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## Putin to Snub Tillerson as Tensions Spike

By Jason Ditz  
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Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's visit to Moscow was shaping up to be an ugly one, tasked with dealing with Russian President Vladimir Putin after last week's US attack on Syria. US-Russia tensions appear to be getting worse so much faster, however, that it has killed the talks entirely.

Kremlin officials now say that Putin has no intention of meeting with Tillerson at all during his visit, and that the only Russian official Tillerson is going to be meeting with is Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Kremlin officials have downplayed the seriousness of this move, insisting a Putin-Tillerson meeting was never officially scheduled in the first place. That's technically true, but as Tillerson had met Putin in the past, it seemed a foregone conclusion that one would take place.

Russia was clearly unhappy with the US attack on Syria, and tensions are continuing to rise, with Russia warning the US not to carry out more such attacks, while the US ratchets up allegations of Russian involvement in a putative Syrian gas attack.

The Tillerson-Lavrov meeting is likely to end with both sides issuing statements criticizing the other at any rate, despite being much lower profile than a meeting with the Russian president, but the lack of such meeting is the real news here, underscoring just how dire bilateral relations have become.