

OPERATION ALEPPO

Russia's War in Syria

**The Inside Story of
Putin's Military
Intervention in the
Syrian War**

TIM RIPLEY

OPERATION ALEPPO:

RUSSIA'S WAR IN SYRIA

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Operation Aleppo

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Battle of Aleppo – Operation Dawn of Victory

24 September to 17 November 2016

Briefing by Tim Ripley, Part 1

updated 12th January 2017



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SOURCES

This briefing is based in analysis of multiple sources, including:

1. Analysis of news media still and video imagery
2. Analysis of social media still and video imagery from Syria, Turkey and Russia. Syrian soldiers and militia fighters, Shia militia fighters and Russian servicemen incessantly post on-line photos of themselves and their fiends.
3. Syrian and Russian government news products
4. Google Earth and other commercial satellite imagery

By Geo-location and comparing the above, it is possible to gain a reasonable “ground truth” about what is happening on the ground. NOTE: All the images in this brief are all sourced from “raw” video imagery from Syria

Future Syrian and Allied Operations Against Aleppo, Nov-Dec 2016

Russian Involvement

Future Russian involvement in the final phases will be:

1. Airpower and surveillance on the outer siege lines to prevent any rebel attempt to lift siege of Aleppo, hitting targets in south west Aleppo and Idlib provinces.
2. Psychological warfare to intimidate population and fighters in eastern Aleppo to surrender and evacuate their enclave
3. Demonstration of force with prestige weapons (Kalibr cruise missiles and carrier aviation) to create "intimidation" effect.

Russian airpower and strategic weapons have little utility in close quarter street fighting so will not be employed in fighting inside eastern Aleppo

Battle of Aleppo

November 9, 2016



This photo taken in the office of the Syrian commander in Aleppo, SRG Major-General Zaid Saleh, on 25th Oct 16 shows expected rebel offensive and the future Syrian offensive operations

Source: [@Souria4Syrians](#)



Operation Dawn of Victory Battle Plan

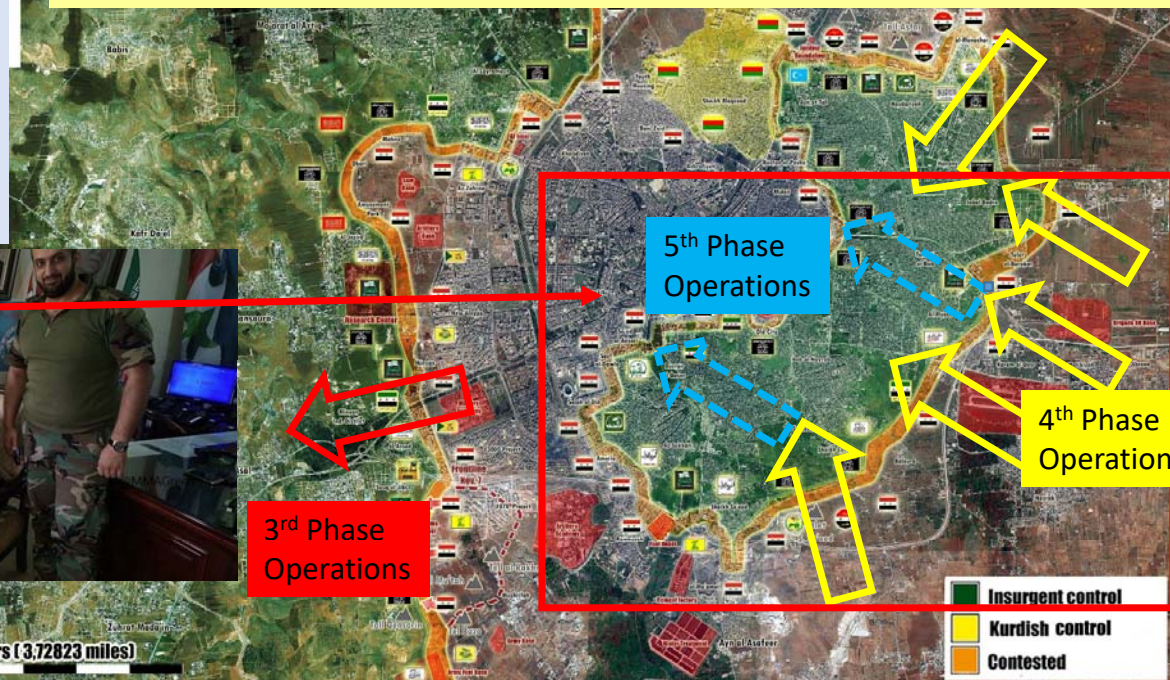
Note: Syrian and allied forces have no intention of launching a direct or all out frontal assault on the heavily populated urban area of eastern Aleppo.

3rd Phase: continue push rebels back away from western outer siege lines (mid November)

4th Phase: seize rural, industrial and unpopulated areas along the eastern edge of Aleppo city, to pen the remaining population and rebel fighters tightly into urban areas without means to grow food or water sources. (late November)

5th Phase: break up rebel held eastern Aleppo enclave into a series of smaller pockets, which are considered more than likely to surrender and volunteer for "evacuation". (December)

AIM to clear out eastern Aleppo of rebel fighters by the end of December



Balance of Forces in Aleppo City: Aug to Nov 2016

Syrian Government and Allies, July 2016

Republican Guard and Special Forces, 2,000+ troops

Syrian Arab Army (SAA) Regulars 2,500+ troops. Mostly in command, artillery, logistic and air force units

Militia: 10,000? fighters (civilian mobilised to operate on shift system to man front line defences)

Allies: 8,000? fighters (majority deployed to south of Aleppo city, expect for 1,000 Palestinian fighters who are based in the north of Aleppo city)

Syrian Government Reinforcements – 5-6,000 additional troops arrive from Aug to Oct 2016

Early August 2016

- Elements 15th Special Forces Division
- Military Intelligence Shield Forces - Lions Den Battalion

Late August 2016

- 800th Republican Guard (RG) Regiment from Damascus

Late September 2016

- Elements 102nd & 106th RG Brigades & 4th Mechanised Division (identified as moving from Damascus 23/9/16, with 1,750 troops)
- Units of Tiger Force and Desert Hawks to Kweires Front from Hama

Late October

- Brigade sized armour equipped unit, local media report 1,500 troops arrive in Aleppo from Damascus and Tartus
- Desert Hawks arrive in Aleppo Province
- Republican Guard “Shudada Kafr Saghira” Brigade (arrive late Oct)

These units – expect for the Tiger Force and Desert Hawks - were all released from the Damascus region as a result of the surrender of rebel enclaves around the capital.

Rebel Forces in and around Aleppo City, Sept-Nov 2016

- 8,000 fighters (including 1,000 from Nusra Front) inside Aleppo city (Source: UN)
- 50,000 fighters in Idlib region, to the south and west of Aleppo. Some 3-4,000 of these are trained and equipped for offensive combat operations
- The Russian MOD claimed there were 6,000 rebel fighters operating around the western edge of Aleppo's outer siege lines



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Train in Northern Syria bringing Government reinforcements to Aleppo 7 Aug 16, Source: [@IvanSidorenko](#)

1



Low loaders bring Syrian Republican Guard T-72s to Aleppo, 29th Sept 16
source: [@IvanSidorenko1](#)



Column of Syrian Army reinforcements arrive in Aleppo 21 Oct 16, including 2S1 122mm SP gun and BMP fighting vehicles
Source: Arab source



Take Away:

- Syrian Government has more troops capable of “offensive” operations in the Aleppo region than the rebels, by a ratio of 3 or 4:1

ALEPPO REGION – Pro-Government Chain of Command

Syrian/Russian/Iranian/Hizbullah “CentCom” Joint Operations Room or Command Post located at Al Safirah Military Base, south east of Aleppo city



Lt. Gen. Vladimir Savchenko, head of the Coordination Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides, giving out medals to Palestinian militia in Aleppo. He is head of negotiating truces and surrenders, as well as psychological warfare ops.

Source:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6if5Y7fD2uM>



Overall commander of wider Aleppo theatre of operations, Major General Qassem Soleimani (who is also the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps Quds Force commander) in south Aleppo, 6 Sept 16.
Source: Arab Source



Commander Russian Military Contingent in Syria, Lt Gen Alexander Zhuravlev, gives medals to Palestinian militia in Aleppo, 23rd Oct 16
Source: @IvanSidorenko1

Republican Guard Major-General Zaid Saleh, Head of the Aleppo Security Committee and commander of Syrian military operations in Aleppo, 26 Sept 16
Source: Arab Source



Ba'ath Party Committee in Aleppo runs the city on behalf of Damascus government
Source: nmedia, , 26 Sept 16



An unidentified Russian general gives medals to troops of Military Intelligence Shield 223 unit in Aleppo 11 Oct 16
Source: @IvanSidorenko1



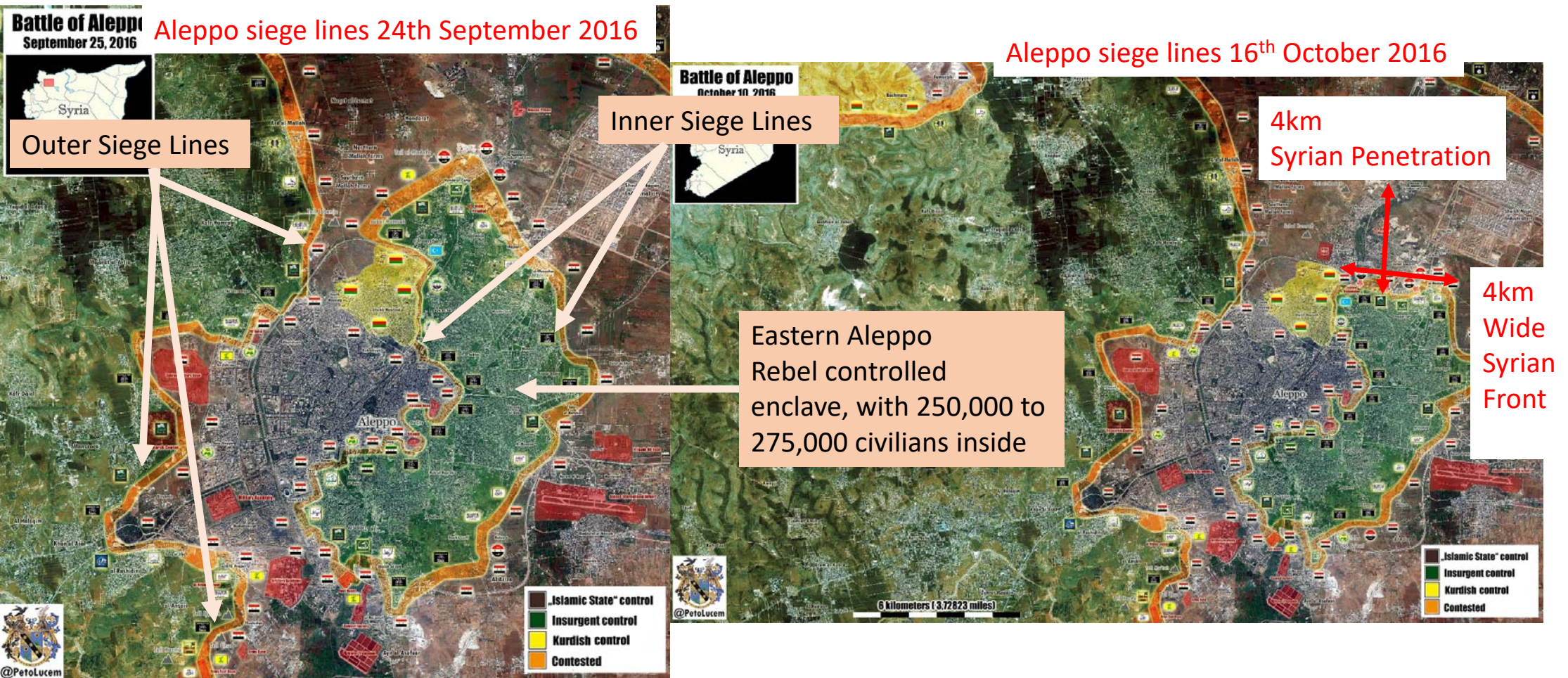
Major General Sergey Sevryukov, commander of Russian 49th Army with Baath Party Brigades on advisory visit to Aleppo, Aug 16
Source: KP.ru

Take Aways:

- Operation Dawn of Victory is a “coalition” battle
- Russia is the “dominant voice” in the coalition, due the presence of the Russian air group in Syria, political support from Moscow and the Russian veto on the UN Security Council

Syrian Advance against Aleppo Enclave

24/9/2016 to 17/10/16



North West Aleppo Outer Siege Lines

Syrian Arab Army
147th Special Forces Regiment
(driven from Artillery base early Aug 16)
83rd Republican Guard Battalion
Militia Forces

- Zahraa and Nubl National Defence Force

Aleppo City inner siege lines

Syrian Arab Army
HQ of 2nd Reserve Division (2,500 + regular troops)

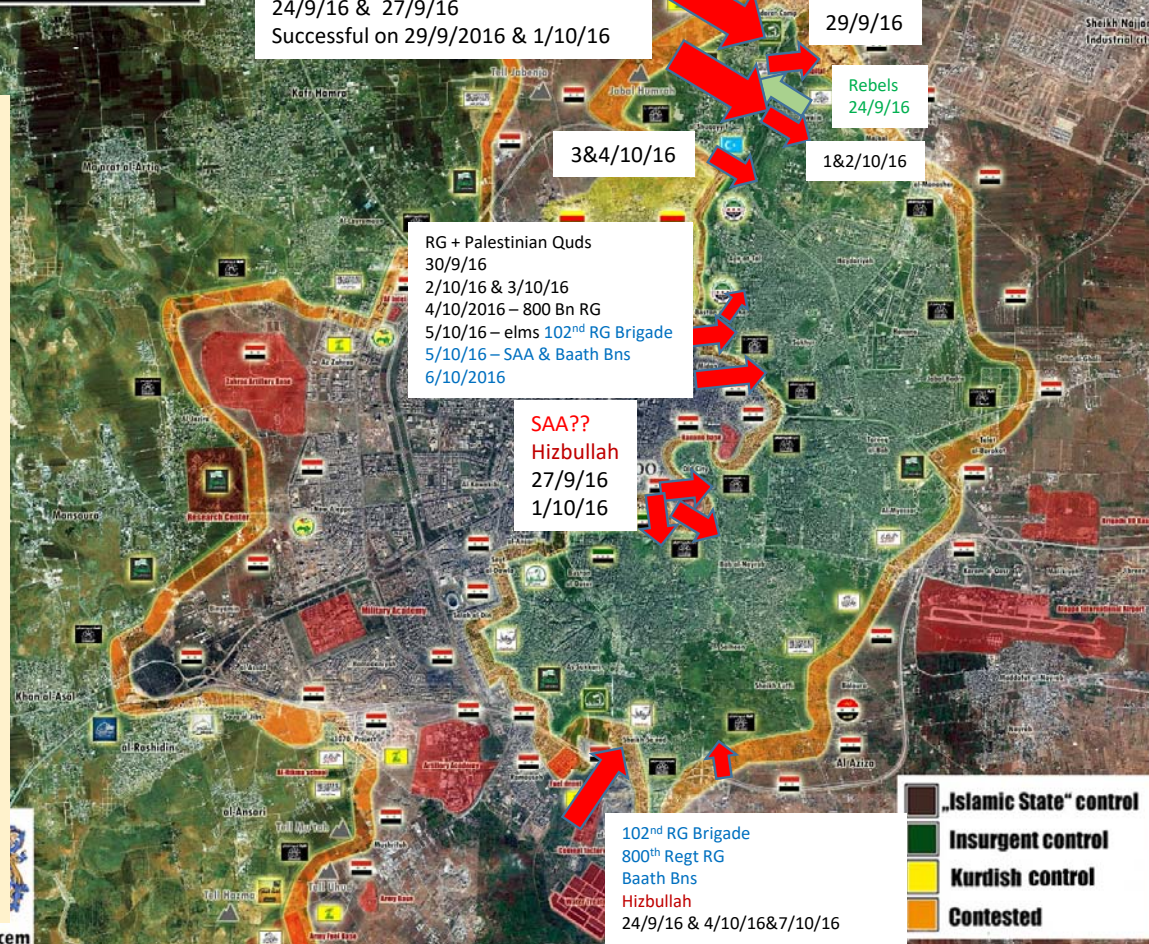
- 106th Special Forces Brigade (Brigadier Suheil Ismail)
- elements 4th Division
- 102nd Brigade Republican Guard (arrive from Damascus ?/9/2016)
- 800th Regt RG (arrive from Damascus on 25 Aug)
- Military Intelligence Shield Forces - Lions Den Battalion (arrive 6 Aug)
- Elements 15th Special Forces Division (arrive 8 Aug)
- Desert Hawks (arrive 31 Oct 16) (commander Colonel Mohammad Jaber)
- Tiger Force (arrive 31 Oct 16)

Allied Forces
Palestinian militia "Liwa Al-Quds" (commanders Omar Hussein Al Hasan & Muhammad Rafi)
Militia Forces

- National Defence Forces (NDF) of Aleppo City
- Al-Ba'ath Battalions
- Contingent Liwa Imam Al-Baqir Brigade (Shia NDF Brigade) Commander Khaled al Daher

Government and Rebel Offensives 24/9/16 to 6/10/16

106th Special Forces Brigade
Palestinian militia "Liwa Al-Quds"
Qadesh 'the lion's lair' RG group
24/9/16 & 27/9/16
Successful on 29/9/2016 & 1/10/16



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Aleppo North East Outer Siege Lines

- Kwieres Airbase Garrison (Major General Munzer Zammam) – 300 airforce troops
- Union of Forat Jarabulus Battalion (Commmander Aref Ehmaid Al Jaber Abu Stayff)
- Tiger Force units (arrive from Tartus, 27 Sep 16)
- Desert Hawks Brigade (arrive late Oct)
- Republican Guard "Shudada Kafr Saghira" Brigade (arrive late Oct)

Russian Land Forces Contingent

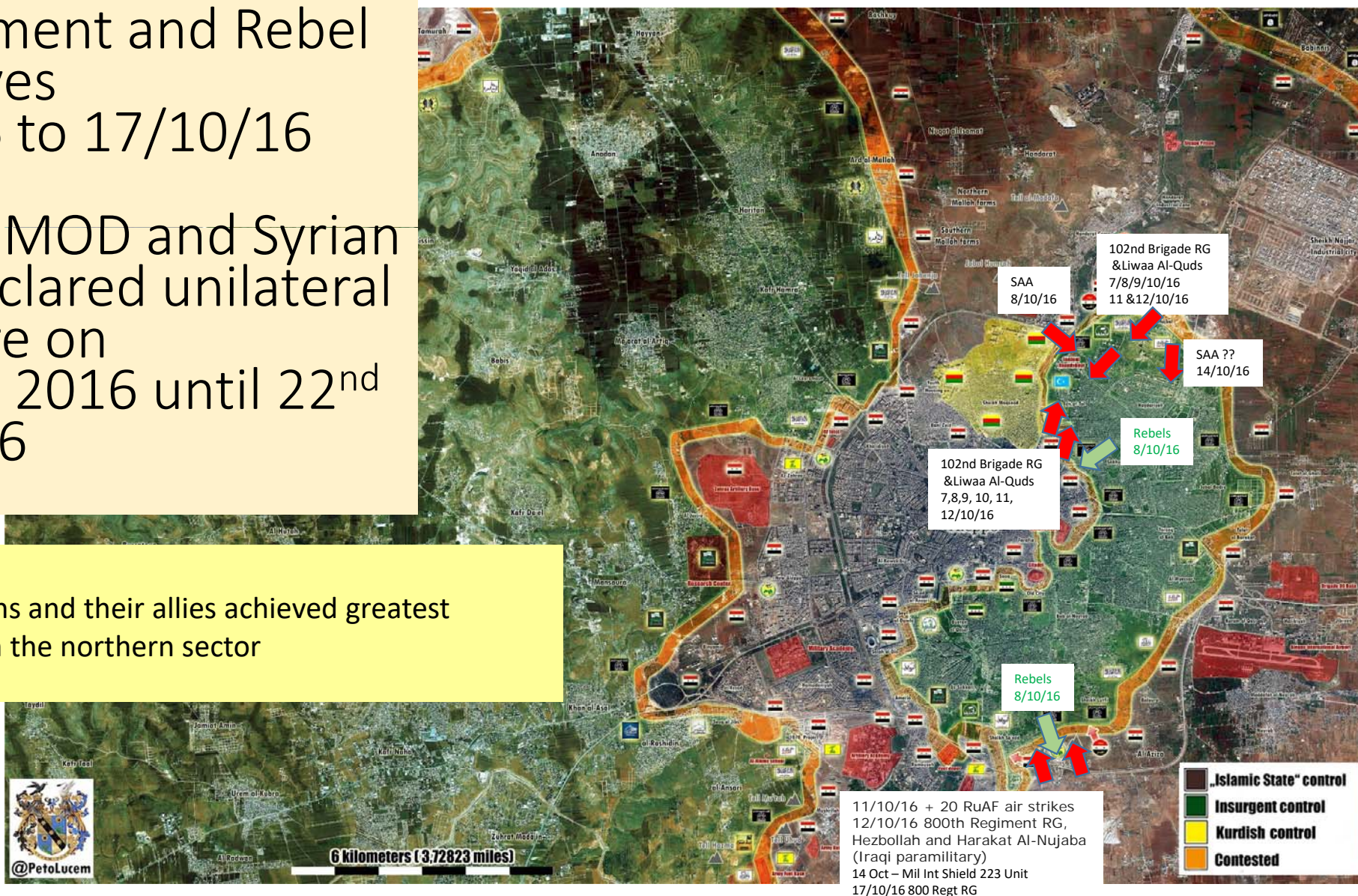
- Forward Command post of Coordination Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides
- Russian Orlan 10 UAV detachment
- MSTA B Battery 120th Russian Guards Artillery Regiment, with 4 x 152mm A65
- Forward Air Controllers
- Russian Naval Infantry Company

Government and Rebel Offensives 6/10/16 to 17/10/16

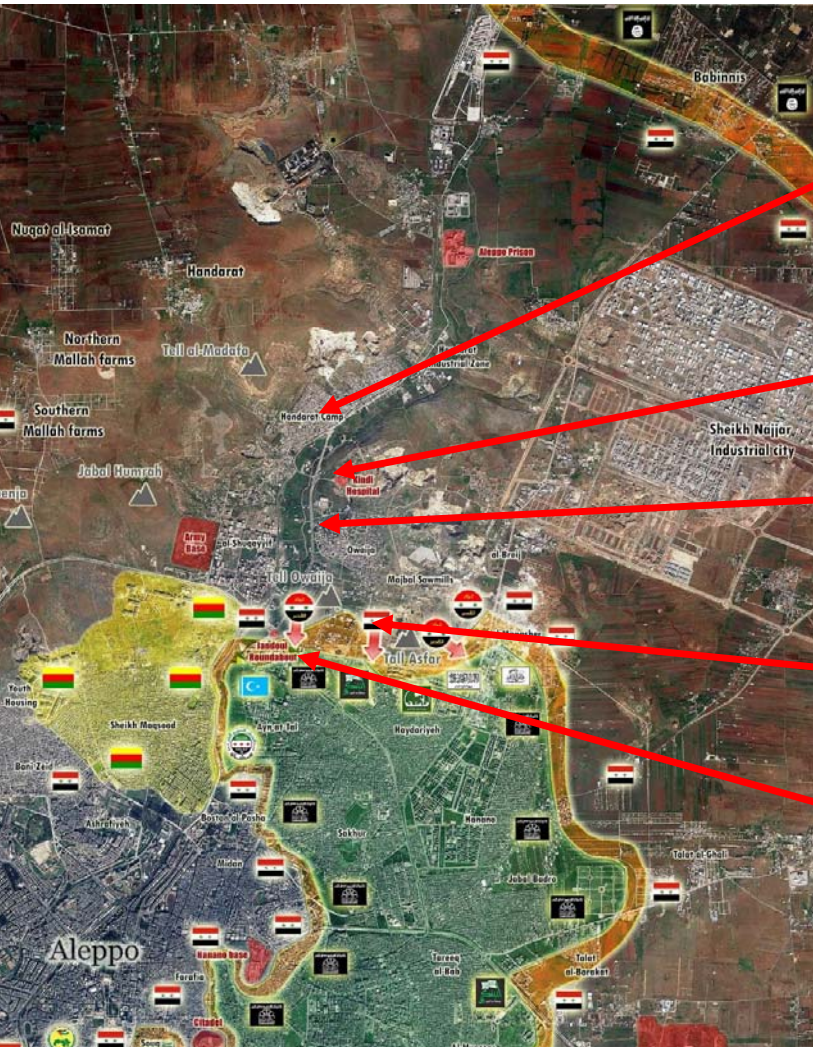
Russian MOD and Syrian
Govt declared unilateral
Ceasefire on
18th Oct 2016 until 22nd
Oct 2016

Take Away:

- The Syrians and their allies achieved greatest success in the northern sector



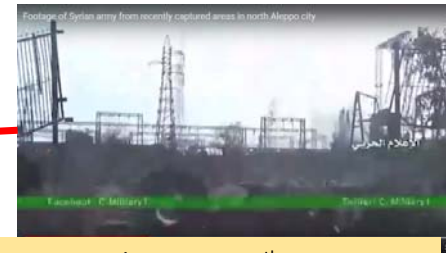
Key Terrain Captured by Syrian Army and Allies, up to 18 Oct 16



Handarat Refugee Camp
Source: ANNA News,
25th Sept 16



Kindi Hospital
Source:
[@IvanSidorenko1,](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hg1G1Uib1)
3rd Oct 16



Electricity sub station, 11th Oct 2016
Source: <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/video-footage-syrian-armys-advance-northeast-aleppo/>



Jandoul Roundabout
Source: SANA
11th Oct 2016



Fire onto Inzarat District, 17th Oct 2016
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hg1G1Uib1>

Offensive in Northern Aleppo

Fire Support Operations against Handarat Refugee camp, 24 Sept 16



Top left and right: RuAF air strikes.

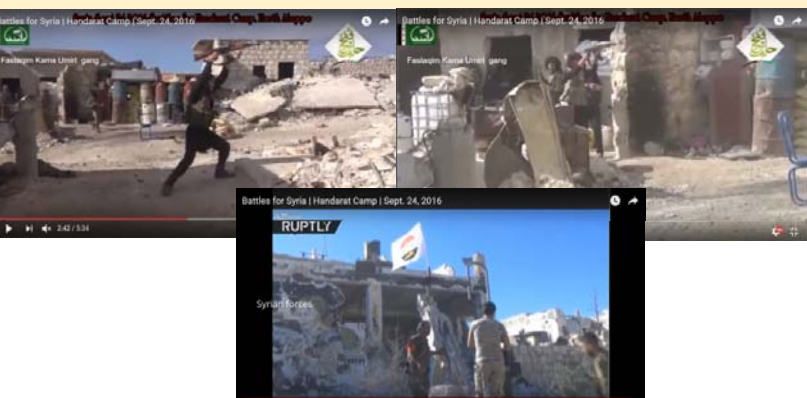
Bottom left: ATGM. Bottom Right: recoilless rifle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wF-TwDOmMbo>

Note: High ground in this sector allows direct fire weapons to be used

Below: Liwa al Quds fighters in Handarat refugee camp.

There was little resistance and few rebel fighters manned the frontlines in the northern sector



Syria M-46 130mm field gun of Imam Al-Baqir Brigade in direct fire role

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkwtpQ4LTmY>

Note: High ground in this sector allows direct fire weapons to be used



Carpet Factory being hit in Russian air strike

Source: Russian MOD briefing 13th Oct 2016

Note: RuAF air support has been heavy in this sector

Take Aways:

- One of the most effective fighting units in the Aleppo region is the Palestinian militia
- The open and unpopulated nature of the northern sector helped speed the Syrian advance because direct fire weapons and artillery could be used to good effect



Liwa al Quds T-55 in Kindi Hospital

Source: [@IvanSidorenko1](#), 13th October 2016

Note: Tanks very rare in this sector

Liwa al Quds AKA the Palestinian Jerusalem Brigade, which has an estimated strength of 1,000 fighters, has been in the forefront of operations in this sector, supported by elements of the 102nd and 106th Syrian Republican Guard, as well as the Imam Al-Baqir Brigade of the National Defence Force militia

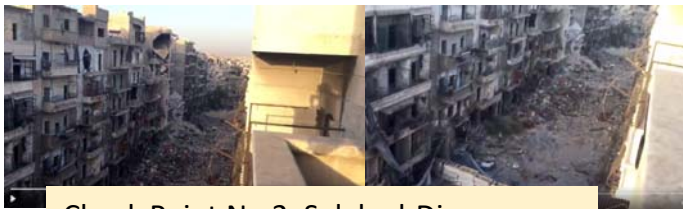


From Liwa al Quds video "Purging a Militant HQ" in northern Aleppo

Source: [@IvanSidorenko1](#) (15 Oct 2016)

Note: House clearing operation but no serious resistance. Typical scene in this sector

Syrian Army Offensives in Central Aleppo



Check Point No 2, Salah al-Din source:
RT.com 15 Oct 16



Offensive in Bustan al Pasha
district, 30 Sept 2016
Source:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHp4mK90zaA>



Dead rebel fighters inspected by government troops on 16th
October 2016. This is one of the rare occasions rebel dead
have been abandoned on the Aleppo battlefield.
Source: [@IvanSidorenko1](#)

Terrain in central Aleppo
is idea for defence and difficult
to attack, due to:

1. Narrow streets
2. Water courses and raised roads
3. High buildings limit observation and prevent employment of direct fire weapons against depth targets
4. Numerous buildings require large number of troops to attack, secure and exploit from

Note: Syrian offensives in the central have made limited progress only taking a few streets and penetrating a couple of hundred metres into rebel territory. Rebel counter attacks also took back territory in several areas.

These operations are intended to confuse rebel commanders and draw off troops from the northern sector.

Take Aways:

- The Syrian army was very reluctant to commit major forces to direct assaults in the heavily urbanised centre of Aleppo city
- Its urban terrain negates major of the Syrian army's advantages in armour and artillery
- Air strikes have also proved of limited effect in this sector



ANNA report on street fighting in Sulieman Haladi district, 2nd October 2016
Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjvNEhKNDCo>

Southern Front Lines

Syria: Drone shows aftermath of SAA and Hezbollah offensive in southern Aleppo

RUPTLY

Syrian artillery fire on Sheikh Sa'eed district 17th Oct 2016
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxL6_MW-idk

Take Aways:

- The Syrian army did not commit major forces in the southern sector of the inner siege lines
- This sector is highly likely to be the next focus of Syrian offensives

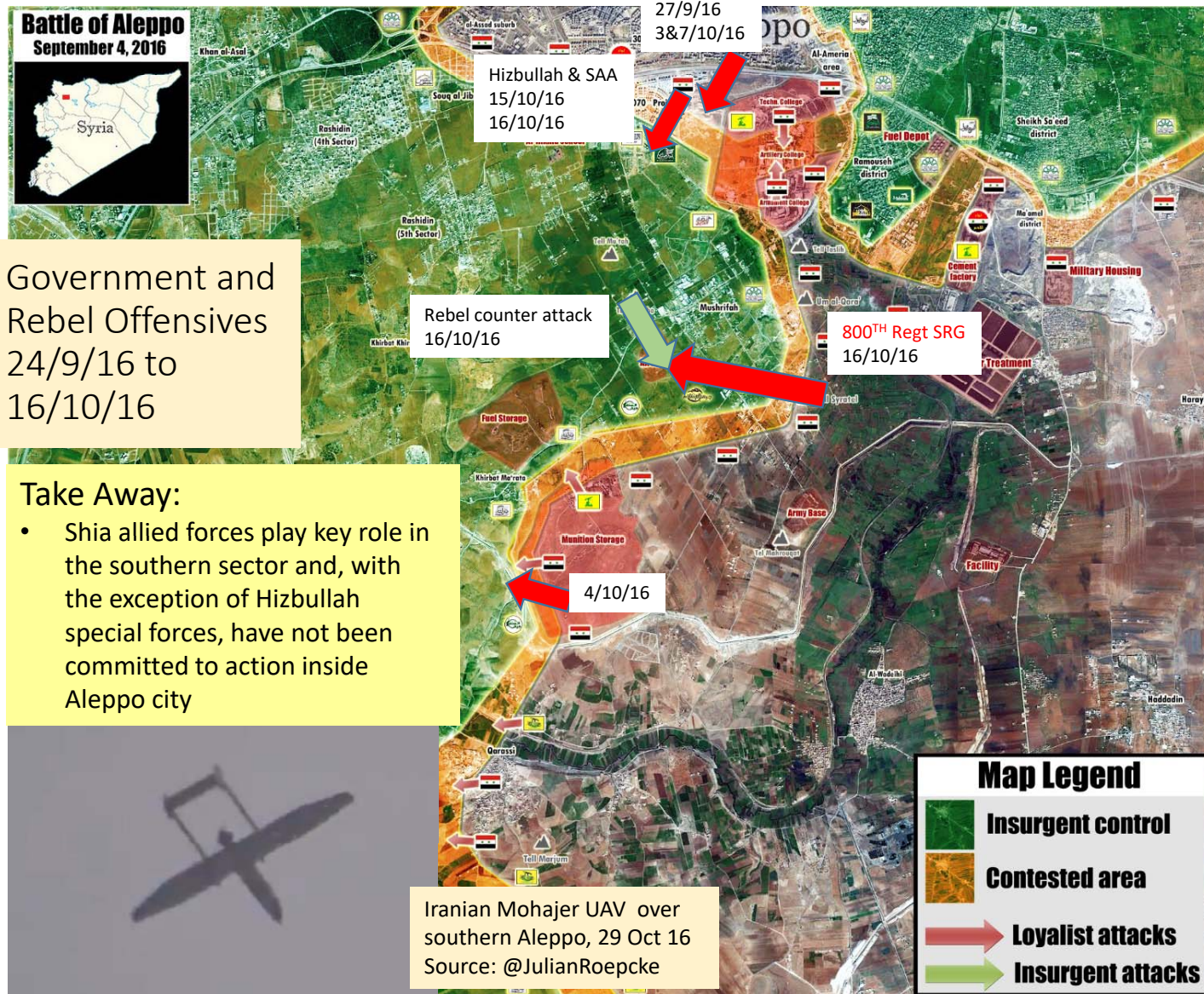
Syrian commanders do not appear to have committed major forces to operations on the southern fringes of the inner Aleppo siege lines. Limited progress has been made around Sheikh Sa'eed hill. These operations are intended to confuse rebel commanders and draw off troops from the northern sector



Military Intelligence Shield Unit 223
Prepares for operation against Sheikh
Sa'eed hill on 14th October 2016

[Source: @IvanSidorenko1](#)

Outer Siege Lines – Southern Sector



Government and Rebel Offensives
24/9/16 to
16/10/16

Take Away:

- Shia allied forces play key role in the southern sector and, with the exception of Hizbullah special forces, have not been committed to action inside Aleppo city

Southern Aleppo Operational Zone

Syrian Arab Army
 Elements 800th Regiment, Syrian Republican Guard
 Syrian Militia Forces
 Kataebat Al-Ba'ath Battalion
 Allied Forces

- Harakat Al-Nujaba (Iraqi paramilitary)

Iranian

- 65th Iranian Special Forces Brigade
- Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps UAV Detachment
- Firqa Fatayemoun (Iranian/Afghani paramilitary) (200-300 fighters)

Lebanese

- Hizbullah Special Forces Contingent
- Hizbullah Radwan Special Forces Regiment

Iraqi

- Harakat Al-Nujaba (Iraqi paramilitary unit)
- Liwaa Abu Fadl Al-'Abbas (Iraqi paramilitary)
- Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq Fighter's. "League of the Righteous" (Iraqi paramilitary unit)
- Liwa Imam Al-Baqer (Iraqi paramilitary unit)
- Group Master of Martyrs Brigade Steadfast Amirli (Iraqi paramilitary) (150+ fighters)
- Assado'llah Forces (Iraqi militia)
- 4th Brigade, Badr Military Wing (Iraqi paramilitary unit) (600 fighters) Commander Haj Abu Hanan
- 8th Brigade, Badr Military Wing (Iraqi paramilitary Unit)
- Martyr Salem Haider Al Bekhitawy Regiment, Badr Military Wing
- Saraya al-Khorasani (Iraqi para-military unit)
- Kataeb Hezbollah (Iraqi paramilitary unit)
- Kata'ib Imam Ali Battalion (Iraqi paramilitary unit)
- Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada (Iraqi paramilitary unit)

The contingent of foreign Shia fighters are based to the south west of Aleppo city, defending positions in the country side along the border with Idlib province. The units are rotated to hold the front from the main Iranian/Hizbullah logistic base at al Safirah garrison.

Operations on Outer Siege Lines

Russian air strikes have been heavy in the 1070 Housing Project region to prevent rebel fighters building up weapons and ammunition to push into the government held northern half of the project

There has been heavy fighting in the 1070 Housing Project, which dominates the southern approaches to Aleppo and would be the key to any successful rebel attempt to break the siege

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8HFGhpCVFc>

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RuAF Air Strike on 1070 Project district, south west Aleppo from Russian MOD Briefing on Aleppo 13th Oct 16
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8mhr5CeWQ>



Take Away:

- The Syrians and Russians are committing considerable numbers of troops and ISTAR assets to secure and monitor the outer siege lines



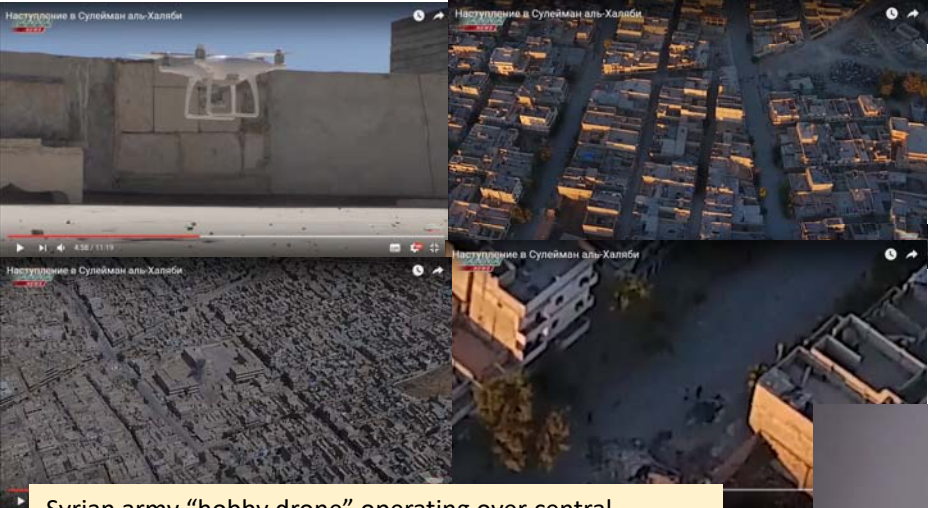
Aleppo - ISTAR Operations

1L271 "Aistenok" artillery and mortar fire locating radar of the Russian 120th Artillery Brigade, which deployed to the Aleppo region in June 2016 <http://eng.syria.mil.ru/en/index/syria/news/more.htm?id=12096084@egNews>



Take Away:

- The Syrian and Russian military have a considerable understanding of the tactical situation, as well as the human and real geography of Aleppo city. Giving them major advantages



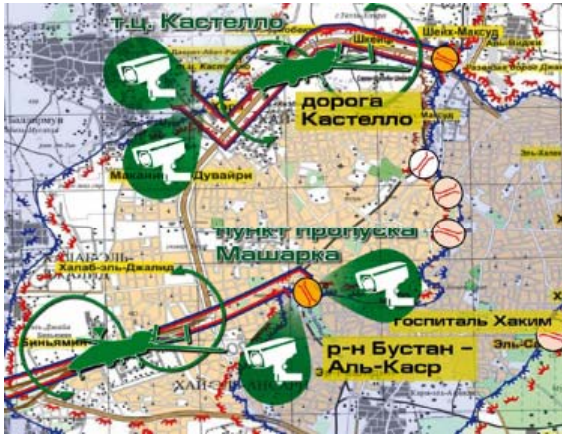
Syrian army "hobby drone" operating over central Aleppo, including directing artillery strike on Sheikh Khader District School, 2nd October <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjvNEhKNDCo>



Russian Forepost UAV operate regularly over Aleppo. Since the 18 Oct 16 ceasefire two Forepost orbits over the city and the video feed has been posted on the Russian MOD website [tp://eng.syria.mil.ru/en/index/syria/news/more.htm?id=121061@egNews](http://eng.syria.mil.ru/en/index/syria/news/more.htm?id=121061@egNews)



Russian troops, believed to be forward air controllers operated in armoured vehicles around Aleppo
Source: [Yusha Yuseef @MIG29](#) (Nov 12



Ground surveillance cameras have been posted around Aleppo city and the video feed has been posted on the Russian MOD website <http://eng.syria.mil.ru/en/index/syria/news/more.htm?id=12100261@egNews>



Col Suhail Hassan, head of Tiger Force, watches drone imagery on iPad in Aleppo 11 Aug 16
Source: [@IvanSidorenko1](#)

Russian Air Support Operations – 24 Sept – 17 Oct 2016



Source: AFP



Source: Reuters



Source: Reuters

The most controversial aspect of the Battle for Aleppo has been Russian air strikes, which rebel groups, US, UK and French governments and some NGOs say deliberately target medical facilities and civilians, making them “war crimes”. These accusations are strongly denied by the Russian government and military.

CASUALTY ESTIMATES

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a report on Thursday that 406 people had been reported killed and 1,384 wounded in eastern Aleppo from 23rd Sept 16 until 8th Oct 16. In government-held western Aleppo, which is frequently targeted by rebel shelling, 91 people including 18 children were killed over a similar period. IHS Jane’s Terrorism and Insurgency Centre reported on 12th Oct that it had recorded 362 fatalities between 19th Sept and 3rd Oct, of which some 51% were civilians.

Take Aways:

- Criticism by western governments and the international media had an effect on the Russia Government
- After the so-called Humanitarian Pause ended on 22nd October Russian and Syrian airpower was not been employed inside Aleppo city limits.

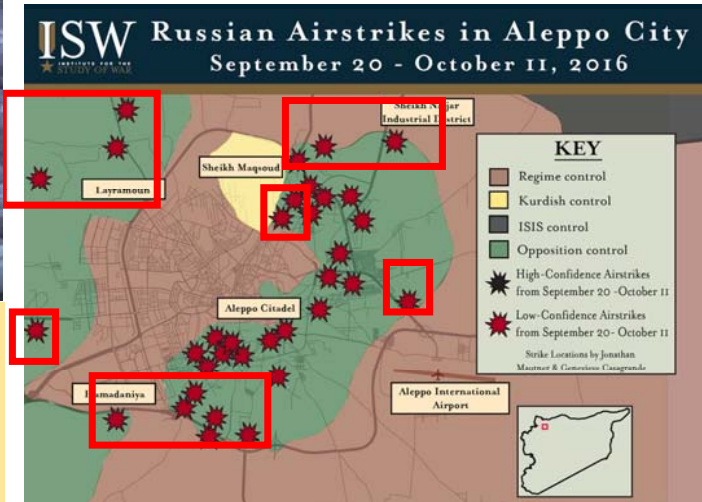
RuAF and SyAF Air strikes on Eastern Aleppo, 22/9/16 to 18/10/16
Source: SOHR, Reuters and other news agencies

Date	Number Air Strikes	Deaths
22/09/2016	2	
23/09/2016	5	47
24/09/2016	7	52
25/09/2016	12	27
26/09/2016	4	12
27/09/2016	17	26
28/09/2016	9	12
29/09/2016 ?	?	
30/09/2016	4	18
01/10/2016	1 ?	
02/10/2016	12 ?	
03/10/2016 ?	?	
04/10/2016 ?	?	
05/10/2016 ?	?	
06/10/2016 ?	?	
07/10/2016	1 ?	
08/10/2016 Nil	?	
09/10/2016	1 ?	
10/10/2016 Nil	?	
11/10/2016	6	35
12/10/2016	7	79
13/10/2016	20 ?	
14/10/2016	10	18
15/10/2016	3	13
16/10/2016	40	49
17/10/2016	10	50
Total	170+	420

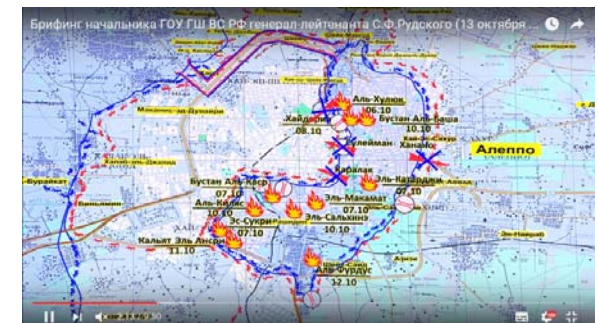


The Russian MOD claims its aircraft are only attacking military targets and produced video imagery to show the tracking of rebel fighters by drones before they are attacked from the air.

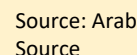
Source: Russian MOD briefing 13th Oct 2016



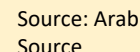
Zones of ground combat or uninhabited areas, representing nearly 50% of coverage of Russian and SyAAF air strikes



Russian air strikes in Aleppo, Ru MOD briefing 13th Oct 16



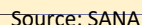
Aleppo's humanitarian corridors
Source: Russian MOD



Government buses were positioned at crossing points to receive surrendered rebels and civilian.

On 20th Oct 16 the Russian MOD reported 8 wounded rebel fighters surrendered

On 24th Oct 14 some 48 civilians
surrendered



Source:
@JulianRoepcke

Leaflet have been dropped over Aleppo to encourage both civilians and rebel fighters to leave the city via eight so-called humanitarian corridors

Take Aways:

- The Syrians and Russians are clearly trying to replicate its “humanitarian” depopulation tactics in Aleppo
- By 9 Nov 16 it had not been working in Aleppo

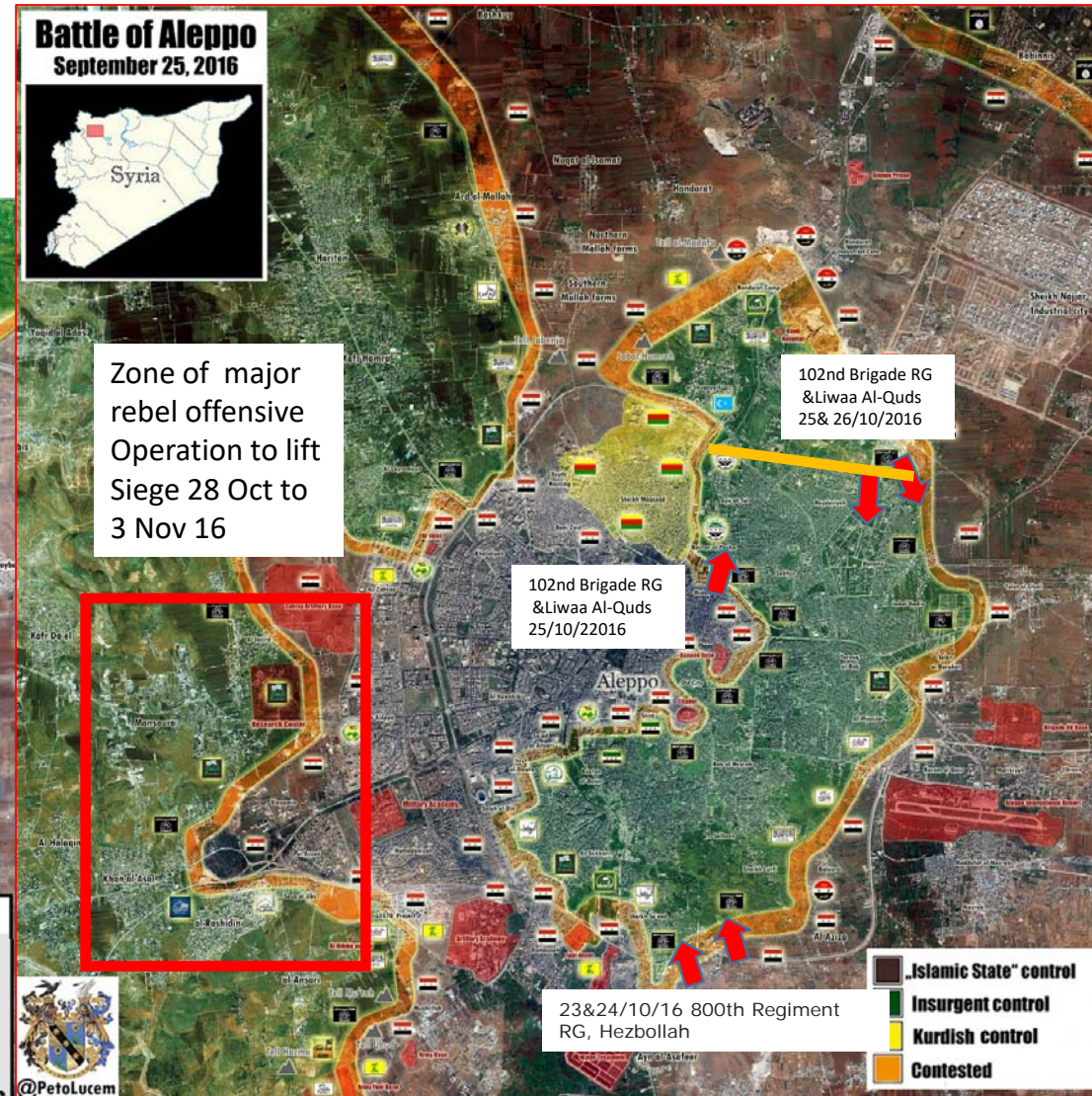
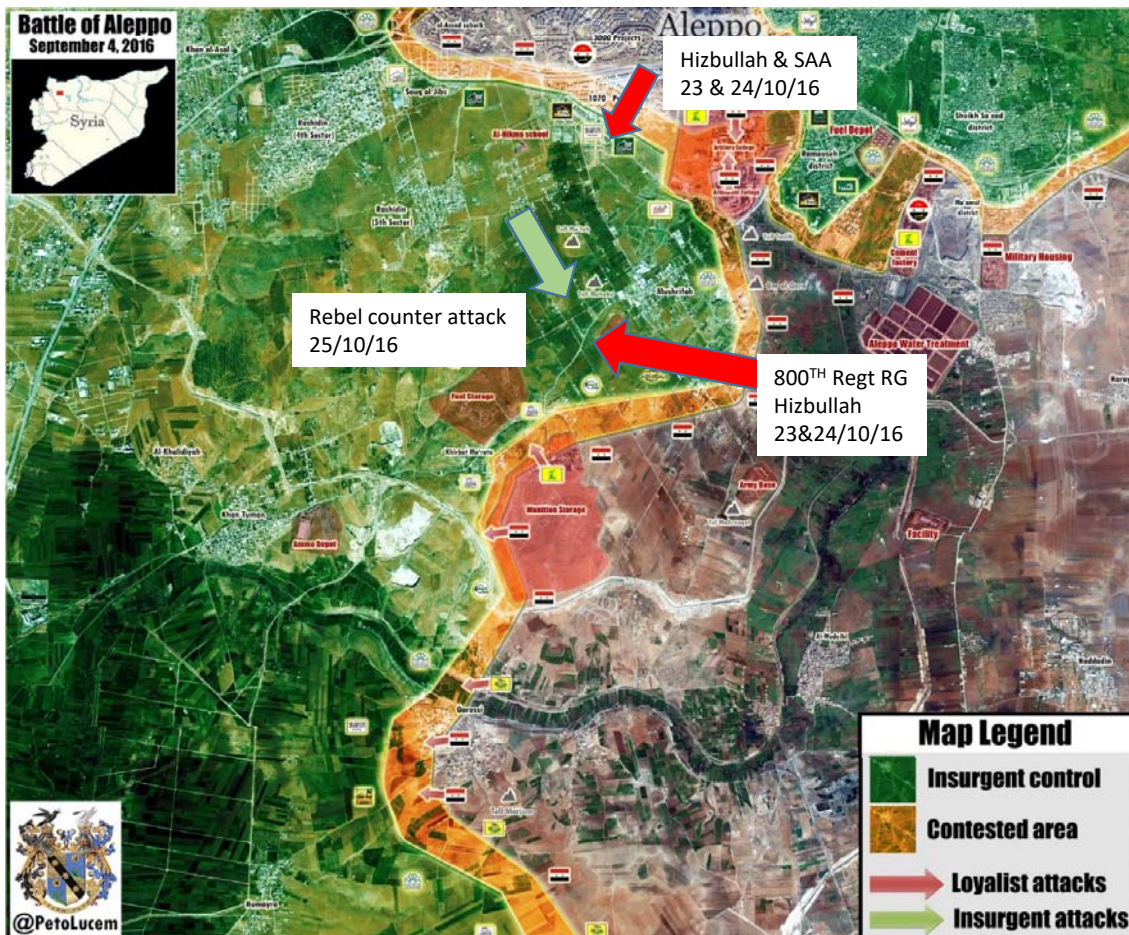
Since 24th Sept 2016 Syrian military commanders appear to be concentrating their effort on capturing the least defended and largely uninhabited areas of northern Aleppo. It is a moot point whether the Syrian government has the manpower to conduct a large scale and systematic house clearing operation in the heavily built-up centre of Aleppo city, and incur the resultant heavy casualties among its own troops.

The Syrians seem to be following the siege tactics that have been successful in the Damascus region. Around the capital the Syrians took the approach of imposing close sieges to deny opposition fighters and civilians in enclaves access to open land to grow food and water supplies, backed up by regular air and artillery bombardments to make life for the civilian population as untenable as possible. Over the past year, several enclaves in the Damascus and Homs regions have succumbed to these siege tactics and signed surrender agreements with the government, that have seen opposition fighters and their families evacuated to the Idlib region. Elements of these tactics are clearly being employed by the government in Aleppo but the negative reaction of opposition groups in the city to the latest Russian and Syrian offer suggests by 22nd October that had little inclination to surrender, and take up the government offer to be transported to the rebel enclave around Idlib.

Syrian attacks resumed around Aleppo on 23rd Oct 2016. These are expected to run for two to three weeks before another “humanitarian” ceasefire will be offered to see if a greater number of civilians and fighters will surrender

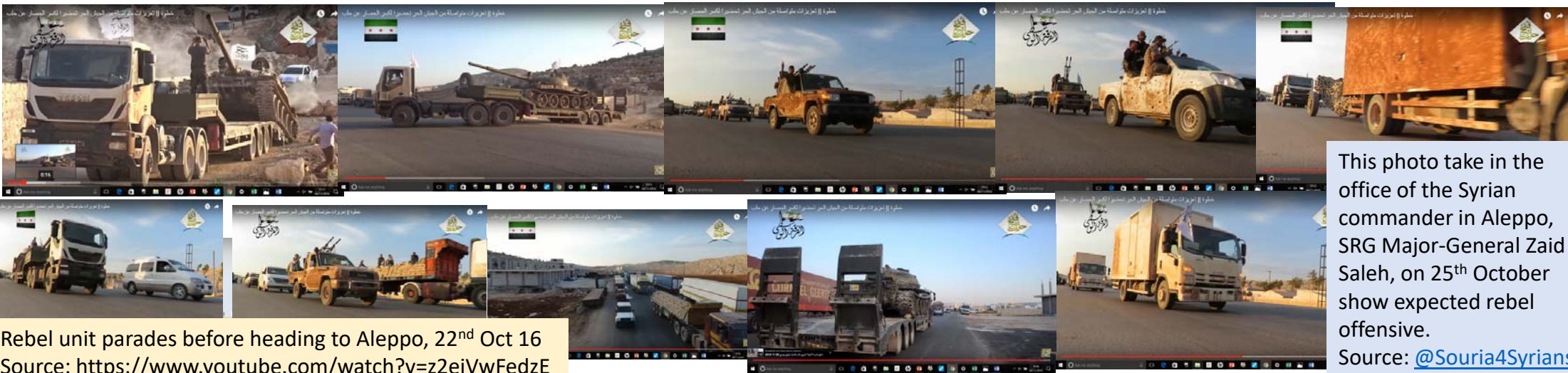
Second Phase of Battle for Aleppo

23 Oct – 3 Nov 2016



Rebel Forces mass in Idlib province for the Battle to Lift Siege of Aleppo, 22 - 24 Oct 16

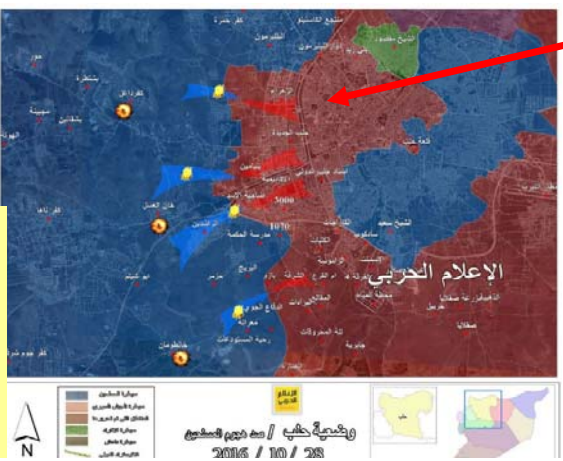
Rebel Column begins road move north to Aleppo, 24 Nov 16. Note move takes place in broad daylight, in perfect weather for aerial surveillance. Russian MOD on 21 Oct 16 reported that 1,200 rebels and 120 vehicles, including tanks were heading to Aleppo. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2eiVwFedzE>



This photo take in the office of the Syrian commander in Aleppo, SRG Major-General Zaid Saleh, on 25th October show expected rebel offensive. Source: [@Souria4Syrians](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2eiVwFedzE)



- Take Aways:
- Rebel forces had terrible operational security or opsec, which compromised their operation, allowing Syrians and Russians to prepare to defeat it
 - Rebel forces are well organised and have considerable combat power available



Pre-emptive Assault on Air Defence Base, South West of Artillery School by Syrian Republican Guard 800th Regiment and Hizbullah Infantry, 23 Oct 16



Infantry Assault from BMP armoured vehicles, 23 Oct 16.

Source:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1VKz3cnBw>



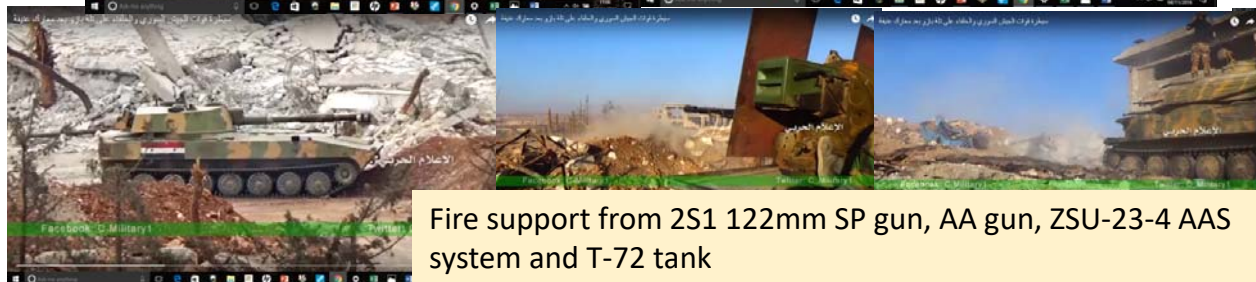
Hizbullah special forces troops rest after the operation to take the AD Base

Source: [@IvanSidorenko1](#),

RuAF and SyAAF Interdiction Strikes in Idlib and south western Aleppo provinces
23-28 Oct 16

Targets hit include in:

23 Oct – Khan Tuman.
24 Oct – Kafr Takharim, Kafr Shykhun
25 Oct – Kafr Takharim
26 Oct – Idlib x 7, Kafr Shaykun, Kafr Najd
27 Oct – Kfar Naha



Fire support from 2S1 122mm SP gun, AA gun, ZSU-23-4 AAS system and T-72 tank

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m32V4NSOTNQ>



Take Away:

- Syrian troops were aggressive in seeking to secure key high ground in the path of the expected rebel counter attack to close down the easiest route to break the siege

Rebel assault in south west Aleppo, 28-30 Oct 16

Rebel forces that had moved up from the Idlib pocket struck against the south west defences of the out siege lines on the morning of 28 Oct 16. Six suicide vehicle borne bombs led the assault on the Minyan, Zahraa and al Assad suburbs, followed up with infantry and armour assaults



Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYhR8_3CxJY



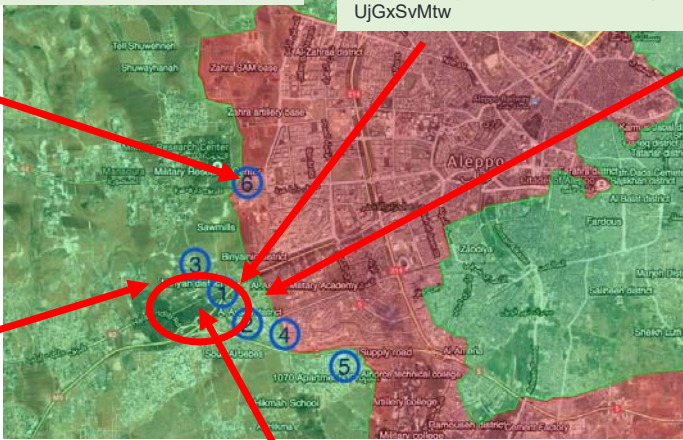
Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5UjGxSvMtw>



Source: Reuters news agent



Source: @TheDaneChris Oct 28



SAA and NDF troops in Aleppo city, 28th Oct 16. Note heavy rain – which inhibited SyAF and RUAF air support and air surveillance, allowing rebels to launch surprise attack
Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vg3go3JQZW8>



Rebel ground assault by Jaish al-Fateh tanks and fighters into Al Assad suburb, 28 Oct 16
Source: @TheDaneChris Oct 28

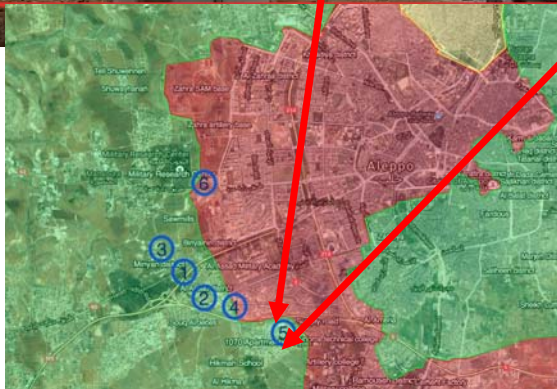


Take Away:

- Rebels are heavily reliant on suicide bombers to achieve tactical success

Follow-up assault led by two Vehicle-borne suicide bomb attacks in 1070 Housing Project took place on 30/10/16. This was filmed on a rebel drone. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qx-0_q0Lsds

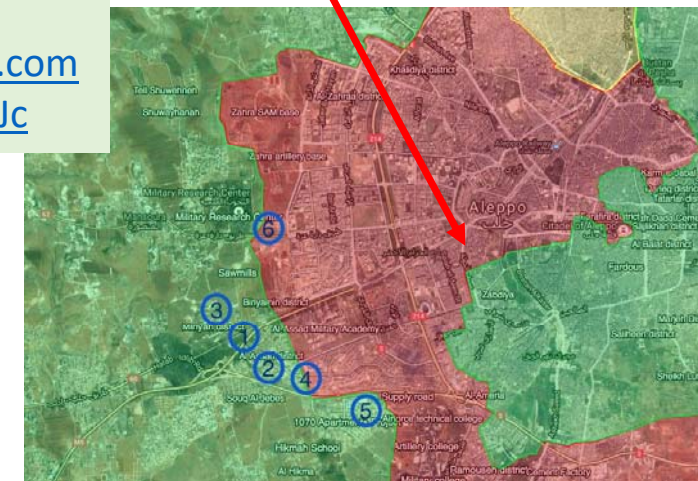
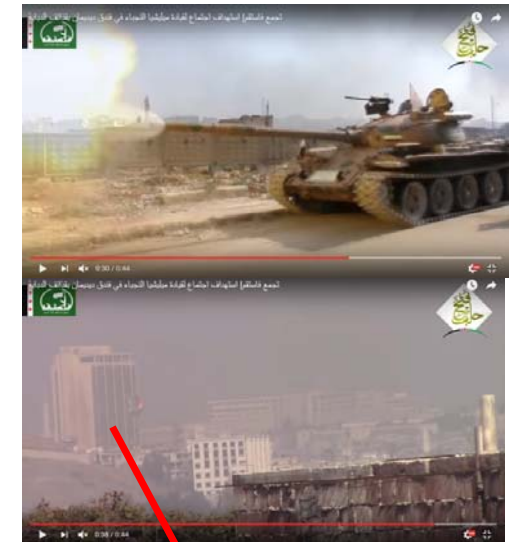
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Rebel T-55 fires at Meriden Hotel from inside eastern Aleppo enclave. This was the only significant activity by the rebel force besieged inside the city to try to link up with the break-in force attacking the south west of the city.

source:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHOX3uZRIJc>



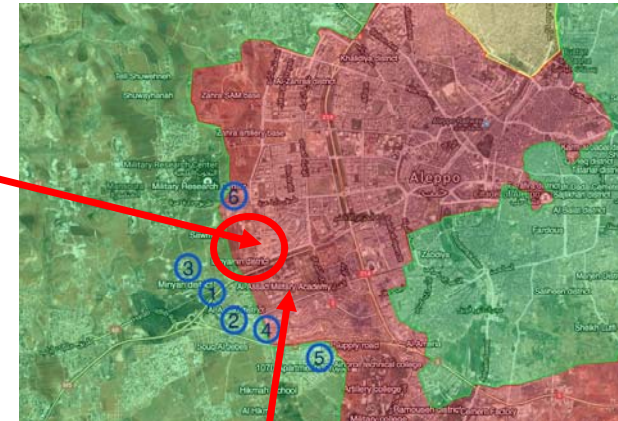
Take Away:

- The lack of any break-out push by the rebel forces trapped in side Aleppo city was a critical weakness in the rebel battle plan

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Syrian Troops of the Desert Hawk Brigade deploy to New Aleppo district on 31st Oct 16, to engage rebel fighters in the Minyan suburb, including T-90 tanks

Source: [@hamza 780](#)



Syrian army troops defence Al Assad Military Academy compound, 31st Oct 16

Source: [@IvanSidorenko1](#)



Liwa al Quds AKA the Palestinian Jerusalem Brigade mobilise in north Aleppo to move tp west Aleppo, 2 Nov 16

Source: [@IvanSidorenko1](#)



Tiger Force armour arrives in Aleppo city on 30 Oct 16

Source: [@TheArabSource](#)

Take Away:

- The Syrians were able to move reinforcements rapidly to the threatened areas in western Aleppo
- This position considerable firepower into the path of the rebel offensive

Rebel Assault 3 Nov 16 opened with Rocket barrage across wide area

Free Syrian Army BM-21
Rocket launcher fires at
southern Aleppo (al Safirah
military complex 3rd Nov 16
Source: [@JulianRoepcke](#)



Improvised Rockets fire at western
Aleppo 3rd Nov 16
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXdy0C5nmXg>



Civilian Casualties

Between 28 and 31 Oct
16 the Syrian state news
agency, SANA, reports 84
civilian deaths in western
Aleppo from rebel rocket
and artillery fire.

On 3 Nov 16 SANA
reports 17 dead and 124
wounded for rebel rocket
fire on western Aleppo



Fatah Halab Improvised
BM-21 launcher fires
rockets fire at western
Aleppo 3rd Nov 16
Source:

[Tomson @TheDaneChris](#)

Take Away:

- Rebel indirect firepower was not organised into a effective targeting network to bring fire down on Syrian military forces
- Rebel rocket fire highly inaccurate and causes considerable civilian casualties

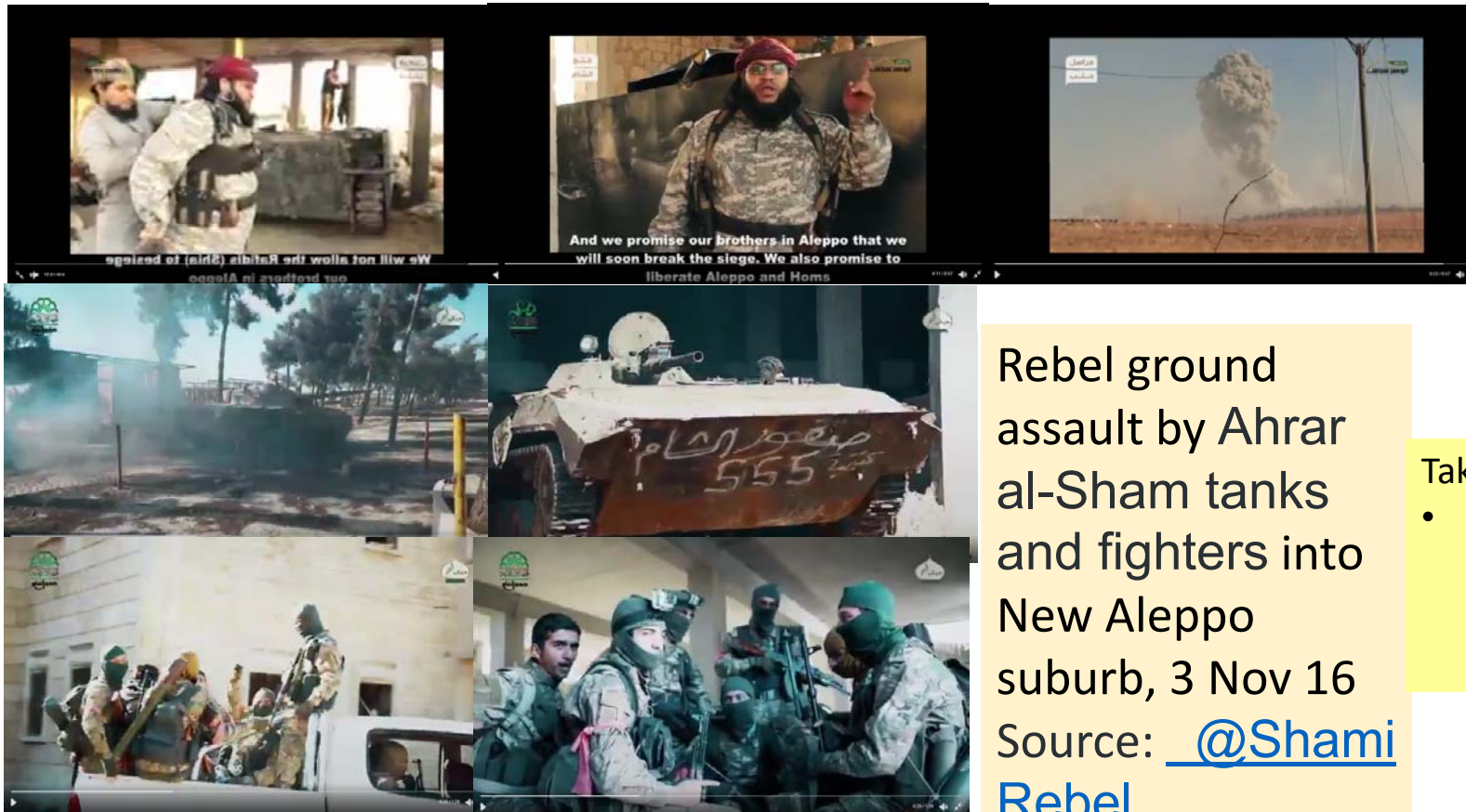
Rebel drone footage of assault
against 3000 Housing Complex in
western Aleppo, 3 Nov 16 Source:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXdy0C5nmXg>



Rebel rocket strikes

Rebel ground assault on 3 Nov 16 was then followed up by three or four Suicide vehicle borne bombs

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Massive Jaish al-Fateh vehicle borne suicide bomb (in BMP armoured vehicle) against New Aleppo, 3/11/16

Source: [@walid970721](#)

Rebel ground assault by Ahrar al-Sham tanks and fighters into New Aleppo suburb, 3 Nov 16

Source: [@Shami Rebel](#)

Take Away:

- The limited number of suicide bombers in rebel ranks limited their combat capability and slowed the advance into Aleppo

Government troops on roof tops in New Aleppo used ATGW to target rebels and called down artillery and air strikes, 3 Nov 16, to defeat rebel advance .



Source:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVLPVsYK1g0&feature=youtu.be>



A SVBIEB is destroyed by a Syrian tank as it approaches Al Assad Military Academy, 3 Nov 16
 @Ibra_Joudeh



RuAF Su-34 drop at least two bombs on Minyan suburb outside New Aleppo 3 Nov 16
 Source:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KC0CeWjL-mg>



Four rebel BMPs and up to a dozen rebel fighters were killed trying to assault the 3000 Housing Project
 Source: [@TheDaneChris](#)

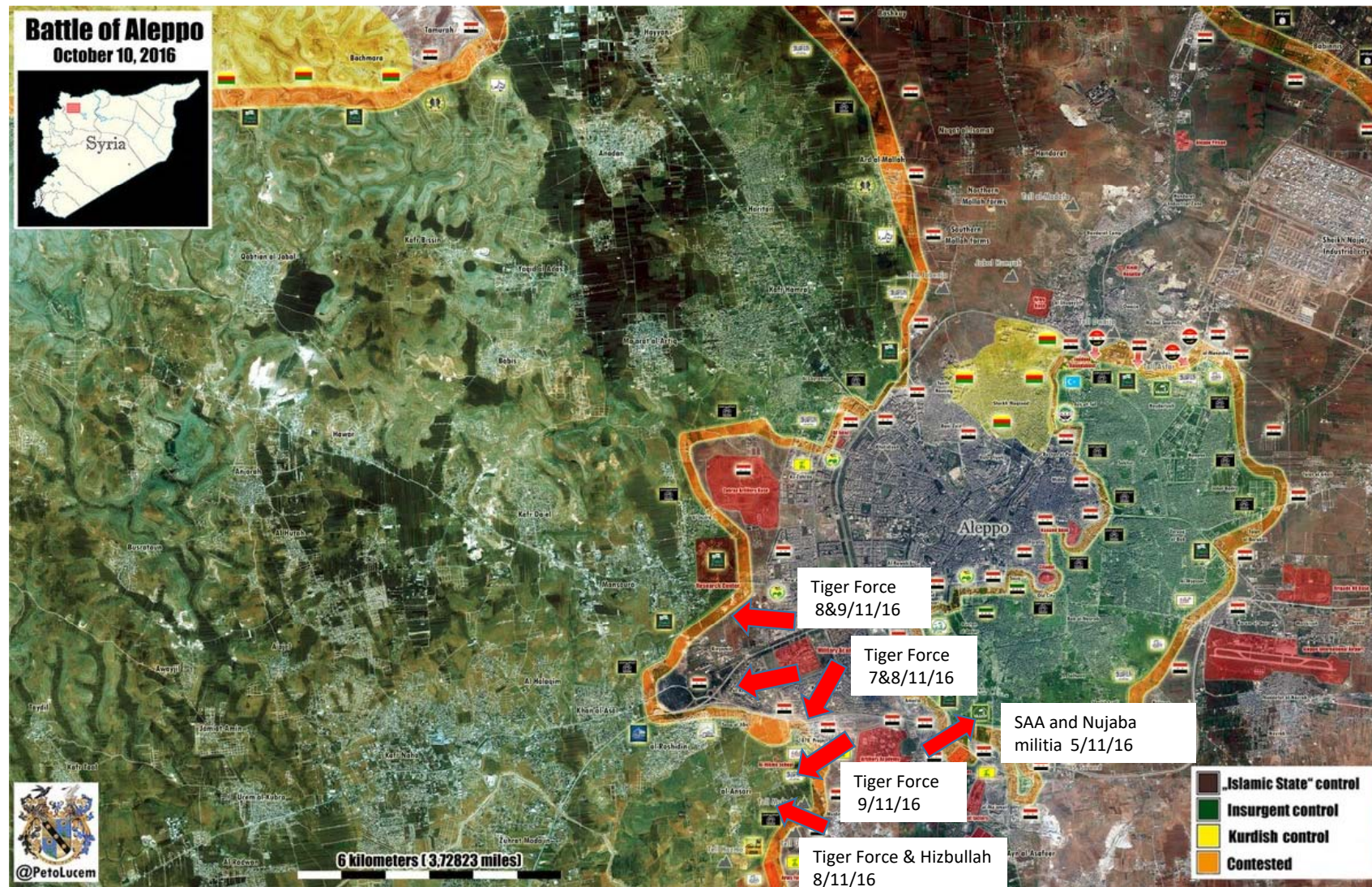
Russian drone imagery of artillery strike on rebel SUV in 1070 Housing project, 3 Nov 16.
 Source:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYLQmLXdIM4>



Take Away:

- Mass firepower decimated and halted the rebel advance on 3 Nov 16
- Without element of surprise, the Syrian military were able to organise highly effective defence

Third Phase of Battle for Aleppo - 5 Nov 2016 onwards



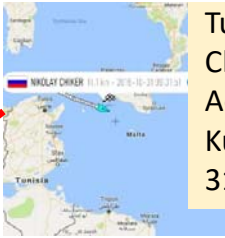
Units of the Tiger Force entered the Project 1070 area to complete the defeat of the rebel attempt to break into Aleppo
Source: [maytham @maytham956](#) Nov 8



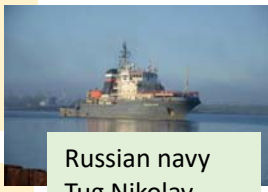
Admiral Kuznetsov Battlegroup Approaches Syria

The Russians positioned strategic forces ahead of the final assault on Aleppo

Admiral Kuznetsov takes on fuel from tanker Sergey Osipov, which loaded with fuel in Algeria on 28th Oct 16



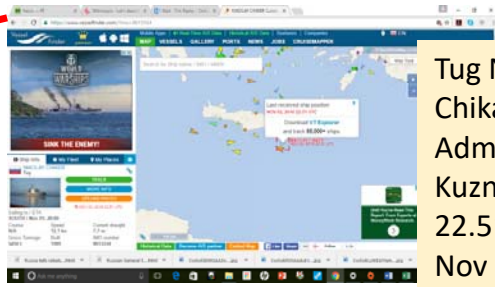
Tug Nikolay Chikar and Admiral Kuznetsov, 31 Oct 16



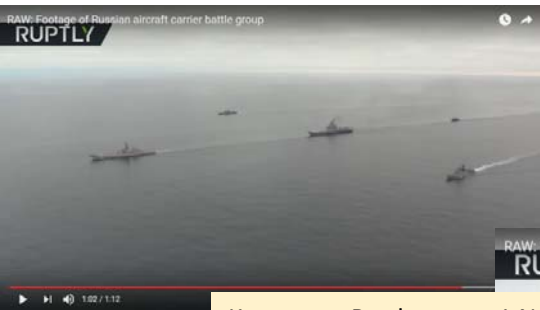
Russian navy Tug Nikolay Chikar which is shadowing the Kuznetsiv has been tracked on open source AIS websites



Tug Nikolay Chikar and Admiral Kuznetsov, AM 2 Nov 16



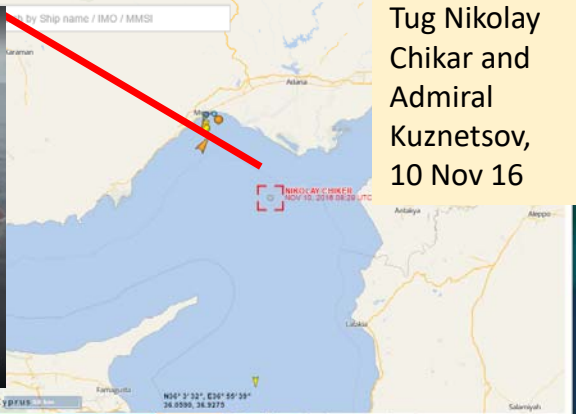
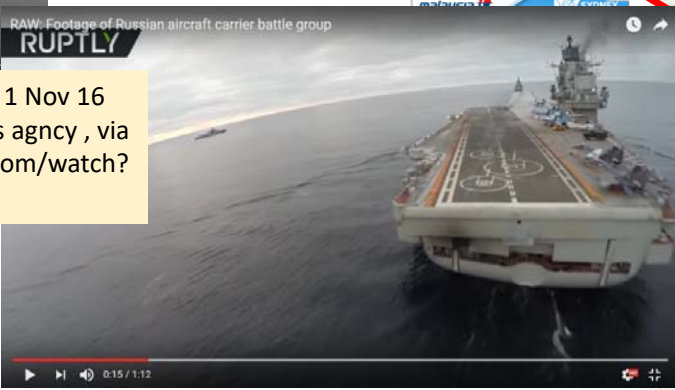
Tug Nikolay Chikar and Admiral Kuznetsov, 22.51hrs 2 Nov 16



Kuznetsov Battlegroup, 1 Nov 16
Source: RT/RUPTY news agency , via <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQmKH2rne6I>



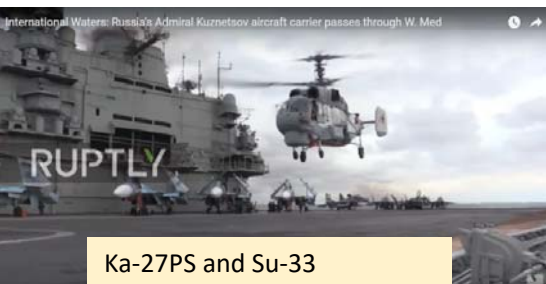
Yug class Oceanographic research ship



Tug Nikolay Chikar and Admiral Kuznetsov, 10 Nov 16

Kuznetsov Air Group,

Source: RT/RUPTY news agency , via <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0Ytm4R0jrl>



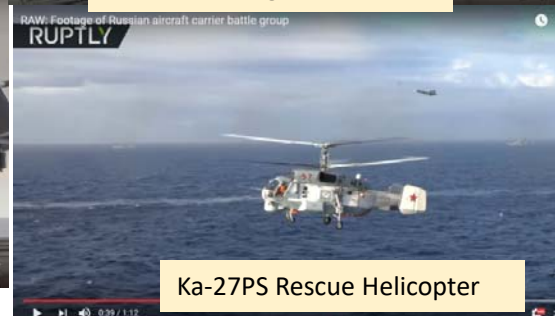
Ka-27PS and Su-33



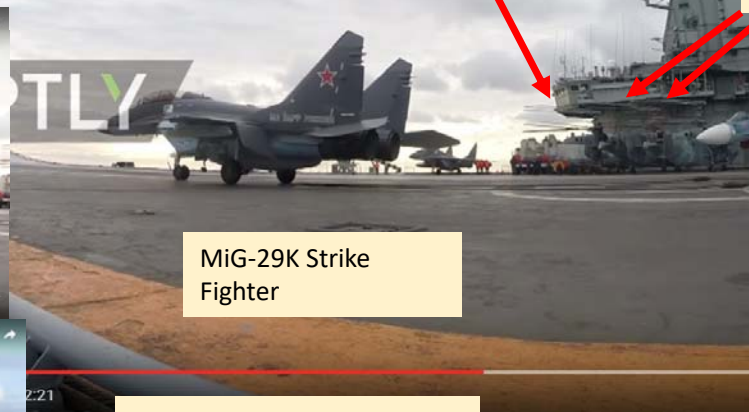
MiG-29K Strike Fighter



Su-33 Strike Fighter



Ka-27PS Rescue Helicopter



MiG-29K Strike Fighter



Su-33 Strike Fighter

Ka-27PS Rescue Helicopter

2 x Ka-29TB Helicopter Gunships



Ka-52K inside Kuznetsov's hanger deck, 12th October 2016
Source: <https://vk.com/milinfoive>

Take Aways:

- The Kuznetsov's air group arrival off Syria boosted the number of Russian strike in theatre by 13 jets or 1/3
- It will also boost the number of armed helicopters by 8 or 1/3

Admiral Kuznetsov Air Group in Mediterranean Sea, 8 Nov 2016-6 Jan 2017

Aircraft Type	Role	Usual Complement	Confirmed by Pix	Serial	Unit
MiG-29KUBR	Strike	4		38, 47, 49 (lost 13/11/16), 4 52	100th Shipborne Fighter Aviation Regiment
Su-33	Fighter/Strike	10		62, 66, 67, 71, 76, 78, 84, 9 85, 88 (1 x lost 3/12/16)	279th Shipborne Fighter Aviation Regiment
Ka-29	Helicopter Gunship	4		2 75	
Ka-31	Airborne Early Warning Helicopter	2 1		90, 232 seen in Syria Oct 16	
Ka-52K	Attack Helicopter	4 1 or 2			
Ka-27PL	Anti-Submarine Helicopter	4 Nil			830th Independent Shipborne Anti-Submarine Helicopter Regiment
Ka-27PS	Search and Rescue Helicopter	4		2 55, 57	830th Independent Shipborne Anti-Submarine Helicopter Regiment



Ka-31 on Kuznetsov as she transits the English Channel, 21 Oct 16
Source Dover Marine

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Russian Navy Su-33 strike on Urum al-Kubra, south west Aleppo province 15th November 2016.

The video imagery was generated by a RussianForepost UAV

Source: Russian MOD, via RT.com: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTF5f-H-NnU>



Google Earth imagery geo-locates Russian Forpost imagery and social media footage below as the same location

Forpost UAV symbology
signature item for the
system that can be seen
repeatedly in Russian
drone footage from Syrian



[Majd Fahd @Syria Protector](#)

Aftermath of a [#RuAF](#) air raid on jihadists
rebel vehicle in Urum al-Kubra town in
west [#Aleppo](#), 5 killed including a senior.

[4:36 PM - 17 Nov 2016](#)

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Further Russian Navy Su-33 strikes on south west Aleppo province 15th November 2015
Source: Russian MOD, via RT.com: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTF5f-H-NnU>



Russian Navy Kalibr cruise missile BDA imagery, 15th November 2016

Source: Russian MOD, via RT.com: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNgPlxqEzA8>

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Kalibr cruise missile armed frigate, Admiral Grigorovich, launched at least missiles on 15th November
<https://www.rt.com/news/367124-russia-syria-aircraft-carrier/>



Bastion land-based missiles joined the operation from a firing point near Latakia
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6S6UuH9OnDg>



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vcdEAK_U1o&feature=youtu.be

Russian Kh-101 air launched cruise missiles strikes west of Aleppo, 17th Nov 2016.
This was the first ever operational use of the weapon from a Tu-95. The strike was launched from an air base near Murmansk and the two bombers and their support Il-78 tankers flew down into the Atlantic and then through the Straits of Gibraltar before launching their missiles from the eastern Mediteranean.

Source: Russian MOD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjYpLYsKJ3E>

