

Iran's air defense can repel U.S. air strikes - Russian brass

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MOSCOW, April 5 (RIA Novosti) – Iran has air defense systems capable of repelling possible United States air strikes, a high-ranking Russian military official said Thursday.

A Kuwaiti newspaper warned Wednesday that the United States was planning a missile strike against Iran some time in April. In an editorial citing unnamed Washington sources, As-Siyasa said air-to-surface missiles could be used in U.S. strikes against Iran, but that no ground operation would be launched to avoid casualties among U.S. service personnel.

“In line with my assessment, Iran’s air defense system is strong enough,” Colonel General Yury Solovyov, commander of the Air Defense Forces Special Command (former Moscow Military District Air Defense Command), said. “Currently Iran has our [Russian] air defense missile systems, which are capable of tackling U.S. combat aircraft. Iran also has French and other countries’ [defense] systems.”

Russia, which is separated from Iran in the south by three tiny South Caucasus nations and shares a sea border with the Islamic Republic, has been actively promoting a diplomatic solution to the Iranian issue.

Solovyov also said that Russia had been receiving detailed information on the current developments in the Persian Gulf situation.

Last week, a Russian security official said that Russian intelligence had information that U.S. Armed Forces had nearly completed preparations for a possible military operation against Iran and would be ready to strike in early April.

The U.S. has not excluded a military option in the standoff with Iran over its refusal to abandon its uranium enrichment program. The UN Security Council passed a new resolution on Iran two weeks ago toughening economic sanctions against the country and accepting the possibility of a military solution to the crisis.

The U.S. Administration sees Iran as a “rogue state” and is determined to stop the Islamic Republic, diplomatically or otherwise, from obtaining nuclear weapons. Washington now plans to deploy a missile defense shield in Central Europe allegedly to protect itself from potential missile strikes from Iran or North Korea.

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