

Destabilisation of the entire Arab world. Moscow Decries US-NATO's Global Provocation in Syria

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Situation in Syria can lead to destabilisation in Arab world - Lavrov

MOSCOW: The situation in Syria can lead to destabilisation of the situation in other Arab countries, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

After the talks with his Kazakhstani counterpart Yerzhan Kazykhanov on Monday, Lavrov said, "Tension continues to heighten in the region. The public stirs up in Egypt. Disorders have begun in Bahrain. Attacks on government buildings have been made in Kuwait."

"I don't rule out that these processes are conditioned by the atmosphere that is being created in Syria when certain foreign players call on the Syrian opposition not to start dialogue with the authorities," the minister said. At the same time, he noted, "Foreign countries' policy towards Syria gives in to the temptation by neighbouring states in order to use the situation for their benefit and stir up tension in their states."

Lavrov said he is hopeful that the countries of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference "will take a responsible approach while other states will also act in a very responsible way, in compliance with the norms of international law under which the peoples themselves should decide on their fate".

Lavrov said the West's and the Middle East's calls for overthrowing the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad looked like a global provocation.

"Western colleagues want the U.N. Security Council to hold discussions on the protection of civilians in Syria. Our position is that Russia backed the LAS initiative, which envisages ceasing violence whatsoever it came from and deploying observers of Arab countries, and to intensify the dialogue between Syrians themselves on ways towards democratic reforms," Lavrov said.

In his view, in order to stop violence it is necessary to convince Syrian authorities and armed groups, who are trying to use peaceful protests to instigate violence, to give up disproportionate use of force. "A certain Liberation Army has emerged in Syria. It created a military interim council, which proclaimed itself the supreme military power and set the task of overthrowing the regime in Syria. Certain Western capitals believe that military actions by Syrian detectors prove the democratic aspirations of the people," he said.

"If democracy is interpreted as grenade-launcher attacks on the buildings of the Baath Party and on administrative facilities, Moscow cannot agree with this.

“Both the authorities and armed groups, who penetrated into the Syrian opposition, should be pressured to cease violence,” Lavrov said on Monday.

“Till now we’ve watched, when the LAS called for ceasing violence and starting a dialogue, Western capitals and certain countries of the Middle East region back calls for advising the opposition to avoid such dialogue,” the Russian minister said. “This looks like a global provocation,” Lavrov stressed.

“If everyone wants to give Syrians an opportunity to exercise their right to decide their fate themselves, it is necessary to take a fair and responsible approach,” the minister stressed.

Commenting on the request to ensure the security of peaceful civilians, Lavrov noted, “Everyone remembers the events that preceded the Libyan tragedy. It’s this slogan that had been used by those who grossly violated the U.N. Security Council resolutions by delivering missile strikes instead of protecting peaceful civilians,” he said, adding, “So, the most important right – the right to life – was infringed upon.”

“One must not admit abuse of and outrage upon international law,” Lavrov said.

Russia believes that the League of Arab States initiative on the settlement in Syria should be concretised, Lavrov said.

Lavrov said Russia wanted LAS observers and foreign mass media to work in Syria. “We uphold an idea of involving unbiased observers in the settlement. We also want mass media to get open access to Syria,” the Russian minister said. “The idea of sending LAS observers to Syria is not new. The LAS put forth this initiative on November 2. We actively supported this idea,” he stressed.

“We can note many contradictory facts about the events in the country. The presence of observers, like as of journalists, would help clarify the situation,” Lavrov pointed out.

He also said, “Several days ago the Syrian government agreed to accept LAS observers and allow them access to any area of the country.”

Russia urges Syrian authorities and the opposition to start talks as soon as possible, Lavrov said. The talks are expected to take place at the LAS headquarters in Cairo, the minister said. “We believe it necessary to send LAS observers to Syria in order to keep a close watch on the fulfilment of obligations by all parties,” he stressed.

“We think that it is necessary to start talks on the peaceful settlement in Syria by all parties. It is important to organise such talks at the LAS headquarters in Cairo,” Lavrov pointed out.

“This is not our fantasy. These are components that the LAS initiative contains. But we believe that they should be concretised,” the minister said.

The events in Syria resemble a real civil war, he added. “The LAS initiative of November 2 [we supported this initiative] contains several components. The first point is that it is necessary to stop violence wheresoever it comes from. It is important because violence in Syria comes not only from government structures,” the minister said.

“Today I’ve watched television commentaries saying a new force – the Liberated Syrian Army – organised attacks on government buildings, i.e. buildings owned by the Syrian

Armed Forces. This resembles a real civil war," Lavrov noted.

"The LAS position on the need to cease violence wherever it came from requires details and concrete facts. In order to realise the Arab initiative we call on all interested parties to demand the Syrian authorities and the opposition stop violence. This should be done on behalf of the LAS and on behalf of the countries where the opposition works," Lavrov stressed.

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