

## Clinton to Push Tougher Syria Policy at UN

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton heads next week to the United Nations General Assembly, trying to rally international support for tougher action against embattled Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. She is facing stiff opposition from China and Russia.

World powers are divided over how to stop the violence in Syria - with Russia, China, and Iran supporting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad - and the Gulf Arab states, Britain, France, and the United States backing his opponents.

At the Washington-based Cato Institute, analyst Malou Innocent said the longer the fight continues, the deeper those divisions run.

"The Western allies, and those who are supporting [the rebels] - the Qataris and the Saudis - certainly have an interest in seeing Assad go. But those allies of Assad have even more of a reason, a more intensified interest in seeing Assad stay," said Innocent.

China and Russia have vetoed tougher U.N. action, saying that is interference in Syria's internal affairs.

"We support a period of political transition in Syria. But it should come from the Syrian people. It should not be imposed from outside," said Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton says a political transition without the threat of consequences is useless.

"There's no point to passing a resolution with no teeth, because we've seen time and time again that Assad will ignore it and keep attacking his own people," said Clinton.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the Obama administration acted alone on Syria and can not now blame others for finding sanctions unacceptable.

"These supporters of sanctions try to blame Russia and China for resisting some unity of the international community. But you can not portray this unity as the demand for everybody else to join something that somebody decided single-handedly," said Lavrov.

Innocent said Russia and China do not want the sort of military intervention that helped topple Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

"They don't want to see another NATO- or U.N.-imposed no-fly zone turn into a means of regime change," said Innocent.

In the run-up to the U.N. General Assembly, Clinton made no progress with Russian President Vladimir Putin or with Chinese President Hu Jintao. So she said she is realistic about New York.

"We haven't seen eye to eye with Russia on Syria," said Clinton. "That may continue, and if it does continue, we will work with like-minded states to support the Syrian opposition to hasten the day Assad falls and to help prepare Syria for a democratic future."

Those opponents so far have failed to unite on a plan for a post-Assad Syria, with divisions between fighters and politicians.