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Saudi Arabia Offers Russia Economic Incentives to Drop Assad

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Kremlin Press Service

Saudi Arabia will offer Russia access to the Gulf Cooperation Council Market and regional investment funds if it ends its support for the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad, the Kingdom's Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir said in an interview with the Politico.eu news website.

Russia's military intervention in Syria began in September last year, purportedly to fight the Islamic State, but many analysts have seen it as a way to prop up Assad's government by mostly attacking groups opposed to the regime.

Saudi Arabia provides financial and military support to several rebel groups in Syria and has long proposed a handover of power or the forcible removal of Assad.

Saudi Arabia, according to Al-Jubeir, can offer Russia a foothold in the Middle East if a compromise can be found on the Syria conflict.

“We are ready to give Russia a stake in the Middle East that will make Russia a force stronger than the Soviet Union” with access to a pool of investment “greater than China’s," he said.

“It would be reasonable for Russia to say, that’s where our relations will advance our interests, not with Assad. We don’t disagree on the end game in Syria but how to get there," he claimed.

“Assad’s days are numbered," he said, “so make a deal while you can.”

The Islamic State is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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