

Is Syria Boiling Over?

The Syrian civil war is once again threatening to engulf the entire Middle East in a war between the U.S. and Russia.

According to the coalition command of Operation Inherent Resolve:

At approximately 4:30 p.m. Syria time, June 18, Pro-Syrian regime forces attacked the Syrian Democratic Forces-held town of Ja'Din, South of Tabqah, wounding a number of SDF fighters and driving the SDF from the town.

Coalition aircraft conducted a show of force and stopped the initial pro-regime advance toward the SDF-controlled town.

Following the Pro-Syrian forces attack, the Coalition contacted its Russian counterparts by telephone via an established "de-confliction line" to de-escalate the situation and stop the firing.

At 6:43 p.m., a Syrian regime SU-22 dropped bombs near SDF fighters south of Tabqah and, in accordance with rules of engagement and in collective self-defense of Coalition partnered forces, was immediately shot down by a U.S. F/A-18E Super Hornet.

Ja'Din sits approximately two kilometers north of an established East-West SDF-Syrian Regime de-confliction area.

The Coalition's mission is to defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria. The Coalition does not seek to fight Syrian regime Russian, or pro-regime forces partnered with them, but will not hesitate to defend Coalition or partner forces from any threat.

The Coalition presence in Syria addresses the imminent

threat ISIS in Syria poses globally. The demonstrated hostile intent and actions of pro-regime forces toward Coalition and partner forces in Syria conducting legitimate counter-ISIS operations will not be tolerated.

The Coalition calls on all parties to focus their efforts on the defeat of ISIS, which is our common enemy and the greatest threat to regional and worldwide peace and security.

The Russian Defense Ministry is disputing the claim that coalition forces used the de-escalation hotline, and called the incident a violation of international law. In a statement sent out via its Russian-language outlets, but not on its English-language website, the ministry said it was shutting down the hotline and threatened to shoot down any aircraft in Syrian airspace not allied with Bashar al-Assad's regime.

The matter has not yet been discussed by the United Nations Security Council, but it's very likely it will meet Monday, setting the stage for yet another tense exchange between the U.S. and Russian ambassadors. Syria has been a matter of major contention between the two nations throughout President Donald Trump's presidency.

There are real dangers of war breaking out in this situation, and we should be praying over it intensely. {eo}