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Russia prepares the curtain call

Russia is making great strides in implementing the Geneva agreements of last June. It is bringing Syria back into the concert of nations, preparing to expel Turkey, reconciling Israel and Iran, gaining a foothold in Africa and distributing absolute weapons in Asia. The United States is no longer the master of the world. Those who do not follow the current upheavals will be the losers of the new era in preparation.

The implementation of the conclusions of the US-Russia summit in Geneva (known as "Yalta II"), held on June 16, 2021, continues. It seems that the concessions made by Washington to Moscow are much more significant than previously thought. President Vladimir Putin continues to put the world back in order not only in the wider Middle East, but also in Africa and Asia. Substantial changes are already observable in four months. In the Russian tradition, nothing is announced, but everything will be revealed en bloc when things have become irreversible.



THE ANGLO-SAXONS HAVE ACCEPTED THEIR DEFEAT

In early September 2021, the US hinted that it was allowing Hezbollah to violate US embargo laws on Syria and Iran and to procure Iranian fuel oil via Syria. Then Jordan reopened its border with Syria. Finally, the Anglo-Saxon press began a series of articles aimed at clearing President Bashar al-Assad of the crimes he was accused of and rehabilitating him. It all started with an article in *The Observer*, the Sunday edition of *The Guardian*, headlined "Pariah Assad sold to West as key to Middle East peace" [1].



One thing led to another and *Newsweek* featured the Syrian president on its cover with the headline: "He's back", followed by the subheading: "In a triumph over the United States, Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad claims a place on the world stage" [2]. The computer version of the weekly even goes further with the caption of a photograph talking about the "presumed" chemical attack in Ghoutta, where the US and French presidents, Barack Obama and François Hollande, had accused the "criminal regime" by name of having crossed "the red line". So goodbye to the ten-year rhetoric of "Bashar must go".

The military defeat that President Joe Biden admitted in Geneva in June is now being assimilated by the Anglo-Saxon press. The rest of the West can only follow suit.

Syria's re-establishment on the international stage is underway: Interpol has taken corrective action to end its sidelining, King Abdullah II of Jordan and Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed of the United Arab Emirates have indicated that they have spoken with President Assad. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, has quietly gone to Damascus to discuss, at last, the return of expatriates. The West had been opposed

to this for a decade and paid the countries hosting them handsomely not to let them return home.



Returning from Africa, President Erdoğan and his team, speaking to the press on board their plane, threatened to send back the ambassadors of ten countries including the United States, France and Germany.

TURKEY A VICTIM OF ITS DOUBLE STANDARDS

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has presented his parliament with the renewal of his army's mission to fight Kurdish PKK terrorists in Iraq and Syria; two countries he illegally occupies.

He is playing a double game: as a member of NATO, he is negotiating arms with Washington (80 F-16 fighter planes and 60 fleet modernisation kits), but he is negotiating others with Moscow, from which he has already bought S-400s; a risky game that is coming to an end. Washington and Moscow are bringing weapons to Syria and may have joined forces to put Ankara in its place as they did with London, Tel Aviv and Paris in 1956 during the Suez expedition. Contrary to appearances, Russia knows that it will not succeed in separating Turkey from the US. It is fighting the Turkish army in Libya and Syria, remembers President Erdoğan's personal involvement in Chechnya, and more generally the opposition between Russia and the Ottomans.

The Syrian army ended the battle of Deraa (southern Syria) to its advantage, allowing Jordan to reopen its border. The jihadists preferred to lay down their arms than to take refuge in Idleb, under the protection of the Turkish army. From now on, Syrian troops are

massing in front of the occupied Idleb governorate (north of the country), ready to free their territory.

The Western press did not give any information on this terrible battle, on the understanding that Deraa could not have been liberated without the discreet withdrawal of Israel and the United States. The population, which has suffered greatly, seems for the moment to hate both its compatriots and its former allies who have abandoned it.

Turkey is gradually alienating all its partners. It competes with the United States and France in Africa. Its army is fighting in Libya. It has a military base in Somalia, welcomes Malian soldiers for training on its soil, sells arms to Ethiopia and Burkina, and has signed a cooperation agreement with Niger (not to mention its military base in Qatar and its involvement in Azerbaijan).

The Osman Kavala affair, named after the leftist businessman turned George Soros' man in Turkey, who was arrested in 2017, bodes ill. A dozen states -including the United States, France and Germany- circulated a letter on social networks demanding the immediate release of the defendant accused of being involved in the attempted military coup of July 15, 2016. On October 22nd, President Erdoğan reacted by apostrophising the ambassadors concerned with his usual arrogance: "Is it your place to teach Turkey a lesson? Who do you think you are?".

President Erdoğan's personal position seems increasingly delicate. A wind of rebellion is blowing in his own political party. He could be thanked by his own if things turn out badly for his country in Idleb.



Scene of civil war in Beirut, 14 October 2021.

LEBANON BETWEEN A BRIGHT FUTURE AND CIVIL WAR

President Joe Biden seems determined to leave Lebanon to Russia and exploit the gas and oil reserves straddling Lebanon and Israel. He has sent his long-time advisor, Israeli-US Amos Hochstein, to shuttle between Beirut and Tel Aviv. His presence attests to the extreme importance of the subject. This IDF officer was an advisor to Joe Biden when he was Vice President of the United States. At the time, in 2015, he had already managed this file and had almost reached an agreement. He can succeed, as this amoral businessman knows both the political file and the technical constraints of hydrocarbon exploitation. He is pushing for the exploitation of reserves without solving the thorny border issue. The two countries could exploit together and share the benefits by prior agreement.

In Lebanon, the leaders of the sectarian groups are trying every possible manoeuvre to keep their fading power, even if it means destroying the country's future.

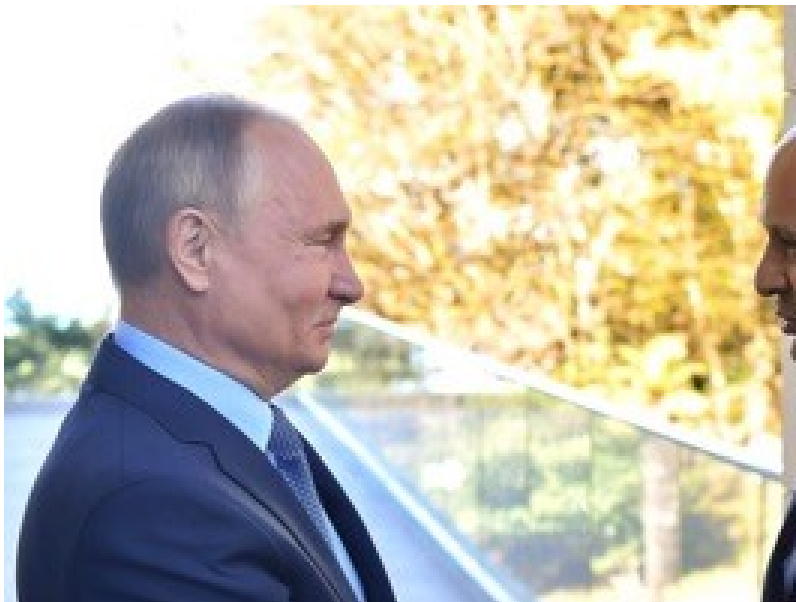
The Parliament has nightly voted two amendments to the electoral law. The first one aims at bringing forward the date of the legislative election from 8 May to 27 March. The Muslims were asking to be able to campaign effectively as it fell in the middle of the Ramadan holiday month. But the new date appears to be a way to prevent General Abbas Ibrahim, the head of counter-intelligence, from being elected and succeeding the Speaker of Parliament Nabbi Berry. The constitution requires senior officials to have left office six months in advance before entering politics.

President Emmanuel Macron had planned to deploy French troops to "secure" the electoral offices. On May 8, he will probably no longer be President of the French Republic and there is no evidence that his successor will approve his decision. On March 27, however, he will still be in charge.

The second amendment changes the way expatriates will be able to vote. They will not elect deputies from abroad, but will vote for deputies from their home constituency. Some hope this will substantially change the outcome. In fact, all this is of little importance as the electoral system pre-determines the number of MPs per faith group without any relation to the demographic reality; a fine example of election without democracy between Russia and the Ottomans.

The other major debate is the investigation into the explosion in the port of Beirut on August 4, 2020. Judge Tarek Bitar faces a number of immunities, starting with that of

former Prime Minister Hassan Diab, who fled to the United States as soon as he left office and is the subject of an arrest warrant. Hezbollah, which paid the price of the investigation into the assassination of Rafik Hariri, does not want the investigation to follow this example, but it comes up against the secrecy of the investigation. Finally, he vehemently demanded that the judge be dismissed and organised a demonstration to this effect. Arriving in front of a Christian neighbourhood, the procession was attacked by members of Samir Geagea's Lebanese Forces. They killed seven Shiites and injured about thirty others. The spectre of civil war reignited. It is not clear whether the Lebanese Forces acted on their own or at the instigation of Saudi Arabia, whose champion the Christian Samir Geagea has become.



The United States not being what it used to be and a quarter of Israelis being Russian-speaking, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett came to Sochi to respectfully introduce himself on 22 October 2021.

THE SLOW RAPPROCHEMENT OF THE ENEMY BROTHERS, ISRAEL AND IRAN

Moscow approaches the Israel-Iran conflict as a whole. The two states talk ultra-belligerently about each other, but their practice is quite different. They actually act with each other against certain political trends at home. The fall of Benjamin Netanyahu (a disciple of the colonialist thinker Vladimir Jabotinsky) opens the way for reconciliation.

While the US imposed sanctions on Tehran to force it to abandon its military nuclear programme, Russia never believed that it was continued after 1988. During the 5+1 negotiations of 2013-15 that led to the Vienna Agreement on Iranian nuclear power, Moscow did not demand an end to the nuclear programme, but the possibility of

controlling that it does not become military. This is still its position. The current discussions focus on technical details such as the installation of monitoring cameras in Iranian power plants.

The slowness with which Tehran is dealing with this problem is working against it. Of course, the Raissi government is negotiating in the meantime with Saudi Arabia, which is dragging its feet on normalising its relations with Israel. President Ebrahim Raissi hopes to reach a sharing of roles with Riyadh and to announce it when he will give in on nuclear surveillance, but the Saudis are impatient and can also hurt him, as we saw with the attack against Hezbollah demonstrators in Beirut.

The Israelis, for their part, stress that Tehran does not simply rely on foreign Shiite communities as it claims, but on all anti-Israeli forces, whether they are Shiite or not. Thus Iran supplies arms to Sunni Hamas. This alliance is all the more dangerous because Hamas is the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, supported by Turkey and Qatar and not by Saudi Arabia. In the Muslim community, there are no longer two camps (Shiites/Sunnis), but three (Iran/Saudi Arabia/Turkey and Qatar).

Moscow is patiently advancing with Tel Aviv. The aim is to get Israel to return the occupied Golan Heights to Syria by providing guarantees on Iran's non-aggressiveness and its withdrawal from Syria.



In a televised interview on 8 October 2021, Mali's Prime Minister, Choguel Kokalla Maïga, accused France of training the jihadists who threaten the country.

MALI FEARS FRANCE AND SEEKS RUSSIAN PROTECTION

The Western defeat in Syria has unforeseen consequences in Africa. Everyone has understood that the world order has been overturned and that it is better to be an ally of Moscow than of the West. While some African states are seeking to diversify their military support by turning to Turkey, the Central African Republic and Mali were the first to question Western aid.

Since 2018, Russia has been accompanying the Central African government to resolve the tribal conflicts, fuelled by France, that have plunged the country into civil war. But Moscow refused to deploy its troops while the situation remained unstable and instead sent a private military company, Yevgeny Prigozhin's Wagner Group. In 2019, the government signed a peace agreement with the country's 14 main armed groups. The country has stabilised, but the government still controls only a small part of it.

Mali is a direct victim of the overthrow of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in 2011. Muamar Gaddafi was working for the reconciliation of Arabs and blacks, but his assassination awakened centuries of war, on the one hand by re-establishing slavery in his country, and on the other hand the desire for Arab domination over the black populations in Mali. It is this conflict that is expressed through the Arab jihadist push in the north of the country. For the time being, the French forces of Operation Barkhane are trying to prevent the reconstitution of an Islamic Emirate in the Sahel. In practice, this means preventing the conquest of an area with a sedentary black population by nomadic Arab jihadists, but not fighting their organisations.

On October 8, Malian Prime Minister Choguel Kokalla Maïga blew the lid off the issue by telling *RIA Novosti* that France was itself training jihadis in its Kidal camp, which it had banned from Malian forces [3]. The interview was widely covered by Russian television, but did not reach the French airwaves. At most, *Le Monde* published a clarification from Choguel Kokalla Maïga, but he only denies his negotiations with the Wagner Group and confirms that he is talking to Moscow... about the Wagner Group.

The accusation that the jihadists were being manipulated is very plausible: at the beginning of its intervention, France had held back its soldiers so that they would give the Qatari leadership of the jihadists time to retreat. Other jihadists, this time in Syria, organised demonstrations to denounce the French double standards in supporting them in the Middle East and announcing that they were fighting them in Africa. When Russian

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov expressed surprise to his then French counterpart Laurent Fabius, Fabius laughed and replied that this was *realpolitik*.

The junta of Colonel Assimi Goïta (a disciple of the Third World revolutionary Thomas Sankara) is negotiating with Russia to defend itself from the jihadists supervised by France. Moscow should proceed as in the Central African Republic and send a thousand men from the Wagner Group to restore civil peace. The service of the Russian private military company should be paid for by Algeria.



The ultimate weapon: small North Korea has reportedly launched a hypersonic missile, the Hwasong-8

THE BALANCE OF POWER IS IN QUESTION

China [4] and North Korea have reportedly launched hypersonic missiles in quick succession. China denies it, but North Korea proclaims it loud and clear. US experts, US parliamentarians and US generals are terrified because their country cannot master this technology, which makes them vulnerable. This type of missile is based on Soviet technology. President Vladimir Putin announced before the Federal Assembly in 2019 that Russia was on the verge of mastering these missiles with atomic warheads, capable of striking anywhere on Earth without being intercepted [5]. Since it seems impossible that China and even more so North Korea have suddenly reached this technical level, experts unanimously consider that Russia has given them a version of its own weapon.

This technology transfer would have taken place before the announcement of the Australia/UK/USA Alliance (AUKUS). It undermines Washington's efforts to confront Beijing and Pyongyang. The West has not only suffered a terrible defeat in Syria that

forces them to accept a new world order, their "missile shield" is powerless, their armies are now totally out of date.

Translation

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