

Medvedev Lauds Syria Reform Plans

April 06, 2011

The  Moscow Times

President Dmitry Medvedev praised Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's reform plans during a telephone conversation Wednesday, the Kremlin said.

Some protesters in Syria have rejected limited reform gestures by Assad, who has faced demonstrations for greater freedoms in the tightly controlled nation where more than 60 people have been killed in three weeks of unrest.

"The Russian president supported the Syrian leadership's intention to begin the internal transformations announced by Bashar al-Assad with the aim of preventing the unfavorable development of the situation and human casualties, for the sake of preserving civil peace," the Kremlin said in a statement.

Separately, Medvedev reiterated Moscow's opposition to the use of force in Libya. Russia allowed Western military action in Libya by abstaining from an authorization vote in the UN Security Council in March.

"We proceed from the assumption that the whole series of conflicts that are taking place should be resolved in a peaceful way, without the participation of troops and on the basis

of international mediation," Medvedev told military officers.

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