

Stung by U.S. Criticism on Syria, Russia Reminds U.S. of 9/11 Support

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Spokeswoman of the Russian Foreign Ministry Maria Zakharova gestures as she attends a news briefing in Moscow, Russia, Oct. 6, 2015.

Russia strongly rebuffed U.S. criticism of its air strikes in Syria on Tuesday, reminding Washington how it had supported the United States in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on New York in 2001.

Moscow has become increasingly critical of what it says is a Western propaganda campaign aimed at distorting the aims of its Syria intervention. The Kremlin says its primary goal is to help President Bashar Assad fight Islamic State militants. But the United States and others have accused it of acting to try to prop up Assad and of targeting other rebel groups instead.

In comments likely to draw a reaction in Washington, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova on Tuesday evoked the Kremlin's reaction to 9/11 when rejecting the U.S. stance on Russia's Syria operation.

"I want to remind you ... after the September 11th attacks, we shared the U.S. pain as if it were our own, understanding what terrorism is," Zakharova told a news conference.

"We supported the United States in everything, [including] in the UN Security Council. We helped them fight terrorism. We didn't ask 'Are they good or bad terrorists?'. "

She recounted Russia's own history of Islamist attacks, saying fighting Islamist militants was a matter of national security for Moscow.

"We have been through this, we know what it is like and we don't want to see international terrorism in our country again. This is too painful for us. And we expect understanding on this one."

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