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Downing of Russian Su-24 Was a 'Stab in the Back' – Putin

By The Moscow Times

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Putin said that the incident will seriously impact relations between Russia and Turkey.

The downing of the Su-24 military plane was a "stab in the back from accomplices of terrorists," Russian President Vladimir Putin said during a meeting with Jordan's King Abdullah II on Tuesday, Russian media reported.

Turkey had no reason to attack the plane, Putin added. The president said that the plane was attacked when it was 1 kilometer away from the Turkish border and landed 4 kilometers away from it, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported.

He said that the incident will seriously impact relations between the two countries. Russia had previously seen Turkey as not just a neighboring state, but a friendly country, Putin said.

According to him, the downing of the plane occurred despite the agreement with the United States — Turkey's partner in the international coalition — designed to prevent this type of

aerial incident.

Putin also alleged that Turkey had profited from oil supplies from Syrian regions controlled by “terrorist groups,” and consequently provided these groups with financial help, the Vedomosti newspaper reported Tuesday.

The Russian president lashed out at Turkey's decision to discuss the situation with its NATO partners at a special session, implying that Ankara had not “established necessary contact with Russia” prior to the meeting.

“Instead ... the Turkish side turns to its NATO partners to discuss this issue, as though we had shot down their plane,” Putin said, Vedomosti reported.

Both Russian pilots have been killed by Syrian-Turkmen militia operating in the northwest of the country, the BBC’S Russian news service reported, citing The Associated Foreign Press and Reuters sources.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has cancelled his visit to Turkey, international media reported Tuesday.

Tensions between Russia and Turkey had been running high because of what Ankara considered repeated violations of Turkish airspace by Russian aircraft. On Oct. 6, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the Russian incursions “did not look like an accident,” media reported at the time.

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