

Washington Heads Toward “Permitting Military Cooperation” with Russia Only on US Terms

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During months of US/Russia talks on conflict resolution in Syria, Washington consistently undermined Moscow's good faith efforts, breaching promises made, violating SC Res. 2254 terms – unanimously adopted in December 2015, calling for ceasefire and diplomatic conflict resolution.

In October 2016, the Defense Department ceased military contacts with Russia in Syria. Information exchanges stopped.

State Department spokesman admiral John Kirby said “(t)he United States is suspending its participation in bilateral channels with Russia that were established to sustain the cessation of hostilities.” He lied, claiming Moscow “failed to live up to its own commitments...”

A Russian Foreign Ministry statement said “in pursuit of regime change in Damascus, Washington...forge(d) an alliance with hardened terrorists...”

House members want US military cooperation with Russia hamstrung, inserting a provision in the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) – overwhelmingly approved on December 2 by a 375 – 34 vote, Senate passage assured, perhaps with minor revisions, followed by Obama signing it into law.

Orwellian anti-Russian Section 1236 bans the Defense Department from pursuing “bilateral military-to-military cooperation between the governments of the United States and Russia” – unless Moscow “cease(s) its occupation of Ukrainian territory and its aggressive activities that threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.”

DOD must “certify” to Congress that Russia “is abiding by the terms of and taking steps in support of the Minsk Protocols regarding a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine.”

Fact: No Russian occupation of Ukraine exists – nor “aggressive activities” threatening Kiev, NATO countries or any others.

Fact: Russia alone strictly observes Minsk principles. Other so-called Normandy Quartet countries France, Germany and Ukraine systematically breach them, US pressure assuring it.

A congressional waiver may be granted provided “national interest(s)” are served, without further elaboration.

Obama's tenure was marked by increasing tensions with Russia, risking direct confrontation by his hostile acts – including by signing into law the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) when it reaches his desk.

Congressional action is aimed at stymying Trump's efforts to normalize ties with Russia, including both countries cooperating in combating terrorism in Syria – if he follows through on what he suggested while campaigning.

Will he observe what Section 1236 mandates or seek a waiver to cooperate with Russia in the "national interest?"

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His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: How the US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

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