

Russia Now Runs the Peace Process to End Syria's War

Part 1

By [Eric Zuesse](#)

Global Research, February 20, 2017

[Strategic Culture Foundation](#) 13 February 2017

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#), [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Terrorism](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Part One of Three Parts

Immediately prior to the resumption of the Syrian peace talks in Geneva on February 23rd, here's a status-report on what has been achieved in these talks so far:

PRELIMINARY NOTE:

Many allegations in this report are contrary to what has been reported by virtually all Western press agencies, and so the documentation behind any such allegation here can immediately be accessed by the reader, simply by clicking onto its link, wherein the untrustworthiness of the Western press can be verified on the given matter, and the facts that haven't been reported by the mainstream media are verified.



THE BACKGROUND PRIOR TO RUSSIA TAKING OVER THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

Russia took over the Syrian peace negotiations after U.S. President Barack Obama [sabotaged them, by bombing the Syrian government's army at Der Zor \(or Deir Ezzor\) in Syria on 17 September 2016](#) (which was a direct violation of [the September 9th ceasefire agreement](#)). This [sabotage](#) terminated his own Secretary of State [John Kerry's longstanding efforts to get the U.S. government to agree to remove Al Qaeda and other jihadist groups from the negotiations, and to abandon Al Qaeda in Syria](#). Obama insisted that, during the peace negotiations, the ceasefire would continue to allow bombing of ISIS in Syria, [but not allow any bombing of Al Qaeda in Syria](#). The September 9th ceasefire agreement allowed continued bombing of Al Qaeda in Syria, but did not allow continued bombing of Syria's army — such as occurred on September 17th. The U.S. and Russia had both signed that deal. Obama's prompt violation of the agreement terminated any remaining trust that the leaders of Syria and of Russia had in Obama. It thus terminated America's ability to continue participating in the Syrian peace-process. Kerry's years-long peace-negotiations suddenly turned to dust.

Al Qaeda in Syria [went under the name of «Al Nusra»](#), and [had long been America's main fighting-force in Syria to overthrow and replace Syria's President, Bashar al-Assad](#). They were, furthermore, [leading all of the jihadist groups there](#), who likewise were aiming to [overthrow and replace Syria's President](#) — which was [Obama's main objective](#).

As Bill Roggio documented as early as [11 December 2012](#):

The Al Nusrah Front has by far taken the lead among the jihadist groups in executing suicide and other complex attacks against the Syrian military. The terror group is known to conduct joint operations with other Syrian jihadist organizations.

Furthermore, when the Obama regime formally declared — on that very same day, December 11th — that Nusra is a «terrorist» organization, Roggio reported [the next day](#), that:

The head of the Syrian National Coalition, which was recognized yesterday by the United States as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people, is urging the US to drop its designation of the Al Nusrah Front as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. ... And lest we think he is alone, 29 Syrian opposition groups have signed a petition that not only condemns the US's designation, but says 'we are all Al Nusrah.'

Obama knew that Nusra was his only hope for overthrowing Assad; and, so, he quietly decided to back them.

Al Qaeda in Syria has been absolutely central to America's war-effort in Syria — it has provided not only America's proxy 'boots on the ground' (which Obama backed up with American air power) but the leadership of America's other proxy 'boots on the ground' in that war. (Since they were mere proxies, instead of actual U.S. troops, they also had the advantage for Obama, of the press not blaming the U.S. for their terror-acts. By quietly arming the jihadists, their mass-murders wouldn't be blamed on Obama — especially because Obama himself condemned Nusra as being a «terrorist» organization. For American 'news' media, this put the necessary verbal distance between himself and what Nusra and the other jihadists did — which he quietly backed.)

Obama was so determined to oust Assad from Syria's Presidency, that Obama in 2014 ordered Syria's U.S. Embassy closed, and all of Syria's diplomats to leave the U.S. America's last Ambassador to Syria, Robert Ford, had already been withdrawn more than two years prior, [during February 2012](#). Obama was personally committed to Assad's overthrow [even before being re-elected in 2012](#).

Obama's only remaining communication with Assad after forcing out his diplomats was military: invading Syria (via air-attacks and via arming the tens of thousands of jihadists that were imported into Syria through Turkey and [financed by the Saudis who own Saudi Arabia, and by the Thanis who own Qatar — this was a cooperative, multi-national, effort](#)).

But his invasions of Syria were limited. He refused to go so far as hard-liners in his Administration, such as [Hillary Clinton](#), were urging: America's establishing a «no-fly zone» or «safe havens» in Syria, euphemisms for places in Syria where the U.S. would shoot down any Syrian or Russian warplanes — euphemisms for U.S. war against both Syria and Russia, over sovereign Syrian territory: a full-fledged invasion and war between the U.S. and not only Syria, but also against nuclearly armed Russia (which Syria's government had invited into Syria, to help defend against the U.S.-Saudi-Qatari-Turkish invasion of Syria; the U.S. was an invader, but Russia was not). On the U.S. hardliners' plan, of all-out invasion, Russia might thus be forced to respond with its nuclear weapons in order to avoid defeat in that traditional-armed conflict. Obama never went so far as Hillary Clinton and many others in his

Administration constantly urged: escalation toward nuclear war. He limited his aggression, so as to avoid World War III.

Up until the agreement between Russia and the U.S. dated [September 9th of 2016](#), Kerry, in his efforts to achieve a negotiated end to the Syrian war, hadn't been able to get Obama to agree to allow continued bombing of Al Nusra (by Russian and Syrian forces — [U.S. forces were protecting Al Nusra](#)) during the peace talks, but the September 9th U.S.-Russian agreement finally did allow it. Kerry played down the agreement's allowing Al Qaeda («Nusrah») to be bombed, and [said](#):

Now, I want to be clear about one thing particularly on this, because I've seen reporting that somehow suggests otherwise: Going after Nusrah is not a concession to anybody. It is profoundly in the interests of the United States to target al-Qaida – to target al-Qaida's affiliate in Syria, which is Nusrah.

That had indeed been his personal position on the matter, but, until September 9th, it was not the U.S. position on it: Obama had blocked it. Allowing the continued bombing (by Russia and by Syria) of «Nusrah» was the real breakthrough in the September 9th agreement, the element that Obama had always previously refused to accept.

Of course, the September 9th agreement prohibited any bombing of the Syrian government's forces.

Suddenly, the U.S. government seemed finally to be committing itself against the international Saudi jihadist networks. Russia's Sputnik News headlined on 12 September 2016, [«Saudi-Backed Syrian Rebel Faction Ahrar al-Sham Rejects US-Russia Ceasefire Deal»](#), and reported that:

Ahrar Al-Sham, the Saudi-backed militant organization, announced that it will reject the ceasefire which is to enter into force on Monday, September 12. The militant group, which has evaded being labeled a terrorist organization thanks to US veto in the UN Security council, announced that it will not comply with the ceasefire negotiated by US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Everyone thought that Obama had now become serious about ending America's reliance upon jihadists as foot-soldiers in its until-then-permanent war against Russia.

However, *The New York Times* gave Obama on Tuesday September 13th a fall-guy to take the heat for the soon-to-come violation of Obama's new international agreement. The headline was [«Details of Syria Pact Widen Rift Between John Kerry and Pentagon»](#), and the report made clear that Obama's Secretary of 'Defense', Ashton Carter, and others at the Pentagon, were passionately opposed to the deal:

On Tuesday at the Pentagon, officials would not even agree that if a cessation of violence in Syria held for seven days — the initial part of the deal — the Defense Department would put in place its part of the agreement on the eighth day... In private, he [Kerry] has conceded to aides and friends that he believes it will not work. But he has said he is determined to try, so that he and Mr. Obama do not leave office having failed to alleviate a civil war that has taken roughly half a million lives... At a time when the United States and Russia are

at their most combative posture since the end of the Cold War, the American military is suddenly being told that it may, in a week, have to start sharing intelligence with one of its biggest adversaries to jointly target Islamic State and Nusra Front forces in Syria... But to Mr. Kerry's inner team of advisers, the Pentagon approach was reflexive Cold War-era thinking.

Then, Obama's bombing of Syria's army at Der Zor on September 17th ended the September 9th agreement. His deception-tactic soon became clear. That bombing in blatant violation of the new agreement could not have been authorized by anyone below the Commander-in-Chief himself — or, if it had been, that person would promptly have been fired by the Commander-in-Chief. No one was fired.

Both Russia and Syria excluded the United States from any further participation in the peace-talks process.

From that moment on, Russia's leader Vladimir Putin, and Syria's leader Assad, knew that America's leader Obama was entirely untrustworthy — not someone suitable to negotiate with. They knew that Obama would (and, there, *did*) even help ISIS take over Der Zor in order to bring about the overthrow of Assad. It wasn't just Nusra that Obama was continuing to support — it now was even ISIS; [anything to replace Assad](#).

Al Qaeda is funded by the aristocracies of the Arabic oil kingdoms, and is funded, [above all, by the royal family of America's chief ally in the Middle East](#), the [Saud family who own Saudi Arabia](#). The [Saud family insisted, and Obama accepted, that jihadists — who would be selected by the Saudis — control the negotiating team representing 'the rebels' at the negotiations](#). It would be basically the Saudis negotiating against Assad, to discuss the arrangements for a new government to replace Assad's government, and to establish Sharia law in Syria (which is the most-secular nation in the Middle East). Syria under the Assads has been and is, the *only* secular nation in the Middle East, and the Saudis' aim has always been to replace it with a fundamentalist-Sunni government, like theirs in Saudi Arabia (or like that of the Thani family who own Qatar, or any of the other Arabic royal families). The U.S. government has backed the Saud family, in this goal.

(Part Two and Three will be published by GR on Feb 21, 22)

The original source of this article is [Strategic Culture Foundation](#)

Copyright © [Eric Zuesse](#), [Strategic Culture Foundation](#), 2017

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Eric Zuesse](#)

About the author:

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of *They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010*, and of

CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca