

# *French Foreign Minister Says Assad's Departure from Syria Not Necessary*

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Paris, December 5 (RHC)-- French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius says Syrian President Bashar al-Assad does not have to step down before a "political transition" process takes place in Syria.

The comments published by French newspaper *Le Progres* on Saturday mark France's latest departure from its hardline stance on the government in Damascus. Fabius said Syrian government forces and other "regional forces" should unite in order for the fight against the Takfiri Daesh terrorist group to be effective.

Fabius had already implied in late November that Syrian government forces must be involved in the fight against Daesh. The terrorist group has overrun areas in Syria and Iraq, and the Syrian government has been heavily involved in fighting it.

Although Fabius later tried to alter his view by saying that what he meant was that the forces of a government formed "within the context of a political transition" can fight Daesh, his November remarks -- as his Saturday comments -- are widely seen as a potential shift of France's position on the Syrian government.

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