

Kerry Says Russia Proposed U.S.-Russia Military Talks on Syria

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U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry

WASHINGTON — Russia has proposed military talks with the United States on Syria and the United States is considering next steps, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Wednesday.

Kerry said he was talking to the White House and Pentagon about the proposal following recent conversations with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

"The Russians proposed ... that we have military-to-military conversation ... to discuss precisely what will be done to deconflict with respect to any potential risks that might be run and to have a complete and clear understanding as to the road ahead and what the intentions are," Kerry told reporters after meeting his South African counterpart.

Russia's support for Syrian President Bashar Assad may aggravate the conflict in Syria, Kerry said, recounting his message to Lavrov in a telephone call.

"I made clear that Russia's continued support for Assad risks escalating the conflict

and undermining our shared goal of fighting extremism if we do not also remain focused on finding the political solution," Kerry said he told Lavrov in the call, which took place on Tuesday. He also told reporters the United States, which has said it will take in at least 10,000 Syrian refugees in the next year, may unveil other steps in the coming days.

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