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Russia Ready to Liaise With U.S. Coalition on Syria Strikes: Lavrov

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Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov

Russia is ready to open "standing channels of communication" with the U.S.-led coalition bombing Islamic State militants in Syria in a bid to boost the fight against "terrorist groups," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday.

Russia said it had launched air strikes against Islamic State militants in Syria on Wednesday, an assertion that was disputed by the United States and France, which suspect Moscow of shoring up support for President Bashar Assad against other opposition groups in the civil war.

"We have informed the authorities of the United States and other members of the coalition created by the Americans and are ready to forge standing channels of communication to ensure the maximum effective fight against the terrorist groups," Lavrov told the United Nations Security Council.

Russia circulated a draft council resolution that President Vladimir Putin has said would be

"aimed at coordinating the actions of all forces that confront Islamic State." Lavrov said it would be discussed over the next month.

But Lavrov added: "Mindful of the growth of the threat posed by ISIL [Islamic State] there is a need now to forge practical cooperation of the activities of all forces which are countering terrorism."

Lavrov said Russia backed UN efforts to get the Syrian parties talking and said there was a need for "an inclusive and balanced outside assistance for the political process."

He said this group should consist of Russia, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Qatar, the European Union and China.

"We believe that such a composition of outside sponsors acting in a united way are in a position to assist Syrians in reaching agreement based on common objectives to prevent the creation of an extremist caliphate," Lavrov said.

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