

Russia says would be threatened by Iran military action

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BRUSSELS (Reuters) - [Russia](#) would regard any military intervention linked to [Iran](#)'s nuclear program as a threat to its own security, Moscow's departing ambassador to NATO warned on Friday.

"Iran is our neighbor," [Dmitry Rogozin](#) told reporters in Brussels. "And if Iran is involved in any military action, it's a direct threat to our security."

Rogozin was speaking two days after the killing of a nuclear scientist in Tehran by a hitman on a motorcycle.

Kremlin Security Council head Nikolai Patrushev, who is close to Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, said Israel was pushing the United States towards war with Iran, according to the Interfax news agency.

Russia, however, opposes a boycott of Iranian oil.

"We are definitely interested in the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," Rogozin said on Friday. "But at the same time, we believe that any country has the right to have what it needs to feel comfortable, including Iran."

Rogozin, often described as an anti-Western hawk, was appointed deputy prime minister in December, and will oversee Russia's defense sector when he returns to Moscow.

The United States, the European Union and Japan are drawing up sanctions on Iran to try to force it to abandon its suspected nuclear weapons program. Tehran says its program does not have military aims.

The United States on Thursday took punitive action against three oil companies dealing with Iranian oil.

EU foreign ministers are expected to agree on a ban on imports of Iranian crude oil on January 23 - though with a grace period to give European companies time to find alternative sources of crude.

Japan on Thursday pledged to take concrete action to cut its oil imports from Iran.

(Reporting By Sebastian Moffett; Editing by Sophie Hares)

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