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## Israel missile test may be tacit warning to Russia: Analyst

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In response to a question about whether Russia's stance vis-à-vis Syria has actually prompted Israel to take the recent action as an alert message, Christopher Walker said the Israeli measure could indeed serve as a "crude message [to Russia]."

He criticized Israel for test-firing the new missile against the backdrop of the onrushing developments across the Middle East, saying, "It just sounds like a bit of saber rattling."

On Friday, the Israeli military launched the missile from a base on the Mediterranean coast.

The missile can carry a nuclear, chemical or biological warhead and is capable of traveling 5,000 miles, reaching Russia.

Walker pointed to Russia's support for the government of Syria, noting, "The Russians will not take [it] kindly to be told that they're now, as it were, in nuclear range of the Israelis."

*"I don't think frankly it will come to any surprise to Russian intelligence that the missiles exist [in Israel]; it's just the timing of making them public, as it were, always ratcheting up the pressure in the region, which is already almost at boiling point," he said.*

Russia has stood by the Syrian government over the course of the ongoing unrest in the Middle

Eastern country, which broke out in March 2011 and blocked several Western-engineered resolutions at the UN Security Council against Syria.

In May, Russia said it has agreed to sell Syria advanced S-300 air-defense missiles. According to Assad, Damascus is already in possession of the first batch of S-300 missile defense systems from Russia.

Many people, including large numbers of Syrian security forces, have been killed in the unrest in Syria.

The Syrian government maintains that the chaos in the country is being orchestrated from outside and there are reports that a very large number of the militants are foreign nationals.