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U.S. Proposes Closer Ties with Russia on Syria

By The Moscow Times

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Smoke rises after what fighters of the Syria Democratic Forces (SDF) said were U.S.-led air strikes on the mills of Manbij where Islamic State militants are positioned, Aleppo, Syria.

U.S. President Barack Obama has set out a possible new agreement on military cooperation between Russia and the U.S. in Syria, the Washington Post reported Thursday.

The agreement would see the two countries cooperating more closely in the fight against the Islamic State if Russia agrees to stop the Assad government from bombing U.S-backed rebel groups, an unidentified White House official told the newspaper.

The text of the agreement was sent to the Russian government on Monday, the official said.

Russia began air strikes in Syria in September last year in a bid to fight terrorist groups working in the region. The West has repeatedly accused Moscow of also bombing moderate opposition groups and civilians, a claim which Russia strongly denies. Cooperation between

Russian and U.S. forces in the country faces a number of hurdles, including disagreements on the fate of the Syrian leader Bashar Assad and the designation of different armed factions as "terrorist."

The Islamic State is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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