

Russia Opposes New Sanctions on North Korea

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Russia criticized North Korea on Friday for its defiant rocket launch but said it opposes new sanctions against Pyongyang and joined China in calling for restraint from neighboring nations.

"We do not believe in new sanctions. They will not do anything in terms of resolving the situation," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said after talks with his Chinese and Indian counterparts.

He told a joint news conference that the UN Security Council must respond to the North Korean launch, which Russia and other nations say violated council sanctions.

But he suggested that trade restrictions or military threats would be counterproductive.

"We discussed the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula and the unsuccessful rocket launch," Lavrov said. "We are convinced that it is necessary to respond to the challenges at hand exclusively through political and diplomatic means."

Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi expressed concern about the rocket and said Beijing hoped for "restrained actions by the corresponding sides with the aim of preserving stability on the peninsula."

The UN Security Council was to meet to discuss a possible condemnation of the launch. Opposition from veto-wielding permanent members China and Russia means new sanctions are highly unlikely. Russia had urged Pyongyang not to conduct the launch, warning it would violate a UN Security Council resolution regardless of its purpose and complicate efforts to revive six-party talks over North Korea's nuclear program.

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