The US doesn't have the military might or financial resources to dictate its will to countries with non-Western cultures. The White House has been proved unable to shape other states along its own pattern. It has failed in bringing democracy and prosperity to the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. Now its hopes are much less ambitious — it tries to prevent these countries from falling apart in order to preserve them in some form. At the same time, Obama is stubbornly trying to shift the gears of its foreign policy. Today, the United States aims at nothing less than destroying ISIL. The threatening statements of the US president were immediately followed by air strikes, although everyone understands - without feet on the ground there's no elimination of the Islamic State. International players begin to understand that in order to succeed Washington needs a more realistic strategy and a far less ambitious policy. The US cannot stop the terrorism that spurs across the Middle East, nor it is capable of preventing the spread of the Sunni-Shiite conflict. Washington has no tools of establishing a Western-style democracy in Syria and Iraq. We can only hope that this confrontation won't last for another decade.

In this struggle Americans seem to have no permanent friends, no permanent enemies. What are the Gulf monarchies that seem to have common interests with the US? Even though some of these countries are taking part in air strikes in Syria, all of these states are totally undemocratic. Moreover, they have been fueling the fire in the Arab world, relying on the most violent extremists to push their agenda forward. On the other hand, although the US has always perceived Iran as an arch enemy, the two states are now sharing a common goal - the instinction of ISIL. But Tehran is in no hurry to enter an alliance with Washington because once the latter is done with Iraq and Syria, it will be seeking the "democratization" of Iran. In turn, Russia could be a major partner of America in the new anti-terrorist coalition, but Obama believed otherwise. He has recently labelled Moscow's actions a threat to peace and stability.

In these conditions, without an anti-terrorist coalition worth mentioning, the White House and the Gulf states have launched aerial bombardments of the ISIL militants in Syria. Obama seems to think that this step will benefit all the parties involved: conservative Arabs monarchies will demonstrate that today they're not pro-terrorism anymore, and the United States will show that it still has the support of Arab countries, hence Washington has not embarked on a new against Arabs and Muslims.

But the air strikes policy won't last for long. Obama has no support in the EU, except for France and the UK. A number of states, including Germany, Russia, China, Turkey and Iran oppose his actions. Arab Gulf monarchies are taking part in this operation only to prevent the Islamists from pouring across their borders. On top of all their desire to prevent Iran from joining the fight against ISIL exceeds all reasonable explanations. It is a well known fact that Saudi Arabia and Qatar have been funding Iraqi Sunnis to fight the Shiite government in Baghdad, since the latter took into account Tehran's position. So here's a question- what are Obama's options?

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey insisted that it is imperative to put feets on the
A similar opinion was expressed by the commander of United States Central Command, General Lloyd Austin. A former commander of the US Marine Corps General James T. Conway has bluntly stated that Obama's strategy is doomed to failure. But US President chose air strikes over a war. In turn Congress has shown support to Obama's plan, which also implies extensive training of the opposition militants in Syria. The 273-to-156, with 40% of the Democrats voting against Obama's strategy, showed that but for the Republicans, Obama would have been outnumbered.

The polls are showing that most Americans are supporting the war against ISIL, at the same time the vast majority of the population is not willing to support Obama's policies, whose approval rating has hit an all time low - 34%. Americans are unhappy with President's ways of fighting the international terrorism. In other words: how can a president be successful if he enjoys no support of his people, if he is opposed in the ranks of his own party, if he ignores the opinions of his military staff, if he has no allies among the permanent members of the UN Security Council? Gulf countries may believe in Obama's good intentions, but clearly they do not believe in his ability to handle the situation. Especially when Obama has declared from the very beginning — that the fight against the ISIL militants will last for three years. Which means that he'll be gone but the time it is over.

Air strikes, which are carried out in Syria now are nothing more than a mere escalation of the war against the Islamic State and other jihadists. But when the conflict expands, Obama will have to clarify its objectives and the means that are to be used in achieving them. If the goal is to carry out swift strikes against the strategic targets - including command centers, armories, training camps, transport hubs, a certain degree of success can be achieved. But this will not lead to the destruction of ISIL. And most importantly — it will not eliminate the possibility of retaliation terrorist attacks in the United States.

But if Obama really seeks to destroy ISIL, he will not be able to achieve this without Iran and Syria. It's basically a dead end: without these countries there's no instiction of ISIL, but once those states are brought in, it would lead to their consequent strengthening. But this turn doesn't fit the US strategic planning and it may deter the current "partners" of the US. Washington cannot afford taking the side of the Shiites in the war between Sunnis and Shiites. Especially when Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states are experiencing concerns about the rumors of a new twist in relationships between the US and Iran.

Dealing with ISIL will require billions of dollars, tens of thousands of foreign troops, years of collective efforts, political will and planning capabilities, which in the last few years have not been shown by neither the Democrats nor the Republicans. So the US bombs have brought no political change to the situation in Syria. On the contrary — they've brought more uncertainty to the strategic layout. After all, the Middle East has always a puzzling region: you start doing one thing and suddenly you end up with a different result. The United States launched a process of color revolutions in the Arab world in order to "democratize" the corrupt Arab regimes but then they got nothing but wars, conflicts, an unprecedented rise of terrorism. Obama wanted to tear Ukraine away from Russia in order to turn it into a "European country", and instead he has made it a failed state with failing economy.

But since Washington has started all this mess, let it clear it up.

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