

Moscow: Hands Off Iran And Syria, China and BRIC countries behind Russian Initiative

By [Global Research](#)

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Russia warned the West against military intervention in Iran and Syria and rejected unilateral sanctions against the two nations.

Military action against Iran would have "catastrophic consequences," Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday.

Mr. Lavrov told an annual press conference that Moscow is seriously concerned about the threat of a military operation against Iran and is "doing its best to prevent it." He said the war would provoke an exodus of refugees from Iran to Azerbaijan and Russia, would pour fuel into the simmering Shia-Sunni conflict and trigger a chain reaction.

The press conference was devoted to Russia's foreign policy in 2011, but Mr. Lavrov's tough language suggested that Moscow was bracing up for hardnosed confrontation with the West in 2012.

Mr. Lavrov said the West's unilateral sanctions against Iran, such as the proposed oil embargo, were "aimed at suffocating the Iranian economy" and "inciting popular discontent."

He said Iran was ready for a resumption of talks with international mediators and hinted that Europe and the United States were imposing new sanctions at this juncture with the specific purpose of torpedoing further negotiations.

The Russian Foreign Minister said Moscow would block any Western attempts to obtain United Nations mandate for military interference in Syria. A draft resolution submitted by Russia states that all Security Council members refrain from interference and use of force in Syria. Mr. Lavrov said it was self-revealing that Western powers were trying hard to remove from the Russian draft the part stating that "nothing in the present resolution can be interpreted as allowing the use of force against Syria by any party."

At the same time, China and the other members of the BRICS group have thrown their support behind the Russian draft, Mr. Lavrov said.

"We consider it absolutely unacceptable to seek to apply the so-called Libya scenario to other conflicts," the Russian Foreign Minister said.

"For us, the red line is fairly clearly drawn. We will not support any sanctions," he added.

Mr. Lavrov rejected Western criticism of Russian arms supplies to Syria.

"We haven't violated any international agreements or the U.N. Security Council resolutions," he said. "We are only trading with Syria in items, which aren't banned by the international law."

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