

What Does Russia Want in Syria?

By Tony CARTALUCCI,
New Eastern Outlook
Oct 6, 2015

The Western media has portrayed **Russia's recent joint anti-terror security operations with the Syrian government** as a means of expanding its influence beyond its borders. CNN in its article, "**Petraeus accuses Putin of trying to re-establish Russian Empire,**" would go as far as claiming:

One of America's top former generals compared the situation in Syria Tuesday to a historic nuclear disaster, implicitly criticizing the U.S. for allowing it to worsen, and accused Russia's President of trying to re-establish an empire.

CNN would also report:

Russian moves in Syria are designed to bolster and hold on to their naval base and airstrip along the Mediterranean coast of Syria, and shore up the al-Assad regime in order to preserve Russian influence in the Middle East, Petraeus said.

"I think that what Vladimir Putin would like to do is resurrect the Russian empire," he said.

Ironically, the United States maintains over 800 military bases around the world while occupying Afghanistan since 2001 and carrying out armed operations everywhere from Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, and Syria to the borders of Pakistan. Russia's only overseas base is in fact the naval facility mentioned by Petraeus. Petraeus never elaborates on how despite such obvious disparity between Russia and America regarding foreign policy, why Russia is suspected of pursuing "empire" while the US is not then completely guilty of already establishing and fighting desperately to maintain an immense one.

While undoubtedly Russia's cooperation with the Syrian government indicates Moscow's ability to project power beyond its borders, it has done so only at the request of the legitimate government of Syria, and only after all other possible options have been exhausted.

And despite many having depicted Syria's ongoing crisis as a "civil war," it is abundantly clear that it is nothing of the sort, with terrorists receiving the summation of their material support, and many of their fighters even from over Syria's borders, not from within them.

Stopping Global Blitzkrieg

In 2011, when the United States and its collaborators in NATO and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) set out to destroy the North African nation-state of Libya, it was portrayed as an isolated intervention based upon the geopolitical doctrine of "responsibility to protect" – or in other words – an alleged humanitarian intervention.

What quickly became clear, even before the operation concluded, was that the US goal was regime change from the beginning, with many of the militant groups supported by the US-led axis via airstrikes and weapon deliveries revealed to be in fact terrorist organizations, including the US State Department-list foreign terrorist organization, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG).

Shortly after the fall of the Libyan government in Tripoli, it also became clear that US military aggression in Libya was in no way an isolated intervention. Almost immediately after hostilities ceased, US-NATO-GCC armed and backed militant groups began transferring weapons and fighters to NATO-member Turkey where they were staged for what was to become **the invasion of Aleppo**, the largest city in Syria.

The invasion of Aleppo was part of a wider US-backed campaign to divide and destroy the nation of Syria just as was done in Libya. Additionally there is the ongoing US-NATO occupation of Afghanistan and the division and destruction of Iraq after a US invasion in 2003 and a subsequent occupation there ever since. Considering this, what is revealed is a regional military campaign of conquest stretching from North Africa to Central Asia and pressing up against the borders of both Russia and China.

It must also be remembered that in 2011, the so-called “Arab Spring” was eventually revealed to be the premeditated work of the US State Department who began training, equipping, and arraying activists against targeted governments years before the protests began. This would be admitted to by the New York Times in a 2011 article titled, “**U.S. Groups Helped Nurture Arab Uprisings**,” which reported:

A number of the groups and individuals directly involved in the revolts and reforms sweeping the region, including the April 6 Youth Movement in Egypt, the Bahrain Center for Human Rights and grass-roots activists like Entsar Qadhi, a youth leader in Yemen, received training and financing from groups like the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute and Freedom House, a nonprofit human rights organization based in Washington...

The New York Times would also admit that these Washington-based groups were all in turn funded and directed by the US State Department:

The Republican and Democratic institutes are loosely affiliated with the Republican and Democratic Parties. They were created by Congress and are financed through the National Endowment for Democracy, which was set up in 1983 to channel grants for promoting democracy in developing nations. The National Endowment receives about \$100 million annually from Congress. Freedom House also gets the bulk of its money from the American government, mainly from the State Department.

Similar regime-change operations were carried out directly on Russia’s western border in the nation of Ukraine, where the US backed Neo-Nazi militants violently overthrow the elected government in Kiev. In the wake of the coup, the junta set out to crush any opposition, from political parties to the inevitable armed groups that rose up against its literal Neo-Nazi militants.

And as this wave of US-backed global destabilization, war, and regime change swept

the surface of the planet, during its initial success, US hubris was difficult to contain.

In a 2011 Atlantic article titled, “**The Arab Spring: ‘A Virus That Will Attack Moscow and Beijing’**,” it would be revealed precisely what Washington’s end game was:

[US Senator John McCain] said, “A year ago, Ben-Ali and Gaddafi were not in power. Assad won’t be in power this time next year. This Arab Spring is a virus that will attack Moscow and Beijing.” McCain then walked off the stage.

Comparing the Arab Spring to a virus is not new for the Senator — but to my knowledge, coupling Russia and China to the comment is.

Senator McCain’s framing reflects a triumphalism bouncing around at this conference. It sees the Arab Spring as a product of Western design — and potentially as a tool to take on other non-democratic governments.

Upon weighing both the comments of US politicians, documented evidence of the engineered nature of the so-called “Arab Spring,” and regime change operations in Ukraine, it is clear that indeed the “Arab Spring” was undoubtedly “a product of Western design” and a “tool” the US fully sought to use against the rest of the planet, including Moscow and Beijing.

In 2011, the use of military force to finish where US-backed political destabilization left off was not fully understood. With the US now having destroyed Libya, Syria, and Ukraine with either direct or proxy military force, it is clear that the US is engaged in a slow motion, 4th generation warfare-version of blitzkrieg – the lightning fast brand of military conquest used by Nazi Germany in the 1930’s and 40’s to conquer Western Europe, parts of North Africa and Eastern Europe, and the attempted conquest of Russia.

It is clear then that Russia today, is not interested in building an “empire,” but instead interested in stopping an obvious wave of Western conquest ultimately and admittedly aimed at Moscow itself.

Russia Wants Balance

Russia’s relationship with Syria is entirely different than NATO’s relationship with the current junta occupying Kiev, Ukraine. Syria is a sovereign nation with its own independent long-established institutions and policies. Kiev’s junta literally includes foreigners who directly control the fate of Ukraine and its people. This difference between Russia seeking partners, and Washington seeking obedient proxies, is what differentiates the unipolar world the West seeks to perpetuate, and the multipolar world Russia and other emerging nations seek to replace it with.

Russia’s involvement in Syria is to first stop a wave of instability and military conquest inevitably destined for Moscow itself, and then to establish a balance of power throughout the world where the future creation of such waves is all but impossible.

This is not only Russia’s stated policy, but also what it is demonstrably pursuing on the stage of geopolitics. The basis for its legitimacy and growing influence is its adherence to the principles of international law, respect toward national sovereignty, and promotion of this multipolar future. As soon as Moscow betrays these principles,

it will forfeit its legitimacy and influence and join the West in its increasing irrelevance and isolation upon the world stage.

For the West's part, both political and media circles have gone through extraordinary lengths to not only avoid mentioning Russia's multipolar vision of the future, but to portray Russia to be the very neo-imperialist in fiction that the West is in reality.

With Libya already destroyed, Iraq struggling, and should Syria fall, Iran, even according to the US' own policy papers, would be next. Looking at a map reveals that after Iran there is little to stop hordes of US-backed terrorists from flooding into southern Russia. Moscow was required to pick a spot, draw a line, and hold it to stop what the West had arrayed against it. That spot is apparently Syria.

By looking at a map we see not a Russia expanding its empire, but a Russia struggling against admitted attempts to destabilize all around it before eventually targeting Russia itself. What does Russia seek in Syria? It seeks what all other nations seek and are entitled to, self-preservation.

Russia is not building an empire, it seeks to stop one that threatens its existence from reaching its borders with proxies that include Neo-Nazis, terrorists, and NATO forces themselves.

Tony Cartalucci, Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher and writer, especially for the online magazine "[New Eastern Outlook](#)".