

## **Russian President Putin calls up Barack Obama to discuss Ukraine, Syria**

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**Washington:** Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday called up US President Barack Obama to discuss Iran nuclear talks, situation in Syria and the need to counter Islamic State (IS) militants, the White House said in a communique.

"The leaders discussed the increasingly dangerous situation in Syria, and underscored the importance of continued P5Æ unity in ongoing negotiations to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon," the White House said.

According to the White House statement, they discussed the Ukraine conflict, in which Moscow is supporting the separatists in the eastern part of that country in their fight against the pro-Western central government in Kiev.

"President Obama reiterated the need for Russia to fulfil its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including the removal of all Russian troops and equipment from Ukrainian territory," the statement added.

The two leaders, who have maintained a cool and distant relationship because of their differences regarding the Ukraine conflict and the civil war in Syria, had not spoken since last February, when Obama telephoned Putin.

Putin and Obama also spoke of the need to counteract the Islamic State (IS) and about recent events in the Middle East, in particular the ever more dangerous situation in Syria, the White House said.

The leaders discussed the international talks with Iran to ensure that it does not divert its nuclear program to military ends, talks that are scheduled to wrap up this month, hopefully with a definitive agreement, and in which the US, Russia, China, France, the UK and Germany are participating.

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