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80% of Russia's Coronavirus Aid to Italy 'Useless' – La Stampa

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Sources claimed that Putin is pursuing geopolitical and diplomatic opportunities in Italy with the military aid package. **Russian Defense Ministry / TASS**

Around 80% of the coronavirus supplies that Russia has sent to Italy are "useless," the country's La Stampa daily reported Wednesday, citing high-level political sources.

Russia sent 600 ventilators and 100 military virologists and epidemiologists to Italy following talks between President Vladimir Putin and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte last Saturday. Footage of Russian military trucks en route from Rome to the coronavirus epicenter of Bergamo circulated online this week.

Related article: 'From Russia With Love': Putin Sends Aid to Italy to Fight Virus

"Eighty percent of Russian supplies are totally useless or of little use to Italy. In short, this is little more than a pretext," an unnamed source told La Stampa.

The source said the Russian supplies consist of disinfection equipment, a field laboratory for sterilization and chemical prevention, and other similar tools.

La Stampa's sources claimed that Putin is pursuing geopolitical and diplomatic opportunities with the aid package dubbed "From Russia With Love," while Conte accepted the aid in order to secure a good personal relationship with Moscow.

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Russia's Ambassador to Italy Sergei Razov dismissed La Stampa's report as "perverse."

"Such assertions are the product of a perverse mind. A selfless desire to help a friendly people in trouble is seen as insidious," Razov told Russia's state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

With more than 7,500 victims and 74,000 overall cases, Italy has recorded more coronavirus-related deaths than any other country.

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