

Kerry: Russia Is 'Not Wedded' to Syrian President Assad

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry (2nd L) speaks during a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin (not pictured) at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, March 24, 2016.

Russia is “not wedded” to Syrian President Bashar Assad, but is not an ally for the United States in Syria either, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said in an interview with CBS television broadcast over the weekend.

Moscow is, however, helping Washington with other things in the “strategic interest” of the United States, Kerry told the CBS show “Face the Nation” in an interview Saturday.

“Russia has helped bring about the Iran nuclear agreement. Russia helped get the chemical weapons out of Syria,” he said. “Russia is now helping with the cessation of hostilities. And if Russia can help us to actually affect this political transition, that is all to the strategic interest of the United States of America.”

Russia supports Assad, and Russian air strikes have allegedly targeted his political opponents — including rebel groups backed by the United States and its European allies.

But the government of Russian President Vladimir Putin is “not wedded to Assad,” Kerry told CBS.

Russian air strikes in Syria, which began on Sept. 30 last year, were widely seen as an attempt to prop up Assad's regime.

Kerry, who traveled to Moscow last week to meet with Putin and other officials, rejected suggestions that Russia may have gotten more of a foothold in the Middle East because of its involvement with Syria, CBS reported. The idea, he said, was “ridiculous.”

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