



# DEBKAFfile

We Start Where the Media Stop | Est. 2000

## Israeli forebodings over widening Russian-Hizballah-Iraqi intervention in Syria

DEBKAFfile *Special Report* May 29, 2013, 1:23 PM (GMT+02:00)

Tags: [Israel-Syria](#) >> [Russia](#) >> [Iran](#) >> [Hizballah](#) >> [US](#) >> [chemical weapons](#) >>



Russian Syrian military drill

Forebodings were voiced Wednesday, May 29, by senior Israeli military officers in the face of the widening military intervention in the Syria civil war by Russia, Iran, Hizballah and latterly Iraq too. They have made Syria's civil war the platform for a Russian contest against the West and a ladder up which Iran and its proxy Hizballah are climbing to top Middle East regional power spot.

Russia, Iran and Hizballah are winning the contest by default against an unresisting US-led West and a hesitant Israel.

A senior IDF officer acknowledged on Wednesday, May 29, that Israel's government and military leaders are at a loss on how to proceed. They have yet to recover from the calamitous miscalculation that Bashar Assad's days were numbered to which they clung stubbornly for almost eighteen months.

Even today, some spokesmen refer to a "disintegrating Syria," thereby losing sight of the major strategic and military changes overtaking the country that are entirely to Israel's detriment as well as eroding its options against a nuclear Iran.

At a time that the US and Israel should be using their heaviest military guns to slow Iran's race for a nuclear bomb, Tehran with Moscow's backing has brought its military assets up close to Israel's borders in Syria and Lebanon and openly threatens to use them.

Unlike Syria and Iran, Israel can't count on military intervention against an aggressor by supportive big powers. According to debkafile's Washington sources, no part of the Obama administration, including its military and intelligence arms, favors military action in Syria.

Even the direct evidence of chemical warfare already afoot in Syria is unavailing.

In Addis Ababa, US Secretary of State John Kerry repeated the administration's mantra Wednesday by denying "concrete evidence" of the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

The Secretary and the rest of NATO were deaf to the vivid testimony brought to *Le Monde* Wednesday by two reporters, who risked their necks by spending two months concealed in the Jobar district of Damascus. They discovered Russia or Iran had developed a chemical weapon that does not explode. The release of its poisonous gases sounds like popping the top off a can of soda and has "no odor, no smoke, not even a whistle to indicate the release of a toxic gas."

So what does happen?

The *Le Monde* reporters provided a graphic first-hand description.

"The men cough violently. Their eyes burn, their pupils shrink, their vision blurs. Soon they experience difficulty breathing, sometimes in the extreme; they begin to vomit or lose consciousness. The fighters worst affected need to be evacuated before they suffocate."

Wednesday morning, the Israeli Home Front rehearsed an attack on a Jerusalem suburb by a chemical-tipped missile.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, who watched, said the exercise is designed to protect Israeli civilians "from the threats pilling up around us." Israel's home front is the best protected

in the world but also the most threatened, he said: "We must make sure that defense is in place before an attack.

Tuesday, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon voiced his certainty that the Syrian President would not use chemical weapons against Israel or treat Israelis the way he treats his own people. There is no indication that anyone in the region intends to challenge us any time soon with unconventional weapons, said the defense minister.

debkafile's military sources find Ya'alon's comment delusory. They don't see why Assad would treat Israelis differently from his own people – especially since the IDF has presented him with no real deterrent. After all, none of Israel's three air strikes in January and May stopped the flow of Hizballah fighters into Syria. And meanwhile, Syrian and Hizballah leaders are declaring loud and clear that a war front against Israel is already operating from the Syrian Golan and Lebanon.

The question is who in Israel is listening. And what is being done to make sure that Assad will be prevented from using chemical weapons against Israeli military and civilian targets at a time of his convenience.

The spate of events in the last 48 hours is troubling - to say the least.

Monday, US Senator John McCain was reported to have paid a secret visit to Syria. What did this "visit" consist of? debkafile reports: The senator entered Syria from Turkey through the Kilis corridor which is the main supply route for the rebels in Aleppo, one of the few still under their control. McCain penetrated some 300 meters into Syria, had his picture taken, and left.

A US publication reported Wednesday that President Barack Obama had ordered the Pentagon to draw up plans to establish no-fly zones over Syria against Syrian warplanes. The Pentagon thereupon issued a denial: "There are no new American operational plans," said the spokesman.

Moscow's response was ready in place even before the report was published.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said the S-300 anti-air missiles that Russia was supplying the Assad regime were a "stabilizing factor" that could dissuade "some hotheads" from entering the conflict.

In the grades Moscow handed out for foreign interventionists: The US and Israel and their leaders were "hotheads" while Moscow, the calm, rational stabilizer.

In that capacity, debkafile's military and intelligence sources reveal that a huge Russian cargo plane landed in Latakia airport Wednesday with 60 tons of "humanitarian aid for Syria."

The nature of this cargo was not disclosed, but the last thing it must have been was "humanitarian" given the massive military aid Moscow is extending Assad's army.

Moscow also knocked on the head the timorous decision by European Union foreign ministers Tuesday to lift the arms embargo for Syrian rebels, which they carefully combined with a decision not to send them weapons.

In sum, the US is not doing anything to help the rebels, Europe is not sending arms, the rebels' Persian Gulf patrons have bowed to pressure from Washington and slashed their weapons aid, while Israel declares it wants no part of the Syrian civil war – even after it assumed the calamitous proportions of a world power contest with Israel's arch foes gaining the upper hand.

So who is feeding the flames of the Syrian conflict with a generous supply of military hardware? Who but Russia, the self-styled "stabilizing factor"

The Free Syrian Army's Supreme Commander Gen. Salem Idris made a desperate show of bravado Wednesday, by threatening to strike Hizballah strongholds in Lebanon if Hassan Nasrallah does not pull his brigades out of Syria within 24 hours.

Hizballah knows perfectly well that Gen. Salem is starved of weapons, just he knows that the US, Europe or Israel will not interfere with the stream of fighting strength he is pumping into Syria.

At worst, a few rockets will hit Hizballah centers in Beirut and the Beqaa Valley. Early Tuesday morning, the rebels tried to ambush Hizballah forces near the eastern town of Aarsal. Their operation went badly wrong and mistakenly killed three Lebanese soldiers manning an army checkpoint.

The senior Israeli officer interviewed by debkafile put all these forebodings into words when he said: "A military and strategic catastrophe for the West and Israel is in full flight in Syria, and no one in Washington or Jerusalem is lifting a finger. Israel's government and military heads never imagined that the Syrian war would take this turn. But we had better wake up at this eleventh hour - before it is too late."

Copyright 2000-2013 DEBKAFfile. All Rights Reserved. [Terms and Conditions](#).