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Big powers move in on Syria: Russian troops for Tartus. US forces ready to go

DEBKAfile *Special Report* June 15, 2012, 7:39 PM (GMT+02:00)

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A contingent of Russian special forces is on its way to Syria to guard the Russian navy's deep-water port at the Syria's Mediterranean coastal town of Tartus, Pentagon officials informed US NBC TV Friday, June 15. They are coming by ship. According to debkafile's sources, the contingent is made up of naval marines and is due to land in Syria in the coming hours.

In a separate and earlier announcement, US Defense Department sources in Washington reported that the US military had completed its own planning for a variety of US operations against Syria, or for assisting neighboring countries in the event action was ordered – a reference, according to our sources, to Turkey, Jordan and Israel.

The Syrian civil war is now moving into a new phase of major power military intervention, say debkafile's military sources. Moscow, by sending troops to Syria without UN Security Council approval, has set up a precedent for the United States, the European Union and Arab governments to follow. They all held back from sending troops to Syria because all motions to apply force for halting the bloodshed in Syria was blocked in the UN body.

According to US military sources, in recent weeks, the Pentagon has finalized its assessment of what types of units would be needed and how many troops. The military planning includes a scenario for [a no-fly zone](#) as well as protecting [chemical and biological sites](#). The U.S. Navy is maintaining a presence of three surface combatants and a submarine in the eastern Mediterranean to conduct electronic surveillance and reconnaissance on the Syrian regime, a senior Pentagon official said.

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