

Lavrov Accuses U.S. of Blackmailing Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry following a Geneva meeting on Syria on Sept. 12. **US Mission Geneva**

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov believes that the United States is "beginning to blackmail" Russia into accepting a UN resolution on Syria.

American diplomats are pushing for a Security Council resolution stemming from Chapter 7 of the UN Charter and are threatening to wind down work in the Hague's Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons if Russia doesn't agree, the minister said in an interview with Channel One on Sunday.

"It's a complete departure from what we agreed on with [U.S. Secretary of State] John Kerry — first a decision by the OPCW and only then a resolution supporting that decision by the UN Security Council, but not referencing Chapter Seven," Lavrov continued.

Mention of Chapter Seven could open the door for the international community to intervene militarily in Syria, a possibility that Russia has vigorously opposed.

The basic disagreement that has complicated negotiations since Kerry and Lavrov's breakthrough agreement on Sept. 14 remains: while Western countries claim that the Syrian government was behind the late August chemical attack outside Damascus, Russia insists that it could have been perpetrated by insurgents aiming to provoke foreign military intervention.

The Syrian government has reportedly given Russian diplomats evidence of insurgents' involvement in the attack, which Lavrov said is "completely technical" and currently under examination by Russian specialists.

Russia's head diplomat repeated doubts about the impartiality of the UN report on the chemical attack, saying that there were additional witnesses who had not been questioned, including journalists who had spoken with insurgents claiming to have received weapons from abroad.

"I think that our Western partners are now simply blinded by their ideological mission to change the regime. Because a few years ago the leaders of the Western world vociferously announced that there was just about no more space for Assad in this world, that he had to go," Lavrov said.

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