

# Netanyahu Meets US Envoy Over Syria, Iran



RUSSIA — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks with Russian President Vladimir Putin during their meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia July 11, 2018.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met on Sunday with a US envoy for Syria for talks on the war-ravaged country and Iran, his office said.

Netanyahu discussed “the situation in Syria and the joint effort to stop Iran’s terror and aggression” with James Jeffrey, the US special representative for Syria engagement, said a statement.

Ahead of the visit, the US State Department said Jeffrey, accompanied by US special envoy for Syria Joel Rayburn, would discuss “maintaining Israel’s security while countering Iran’s destabilising activity throughout the region”.

Jeffrey and Rayburn would travel on to Jordan and Turkey, where they would reiterate the US position against a military offensive in Idlib, the State Department said.

The two “will also address Russia’s specious allegations of international plans to

stage a chemical weapons attack in Syria” in their meetings across the region, according to the State Department.

Iran is backing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in his country’s civil war along with Russia and Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah.

Israel has sought to avoid direct involvement in the conflict but acknowledges carrying out dozens of air strikes in Syria to stop what it says are deliveries of advanced weaponry to its Lebanese enemy Hezbollah.

It has also pledged to prevent its arch foe Iran from entrenching itself militarily in Syria, and a series of strikes that have killed Iranians in Syria have been attributed to Israel.

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