



Syria, Russia Upgrade Ties, Israel Fears More Arms for Hizbullah

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(Israelnationalnews.com) Russian President Dmitry Medvedev is visiting Syria for the first time Monday night as the two countries upgrade trade ties despite American disapproval of Syria's supplying Hizbullah terrorists with missiles. Medvedev's arrival in Damascus comes hours after he hosted President Shimon Peres during a three-day visit. The United States has raised suspicions that Syria also is arming Hizbullah with long-range Scud missiles, a charge that Syrian President Bashar Assad vehemently denies. The Obama administration recently charged that Hizbullah has one of the largest missile arsenals in the world.

Israel has been unsuccessfully trying to convince Russia not to sell it an advanced anti-aircraft defense system, which the IDF fears could end up in Hizbullah's increasingly advanced arsenal. Hizbullah surprised Israel in the Second Lebanon War with advanced Russian anti-tank missiles that destroyed heavily armored IDF tanks.

Medvedev and Assad will talk about regional security at a time when the Obama administration is trying to reverse previous American policy and restore diplomatic relations with Damascus to the level of ambassador. Republicans in the U.S. Senate last Friday blocked an attempt by President Obama's Democratic party to confirm Robert Ford as the first American ambassador to Syria in five years.

The United States officially regards Syria as a state that supports terror.

Medvedev also is scheduled to visit Turkey, which has rapidly dropped formerly friendly relations with Israel and has embraced Iran and Syria. Turkey has offered to resume its role as a mediator in indirect Syrian-Israeli peace talks, which former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert approved during his term of office but which were suspended more than a year ago. Israel has rejected the offer.

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