

Russia: Ties With the U.S. Are 'Frozen' Until Trump Is Sworn In

The latest attempt to resolve the five-year-old Syrian Civil War diplomatically involves several key players in the region—Russia, Turkey and even Iran—but it won't include anyone from the United States.

Now we know why.

In a statement issued by the Russian Foreign Ministry, spokesman Dmitry Peskov said:

“Nearly all levels of our dialogue with the U.S. have been frozen. We do not talk to each other. Or we do it to a minimum.”

It's been implied the relations are “frozen” until the new Trump administration is installed next month. Russia has said it would prefer to work with the president-elect and that it sees him as a negotiation partner they might work better with.

This week, the U.S. imposed new sanctions against Russia over its actions in the Crimea region of Ukraine. Peskov said those sanctions “seriously harm our bilateral relations.” But the rift goes much deeper than that.

The two nations blame each other for the humanitarian crisis that has developed in Aleppo, Syria. But U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, took the conflict to a new level when she blasted the Syrian regime, Russia and Iran, asking, “Have you no shame?”

Additionally, U.S. allegations of hacking meant to influence the 2016 presidential election have further frosted over international relations with Russia. But the Department of

State refutes reports it has been locked out of discussions about Syria.

Spokesman John Kirby said Secretary of State John Kerry had spoken with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Tuesday. Kirby also noted that while the U.S. and Russia have a number of issues of disagreement, "dialogue has not been broken."

"Yes, we weren't in the meeting in Moscow, but it's not as if we haven't had communication with them before and then right after that meeting," he added. "There's been no exclusion of the United States with respect to the issue of Syria." {eoa}