Elections in Syria and Ukraine, the Application of the West's Double Standards

Presidential elections in Syria, scheduled for June 3, has already begun with voting being carried out abroad. On these elections the sitting president Bashar Assad has two competitors. The first of them is a 43-year-old Communist from Aleppo, a member of the the Popular Front for Liberation and Change party, Maher Abdel Hafiz Hajjar. The second is a 54-year-old former state minister who now heads the National Initiative for Reform, Hassan Abdel Illyahi en-Nuri. Initially 23 candidates applied for participation in the elections campaign, but the absolute majority of them were not able to obtain the support of 35 deputies of the People's Council of Syria required by the law.

Syrian moderate opposition proposed to delay the presidential elections since supposedly the majority of voters will not be able to attend the polling stations. This was the announcement made on May 27 at a press conference in Moscow by one of the leaders of the Popular Front for Change and Liberation, Qadri Jamil. However, he stressed that the opposition is not calling for a boycott of the presidential elections. Additionally, up to a million of Kurds living in the areas of Ifrin and Ayn al-Arab in the province of Aleppo in northern Syria will take part in voting.

On May 28 a majority of Syrian embassies around the Globe opened for voting. They should have allowed more than 200 thousand citizens living abroad to cast their ballots, since the voting was carried out in 38 diplomatic missions. As it was expected, many NATO member states and the Arabian anti-Syrian coalition banned the voting in their respective countries. Thus, in France, Germany, Belgium and the United States Syrians were not allowed to participate in polling. It is understood that the same position was adopted by Saudi Arabia and Qatar - the main sponsors and “financiers” of the Islamist insurgency in the Syrian Arab Republic, those two states closed Syrian embassies in their respective capitals. Unexpectedly, the United Arab Emirates authorities decided to obstruct around 39 thousand Syrians working in the UAE from voting. Syrian Foreign Ministry condemned the move and expressed regret that the Syrian citizens in the Gulf countries "won't be able to exercise their constitutional rights". A single GCC member state - Oman allowed Syrian citizens to participate in the presidential elections. Another Arab country - Jordan, wasn't obstructing the voting despite the fact that a Syrian ambassador had been previously expelled from this state.

The heart of the Lebanese capital — Beirut was blocked by a crowd of people wishing to cast their votes in the Syrian embassy, since the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon today has reached 1.2 million people. Even before the elections, when the poll date was announced, Syrians started to line up in lines in front of the embassy gates to verify their right to vote.

The Syrian embassy in Moscow was allowing Syrian to cast their ballots in presidential elections on May 28 as well. There's more than eight thousand Syrians living in Russia. Passersby could witness Syrians starting to gather at the door of the diplomatic mission at 6 o'clock in the morning.

Russia has promised Syria to transfer 240 million euros to Syria for the social needs of the people. This agreement is a result of the recent visit to Damascus paid by a Russian delegation headed by Russia’s Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin. According to some Russian media sources Russia’s Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has allowed to grant 9.4 billion Syrian pounds (46.3 million euros) out of the above mentioned sum to the Syrian authorities. In fact, we are witnessing a "debt for financial assistance" exchange, which will not require any money to be spent from
Russia's budget. This was the sum Syria should have paid Russia for its debt, but the money were not transferred in due time due to the outbreak of war in Syria. Now Syria has saved enough money to pay the debt but instead the money will be used to solve social problems in the Syrian Arab Republic. The visit of the Russian delegation to Damascus and the bilateral financial agreement signed on the eve of the elections means that Moscow believes that the future of Syria is in Bashar Assad's hands and there can be little doubt in his victory, experts say.

Meanwhile, the US is going to continue its support of the Syrian opposition. According to The Wall Street Journal, Obama is close to allowing the US military to officially train the "moderate Syrian rebels" for fighting against the forces of Assad and groups associated with "Al-Qaeda". According to unnamed sources of the newspaper in the White House administration, the new training program will be complementing a smaller-scale CIA based one that had been approved by Obama a year ago. Thus, the White House makes it clear that is going to expand its support to the radical armed opposition in Syria. New military program is designed to demonstrate a significant increase in the scale of effort that Washington is willing to make to see Bashar Assad go

Still, the situation in Syria remains tense. A couple of days ago a mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) suffered an attack. Initially a report came that the group was abducted, but then the OPCW spokesman Michael Luhan said that all team members that were heading to the place of the alleged chlorine attacks in Al-Salam Teybat are safe and well. According to the Syrian Foreign Ministry, the army provided protection to the OPCW convoys up to the village of Kafr Zita near the town of Hama. Earlier it had been announced that a ceasefire agreement would be observed in the group's operation area. But nevertheless the convoy was blown up by a roadside bomb installed in its path. One of the four SUV was damaged, but no member of the OPCW team suffered injuries so the mission was carried on in the three remaining vehicles.

Armed skirmishes in Syria continue - the army forces are tightening the encirclement of rebel positions on the outskirts of Damascus, from where the militants are shelling the city. The military authorities are planning to eliminate all threats to the inhabitants of Damascus before the polling starts. A couple a days ago the Syrian capital suffered another round of mortar attacks. During this attack a woman was killed and three children were injured. The militants have also bombarded an oncology clinic Al-Biruni in the suburbs of Haraszti. A shell ripped the building's entrance wounding a number of civilians. Syrian forces have established control over most of the suburbs of Mlikh located at the entrance of Damascus. It is assumed that in the coming hours Mlikh will be announced a safe area. The Bashar Assad forces are also advancing on the western front to the town of Khan el-Sheikh some 8 kilometers from Damascus, where militants have employed reinforcements from Deraa and the Jordanian border. The regular army is opposed here by the formations of the Islamic Front and Dzhabgat en-Nusra.

The attitude of the West towards the presidential elections in Syria manifests the double standards of the US and a number of EU countries. They refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the upcoming Syrian elections on the pretext of the ongoing war in Syria, while at the same time the Western powers support the questionable presidential elections in Ukraine, where Kiev authorities that had gripped control after the February coup, have launched a war on the South-East, using gunships, armored vehicles and heavy artillery against innocent civilians that try to fight for their legitimate rights. Due to their aggression more than 2 million Ukrainians were not able to exercise their constitutional rights, which raises the question about the legitimacy of these elections. According to the logic applied by Washington and Brussels, the legally elected head of the Syrian state, whose term expires, and who had been repulsing the aggression of terrorists and radicals relying on external forces for three years, shall not conduct elections. But when a doubtful in all respects regime in Ukraine, that had seized the reins of power due to the support of armed gangs and radical nationalists holds elections with a predetermined outcome, it's perfectly fine by them. Any references to the Geneva agreements on Syria made by the West are plain ridiculous, when one is to consider that the US and NATO forces, along with Wahhabi-Saudi puppets and the external opposition have derailed the negotiating process themselves, betting on the forced removal of Bashar Assad government from power.

All these factors raise the questions about what constitutes the so-called Western democratic values. Judging by the Syrian and Ukrainian examples, it is clearly not the respect they show to the international law and civil society, human rights and national minorities rights. The West its trying to impose its own will on foreign nations in order to further undermine the position of those who do not want to obey to the neo-colonialists, or can stand in the way of the Western expansion, like Russia and China.

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