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France: 'Curious' Russian Airstrikes in Syria Not Against Islamic State

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French Army Rafale fighter jets are seen in flight during an operation against Syria, Sept. 27.

France said it was "curious" that Russian airstrikes in Syria on Wednesday had not targeted Islamic State militants and a diplomatic source added that Moscow's action appeared aimed at supporting President Bashar Assad against other opposition groups in the country's civil war.

The diplomatic source said it was in line with Russia's stance since 2012 that until there was a viable alternative to Assad, Moscow would not drop its support for him in the war that began in 2011 after a government crackdown on anti-Assad protests.

"Russian forces struck Syria and curiously didn't hit Islamic State," Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told lawmakers.

A French diplomatic source said the strikes, which seemed to have been carried out near Homs, an area crucial to Assad's control of western Syria.

"It is not Daesh [Islamic State] that they are targeting, but probably opposition groups, which confirms that they are more in support of Bashar's regime than in fighting Daesh," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"We shall see what they do with their other strikes," the source said.

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