

# Syria fighting continues into third day of US-Russian “truce”

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Two days after the announcement of a US-Russian brokered “truce,” fighting continues throughout Syria. US war planes continue to strike targets throughout large areas of the country, while American commandos organized offensive operations by an array of proxy forces.

Over the weekend, the US military announced it would launch new cyberwarfare operations in Syria, nominally against ISIS militants. On Friday, US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter hailed the seizure of the town of Shaddadi by US commandos and proxy forces, saying the development has vindicated the US approach of “enabling” Kurdish and Sunni militias with intelligence, air support and logistics.

US-led “partner forces” are also preparing offensives against Raqqa, Syria and Mosul, Iraq, Carter said.

“This is just the most recent example of how we’re effectively enabling and partnering with local forces,” Carter said.

The ceasefire agreement itself does not represent a meaningful de-escalation of the war. The announcement of the truce has been accompanied by new offensives by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as well as the al Nusra Front and other US-backed proxy militias.

On Sunday, US-led coalition forces carried out at least 12 strikes on Syrian soil, including near Raqqah, Manbij and Tal Abyad.

The American media has played its dutiful role, portraying the continued fighting as a matter of Russian aggression, based on accusations that the Putin government has continued to strike “moderate” fighting groups in a number of towns and villages in northern Syria and along the Turkish border.

“Syria’s cease-fire frays as Russia resumes strikes,” the *Washington Post* declared Sunday evening, citing a

handful of Russian strikes against unidentified targets in northern Syria.

“Russia, Syria resume airstrikes despite cease-fire,” ran the *Wall Street Journal*’s headline. “Pentagon, CIA Chiefs Don’t Think Russia Will Abide by Syria Cease Fire,” the *Journal* warned earlier this week.

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir echoed the accusations against Russia in comments that he delivered in Riyadh alongside Danish Foreign Minister Kristian Jensen. Al-Jubeir repeated warnings that the Saudis are ready to join in US-led military operations against the Damascus regime.

Russian officials countered these claims, with Moscow maintaining that “on the whole, the ceasefire regime in Syria is being implemented,” according to Russian media. Russian ceasefire monitors claim that opposition groups carried out at least nine violations of the truce within the first day. Among the violations was an incursion by Islamic State fighters against the Kurdish-controlled area of Tal Abyad.

According to Russian General Sergei Kurylenko, the IS assault took place with direct fire support from the Turkish military, including “artillery fire from Turkish territory.”

Within the American ruling class there are deep divisions over the cessation of hostilities brokered by US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov last week. Powerful factions within the Central Intelligence Agency and Pentagon are hostile to the truce deal and are pressing for strategic and military escalation against Russia.

After nearly five years of continuous covert warfare and subversion against Damascus, destroying hundreds of thousands of lives, the Obama administration seeks to use the ceasefire to regroup its own proxy forces in Syria. The Obama administration is probing the

possibility of a negotiated carve-up of Syria, while at the same time working to outline a “Plan B” scenario, i.e., a huge military offensive to topple Assad. This could quickly bring the US into direct military conflict with Russia.

The continued fighting in Syria comes amidst an intensification of provocative declarations from US and NATO officials directed at Russia. Speaking before a Congressional panel on Thursday, NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, General Philip Breedlove, denounced Russian aggression, saying that Moscow has “chosen to be an adversary and poses a long-term existential threat” to the US.

Breedlove added that the US and its European allies are “deterring Russia now and preparing to fight and win if necessary.”



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