Posture of Syrian Regime and Allies: November 9, 2015

Key Take-Away: Russia shifted military assets into eastern Homs Province, positioning at least five attack helicopters at the T4 (Tiyas) Airbase in eastern Homs Province and additional rotary-wing aircraft at the Shayrat Airbase. These deployments position Russia to blunt an offensive by ISIS against pro-regime forces south of Homs City that began after ISIS seized the village of Mahin on November 1, 2015. Russia has also forward-staged rotary-wing aircraft out of the Hama Military Airport in order to target rebel positions north of Hama City. Syrian rebels have been pushing back regime forces in the northern countryside of Hama Province despite the start of Russian air support to the Syrian regime on September 30. Russia has also forward-staged rotary-wing aircraft out of the Hama Military Airport in order to target rebel positions north of Hama City. Syrian rebels have been pushing back regime forces in the northern countryside of Hama Province despite the start of Russian air support to the Syrian regime on September 30. The expansion of the Russian footprint in Homs and Hama Provinces positions Russia to further deepen its military involvement in the Syrian Civil War. The aggressive use of helicopter gunships to conduct reconnaissance-by-fire along active frontlines will provide Russia with valuable sources of additional intelligence on potential targets for fixed-wing airstrikes. Over the long-term, the deployments to the two airbases in eastern Homs Province could also provide Russia with new forward positions for an expanded air campaign against ISIS in far-eastern Syria or western Iraq. The forward-staging of Russian rotary-wing nonetheless brings Russian personnel closer to direct contact with ISIS, raising the risk that ISIS could deliberately target these forces in order to punish Russia for its involvement in Syria.