

Moscow and Beijing: Cowardice or Duplicity Towards Iranian, Syrian Allies?

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While the duplicity of American-led NATO powers towards Iran and Syria is glaringly obvious, the more disquieting question is what are Russia and China playing at?

Washington, London and Paris have been fuelling covert state terrorism against Syria and its ally Iran with proxy mercenaries wreaking havoc in both countries. No-warning car bombs in Damascus are the vile counterpart to assassination of nuclear scientists in Tehran.

So it is with utter contempt that these same powers should engage in a so-called peace summit convened at the weekend by the United Nations in Geneva. A crisis meeting on a crisis created by Western powers and their regional allies, Turkey, Israel and the Arab dictatorships of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The duplicity is rank.

However, what of the other permanent members of the Security Council, Russia and China, who were also prominent players at the Geneva gathering?

Some Western media reports hailed the outcome of the summit a success for Russian and Chinese diplomacy. This was because the concluding statement at the conference outlining a putative peaceful transition in Syria did not exclude the participation of President Bashar Al Assad or his government in any future political settlement.

The UN special envoy, Kofi Annan, said at a press conference after the meeting that the way forward “could include members of the present government and the opposition and other groups, and shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent”.

This was supposed to be a coup for Moscow and Beijing since an earlier formulation backed by the US and its allies was aimed at ostracizing Assad by calling for an interim government that excludes those “whose continued presence and participation would undermine the credibility of the transition and jeopardize stability and reconciliation”.

The boorish parting reaction of Hillary Clinton, William Hague and Laurent Fabius insisting that, the final declaration besides, Assad still had to go suggests that Russia and China did thwart the Western plan to capsize the Damascus government. Clinton stamped her feet, saying Russia and China had to show Assad “the writing on the wall”.

But the supposed support of Syria’s two superpower allies is questionable. Note that the final statement favoured by Russia and China outlining Syria’s political transition includes “the opposition and other groups”. What this amounts to is the Assad government being offered a poisonous chalice. Why should a government that has a popular mandate and

which has overseen significant constitutional reforms earlier this year paving the way to parliamentary elections – why should this government be obliged to sit down with opposition groups some of whom have endorsed sabotage and terrorism?

It is a reasonable objection, which many ordinary Syrians are now expressing in the wake of the Geneva summit. While Russia and China said that no political solution should be imposed on Syria from outside, in effect what Moscow and Beijing have endorsed is a delegitimising of the Assad government. This is still unprecedented interference in the sovereign affairs of Syria, albeit in the name of supposed allies.

What is all the more surprising is the fact that Syria and its closest regional ally, Iran, were not even invited to the Geneva summit. Surely if Russia and China were acting in the best interests of these two allies, they would have insisted on their attendance?

Furthermore, Russia and China know without a shadow of doubt that the violence raging in Syria over the past 16 months is a result of a covert dirty war fomented and fuelled by Washington, London, Paris and their regional proxies. The Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, has explicitly stated that the Syrian conflict is part of a larger Western regional war plan directed at Iran and beyond.

For Moscow and Beijing to treat the Geneva conference at naïve face value is tantamount to indulging in a cynical Western charade of concern for international law and human rights. Is this cowardice or duplicity?

The same anomalous foreign policy from Moscow and Beijing is disturbingly apparent in the P5+1 negotiations with Iran over its nuclear programme. The pseudo talks that cover for Western regime-change policy resume this week in Istanbul, with negligible signs that the NATO powers are serious about any kind of mutual deal that recognizes Iran's inalienable rights to nuclear technology as a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Both Russia and China have at various times supported Iran's legal right to develop nuclear technology. Russia's president Vladimir Putin even stated recently his belief that Iran would not obtain a nuclear weapon.

Yet, in effect, the pusillanimous position of Russia and China gives credence and legitimacy to the spurious concerns of the US, Britain, France and Germany. Rather than dismissing the Western charade, Moscow and Beijing seem to meekly go along with the P5+1 browbeating and interminable wrangling towards Iran – in much the same way as the Geneva conference on Syria.

The upshot of the P5+1 straightjacket imposed on Iran is the culmination of crippling US and EU sanctions against Iranian oil and banking industries, which come into effect this week. These sanctions amount to economic warfare. Despite Iranian government bravado on the impact of sanctions, it is scarcely deniable that Iranian society is being plunged into severe hardship with consumer price inflation hitting 25 per cent, unemployment soaring and the country's currency collapsing in value.

Western powers are conspicuous in their odious deceit and criminality towards Syria and Iran. But questions must be asked of the Russian and Chinese agenda. With friends like these, who needs enemies?

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