



→ Reported Air Route
- - - Possible Cruise Missile Path
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Russia is attempting to align itself with France in the wake of ISIS's terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13. Russia took steps to reassert its freedom of action in Syria as France expanded its anti-ISIS air campaign in response to the Paris attacks. On November 17, Russia launched air strikes from long-range strategic bombers for the first time since its intervention in the Syrian Civil War and announced plans to deploy 12 additional fixed-wing attack aircraft. Russia also reportedly launched sea-based cruise missile strikes from both the Mediterranean and the Caspian Sea, although Moscow has not officially confirmed these attacks. Russia framed this escalation as a direct response to ISIS's likely responsibility for the Russian airliner downed over Egypt's Sinai Peninsula on October 31. Russia's use of long-range strategic bombers and missiles is, however, likely intended as a show of force to the U.S. and its NATO allies. Russia likely accelerated its announcement about the downed airliner in order to garner sympathy and greater partnership with France. Russia may view France's accelerating air campaign in Syria as an opportunity both to draw a major U.S. ally into its proposed alternative counterterrorism coalition and to degrade NATO. Meanwhile, Russian-backed separatists escalated again in Ukraine, launching attacks with Grad rocket launchers for the first time since a September 1 ceasefire. Russian mobilization through proxies as well as with naval and air assets ranges beyond Syria in an increasingly aggressive pattern.

1 Syria. 11-12 NOV: Russia's MoD officially announced that Russian warplanes struck targets in the southwestern Dera'a Province for the first time since the start of its air campaign in Syria on September 30. Local sources in Dera'a Province reported Russian airstrikes as early as October 28.

14 NOV: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov announced that peace negotiations between the Assad regime and the "whole spectrum of opposition forces" in Syria are planned to begin on January 1, 2016. The announcement came directly after the culmination of the third round of international talks in Vienna on a political solution to the Syrian Civil War.

17 NOV: The lower house of Russian parliament issued a statement calling on parliamentarians in Europe, North America, and the Middle East to create an "international anti-terror coalition" against ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, and linked groups.

17 NOV: A Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) presentation to President Vladimir Putin indicated that 6 howitzers from Russia's 120th Artillery Brigade are deployed near the Assad regime's Sha'irat airbase in Homs Province.

17 NOV: Russia announced that 25 long-range Russian strategic bombers launched strikes against targets in Aleppo, Idlib, ar-Raqqa and Deir ez-Zour provinces. Russian military chief of staff Gen. Valery Gerasimov announced that Russia planned to incorporate these strategic bombers into the Russian air campaign in Syria along with an additional 8 Su-34 and 4 Su-27 attack planes.

17 NOV: An unnamed U.S. official reported that Russia launched "about 20" cruise missiles into Syria from the Caspian Sea.

17 NOV: Russia's Rostov-na-Donu submarine reportedly launched Kalibr cruise missiles from the eastern Mediterranean against ISIS's stronghold of ar-Raqqa City, according to an anonymous source close to the Russian MoD.

18 NOV: Russian long-range strategic bombers carried out a second day of strikes against ar-Raqqa, Deir ez-Zour, Aleppo and Idlib provinces.

18 NOV: An unidentified Russian defense source reported that Russia had recently deployed the Vice-Admiral Kulakov and the Mirazh missile ship to join Russia's naval contingent off of the Syrian coast.

2 India. 08-18 NOV: The Russian and Indian militaries held a joint counterterrorism exercise in Rajasthan, near India's border with Pakistan.

3 South Caucasus. 11 NOV: Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the Russian MoD to sign an agreement with Armenia to establish a joint air defense system.

4 North Korea. 12 NOV: Military representatives of Russia and North Korea signed an agreement in Pyongyang designed to prevent "dangerous military activities" between the two countries' armed forces.

5 Iraq. 13 NOV: Russia's deputy foreign minister met with a delegation from Iraq's Security and Defense Committee. Russia's Foreign Ministry alleged that the Iraqi delegation advocated for increased "coordination and cooperation" on counterterrorism issues.

6 Russia. 14 NOV: A Russian nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine tested two Bulava ballistic missiles in the White Sea near northwestern Russia.

17 NOV: Russia successfully test fired a RS-12M Topol intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) from a test site in Astrakhan Oblast in southwestern Russia. Russia previously tested ICBMs on October 28 and 30 in northwestern Russia and from submarines in the Arctic and Pacific.

7 Ukraine. 16 NOV: Ukraine's military reported that Russian-backed separatists fired Grad multiple launch rocket systems on residential areas west of the separatist stronghold of Donetsk City, the first reported separatist Grad attack since a September 1 ceasefire.

18 NOV: Russia transferred two small missile boats to the Black Sea Fleet base at Sevastopol, Crimea. The ships carry the modern Kalibr SS-N-30A cruise missile, which Russia first used in combat operations on October 7 in strikes launched from the Caspian Sea into Syria.

8 France. 14 NOV: Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his condolences to French President Francois Hollande following the November 13 Paris terrorist attacks and called for the "unification of the whole international community" to combat terrorism.

15 NOV: Former French President and head of the main French opposition party Nicolas Sarkozy called for the creation of a single anti-ISIS coalition in Syria including both France and Russia.

16 NOV: French President Francois Hollande called for the United States and Russia to "unify" their strength in fighting ISIS and announced that he will meet with leaders from both countries to facilitate cooperation.

17 NOV: President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia's Moskva missile cruiser would coordinate with the French Charles De Gaulle aircraft carrier off the coast of Syria.

17 NOV: French President Francois Hollande held a phone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss coordinating military action in Syria, according to the Kremlin.

9 United Kingdom. 16 NOV: Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that Russia's relations with the UK were undergoing a "revival" after a meeting with UK Prime Minister David Cameron at the G20 summit in Turkey. Putin said that the UK shared intelligence with Russia on the October 31 downing of Russian Metrojet Flight 9268.

10 Egypt. 17 NOV: Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) assessed that a bomb was responsible for the October 31 downing of Russian Metrojet Flight 9268. Russia likely timed its announcement in order to increase its alignment with France after the November 13 attacks in Paris.

18 NOV: President Vladimir Putin agreed to enhance airline security in a phone conversation with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

11 United States. 15 NOV: President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin met on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Turkey to discuss the Syrian Civil War.

18 NOV: President Barack Obama stated the U.S. would consider coordinating with Russia in countering ISIS if the two countries "reached a better understanding" about a resolution to the Syrian Civil War.

12 Lebanon. 18 NOV: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called for a greater bilateral counterterrorism dialogue with Lebanon during a meeting with his Lebanese counterpart Gebran Bassil. Russian state media reported that Bassil refused to rule out the possibility that Lebanon would ask for Russian military support.

13 China. 18 NOV: Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu met with the deputy chairman of the Chinese Central Military Commission to discuss security, military-technical cooperation, and the next Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) counterterrorism exercise scheduled for 2016 in Kyrgyzstan.