

Syria and Bulgaria: U.S. Double Standards on Terrorism

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On July 20, the mandate of the UN Supervision Mission in Syria expires. After the intrigue regarding the mission's prolongation lingered in the UN Security Council, now it looks like 300 unarmed servicemen will stay in that country.

It is quite likely that on Friday the UN Security Council will approve the resolution on the technical prolongation of the mission for 30 more days. By now the mission has worked for 90 days in Syria. Russia's permanent ambassador in the UN Vitaly Churkin expressed confidence that the mission would be prolonged. The diplomat also welcomed Pakistan's intention to submit its draft on the technical prolongation of the mission to the UN Security Council.

Russia plans to increase its monitoring mission in Syria by 30 servicemen. President Putin signed a ruling to that effect about Russia's willingness to dispatch up to 30 liaison and staff officers, as well as military observers to the UN monitor mission at the expense of the United Nations.

The intrigue regarding the mission's prolongation lingered after Russia and China vetoed the draft resolution on Syria proposed by the UK. That draft contained a proposal to prolong the UN mission but also an initiative to introduce tough sanctions against the regime in Damascus and an option to use military force if Damascus did not withdraw troops from Syrian cities. Russia and China's veto of that unilateral resolution suspended the question about the mission's technical prolongation. However, right after the vote the ambassadors of Russia and China in the UN Vitaly Churkin and Li Baodong said that they would vote for the prolongation.

The US reaction to it was inadequate. Washington said that it would support the prolongation of the mission's mandate only if a tough anti-Syrian resolution is approved, in other words a resolution aimed at overthrowing Bashar Assad's regime. In fact the UN supervision mission served as a bargaining chip for US plans on Syria. Later the US position slightly changed. Washington made a statement that it was ready to consider the mission's prolongation.

The US reaction to the terrorist attacks in Damascus, in which three generals were killed including Syria's Defense Minister, was quite remarkable. The US statement did not contain any condemnation of the attacks. Moreover Barack Obama accused Bashar Assad of what had happened, saying that the assassinations of the ministers were the consequences of his policy.

At the same time Barack Obama condemned the terrorist attack in Bulgaria where a suicide bomber carried out an attack that killed eight people in a bus transporting Israeli tourists, because that attack concerned Israel's international image. Obama's statement expressed firm determination to support its Mideast ally. Again the US activates its double-standard policy mechanism, fighting terrorism when it is targeted against its allies and ignoring attacks when the targets are US opponents. We hear from Sergey Demidenko, an analyst at the Institute of Strategic Studies.

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Meanwhile reports about ongoing military actions in Syria are controversial. The opposition claims that it has taken control over all the checkpoints on the border with Iraq and two check points on the border with Turkey. The authorities deny this information. It has been rumored that Damascus is preparing repressions in response to the murders of Bashar Assad's associates. The authorities have warned the population that in some regions the insurgents dressed in the uniforms of government troops are going to perpetrate massacres and later shift the blame onto the military.

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