

Iranian Missiles Pose no Threat to U.S. and Europe - Lavrov

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, March 10, 2010

[RIA Novosti](#) 10 March 2010

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Moscow — Iran currently has no missiles capable of striking Europe and the U.S., Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday.

“It is evident that Iran currently poses no threat to the U.S. and European countries... At the moment, Iran has no missiles capable of striking Europe, let alone the U.S., and is unlikely to develop [such missiles] in the foreseeable future,” Lavrov said.

Romania and Bulgaria are in talks with the U.S. to host elements of U.S. missile defense system on its soil, which the U.S. says are designed as protection against “current and emerging ballistic missile threats from Iran.”

The planned deployment of U.S. interceptor missiles in the Black Sea region has triggered fierce criticism from Moscow.

Western powers suspect Iran of running a nuclear program, aimed at making weapons. Tehran claims it needs enriched uranium for civilian energy purposes.

The Russian foreign minister said that Russia was fully committed to resolving the Iranian nuclear issue by diplomatic means, saying that there was “no alternative to political and diplomatic approaches to Iran’s nuclear issue, and any attempt to resolve the situation by force will be unacceptable and counter-productive.”

Lavrov added that the lack of “constructive response” from the Iranian side on the IAEA-proposed uranium swap scheme might lead to Security Council discussions on the fourth set of sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

The U.S. stepped up calls for fresh harsher sanctions against the Islamic Republic after Tehran had begun enriching uranium to 20%. Russia, a veto-wielding Security Council member, had earlier opposed sanctions but said after Iran’s move that it might support the initiative.

Last week, diplomats from the United States, France and Britain said they had sent draft proposals to the Russian and Chinese delegations at the United Nations. The five countries, along with Germany, comprise a group of international mediators negotiating with Iran on its nuclear program.

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