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**Moscow Urges U.S. for Joint Fight against IS in Syria**

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The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement today that “Lavrov reiterated the need to make consolidated efforts to repel terrorist groups that have occupied large swaths of Syrian territory and continue to threaten global security.”

“Lavrov stressed that the Syrian army has been carrying the main burden of thwarting terrorist advances in the country so far,” the statement said.

Russia has proposed that the United States form a coalition that includes Syria and Iran to combat jihadists across the Middle East.

According to a statement released by the U.S. Department of State, Kerry called Lavrov last Saturday “to discuss Syria, including U.S. concerns about reports suggesting an imminent enhanced Russian military build-up there.”

“The secretary made it clear that if such reports were accurate, these actions could further escalate the conflict, lead to greater loss of innocent life, increase refugee flows and risk confrontation with the anti-ISIL coalition operating in Syria,” the U.S. Department of State added.

In this regard, Russian deputy minister of foreign affairs Mikhail Bogdanov denied on Tuesday that there has been a change in Russian-Syrian military cooperation, while the foreign ministry stressed on Wednesday that military aid heading to Syria is only to support the fight against IS

and other terrorist groups.

After Bulgaria closed its airspace to Russian military planes heading to Syria, Russia announced on Wednesday that it has acquired a permit from Iran to use its airspace to deliver equipment bound for Syria.

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