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## **President Peres represents Israel in Moscow marking victory over Nazis**

(Communicated by the President's Spokesperson)

President Peres represented the State of Israel at the military ceremony in Red Square in Moscow and held a round of political talks with the presidents of China, Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan and the Chancellor of Germany.

President Shimon Peres represented the State of Israel yesterday in a major ceremony that was held in Red Square in Moscow to mark the 65th anniversary of the Red Army's victory over Nazi Germany, with the participation of over 30 presidents and heads of state. President Peres sat on the leaders' balcony to watch the military parade that included tens of thousands of Russian soldiers and delegations of the allies, headed by England and the U.S., as well as a flyover of military aircraft and a parade of Russian-made tanks and missiles. At the end of the ceremony, the leaders laid memorial wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Russian President hosted the leaders at a gala reception in the Kremlin.

The President took the opportunity to hold a marathon round of political talks with the presidents of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Croatia and the Chancellor of Germany.

In his meeting with the President of China, Hu Jintao, Mr. Peres opened the meeting by saying that Israel welcomes its warm relations with China and that Israel is very hopeful about China's ability to restrain Iran. He said that Iran is an extremist and dangerously negative element in the Middle East, which is based on a scorched earth policy of terrorism and war. Mr. Peres further stated that Israel supports peace and successful political negotiations with the Palestinian that will lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

The Chinese President began by saying that there has traditionally been a deep friendship between the Chinese people and the Jewish people. The Chinese people stand behind the State of Israel, even in difficult times, and during the 18 years of the diplomatic relations between the two countries, that friendship has grown along with economic, scientific and political cooperation. He said that China is adopting a positive approach to significantly expanding and increasing the scope of the cooperative ventures with Israel, particularly in everything connected with science, advanced technologies and agriculture. The Chinese President further stated that China is closely following events in the Middle East, and his country welcomes the start of the peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. He talked about his last meeting with Mahmoud Abbas and noted that China believes that the Palestinians are serious about their intentions for peace. He further stated that peace between Israel and the Palestinians would significantly reduce the tension and hostilities in the Middle

East. The two presidents agreed on increasing the cooperation between Israel and China and at the end of the meeting, Mr. Peres extended an official invitation to his colleague to visit the State of Israel. "Israel awaits you with open arms," Mr. Peres said.

In his meeting with Russian President Medvedev, the two discussed the progress of the peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, the issue of the arms smuggling from Syria to Hizbullah and strengthening the strategic relations between Russia and Israel.

President Peres opened the meeting with warm words after the military parade, saying, "I came as the president of the State of Israel and the Jewish people to thank you and Russia for the great victory over the Nazis and for the warm relations between Russia and Israel and the Jewish people. Mr. Medvedev replied that he ascribes great importance to the presence of the leaders at the parade and to the world's recognition of the results and the importance of World War II and the victory of the Red Army.

The two presidents spoke at length about the state of relations between Syria and Israel, and President Peres asked to send a clear message to Syrian President Assad, whom Mr. Medvedev will be meeting tomorrow in Damascus.

President Peres said that Israel has no interest in a war with Syria or in heating up the northern border and that Israel is seeking a genuine peace with its Syrian neighbor, provided that Syria ceases its support of terrorism and arms smuggling. "Israel will not let them have it both ways - on the one hand, giving up the Golan Heights and on the other getting Iranian missiles and terrorist cells on the Golan. We are following the smuggling of missiles from Syria to Hizbullah with open eyes, and there is only one explanation - an attempt by Syria to escalate matters on the northern border," Mr. Peres stated.

On the Palestinian issue, Mr. Peres reiterated Israel's deep commitment to the principle of two states for two nations, and he gave his host details of the schedules and the ways to reach a political solution.

At the end of the meeting, the two presidents discussed the progress of economical-technological projects between their countries that require government intervention to advance.

In talks between Chancellor Merkel and President Peres, the German chancellor expressed great interest in the opening of the proximity talks between Israel and the Palestinians and reiterated Germany's commitment to supporting and assisting the progress in the Middle East peace process.