

Russia Has Begun Operations Against Islamic State in Syria

September 30, 2015

The  Moscow Times

Putin said on Wednesday the only way to fight terrorists in Syria was to act preemptively.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Wednesday the country's air force had begun striking Islamic State militants in Syria, targeting military equipment, communication facilities, arms depots, ammunition and fuel, domestic news agencies reported.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Russian parliament gave President Vladimir Putin its unanimous backing to launch air strikes in Syria, setting the stage for Russia's most dramatic intervention in the Middle East in decades.

"In accordance with the decision of the Armed Forces Supreme Commander of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, Russian air forces today began pinpoint strikes against ISIS [Islamic State] targets on the ground on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic," the Interfax news agency cited a Defense Ministry spokesman as saying.

Putin said on Wednesday the only way to fight terrorists in Syria was to act preemptively,

saying Russia's military involvement in the Middle East would only involve its air force and only be temporary.

Speaking at a government meeting, Putin said it was still possible and necessary to unite international efforts to take on Islamist militants in Syria.

Putin told a government meeting on Wednesday that all of Russia's "partners" had been informed about Moscow's actions.

He said Moscow expected President Bashar Assad would show flexibility and be ready to compromise over the future of his country.

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