

Russia still opposes N. Korea sanctions

by UPI

MOSCOW -- Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says Moscow won't change its opposition to U.N. sanctions against North Korea because of its recent rocket launch.

Russia and China opposed a move in the 15-member U.N. Security Council to impose sanctions on Pyongyang following the launch Sunday, which Japan and others claimed was a banned test of a long-range ballistic missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. Lavrov said Wednesday Moscow's stance is unlikely to change, RIA Novosti reported.

"We are definitely concerned by the recent rocket launch and believe it does not offer grounds for stabilizing the situation in the region," Lavrov said, adding that "we also believe that any threat of sanctions would be counterproductive."

North Korea insists the launch was to put a communications satellite into orbit, but the United States, Japan and South Korea maintain the firing was actually a test of Pyongyang's Taepodong-2 missile.

"We will not change our stance and our position is reflected in all those consensus decisions, which have been made in recent years concerning ways of resolving the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula," Lavrov told the news agency.

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