
RUSSIA MAY SET UP CAMP IN THE BASE THE US AND NATO USE TO BOMB ISIS

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After Russia's short-lived air campaign out of Iran's Hamedan air base, Turkey's prime minister has said that the Russian air force could possibly operate out of Turkey's Incirlik base, where US and NATO forces are stationed, "if necessary."

Iran cut Russia's engagement at Hamedan shortly after Russia demonstrated a "kind of show-off and ungentlemanly" attitude in publicizing the event, according to Iran's defense minister, when Moscow televised video of bombs dropping from Tu-22s over Syria.

Now a Russian senator, Igor Morozov, told a state-run media outlet that "it just remains to come to an agreement with Erdogan that we get the NATO base Incirlik as our primary air base ... You'll see, the next base will be Incirlik."

For NATO, it seems such a move would be untenable.

"In 2014, we suspended all practical civilian and military cooperation between NATO and Russia following Russia's illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea," a NATO official told Business Insider. "This decision was reconfirmed at the NATO Summit in Warsaw in July 2016."

However, Incirlik is not a NATO base.

"Incirlik air base is a Turkish air base, and any foreign nation's operations from there would need to be coordinated with the Turkish government," an official from US Army Europe told Business Insider.

Six U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons from Aviano Air Base, Italy, are seen at Incirlik Air Base,

Turkey, after being deployed, in this U.S. Air Force handout picture taken August 9, 2015. REUTERS/U.S. Air Force/Senior Airman Michael Battles/Handout

US Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons at Incirlik air base, in Turkey. Thomson Reuters

Meanwhile, US Vice President Joe Biden, who is visiting Turkey on Wednesday, said Syrian Kurds would need to withdraw from the area immediately across the Turkish border in Syria, back across the Euphrates river, to receive US support.

Ankara, for its part, views the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, as a terrorist organization and immediately set out on a sweeping military campaign into Syria, unlike any seen from it before, once the Kurds started operations aimed at taking the ISIS-held border city of Jarablus. For the US, however, Syrian Kurds have been some of the most effective allies on the ground.

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden (L) meets with Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan at Beylerbeyi Palace in Istanbul November 22, 2014. REUTERS/Murad Sezer

US Vice President Joe Biden meets with Turkey's President Recep Erdogan in Istanbul. Thomson Reuters

Biden also said he was confident that the rule of law would prevail in Turkey in regard to the failed coup in July, after which the government, media, and military were purged of thousands of employees, with tens of thousands arrested.

Yet according to Amnesty International, "the coup attempt unleashed appalling violence and those responsible for unlawful killings and other human rights abuses," a far cry from the "rule of law" heralded by Biden.

NATO and US European Command officials did not respond to inquires about the effect of a possible Russian presence at Incirlik.

For now, it seems the US may be toeing Turkey's line to possibly prevent Russia, which has different objectives in Syria, from setting up camp at Incirlik.

State Department deputy spokesperson Mark Toner said at a press briefing on Tuesday that the US focuses on fighting ISIS in Syria, whereas Russia's focus is on supporting the Assad regime, which often leads to civilian casualties.

"Aleppo is a perfect example of that, where you still see strikes hitting civilian targets and certainly moderate opposition targets," Toner said. "And that is not helping the overall situation in Syria."

Kaynak/Source: