

# Syria's No-fly Zone

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*The Russian Defence Minister has announced that the promised S-300 air defence system has been delivered to Syria with the Karushka 4 radar systems jammer and other related military equipment, to boost the safety of Russia's military personnel and facilities. The system will be in place by 20<sup>th</sup> October. Syrian Army personnel will, meanwhile, be brought up to speed in three months to operate the system which has the combined effect of effectively closing the Syrian airspace to unfriendly air crafts.*

There is then no room for doubt that Russia's promise to bolster the security of her interests in Syria is about accomplishing a no-fly zone over most of Syria, if not all of it.

Israel, on her part, even while sending condolences to Moscow, is remorselessly threatening to carry on attacking what Tel Aviv claims are Iranian targets in Syria, regardless of the S-300s and the jammers; there only because her fighter jets' cynical manoeuvres resulted in the recent downing of Russia's EW aircraft IL-20 shot by friendly fire killing all 15 crewmen on board. The Israeli fighters were attacking Latakia province at the time and the detailed data of the incident as captured by the S-400 on Russia's Hmeymim air base proved this in no uncertain terms: Israeli jets were using the IL-20 as cover.

Russia's Defence Minister's anger left no room for speculation but President Putin appeared to be initially looking for a non-confrontational way out. In the end, irrespective of how one reads meanings into his words the outcome is, indisputably, a no-fly zone over Syria.

For Israel, this will mean a substantial crippling of her formerly undisputed air superiority over the region. However, even as is, without Russia's forbearance — the deconfliction measures agreed to between her and Russia, as is true of the agreement between Russia and the US — the skies over Syria already invited caution because in place is a combination of Syria's S-200, and Russia's S-400 and S-300, the latter two to guarantee the safety of her air base, Hmeymim, and her naval base, Tartus. In short, it is fair to assume that had the deconfliction measures been in place the 200 attacks carried out by Israel on Syrian territory over the past year, which Tel Aviv recently boasted of, could not have been so easily achieved.

Thus far this triangular power configuration has been as if playing at war. The aim is to free Syria of terrorists. For as long as the deaths of civilians and damage to infrastructure caused by US allied bombings can be classified as necessary collateral damage there is very little Russia can do without escalating tensions between the major "players". But the IL-20 tragedy is without doubt a pre-meditated move by Israel, which resulted in the loss of a valuable Russian military asset and 15 highly specialised airmen.

John Bolton, the White House National Security Advisor, has warned Moscow that this Russian move is considered an escalation. But of what? If at all there is a war it is with the terrorists. Is Washington admitting that these are not terrorists but rather mercenaries of an American proxy army?

Israel promises to keep attacking Syria. President Putin since intervening in Syria has, on many occasions, gone out of his way to prevent the outbreak of war with NATO that could bring the world to the brink. Unfortunately, this is perceived of as a weakness waiting to be exploited.

But much as Putin might want to avoid a war with another nuclear power whose total disregard for civilian lives is beyond dispute, what pretext can there now be which will not appear to the Russian people as a betrayal of the 15 airmen, crew of the IL-20? Russian lives have been lost in what to many is a foreign war.

Then, too, what about the prestige Russia has built over the recent years that helped restore her position as a superpower and, necessarily, the Cold War balance of terror that afforded the world a measure of security. And, what about the threatening and callous actions of the US and her allies, which makes discounting a nuclear war impossible. Subservience to Washington is, therefore, not an option.

That the US and her allies are pushing for war is difficult to ignore and Israel's security is a good enough excuse for them. Placing Iran squarely in their cross-hairs to secure Israel's safety facilitates this. But can they find a way of undermining the no-fly zone, militarily, now that Russia has lost all goodwill for compromises? Or, has Russia really lost all goodwill for her adversaries?

Apparently the deconfliction agreement is still operational. But are the gloves now irretrievably off such that one false step will witness "enemy" fighters dropping from the skies over Syria? Israel's belligerence is unrelenting. Washington though, while no less so, is more circumspect.

Are the US and her allies, including the ever vacillating Turkey, virtually checkmated in Syria? Will a crushing defeat of the Jihadists in Idlib be possible without civilians being sacrificed? After all, without their backers the proxy army of assorted terrorists will be crippled as has been demonstrated time and time again.

Of course, this assumes that reason will prevail. But what if reason, already so elusive in certain quarters, cannot prevail? Can a surprise attack on Syria and her allies be on the cards and low yield nuclear weapons be used by the US in the belief that it is a feasible option in a first strike strategy?

That is the clear and present danger which the world is now facing. To the neoconservatives and the Deep State this is the best opportunity they have for obliterating the challenger once and for all and global hegemony be achieved. Will they chance it?

Bearing in mind America's Nuclear Doctrine of pre-emptive nuclear war this is not as far fetched as it may seem. And, while Russia is way ahead in terms of military capability has she the means to counter this suicidal desperation successfully? For, according to the experts in a nuclear war, no matter how limited, the one who makes the first strike cannot but be victorious.

And then there is the theological doctrine that the *goyims* (non-Jews) are dispensable when they serve no purpose. What more when they are obstacles. To the apartheid Jewish state this has serious political consequences. Therefore, most logically, a nuclear armed Israel gone rogue would be the biggest threat to the world.

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