

First Sponsoring Terrorism, Now Fighting It? Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov on West's Anti-ISIS Operation

By [Sergey Lavrov](#)

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (RIA Novosti / Maksim Blinov)

The Western powers that fostered Islamic extremists to incite them against Middle Eastern regimes should stop dividing terrorists into good and bad, Russia's foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, said in a TV interview.

In an interview to Channel 5 in St. Petersburg, Lavrov said:

"Now that the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant has been appointed United States' archenemy, I'd like to recall that [ISIS militants] are the very same people that evolved and got powerful sponsorship and material support from abroad at the time of the regime change efforts in Libya and later on when the same process was attempted in Syria."

The Russian foreign minister recalled the no-holds-barred time when Americans and Europeans were justifying their help to Islamic fundamentalists as providing support to those opposing unpopular regimes.

"When we called their attention to the fact that there were a large number of terrorists and extremists fighting the regimes, [the Americans and Europeans] essentially told us that all such things would pass once they overthrew the regimes, and that they would deal with this later on," Lavrov said. *"But all this turned out to be wrong."*

In another example, Lavrov said that France had armed the militants fighting against Libyan strongman Muammar Gaddafi, yet some time later faced the same people in Mali, where French troops had to oppose Islamic fundamentalists who migrated there from a ravaged Libya after Gaddafi's fall.

"We need a general criterion: if we do fight terrorism - we do it everywhere and always. You cannot divide terrorists into good and bad, only because some of them help you to oust a legitimately elected leader of a UN member country that you don't like," Lavrov said.

Washington insists that it is the "bad" terrorists that are being killed by the Americans, Lavrov said, adding that Americans became agitated only after *"the disgusting video of American journalists being executed was broadcasted."*



31-year-old US freelance writer Steven Sotloff (AFP Photo / HO / SITE)

“This is unacceptable and inhumane, and such people should be battled tooth and nail, but why didn’t the Americans see the threat before that happened?” he said.

“That’s because they are used to fighting terrorism using double standards, and they never listened to us when we proposed to unite our efforts and help the Syrian government and the moderate, patriotic Syrian opposition to form a united front against terrorists swarming all over the Syrian Arab Republic – they never listened to us,” Lavrov said.

Now that the US is cobbling together an anti-terrorist coalition, Moscow has [no intention](#) of joining it, Lavrov said.

“There’s nothing that we feel ashamed of as we do help Iraq, Syria and other countries in the Arab world to strengthen their potential to fight this [terrorist] evil,” Lavrov said, adding that Russia has been sending weapons to governments in Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Yemen – countries that are suffering from terrorism – and thus boosting their capability to oppose terrorists.



An image uploaded on June 14, 2014 on the jihadist website Welayat Salahuddin allegedly shows militants of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) executing dozens of captured Iraqi security forces members at an unknown location in the Salaheddin province (AFP Photo / HO / Welayat Salahuddin)

But Lavrov welcomed the desire of western states, with their remarkable potential, to help the legitimate Iraqi government to fight terrorism.

"It's better late than never," the Russian FM said, stressing that if the west intends to fight terrorism in other countries, more specifically Syria, it should get the [sanction](#) of the legitimate Syrian government for such actions.

"The Syrian government has repeatedly proclaimed its readiness to cooperate with foreign partners to eliminate terrorism on their territory," Lavrov said.

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