

The US' Plans to Designate the Iran Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) as "Terrorists" Aren't Just for Show

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The US plans to use this possibly impending designation as the basis upon which to "justify" forthcoming Hybrid War measures against the Islamic Republic aimed at dismantling its "deep state" network in the Mideast, including through possible strikes against the IRGC and its Hezbollah allies in Syria.

From Farce To Tragedy

[Alt-Media](#) is making a mockery out of the US' reported plans to designate the IRGC as "terrorists", giddily quoting the Iranians who [spun this rhetoric around](#) and announced that they'll reciprocate by doing the same to the US military if that happens. The "chattering class" is having a field day using this opportunity to highlight the many abuses that America has committed across the Mideast and the world in general over the decades, seemingly not caring one bit for the possible consequences that could transpire if the US actually goes through with the unprecedented move of designating part of a foreign military as "terrorists". That's a mistake because the US' plans need to be taken much more seriously than they are since they'll likely herald a new escalation of the [Hybrid War on Iran](#) through the possible commencement of direct strikes against the IRGC and its Hezbollah allies in Syria.

"Sitting Ducks"

Like I wrote back in April 2017 after the US' first conventional strike against Syria, "[Trump's Cruise Missile Message To Iran](#)" was that his country won't hesitate to hit it and its non-state allies there next, though provided that America was prepared for the inevitable backlash that this would undoubtedly unleash. In hindsight, the US preferred to "play it safe" and not "up the stakes" to the point of potentially triggering a larger Mideast war, but nowadays it appears as though Bolton has convinced Trump that now is the perfect time for striking Iranian positions in Syria due to the Islamic Republic's refusal to agree to the dignified but "phased withdrawal" that Russia has been [pressing them to commence](#) for most of the past year as part of its [broader "balancing" strategy](#). In addition, sanctions have finally [begun to bite](#) and a sudden increase in the physical and financial costs of Iran's Syrian deployment might be all that's needed to get it to begin the "phased withdrawal" process.

The US insists on maintaining a troop presence in Syria despite Trump's [promised "withdrawal"](#) last year precisely because of its desire to "contain" Iran, so it's not inconceivable that it will seek to intensify the pressure that it puts on its rival to the point of striking the IRGC and its Hezbollah ally if Washington "officially" regards them both as being "terrorists". Iran has no air defense assets in the country and Russia is extremely unlikely to allow its Syrian partners to have full and independent control of the [much-touted S-300](#) in

order to avoid the scenario of Damascus escalating the situation by shooting at American warplanes and possibly dealing Moscow enormous embarrassment if Washington manages to destroy its surface-to-air missile systems in response. Simply put, Iranian forces are practically “sitting ducks” if the US decides to strike them.

A Likely Ultimatum In Latakia

It should be taken for granted that Iran has many asymmetrical means through which it could likely respond, whether in Syria, Lebanon, the Gulf, or even in “Israel”, but one also shouldn’t over-exaggerate its capabilities either since Tehran has yet to unleash the devastating consequences that it regularly promises every time “Israel” hits its forces in Syria. One can only speculate whether this is a prudent move to patiently wait until the “right moment” or if everything was nothing more than one big bluff to begin with, but whatever the case, the US evidently thinks that it can manage whatever response Iran might have to the potential bombing of the IRGC and Hezbollah by American forces in the event that the former is designated as “terrorists” and Trump wants a dramatic headline-grabbing news event to follow this development.

In fact, the US might even issue an ultimatum to Iran to withdraw from Syria or be militarily driven out after reports recently emerged that the country is [about to clinch](#) a deal for operating the Mediterranean port of Latakia just a few hundred kilometers from “[Israel](#)”, something that’s sure to set off alarm bells in both Washington and Tel Aviv because of speculation that this economic agreement might have military implications. The reason why an ultimatum might be issued in this case instead of just “bombing first and making demands later” (as is the usual US modus operandi) is because of how close Russia’s Hmeimim airbase is to the port, meaning that any possible strike against Iran’s assets there would be extremely complicated to pull off without coordinating with Russia otherwise another September-like midair tragedy might transpire.

Russia: An Ally To Whom?

“Israel” certainly doesn’t want to repeat the events of that fateful day, nor would the US be willing to risk the outbreak of World War III if a few missiles carelessly veered off course and either hit the Russian base or its assets, so it should be assumed that those two are already in secret talks with Moscow (likely facilitated by Netanyahu’s “shuttle diplomacy” between their two capitals) in order to agree upon a “solution” to this scenario. Syria and Iran should have anticipated that something of the sort was in the works because of Russia’s lengthy track record “passively facilitating” “Israeli” strikes against the IRGC and Hezbollah, so both of them probably predicted that their port deal might force Moscow to stop “balancing” and finally pick a side once and for all.

The “surprise”, however, is that Russia is completely disinclined to pick Iran over “Israel” because it derives enormous strategic benefit in Syria by removing its “friendly competitor” and strengthening its increasingly monopolistic control over the country in the [economic](#), [political](#), and [military domains](#). Furthermore, Iran’s relative weakening is advantageous for Russia because it makes the Islamic Republic more desperate to agree to whatever “sanctions relief” deals Moscow might offer it irrespective of the possibly unfavorable conditions. “Israel”, meanwhile, is poised to become [Russia’s top military-strategic partner](#) in the Mideast, and Moscow believes that the comprehensive benefits of this relationship far surpass whatever Iran could provide for it. As such, it can be expected that Russia will

silently work to avert the scenario of direct US strikes on the IRGC and especially the Latakia port by more actively encouraging Iran's dignified but "phased withdrawal" from Syria.

Concluding Thoughts

The US' very probable designation of the IRGC as a "terrorist" group in the near future would open up the Hybrid War floodgates by providing the "justification" that the Pentagon needs to commence strikes against its rival's special forces or at least issue the threat thereof as part of a series of forthcoming escalations designed to trigger Iran's dignified but "phased withdrawal" from Syria. The IRGC has reportedly suffered many casualties already because of Russia's "passive facilitation" of "Israeli" strikes against it over the years but has yet to make either of them pay, so the likelihood of Iran doing anything real dramatic in response to the US possibly striking its special forces too is low.

In any case, Russia — as the undisputed hegemonic power in Syria — would prefer for the US and "Israel's" issues with Iran's military presence in the Arab Republic to be settled as peacefully as possible without posing a danger to its Aerospace Forces, fearful as it is of a repeat of last September's tragedy in the event that either of those two bomb the Latakia port facilities near its Hmeimim airbase that Iran is on the brink of possessing. Therefore, the US' reportedly impending designation of the IRGC as "terrorists" will probably cause Russia to cooperate more closely with it behind the scenes (possibly via "Israeli" mediation) to ensure Iran's dignified but "phased withdrawal" from Syria.

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