

Medvedev Says Deal Possible in Libya

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Lavrov smoking a cigarette during consultation meetings between Medvedev and Merkel in Hanover on Tuesday. **Fabrizio Bensch**

HANOVER, Germany — President Dmitry Medvedev said Tuesday that compromise was possible between Libya's rebels and government, adding that supporting one side in the conflict was "exceptionally bad" for Libya.

"We must continue the search for opportunities for a peaceful solution," said Medvedev, whose country is to host Moammar Gadhafi's foreign minister on Wednesday for talks on ways to end the five-month war in Libya.

"We will continue the search for a compromise. In my view it is achievable — a compromise between Benghazi and Tripoli, between the rebels and Gadhafi's circle," he said at a joint news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The Kremlin has called for Gadhafi to go but criticized Western military and diplomatic support for the rebels.

"The active phase of a civil war has begun, and different forces are supporting conflicting

sides, and this is not very good. In truth, this is exceptionally bad for Libya," Medvedev said.

He added that Russia was "doing its share" to seek a peaceful solution.

Medvedev's Africa envoy has met with government officials in Tripoli and rebels in Benghazi, and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is to meet his Libyan counterpart, Abdelati Obeidi, in Moscow on Wednesday, the ministry said on its Twitter feed.

Lavrov on Monday accused the United States and other countries that have recognized the rebel National Transitional Council as Libya's legitimate government of pursuing a "policy of isolation."

Russia abstained in the vote on a March UN Security Council resolution that authorized military action but has accused the NATO nations conducting airstrikes of overstepping their mandate that allowed them to enforce a no-fly zone and protect civilians.

Medvedev reiterated Russia's opposition to any UN resolution condemning Syrian President Bashar Assad's government for its violent crackdown on protesters, saying Moscow has learned a lesson from Libya.

"We really don't want the situation in Syria to develop according to the Libyan scenario," Medvedev said. "We don't want a resolution to appear that will subsequently be manipulated and waved about like a leaflet to say, 'There is a resolution that says Assad is bad and we will close the skies.' Then under the closed skies, military action starts."

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