

Putin: Russian Can Redeploy to Syria 'Within Hours'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia can beef up its military presence in Syria “within hours” to any scale the situation may demand, President Vladimir Putin told a Thursday gathering of military officials and soldiers at the Kremlin.

He said that the partial withdrawal of Russian troops — which Putin declared in a surprise announcement this week — will leave in its wake a favorable “balance” for the Syrian government forces.

“Given our support to strengthen the Syrian army, I am certain that in the near future we will see new significant successes of patriotic forces in their battle against terrorism,” Putin said in remarks published on the Kremlin website.

Referring to ongoing battles around the Islamic State-controlled city of Palmyra, Putin said that he hoped that “this pearl of the world's civilization, or at least what's left of it after it hosted bandits, will be returned to the Syrian people and to the world.”

But should things turn less favorably than Moscow hopes, “Russia is capable, literally within a few hours, to increase its military deployment in the region to a size appropriate for the situation that is forming, and to use the whole arsenal of capacities in our possession,” Putin said.

The Russian Defense Ministry has previously said it would continue air strikes against terrorist targets after the partial withdrawal, and Putin confirmed his army would continue battling terror groups in Syria.

Islamic State is a terror group banned in Russia.

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