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Russian Lawmaker Says Syria Mission Is Almost Complete

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AP/TASS

Russia's military has completed most of its objectives in Syria, the head of the State Duma Defense Committee said, as Russian media predicts the third withdrawal of Russian forces.

President Vladimir Putin twice ordered reductions of Russian forces in Syria in 2016, two years since Moscow's launch of military operations there. Both times, however, it was revealed that Moscow had shipped new equipment to Syria.

This time, policymakers are planning to cut Russia's Air Force in Syria, two military and diplomatic sources told the business daily Kommersant on Monday.

Kommersant cited Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying that "such decisions are not announced," while the Ministry of Defense denied that these plans exist.

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Hours after the report was published, Duma Defense Committee chairman Vladimir Shamanov said that the main objectives of Russia's campaign were largely fulfilled.

"We expect government troops will regain control over the eastern border of Syria by the end of this year," the state-run RIA Novosti news agency cited Shamanov as saying in Kazakhstan.

Viktor Ozerov, defense committee chairman of the Federation Council, also referenced Russia's potential pullout from Syria.

"But the president makes the final decision here," Ozerov told RIA Novosti, citing Putin's authority to determine the weapons, equipment, and personnel numbers in Syria.

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