Russia continues to leverage its military intervention in Syria to assert its great power status in the Middle East. Following inconclusive multilateral talks in Vienna on October 30, Russia claimed to have conducted airstrikes in direct coordination with the Syrian opposition in order to present itself as a cooperative actor, and possibly to sow distrust among rebel groups. Russia strengthened its military partnership with Iran by responding on November 3 to an attack by ISIS south of Homs city by sending attack helicopters to a forward airbase near the ISIS front line. Preserving the Syrian regime may require Russia to engage on the central Syrian front against ISIS while maintaining its current support to NATO outside the Middle East. Russia launched a snap naval aviation drill near its Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad after reports emerged that NATO was considering bolstering its military presence along its eastern border with Russia. Russia launched one of its largest missile tests of the year on the day of the Vienna talks over Syria. Russia also may have backed pro-Russian parties in the former Soviet republic of Moldova, which ousted the pro-EU government on October 29. Russia’s operations in the Middle East are part of a larger effort to expand Russia’s military presence and political influence at the expense of the U.S. and its allies to an extent not witnessed since the end of the Cold War.

1) Pacific 27 OCT: The U.S. Navy scrambled four F-18 jets after two Russian bombers approached within a nautical mile of the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier during a joint exercise with South Korea in the Sea of Japan.

2) Serbia 27-29 OCT: Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić met with Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. Vučić reportedly agreed to purchase Russian arms in addition to signing new economic cooperation deals.

3) Syria 28 OCT- 03 NOV: Russia continued its air campaign in Syria, claiming to carry out strikes in Hama, Homs, Damascus, Aleppo, Raqqa, and Deir ez-Zour provinces.

30 OCT: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov took part in international talks in Vienna over a resolution to the Syrian Civil War.

03 NOV: Russia and the U.S. carried out a short communications test over Syrian airspace with two fighter aircraft to test protocols outlined in the October 20 air safety memorandum of understanding.

1) NOV: Russia positioned five attack helicopters at the T-4 airbase in Tiyas, 50 km west of ISIS-held Palmyra, according to an unnamed U.S. official.

3) NOV: The Russian MoD alleged that it had established “coordination groups” with unnamed Syrian opposition figures and had used information provided by opposition figures to carry out airstrikes.

4) Russia 28 OCT: The deputy director of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) announced the military alliance’s readiness to carry out peacekeeping missions within the borders of member states and by UN mandate in other nations.

28 OCT: Russia successfully tested a “Yars” intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), firing it from the northwestern region of Archangelsk Oblast to Kamchatka in Russia’s far northeast.

30 OCT: Russia conducted a large set of missile tests across the country, including ICBM tests and the launch of the “Kalibr” cruise missile in the Caspian Sea similar to those fired into Syria on October 7.

5) Afghanistan 28 OCT: The head of Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) claimed that the likelihood of a “terrorist” incursion from northern Afghanistan into Central Asia had increased and called for greater border security cooperation between Russia and former Soviet republics in the region.

6) Ukraine 28 OCT-03 NOV: Russian-backed separatists killed two Ukrainian soldiers and injured four in attacks near the separatist-held Donetsk airport on October 28 and 30. Separatists wounded three Ukrainian soldiers in a grenade launcher attack northwest of the separatist stronghold of Luhansk on November 3.

30 OCT: Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev announced that Russia will increase its trade tariffs against Ukraine in January 2016.

03 NOV: Russian-backed separatists threatened to postpone the withdrawal of light artillery systems from the frontline due to the uptick in fighting.

7) Moldova 29 OCT: Moldova’s parliament ousted the pro-EU pro-Russian opposition in the former Soviet republic.

8) Baltic 29-30 OCT: Russia conducted snap drills involving Su-27 fighter jets and Su-24M bombers near its Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad.

9) Saudi Arabia 29 OCT: Russia and Saudi Arabia exchanged lists of Syrian opposition groups, according to deputy Russian foreign minister Mikhail Bogdanov.

10) Iran 30 OCT: Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev announced that Russia and Iran are nearing an agreement over a contract to supply Tehran with S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems, according to the head of Russian state arms exporter Rosoboronexport.

02 NOV: Russia and India will hold a joint anti-terror naval exercise later this year.

11) India 02 NOV: Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu announced that Russia and India will hold a joint anti-terror naval exercise later this year.

12) Egypt 02 NOV: Russia and Egypt recently held negotiations over Russia’s provision of equipment and KA-52K attack helicopters for the Mistral-class assault ships, according to Russian state media reports.

13) Israel 03 NOV: The chief of staff of the Russian military claimed that Russia and Israel were frequently exchanging information about activities in Syrian as part of a de-escalation mechanism announced on September 21.