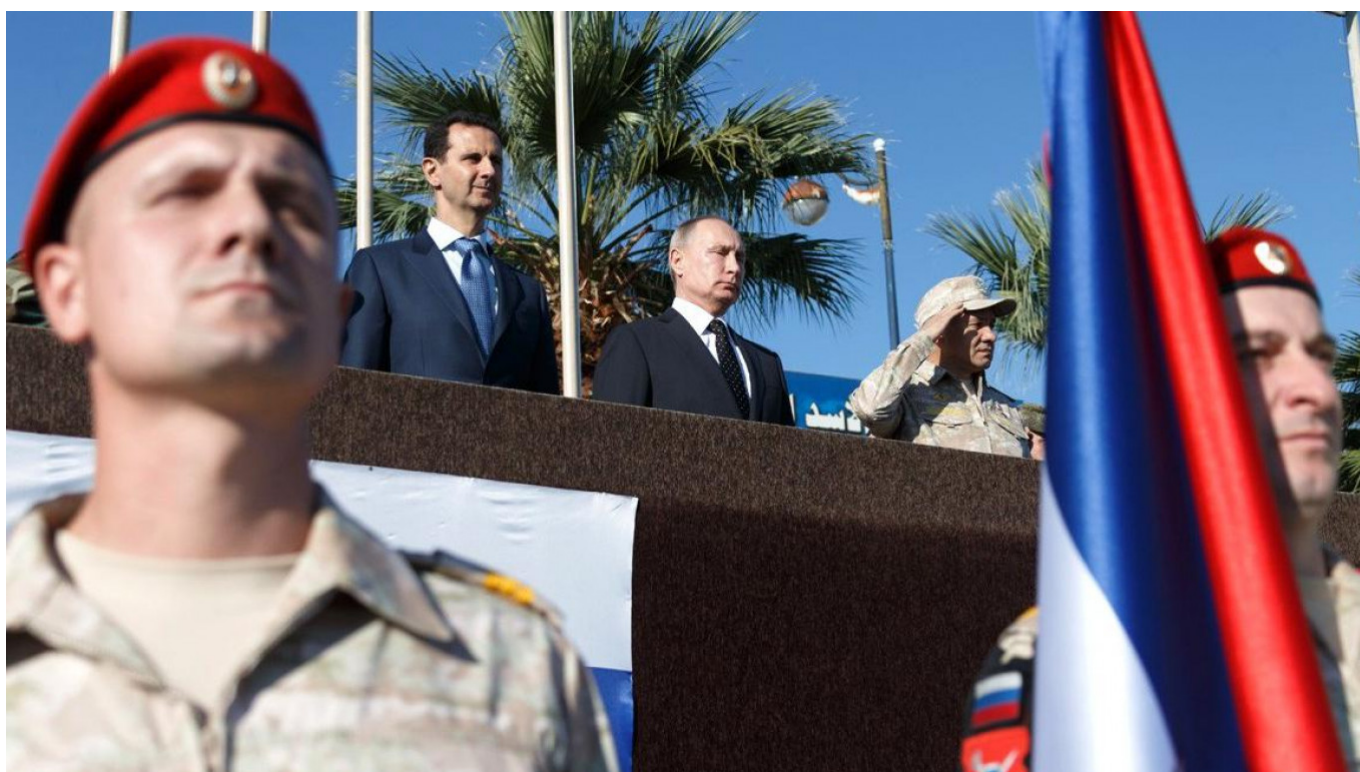


Putin Asks Lawmakers to Expand Russia's Navy Presence in Syria

December 13, 2017



Kremlin Press Service

President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday submitted a draft treaty to the State Duma that could expand Russia's naval presence in Syria until 2092.

The move follows Putin's [order](#) to withdraw Russian forces from the war-torn country during a surprise visit to a Russian airbase there on Monday. Earlier this month, Russia said that the war in Syria was coming to an end — a claim the United States and opposition groups dispute.

Related article: [Russia's Defense Ministry Says Syria '100% Free of Islamic State'](#)

“I hope that in the long run, Tartus will become a full-fledged military base,” the deputy chairman of the Federation Council's Committee for Defense and Security Franz Klintsevich [told](#) the RBC business portal.

“As the guarantor of Syria’s stability, Russia is defending its interests,” he said.

The [agreement](#), which was signed by the Defense Ministries of the two countries on Jan. 18, allows Russia to expand its naval base in the Syrian port city of Tartus.

According to the document on the State Duma’s website, the agreement was based on the "mutual desire" of the parties “to strengthen and develop military cooperation.” The Russian Navy’s continued presence in Syria would be “defensive in nature and not directed against other governments,” the agreement reads.

If ratified, the agreement would extend the Russian Navy’s lease on the Tartus base by 49 years, after which the agreement would automatically enter an additional 25-year period if neither party decides against it.

Earlier this year, Russia [renewed](#) the lease on its Western Syrian airbase in Khmeimim for an additional 50 years.

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