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“The US will strengthen its occupation of Syria, while plundering oil resources”, Interview with Glenn Diesen

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The Obama administration began the US military occupation of Syria in November 2015. Obama sold the public on the idea of fighting ISIS, but in reality military personnel of Syria, Russia, Iraq and Iran were already on the group and ultimately defeated ISIS in Syria.

The real reason behind the US invasion and occupation of Syria, now lasting eight years, and with no end in sight, was to prevent the Syrian government, and its citizens, from benefiting from the oil wells in the north east.

Those oil wells had supplied the domestic consumption of gasoline, diesel home heating fuel, diesel truck fuel, and the production of electricity.

Since then, Syrians have had a chronic shortage of gasoline, diesel and have almost no electricity for homes, offices, businesses, schools and hospitals The national grid is dependent on converting petroleum into electricity at the various power stations. Syrians are living with just two to three hours of electricity per 24 hours, in three increments.

Due to US sanctions, Syria can’t buy energy products easily. The sanctions and occupation are designed to keep the Syrian people deprived of even the most basic daily needs.

Steven Sahiounie of MidEastDiscourse.com interviewed Glenn Diesen, Professor, of the University of South-Eastern Norway.

Steven Sahiounie (SS): Recently, the US military sent reinforcement to east of Syria where they are illegal occupying the largest oil wells in Syria. In your opinion, what is the US planning there?

Glenn Diesen (GD): We have seen growing military pressure against the US in Syria to compel the Americans to end their occupation of Syria. The US will strengthen its position to withstand these efforts. Besides plundering Syria, the US must also ensure that the region recognizes the US as the dominant force in the region. Once states in the region no longer believe that the US will have the final say, then they will start to become more self-reliant by seeking alternative security arrangements, or pursuing peace agreements. The political power of the US derives to a large extent from its ability to demonstrate its military dominance.

SS: In both Ukraine and Syria, Russia and the US are in a military conflict. Recently, the US was complaining about Russian airplanes operating in Syria, where they are targeting the Radical Islamic terrorists such as ISIS and Jabhat Al-Nusra. In your opinion, will this result in open conflict, and where?

GD: Russia is increasing pressure on the American troops to push them out of Syria. This can also be considered to be horizontal escalation to the conflict in Ukraine where the Americans are in a position to kill Russian soldiers, but the Russians do not have any possibility to impose direct costs on the Americans. Neither the Russians nor the Americans want this to escalate into a direct hot war between the two nuclear powers; however, they are both prepared to risk such a war by increasing pressure on the other side. However, the US still prefers to fight Russia through proxies such as Islamic terrorist groups in Syria.

SS: China brokered a deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which took America by surprise. In your view, how do you see the American reaction to this new relationship?

GD: The political influence of the US in the region largely derives from its role as a security provider, and therefore has an interest in perpetuating the conflicts. US hegemony therefore depends on dividing regions of the world into dependent and obedient allies on one side, and weakened adversaries on the other. The US openly expressed its dissatisfaction with the Chinese-brokered deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran as they want the military pressure on Iran to endure and they want to maintain their influence over Saudi Arabia. The US is also very apprehensive about the strength of China, that is displacing US power across the world.

SS: US president Joe Biden has a very strained relationship with Saudi Arabia. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has decided to act decisively on the world stage. In your opinion, will America allow Saudi Arabia to fall from their grasp?

GD: Saudi Arabia is seeking an ideal position in the nascent multipolar world, which is to establish good relations with all the great powers. By diversifying its partnerships, Saudi Arabia can avoid excessive dependence on any one state and thus enjoy greater political autonomy. The US will predictably attempt to restore its control over Saudi Arabia, and therefore push for Saudi Arabia to sever its ties with other great powers such as China and Russia. This can only be achieved by stoking tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran as this will increase Saudi security dependence on the US and it must therefore follow US orders. The US always aims to convert security dependence into economic and political loyalties, thus US power is conditioned on conflict.

SS: The US-Turkish relationship has been strained for years while the US supports the Kurds, who Turkey considers terrorists. In your view, now that President Erdogan has been re-elected, and has such a big role to play in Ukraine, will the US re-evaluate their support of

the Kurds?

GD: The US has more than once used the Kurds as a proxy against regional adversaries, and then abandoned the Kurds once they have served their purpose for the Americans. It is still unclear what path the Americans will take, but they obviously face a dilemma between continuing to use the Kurds to advance US objectives in Syria or improving US relations with Turkey.

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