

Britain Not in Military Discussions With Russia Over Syria Says U.K.'s Fallon

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Britain's Secretary of Defence Michael Fallon dspeaks with a member of the Royal Navy at the Defence and Security Equipment International trade show in London.

Britain has not discussed military action in Syria with Russia, British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon said on Tuesday, adding that Moscow's action in the last few weeks had further complicated the situation there.

"We have not discussed military operations against ISIL [Islamic State] in Syria with the Russians," Fallon told British defense and security think tank Royal United Services Institute.

"The Russian action in the last few weeks of putting ships and aircraft into the region obviously further complicates an immensely complex situation."

Washington said last week it had held initial military talks with Moscow to look at ways of

avoiding accidental military interactions in Syria after Russia's military buildup.

British Prime Minister David Cameron wants to get parliamentary approval for extending a bombing campaign against Islamic State militants in Syria, and the government said last week it would try to reach a consensus.

Asked how urgent it was for Britain to get involved in direct military action in Syria, Fallon said it was urgent to support the Iraqi government of Prime Minister Haider Abadi.

"One of the keys to that, of course, is tackling the command and control that lies in northeast Syria, the supply routes that leave the area around Raqqa into Iraq ... and support those allies in the coalition already taking action by striking in Syria."

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