

US sanctions 13 firms for arms sales to North Korea, Iran, Syria

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Washington - The United States has imposed sanctions on 13 companies accused of aiding the weapons programmes of North Korea, Iran or Syria, the State Department said Friday.

The companies include firms based in Russia, South Korea, China, Sudan, Venezuela and the United Arab Emirates, as well as in the three targeted countries.

The United States had 'credible information' that the companies made sales that could 'make a material contribution to weapons of mass destruction or cruise or ballistic missile systems,' State Department spokesman Gordon Duguid said in a statement.

The companies include: Russia's Rosoboronexport; South Korea's Yolin/Yullin Tech; Chinese firms Xinshidai Company, China Shipbuilding and Offshore International Corporation and Huazhong CNC; Venezuelan Military Industries Company; and United Arab Emirates firm R and M International FZCO.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov criticized the sanctions as a violation of international law, saying they would harm ties and were not likely to improve cooperation on ending Iran's nuclear programme, according to media reports.

Under the sanctions, which remain in place until September 2010, no US government department or agency can have dealings with the affected companies. More than 50 companies have now been targeted for sanctions by the United States for arms dealings with either Iran, Syria or North Korea.

The sanctions took effect on August 12.

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From the US State Department

Taken Question

Office of the Spokesman

Washington, DC

October 24, 2008

Questions Taken at October 24, 2008 Daily Press Briefing

Iran, North Korea and Syria Nonproliferation Act Sanctions (Taken Question) Questions: Please identify the U.S. companies that allegedly provided weapons and sensitive technology to the specific countries sanctioned by the U.S. and published in the October 22, 2008 Federal Register? What is the U.S. response to companies who call the State Department's actions unscrupulous competition? Is this a new set of sanctions on the Russian company Rosoboronexport since this is the second time it has been listed?

Answer: The Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act (INKSNA) only provides the authority to impose sanctions on foreign persons and entities with respect to whom there is credible information that the person has transferred to or acquired from Iran, North Korea, and Syria certain controlled goods, services, or technology.

The October 22, 2008 determination did not impose any sanctions on countries. The sanctions apply only to the specific named foreign entities and not to their respective countries or governments.

We impose sanctions because foreign companies proliferate Weapons of Mass Destruction, other dangerous weapons and related material as defined under the Act. Sanctions were imposed because there was credible information indicating that these entities had transferred to or acquired from Iran, North Korea, or Syria a) goods, services, or technology listed on multilateral export control lists (e.g., Australia Group, Chemical Weapons Convention, Missile Technology Control Regime, Nuclear Suppliers Group, Wassenaar Arrangement) and certain other items that could make a material contribution to weapons of mass destruction or cruise and ballistic missiles.

This is a new determination on Rosoboronexport.

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