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Buying Time in Syria

By Phil Greaves

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The US government and its “Re-directional” middle east policy planners are buying time in Syria. The current softening of US rhetoric is merely a smokescreen to enable the US Government and its autocratic GCC (Gulf Co-Operation Council) allies to shift strategies and proxy allegiances, in their aggressive regime change objectives in Syria and Iran. Currently, US and Gulf proxies are losing ground to the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) nationwide.

In the last month to six weeks the SAA has been on a concerted nationwide offensive, targeting Salafi/Jihaddi inspired militia that have encamped in cities, towns and villages all over the country. These efforts have concentrated on two key objectives: firstly, to enable the Syrian Government and its army to fight on indefinitely, continue receiving supplies, materiel and in some instances personnel from its international allies: Iran, Hezbollah, and Russia. Furthermore, the army has also concentrated on starving, and cutting off “rebel” supply routes and arms corridors, which predominantly run through Northern Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan.

Initially, the US was hoping for a “slam dunk” of regime change in Syria, a la Libya no fly zone (NFZ). Russia and China put an immediate stop to these pernicious attempts of aggression in the UNSC: a major blow to short-term US imperial designs in the region. This left the US with the option of carrying its plan forward covertly, with its regional allies and their proxies, or, attempting a “humanitarian intervention” with its own, or its regional allies conventional forces.

For many an obvious reason, the US administration chose to continue in its pursuit of the former covert strategy, primarily for domestic political appeal, (no boots on the ground!) whilst also subverting the UN to continue its illegal policy unimpeded. The Syrian Army’s success on the ground; alongside its allies unwillingness to bow to US demands in the UN, has meant this covert proxy strategy has come to an almost standstill. The US is unable to overtly arm the

current disparate melee of militants: predominantly Islamic extremist's fighting on the ground in Syria, or gain its coveted no-fly zone. This is where the strategy has become entangled, and why the US State Department is currently changing its public rhetoric and paying lip service to Russia's defiant stance based on the 2012 Geneva Communique in the UN, calling on all sides to partake in peaceful transition. The last thing the US wants in Syria, is to allow Assad to stand in elections.

The US objective of swift regime change has drastically failed thus far in Syria, the GCC fomented extremist militia acting as shock troops have taken on the leading role in the insurgency, gaining the most in recruits, arms and funding; and ultimately success on the ground. In the long-term, and the more this dynamic is allowed to overtly foment and expand, and gains public exposure, the more counter-productive it becomes for the US. Several other reasons must be taken into consideration with regard to the US changing its overt rhetoric and short-term objectives. First, the administration cannot be seen to be overtly arming and funding militia, whose core leadership comprises of Al Qaeda ideologues and sympathisers.

In addition the Syrian Army and its allies within the "axis of resistance", have proven a far more capable and determined fighting force than anticipated; Syria's international allies appear unwilling to roll over and allow the US to steamroll into forming their own revamped Sykes-Picot agreement. In addition, another crucial obstruction is the western public's refusal to be hoodwinked into another act of aggression under false pretences. As a result of this public dissatisfaction, the US Government itself, is in a state of conflict within the foreign policy and intelligence establishment on how best to implement its imperial designs.

In recent statements US Secretary of State John Kerry, has attempted to give the impression he is leaning towards Russia's way of thinking, with many added caveats of course: this is simply diplomatic bluster. Much speculation has been afforded to the theory that Russia, still overtly supportive of the Syrian Government, has supplied the SAA with renewed and sophisticated air-defense missile batteries. Russia vaguely deny and claim they are only fulfilling previous contracts (of which the S-300 was included), "anonymous sources" confirm or speculate further, the US harps on about Israeli "security" (post Israeli aggression on Damascus) and no clear picture of Russian military objective is obtained.

Regardless, something has definitely changed in both the US' overt rhetoric, and the media vehicles that propagate it. Much more attention is being paid to the actual ideologies of the militants fighting the SAA, and the repercussions on the whole region if the Syrian Government and its security infrastructure is overthrown. A recent report suggested the CIA is already looking to target Jahbat al Nusra: the strongest, and indeed, most overtly extreme of the "rebel" militia; the CIA is also looking to use so-called "moderate" rebels to undertake this targeting for them. It beggars belief that the US is seriously considering splitting the "opposition" insurgency against its most effective fighting force, to try to "stabilise" an already critical situation. To some extent, this is exactly what the administrations plans appear to be: the US is attempting to reinvigorate the extremist infested, and corrupt insurgency, to reshape and rebrand those it is supporting and funding to overthrow the Syrian Government.

One fact remains, and is an overall positive one for the US and its allies long-term objectives in the region. Syria is in a total state of crisis and in no position to afford Iran any defense against attack; its whole social fabric is being ripped apart by sectarian hatred, revenge, and outright

brutality. This societal division, is the overarching desired outcome for the Neo-Cons and apartheid apologists that hold sway within the US foreign policy elite.

Israel's recent airstrikes are another key indicator as to the long-term western-establishment goal of constant destabilization. In this war, Israel will, as always, act as a conduit for western foreign Policy, whilst furthering its own genocidal agenda. The US, and by extension Israel, are more than happy to abandon the Gulf fomented extremists that the US, and its Gulf allies so eagerly propagated into war. A "desirable" Henry Kissinger-esque outcome for these parties would be total annihilation of both sides, followed by quick installation of compliant strongman-puppet, and, preferably: some ethnic division, secession, and further weakening of a unified bloc of resistance to western resource/land theft, and imperialism.

The only thing stopping this outcome and its inevitable human suffering and destruction, is resistance.

But resistance of US imperialism comes at a heavy price for such out-gunned nations, and the US, Israel and their entirely undemocratic GCC allies will persist unabated in their long-term objective to overturn the Syrian Government; wipe out Hezbollah; suppress the Lebanese and Palestinian resistance, and dominate Iran.