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## US slams Russia-Venezuela arms deal

Wed, 23 Jul 2008 07:06:47

**The US State Department has rebuked Russia's decision to sell a package of sophisticated arms, worth 2 billion dollars, to Venezuela.**

The US government says Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez does not truly need the weapons and has high ambitions that "go beyond his country's defensive needs," according to DPA news agency.

The State Department spokesman, Gonzalo Gallegos, said: "We've repeatedly communicated concerns with Russia about Chavez's arms build-up in the past, and we're going to continue to do so."

The deal, which was finalized in Moscow between Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Hugo Chavez, includes sales of 20 air-defense systems, 12 military transport planes and 24 fighter jets.

Chavez has recently tried to build stronger ties with Russia against "US plots to invade Venezuela".

QN/PA



Gonzalo Gallegos

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What is your opinion about a possible decision by Russia to deploy nuclear-capable bombers to Cuba?

- The move is a legitimate response to the US missile defense shield in Europe
- The US missile plan is legitimate and Russia's move will only fuel tension
- Neither the US nor Russia is making the right move

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