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US claims on chemical attack in Syria ‘does not convince’ Russia

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Russia says the material provided by the United States and its allies to prove that the Syrian government has used chemical weapons is not "at all" convincing.

During an address to the students of the Moscow State University of International Relations on Monday, Russian Foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said, “What our American, British and French partners have shown us before - as well as now - does not convince us at all.”

“There are no supporting facts. There is only repetitive talk in the vein of ‘we know for sure.’ And when we ask for further clarification, we receive the following response: ‘You are aware that this is classified information, therefore we cannot show it to you.’ So there are still no facts,” Lavrov stated.

“If there truly is top secret information available, the veil should be lifted. This is a question of war and peace. To continue this game of secrecy is simply inappropriate.”

Lavrov added that there were “many doubts” about the images posted on the Internet that allegedly relate to the chemical attack in Syria.

“We were shown some sketches, but there was nothing concrete, no geographical coordinates or details... and no proof the test was done by professionals... there were no comments anywhere regarding the experts’ doubt about the footage circulating all over the Internet,” he said.

The call for military strike against Syria intensified after the Takfiri militants and the foreign-backed Syrian opposition accused the government of President Bashar al-Assad of launching a chemical attack on militant strongholds in the suburbs of Damascus on August 21.

The Syrian government categorically rejects the claims and says the attack was carried out by the militants to draw in military intervention.

US President Barack Obama delayed an imminent military strike against Syria on August 31 to seek approval for the move from the Congress, which will debate the issue when federal lawmakers return from recess on September 9. The Obama administration has, however, said it “has the right” to attack Syria even if the Congress does not approve the measure.

The Russian foreign minister further criticized the West’s double standards in dealing with issues in the Middle East, saying that democracy has been often used by Western powers as an excuse for military intervention in the regional countries.

Lavrov also said that the war in Iraq was initiated under the pretext of weapons of mass destruction and now a conflict in Syria is being justified by the same allegation.