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## Syria: U.S.-led airstrikes kill dozens of Assad regime's soldiers

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U.S.-led coalition jets bombed a position for Assad regime forces at Jebel Tharda near Deir Ezzor airport on Saturday, killing dozens of Assad regime's soldiers, Russia and a war monitor said, paving the way for Islamic State to briefly overrun it.

The strike was in an area the coalition had attacked in the past, and coalition members had informed their Russian counterparts before it began, the U.S. military's Central Command said in a statement.

“Coalition forces believed they were striking ISIS (Islamic State) fighting position that they had been tracking for a significant amount of time before the strike,” Tampa, Florida-based Central Command said in its statement.

The defense ministry in Russia said U.S. jets had killed more than 60 Assad regime's soldiers in four air strikes by two F-16s and two A-10s coming from the direction of Iraq.

The ministry said the strikes had been carried out between 5pm-5:50pm local time.

Russia's Defence Ministry said that if the coalition bombing was a mistake, it was evidence of Washington's “stubborn refusal” to coordinate its actions with Russia's government.

“Syria is a complex situation with various military forces and militias in close proximity, but coalition forces would not intentionally strike a known Syrian military unit,” U.S. officials said.

Moscow called for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council to discuss the deadly air strikes.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitoring group with contacts across the country, cited a military source at Deir Ezzor airport as saying that at least 80 Assad regime's soldiers had been killed in the strike.

The Observatory said that Russian jets had been conducting bombing in the area at the same time, and that violent clashes took place afterwards between Islamic State and the Assad regime forces around the position.

Assad regime's army general command said in a statement that the air strike was “conclusive evidence” of U.S. support for Islamic State, noting that the strike was “dangerous and blatant aggression”.

Islamic State said in a statement on its Amaq news channel that it had gained “complete control” over Jebel Tharda but both Syrian state television and Russian state media said the positions lost to the militant group were later recaptured.

Assad regime's forces control Deir Ezzor airport and parts of the city which are otherwise entirely surrounded by territory held by Islamic State.

The U.S. military, in an apparent admission that it may have hit the position, said in a statement that coalition air strikes near Deir Ezzor had been halted when Russia told coalition officials they may have hit the Assad regime's forces.

The Syrian crisis began as a peaceful demonstration against the injustice in Syria. Assad regime used to fire power and violence against the civilians and led to armed resistance. 450.000 Syrians lost their lives in the past five years according to UN estimates, and more than 12 million have lost their homes. Syria