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US Threatens to Arm Al Qaeda, ISIS with Anti-Air Missiles, To Strike Russian Warplanes?

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Mondialisation.ca, 30 septembre 2016
New Eastern Outlook 30 septembre 2016

Région : Middle East & North Africa
Thème: Terrorism, US NATO War Agenda
Analyses: SYRIA

US officials have threatened Syria and its allies – including Russia specifically – that the collapse of a US-proposed ceasefire will lead "Gulf states" to arm militants with shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles.

A Reuters article titled, "Gulf may arm rebels now Syria truce is dead: U.S. officials," would elaborate, claiming:

> One U.S. official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss American policy, said Washington has kept large numbers of such man-portable air defense systems, or MANPADS, out of Syria by uniting Western and Arab allies behind channeling training and infantry weapons to moderate opposition groups while it pursued talks with Moscow.
>
> But frustration with Washington has intensified, raising the possibility that Gulf allies or Turkey will no longer continue to follow the U.S. lead or will turn a blind eye to wealthy individuals looking to supply MANPADS to opposition groups.
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> "The Saudis have always thought that the way to get the Russians to back off is what worked in Afghanistan 30 years ago – negating their air power by giving MANPADS to the mujahideen," said a second U.S. official.

However, in reality, ambitions to down Russian and Syrian aircraft over Syria are not Saudi in origin, but rather come from the highest levels of policy and politics within Washington. Washington-based corporate-financier policy think tank, the Brookings Institution, in a paper titled, "What to do when containing the Syrian crisis has failed," would admit (emphasis added):

> We must also be clever about employing various options for no-fly zones: We cannot shoot down an airplane without knowing if it's Russian or Syrian, but we can identify those aircraft after the fact and destroy Syrian planes on the ground if they were found to have barrel-bombed a neighborhood, for example. These kinds of operations are complicated, no doubt, and especially with Russian aircraft in the area—but I think we have made a mistake in tying ourselves in knots over the issue, since there are options we can pursue.

In a 2015 Fox News interview, US Senator John McCain would admit:

I might do what we did in Afghanistan many years ago, to give those guys the ability to shoot down those planes. That equipment is available.

When asked to clarify his statement as to who would be shooting down the planes, McCain would answer:

> The Free Syrian Army, just like the Afghans shot down the Russian…

In essence then, the US is merely laundering anti-air weapons and the ambition to use them through Saudi Arabia, as it has done so with all the weapons, terrorists, vehicles, money, and support used to trigger and perpetuate the ongoing war in Syria – with the Saudis at best, merely partners.

The US is Knowingly Going to Arm Al Qaeda, ISIS with Anti-Air Missiles

US politicians and policymakers are already acutely aware that any weapons they send into Syria – including anti-air missiles – will immediately end up in the hands of designated foreign terrorist organizations, including Al Qaeda and ISIS. They are aware of this because thousands of anti-tank missiles the US has sent into the country, as well as fleets of Toyota trucks, ammunition, food, and other supplies have already ended up in Al Qaeda and ISIS' hands.

This is not only through the seizure of weapons by terrorist organizations from "moderate rebels," but because America's "moderate rebels" have either voluntarily joined the ranks of designated terrorist organizations, including Al Qaeda and ISIS – or were affiliated with terrorists from the very beginning and even before the conflict even began.

In a particularly embarrassing episode, it was reported by the pro-war, corporate-financier funded and chaired Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) blog, The Long War Journal in an article titled, "Islamic State used US-made anti-tank missiles near Palmyra," that:

> In a new video released by the Islamic State, the jihadist group shows the capture of the ancient city of Palmyra, also known as Tadmur in Arabic. During the video, at least one US-made BGM-71 TOW anti-tank missile is seen being used against Syrian regime troops near the city.

The report continued by stating:

> This is not the first time the Islamic State has shown with TOWs. Last December, the jihadist group also published photos showing its forces using TOW missiles against Free Syrian Army (FSA) forces in the Damascus countryside. The United States has supplied several FSA groups with TOW missiles, which have sometimes fallen into the hands of jihadist groups or have been used to assist jihadist groups. The TOW used in Palmyra was likely captured from battles with the FSA in other parts of Syria.

It is not only possible that any anti-air weapons sent into Syria will end up in the hands of Al Qaeda or ISIS, it is inevitable.

Any nation supplying militants with such weapons is all but intentionally ensuring they eventually end up in the hands of terrorist organizations.

America Sowing the Seeds for New Levels of Global Terrorism for Decades to Come

And what US policymakers seem unaware or unconcerned with is the possibility that such weapons may be turned against their own forces not only in Syria – including US and European warplanes – but across the region, including on the battlefield in Yemen, targeting US-made Saudi warplanes.

Also possible is that these weapon systems are spirited out of the region and used to target civilian aircraft in terrorist attacks around the world.

As the US continues leveraging the downing of MH-17 over Ukraine against Russia, it simultaneously attempts to all but ensure the most dangerous terrorist organizations on Earth gain access to anti-air weaponry. It is a clear indicator that the US, not Russia nor the Syrian government, pose a threat to global peace and stability.

The same US who knowingly created and wielded Al Qaeda against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s before claiming to be victimized by this mercenary force on September 11, 2001 -precipitating a decade and a half of "War on Terror" – is hereby standing up a terrorist mercenary force larger and better armed than ever before. The US is sowing the seeds of global terrorism for decades to come by doing so.

America's fueling of the Syrian conflict directly and through its Persian Gulf proxies has turned the entire Middle East and North African region into a hotbed of failed states, terrorism, and humanitarian crises. Russia's failure to prevent US intervention in Libya has left the nation divided and destroyed, hemorrhaging refugees across the Mediterranean Sea into Europe and inviting terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda and ISIS to expand across not only the ruins of Libya, but also across the rest of the region and beyond.

Russia's failure to stop the division and destruction of Syria will result in a catastrophe greater still – and despite the level of destruction and violence unfolding today in Syria – should Damascus collapse and militant groups be left intact – Syria will face exponentially greater violence and destruction that will make Libya's ongoing sociopolitical and humanitarian catastrophe pale in comparison.

The US, by erasing the lines of even rhetorical sensibility, does however open a window of opportunity for Syria and its allies to respond with asymmetrical warfare, targeting US and European warplanes illegally operating over Syria in such a way as to make it difficult if not impossible to determine whether or not America's own anti-air weapons are being used against its and its allies' warplanes.

US policy which essentially places anti-air missiles into the hands of terrorists – is so ill-conceived and desperate, the fact that it has been tabled in the first place illustrates Washington's increasingly weak and desperate hand. If this policy is properly exposed for what it truly implies both for Syria and the state of global security for decades to come, and should it be countered intelligently by Syria and its allies, it can be turned back against Washington and add further impetus to finally end this war in the Syrian people's favor – not Washington's.

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