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US, Russia Again Fail to Reach Syria Deal

By Jason Ditz
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Despite repeated claims in recent weeks that a deal was all but imminent, the US and Russia have once again failed to reach a deal in their attempts to negotiate the start of a new ceasefire within Syria, with President Obama claiming “grave differences” yet remain.

Exactly what the differences are isn’t totally clear, but previous US interests in launching a joint military operation against the Nusra Front appear to have evaporated with Nusra’s official rebranding, which ended their official status as an al-Qaeda affiliate.

The US has been intensely critical of Russian airstrikes against Nusra in recent weeks, and insisted that Russia is obliged to ensure that humanitarian aid flows into all parts of the city of Aleppo. This has been a struggle, as both Nusra and the Syrian military have attempted to place one another’s districts in a state of siege.

The State Department is said to be pushing for an open-ended, nationwide ceasefire in Syria, and to be opposed to any deal which either has a deadline or which only stops fighting in certain key regions. The last such ceasefire came into effect in February.

President Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin are scheduled to meet Monday, during the G20 summit. It is unclear to what extent this will center on Syria, but there does not appear to be any expectation of a deal any time soon.