

## United States Signals Intention to Occupy Eastern Syria and Divide the Nation

The United States is moving closer to active involvement in the Syrian conflict.

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*Tensions in Syria hit an all time high when the [US military shot down a Syrian SU-22](#) that was attacking Al Qaeda jihadist forces on the ground.*

The US version of the incident goes like this ([courtesy of The Hill](#))...

A statement from the U.S. military said it shot down the Syrian SU-22 in self-defense and after contacting Russian counterparts through the established deconfliction zone. The Syrian aircraft was bombing U.S.-backed forces fighting the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) south of Tabqa. It was the first time the United States has shot down a Syrian plane, and the first time a U.S. military jet has shot down any manned aircraft since 1999.

The reality is much more complex, yet simpler. Syria was flying its jets over Syrian sovereign territory, moving to attack Al Qaeda jihadists (aka “moderate rebels”) operating illegally in Syrian territory, and backed up by US forces, which have set up operations illegally within Syrian sovereign territory.

The US has not been invited by the internationally recognized government of Syria to fight ISIS on Syrian land, and as such the United States has de facto invaded and occupied Eastern Syria.

To make matters worse, the US is supporting Al Qaeda terrorists as a foot soldier proxy army, in order to secure as much of Eastern Syria as possible, and create a rump state Syria, effectively dividing the once united country.

Russia responded to the US aggression by saying its surface-to-air missile systems in Syria would begin to track manned and unmanned aircraft from the US coalition if they move west of the Euphrates River.

Once again we see American regime change policy gone horribly wrong (as expected) with consequences now pushing the US military into full confrontation with Russia and Iran...two countries which have been invited by the Syrian government to operate on Syrian sovereign territory to fight ISIS and Al Qaeda.

[The Hill](#) reports that American forces may be digging in, ready to protect the Al Qaeda army at all costs so as to ensure an East-West division in Syria...

Robert Ford, a former U.S. ambassador to Syria, said there is real danger to the U.S. as tensions flare.

Syrian President Bashar Assad has vowed to recapture all Syrian territory lost during the nation's civil war, Ford noted in an email.

"There is, therefore, a real risk of escalation, especially if, unlike in western Syria, the Americans insist on backing up their Syrian allies on the ground and there is no deal with Assad," he said.

U.S. and Syrian forces largely had stayed out of each other's way before, because the United States operated mostly in eastern Syria and the government forces mostly in western Syria.

But since the fall of Aleppo, pro-Assad forces have been moving further east, bringing them into closer proximity with the U.S. forces and upping the potential for confrontation, said Ford, a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute and professor at Yale.

Assad can't match U.S. airpower, Ford said, but could hit U.S. forces in other ways.

"The escalation may be asymmetrical," he said. "Assad's air force can't challenge ours. Look instead for car bombs, ground ambushes and small-scale, regular attacks against our forces and those we back in eastern Syria. The Syrian government is very experienced at testing the edges of any envelope or red line."



Syrian President Bashar Assad, left, meets with Robert Ford, U.S. Ambassador to Syria, in Damascus, Syria, on January 27, 2011. (Photo: US State Dept.)

War hawks in neocon think tanks are salivating at an all out confrontation breaking out between all the players involved...

Nile Gardiner, director of the Heritage Foundation's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom, doubted Moscow would follow through on its threat. Russia, for instance, did not retaliate militarily after Turkey shot down its jet in 2015, he noted.

He called the U.S. military's decision to shoot down a Syrian jet a "welcome development."

"Washington has sent a clear message to Moscow that it's no longer business as usual," he said. "For too long, the Russians have treated Syria as their own backyard."

But even if neither Russia nor the United States wants to get dragged further into war, they could be "chain ganged" to their allies who are jockeying to control land taken from ISIS, said Stephen Biddle, adjunct senior fellow for defense policy at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Other experts worry about the U.S. military attacking pro-Assad forces without a larger Syria strategy from President Trump.

Danielle Pletka, senior vice president for foreign and defense policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, has advocated for more U.S. involvement in

the civil war. But she expressed alarm at the United States shooting down the Syrian jet and attacking militias at Al Tanf without a larger strategy.

“My biggest concern is not escalation, although I agree that there’s a real risk,” she said. “Escalation toward a particular end is a good thing. Escalation for no reason with no particular goal is not.”

We remind our readers, the sovereign nation of Syria, whose government is internationally recognized by the United Nations, has invited Russia and Iran to fight ISIS and Al Qaeda.

The United States has not been invited into Syria.

This the irony of neocon war hawks making comments such as, “*for too long, the Russians have treated Syria as their own backyard*”, which exposes the perversion of US propaganda and the despicable nature of American military empire.

Syria is neither Russia’s or America’s backyard, but only one country was invited to enter the backyard, and it was not the United States.

*Alex Christoforou is a writer and director for [The Duran](#) – Living the dream in Moscow.*

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