



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on March 19, 2023

## Assad Welcomes Russian Presence in Syria

America's rivals are making quick and decisive moves on the world chessboard. Can the U.S. keep up?

Syrian President Bashar Assad recently reaffirmed his loyalty to Russia's Vladimir Putin, stating during a visit to Moscow that he supports Russia in the Ukraine war and that he would like to see more Russian military bases in Syria.

"Because this is my first visit since the start of the special military operation in Ukraine, I would like to repeat the Syrian position in support of this special operation," Assad said to Putin, as reported by [Reuters](#).



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Of the ersatz "republics" of Donetsk and Luhansk, which Putin claimed at the outset of the war, Assad said: "I say that these are Russian territories, and even if the war had not happened, these are historically Russian territories."

Assad's glowing words for Putin are telling. After all, he isn't happy to have just any foreign forces in his country. The Syrian leader said on Russian television that he views the presence of Turkish troops on Syrian soil as problematic for him, and that he refuses to meet with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan until Turkey is "ready and without any ambiguity to exit completely from Syrian territory and end its support of terrorism and restore the situation that prevailed before the start of the war on Syria."

The remark was in reference to various incursions by Erdogan into Syria to remove Kurdish militants from the Turkish border.

By contrast, Assad welcomed the idea of Russia having a great military presence in his country.

"We think that expanding the Russian presence in Syria is a good thing. Russia's military presence in any country should not be based on anything temporary," said Assad, per Reuters.

He added, "We believe that if Russia has the desire to expand bases or increase their number, it is a technical or logistical issue."

Breitbart News [noted](#) of the strained relations between Turkey and Syria:

Assad told his Russian interviewers on Thursday that Putin's regime has made a strong effort to restore relations between Syria and Turkey, but the effort will go no further unless Turkish forces withdraw.

"We trust the Russian side who has played a mediator role to facilitate the communications, but within the basis of Russian policy of respecting sovereignty of states ... and the exit of illegal foreign forces from Syrian territory," he said.



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In 2017, in fact, Assad prevented humanitarian aid from being delivered to rebellious areas of Syria, an action that provoked Erdogan to call him a “terrorist involved in state terrorism.” He even asked if Syrians could “embrace the future with a president of Syria who killed close to one million of its citizens.”

While Russia has a balancing act to perform in order to appease allies who are at odds with each other, the fact that Moscow is able to work effectively with disputing nations shows the Kremlin’s adeptness at building a new international order largely made up of nations that are tired of U.S. hegemony — and who seek the means to escape from under its figurative thumb of sanctions and military intervention.

Of course, Russia is the co-pilot of this international order. The other senior partner is China. As the New American has reported, China is pulling a diverse array of nations into its sphere, including in Latin America—where socialist dictatorships like Nicolas Maduro’s Venezuela and Daniel Ortega’s Nicaragua have traditionally given Beijing an open door into the Western Hemisphere.

But China is now moving to expand beyond those already-established allies. One nation Beijing is currently seeking to win over: Argentina.

Argentina’s embassy to China recently said Buenos Aires is [considering the purchase](#) of JF-17 “Thunder” fighter jets from Beijing.

In addition, Argentina’s defense ministry wants to integrate its armed forces with China’s, buying CCP-made military equipment and participating in personnel exchanges with the People’s Liberation Army.

Argentina’s high standard of living and civil order relative to other Latin American countries, combined with its strong sense of national pride, provide it with the potential to become a strong military power in the region.

China is playing an astute game. The U.S. has generally underestimated the potential of Latin America, placing more strategic emphasis and weight on its relationship with Europe. But if China can one by one win over the Latin American republics and turn them into formidable powers — or even middle powers — it will have a loaded gun pointed directly at America’s head.

Meanwhile, China and Russia continue to win over African nations such as South Africa, and are [working on pulling India](#) — the world’s most populous nation — into their column.

Soon, all the U.S. will have left is Europe, which militarily has seen far better days and shows signs of sliding into further irrelevance.

If America does not step up its game, it will eventually find itself alone, surrounded by enemies.



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