Washington's Gross Negligence or Deliberate Provocation?

On September 17, 2016, air force of the US-led western coalition bombed Syrian army positions near the town of Deir ez-Zor along the Syrian-Iraqi border region. Four combat F-16 and A-10 aircraft carried out the air raid, in direct violation of the latest fragile ceasefire agreement between Damascus and the armed opposition. The aerial assault claimed the lives of 62 Syrian soldiers, leaving some 100 soldiers and civilians injured. The US Defense Department said that a “miscalculation” was to be blamed for the tragedy. The Pentagon also alleged that Americans had been sure that they were launching strikes against ISIS forces (a terrorist organization outlawed in Russia).

However, one does not have to be a military expert to be skeptical of Washington’s version of the story. This is considering the fact that the US Air Force possess advanced reconnaissance systems, and that there had been no reports of the relocation of either the Syrian government troops or ISIS militants in this area prior to the attack. In addition, the trench warfare and the siege of the Syrian garrison and airfield in Deir ez-Zor have been going on for a couple of years. All this means that the probability of making an error when calculating targets should have been close to zero. In fact, this “error” resembles a deliberate provocation by Washington that is devised to resolve a range of military and political problems to the advantage of the US and its allies.

To start with, the US administration would be greatly satisfied if the Syrian peace process comes to a halt. This is because they strongly disagree with the prospects of Bashar al Assad remaining in power, participating in the activities of the transitional government and, subsequently, taking part in the restoration of the Syrian state.

Secondly, it would also be in the US interests for the government troops deployed in Deir ez-Zor to become emasculated. If that happens, the Americans will maintain control over the ISIS-infested area along the Syrian-Iraqi border, where ISIS militants are expected to soon be replaced by the forces of the so-called “moderate opposition.”

The third reason why the US launched an airstrike on September 17 was to make sure that Syria remains split into several enclaves, and that the country’s central government in Damascus, which controls the regions densely populated by Alawite Arabs, would be securely isolated from the rest of the country.

Fourthly, by launching an assault, Americans were trying to divert public attention from the real crisis spot of the Syrian conflict and the humanitarian disaster in Aleppo and the adjacent areas.

This is not the first act of state terrorism committed by Washington against Syrian government troops. Previously, the US Air Force and their allies had “erroneously” bombed Syrian military and civilian facilities, killing military personnel and civilians and destroying the country’s infrastructure. It is precisely due to such “mistakes” that today, the majority of Syrian towns are lying in ruins.

US allies in the region – Saudi Arabia and Turkey, were quick to adopt the unruly behavior of their “big brother” and senior NATO bloc partner. For example, Riyadh was not too scrupulous either when it inflicted airstrikes against the long-suffering Yemen. On August 22-24, 2016, Ankara grossly violated Syrian sovereignty by bombing and shelling the neighboring Syrian territories and ordering its armored and mechanized troops to cross the border of this sovereign state. Later, Turkish authorities invented a cover story stating that Recep Erdogan had endorsed the operation, as he had allegedly made up his mind to join the struggle against radical ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra Islamist
groups (the US air forces used the same pretense when it launched its airstrikes against Deir ez-Zor). In reality, these areas had already been cleared of Islamists by the Kurdish militia, and the Turkish military machine was ultimately targeting the Syrian Kurds, who had been courageously fighting the jihadists for several years.

In justifying their aggression against the Syrian Kurds, Turkish authorities stress that the latter sympathize with the struggle of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (KWP) for their rights and freedoms. While labeling the Kurds from the neighboring country as terrorists, Turkish president Erdogan continues a punitive operation against the Turkish Kurds, while using intelligence agencies and Turkish Islamist groups as mediators in his negotiations with Syria and Iraqi-based jihadists. Even to this day, Turkey remains a transit corridor and conduit for radical Islamists looking to infiltrate Europe. In the course of his recent visit to Turkey, Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia, Valeriy Gerasimov, warned his Turkish counterpart that the country's armed forces are conducting illegitimate activities in Syria. He also stressed that Ankara would put itself at risk of military and political backlashes if it fails to cease the Euphrates Shield military campaign, or if it continues expanding its geography.

As can be seen from the above, it could be concluded that Washington, Riyadh and Ankara are using the "struggle against global terrorism" as an excuse to attain their selfish strategical and tactical objectives in the region. The allies are looking to either topple Bashar al Asad's regime in Syria, or drive it into isolation. They are also pursuing other goals, the main among them being to neutralize the influence of Iran in Shia communities of Arab countries and suppress the Kurdish national movement in Turkey and Syria. And the administration headed by Barack Obama, a Noble Peace Prize winner and ‘peace advocate’, is setting the tone for this aggressive quest.

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