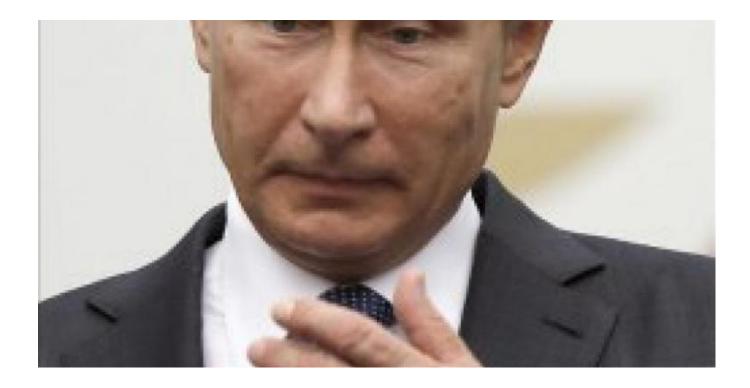


Putin Briefs Saudi King on Al-Assad Meeting

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"In a phone conversation with Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Putin continued the discussion of Syrian topics," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"The head of the Russian state informed the monarch of the results of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's visit to the Russian Federation that occurred yesterday," Peskov explained.

Earlier, the Russian presidential spokesman reported that the Putin had also telephoned his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan to brief him about the results of the meeting.

Al-Assad paid a visit on Tuesday night to Moscow, where he held talks with his Russian counterpart on his first trip outside Syria since the conflict began in March 2011.

Saudi Arabia insists that al-Assad should step down from power to enable a political transitional period in Syria.