

16/08/2013, 09:30.



I keep writing this...but things really are heating up in Syria.

The situation on the ground was already in flux after Hezbollah's large scale intervention launched from the Bekaa Valley. Our last sortie saw us defend SDF forces from a Hezbollah attack on a key bridge on the Homs road as they looked to seize control of this key supply route and attempt to isolate the SDF forces pushing south. The JSTF responded, as expected, with even more air support - which was intended to counteract the increasing number of opposition fighters on the ground. But of course this is Syria...and things are never simple, and two days ago the latest complication was no longer Hezbollah, nor was it the SIA. Instead it was time for the Russians to step up as they commenced a massive resupply operation to the Syrian military, no doubt we will begin to see the effects of this soon enough.

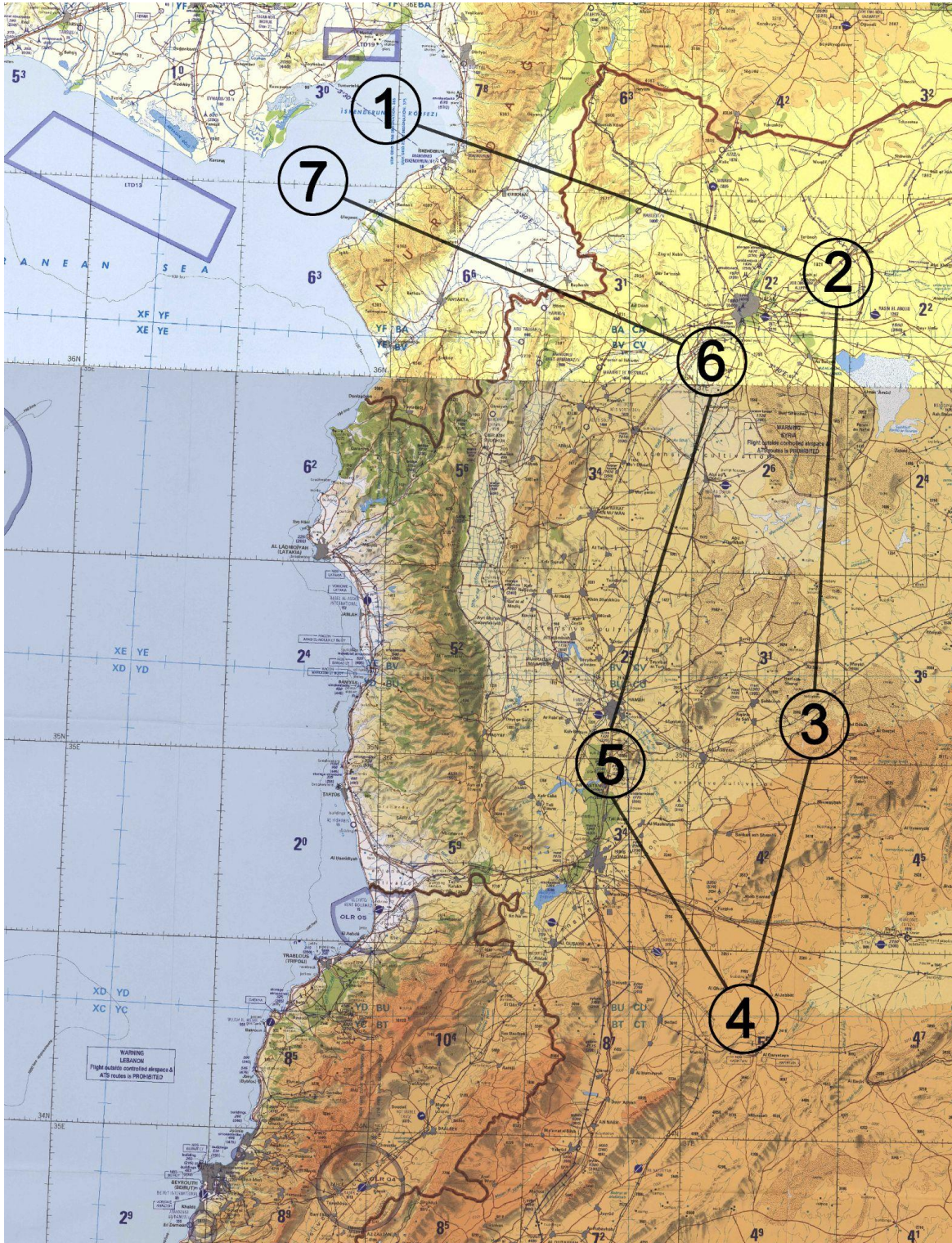
I have another mission planned for today so attended the squadrons briefing this morning. Major Daniels kicked things off with the intel briefing, and he had only one thing on his mind. The Russian airlift has been a huge and sustained operation over the last 48 hours. A constant stream of Russian heavy lift aircraft have been monitored flying into the Damascus area and SATINT has shown that this resupply effort has been delivering large amounts of equipment to the Syrian forces. Along with heavy equipment such as SAM systems and armoured vehicles it is believed that the Russians have also been delivering much needed fuel, ammunition and parts. The reason for the timing of the Russian resupply is unclear but Daniels did say that intel assessments are that given the recent pressure from Hezbollah forces on the SDF, the SAA may be preparing for a major offensive. The fact that Russia has provided these supplies has also been very telling, up to now Russia has appeared to be reluctant to provide material support to Syria, given their already substantial debts to Russia. That Russia is willing to set these concerns aside for the moment suggests that the situation within the Syrian military was more fragile than we were aware of. One thing's for sure though...the Russians are more committed than ever to stabilising and securing the Syrian military. Daniels finished up discussing the Russians by telling us that as far as we can tell, very little of this new equipment has yet made it to the Syrian frontline, although it is surely only a matter of time until it does.

Major Daniels had little in the way of updates for us on the rest of the theatre, the only point of note being that the SDF siege of Palmyra airbase has been broken by SAA forces in conjunction with the Russian air force and, it is believed by Russian special forces operating from their FOB north of Palmyra.

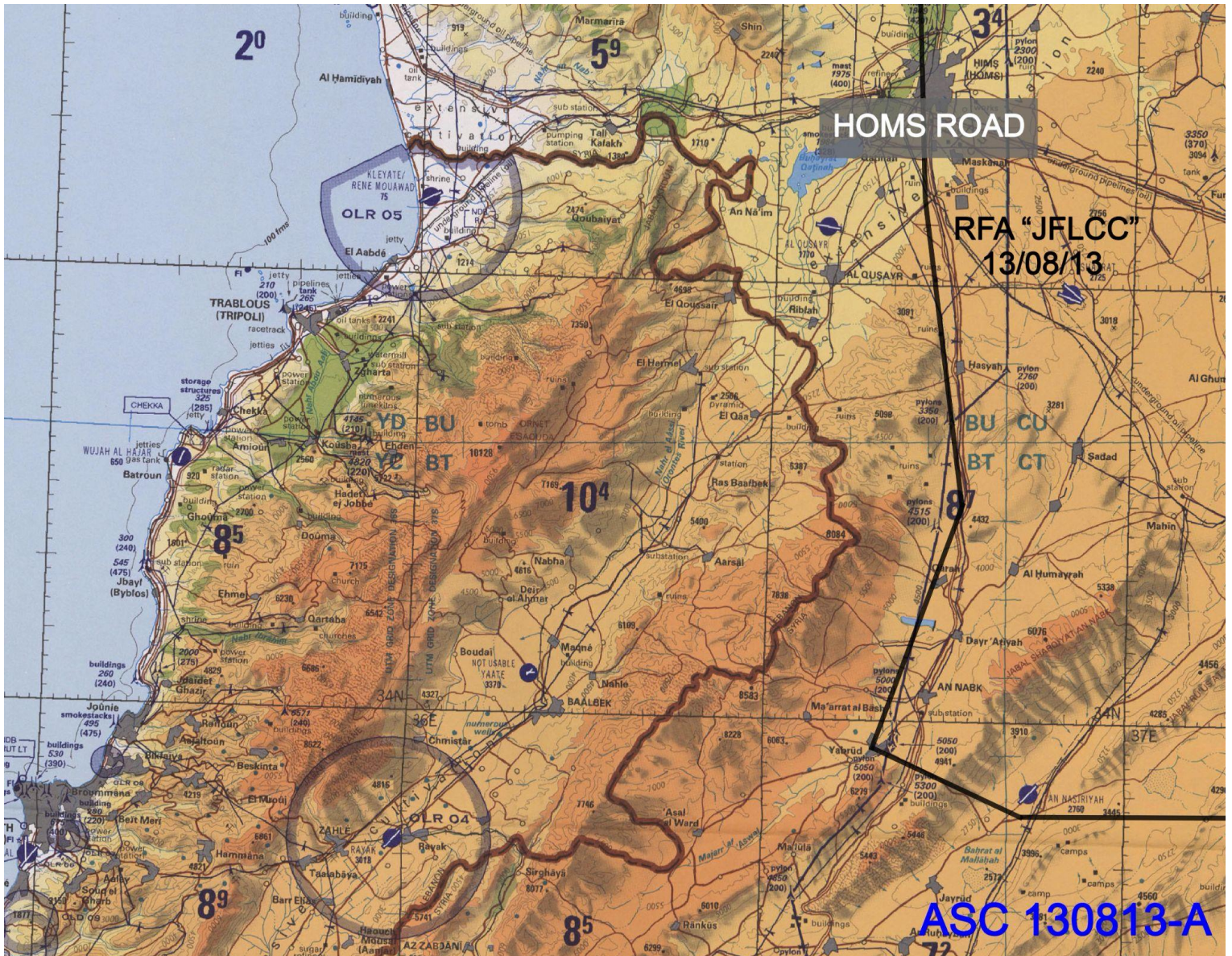
His brief complete, Major Daniels handed over to Captain Edwards for the weather briefing. Today's weather will see scattered clouds around 18,000 feet and relatively light winds, certainly an improvement on the weather we've recently seen.

It was then Link's turn to begin briefing today's flights. The Red Devils are again on a CAS patrol and the operational details are almost identical to our last mission. This will again be a standard departure out of Incirlik and into Syria, before refueling at waypoint 3 with Texaco and pushing south to Marshall where we will again receive tasking once on station.

I will again be Poodle's wingman, this time we have managed to get our hands on both Mavericks and Rockeyes - it seems that someone feels we're more likely to come up against enemy armor today and we should be prepared for action against both Hezbollah and the SAA.



The position of friendly forces has not changed and the air support charts we were issued on the 13th are still in effect.



The threat profile also remains the same as before, with Hezbollah providing a patent lower altitude threat from AAA and MANPADs and Syrian SAMs providing more threats south of the 'Yankee Line'. We know from previous missions in this region that should we come into contact with SAA forces we should also expect both SA-9 and ZSU-23-4.

With that the briefing concluded, wheels up today is at 15:40.

*** NOTES FOR PLAYER ***

Out of respect for the player's time it is only fair to tell you this is a very short mission and will not require any preparation.