
Kerry Going to Russia for Talks on Syria

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Kerry said he will meet with Putin and with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov “in order to discuss how we can effectively move the political process forward and try to take advantage of this moment.”

“Today, as we mark the fifth anniversary of the start of this horrific war, we may face the best opportunity that we’ve had in years to end it,” Kerry said before a meeting with his Georgian counterpart, Mikheil Janelidze.

“With the cessation of hostilities largely holding, Russia’s announcement yesterday that it will remove half of its forces immediately and more perhaps from Syria, and with the political negotiations reconvening this week in Geneva, we have reached a very important phase in this process,” the head of U.S. diplomacy said.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest acknowledged that the United States received no previous notice about Putin’s announcement this Monday, but said that Obama’s call to his Russian counterpart was already scheduled before the Russian president’s decision was made public.