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Russia and West on collision course at the UNSC over Kosovo

KosovoCompromise Staff

Russia and Western nations continued their verbal confrontation in Security Council Wednesday in, what appears to be, a path towards an unavoidable collision which would reach the climax on next week's debate on negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina on the future status of Kosovo.

Russian ambassador Vitaly Churkin urged the Security Council to support a fresh round of negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina, saying "the parties benefited from period of intensive dialogue, overlooked by Contact Group's "Troika".

Moscow called for "close engagement of the Contact Group in support of continued negotiating process between Pristina and Belgrade in order to reach agreement on Kosovo's future status".

The move was immediately rejected by the U.S. and Great Britain, who said that the time for talks was over, urging the Council to make a decisive move towards the implementation of proposal drafted by former Finish President Martti Ahtisaari.

However, British Ambassador John Sawers said that, barring in mind that Serbia and Kosovo Albanians have retained initial positions on the sovereignty, "the time has come to resolve the status of Kosovo".

"I do not believe the Council, as far as I can judge, is going to be able to reach agreement on way forward, in which case other organizations will have to take their responsibilities", said Sauer.

The British position was immediately backed by the U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, who underlined that stances of Moscow and the West "fundamentally differ on this issue".

"We think negotiations have been exhausted", Khalilzad said.

But, Churkin rejected the possibility to withdraw the Russian proposal, saying the Moscow's elements are still on the table in the Security Council and "very much alive".

In addition to different stances towards the possible continuation of negotiations, Russia and China on one and Western countries on the other side also clashed over the format of next week's debate in Security Council.



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U.S. and Britain backed the Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu's request to take part in the meeting, but Russia and China rejected that notion, saying that such a move would unacceptable considering provisions of the Resolution 1244.