

Russia Admits Sending New Planes to Syria, Insists It Is Still Withdrawing

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Defense Ministry

On Jan. 12 Russia's Defense Ministry confirmed sending new combat aircraft to Syria, but insisted that Moscow was adhering to a recent ceasefire agreement under which Russia will withdraw its military contingents.

President Vladimir Putin ordered a reduction in forces sent to Syria at the end of December, following a cease-fire agreement with Iran and Turkey in Syria. The first evidence of a withdrawal came last week when Russia ordered its aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov to return home.

But on Jan. 11, two unidentified U.S. officials told Fox News that Russia was adding new forces to its airbase in Syria – specifically, four Su-25 ground attack jets.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov confirmed the deployment, but slammed the report as “a propaganda hoax.”

“As part of the planned rotation of aircraft [in Syria], four Su-25 planes recently joined the Russian Air Group at the Khmeimim airbase,” Konashenkov told reporters.

Despite the Kuznetsov's widely cited withdrawal, Russia's predominantly ground-based aerial campaign suggests that Moscow's military presence may continue.

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