



DEBKAFfile

We Start Where the Media Stop | Est. 2000

Medvedev sees Hamas leader in Damascus, an affront to US and Israel

DEBKAFfile *Exclusive Report* May 11, 2010, 9:29 PM (GMT+02:00)

Tags: [Damascus](#) >> [Medvedev](#) >> [Meshaal](#) >>



Russian president Dmitry Medvedev welcomed in Damascus

Before Israel's president Shimon Peres had time to unpack his bags from his Moscow visit, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev was closeted with the Palestinian terrorist leader, Hamas' Khaled Meshaal in Damascus, Tuesday, May 11. Present too were Syrian president Bashar Assad and leaders of the extremist Palestinian organization in Syria and Lebanon.

In Jerusalem, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, apparently unaware of the Russian president's plan to meet the heads of Israel's arch-foe Hamas, referred earlier to Medvedev's comment that Moscow seeks a role in Middle East peacemaking by welcoming any constructive contribution to the effort. He also accused Tehran of warmongering between Syria and Israel.

Monday, the day the Russian leader arrived in Damascus, **DEBKAFfile's** sources predicted his visit would be the occasion for a weapons deal which might even be a secret back door for Iran to acquire the sophisticated weapons Moscow has denied to date.

It was also an opportunity for Moscow to dramatize its polar differences on Iran with Washington by gestures of support for the extremist Tehran-Damascus-Hizballah-Hamas alignment in the Middle East at the expense of the pro-Western moderate bloc led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Last week, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak brusquely refused to receive Assad for a get-well visit to Sharm el-Sheikh.

Both Washington and Jerusalem were unpleasantly surprised by Moscow's willingness to provide Bashar Assad with a public shot in the arm just a week after the Obama administration renewed US sanctions against Syria, citing its support for terrorist groups and pursuit of weapons of mass destruction as an "extraordinary threat" to American national security. Syria is widely shunned in the Middle East itself.

In Jerusalem, Israeli government leaders were too busy with the reopening of indirect talks with the Palestinians to gear up in time to seriously forestall the damage to Israel's interests predicted from expected Russian-Syrian deals and Moscow's shifting orientation toward the radical Middle East bloc. Medvedev's surprise meeting with the Hamas leadership Monday was perceived as yet another slap in the face to both Washington and Jerusalem.

President Peres, hurried dispatched to Moscow for Sunday's events marking the 65th anniversary of the allied victory against the Nazis, found Kremlin leaders deaf when he maintained that Iran and Syria were a danger to Middle East as promoters of terrorist activity. He commented wryly that Syria's Assad must be the only ruler in the world to treat missiles for Hizballah as a vehicle for peace.

Copyright 2000-2010 DEBKAFfile. All Rights Reserved. [Terms and Conditions](#).