Russia mobilized and transported forces and equipment to Syria under the guise of military exercises. The link between Russia’s arrival at the naval base at Tartus and its military exercises in the Eastern Mediterranean are clear, and the proximity in time of Russia’s deployment into Syria and its Center 2015 exercise indicates that these military exercises served as preludes or covers for deployments. Russia is flexing its military power and basing in more than one location. On September 8, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said Moscow was prepared to establish airbases in the former Soviet countries making up the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) alliance. On September 19, President Vladimir Putin signed a decree calling for Russia’s foreign and defense ministries to conduct negotiations with Minsk to establish a Russian air base in Belarus. Two new ground force bases are in development near Russia’s border with government-controlled northeastern Ukraine, suggesting that Russia will maintain its aggressive military posture toward Ukraine in the coming years. Russia’s activities in Syria appear to be part of a larger strategy aimed at bolstering its security, political and economic interests from the eastern Mediterranean to Central Asia.