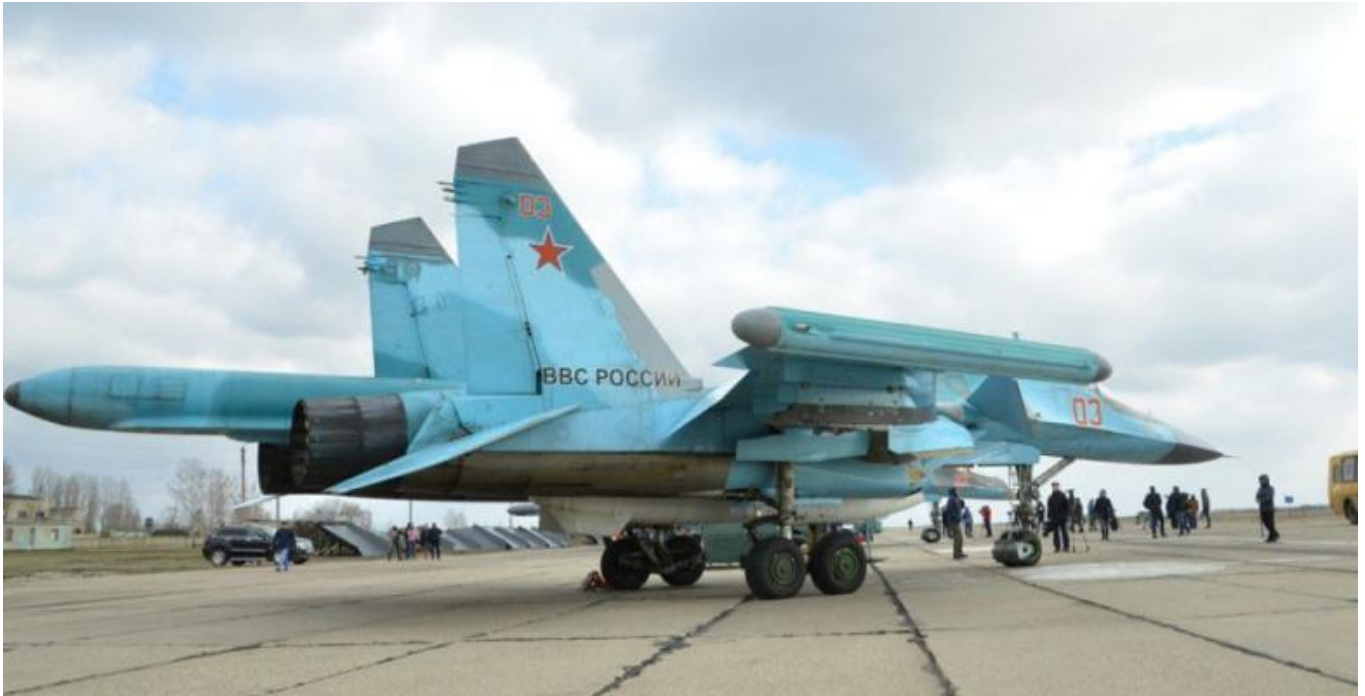

Second batch of Russian jets leaves Syria airbase

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"Another group of Russian aircraft took off from the airbase in Khmeimim heading to places of permanent deployment on the territory of the Russian Federation," the military statement said.

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The ministry added that the new batch of planes comprising Su-25 fighter jets is led by a strategic airlifter, the Il-76. All planes returning to home bases in Russia are flying in "flocks" headed by a "leader" aircraft – either Tu-154 or Il-76 transport aircraft – that carries the technical engineering crew, along with other cargo.

Once the group reaches the Russian border, each individual plane separates from the squadron and heads to its original place of deployment.

The first Russian forces planes and pilots left Syria on Tuesday, following the withdrawal order from President Vladimir Putin. They received a hero's welcome at home. On Monday, the Kremlin ordered the disengagement of the Russian Air Force from Syria because they had fulfilled the bulk of their original objectives.