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Russian Military Presence Could Complicate US Invasion of Syria

By Jason Ditz

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The Obama Administration has repeatedly insisted that it has "no plans" to intervene militarily in Syria's civil war, but as they have continued to openly back rebels forces, planning for the invasion has continued, treating the US-led invasion as something of a foregone conclusion.

Yet unlike Iraq, or Afghanistan, or even Libya, Syria is a nation with some very sophisticated defenses designed with the idea of a US or Israeli invasion particularly in mind, and very formidable air defenses.

And Russians. Syria is the site of a key listening post as well as the last Russian naval base in the Mediterranean in Tartus. Those air defenses, state of the art from the Russian perspective, also came complete with Russian advisers.

Which is going to really complicate the US invasion, if and when it happens. With Russian military advisers at the center of the air defense, and a NATO invasion certain to center on air power, the prospect of NATO killing Russian soldiers and prompting a Russian retaliation cannot be ruled out, and makes this invasion extremely problematic.