

US Coalition Out of Syria Now!

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Both great powers, Russia and the USA, recently claimed victory over the Islamic State (aka Daesh, ISIS, ISIL) in Syria, but only one did the right thing in response.

President Putin of the Russian Federation flew to Syria to announce deep cuts to its troop and equipment commitments in Syria and to assure President Assad of Syria and the **Syrian people** that Russian troops would return immediately if ISIS terrorists reared their ugly heads again in his country.

Russia has been open and transparent with the whole world about its military commitments in Syria, right down to actual troop numbers and types of military aircraft. President Putin stated moreover that Russia would continue to maintain one naval and one airbase inside Syria.

How can Putin say and do these things in Syria? The answer is that Russia, like Iran, has maintained a military alliance with Syria for several decades and has, in addition, signed many political, economic, and cultural agreements with Syria. The Russian military intervention in Syria, starting on Sept 30, 2015, was at the invitation of the sovereign government in Damascus and was in compliance with international law. **This was backed with proactive and constructive support for both the reconciliation and dialogue initiatives which was complemented by the Syrian government simultaneously announcing a program of reconciliation** with “rebels” of Syrian origin, **a program which saw** some 20,000 Syrian “rebels” lay down their arms **and reintegrate with their families in the main Syrian society to defend and rebuild Syria.**

The US presence in Syria, on the other hand, has been in flagrant violation of international law. It's true that the USA had the permission of the sovereign government of Iraq to fight the Islamic State in Iraq. However, it lacked such permission from the government of Syria and from the United Nations Security Council.

Like Russia, the USA recently declared victory over the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq and announced that it would continue to maintain a military presence in Syria. Unlike Russia, it has never been open and transparent with the world about either its troop commitments or its real intentions in Syria.

For example, the USA lied to the world about its covert support to the Islamic State in Syria (and Iraq). It lied about its Coalition's alleged purpose “to degrade and destroy ISIS.” In fact, until the Russian military offensive in Syria in 2015, the US Coalition never even bothered to bomb the convoys of tanker trucks smuggling Syrian oil to Turkey, or the convoys of

transport trucks carrying supplies from Turkey to ISIS-held cities in Syria and Iraq, or the convoys of ISIS fighters that travelled across hundreds of kilometres of open desert in broad daylight to capture and destroy the Syrian world heritage site of Palmyra. Rather, Coalition planes attacked Syrian Arab Army (SAA) positions on several occasions, on behalf of ISIS, at Deir Ezzor, Al Tanf, and other locations. Most recently, the USA oversaw the rescue of thousands of the Islamic State's last remaining fighters from Raqqa and brought the terrorists in a convoy with their heavy equipment to Coalition-held territory in the northeast corner of Syria, east of the Euphrates River. That triangular corner of Syria contains some Kurdish and Arab tribes, about half of Syria's petrochemical resources, and a large swath of good agricultural land.

Today, we know, through a slip of the tongue on the part of US Major-General Jarrard, that the USA now has [4000 soldiers in Syria](#), though officially it claims only 500.¹ Thanks to the Turkish government, which supplied their GPS locations, we have also learned that the USA has built ten military bases in that corner of the country, all of which are illegal since they were not approved by the government of Syria. In fact, the continuing US presence in Syria constitutes an illegal occupation. Nevertheless, US military and political leaders, such as Secretary of State Tillerson, have indicated that they intend to stay indefinitely inside Syria.

Why? Because a continuing US military presence in Syria allows the USA to pressure the Syrian government regarding the terms of the inevitable political settlement of the Syrian conflict. From its vantage point in NE Syria, the USA could continue militarily to threaten Damascus – not to mention other nearby states such as Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey, and Iran – and to make life miserable for Syrians, such as by supporting roving bands of ISIS terrorists or ISIS missile attacks on Syrian communities.

However, a number of military analysts have observed that the US occupation of the NE corner of Syria is not viable. That chunk of sovereign Syrian territory is surrounded on all three sides by potentially hostile forces: Turkish, Iraqi, and Syrian. All of the Kurdish and Arab tribes who live in this triangle have abandoned any allegiance they may once have had to the US Coalition and its so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). So, the only allies the USA has on the ground in that part of Syria are those (rescued) ISIS terrorist mercenaries who have nominally switched allegiances. Hardly a solid military position...

The **Syria Solidarity Movement** maintains that the USA does NOT hold exceptional status regarding international law. We regard the US occupation of any part of Syria as a war crime and we call upon the USA and its Coalition partners to get out of Syria now. In addition, we demand the following:

- the USA **forces withdraw from Syria** and disband its Coalition allegedly to “degrade and destroy ISIS”;
- the USA end its unilateral (and therefore) illegal economic sanctions against Syria;
- the USA disband the so-called “Friends of Syria Group” of countries (FSG) which organized the proxy war against Syria;
- the USA and its coalition and FSG partners restore diplomatic relations with Syria and come to the UN peace process, without any preconditions, to bring a speedy end to the Syrian conflict.

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