

Week Twelve of the Russian Intervention in Syria. “Obama, An Exceptionally Weak and Clueless President”

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In last week's review of the Russian military intervention in Syria I wrote that Kerry had lost every single negotiation he ever had with the Russians and that he had a record of agreeing to A only to come back to the US and then declare non-A. This time again, the Americans did not change their modus operandi, except that it was Obama himself who declared, yet again, that Assad must go, resulting in some commentators speaking of a "[White House Schizophrenia](#)". [Others, however, noted](#) that this could be simply a case of face saving denials. Personally, I think that both of these explanations are correct.

There is no doubt that Obama is an exceptionally weak, and even clueless, President. The man has proven to have no vision, no understanding of international relations, his culture is minimal while his arrogance appears to be infinite – he is all about form over substance. This is the ideal mix to win a Presidential election in the USA, but once in the White House this is also a recipe for disaster.

When such a non-entity is placed at the top of the Executive branch of government, the different part of government do not get a clear message of what the policy is and, as a result, they each begin doing their own thing without worrying too much about what the POTUS has to say. The recent article by Sy Hersh "[Military to Military](#)" is a good illustration of that phenomenon. Being weak and lacking vision (or even understanding) Obama's main concern is conceal his limitations and he therefore falls back on the oldest of political tricks: he tells his audience whatever it wants to hear. Exactly the same goes for Kerry too. Both of these men will say one thing to the Russian rulers or during an interview with a Russian journalist, and the exact opposite to an American reporter. That kind of "schizophrenia" is perfectly normal, especially in the USA.



Christmas celebration in the streets of Latakia, Syria. Credit: The Saker.

To use the expression coined by Chris Hedges, the USA is an “[Empire of Illusion](#)”. The US society has an apparently infinite tolerance for the fake as long as the fake looks vaguely similar to the real thing. This is true on all levels, ranging from the food Americans eat, to the way they entertain themselves, to the politicians they elect and to the putative invincibility of the armed forces their taxes pay for. It is all one gigantic lie, but who cares as long as it is a fun, emotionally reassuring lie. In the Syrian context, this ability to ignore reality results in the support of terrorism in the name democracy, the conduct of an “anti-Daesh” campaign which results in Daesh dramatically increase its territory, the accusation that Assad used chemical weapons and now the “Assad can stay but he must go” policy. This ability to completely decouple rhetoric and reality can sometimes have a positive side-effect. For example, even if this week saw a Zag! From the US Administration in terms of rhetoric, this does not necessarily mean that the USA will continue to attempt to overthrow Assad. The opposite is also true, however. The fact that the US has said that Assad can stay in no way implies that the US will stop trying to overthrow him.

The bottom line is this: yes, there was definitely a Zag! this week, but only time will tell how much of a zag we are dealing with.

In this context I highly recommend the recent article by Alexander Mercouris entitled “[Russian diplomacy achieved a trio of Security Council Resolutions over the last month which give Russia a decisive advantage](#)” in which he explains how Russia has achieved victory after victory at the UN Security Council. What is important here is that with each of these Russian-sponsored Resolutions the number of available options for the USA are gradually reduced.

Another factor also reducing the US options are all the tactical successes of the Syrian military whose progress is slow, but steady. The intensive pace of Russian airstrikes is having an effect on Daesh and the Syrians are slowly advancing on all fronts. There has been no Daesh collapse yet, but if the Syrians continue to advance as they have done so far their offensive will eventually reach a critical point when the quantity of their small (tactical) victories will end up triggering a qualitative (operational) reaction and Daesh will begin to collapse. Of course, the Daesh fighters will have the option of finding safety in Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and elsewhere, but the psychological impact of a Daesh defeat in Syria will be huge.

So far there are no signs of a possible Turkish invasion of northern Syria, no signs that anybody is still thinking about imposing a no-fly zone, and besides the murder of Samir Kuntar in an Israeli airstrike (which I discussed [here](#)), it appears that the S-400s are achieving the desired deterrent effect.

In other words, while US leaders have their heads stuck deep up into their own delusions, the events on the ground are slowly but steadily reinforcing the Russian position and vindicating Russia’s stance.

In the meantime, the Syrian Christians who follow the Gregorian Calendar are celebrating Christmas in the streets of Latakia in a clear sign that a multi-confessional Syria still exists and has a future.

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