

Russia Sells Syria Warplanes: Official

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MOSCOW – Russia is supplying Syria with warplanes, armored vehicles and air defense systems under existing contracts, ITAR-Tass News Agency quoted the head of the country's state military agency as saying.

Mikhail Dmitriyev, head of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, said Russia was selling Syria MiG-29 fighter jets, Pantsir short-range air defense systems and armored vehicles.

No further details were provided.

President Dmitry Medvedev this week paid the first-ever visit by a head of state from Moscow to Damascus, where he said the use of nuclear energy “may get a second wind” in Syria – a remark that prompted concern from Washington.

Russia's arms sales and possible nuclear cooperation with Syria, which has close ties to Iran, is unnerving for Israel and the U.S., which earlier this month renewed sanctions on Syria for another year, accusing it of supporting “terrorist” groups.

Russia is also in talks to supply NATO member Turkey, which Medvedev also visited this week, with air defense systems and helicopters, Dmitriyev said.

“It is unclear what will happen, what Turkey would agree to,” the news agency quoted him as saying.

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