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Lavrov Offers New Warning to U.S. Over Magnitsky Bill

By The Moscow Times

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Using some of his harshest language yet, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned that the adoption of the Magnitsky bill by the U.S. Congress would have disastrous consequences for U.S.-Russian relations.

Lavrov, speaking during an interview with U.S. television talk-show host Charlie Rose, said Moscow supported a dialogue on human rights with Washington but did not want to be "lectured" or "judged" through efforts like the Magnitsky bill.

"This would be certainly something which will be detrimental to our relationship," he said, speaking in English. "Attempts to interfere in the legal procedures of other countries are not really welcome by normal states, normal governments, and this is absolutely the case between Russia and the United States."

Returning to a well-trodden Kremlin line, Lavrov insisted that Russia was interested

in discussing human rights, particularly cases involving the abuse and sometimes death of adopted Russian children at the hands of their U.S. parents and the imprisonment of convicted arms trader Viktor Bout.

Lavrov did not say what Moscow's response might be if U.S. lawmakers pass the Magnitsky bill. The legislation, which Congress has postponed until after national elections on Nov. 6, would blacklist Russians implicated in human rights violations and is named after lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who died in a Moscow jail in 2009 after being arrested by senior officials he had accused of corruption.

Lavrov spoke to Rose during a visit to New York for the opening of the United Nations General Assembly this week.

Keeping on the Russian theme, Rose was scheduled to interview billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov and his sister, Irina, on Thursday night.

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