

Putin Orders Russian Forces Home from Syria. ISIS is Down and Defeated, But It's Not Out (Still Supported by America?)

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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stephenlendman.org

([Home - Stephen Lendman](#)).

Contact at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

Russian aerial operations turned the tide of battle in Syria from defeat to near-triumph, aiding government and allied forces decisively, smashing ISIS Washington supports, combating al-Nusra effectively, defeating America's imperial agenda in the country.

While too early to declare victory, kudos are warranted for years of valiant efforts by courageous Syrian and Hezbollah forces, along with Russia making the decisive difference by intervening in September 2015.

Putin and Assad made an unannounced visit to Khmeimim air base in Syria. Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu and commander of Russian forces in Syria General Sergey Surovikin joined them.

Russia's president stopped at Khmeimim en route to talks with Egyptian President al-Sisi in Cairo, followed by meeting with Turkish President Erdogan in Ankara - discussions with three heads of state on Monday.

Assad thanked Putin before for significant help he provided in defeating US-supported terrorists in Syria, again on Monday, saying:

"The achievements that have occurred are very significant and very important for us."

"(D)estruction (of ISIS) is crucial for the entire world...On behalf of the entire people of the Syrian Arab Republic, I express deep gratitude for this role that your Armed Forces have played. The victories that were achieved concerned both our state and the neighboring countries."

General Surovikin explained about 70,000 square km of Syrian territory were liberated, about 32,000 terrorists killed in the last seven months alone, tens of thousands more earlier.

Addressing military forces at Khmeimim air base, Putin thanked Russian aerial and support personnel involved in counterterrorism operations, completing their mission successfully. Here are the highlights of his address:

“(Y)ou are protecting our country,” Putin stressed. “By helping the people of Syria to maintain their statehood, to fight off attacks by terrorists, you have inflicted a devastating blow to those who have directly, brazenly and openly threatened our country.”

“We will never forget the sacrifices and losses incurred in the struggle against terrorism both here in Syria and in Russia. However, it will not make us fold our hands and retreat.”

“(T)his this memory will continue to motivate us to eradicate this absolute evil – terrorism – whatever face it hides behind.”

“Syria has been preserved as a sovereign and independent state. Refugees are returning to their homes. Favorable conditions have been created for a political settlement under the UN.”

“The Russian Center for the reconciliation of opposing sides in Syria continues to operate in line with international agreements.”

“The two bases, in Tartous and Khmeimim, will continue to operate on a permanent basis. If the terrorists raise their heads again, we will deal unprecedented strikes unlike anything they have seen.”

Most Russian forces will begin returning home. Mop up operations continue. US-supported global terrorism remains a significant threat.

Much work remains to eliminate al-Nusra and other terrorists in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere regionally. ISIS may be down, but it’s not out – not as long as America supports the terror group.

The struggle for Syria’s soul remains to be entirely completed successfully, a long way to go to achieve it because Washington, Israel and their rogue allies want war and regime change, not peace and stability.

Putin erred earlier by withdrawing Russian forces prematurely, hopefully not again, but it’s too soon to know. Returning Syria to its pre-war state remains a longterm struggle.

Removal of US forces in the country remains an enormous obstacle to overcome – fundamental to win a genuine peace, along with preserving Syrian sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Stephen Lendman is a Research Associate of the CRG, Correspondent of Global Research based in Chicago.

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About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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