



## Ahmadinejad Shows Signs of Pressure on Syria

by Gil Ronen

Nissan 1, 5771, 05 April 11 08:43

(Israelnationalnews.com)

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is showing signs that he is worried by recent developments in Syria, where anti-government protests are threatening Bashar Assad's grip on power.

Ahmadinejad accused the West on Monday of causing instability across the Middle East, and in Syria in particular, to bolster Israel's standing, Iranian state television reported.

According to Reuters, the Iranian leader told reporters that the Western countries "want to save the Zionist regime (Israel) by interference in the region aimed at creating discord among the regional nations and governments."

"America and the Zionist regime want to weaken Syria's resistance by creating discord between the Syrian government and the Syrian nation," he explained. He then added ominously: "The government of Syria and its nation are our friends. We think they will resolve their problems with expediency."

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The linkage he made between Iranian friendship toward Syria on the one hand, and his belief that unrest there would soon end on the other, may be an oblique reference to Iran's involvement in assisting Assad to quash the riots.

Protesters in Syria have reported that [police and soldiers firing on them spoke Farsi](#), the language of Iran.

Ahmadinejad predicted that the revolutions in the Middle East would bring about Israel's downfall, since all of the countries that experienced upheavals oppose "the occupation of Palestine." He said that there would soon be a new Middle East without Israel and the U.S..

He also also fired back at a statement by the six member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), who said on Sunday they are "deeply worried about continuing Iranian meddling" aimed at stirring up trouble to aid sedition in Kuwait and Bahrain.

"We attach no legal value to this statement that was issued under political pressure of America and its allies," Ahmadinejad said. He added that he had asked U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon "to prevent catastrophes happening in the region as occurred in Afghanistan and Iraq."

The Foreign Ministry source told IDF Army Radio last week that "Syria is Iranian property," and said Iran was trying to protect its investment there.

"A destabilized Syria potentially throws the Iranian military base idea out the window," according to former CBS Middle East correspondent Dean Reynolds. "Syria has been the Lebanese overlord for decades, and Hizbullah has been Iran's meddling pet," he added.

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