

Kerry Defends Obama's Choice Not to Attend Paris Rally

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is to visit Paris on Friday in solidarity with victims of last week's militant attacks and he dismissed criticism over the fact no senior U.S. official joined other world leaders in a mass remembrance march.

He said he would travel on Thursday and be in Paris for part of the day on Friday. Seventeen people, among them journalists and police, were killed in three days of violence last week that started with a shooting attack on the Charlie Hebdo weekly, known for its cartoons that mocked Islam and other religions.

"No single act of terror, no two people with AK-47s, no hostage-taking at a grocery store, is ever going to prevent those who are committed to the march of freedom," Kerry told reporters during a visit to India.

The U.S. ambassador to France attended Sunday's march in Paris, while the top U.S. diplomat for Europe, Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, took part in a march in Washington, U.S. officials said.

"We have offered, from the first moment, our intel, our law enforcement and all of our efforts, and I really think that, you know, this is sort of quibbling a little bit," Kerry said in reply to a question about the lack of a senior Washington envoy in the group of world leaders who led the march.

The U.S. relationship with France was "not about one day, or one particular moment", Kerry said.

"It's an ongoing, long-time relationship that is deeply, deeply based in the shared values and particularly the

commitment that we share to freedom of expression.”

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