
JOHN KERRY THREATENS TO SUSPEND TALKS WITH RUSSIA ON SYRIA

- 29.09.2016

The Wall Street Journal, 28 September 2016

WASHINGTON [REDACTED] of State John Kerry told his Russian counterpart Wednesday that the U.S. is preparing to suspend its engagement with Moscow on Syria if Russia doesn't take immediate steps to halt an offensive on Aleppo and restore a cease-fire.

The secretary stressed that the burden remains on Russia to stop this assault and allow humanitarian access to Aleppo and other areas in need, said State Department spokesman John Kirby, describing the phone call between the two diplomats.

Mr. Kerry also expressed grave concern over continued attacks by Russian and Syrian forces on hospitals and other civilian infrastructure in Aleppo.

The secretary made clear that the United States and its partners hold Russia responsible for this situation, including the use of incendiary and bunker buster bombs in an urban environment, a drastic escalation that puts civilians at great risk, Mr. Kirby said.

The U.S. and Russia announced a cease-fire deal earlier this month that would eventually lead to closer military cooperation. The first part of the deal required a seven-day period of calm and increased humanitarian access, but the agreement fell apart about a week after it took effect.

Mr. Kerry told Mr. Lavrov Wednesday that the U.S. was preparing to suspend preparations for the next phase of the agreement [REDACTED] of a Joint Implementation Center, which would allow the former Cold War rivals to share targeting information on Islamist militant targets.

Russian officials didn't immediately comment on the conversation between Messrs. Kerry and Lavrov.