

SYRIA: Imperial Arrogance Spells Fatal Over-reach for the US and Western Allies

The United States and its Western allies are behaving increasingly like the doomed emperors of the late Roman Empire

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The United States and its Western allies are behaving increasingly like the doomed emperors of the late Roman Empire: decadent, self-indulgent and supremely arrogant.

There seems to be a reckless presumption of boundless, unilateral power. While the US and its left lieutenants, Britain and France, can claim to command the world's fiercest military machine in the form of NATO, there is nevertheless, paradoxically, a growing sense of fragile, impotence in the face of a fast-changing world.

This past week we have seen yet another manifestation of this Roman Empire syndrome with the astoundingly arrogant conduct of the US, Britain and France at the Geneva conference on Syria. Ostensibly, the summit was called to oversee a peaceful political transition in Syria, which has been ravaged by 16 months of violence.

But the absurdity and obscenity of the Geneva meeting is that the mayhem raging in Syria has largely been inflicted on that country by the same Western powers along with their Turk and Arab proxies. Yet, these Western powers pontificated as usual about international law and respect for human rights. (Of course, the dissembling Western media provide a crucial cloak for their masters to hide what is otherwise a sickening farce.)



US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton takes her seat next to British Foreign Minister William Hague, prior to a meeting about Syria in Geneva, Switzerland, June 30, 2012.

Since mid-March 2011, these parties have been arming, funding and directing mercenary militia groups to rip Syria apart from within. No cost in human lives and suffering is too high for the imperial powers to effect their strategic goal of regime change. No-warning car bombs in urban centres, roadside explosives, massacres of families and whole villages are part of the Western instruction manual to terrorise and subvert a sovereign country.

Civilian sources in Syria say communities are living in a state of fear from these NATO-backed foreign mercenaries and opportunistic internal criminal gangs. Families are evicted from their homes, which are then turned into sniper nests or bomb factories; shopkeepers are warned to close down their premises or see them burned to the ground. "These gangs are not Syrian. We can tell from their accents and beards that they are foreigners from Libya, Iraq, Saudi," said one young woman from Damascus, who added that she feared her

country would be turned into the NATO-induced post-apocalyptic disaster that is currently Libya.

So for the Western triumvirate of Washington, London and Paris to assume the position of drawing up a “peace plan” for Syria is as preposterous as expecting a group of arsonists to come up with proposals to quench a blaze that they have instigated.

To add insult to injury, even when the Geneva meeting over the weekend concluded with a statement on a political transition that does not exclude the incumbent Syrian President Bashar Al Assad – at the insistence of Russia and China – the imperium’s foreign ministers Hillary Clinton, William Hague and Laurent Fabius insisted that “Assad must step down”. Clinton, with magisterial arrogance, said: “Assad will still have to go... he cannot be part of Syria’s future... Russia and China will have to show him the writing on the wall.”

Indeed, Clinton gave notice that, in the wake of the Geneva summit, the US will be returning to the UN Security Council to demand more sanctions against Syria and to seek a mandate for “no fly zones” and “humanitarian corridors” – which is euphemistic language for NATO military intervention.

What we can be sure of in the coming weeks is a vice-like move by the Western powers. On the one hand, there will be an even greater escalation of violence on the ground against Syrian society by the NATO, Turkish and Arab-backed death squads. Ever since the supposed Kofi Annan peace plan was implemented on 12 April, avowedly with the support of Western powers, the NATO-backed mercenaries of the self-styled Free Syrian Army have ratcheted up the violence, making it impossible for any ceasefire to take hold. In the past week, in the run-up to the Geneva conference, the conflict and casualties surged, with explosions in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs, Dayr al Zawr and Idlib.

As Syria becomes ever more unstable and blood-soaked from NATO mercenaries, and with the Western corporate controlled media dutifully pumping out their government propaganda narrative that it is the state forces of Assad that are “massacring civilians”, the scene will be set for the diplomatic hand to tighten the vice-like grip.

The pressure on Assad to step down may become unbearable given the mounting civilian casualties and commercial mayhem inflicted by Western-backed covert war. This abdication would be unwarranted of course given the popular mandate, but the president may feel that sacrificing his office may be the only way to alleviate the pain on his people.

Alternatively, the US-led NATO powers will push for “responsibility to protect” no fly zones or safe havens. In fact, the latter development is already under way with Turkey’s militarization of its southern border with Syria after the downing of the Turk warplane last week and Ankara’s warning to Damascus to keep its troops removed from the frontier. This “humanitarian intervention” by NATO will follow the Libyan precedent in which NATO becomes the air force for its proxy militias on the ground. “Responsibility to protect” will quickly transmogrify into “responsibility to bomb” the Syrian government of Assad into defeat.

All of these pernicious designs on Syria over the past 16 months and in the coming weeks are utterly criminal. The NATO interference in Syria is aimed at regime change and is an integral part of a wider military roadmap for Western hegemony in the oil-rich Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa. To be sure, rhetorical pronouncements by Washington,

London and Paris on democratic principles, human rights and respect for international law are displays of the most abject cynicism and duplicity. These powers are the diametric opposite to what they proclaim to represent: they are pariah terror states that are out of control.

The destruction of Syria by Western powers is apiece with the destruction by these same powers in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. News reports are coming in of the US now using drone air strikes in the West Africa country of Mali. This insatiable march to endless wars is accompanied by Western so-called democracies allying with the most repressive dictatorships of Saudi Arabia and other Arab monarchies, as well as enlisting the manpower of Al Qaeda and other shadowy Islamic extremists. The gap between Western pretentious rhetoric and grim reality has now diverged to a chasm.

As American author and analyst Webster Tarpley pointed out recently, Washington and its allies have no longer a modicum of respect for sovereignty of countries. The Western powers are on a mission to plunder the planet in a vain bid to salvage their own debt-ridden, bankrupt societies.

The seeming indifference of Western governments to the chasm in their rhetoric and reality – glaringly obvious to the rest of the world – is the mark of supreme arrogance, the Roman Empire syndrome.

But history shows that every empire has its day of reckoning. As with the Imperium Romani, the height of expansion by the Imperium Americana may also signal a fatal strain of over-reach. While its nefarious foreign military adventurism in Syria and elsewhere seems unstoppable at the moment, the latent social implosion in the US and across Europe may well herald the eventual sacking of this empire – from within.

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