

# *Russian Foreign Minister Says Obama Main Reason Behind Rise of Russophobia*

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Moscow, October 11 (RHC)-- Russia's top diplomat has accused the United States of threatening his country's national security as well as plotting to empower al-Qaida to take down Syria's Assad. The main reason behind the worsening of relations between the United States and Russia is President Barack Obama, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said, adding that Washington's policies toward Moscow are increasingly aggressive and hostile.

"We have witnessed a fundamental change of circumstances when it comes to the aggressive Russophobia that now lies at the heart of U.S. policy towards Russia," Lavrov told Russian state TV's First Channel. "It's not just a rhetorical Russophobia, but aggressive steps that really hurt our national interests and pose a threat to our security."

His comments came just days after the Barack Obama administration formally accused Russia of a campaign of cyber attacks against Democratic Party organizations ahead of the Nov. 8 presidential election. With relations between Moscow and Washington strained over issues from Syria to Ukraine, Lavrov reeled off a long list of Russian grievances against the U.S. which he said helped contribute to an atmosphere of mistrust that was in some ways more dangerous and unpredictable than the Cold War.

Lavrov complained that NATO had been steadily moving military infrastructure closer to Russia's borders and lashed out at Western sanctions imposed over Moscow's role in the Ukraine crisis. He also said he had heard that some policy makers in Washington were suggesting that President Barack Obama allow the carpet bombing of the Syrian government's military airfields to ground its air force.

"This is a very dangerous game given that Russia, being in Syria at the invitation of the legitimate government of this country and having two bases there, has air defense systems there to protect its assets," Lavrov said and hoped Obama would not agree to such a scenario.

Russia's top diplomat also said that his government "doesn't see any facts that the U.S. is seriously battling al-Nusra," an extremist religious group that is allied with al-Qaida. His comments come a day after Russia vetoed a French-proposed resolution on Aleppo at the United Nations which called for a no-fly zone in and around the city which would mean a halt to Russian and Syrian airstrikes there.

Lavrov said he was suspicious of such resolutions to end airstrikes against terrorists in eastern Aleppo "because, yes, the main force of al-Nusra Front is there."

The Russian foreign ministry went further to say that such calls would amount to the U.S. and its Western allies attempting to help al-Qaida terrorists and provide them with air cover.

"An explicit attempt was made by banning flights in the Aleppo area to provide cover for the terrorists of Jabhat al-Nusra and associated militants," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement, calling the French proposal politicized and one-sided.

Lavrov suggested that such resolutions imply that Washington has a secret plot to help the al-Qaida affiliate to become a powerful force to take down the Syrian government and President Bashar Assad.

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