

Russia's Middle East Strategy: "Balance" vs. "Betrayal"?

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There's an intense debate raging within the Alternative and Independent media over whether Russia's contemporary Mideast strategy amounts to "balancing" or "betraying" the Resistance given the Eurasian Great Power's extremely close military cooperation with "Israel" in Syria.

The Freakish Fusion Of Anti-Zionism and Russophilia

There's perhaps no political entity more reviled in the [Independent Media Community](#) — which refers to the collection of publicly financed non-Western media outlets, independent/self-funded ones, and their community of followers who all reject the Mainstream Media — than ["Israel"](#) owing to the strong anti-Zionist sentiment that the vast majority of its members embrace.

Many of them are well-intended folks who are outraged by the injustices that the self-professed "Jewish State" carries out against the occupied Palestinians with impunity, to say nothing of "Israel's" destabilizing role in the Mideast at large. Their view is that "Israel" is one of the main forces of evil in the world, which by default makes it the enemy of all responsible international actors and their supporters. About the latter, the Alt-Media Community lionizes Russian President Putin as the real leader of the free world because they truly believe that his efforts at actively resisting American Hybrid War aggression in Georgia, Crimea, and Syria make him a modern-day hero who has profoundly altered the course of history for the better.

It's therefore impossible for them to ever believe that the Russian leader would willingly cooperate with "Israel" on anything whatsoever unless he was secretly playing "5D chess" with the intent to eventually undermine it, but this popular dogma of the Alt-Media is actually nothing more than the freakish fusion of its members' equally passionate anti-Zionism and Russophilia into a false projection of their own wishful thinking expectations onto Russian foreign policy.

As "politically unpalatable" as it is to the many people who [practically worship](#) President Putin as the ultimate force for good in the world, he actually has nothing against "Israel" and is on record praising it far and beyond whatever one might argue that he "has to say" for "diplomatic reasons" as proven by the author's [collection of quotes from the official Kremlin website](#) that was published in May 2018. Not only that, but it's an uncontested fact as revealed by the Russian Defense Ministry spokesman last September and reported by [RT](#) that Russia's military coordination with "Israel" in Syria is real.

“Putinyahu’s Rusrael”



The unofficial alliance between the two (elaborated on by the author in his piece half a year ago provocatively titled “[Putinyahu’s Rusrael](#)”) goes further than “passively facilitating” “Israel’s” hundreds of strikes against the IRGC and Hezbollah in the Arab Republic since the onset of Russia’s 2015 anti-terrorist intervention there to include carving out an anti-Iranian buffer zone 140 kilometers beyond the occupied Golan Heights in southern Syria at Tel Aviv’s request and even dispatching Special Forces to dig up “IDF” remains in the middle of an SAA-ISIS firefight.

These details aren’t the figments of an “overactive imagination” but were officially confirmed by the Russian Defense Ministry in RT’s aforementioned hyperlinked report. As if that wasn’t enough proof of the closeness of Russian-“Israeli” relations, President Putin spoke last week at the “Keren Heyesod Foundation’s” annual conference that was hosted this year in Moscow and gave what might perhaps be one of the most important speeches of his career that’s a must-read for anyone remotely interested in the truth about their ties.

According to the transcript published by the [official Kremlin website](#) (with a video link to the Russian original [here](#) for those who doubt that he truly said what’s attributed to him), he “said with pride that probably there has never been such a high level of relations between Russia and Israel”, confidently asserting that he regards “Israel” as a “Russian-speaking country”, and even boldly saying that the two are “a true common family”, the latter description of which he immediately proceeded to say was said “without exaggeration”. It’s important to point out that the “Keren Heyesod Foundation” describes itself as the “[fundraising arm of the Zionist movement](#)” and is an extremely influential organization lobbying on behalf of that ideology’s interests all across the world, so President Putin’s words of about a familial bond between Russia and “Israel” and full endorsement of the organization’s activities were spoken to a group that embodies everything that the Alt-Media Community’s most zealous anti-Zionists oppose.

Debunking The “Betrayal” Narrative

The less mature of the community’s members insist that President Putin is secretly an anti-Zionist just like they are because they can’t overcome the cognitive dissonance that’s triggered by the factual evidence of his extremely close ties with “Israel” and now recently even the global Zionist movement given the freakish fusion of their anti-Zionist views and “hero worship” of the Russian leader as being the ultimate force of good in the world opposed to what they consider to be its ultimate evil, though the more mature among them are naturally wondering what’s driving his strategic calculations.

There are two prevailing schools of thought explaining this, namely that it either amounts to “balancing” or “betrayal”, the first-mentioned of which refers to what the author earlier wrote about Russia’s 21st-century grand strategy to become the [supreme “balancing” force](#) in Afro-Eurasia while the second simply claims that he stabbed Syria and the rest of the

Resistance in the back by selling out to their enemies.

It's that version of events that will be tackled first and debunked before explaining why President Putin is indeed "balancing", whether the most opinionated of his supporters approve of it or not. Contrary to what many in the Alt-Media Community wishfully thought, Russia isn't a part of the Resistance, though it's veritably assisted them with fighting terrorism in Syria and that's probably where the misconception comes from. Therefore, Russia can't "betray" the Resistance since it was never allied with it in a traditional sense to begin with beyond the short-term convergence of anti-terrorist interests that they currently share. It was wrongly thought by many that this automatically translated into anti-Zionism because of how "Israel" unsuccessfully tried to apply the [Yinon Plan](#) to Syria through these means but was stopped by Russia's intervention, but that narrative doesn't account for the two parties reaching their military cooperation agreement a little over a week prior to the onset of that anti-terrorist campaign during [Netanyahu's visit to Moscow](#) on 21 September, 2015.

Quid Pro Quo

Bearing in mind that Russia unofficially allied with "Israel" before officially beginning its intervention in Syria, it can be said that those two have been on the same side since the mission formally started despite their public differences over the future of the democratically elected and legitimate government of President Assad. That doesn't, however, mean that Russia intervened in Syria because of "Israel" (though the outcome was nevertheless that Iran's role in filling the growing security void there was countered by Russia and is progressively being replaced by it in a manner that does indeed work out to "Israel's" modified regional benefit), but that it saw the opportunity to unprecedentedly expand their nascent partnership by taking advantage of Moscow's pressing security interests in saving the Arab Republic from ISIS and eliminating nationals from the former Soviet Union who were fighting there in support of the terrorists before returning to their home countries to replicate the "caliphate" model that they spent years training to create.

Meanwhile, Russia keenly understood that "Israel's" pressing security interests rested in pushing back Iran's strategic advance towards the occupied Golan Heights and preventing the Islamic Republic and its Hezbollah allies from entering into a position to launch rocket attacks against it as part of a forthcoming liberation offensive there. Accordingly, that's why Moscow entered into the Machiavellian pact with Tel Aviv to allow its new unofficial allies the freedom to bomb their adversaries whenever they'd like as long as they notified Moscow ahead of time to prevent midair collisions and collateral damage despite Russian troops cooperating with those same targets on the ground in fighting terrorism. With their newfound and deeply trust-based military relations, Russia and "Israel" were able to take their comprehensive ties to an altogether higher level that's approaching the point where the latter might soon enter into a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Union according to President Putin when he was speaking to the "Keren Heyesod Foundation".

Midwifing Multipolarity In the Mideast

It's not just that President Putin is a philo-Semite positively inclined towards "Israel" as a result of his lifelong experiences growing up with Russian Jews (some of whom still remain his very close friends), but that this judo master understands that his country can only succeed with its ambitions to "balance" the Mideast if it's on excellent terms with the self-

professed “Jewish State”. This is even more so the case if Russia can succeed in one day replacing America’s role as “Israel’s” protector like it’s evidently trying to do after having carved out the 140-kilometer-deep anti-Iranian buffer zone last summer in a stunning geopolitical feat that not even Washington under its extremely pro-“Israeli” President was capable of pulling off. The way that Russia sees it, certain “sacrifices” must be made in and by Syria so as to accelerate the emergence of the [Multipolar World Order](#) and Moscow’s supreme “balancing” role in maintaining it, which the Eurasian Great Power believes serves grander, longer-term, and more “collective” interests than returning to the USSR’s anti-Zionist policy.

It shouldn’t ever be forgotten that Russia’s military mandate in Syria is strictly to fight terrorism and not defend the state’s internationally recognized borders, which is the “loophole” “justifying” the deal that it struck with “Israel” and debunking the claims that it “betrayed” Damascus as a result. Speaking of which, Lavrov put Russia’s relationship with Syria’s leader into perspective when [remarking](#) in 2016 that “Assad is not our ally, by the way. Yes, we support him in the fight against terrorism and in preserving the Syrian state. But he is not an ally like Turkey is the ally of the United States.” What was probably meant by that provocative clarification is that Russia does not have a conventional mutual defense agreement with Syria and therefore isn’t responsible for defending it from “Israeli” or even Turkish attacks, with Russia’s top diplomat even saying as recently as last month that Ankara’s envisaged buffer zone in northern Syria is “[absolutely legal](#)” despite Damascus [condemning](#) it as “a flagrant violation of international law, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.”

Russia’s Senior Foreign Policy Planner Schools The Fools

Earlier in the summer, Senior Advisor of the Foreign Policy Planning Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Maria Khodynskaya-Golenischeva published an article in Russia’s top think tank, the Valdai Club, about “[How Bloc-Free Mentality Helps Russia Be a Welcome Foreign Actor in the Middle East](#)” and in which she [criticized](#) those who claim without any evidence whatsoever that her country is allied with Iran against the latter’s regional enemies. The words of this high-ranking official deserve to be republished in full so as to preemptively avoid any unfounded allegations from the Alt-Media Community that they’re being misportrayed for the sake of “pushing an agenda”, so without further ado, here’s what she said that adds further credence to the argument being made in this analysis:

“Incidentally, the emphasis of some colleagues (primarily from the West) on some ‘other side of the medal’ as regards the Russia-Iran cooperation on Syria (in the bilateral format and the Astana venue) makes no sense. They are trying to present this cooperation as some Russia-Shia axis that is alienating the Arab world from Moscow, primarily the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and the Sunni opposition in Syria.

However, this view is contrary to hard facts. Russia has become the only country involved in the Syrian file to preserve contacts with all players in Syria without exception: the Syrian Government, political and armed opposition’s organizations (except those classified as terrorist) and the states involved in the Syrian settlement. There are examples of joint action by Russia and the armed Sunni opposition “on the ground”, for instance, the participation of the Shabab Al Sunnah in the operation to free the valley of the Yarmouk River from ISIS, in which the Russian Aerospace Forces were involved.

The same is true of Russia-Israel interaction, which has not been marred by Moscow-Tehran cooperation. In the framework of Syrian settlement, Russia and Israel not only discussed “deconflicting” initiatives but also cooperated “on the ground”. Importantly, it was Russia that ensured the withdrawal of the pro-Iran forces from the Golan Heights and the Russian military police ensures security in this area, thereby creating the conditions for the mission of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)...Russia is trying to avoid alliances with these or other groups of players in order to ensure freedom of action for itself, in part, in developing bilateral relations with each of these states.”

Iran Ignores Russia’s Unofficial Alliance With “Israel”

Just because Russia isn’t allied with Iran doesn’t mean that it’s allied against it in general despite its unofficial alliance with “Israel” to that effect in Syria. In fact, Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif [told](#) his Russian counterpart earlier this month that “Relations between Russia and Iran are at the highest level over the past decades” and that “Cooperation between Russia and Iran has a strategic character and is especially successful in the energy and transport sectors, and in the area of maintaining peace and security”, which is certainly true. This somewhat surprising pronouncement made in spite of Russia’s “passive facilitation” of literally hundreds of “Israeli” strikes against the IRGC and their Hezbollah allies in Syria, as well as the carving out of the 140-kilometer-deep anti-Iranian buffer zone beyond the occupied Golan Heights is due to Iran separating its interactions with Russia in the wider region from their bilateral ties and apparently accepting the existence of “indirect kinetic competition” between them in Syria.

Whether willingly or compelled out of an increasingly desperate strategic situation motivated by the carrot of some form of future sanctions relief, Iran recognizes the reality that Russia is unofficially allied with “Israel” in Syria but doesn’t allow that “politically inconvenient” fact in a third party state to interfere with their bilateral ties. After all, one of the reasons why Russia partnered with “Israel” in the first place is because Iranian influence was on the regional rise following the interlinked but delayed disasters of the US’ 2003 War on Iraq and the 2011 [theater-wide Color Revolution](#) popularly known as the “Arab Spring”, but Moscow’s purely interests-driven “balancing” act could conceivably shift against Tel Aviv one day if it comes to be regarded as too powerful once again sometime in the future. One way that “Israel” is seeking to preemptively offset that scenario, however, is to encourage Russia to fill the security voids left in the region following the US’ so-called “Pivot to Asia” (or rather, to the “Indo-Pacific”) to [“contain”](#) China and Iran’s recent setbacks in Syria.

Concluding Thoughts

Russian foreign policy isn’t formulated based on morals, ethics, or principles, but on cold, hard interests in full alignment with the Neo-Realist paradigm of International Relations despite sometimes being disguised by Neo-Liberal rhetoric touching upon the three aforementioned themes when selling a certain decision to the masses or criticizing a rival’s. Never, however, has contemporary Russian foreign policy — and especially under President Putin — ever even remotely hinted at being allied with the Resistance against “Israel”, let alone out of shared anti-Zionist sympathies. To the contrary, the practice of Russian foreign policy as evidenced by Moscow’s unofficial alliance with Tel Aviv in allowing the latter to bomb the IRGC and their Hezbollah allies literally hundreds of times with impunity and then carving out a 140-kilometer-deep anti-Iranian buffer zone to protect the self-professed “Jewish State” at its request proves that it not only doesn’t share the Resistance’s commitment to destroying “Israel”, but that it’s actually committed to protecting their

enemy instead.

All of this is common knowledge to any objective observer, but unfortunately it seems to be the case that most of the Alt-Media Community is full of overly enthusiastic wishful thinkers who freakishly fused their deeply held anti-Zionist and Russophilic beliefs together and then projected that ideological monstrosity onto President Putin in imagining him to be the “knight in shining armor on a white horse” who’s destined to destroy what they regard as the global evil of “Israel” just like how St. George is depicted slaying the dragon on the Russian coat of arms. It’s regrettable that so many people bought into this false narrative that it’s practically become dogmatic at this point and enforced by a wide array of gatekeepers committed to keeping this lie alive, but that’s precisely why the author felt it necessary to carry out a comprehensive analysis of Russia’s Mideast strategy at this time. Everyone’s entitled to their own views about whether Moscow is “balancing” or “betraying” the Resistance, but their conclusions should be based on facts and not on fake news.

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