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# Russia-France Military Cooperation in Syria to Go Ahead

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French President Francois Hollande (R) shakes hands with Russia's President Vladimir Putin

Russian President Vladimir Putin is set to meet with his French counterpart Francois Hollande in Moscow on Thursday, with military cooperation against Islamic State in Syria and against terror threats at home topping the agenda, the Vedomosti newspaper reported Thursday morning.

The visit, arranged shortly after the Paris terror attacks on the night of Nov. 13 — which left 130 people dead and over 360 injured — is to go ahead despite a chill in Moscow's relations with Ankara, one of Paris's NATO partners, following the downing of a Russian Su-24 bomber by Turkish forces Tuesday.

Despite a flare-up of tensions, with Putin referring to the attack as "a stab in the back ... by accomplices of terrorists" on Tuesday evening, leading NATO powers remain open to including Moscow in an expanded anti-IS coalition, Vedomosti wrote.

Late on Tuesday, Hollande said during a meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama that his

country was ready to work with Moscow as long as the latter demonstrated a willingness to fight IS and come out in support of a political solution to the situation in Syria, prompting some to speculate that France was backing down on its earlier offer of cooperation, Vedomosti reported.

However, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wednesday that Moscow supported Hollande's proposal to close the Syrian-Turkish border, a plan the French president was to lay out in detail during his visit, Russian media reported on Wednesday evening.

“[The Su-24 incident] will complicate matters; however, in my opinion, it is not a reason to rule out the possibility of a coalition,” Lavrov was quoted as saying by Vedomosti.

Islamic State is banned in Russia as a terrorist organization.

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