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Subject: Russia's Medvedev drives into West Bank for talks (Reuters)

JERICHO (Reuters) - Russian President Medvedev drove into the Israeli-occupied West Bank on January 18 for talks with Palestinian President Abbas on reviving the moribund Middle East peace process. His convoy from Amman airport in Jordan crossed over the historic Allenby Bridge, in an unusual route for a head of state dictated by an Israeli foreign ministry strike which forced him to cancel the Israel leg of his trip. Palestinian officials said they could not remember when a visitor of that level had used the Allenby crossing, which was shut down to normal traffic for the occasion. Russia is part of "the quartet" of international powers overseeing Middle East peace negotiations, though the United States plays the dominant role in diplomacy that has ground to a halt due to a dispute over Israel's settlement policy. "It is crucial for us to continue our work with the Middle East quartet ... to revive the talks," said a Kremlin official, speaking on the eve of the January 18 talks in Jericho.

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