

On John Kerry's Hypocritical Mission to Saudi Arabia

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While the U.S. has been blaming the House of Saud for allegedly supporting and funding Al-Qaeda and for its involvement in 9/11, it is still the House of Saud that the U.S. has to talk to 'end' the war in Syria. How logical of the U.S. policy makers! It is true that the war in Syria cannot potentially end unless the support extremist outfits continue to receive from Saudi Arabia and its allies is cut off; however, what does not make any sense at all is how this support and the war can end when the U.S. itself continues to provide weapons worth billions of dollars to Saudi Arabia; when the real enemy is not Syria, its regime or its people; and, most importantly, when Saudi Arabia's new strategic ally, Turkey, continues to bomb the most successful ground force against Daesh, Kurds.

This is precisely where the greatest contradiction for the U.S. lies: it can neither afford to really confront the House of Saud nor can it continue, politically speaking, to support its wars by making long terms military commitments that the House of Saud has been asking for since the beginning of the conflict. For the U.S. president—the noble peace award winner—this contradiction has turned out to be too formidable to overcome.

John Kerry's latest visit to Saudi Arabia was, in this context, yet another attempt on the part of the U.S. to pacify its angry friend before the up-coming Vienna talks. This tour, in straightforward terms, is part of the U.S.' grand preparations for confronting Russia during these talks. That is to say, far from being a visit to end the war, the visit's purpose was to assure the House of Saud that the U.S. would continue to assist them in every possible way to reach the desire end of the war i.e., achieve a 'minus-Assad' Syria.

While the US officials stated that the purpose of the visit was to take 'opposition' forces on board before the up-coming talks, it is ironical as well as self-contradictory for the U.S. to detach itself from the so-called 'opposition'. The question is: how different is the U.S. stance from that of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, UAE and their funded groups? If all of them have been and are still fighting for Assad's removal from power, it is un-understandable as well as illogical for us to categorize the U.S. as a non-opposition actor in the conflict. The U.S. has been and still is "opposing" Assad's rule that truly makes it least different from the House of Saud and its allies.

This is why the U.S. considers talking to the 'like-minded' group of states before the Vienna talks begin on Tuesday, May 17. That the U.S. is part of "Syrian opposition" is also evident from what its allies in the Gulf have been expecting from it—an expectation that has now turned into a sort of political agony. Diplomats in the Gulf say Saudi Arabia sees U.S. support for the rebels as "inadequate", and fears that Washington may abandon their shared stance that Assad must immediately leave power as part of any negotiated political deal. That is to say, the U.S.' "chief ally" in the region considers the U.S. a part of the so-called

“opposition”, while the U.S. continues to project itself as a mediator or, at the most, leader of the coalition against Daesh.

Therefore, the U.S. State Department’s statement that said that Kerry and Saudi officials discussed the need to strengthen truce and their support for continued UN talks was actually meant for only general public’s consumption. As it stands, neither does it reflect the U.S.’ actual position in Syria, the nature of its campaign or the logic of its very involvement in Syria in the first place.

This is not so difficult to grasp. Were the U.S. administration truly focused on establishing peace in Syria, it must immediately end the support it has been providing to the so-called rebel groups and force its allies in the Gulf to do the same. However, were they (the U.S. and its allies) to do so, this would straightaway pave the way for the Syrian army to walk over the territory it had lost to the foreign funded “rebels.”

It is for this reason that the U.S. and its Gulf allies continue to oppose Russian stance with regard to declaring all terror groups in Syria as “terrorist organizations.” They have been opposing this stance for two primary reasons: first, the “opposition” (terror groups and their supporting states) hope to eventually overthrow Assad; secondly, were the so-called “rebel” groups to be placed on terror list, these groups could no longer be considered to have broken a truce, allowing Syria a free hand to eliminate them. Were this to happen, the U.S. and its allies would lose their vital ground assets, amounting to an outright defeat in the war.

With the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Turkey (read: Turkey’s recently exposed support for ISIS in Syria) and other Gulf allies still supporting terror outfits, the purpose of holding peace talks is highly ambiguous as well as self-contradictory. With Saudi Arabia and the U.S. sticking to “Assad must go” stance, it is highly unlikely that talks can yield any meaningful result; and were the talks to fail, the House of Saud and its allies would certainly find in it an opportunity to restart funding Syrian “rebels” on a much wider scale to boost up their fragile position against Syrian army. The big question here is: Will Russia re-consider to send its previously withdrawn forces back to Syria to confront this possible re-newed ‘Arab assault’?

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