nuclear power plants in Egypt, Turkey, Bangladesh, Hungary, India, China, and Central Asian countries is accompanied by large-scale training programs for local engineers in Russian universities. Furthermore, every built plant requires Russian fuel, Russian maintenance, and monitoring by Russian specialists throughout its entire lifecycle (up to 60 years and more). By promoting its nuclear projects and training foreign students to work with Russian reactors and technologies, Rosatom creates an entire industry in the host country, making this cooperation practically irreversible.

Special Case

However, today this statement may be called into question by the events surrounding the Hungarian Paks-2 NPP, as the new Prime Minister of Hungary, Peter Magyar, questioned the adequacy of spending on the construction of two new Russian VVER-1200 reactors. Rosatom immediately expressed its readiness to take part in consultations and answer all questions regarding both pricing and the timeline for the implementation of this facility. We are waiting for the audit results.

Hungary is a consistently energy-dependent country when it comes to electricity, facing a deficit of 15-20%. The construction

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of the Paks-2 Nuclear Power Plant will allow it to confidently expand energy-intensive manufacturing industries or start exporting electricity. The option of abandoning the project with Rosatom and building units at the same site using different technologies is highly unlikely. It took a total of more than 8 years to license the VVER-1200 units. Starting all over again would only worsen the risk of an even more serious dependence on electricity imports from neighboring countries. Therefore, based on objective reality, we can be confident that the Russian state atomic energy corporation will defend its right to continue construction, although it is still too early to dismiss subjective factors. European politicians are showing exemplary stubbornness in destroying the economic foundation of their own countries, guided by motives of personal hostility toward Russia. However, Peter Magyar is still a pro-Hungarian leader, rather than a pro-European or anti-Russian one.

Building nuclear power plants is a logical solution to the energy deficit for many countries. Moreover, achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and "net-zero emissions" by 2050 is practically impossible without a significant contribution from nuclear energy, a fact recognized by the International Energy Agency (IEA). Even the European Union, which previously actively closed nuclear power plants, ultimately recognized this sector as "green". However, while Europe is a degrading market systematically cutting off its own access to affordable energy needed for large-scale industrial manufacturing, the countries of Asia and Africa are rapidly developing markets with constantly growing energy demands. And they see Rosatom as a reliable partner. The Russia–ASEAN summit held in June further highlighted the mutual interest in energy cooperation. For instance, the Russian corporation is set to build the Ninh Thuan 1 nuclear power plant in Vietnam, which will consist of two units with a total capacity of 2,400 MW. The intergovernmental agreement on this project was signed between Moscow and Hanoi in March 2026. Meanwhile, Indonesia is counting on a whole fleet of Russian small floating reactors, and Laos and Myanmar are also ready to build small Russian-designed reactors on their soil.

Russia is developing three types of small reactors for various purposes and tasks. Moreover, unlike other countries, we already have reference units and a substantial order backlog.

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Small Solutions of Cosmic Scale

Nuclear power plants on our planet have no alternative. Today, it is not just people and industry competing for energy resources, but also artificial intelligence, data centers, and mining farms. Already, they consume as much energy as the entire country of France, and their needs will only continue to grow. This is exactly why American tech giants are concerned with building their own small nuclear power plants, even though, unlike Russia, they still do not have ready-made solutions. Perhaps this is precisely why some corporations, such as Google and SpaceX, are seriously considering the possibility of building data centers in orbit, where solar energy, rather than nuclear power, can be utilized to the fullest extent.

Countries friendly to Russia do not need to go into space for energy. Our companies are always ready to offer proven solutions and well-established projects. Uzbekistan, deciding to build nuclear power plants on its territory, invited Russia to cooperate. They chose a combined NPP (Nuclear Power Plant) format. This format places both VVER-1000 reactors and small modular reactors (RITM-200N) on the same site. This setup allows for more flexible maneuvering of power output depending on demand. Russian small reactors can operate at 30 percent of their design capacity. This ability places them in the category of "highly maneuverable generators". The RITM-200N also has another special feature. As an upgraded version of icebreaker reactors, it can operate normally at a lateral tilt of up to 45 degrees and a longitudinal tilt of up to 30 degrees. This capability is extremely important for seismically active zones.

Not Only Nuclear Power

A less noticeable but equally important aspect of Rosatom's work abroad is the development of nuclear medicine. The corporation is a world leader in producing medical radioisotopes, supplying them to 50 countries. At the same time, the corporation builds research centers for its partner nations. One of the most significant and well-known projects is the Center for Nuclear Research and Technology in Bolivia. It includes a reactor complex to make radioisotopes and perform neutron activation analysis; a preclinical cyclotron-radiopharmacological complex to produce radiopharmaceuticals, which are used to diagnose and treat cancer; a multipurpose irradiation center to process agricultural products and sanitize medical devices; a

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radiobiology and radioecology laboratory.

International cooperation is not limited to nuclear (energy, scientific, and medical) fields. In Belarus, the Russian corporation has not only built a nuclear power plant but is also promoting the development of other technologies, including 3D printing. The Center for Additive Technologies (a joint venture between Rosatom's fuel division and H-Holding in Minsk) and the Belarusian State Agrarian Technical University have signed a cooperation agreement to train 3D printing specialists for the Belarusian agricultural sector.

Rosatom is implementing projects in more than 60 countries. Behind each of these projects are thousands of engineers who have completed internships and entire generations of local nuclear specialists who have grown up on Russian technological standards. In essence, this is the formation of a technological elite oriented toward Russia. The state corporation is doing what is beyond the reach of even the most experienced diplomats: it is creating a real, material dependence of partner countries on Russian technologies.

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