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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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Subject: Fw: 'Friends of Syria' vow support for opposition (AP)

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To: NEWS-Mahogany; Syria Unrest
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Subject: 'Friends of Syria' vow support for opposition (AP)

TUNIS (AP) - More than 60 nations meeting in Tunisia have agreed on some steps to pressure Syria's government to end its bloody crackdown on opponents.

Among them, they're asking the United Nations to begin planning a civilian peacekeeping mission. But there's no indication that Russia and China, allies of the Syrian regime, will go along. They've blocked previous U.N. resolutions on Syria -- a stance Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton blasted at today's meeting, calling it "despicable."

The U.S., European and Arab nations, calling themselves the Friends of Syria, called on Syrian President Bashar Assad (bah-SHAR' AH'-sahd) to end the violence immediately and allow in humanitarian aid. But they didn't commit to military intervention.

They pledged to boost relief shipments and set up supply depots along Syria's borders, but it isn't clear how it would be distributed without government approval.

They also said they would increase ties with the Syrian National Council, an opposition umbrella group, describing it as "a legitimate representative" of the Syrian people.

221-a-11-(Josh Earnest, deputy White House press secretary, at news conference)-"the Assad regime"-
Deputy White House press secretary Josh Earnest says the Tunisia conference involving the U.S. and its allies aims to turn up the heat on Syrian President Bashar Assad.

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