

Washington has Lost the Proxy War. US Ambitions to Occupy Syria with Physical Force

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Since 2011, Syria has fought desperately to hold itself together as a single, unified nation. Threatened from the beginning by the "Libya precedent," Washington and its regional allies have openly conspired to divide up Syria as a consolatory objective upon failing to topple Damascus outright.

US policymakers, some of whom had previously played a role in laying out invasion and occupation plans for Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, have published numerous op-eds and entire policy papers regarding [the planned partition of Syria](#).

It was hoped that the Syrian government could be pushed from Damascus and sent fleeing to Syria's western provinces of Latakia and Tartus. From there, the US hoped to create a Saudi-Qatari-Turkish dominated central state with a Kurdish territory linked up with US-backed Kurds in northern Iraq. Forever divided against itself, Syria would never again function as a powerful ally of nearby Iran, Lebanon's Hezbollah or Russia and distant China.



Russia's intervention in Syria has all but prevented Damascus from falling. And while the Western media has attempted to claim the intervention has made little difference, so successful has it actually been that attempts by Turkey to establish its [long-sought after "safe zone"](#) in northern Syria have also all but evaporated.

Syrian troops backed by Russian airpower have moved from Latakia along Syria's border with Turkey toward the now much reported-on A'zaz-Jarabulus corridor while another force pushes north from eastern Aleppo toward the Turkish border. Elsewhere, Syrian forces are securing Damascus, pushing Western-backed militants over their southernmost border with Jordan and pushing east toward Raqqa itself.

What is left?

What has been left for the US and its regional allies is a possible attempt to invade and occupy Syria's northeast. The US has already been allegedly carrying out ground operations in this region supposedly in support of "Kurdish" and "Arab" forces that make up what it calls the "Syrian Democratic Forces."

The U.K.-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported Friday that Russian experts had "arrived to explore" the Qamishli airport's "readiness and to check what is needed to develop and use it" near the Turkish border. The report added that Russian warplanes were expected to use the airport in the "coming days and weeks." Qamishli is located south of

the Turkish border town of Nusaybin.

The US has even allegedly begun constructing, or rather restoring, an airstrip within Syrian territory. The BBC in its report [Syria conflict: 'US expanding air strip' in Kurdish north](#) claimed:

Satellite imagery appearing to show the US expanding a formerly disused air strip in Kurdish-controlled northern Syria has been seen by the BBC.

The images, from the security analysts Stratfor, show a runway near the town of Rmeilan being extended from 700m (half a mile) to 1.3km.

That would make it more suitable for a larger aircraft such as a Hercules.

A spokesman for the US Department of Defence said its small team in Syria needed "occasional logistical support".

The US inviting itself into sovereign Syrian territory and creating a military base to supply its ground forces operating there without UN Security Council approval or invitation by the Syrian government sets a dangerous and unacceptable precedent. But assuming the United States has no interest in actually upholding the very international law it attempts to justify its numerous extraterritorial adventures with, what options does Syria have to head off what is a well-documented conspiracy to strip it of its own sovereign territory and expand from there toward Damascus itself?

The answer can be found in Qamishli, Syria, teetering near the Syrian border with Turkey and only 50 miles west of the US' alleged airstrip in Rmeilan. Qamishli is the site of what is alleged to be a growing Russian presence, including a burgeoning airbase.

The International Business Times reported in their article [US Forces Setting Up Base In Northern Syria Near Russian Forces In Qamishli Airfield: Report](#) that:

...Russian experts had "arrived to explore" the Qamishli airport's "readiness and to check what is needed to develop and use it" near the Turkish border. The report added that Russian warplanes were expected to use the airport in the "coming days and weeks." Qamishli is located south of the Turkish border town of Nusaybin.

It would be the check to America's latest, and perhaps final move in an overarching game the West has been sorely losing in Syria.

Check or Checkmate?

Russian forces, if they are indeed setting up in Qamishli, will establish a permanent bastion in Syria's northeast. When inevitably Syrian forces cut off terrorists from their foreign supply routes and reestablish control over Syria's largest cities back west, they will be able to reenter the northeast of their nation in force with Russian backing up to and including onto the doorstep of any illegal US occupation. There would be little the US could do to stop this, and no strategic or tactical means of "holding" territory already under the control of Syrian-Russian forces.

The US in this scenario is reduced to a trespasser coming up to an occupied house, unable to do anything else but leer through the window. While the US would surely be trampling the flowerbed outside the home, it would be unable to access anything of value within it.

Syria and Russia are displacing US ambitions to occupy Syria with physical forces that once in place will be difficult to remove. The US will come to the bargaining table with its “Syrian Democratic Forces” operating at the fringe of Syrian territory, with a Russian airbase standing between it and Syria’s interior. Meanwhile, the lion’s share of military victories against both Al Qaeda forces masquerading as the West’s “moderate fighters” and the “Islamic State” (IS) itself goes to Russia and Syria, not the US.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for the US and its allies to explain just what they are actually even doing in Syria besides perpetuating the war for as long as possible. It is clear that the only progress being made in Syria against the forces of extremism is being made by the long-chastised Syrian government and their Russian, Iranian, and Lebanese allies. It is also clear that remaining hurdles preventing the final restoration of peace and order in Syria is the US and its regional allies who insist on propping up armed groups opposed to the Syrian government, and direct threats and undermining by the US itself aimed at Damascus.

It should be abundantly clear that the US has lost the political war, the proxy war and now possibly checked in the “base war” as well. How much more the US wants to lose before withdrawing from yet another quagmire of its own creation depends on how much credibility the US believes it can still afford to lose as it pursues hegemony openly in front of an increasingly aware global public that has begun effectively fighting back.

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