

## ‘Coincidence: ISIS launched offensive straight after US strike on Syrian troops?’

By [RT](#)

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*If Russia bombed Washington allies in Syria just as the US ‘mistakenly’ did, UN envoy Samantha Power would make as much of a stink as she possibly could, analysts said, adding that in general the US is uncomfortable in a new relationship with Russia in the context of the ceasefire.*

The US coalition carried out airstrikes on the Syrian Army near the eastern city of Deir ez-Zor on Saturday. 62 people were killed, according to the Russian Ministry of Defense.

The air attack was followed by a bitter exchange between the US and Russia at the United Nations Security Council on Saturday night.

*“It is highly suspicious that the US chose to conduct this particular air strike at this time,”* Russia’s Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said, adding that the strike that killed Syrian soldiers did not look like an honest mistake.

US envoy Samantha Power expressed “regret” over the strike and then went on to slam Russia’s “*uniquely hypocritical and cynical*” attempt to make Washington explain itself at an urgent UNSC meeting.

According to **Joshua Landis** of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Oklahoma, the US “*is very uncomfortable in this new relationship with Russia and the ceasefire.*”

*“As we’ve heard, the Defense Department is very uneasy with this. And the US has been taking it on both cheeks – not only have they erroneously bombed Deir ez-Zor, killing a lot of Syrian troops, but just yesterday they were kicked out of a Syrian town in Northern Syria,”* he said.

Landis referred to an incident when a small group of US Special Forces reportedly fled from the Syrian town of al-Rai near the Turkish border after being threatened by rebel fighters. The Free Syrian Army (FSA), which is considered to be American allies, kicked the US military out, calling them “*infidels*” and “*crusaders.*”

*“This was a very embarrassing scene for the US, because these moderate militias are supposed to be welcoming to the US,”* Landis added.

Commenting on Power’s rhetoric at the UNSC, he said, “*the US doesn’t want to get on its knees in front of Russia and beg forgiveness.*”

*"The US has a lot of competitive, and long, history with Russia, whether it is in Ukraine, or it is in Syria. I am sure, however, if the shoe is on the other foot, and these were American allies who've been bombed by Russia, that Ambassador Power would make as much of a stink as she possibly could. That is what her job is to do. And Russia would have to find a way to thread that needle. There is a certain amount of grandstanding on all sides here. And the US is clearly guilty of that itself. It is trying to deflect the blame in this situation and place it on Russia for being allied with Assad – an enemy of the US," Landis told RT.*

### **'Who is Samantha Power working for?'**

**William Jones**, Washington Bureau Chief of Executive Intelligence Review magazine has criticized the US envoy to the UN for *"not only throwing a monkey wrench into the whole thing,"* but refusing to even talk.

*"I ask myself the question: who is Samantha Power working for? Is it the US government? Kerry and Lavrov put together this deal apparently... also with the backing of the White House – it's US government policy. What she should do as representative of the US government is try and follow this policy,"* he said.

*Jones said he suspected that Secretary Kerry might be "extremely upset about this whole encounter."*

*"It is not the way that he conducts policy, and it is not a policy that is in the interest of the US. I think she should be fired on the basis of what she has done,"* he added.

### **'Info leak to terrorists ahead of strike can't be ruled out'**

It is likely that information about the US air strikes against Syrian Army positions was leaked to terrorists ahead of the raid, so they could start their offensive against government forces, **Gregory R. Copley**, editor of Defense & Foreign Affairs, told RT.

*"Is it a coincidence that the [Islamic State] fighters were immediately ready to launch an offensive once the air strike was made on the Syrian forces?"* Copley asked.

*"This perhaps indicates that there might well have been a leak of some of the US targeting against the Syrian forces to [Islamic State] forces or other jihadist forces which were to enable them to take advantage of the so-called 'mistaken' strike by the US air force."*

Another explanation presented by the editor of Defense & Foreign Affairs is that US President Barack Obama personally wanted to get more involved in Syria before he leaves office.

*"The outgoing president, Barack Obama, really wanted to get the US engaged in military operations directly in Syria,"* Copley said. *"This will no doubt gain him some degree of support back from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar."*

*"It is certainly likely to allow the US to escalate its position because that is what I think President Obama is seeking to do, to upgrade this conflict against President Assad rather than against Daesh."*

If the strike was not deliberate, then the US is to blame for its forces' *"poor targeting"* intelligence.

*“What we see is the US going into these areas with very poor targeting information. It is making a lot of mistakes,”* Copley said, noting that a similar situation is unfolding with the US contingent fighting in Iraq, where US forces are *“totally disorganized.”*

## **US hostility towards Assad unchanged**

The US might say that the strike was *“unintentional,”* but at the same time they have a political position in Syria that is at variance with the Syrian government, as well as with Russia, noted **Abayomi Azikiwe**, editor at Pan-African News Wire.

*“They have not changed their position of hostility towards the government of President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus,”* he told RT.

He also commented on what this incident might mean for the future of the agreement reached between Russia and the US during recent [talks in Geneva](#).

*“To the extent that agreement existed, there have been reports coming out of the last two days that suggested there have been hundreds of the violations of the agreement by the armed opposition inside the country. This doesn’t help the entire process of reaching a long-term political settlement in the country,”* Azikiwe said.

What’s interesting, the analyst said, is that Jabhat Fateh al-Sham armed opposition group, formerly known as the Al-Nusra Front, rejected this agreement, saying that it gave too much power to the Syrian government.

*“This is problematic for the US. If the agreement is effective, then it eliminates their main foreign policy imperative vis-à-vis Syria – that is the removal of the legitimate government inside the country,”* he added.

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