

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's answer to a media question on the sidelines of his official visit to China, Beijing, April 23, 2018

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Question: Would it be correct to say that the question of supplying the S-300s to Syria is almost settled?

Sergey Lavrov: I cannot say that it is settled. We all know what President of Russia Vladimir Putin said. He raised this matter with a representative of the Defence Ministry in the context of efforts to prevent the Syrian Arab Republic from finding itself in a situation where it is not sufficiently prepared to counter acts of aggression like the one that took place on April 14, 2018. We have yet to see what decisions will be made by Russia, together with representatives of Syria. There is no secret with this and it will probably be made public.

Of course, there is a need to anticipate further provocations, although we warned our US and European colleagues who took part in this risky venture, in the strongest possible terms, against engaging in undertakings of this kind. The plans our Western colleagues are nurturing with regard to Syria are a matter of concern for us. I heard that President of France Emmanuel Macron has recently called on the US not to withdraw its troops from Syria even after the last terrorist is destroyed or forced to leave the country. The French leader went so far as to suggest a permanent deployment in order to build a new Syria. This is reminiscent of colonialism. We will seek clarification from our French partners in order to understand what they meant, since until now we were assured at all levels that the sole purpose of the US-led coalition in Syria was to eliminate the terrorist threat caused by ISIS and other structures listed by the UN Security Council as terrorist groups. This is a very serious issue. We will be working on it.