

Kerry: 'Productive' Talks With Russian Foreign Minister in Moscow

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U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry (L) and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov shake hands as they meet at Osobnyak Mansion in Moscow, Russia, March 24, 2016.

Following negotiations with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Twitter that talks had been “productive.”

Kerry wrote: “Spoke at length today with FM Lavrov about Syria and Ukraine. Productive dialogue with important partner.”

Kerry and Lavrov met in Moscow and spoke for almost four hours. During the session, they discussed bilateral relations and the situation in Syria and Ukraine, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova reported Thursday.

Before the talks began, Kerry congratulated his Russian counterpart on his birthday, adding, much to everyone’s amusement: “I hope that it will bring in extra wisdom to our

conversations. You look terrific, Sergei,” the U.S. State Department press office reported.

“We can actually demonstrate that the two mighty powers such as ours can work together despite differences on some issues. We can, when the need arises, do everything possible to deal with these challenges,” Kerry said in remarks prior to negotiations.

Kerry said that Russia and the United States have been working together — along with their allies and countries in the International Syria Support Group. “There has been a fragile but nevertheless beneficial reduction in violence — some say as much as 85 to 90 percent — in Syria,” the U.S. State Department transcript said. However, he said that more needs to be done to reduce the violence and increase humanitarian aid in Syria.

Kerry arrived in Moscow on Wednesday for a two-day visit to hold talks with Lavrov and Russian President Vladimir Putin. This is the third time Kerry has visited Russia over the past year.

During the current visit to Moscow, Kerry also held talks with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier to discuss the situation in Syria and the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

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