



RUSSIA RAMPS UP ITS PRESENCE IN SYRIA

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Some 1,000 Russian troops arrived in Syria in mid-October, disregarding Israeli strikes on the airport runways in Damascus and Aleppo. This is a clear sign of Moscow not going to scale down its fight against Islamic terrorism either because of the situation in Israel or the war in Ukraine. This also means that the Russian Defense Ministry has enough resources to replace the private military companies (PMC) once present in this Arab country. The Defense Ministry, headed by General Sergei Shoigu, quickly and effectively took over the share of Wagner PMC's military assistance to Syria, focusing not on protecting corporate business interests there, but on ensuring maximum effectiveness in the fight against terrorism.

"According to intelligence data, terrorist groups in the Idlib de-escalation zone are preparing attacks on civilians and Russian and Syrian troop deployments," Rear Admiral Vadim Kulit, deputy head of the Russian Center for the Reconciliation of Warring Parties (CPVS) in Syria, said on October 16.

"The command of the Russian group of forces and the leadership of the armed forces of the Syrian Arab Republic will take the necessary proactive measures," Kulit emphasized. He also said that the aviation of the US-led anti-terrorist coalition continues to create dangerous situations in the skies over Syria, flying in violation of de-confliction protocols and Syrian airspace. By the way, this is not the first time that NATO aircraft provide air support for ground operations carried out by bands of criminals and terrorists.

Meanwhile, the US Department of Defense keeps insisting that there are only a few hundred Russian PMC fighters in Syria and that their numbers are not changing.

"What I see is a relatively stable number of Wagner forces in Syria over the last several months," the commander of the US Central Command Air Force (CENTCOM), Lieutenant General Alexis Grinkevich, said when meeting with members of the Washington group of military observers (Defense Writers Group). When asked to clarify the precise number of Wagner personnel he was talking about, Grinkevich replied, "I'll say this - several hundred." It is hard to say exactly what facts that the general had in mind though. Perhaps information gleaned from the media that needs verification. Besides, how come such a high-ranking US military officer is unaware of the fact that Wagner's military structures have over the past couple of months been almost completely integrated into the Russian Defense Ministry's line of command?

Sergey Shoigu - Russian Minister of Defense with associates Western media claims that Russia finds it hard to keep the situation in Syria under control due to the progress of the military operation in Ukraine. However, judging by the situation in the East of Ukraine, it can be assumed that such statements are sheer propaganda.

The Russian armed forces are fast advancing along the entire front line, leaving less and less chances for the Ukrainian military and for Kyiv itself.

"The Ukrainian Armed Forces have run out of time for a counteroffensive," Newsweek magazine writes, adding that Ukraine no longer has a chance to achieve significant results, since the winter slush will complicate logistics and Ukrainian troop advancements. However, it is now clear to everyone that the seasonal change is not the issue. Essentially, the much-trumpeted Ukrainian counteroffensive never materialized. Pumped up with Western weapons, Zelensky had nothing to boast about on the battlefield.

Apparently, because weapons alone are not enough, one needs tactics, knowledge of military science and much more, which is something neither he nor his team can boast of. As for the Russian Defense Ministry, led by Sergei Shoigu, this past summer it changed its tactic making it possible to strengthen the Russian forces' position and confidently move forward, so much so that Russia can now allow itself to considerably bolster its presence in both Syria and the African countries.

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