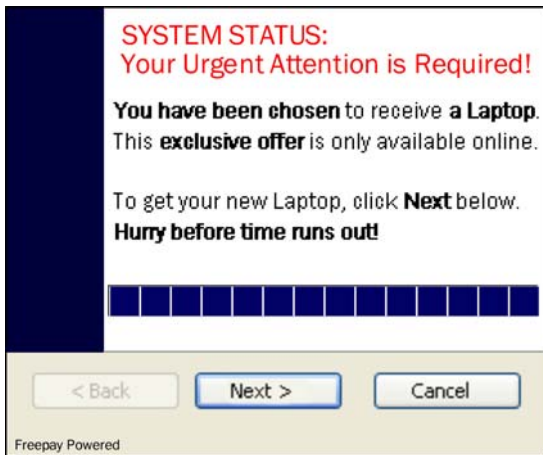


Russia And China Denounce U.S. Agression Towards Iran

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Jessica Pupovac - AHN Writer

Moscow, Russia (AHN) - Russian and Chinese officials have decried the pace of what they perceive as a U.S.-led march to war with Iran. Both countries hold seats on the U.N. Security Council, which plans to debate imposing a third round of sanctions on the country when it convenes this Friday. The U.S., in preparation for that meeting, has recently reiterated charges that Tehran's civilian energy program is a cover for a more sinister nuclear weapons program.

On Tuesday, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov announced

plans to reject the U.S. push for further sanctions in an interview published on the ministry's Web site, warning that a military attack on Iran would be "a serious diplomatic and political mistake."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu echoed his remarks from Beijing, asserting that China is "opposed to the unbridled threat of the use of force in international affairs."

The Russian and Chinese officials' words of caution came just two days after French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner warned that Paris should prepare for war with Iran, a statement which he quickly retracted, urging all sides to "negotiate, negotiate, negotiate without a break."

On Monday, the chief U.N. weapons inspector Mohamed ElBaradei decried the mounting discourse. "There are rules on how to use force, and I would hope that everybody would have gotten the lesson after the Iraq situation, where 700,000 innocent civilians have lost their lives on the suspicion that a country has nuclear weapons," he said. A recent U.N. report applauded successful negotiations with Iranian officials surrounding the uranium enrichment program and affirmed that they have no evidence that "the Iran program is being weaponized."

The U.S., meanwhile, has refused to rule out the possibility of force against Iran if it continues its nuclear program.

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