

# Russia Launches New Airstrikes In Syria; First From Submarine

BY VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV  
Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russia has unleashed another barrage of airstrikes against targets in Syria, including the first combat launch of a new cruise missile from a Russian submarine in the Mediterranean Sea, the country's defense minister said Tuesday.

The Kalibr cruise missiles launched by the Rostov-on-Don submarine successfully hit the designated targets in Raqqa, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu reported to President Vladimir Putin. The submarine was in a submerged position during the launch, he added.

Putin noted that the new cruise missile can be equipped with both conventional and nuclear warheads, adding he hopes that the latter "will never be needed."

Shoigu said Tu-22 bombers flying from their base in Russia also took part in the latest raids, performing 60 combat sorties in the last three days.

He said the targets destroyed in the latest wave of Russian airstrikes included a munitions depot, a factory manufacturing mortar rounds and oil facilities belonging to "terrorists."

Shoigu said the Russian military had informed Israel and the United States about the airstrikes before launching them. A U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the matter publicly, confirmed that Russia notified the U.S. in advance.

The U.S. official said at least 10 cruise missiles were launched from Russian surface ships in the Caspian Sea and at least one missile was fired

by a Russian submarine in the eastern Mediterranean.

Russia has carried out its air campaign in Syria since Sept. 30, using warplanes at an air base in Syria's coastal province of Latakia, as well as navy ships and long-range bombers flying from their bases in Russia. While Moscow said its action has been focused on the Islamic State group, the U.S. and its allies have criticized Moscow for also striking moderate rebel groups opposed to Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Shoigu told Putin that Syrian army forces had overtaken the area near the border with Turkey where a Turkish jet shot down a Russian warplane on Nov 24. He showed Putin the plane's flight recorder, which he said Syrian and Russian troops had recovered from the crash site.

Putin ordered the flight recorder to be studied in the presence of foreign experts, adding that the data will show the plane's flight path.

Moscow's relations with Ankara have been badly strained over the downing. Turkey said it shot down the aircraft after it violated Turkey's airspace for 17 seconds despite repeated warnings.

Russia has insisted the warplane had stayed in Syria's airspace, and responded by deploying long-range air defense missiles at its air base in Syria and introducing a slew of economic sanctions against Turkey.

"We had treated Turkey not only as a friendly country, but as an ally in the fight against terrorism, and we couldn't expect such a mean, treacherous stab in the back," Putin said.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria

Zakharova dismissed Turkey's complaint about a sailor on a Russian navy vessel pictured on its deck with a portable air-defense missile while the ship was cruising across the Bosphorus.

Turkey denounced the incident as a provocation and summoned the Russian ambassador to protest.

Zakharova responded Tuesday by saying the Russian crew had the right to protect its vessel and insisted that the action didn't contradict the Montreux Convention, which sets international rules for using the Turkish straits.

Russia's Foreign Ministry also voiced concern Tuesday about the reported bombing of a Syrian army camp without addressing the U.S. claim that Russia was responsible for the bombing.

The Syrian government blamed aircraft from the U.S.-led coalition for targeting the army camp in the eastern city of Deir el-Zour on Sunday night, killing three Syrian soldiers and wounding 13. The U.S. denied the claim, and a senior U.S. official military said Washington was "certain" it was a Russian airstrike that had hit the camp.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

Without commenting on the U.S. claim, Russia's Foreign Ministry on Tuesday said it has "serious concerns" about reports of the coalition strike in Deir el-Zour. It said the incident was rooted in the U.S.-led coalition's reluctance to coordinate with Damascus on its campaign against the Islamic State group.

The ministry also mentioned a coalition strike in

Syria's province of Hassake that reportedly involved civilian casualties.

"These incidents show that the situation on the front against IS in Syria and Iraq is getting more tense," the ministry said, adding that the Turkish military's deployment to a base near Mosul in Iraq without Iraqi government sanction has added to the tensions.

"We consider such presence unacceptable," the ministry said.

U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, said Washington expects Turkey to operate in coordination with the Iraqi government.

"We have urged political dialogue between the Iraqi government and that in Turkey," Power said. "Our belief is that just as we operate in close coordination with and with the consent of the Iraqi government that all countries should do that."

She voiced hope that the Turkish deployment could "be done in that manner where a sovereign government is making judgments about which capabilities are deployed and making sure that it has visibility into everything going on in its country."

Dmitri Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, said that while Russia so far has said 'no' to Iraq's request for help in fighting IS, that attitude may change. He added that the arsenal Russia has put on the ground in Syria signals Moscow's intention to have a lasting military presence.

"It's not going to be a short operation, it's not going to be a short war," Trenin said. "Russia is there for a long haul."

## Police Misconduct Has Frayed Relations

CHICAGO (AP) — A South Side police commander and his officers tortured black suspects into confessing to crimes they didn't commit. Another rogue unit shook down drug dealers on the West Side for drugs and money. A different group of officers accepted payments from drug dealers to warn them of police raids.

And for years, whenever Chicago officers did something wrong, their colleagues covered for them.

The city's longstanding reputation for police misconduct and brutality shattered relations with the black community long before the federal government announced this week that it was launching a wide-ranging civil-rights investigation of the Chicago Police Department. The probe was prompted by a video showing a white officer shooting a black teen 16 times and revelations that other officers filed false reports about what happened.

"There is a deep mistrust, and it really becomes a cancer here in Chicago because it eats away at respect for authority and respect for the law ... that becomes toxic," said the Rev. Marshall Hatch of New Mt. Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church. He said some communities feel like they're being occupied by police rather than protected by them.

Craig Futterman is an attorney who helped win the release of video showing the fatal shooting of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald. He said the footage underscored two things: A pervasive code of silence at all levels of the department has allowed misconduct and brutality to fester, and previous reform efforts have done little to solve the problem.

## Venezuela Opposition Wins Supermajority

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela's opposition won a key two-thirds majority in the National Assembly in legislative voting, according to final results released Tuesday, dramatically strengthening its hand in any bid to wrest power from President Nicolas Maduro after 17 years of socialist rule.

More than 48 hours after polls closed, the National Electoral Council published the final tally on its website, confirming that the last two undecided races broke the opposition coalition's way, giving them 112 out of 167 seats in the National Assembly that's sworn in next month. The ruling socialist party and its allies got 55 seats.

The publication ends two days of suspense in which Maduro's opponents claimed a much-larger margin of victory than initially announced by electoral authorities, who were slow to tabulate and release results that gave a full picture of the magnitude of the Democratic Unity opposition alliance's landslide.

The outcome, better than any of the opposition's most-optimistic forecasts, gives the coalition an unprecedented strength in trying to rein in Maduro as well as the votes needed to sack Supreme Court justices and even remove Maduro from office by convoking an assembly to rewrite Hugo Chavez's 1999 constitution.

Although divided government should foster negotiations, Maduro in his first remarks following the results showed little sign of moderating the radical course that voters rejected.

## House Tightens Controls On Visa-Free Travel

WASHINGTON (AP) — Driven by the Paris terror attacks, the House voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to tighten controls on travel to the U.S. and require visas for anyone who's been in Iraq or Syria in the previous five years.

The legislation takes aim at the "visa waiver" program that allows citizens of 38 countries to travel to the U.S. for stays of 90 days and less without first obtaining a visa from an embassy or consulate. Belgium and France, home to most of the perpetrators of last month's Paris attacks, are among the participating countries.

The bill, which passed 407-19, would institute a series of changes, including the new visa requirement for citizens of Iraq, Syria and any other country deemed a terrorist hotspot, along with anyone who's traveled to those countries in the previous five years.

## Brazilian Lawmakers Scuffle As Impeachment Commission Forms

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Lawmakers scuffled on the floor of Brazil's lower house Tuesday during an attempt to block a vote on forming a commission that will determine if impeachment proceedings against President Dilma Rousseff should go before the full body.

Voting resumed after nearly a half hour of pushing and shoving and the commission was partially filled. The panel

so far is dominated by those seeking the president's ouster based on allegations of fiscal irregularities by her administration using state-run banks to fill budget gaps.

Speaker Eduardo Cunha, Rousseff's bitter rival, allowed impeachment proceedings to be introduced into the House of Deputies last week.

Chaos broke out on the house floor Tuesday when Cunha

called for secret balloting in the creation of the commission and wouldn't yield the floor to allow deputies to debate before voting. Members of Rousseff's Workers' Party physically blocked voting for a while.

The formation of the commission is the first step in the impeachment process. Once it's formed, Rousseff will present a defense to it.

The commission then

votes on whether to allow the full house to vote on whether she should be impeached and temporarily removed from office. A vote for impeachment would send the matter to the Senate, which would determine if she should be permanently removed.

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