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Putin Celebrates Victory in Syria

- Stephen Flurry
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On Monday, Russian President Vladimir Putin made an unannounced visit to Syria, where he embraced a Russian general and Syrian dictator President Bashar Assad. During a victory celebration, Putin declared victory against the Islamic State. Only one week prior, the Russian General Staff announced that Syria had been liberated from all Islamic State terror units.

It wasn't that long ago that former United States President Barack Obama said that Syria was going to be a quagmire for Putin—and now, only a couple of years later, he has declared victory in Syria. Notice what Mr. Obama said back in October 2015 (emphasis added throughout):

And I said to Mr. Putin that I'd be prepared to work with him if he is willing to broker with his partners, Mr. Assad and Iran, a political transition—we can bring the rest of the world community to a brokered solution—but that a military solution alone, an attempt by Russia and Iran to prop up Assad and try to pacify the *population is just going to get them stuck in a quagmire. And it won't work.* And they will be there for a while if they don't take a different course.

It's clear that Syria has turned out to be anything but a quagmire for Putin. Instead, it ended with a victory lap! Even though Obama got this wrong, he was right about one thing—Russia *has* been there for quite a while—and *it has no intention of leaving.* Though Putin did announce a partial withdrawal of troops from Syria, he said that Russia's two Syrian bases, Tartus and Hmeimim, would continue to operate! Despite the fact that they've crushed the Islamic State! Russia has made itself clear: It is in Syria to stay.

After Putin disembarked from his plane, the first person he greeted on the tarmac was a Russian military officer. Haaretz [wrote](#) on December 13:

Only then was he approached by Syrian President Bashar Assad, and together they walked down the runway, passing Russian bomber jets and attack helicopters.

The message was clear. *The first visit to Syria in seven years by a foreign leader wasn't a regular state visit: Putin was there to inspect Russia's latest outpost.*

Putin wasn't in Syria on a regular visit—he was there to inspect *Russia's newest military base* in the Middle East!

What a contrast to America's supposed victory over the Islamic State in Iraq! When U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson announced victory in Iraq, he told the Iranians it was time for them to go home. And what was their response? Both Iraqi and Iranian officials said *no way!* Instead, they told America to leave.

Compare that to Russia's presence in Syria! Now that the fighting is over, where are the calls from America and the Middle East telling the Russians to leave? There aren't any.

If you would like to hear more on this subject, you can listen to my *Trumpet Daily Radio Show* from Tuesday where I discussed this topic at length. If you'd like to understand more about where Russia's growing presence on the world scene is leading, you can also request our free booklet [Russia and China in Prophecy](#). ■

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