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## Russia Criticizes US for Iran Sanctions, Warns They Put Ties at Risk

By John Glaser

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Russia sharply criticized the US-led international sanctions on Iran's economy on Monday, calling them "overt blackmail" and a "crude contradiction of international law," and warning that they could harm bilateral relations with Moscow.

"We are talking about restrictive measures not only against Iran but also affecting foreign companies and individuals working with it, including in the hydrocarbon extraction and transport, petrochemicals, finance and insurance industries," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The Obama administration has led an effort to internationalize the economic sanctions on Iran, not only blocking trade with US companies but others based all around the world. The measures, essentially economic warfare, have been crippling Iran's economy, arresting the flow of credit, and blocking important pharmaceuticals and medical care, putting tens of thousands of sick Iranians at risk.

But the measures are also affecting international trade, raising concerns in Russia. "We consider efforts to...impose internal American legislation on the entire world completely unacceptable," the statement added. "We reject methods of overt blackmail that the United States resorts to in relation to the companies and banks of other countries."

"Those in Washington should take into account that our bilateral relations will suffer seriously if Russian operators ... come under the effects of the American restrictions," the ministry said.

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1

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Washington is placing sanctions on Iran in order to placate pressure from Israel, which has been pushing the Obama administration to launch an unprovoked war on Islamic Republic. This is the first sign that such measures are at the expense of America's other alliances. The acquiescence towards Israel from Washington runs counter to US interests for several reasons, but burning bridges with other allies because of the sanctions is yet another strain on US standing.