

U.S. Official: Russia Airstrikes Not Targeting Islamic State Areas in Syria

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Russia's airstrikes in Syria so far do not appear to be targeting Islamic State-held territory, a U.S. official said Wednesday, a crucial detail which could complicate any potential cooperation with the United States in the war.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Russia was carrying out the strikes in the vicinity of Homs and perhaps other areas in Syria as well, noting that all U.S. information on Russian activity was still preliminary.

Russia cautioned the United States to clear Syrian airspace ahead of the strikes, the U.S. official said, adding, however, that the U.S.-led coalition was "continuing to fly missions in Syria."

A Russian official in Baghdad told U.S. Embassy personnel that Russian military aircraft would begin flying missions on Wednesday over Syria against Islamic State forces, U.S. State

Department spokesman John Kirby said.

"The U.S.-led coalition will continue to fly missions over Iraq and Syria as planned and in support of our international mission to degrade and destroy ISIL," Kirby added, using an acronym for Islamic State.

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