

# Russia's Relationship with Israel and the S-300 Controversy

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*Ever since the Israeli-Syrian skirmish (falsely reported as an Israeli-Iranian clash in Syria by the mainstream press), questions have been circulating about what this means for Syria, Israel, Iran and the region, even the rest of the world. Was the retaliation by Syria all that was needed to finally make Israel understand that there might be consequences for its actions? Is this the beginning of a wider war between the two? What will be the response of the United States? The response of Russia?*

While a full-on military conflict between Syria and Israel did not happen in the hours after the missiles ceased firing, it was announced by the Russians that Russia would not be sending its famed S-300s to Syria. This was despite a warning by the Russians earlier that the previous U.S. missile strikes against Syria removed all “moral hurdles” previously in Russia’s way to do so. The new Russian announcement seemed to coincide with a trip to Russia made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who has been campaigning against a transfer of those air defense missile systems for quite some time. As a result, [many have been wondering](#) whether or not Russia is going back on its support of Syria or if it is becoming infected with the virus that has made the United States exist in a symbiotic relationship with Israel. Indeed, this one announcement is leading many to question Russia’s entire relationship with Israel.

## The S-300 Issue

There are several questions surrounding the announcement that the Russians would not be sending Syria its S-300 air defense missile system. Among those questions are “Why did the Russians decide not to do so? Do the Syrians already have the missiles? Does the truth lie somewhere in between?”

First, it is important to look at the announcement itself. Western mainstream media has been uniform in its suggestion that Israeli lobbying has prevailed upon the Russian government not to provide the missiles to Syria. For instance, in the *Reuters* article, “[Russia, after Netanyahu visit, backs off Syria S-300 missile supplies](#),” by Andrew Osborn, writes,

Russia is not in talks with the Syrian government about supplying advanced S-300 ground-to-air missiles and does not think they are needed, the *Izvestia* daily cited a top Kremlin aide as saying on Friday, in an apparent U-turn by Moscow.

The comments, by Vladimir Kozhin, an aide to President Vladimir Putin who oversees Russian military assistance to other countries, follow a visit to Moscow by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this week, who has been

lobbying Putin hard not to transfer the missiles.

Russia last month hinted it would supply the weapons to President Bashar al-Assad, over Israeli objections, after Western military strikes on Syria. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the strikes had removed any moral obligation Russia had to withhold the missiles and Russia's Kommersant daily cited unnamed military sources as saying deliveries might begin imminently.

But Kozhin's comments, released so soon after Netanyahu's Moscow talks with Putin, suggest the Israeli leader's lobbying efforts have, for the time being, paid off.

"For now, we're not talking about any deliveries of new modern (air defense) systems," Izvestia cited Kozhin as saying when asked about the possibility of supplying Syria with S-300s.

The Syrian military already had "everything it needed," Kozhin added.

The Kremlin played down the idea that it had performed a U-turn on the missile question or that any decision was linked to Netanyahu's visit.

"Deliveries (of the S-300s) were never announced as such," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call, when asked about the matter.

"But we did say after the (Western) strikes (on Syria) that of course Russia reserved the right to do anything it considered necessary."

The possibility of missile supplies to Assad along with its military foray into Syria itself has helped Moscow boost its Middle East clout. with Putin hosting everyone from Netanyahu to the presidents of Turkey and Iran and the Saudi king.

Israel has made repeated efforts to persuade Moscow not to sell the S-300s to Syria, as it fears this would hinder its aerial capabilities against arms shipments to Iranian-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah. Israel has carried out scores of air strikes against suspected shipments.

On Thursday, Israel said it had attacked nearly all of Iran's military infrastructure in Syria after Iranian forces fired rockets at Israeli-held territory. S-300s could have significantly complicated the Israeli strikes.

For its part, Israel seems happy to boast that its lobbying efforts have paid off.

"I see here another manifestation of mutual respect, which our countries have toward each other, and also adherence to the principle of accounting for [the partner's] interests," [said Israeli Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz](#).

"Iran's presence in Syria poses threats to Israel and is a source of instability both in Syria and in the Middle East. The solution to this problem would be driving Iran out of Syria and restoring stability in the region ... Israel will continue its activity aimed at ensuring its security and preventing Iranian presence in Syria," he added.

But Russian spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that it was unfair to link the announcement to Netanyahu's visit because the announcement, according to him, was made prior to the visit. However, the statements in question were indeed made two days after Netanyahu appeared

at the Kremlin.

“We never announced these deliveries as such. However, we said that after the strikes [by the US, France and the UK on Syria], Russia reserves the right to do whatever it deems necessary,” [Peskov said](#).

Regardless, the Israelis have been arguing against the Russian provision of S-300s to Syria for years.

Clearly, the implication in Russia’s public statements is that Russia has not provided Syria with S-300 missile systems. However, in April, Syrian Ambassador to Russia, Riyad Haddad, stated that the Russians had indeed delivered S-300s to Syria in March. His statements were denied by the Russian military and a diplomatic source.

In 2013, the President of Syria himself, Bashar al-Assad, [told Lebanese television station, al-Manar TV](#), that Syria had received S-300 missile systems.

“Syria has got the first batch of Russian S-300 missiles ... The rest of the shipment will arrive soon,” President Bashar al-Assad said.

So what is actually going on? Does Syria have the S-300s or not?

The truth is that no one really knows for sure. Syria has stated publicly that it does. Russia, however, has repeatedly stated that it does not.

There are thus a number of possibilities to consider here. One possibility is that Syria has not received S-300 missiles from Russia and is attempting to ward off Israeli temptations to launch airstrikes inside Syria to destroy those systems. Another possibility is that Syria has received the S-300s, or at least partially received them, but Russia is holding back further deliveries for one reason or other. A third possibility is that Syria does have S-300s but the Russian government wants to keep it under wraps so as not to inflame tensions in the region or tempt Israel further into “acting now” before Syria can effectively end Israel’s ability to conduct strikes. Israel has long launched individual strikes into Syrian territory not only for the purpose of inflicting damage and aiding terrorists but also to get Syria to light up its air defense systems so that, when the time comes, Israel will be able to eliminate those systems before launching a much more massive bombing campaign. It is possible that the possession of these weapons are being kept secret now so that, if a massive air campaign were to take place (via Israel or the US), the S 300s will be able to light up and demonstrate their capabilities with the element all at once with the element of surprise.

Lastly, it should be considered a possibility that S-300s are already in Syria but not manned by Syrians. Given that these systems are so effective, it could be that the Russians are manning these weapons either on Russian bases or elsewhere in the country so as to avoid premature launches and/or the possibility of downing Israeli or American planes before absolutely necessary and risking a wider war. Indeed, we know that S-300s are present in Syria under the control of Russian forces at least on [the soil of the Russian base](#) in Tartus.

[A mysterious delivery](#) of some type of hardware or material in April (notably around the time that the Syrian Ambassador suggested S-300s had been delivered) which involved unloading several cargo ships under the cover a gas that masked the unloading process and

prevented satellite surveillance lends credence to the idea that S-300s are indeed present in Syria at a greater level than what has been publicly admitted by the Russians.

### Russia's Relationship With Israel – Adversary, Sell-out, or Pragmatic?

The question over Russia's relationship with Israel and the influence the Israeli lobby has over the Russian government is perhaps the most controversial aspect of this entire affair, particularly in the alternative media where some claim that Putin is a secret warrior against Zionism and Israel and master of 5d chess, others claiming Putin has sold Syria down the river, and others still maintaining that Putin is merely a pragmatist.

Political analyst Andrew Korybko seems to believe that Putin is secretly attempting to force Syria to compromise to “federalization” and the weakening of the governmental structure in order to avoid a regional or possibly world war. As he writes in his article, [“Could It Be Any Clearer? Russia Is ‘Urging’ Syria To ‘Compromise’ Now!”](#) for *Eurasia Future*,

The Putin-Netanyahu Summit on Victory Day really did change everything, and Russia is no longer shy about showing the world its desire to “balance” “Israel” and Iran in Syria.

It couldn't get any clearer – Russia is without a doubt “urging” Syria to “compromise” on a so-called “political solution” to its long-running crisis, and to do so as soon as possible in order to avoid a larger Mideast war. The groundbreaking Putin-Netanyahu Summit that took place a couple of days ago in Moscow on Victory Day was bookended by two back-to-back “Israeli” bombings of Syria within a 24 hour period, all of which was followed by [Russia reportedly declining to sell S-300s to Syria](#). There's no other way to analyze this than to see it for what it truly is, which is Russia utilizing various means to “urge” Syria to “compromise” on its hitherto recalcitrant position in refusing to make tangible progress in adapting the [2017 Russian-written “draft constitution”](#) for “decentralization” (and possibly even “[federalization](#)”) and “complying” with Moscow and others’ “request” that it initiate the “phased withdrawal” of Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and their Hezbollah allies from the Arab Republic.

### Sudden Flip-Flopping Or Scenario Fulfillment?

The suddenness with which Russia moved may have caught many Alt-Media observers by surprise, but that's only because many of them were [brainwashed by the community's dogma](#) that Russia is “against” “[Israel](#)” and supposedly on some kind of “anti-Zionist crusade”, which it definitely isn't. Instead, Russia and “Israel” are veritably allies and the events of the past couple of days prove it. That said, just because Russian foreign policy seems (key word) to be “pro-‘Israeli’” doesn't in and of itself make it “anti-Iranian”, at least not how Moscow conceives of it. Rather, Moscow believes that it's fulfilling its grand geostrategic ambition to become the supreme “balancing” force in 21st-century Eurasia, to which end it's playing the [globally irreplaceable role](#) of preventing the current “Israeli”-Iranian proxy war in Syria from evolving into a full-fledged conventional one all throughout the Mideast.

....

The contradiction between Syria's “maximalist” approach in wanting to liberate “every inch” of its territory (which is its sovereign and legal right) and Russia's “pragmatic” one in recognizing the impossibility of this reality and declining to get militarily involved in advancing these plans (which would correspondingly include forcibly removing NATO members Turkey and the US from the Arab

Republic) have led to a “strategic dilemma” between the two partners whereby Damascus is intent on dragging its feet and procrastinating in order to avoid the political (“new constitution”) and military (“phased withdrawal” of the IRGC and Hezbollah) “compromises” that Moscow’s “solution” entails. Russia respects that Syria has informally made the choice to avoid committing to either of these two interlinked prospective means for resolving the crisis, but it nevertheless won’t stop trying to “convince” Damascus that the options presented before it are what Moscow believes to be the “best” ones that will ever be offered from this point forward.

In pursuit of its peacemaking objective to get Syria to “compromise” on the terms that Russia has presumably presented it with in order to avoid escalating the “Israeli”-Iranian proxy war inside the country to the point where it becomes a conventional one all throughout the region, Moscow has apparently decided to send very strong symbolic messages to Damascus to let it know just how serious it is about this. The most powerful signals that sent shockwaves through the Alt-Media and likely also the global diplomatic communities came from the Putin-Netanyahu Summit and Russia’s passive “acceptance” of “Israel’s” latest bombing run against what Tel Aviv claimed were Iranian units in southern Syria. Furthermore, Russia’s reported reconsideration of possible S-300 sales to Syria also stands out in the starkest terms as an informal statement declaring Moscow’s unwillingness to contribute to anything that would “compromise” “Israel’s” ability to bomb suspected Iranian and Hezbollah targets at will.

Referring back to the title of this analysis, it couldn’t be any clearer that Russia is “urging” Syria to “compromise” as soon as possible, though it’s uncertain whether Moscow’s latest messages will get Damascus to “comply” or if it will continue digging in its heels to resist all international “pressure” to do so. [Time is running out](#), however, because “Israel” has signaled that it’s run out of patience with this “game” and will utilize all means at its disposal to remove Iran and Hezbollah from Syria once and for all, counting as it will on open US and Gulf backing alongside Russia’s implicit support. Moscow’s passive involvement in these “containment” measures is a real game-changer and dramatically alters the strategic dynamics of the “Israeli”-Iranian proxy war in Syria, making it more likely than not that the odds will decisively shift in Tel Aviv’s favor with time unless Damascus “cuts a deal” and freezes the state of affairs before it gets any worse than it already is.

This raises the question about the skirmish itself. To be clear, Iran was not at all involved despite overwhelming reports in the Western mainstream press that it was. The skirmish began when Israel launched missiles against the Syrian village of Ba’ath located in the occupied Golan and Syria responded by not only taking out a number of those missiles but firing back at Israeli positions. Israel then launched bombing raids inside Syria against what it claims were Iranian military positions. While Syrian missile defense systems did a great job of taking out Israeli missiles, Russia did not intervene, most likely out of a desire to stay out of Israeli-Iranian conflicts and not to further inflame tensions. Russia also would not like to be forced to “choose” between Israel or Iran on the spur of the moment by downing Israeli jets and losing an “ally” and “partner” in Israel. It may also be true that Russia is willing to allow Iran to take as many hits as Israel is willing to give it, due to the fact that Iran is expanding its influence in the country. Russia may figure that the loss of life and material may begin to encourage Iran to head back home, reducing the complication of international relations between itself and Syria as well as itself and Israel.

This lack of defense of Syrian and Iranian positions has been interpreted as a Russian “green light” of the attack, especially since Netanyahu met with Putin in Moscow hours

before the strike both by the mainstream press and a portion of the alternative media.

[Netanyahu's statements](#) after the meeting were [more upbeat](#) suggesting that Russia would not interfere or block Israel's routine attacks in Syria. "Given what is happening in Syria at this very moment, there is a need to ensure the continuation of military coordination between the Russian military and the Israel Defence Forces. . . . In previous meetings, given statements that were putatively attributed to – or were made by – the Russian side, it was meant to have limited our freedom of action or harm other interests and that didn't happen, and I have no basis to think that this time will be different," he said. Israeli lobbying, or "a long-running Israeli courting of Russian sensitivities," [was credited](#) with this alleged decision by Putin and, notably, Israel has not joined the Western countries in imposing more sanctions of the disproven "Skripal affair" which Israel was more than willing to point out. Also notable is the fact that the United States has not responded with sanctions on Israel for ignoring its dictates.

This possible "green lighting" of the attack on the part of the Russians has been reported *ad nauseam* in the mainstream press. If it is true, then the fact that Russia would agree to such a massive attack – the largest Israeli attack on Syria since 1974 – is a major concern in terms of Russia's commitment to Syria.

But there is another possibility that few have discussed. Whitney Webb of *Mint Press News* writes in her article, "[Is Netanyahu Playing A Geopolitical Chess Game To Drive A Wedge Between Russia and Syria?](#)"

Indeed, prior to the strikes, there had more or less been a consensus that Israel was increasingly desperate that its involvement in the Syrian conflict was not going its way.

Could this new narrative of Russia cozying up to Israel and distancing itself from Syria be a desperate act by Israel to create an impression that it now has the upper hand?

[Webb continues by writing,](#)

While reports on the Putin/Netanyahu meeting certainly suggest Putin approved Israel's strikes beforehand, information from local sources and independent analysts suggest that narrative – based solely on Netanyahu's post-meeting comments – was largely inaccurate. As journalist [Elijah Magnier noted](#), the meeting with Netanyahu was much more tense than described by most media, with Putin expressing disdain for [Israel's bombing of Syria's T4 Airbase](#) in early April, just 50 meters from a Russian military position.

Information from sources within Syria and from the Syrian Arab Army also offered counter-narratives that reject the notion that Putin "greenlit" Israel's strikes on Syria. [Those sources](#) alleged that Israeli jets, which took part in the strike, used a U.S. transponder signal to masquerade as U.S. fighter jets. Given that Syrian and Russian forces are under orders not to fire on jets transmitting U.S. transponder signals – in the hopes of avoiding a wider conflict – this ruse [would have allowed](#) Israeli jets to fly into Syria via its ally Jordan with little incident.

Earlier this month, a [source](#) in the U.S. Air Force stationed in Syria reported that Israeli jets had been using U.S. transponder signals to move freely in



Syrian airspace, suggesting the tactic had been used by Israel prior to last Thursday's strikes.

If true, this would mean that it is highly unlikely that Putin "greenlit" anything, as there was no way of knowing that those jets using U.S. transponder signals were not of U.S. origin and because allowing the jets to use those transponder signals would threaten the understanding between the U.S. and Russian militaries, a risk Putin was unlikely to take.

It would mean that Israel deliberately endangered the understanding between U.S. and Russian forces to respect flight paths of their respective fighter jets, which could potentially have dangerous consequences, as it would erode the trust that served as a basis for that understanding. Sources within the Syrian Arab Army [also suggested](#) that Netanyahu approved the use of U.S. transponders before his meeting with Putin, giving the subsequent Israeli strikes the appearance that they were approved by Putin and in turn sowing distrust between Russia, Syria and Iran.

Continuing with her discussion of the possibility that Israel is attempting to sow the seeds of deception between the Syrian, Russian, and Iranian alliance, Webb writes,

If Russia's alleged "green lighting" was an indeed an intentional ploy on the part of Netanyahu to spread distrust through the key alliance of Russia and Syria and Iran, it would not be without precedent, as Netanyahu has been known to resort to similar tactics, including his [recent presentation](#) on Iran's so-called "Atomic Archive," where he presented old information on Iran's alleged nuclear ambitions as groundbreaking new evidence. In fact the whole foundation for the "green light" narrative came exclusively from Netanyahu's comments combined with the timing of the strike, which came just hours after Putin and Netanyahu met.

Israel stands to gain significantly from fomenting distrust between Russia and Syria. As the foreign-funded proxy war targeting the Assad-led government in Syria [has largely failed](#), weakening Assad's most critical alliance by making Putin appear to have been complicit in a major Israeli air strike against Syrian Army bases would certainly benefit the Israeli government. Even Assad himself [noted](#) that Russia is largely to thank for "saving" the country from regime change efforts at the hands of foreign governments and their proxies. Were that alliance to weaken, it would give Israel, whose defense minister just a week ago spoke of "[liquidating](#)" the Syrian government, a new opening.

Israel's apparent influence over Putin also distracts from other embarrassing news that came as a result of its attack on Syria, such as the apparent failure of its [much-touted](#) but [often dysfunctional](#) Iron Dome missile defense system, which [managed](#) to shoot down only four of the twenty Syrian missiles launched into Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. In contrast, Syria's 30-year-old Russian-made missile defense system downed [more than half](#) of the 70 missiles Israel fired in and around Damascus.

The Israeli government has [been careful](#) to prevent the proliferation of images or information showing the damage caused by the 16 Syrian missiles that landed in the Golan Heights, instead [publicly claiming](#) it has eliminated the "Iranian threat" (i.e., presence) in Syria.

Israel, always ready to point out how its neighbors are terrorizing and threatening it, has now claimed that it has "eliminated the Iranian threat," signaling to some that Israel is not prepared to go any further in the near future. However, with the backing of the world's

biggest bully, the United States, Israel may also be acting deceptively in that regard as well. Knowing that the U.S. will come running ready to sacrifice as much American blood and treasure as necessary to defend it, Israel is as emboldened as ever.

But Putin's hesitation to give Syria S-300s (if, in fact, Syria does not have them) may also be rooted both in pragmatism and lack of perceived necessity. As Tony Cartalucci writes in his article "[Israel Bait The Hook. Will Syria Bite?](#)"

A cynical reality remains as to why. Israel's war on Lebanon in 2006, conducted with extensive airpower – failed to achieve any of Israel's objectives. An abortive ground invasion into southern Lebanon resulted in a humiliating defeat for Israeli forces. While extensive damage was delivered to Lebanon's infrastructure, the nation and in particular, Hezbollah, has rebounded stronger than ever.

Likewise in Syria, Israeli airstrikes and missile attacks will do nothing on their own to defeat Syria or change the West's failing fortunes toward achieving regime change. They serve only as a means of provoking a retaliation sufficient enough for the West to cite as *casus belli* for a much wider operation that might effect regime change.

Attempts to place wedges among the Syrian-Russian-Iranian alliance have been ongoing. Claims that Russia's refusal to retaliate after US-Israeli attacks or its refusal to provide Syria with more modern air defenses attempt to depict Russia as weak and disinterested in Syria's well-being.

The fact remains that a Russian retaliation would open the door to a possibly catastrophic conflict Russia may not be able to win. The delivery of more modern air defense systems to Syria will not change the fact that US-Israeli attacks will fail to achieve any tangible objectives with or without such defenses. Their delivery will – however – help further increase tensions in the region, not manage or eliminate them.

#### Because Syria Already Won

Syria and its allies have eliminated the extensive proxy forces the US and its allies armed and funded to overthrow the Syrian government beginning in 2011. The remnants of this proxy force cling to Syria's borders and in regions the US and its allies are tentatively occupying.

Should the conflict's status quo be maintained and Russia's presence maintained in the region, these proxy forces will be unable to regroup or regain the territory they have lost. In essence, Syria has won the conflict.

Indeed, sections of Syria are now under the control of occupying foreign armies. Turkey controls sections in northern Syria and the United States is occupying territory east of the Euphrates River. While Syria's territorial integrity is essential – Syria will be better positioned to retake this territory years from now, than it is at the moment. Maintaining the status quo and preventing the conflict from escalating is the primary concern.

Over the next several years – within this status quo – the global balance of power will only shift further away from America's favor. As that happens, Syria will have a much better opportunity to reclaim its occupied territory.

The baited hook to which Cartalucci refers is the U.S. strategic plan, developed by



corporate-financier think tank, The Brookings Institution, to create a “multi-front war” in which pressure is brought to bear on Syria and/or the plan to provoke an Iranian response that would be used to justify an Israeli or American military invasion.

In its 2012 article, “[Assessing Options For Regime Change](#),” Brookings wrote that Israel’s role, particularly in the Golan is to put pressure on Syria and create a “multi-front war.” It states,

Israel’s intelligence services have a strong knowledge of Syria, as well as assets within the Syrian regime that could be used to subvert the regime’s power base and press for Asad’s removal. Israel could posture forces on or near the Golan Heights and, in so doing, might divert regime forces from suppressing the opposition. This posture may conjure fears in the Asad regime of a multi-front war, particularly if Turkey is willing to do the same on its border and if the Syrian opposition is being fed a steady diet of arms and training. Such a mobilization could perhaps persuade Syria’s military leadership to oust Asad in order to preserve itself. Advocates argue this additional pressure could tip the balance against Asad inside Syria, if other forces were aligned properly.

In regards to Iran, Brookings wrote in its article, “[Which Path To Persia? Options For A New American Strategy Towards Iran](#),”

The truth is that these all would be challenging cases to make. For that reason, it would be far more preferable if the United States could cite an Iranian provocation as justification for the airstrikes before launching them. Clearly, the more outrageous, the more deadly, and the more unprovoked the Iranian action, the better off the United States would be. Of course, it would be very difficult for the United States to goad Iran into such a provocation without the rest of the world recognizing this game, which would then undermine it. (One method that would have some possibility of success would be to ratchet up covert regime change efforts in the hope that Tehran would retaliate overtly, or even semi-overtly, which could then be portrayed as an unprovoked act of Iranian aggression.)

## Conclusion

At the end of the day, Putin’s interests are essentially Russian interests. Putin wants to see an end to the encircling of Russia and the economic isolation foisted onto it by the West. Putin does not want to see Russia’s strategic ally destroyed but Putin has also negotiated his own deals with the Syrian government that not only see Russian bases and ports established in the country but mining rights for Russian companies. It was a deal made at exactly the time when Assad couldn’t refuse. Whether or not Putin has personal feelings about the fate of the Syrian people, Russia entered the Syrian field because Russia’s interests deemed it necessary from a Russian perspective. Make no mistake, Russia is out for Russia’s interests, not Syria’s. This is not a criticism. The first priority a leader has is to his own people and enlightened self-interest is the wisest way to conduct international relations.

With all that being said, however, it is undeniable that Russia has acted as Syria’s savior with its entering the country and assisted the government in liberating territory from Western-backed terrorists. Even more so, Russia has stood as a deterrent to the United States which has attempted to launch direct military invasions of Syria on numerous

occasions.

However, Russia is not interested in seeing regional tensions fanned simply because it makes the waters rougher for its own fleet. Thus, Russia is not on some anti-Israel crusade. It is merely looking to maintain stability in the region while at the same time maintaining and boosting trade with all parties and establishing a more equitable balance of power on the world stage along with the United States and China. This is why Russia has opposed Israel's unprovoked attack on Syrian military targets while saying nothing about its attacks on Iranian military positions. It is also why, despite Israel and Syria being mortal enemies, that Russia has boosted its trade with Israel.

In the future, look for Russia to continue to do whatever it can to aid Assad in his attempt to retake the country while avoiding World War III and a confrontation with Israel. While it is tempting to become emotional and desire a little justice or at least a little revenge, Putin is going to continue to let cooler and more intelligent heads prevail. He is also going to let Russian interests take top priority and there may be a time when Russian interests and Syrian interests do not necessarily line up. For the sake of Syria, we hope that such a divide can be easily bridged.

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