

Very Dangerous Escalation in Syria. Russia “Officially” Accuses US of Collaborating with ISIS. Pentagon to Attack Russian Forces Directly

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Global Research, September 26, 2017
[The Saker](#) 25 September 2017

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#), [Russia](#)
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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [Terrorism](#),
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Featured image: Lieutenant-General Valery Asapov

By now many of you must [have heard the news](#): a Russian Lieutenant-General, **Valery Asapov**, and two Colonels have been killed in what appears to be a very precisely targeted mortar attack. Just as in the case of the [Russian military police unit recently attacked near Deir ez-Zor](#), the Russians are accusing the Americans of being behind this attack. To make things even worse, the Russians are now also [officially accusing](#) the Americans of actively collaborating with ISIS:

US Special Operations Forces units enable US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces units to smoothly advance through the ISIS formations. Facing no resistance of the ISIS militants, the SDF units are advancing along the left shore of the Euphrates towards Deir-ez-Zor. The aerial photos made on September 8-12 over the ISIS locations recorded a large number of American Hummer vehicles, which are in service with the America's SOF. The shots clearly show the US SOF units located at strongholds that had been equipped by the ISIS terrorists. Though there is no evidence of assault, struggle or any US-led coalition airstrikes to drive out the militants. Despite that the US strongholds being located in the ISIS areas, no screening patrol has been organized at them. This suggests that the US troops feel safe in terrorist controlled regions.

These are the maps and aerial photos provided by the Russians (for higher resolution, click [here](#))



What this all seems to point to is that the Pentagon has now apparently decided to attack Russian forces directly, albeit unofficially. From the Pentagon's point of view, this (almost) makes sense.

First, by now it is pretty darn clear that the “good terrorists” and the “bad terrorists” have lost the civil war in Syria. Simply put, the USA has been defeated, Syria, Russia, Iran and Hezbollah have won and the Israelis are now freaking out.

Second, the American plan to use the Kurds as foot-soldiers/cannon-fodder has failed. The Kurds are clearly too smart to be pulled in such a losing proposition.

Third, the American plan-B option, the partition of Syria, is now itself directly threatened by the Syrian military successes.

Last and not least, the Americans by now are deeply humiliated and enraged at the Russian success in Syria.

Hence they have now apparently taken the decision to directly target Russian military personnel and they are using their considerable reconnaissance capabilities combined with US Special Forces on the ground, working side by side with “good” and “bad” terrorists, to target and attack Russian military personnel.

This is not the first time, by the way. There is pretty good evidence that a Russian hospital near Aleppo was targeted using means not available to the local Daesh franchise. This time, however, the Americans are not even trying to hide. The message seems to be this all-time American favorite “*watcha gonna do about it?*”.

There is a lot the Russians could do about it, in fact. I wrote about this in my article “[Using plausible deniability against a systematically lying adversary](#)”. If the folks at CENTCOM really believe that their generals are all safe and out of reach they are deeply mistaken. Unlike the Russians and, even more so, the Iranians, US Generals are mostly risk averse and hard to get to in Syria. But who said that Russia would have to retaliate in Syria? Or, for that matter, that Russia would have to use Russian forces to retaliate. Yes, Russia does have special units trained in the assassination of high-value targets in hostile countries, but that does not at all mean that they would decide to use them. Accidents can happen anywhere and the roads are notoriously dangerous in the Middle-East. Why do I mention that? To illustrate that Russia does have options short of overtly going to war.

Of course, the Russians could simply fire a volley of Kalibr cruise missile at any of the ISIS positions shown in the photos above and then go “*oops, you had personnel embedded with these al-Qaeda types? Really? We had no idea, no idea at all*”. Syria also have a pretty solid [arsenal of tactical ballistic missiles](#). The Syrians could mistakenly hit any such ISIS+US positions and express consternation at the presence of US military personnel in the midst of terrorists. There is also Hezbollah who, in the past, has even seized Israelis soldiers in raids across the border and who could decide to capture themselves some US SOF types. And let’s not forget the Iranians who have not had such an golden opportunity to finally get their hands on US military personnel since many years.

The three key weakness of the US force posture in Syria are: first, their own force in Syria is too small to make a difference, but big enough to represent a lucrative target and, second, all the boots on the ground which matter are against them (Syrians, Iran, Turkey, Hezbollah and the Russians). Finally, the only two real US allies in the region are too afraid to put boots on the ground: Israel and the Saudis.

The bottom line is that if the Americans think that the Russians and their allies don’t have options they are deeply mistaken. They also should seriously consider the consequence of having US SOF operating in forward positions. The Syrians are closing the distance fast and this might not be the best time to hunt Russian military personnel.

So far the Russians have only limited themselves to protests and expressions of disgust. This has clearly not been an effective strategy. The Russians apparently don't realize that very few people care and that the more they complain, the less credible their warnings sound. This is not a sustainable approach and the Russians will so "have to do something about it", to use the American expression.

Things might become very dangerous, very fast and very soon.

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