Is Qatar Attacking Russia?

The Qatari newspaper Al Raya which is close to the family of Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and expresses the official viewpoint of Qatar ran a story on December 1 under the headline "Syria: the seventh Muslim district of Russia" by Mahmud Zaaluk. The article offers a curious view on Moscow's Middle East policy. Here is an excerpt: "Observing the destruction of Syria, it seems as if we are watching the final episode of a Russian TV serial. We missed the previous episodes ... because if they were translated into Arabic, they would cause us to shed enough tears to drown the entire Middle East. ... Today, Moscow's Middle East screenplay is being filmed with Iran as the film director. The Arabs are simply spectators. Syria is where the filming of the serials is taking place, but it's Russia alone that will reap the profits of the show." He continues: "More than three hundred years ago, Russia had an area of no more than 400,000 square kilometers, but today the Russian flag flies over more than 17 million square kilometers! Historically, Russia was a small state in northeastern Europe, but then the tsars decided to enlarge the country at the expense of the Muslims. They managed to capture several major Islamic states: the Siberian, Astrakhan and Crimean khanates, Turkestan and lands in the Caucasus and the Urals." Then at the end: "It seeks to acquire new lands to make them its own and completely assimilate the local population. And that is what is happening today with Syria. ... The world has been stunned as it watches Russia savor the sight of the blood of hundreds of thousands of dead Syrians. The reason is that Russia has benefits from their destruction, exhaustion and deportation. As it systematically destroys the Syrian people, Russia simultaneously wants to develop a new generation of Syrians who will be brought up exclusively in the Russian culture. Genocide of all the Middle East peoples is occurring today, in its significance similar to what Moscow did to those Islamic states where Muslims have become a minority that has to fight for its freedom."

Zaaluk's profound familiarity with Russian history is breathtaking. Which is to say that his lack thereof is, of course, what is so astounding. Or, more appropriately, his complete "Jahiliyyah," or ignorance to use the Arab word which is also how Arab describe the period before Islam. Someone should tell this Qatari hack: 300 years ago, meaning in 1714, Russia was a great European power that had torn the Polish and Swedish kingdoms to shreds, set out for the shores of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, and even succeeded in building a new capital, Saint Petersburg, on the Baltic Sea. And 150 years before that, Russia under Ivan the Terrible had seized Kazan, and by the time of Peter the Great, a thriving industry had already sprung up in the Urals, including weapons and metallurgical factories. And oh, by the way, the Russian Empire at that time was seven times larger than what the author described.

So now let's look at what Qatar was back then. Truth be told, it wasn't anything. The country just flat-out did not exist. A few hundred people lived on the peninsula where Qatar is today, mostly fishermen, pearl divers and pirates who plundered Persian Gulf merchant ships en route from Basra to India. They were ruled by sheiks from the Al-Hiss region (which is now part of an eastern province of Qatar), and those sheiks were under the thumb of the Ottomans. Also, they were all Shiites, in contrast to the population of Qatar nowadays, the majority of which is made up of Wahhabi Sunnis. The Banu Tamim (literally, the sons of Tamim) is an Arab tribe related to the Mudar, an Arabian tribal group, that migrated to Qatar from the oases of southern Arabia and settled near the present capital of Doha which was a large village where the people sustained themselves through fishing and a smattering of date farming. They herded camels and goats as well. The entire area was controlled by the sheiks of Bahrain. The founding Al Miadadi clan which produced the “dynasty” of Al Thani emirs didn't show up on the peninsula until the early 19th century, which was 200 years ago. The principality (or emirate) of Qatar is thought to have emerged in 1850, and its
leaders were called hakims, or rulers. In 1868, the sheik of Bahrain recognized the independence of Qatar which was led by Sheik Mohammed bin Thani. That same year, he signed a treaty with Britain, stipulating that Qatar would conduct foreign policy only in consultation with a resident representative of the British crown. However, in 1871, the sheik declared himself a vassal of the Ottoman Empire and received the title of kaimakam of Doha. His grandson was forced to acknowledge Qatar as a British protectorate, and later he was forced to grant the British concessions for oil exploration and extraction. Sheik Ali Al Thani (1949-1960) was famous for his uncontrollable wastefulness (for example, he once presented a Saudi delegation with a gift of 60 Cadillacs). In October 1960, internal dynastic clashes led Sheik Ali to abdicate in favor of his son Ahmad. The new sheik (1960-1972) spent hardly any time in his own country. He continually made his way to highly prestigious casinos in Lebanon and Monte Carlo. In 1971, the British “bestowed” a constitution on Qatar that proclaimed the country an independent emirate. The emir, or prince as it is, was given the title of head of state. That means Qatar has been a country for all of 43 years. According to the 2010 census, it has a population of barely 300,000. The remaining 1.5 million people are expats, foreigners who work in the emirate on a contract basis. Of that number, 500,000 come from India, followed in numerical order by Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Nepalese and Filipinos. The country covers 11.5 square kilometers. That is four times smaller than the area of the Moscow region (44,700 square kilometers in area), where 7.2 million people reside (four times the population of Qatar).

So Mahmud Zaaluk has no room to talk about the size, population, and history of Russia like that. He would have been better served to recall the founding of the country that is the real ruler of Qatar - the United States of America. It just so happens that 300 years back, the Anglo-Saxons outright stole land that didn't belong to them and almost totally wiped out the American Indians in the area. While we're at it, the Qatari journalist might want to dredge up the history of Australia and its Aborigines, who were exterminated by those very same Anglo-Saxons. Then we have the Bani Tamim who also destroyed the local tribes upon arriving on the peninsula. And the country of Qatar was created by Britain, as were the United States and Australia. So the vassals are no different from their masters!

Now let's move on and talk about Syria, the Middle East, the extermination of Muslims, and terrorism. Zaaluk is twisting meanings and distorting facts here. Was it not Qatar that in the 1990s funded the terrorists in Chechnya who were killing both Muslims and Christians? And wasn't the Qatari Al Thani dynasty involved in the terrorist acts in New York and Washington on September 11, 2011, by giving a refugee to the conspirators? If not, then why has former Emir Hamad's first cousin, the head of the Interior Ministry, been under house arrest since 2001? Why did Qatar have a lengthy spell on America's list of countries involved in international terrorism?

Qatar became eligible to come off that list only after providing Washington with the Al Udeid air base near Doha, which was used for the bombing of the “Arab brother country” of Iraq in 2003, and transferring full control of ExxonMobil to Washington. And what about the February 2011 coup in Egypt, for which Qatar footed the bill?

Or the outbreak of civil war in Libya in March 2011 funded by Qatar, Qatari special forces' presence in the assault on Gadhafi's palace in Tripoli in August 2011, the bombing of Libya by six Qatari fighter planes from April through August 2011, arrangement of the barbaric murder of the Libyan leader in September 2011 and, a year later, arrangement of the murder of the American ambassador in Benghazi by Islamists, who, like Gadhafi, was sodomized with a stick?

The list of Qatar's "feats" includes fomenting a war in Syria, that has killed hundreds of thousands of Muslims; supporting the terrorists of Jabat an Nusra, who were shown on camera eating the internal organs of captive Syrian soldiers, cooperating with the Islamic State group, backing the overthrow of Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Saleh by terrorists of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, financing terrorist attacks against the Shiite government in Iraq, etc.

To its credit, even Riyadh got fed up with the antics of the “gas midget”, and in June 2013 the Saudis had Emir Hamad and his completely corrupted prime minister, Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani, removed from office. The latter had put his haute couture and oh-so-civilized sensibilities on full display on November 29, 2011. He gave instructions to have Russia's ambassador to Qatar, Vladimir Titorenko, roughed up at the airport in Doha out of rage for Moscow's support of Syrian President Bashar Assad. Current Emir Tamim is certainly no improvement over his "retired" father Hamad, either. Par for the course, considering that he was raised by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who, besides being the chairman of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, is also a well-known extremist and the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood.

So the question now is whether it might be worth Moscow's while to respond more harshly to cheap shots like these
from some Wahhabi riffraff and not to limit itself to downgrading diplomatic relations, as was the case in 2011.

The great country should not allow the malicious yipping of a lapdog of Washington to go unpunished. Everyone knows full well that without a nod from Washington, uppity little Qatar wouldn't dare snarl at the Russian bear.

The time has come to put the matter before the UN and ask whether the rulers of Qatar should be tried for their complicity in terrorism, their financing of terrorism and their overthrow of legitimate governments in several countries. It is time to demand that all these “princes” be put in the dock at the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Vladimir Simonov, an expert on the Middle East, Ph.D., written especially for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook.”