

Head of Putin's Administration Confirms Russian Planes Were in Syria Before Official Intervention

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Sergei Ivanov

Presidential administration head Sergei Ivanov confirmed that Russian planes and equipment had been deployed to Syria in advance of Russia's military campaign there, in an interview with the state-run TASS news agency Monday.

"It's no longer a secret that our military planes and some specialized divisions of the armed forces were sent to Syria in advance," Ivanov said.

Russia's air strikes, reportedly aimed at destroying facilities controlled by the Islamic State terrorist organization in Syria, officially began on Sept. 30.

In the days prior, Western media reported — citing sources in Syria — that Russian military personnel and equipment had been spotted in various parts of the country. Russian authorities, including President Vladimir Putin himself, denied an intervention was under

way, saying Russia was simply selling equipment to Syria under governmental contracts.

Answering a question about the authorities denying any military presence in Syria till Sept. 30, Ivanov explained that “we didn't confirm or deny it, we simply didn't comment on it.”

“It's standard international practice. Completely legal, by the way,” he added. “But let's be realists: Everybody understands that it's hard to conceal the transportation of military planes, [things like that] are seen from space,” he said.

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