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Russia Ready to Respond to US Diplomatic Assault

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Moscow, Dec 30 (Prensa Latina) Russia's Foreign Minister Serguei Lavrov, has proposed expelling 31 US diplomats from Moscow and 4 from the US Consulate in St Petersburg in retaliation for a similar measure taken by Washington.

Lavrov said that his proposal, already presented to President Vladimir Putin, also includes the closure of a residence and a warehouse in Moscow, which are under the management of the US Embassy.

In an unprecedented action, not seen even in the worst moments of the Cold War, the White House yesterday gave 35 Russian diplomats (31 from Washington and 4 from San Francisco) 72 hours to leave the country. The expulsions could cost Russia up to 13 million rubles, almost 220,000 US dollars, according to diplomatic sources.

The Obama Administration also ordered the closure of a country house on Long Island, which the Russian Embassy has owned since 1954, as well as another property in Maryland.

Lavrov criticized Washington for accusing Moscow, without presenting any proof, of interfering with the US elections through cyber attacks in the lead up to the defeat of Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton.

'They want to accuse us now of everything that has caused their foreign policy to fail, alluding to Syria and their inability to retain the White House,' Lavrov said.