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Su-24 downing gave grounds for war, but Russia decided against symmetrical response – Medvedev

09/12/2015



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*“What did 20th-century countries used to do in a similar situation? A war began,”* Medvedev said on the ‘Talk to the Prime Minister’ TV program.

Medvedev said Ankara had *“violated the norms of the international law,”* giving Russia what’s called in international judicial language ‘*a casus belli*’, or a reason to start a war.

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*“That was a direct assault on a foreign state. In the present situation a war is the worst what could happen. That’s why a decision was taken not to give a symmetrical answer to what the Turks had done,” the PM explained.*

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*“Yet we had to make them understand they’re going to hold responsibility for their actions. Exactly for that reason and for the safety of our citizens the relevant decisions were taken,” Medvedev said regarding the economic and other sanctions Russia has introduced towards Turkey.*

It should be realized that Russia’s actions are not effectively sanctions, but rather a “*protective reaction*” of the Russian state, Medvedev said.

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Speaking about the Russia’s military spending, the PM stressed that the decision taken five years ago to increase defense expenditures was “*absolutely correct.*”

*“What can we say about our country? It is the largest country in the world with the longest border line. If we don’t maintain reliable armed forces, we would simply not have our country*

anymore," he said.

At the same time the prime minister declined to release defense budget expenditures on the military operation against Islamic State terrorists in Syria.

*"It's classified. I can tell you the following: employment of the Russian armed forces [in Syria] stays exactly within the budget of the Defense Ministry. They have made no requests for wider defense responsibilities regarding the given situation (operation in Syria)," Medvedev said.*

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