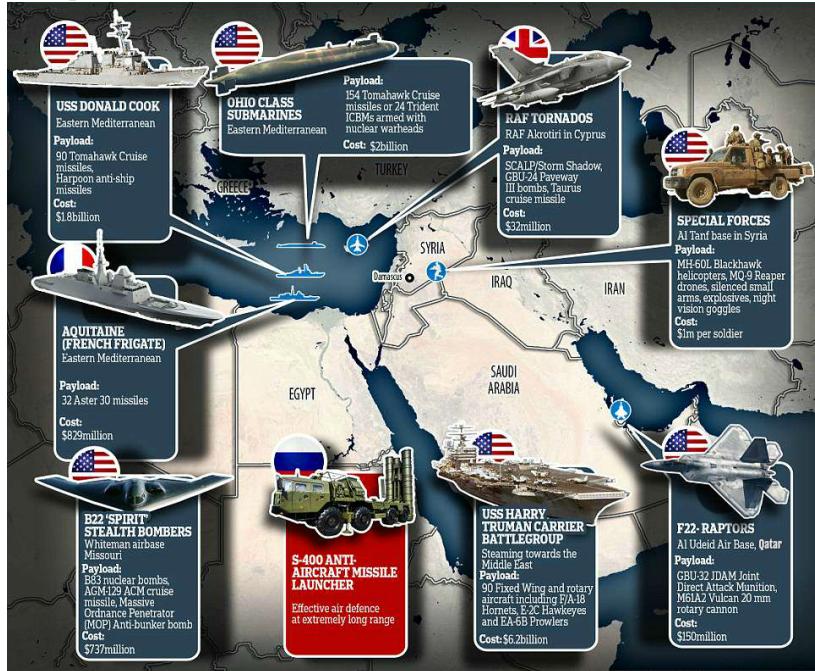


European air traffic warned over Syria strikes

David Mumford
11 April, 2018



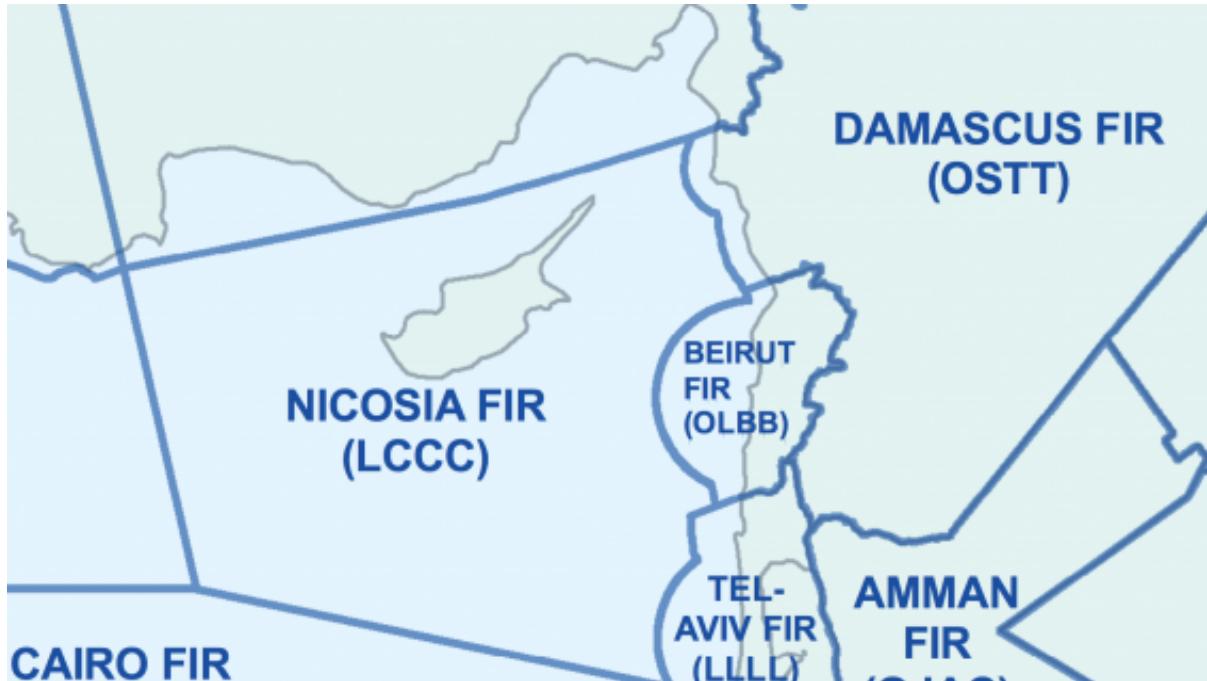
EASA are warning of possible air strikes into Syria being launched from locations within the LCCC/Nicosia FIR over the next 72 hours (Apr 11-14).

Eurocontrol have published a 'Rapid Alert Notification' on their website, with a statement from EASA that reads:

"Due to the possible launch of air strikes into Syria with air-to-ground and / or cruise missiles within the next 72 hours, and the possibility of intermittent disruption of radio navigation equipment, due consideration needs to be taken when planning flight operations in the Eastern Mediterranean / Nicosia FIR area."

Very few commercial flights operate over Syria, and authorities in the US, UK, France and Germany have all previously issued warnings for Syrian airspace.

But many airlines regularly transit the LCCC/Nicosia FIR: there are frequent holiday flights to the main Cypriot airports of LCLK/Larnaca and LCPH/Paphos; overflight traffic from Europe to the likes of OLBA/Beirut, OJAI/Amman and LLBG/Tel Aviv; as well as traffic from Istanbul heading south to the Gulf and beyond.



Last year, two US warships in the eastern Mediterranean fired missiles at an air base in Syria after a chemical weapons attack by the Assad regime killed more than 80 people.

This week, following another suspected chemical attack by the Syrian government against civilians in a rebel-held town in Syria, the US President Donald Trump warned there would be a “forceful” response. On Apr 11, he took to Twitter to warn Russia to prepare for strike on Syria:



Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump

Russia vows to shoot down any and all missiles fired at Syria. Get ready Russia, because they will be coming, nice and new and “smart!” You shouldn’t be partners with a Gas Killing Animal who kills his people and enjoys it!

11:57 AM - 11 Apr 2018

For the airstrikes on Syria last year, the US gave Russia advance warning of the attack, and Russian forces opted not to attempt to shoot down the missiles using its air defence systems stationed in the region.

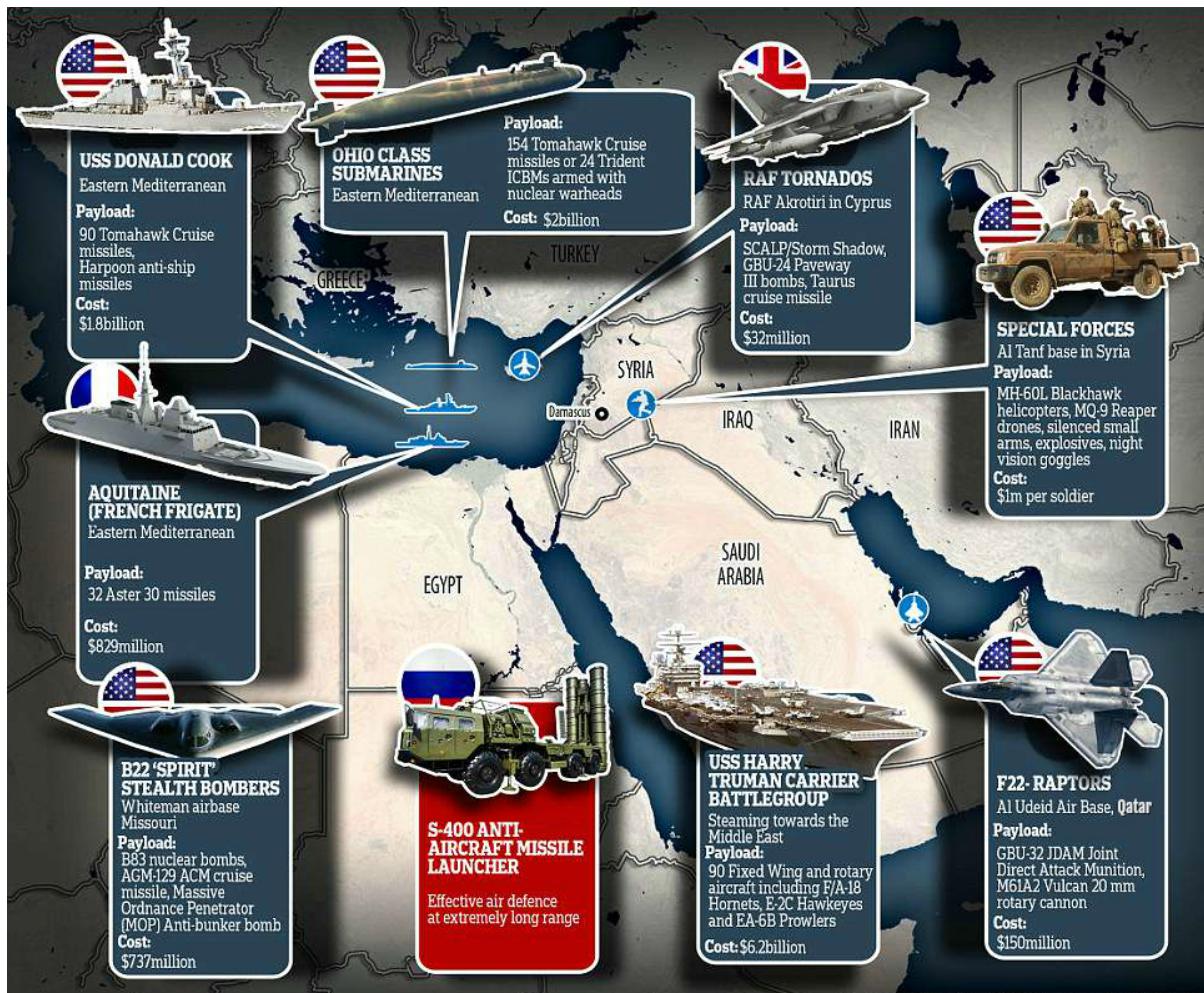
However, this time round things could be very different. This week, Russia’s ambassador to Lebanon reminded the US that the head of the Russian military has said his forces in Syria would not only shoot down any missiles that threatened them but would target the source of the weapons as well.

The only US warship currently in the Mediterranean and capable of a possible strike is the USS Donald Cook, which left port in Larnaca and started to patrol in vicinity of Syria on Apr 9. According to some reports, it has since weighed anchor off Syrian territorial waters, and has been “buzzed” by low-flying Russian military jets.

Another 3 warships of the Sixth Fleet are already in the Atlantic Ocean, and on Apr 11 the entire US Truman Fleet (including an aircraft carrier, 6 destroyers, and nearly 6,500 sailors) departed Norfolk,

Virginia, to head to the Mediterranean Sea. However, it may take up to a week for any of these warships to arrive.

Here's an overview of US and coalition forces' military options currently thought to be on offer in the eastern Mediterranean:



With the downing of MH17 by a surface-to-air missile over Ukraine in 2014, as well as all the recent unannounced missile tests by North Korea, there has been increased focus by the aviation community on the risks posed by conflict zones. If any missiles are launched from the Eastern Mediterranean in the next few days, be prepared for possible last-minute reroutes, as any Notams that get published may not give much warning.

Further reading:

One of our biggest missions in OPSGROUP is to share risk information and keep operators aware of the current threat picture. Check out Safeairspace for the most up-to-date information on airspace safety around the world.

Feb 2018: Tel Aviv Airport closes as a

precaution against attack

David Mumford
11 April, 2018



LLBG/Tel-aviv: Israel's main airport briefly suspended operations on Feb 10, due to military clashes along the northern border with Syria.

Two Israeli pilots were forced to abandon their F-16 jet, which crashed near the border after being hit by a Syrian anti-aircraft missile. The jet was on a mission in which it struck an Iranian facility in Syria that had previously operated a drone which Israel shot down over its territory.



This resulted in all flights from LLBG/Tel-aviv Airport being grounded for around an hour starting at 9am local time, as a precaution against any further attacks. The airport is considered a strategic location that could be targeted during military conflict.

Here's what Israel's PM had to say about it:

This incident marks the most significant engagement by Israel in the fighting that has been taking place in neighbouring Syria since 2011. Israel has mostly stayed out of the conflict so far, but has recently become more concerned about the increased Iranian presence along its border.

Missile attack on OERK/Riyadh was “warning shot”, other airports now targets

Declan Selleck

11 April, 2018



Update: Yemen-based Houthi forces fired another missile into Saudi Arabia on Dec 19. Saudi Arabia claim they intercepted it south of the capital Riyadh, with no damage or casualties reported, though a loud explosion was heard throughout the capital. The Houthi forces claim they were targeting a palace in southern Riyadh. This follows the previous Houthi missile attack on OERK/Riyadh Airport on Nov 4th, when they said: “the missile that targeted King Khalid airport was a warning shot and we warn all companies to prevent landing of their planes in the UAE and Saudi Arabia airports”. A Yemeni Army spokesman has said that the November 4 missile attack on OERK was a “warning shot”.

That missile was launched from rebel territory in Yemen, specifically targeting OERK/Riyadh King Khalid airport. Although most mainstream media carried the “missile was intercepted” story, we’re not sure that this is the case – even if it was, parts of it did fall on airport property and there was a visible explosion.

The spokesman said “**the missile that targeted King Khalid airport was a warning shot** and we warn all companies to prevent landing of their planes in the UAE and Saudi Arabia airports”.

Given that the Yemeni rebels have demonstrated their capability of reaching their target, there is some credibility to the threat.

Operators should consider this in operations to OE and OM** airports.**

At present, there is no indication of increased threat to overflight of Saudi or UAE airspace.

On Monday, the Saudi Arabia coalition closed all air, sea and land borders with Yemen after the missile strike on Riyadh on Nov 4, effectively closing all airports in Yemen. Yemenia airlines said that the coalition, which controls Yemen's airspace, had declined it permission to fly out of Aden and Seiyun, the only two remaining functioning airports. OYSN/Sanaa has been closed since August 2016.

Also, all UN humanitarian flights to Yemen, one of the few international operators, have been cancelled after flights were no longer given clearance from the Saudi-led coalition to land in the country.

SCATANA remains active in the southwestern portion of the Jeddah FIR, no new Notams have been issued in relation to the last few days.

For further:

- Monitor Saudi Arabia page on SafeAirspace
- Monitor OPSGROUP member updates
- Talk to us at team@fsbureau.org

North Korean Missile Threat

Declan Selleck
11 April, 2018



In the past, when the DPRK (North Korea) has planned a missile launch, airlines and aircraft operators have, as a rule, been informed of the details through a warning from the DPRK to ICAO. Of concern to airspace users now, is the fact that the most recent launches this month **were not notified in advance**.

The two most common airways through DPRK airspace, G711 and B467, as depicted on the chart below, are in regular use by International Operators. The increased frequency of ballistic launches of late, coupled with the failure to notify, has created heightened concern.

Further, **GPS signal jamming** close to the South Korean border, has led to over 1000 individual reports from operators in 14 different countries since May.

A number of airlines and operators have already made a blanket decision not to enter the Pyongyang FIR, even for that overwater portion on G711 and B467.

