

Israeli Official: 'Axis Crossed All Red Lines'

The radical axis of Iran, Syria and Hezbollah has crossed all red lines recently, Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chairman Avigdor Lieberman said on Tuesday.

Speaking at a meeting of his committee, Lieberman said that Iran was moving at a "crazy pace" toward obtaining a nuclear weapon, and that he hoped Israel would be able to make the correct decisions.

He also said there was no doubt that the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad had used chemical weapons. He said the international community had done nothing while 90,000 people were massacred in Syria.

Lieberman noted that Hezbollah has missiles that can reach anywhere in Israel. He expressed concern about a situation in which any terrorist group could strike Israel.

"I know the answer is more funding, but I think what is required is more decisiveness and determination," Lieberman said.

Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Benny Gantz told the committee, "We are dealing with two tracks simultaneously—the use of operational force in the different arenas in light of events and possible developments and the long-term building of force within the budgetary constraints."

Also on Tuesday, Strategic Affairs Minister Yuval Steinitz said that the elections in Iran next month would have no effect on the country's nuclear program. Steinitz said a nuclear Iran would equal 30 North Koreas. He assessed that "the next few months, a year or so" remain for the Iranian nuclear standoff to be resolved.

On Syria, Steinitz said Israel was not ruling out any scenario in the Syrian civil war, including a victory by the Assad regime. He warned that the S-300 anti-aircraft system that Russia plans to sell to Syria could potentially be used to shoot down civilian aircraft over Tel Aviv.

Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon said on Tuesday that the S-300 system destined for Syria has not left Russia yet, but Israel will know how to act if it does.

Yaalon's remarks appeared to contradict Israel's air force chief, who said last week the shipment of S-300 missiles was "on its way" to Assad.

Israel is alarmed by the prospect of Russia supplying advanced weapon systems to Syria, saying such arms could end up in the hands of Iran or Hezbollah.

"I can say that the shipments are not on their way yet," Yaalon told reporters. "I hope they will not leave, and if, God forbid, they reach Syria, we will know what to do," he said, without disclosing how he came by the information.

Although Israel has not publicly taken sides in the Syrian conflict, Western and Israeli sources say it has launched air strikes inside Syria to destroy weapons it believed were destined for Hezbollah, which is allied with Assad.

Russia's foreign minister said on May 13 that Moscow had no new plans to sell the S-300 to Syria but left open the possibility of delivering such systems under an existing contract.

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