

G8 Ministers Fail to Agree on Syria, No Plan on North Korea

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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U.S. State Secretary John Kerry with Russia's Sergei Lavrov on Thursday. **Paul Rogers**

LONDON — Foreign ministers from the G8 group of the world's wealthiest countries, which includes Russia, failed to patch up deep divisions over Syria or come up with a plan on North Korea during a meeting in London on Thursday.

British Foreign Secretary William Hague, speaking after talks with his counterparts, admitted that the world had failed to resolve Syria's two-year-old conflict in which an estimated 70,000 people have been killed.

"The United Nations Security Council has not fulfilled its responsibilities because it is divided. That division continues. Have we solved that division at this meeting? No. We didn't expect to do so," Hague told reporters. "The world has failed so far in its responsibilities and continues to do so."

North Korea's threats of war and Iran's nuclear program were also high on the agenda of the ministers' talks in London, but little substance came out of their private meetings with members of Syria's opposition on the sidelines of the gathering.

On North Korea, they condemned Pyongyang's development of nuclear weapons "in the strongest possible terms" but did not come up with any specific steps on how to address the threat.

In a communique issued after the meeting, foreign ministers from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada and Russia just urged North Korea to "refrain from further provocative acts."

"They talked about the role of China," a U.S. official said on condition of anonymity. "That's always something that comes up, but there was nothing more specific than that."

Actress Angelina Jolie, a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, also addressed the ministers, urging more action to prevent sexual violence against women in conflict zones.

With diplomatic efforts deadlocked, Syria's protracted conflict remains the biggest headache for global powers, and Hague described it as the world's biggest destination for jihadists.

Leaders of the Syrian National Coalition were present on the sidelines of the London meeting to ask for more humanitarian help, but no promises were made, officials said.

In their statement, the ministers "called for greater humanitarian assistance and for improved and safe access to the Syrian people by humanitarian agencies in coordination with all parties to the conflict."

On Iran, they expressed concern about the lack of progress in the latest talks at resolving a decade-long nuclear dispute that threatens to trigger a new war in the Middle East.

"People were concerned about that, that time is not unlimited," the U.S. official said. "They didn't feel that the Iranians were bringing anything significant to the table, or anything new."

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