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Kedar: Israel 'Knows How to Deal With Syrian Chemical Threat'

As Syria raises the stakes over its chemical weapons, an Israeli expert says measures are being taken to minimize the threat.

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Lt. Col. (res.) Mordechai Kedar, a lecturer at Bar Ilan University and a 25-year veteran of military intelligence says actions are quietly being taken to deal with the potential threat posed by Syria's chemical arsenal.

The U.S. said earlier this week that its intelligence had detected Syrian technicians had mixed precursor chemicals for the deadly nerve gas called sarin. The process took place at two storage sites, according to at least one report, and sources said the chemical may have been loaded into aerial bombs or artillery shells.

If the nerve gas is loaded into aerial bombs, and if the bombs make it on to planes and are fired, what happens if they are intercepted and explode in mid-air either by the Iron Dome anti-missile defense system, or by Patriot missiles?

Kedar told *Arutz Sheva* in an exclusive interview Thursday afternoon that if the gas is in an aerial bomb, it is "very easy to deal with. The Air Force knows very well how to deal with such things. An aerial bomb is a traditional weapon," he said, even when it is carrying a payload of sarin. "Missiles are much faster," he added, "but still they too can be dealt with."

The aerial chemical weapons threat, however, is one reason Turkey has turned to NATO for assistance, Kedar said. "This is why Turkey is deploying Patriots along the border with Syria," he pointed out.

If an aerial bomb bearing a payload of sarin explodes in mid-air, Kedar said, "it is much less dangerous than if it blows up on your head. Sarin needs to be within a certain range, and at a certain concentration, in order to be effective."

Among other effects, sarin causes burns and blindness.

Kedar added that although the U.S.-based *NBC News* network had reported the nerve gas had been loaded into the bombs, "I do believe that military intelligence organizations know more about what is going on, and take measures to secure things in an appropriate manner."

The intelligence veteran said that behind the scenes, "things are being done" and that it is "good that professional people are dealing with this. They have all the information and are taking decisions in accordance with the changing situation."

In response to a fierce warning from the American government, Syria's foreign ministry issued a statement on Monday saying it would not use such weapons against its own people. It was the second statement of its kind to be made in less than six months; Syria had broadcast a similar assurance in July.

However, by nightfall, the Foreign Ministry's spokesman, Jihad al-Makdissi, had fled the country, allegedly first to Beirut and from there to London, where the rest of his family allegedly had preceded him. According to Beirut-based *Al-Manar* television, linked to the Iranian-backed Hezbollah terrorist organization, Makdissi had been sacked by President Bashar al-Assad for making inaccurate statements that implied – or revealed – the presence of chemical weapons in Syria in the first place.

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