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Volgograd and the Conquest of Eurasia: Has the House of Saud seen its Stalingrad?

By Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya

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The events in Volgograd are part of a much larger body of events and a multi-faceted struggle that has been going on for decades as part of a cold war after the Cold War—the post-Cold War cold war, if you please—that was a result of two predominately Eurocentric world wars. When George Orwell wrote his book 1984 and talked about a perpetual war between the fictional entities of Oceania and Eurasia, he may have had a general idea about the current events that are going on in mind or he may have just been thinking of the struggle between the Soviet Union and, surrounded by two great oceans, the United States of America.

So what does Volgograd have to do with the dizzying notion presented? Firstly, it is not schizophrenic to tie the events in Volgograd to either the conflict in the North Caucasus and to the fighting in Syria or to tie Syria to the decades of fighting in the post-Soviet North Caucasus. The fighting in Syria and the North Caucasus are part of a broader struggle for the mastery over Eurasia. The conflicts in the Middle East are part of this very grand narrative, which to many seems to so far from the reality of day to day life.

“Bandar Bush” goes to Mother Russia

For the purposes of supporting such an assertion we will have to start with the not-so-secret visit of a shadowy Saudi regime official to Moscow. Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the infamous Saudi terrorist kingpin and former House of Saud envoy to Washington turned intelligence guru, last visited the Russian Federation in early-December 2013. Bandar bin Sultan was sent by King Abdullah to solicit the Russian government into abandoning the Syrians. The goal of Prince Bandar was to make a deal with the Kremlin to let Damascus be overtaken by the Saudi-supported brigades that were besieging the Syrian government forces from Syria’s countryside and border regions since 2011. Bandar met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and the two held closed-door discussions about both Syria and Iran at Putin’s official residence in Novo-Ogaryovo.

The last meeting that Bandar had with Putin was a few months earlier in July 2013. That meeting was also held in Russia. The July talks between Prince Bandar and President Putin also included Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, the head the Security Council of the Russian Federation. One would also imagine that discussion about the Iranians increased with each visit too, as Bandar certainly tried to get the Russians on bad terms with their Iranian allies.

After Bandar’s first meeting with President Putin, it was widely reported that the House of Saud wanted to buy Russia off. *Agence France-Presse* and *Reuters* both cited the unnamed diplomats of the Arab petro-monarchies, their March 14 lackeys in Lebanon, and their Syrian opposition puppets as saying that Saudi Arabia offered to sign a lucrative arms contract with Moscow and give the Kremlin a guarantee that the Arab petro-sheikhdoms would not threaten the Russian gas market in Europe or use Syria for a gas pipeline to Europe.

Russia knew better than to do business with the House of Saud. It had been offered a lucrative arms deal by that Saudi regime much earlier, in 2008, to make some backdoor compromises at the expense of Iran. After the compromises were made by Moscow the House of Saud put the deal on ice. If the media leaks in *AFP* and *Reuters* were not tactics or lies in the first place aimed at creating tensions between the Syrian and Russian governments, the purportedly extravagant bribes to betray Syria were wasted on the ears of Russian officials.

The House of Saud and the undemocratic club of Arab petro-monarchies that form the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have always talked large about money. The actions of these self portrayed lords of the Arabia Peninsula have almost never matched their words and promises. To anyone who deals with them, the House of Saud and company are known for habitually making grand promises that they will never keep, especially when it comes to money. Even when money is delivered, the full amount committed is never given and much of it is stolen by their corrupt partners and cronies. Whether it is the unfulfilled 2008 arms contract with Russia that was facilitated with the involvement of Iraqi former CIA asset Iyad Allawi or the overabundant commitments of financial and logistical aid to the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples that never materialized, the Arab petro-sheikhdoms have never done more than talk grandly and then get their propagandist to write articles about their generosity and splendor. Underneath all the grandeur and sparkles there has always been bankruptcy, insecurity, and emptiness.

A week after the first meeting with Bandar, the Kremlin responded to the media buzz about the attempted bribe by Saudi Arabia. Yury Ushakov, one of Putin's top aides and the former Russian ambassador to the US, categorically rejected the notion that any deal was accepted or even entertained by the Kremlin. Ushakov avowed that not even bilateral cooperation was discussed between the Saudis and Russia. According to the Kremlin official, the talks between Bandar and Putin were simply about the policies of Moscow and Riyadh on Syria and the second international peace conference being planned about Syria in Geneva, Switzerland.



More Leaks: Fighting Fire with Fire?

If his objective was to get the Russians to abandon Syria, Prince Bandar left both meetings in Russia empty-handed. Nevertheless, his visit left a trail of unverifiable reports and speculation. Discretion is always needed when analyzing these accounts which are part of the information war about Syria being waged on all sides by the media. The planted story from the Saudi side about trying to buy the Russians was not the only accounts of what took place in the Russian-Saudi talks. There was also a purported diplomatic leak which most likely surfaced as a counter-move to the planted story about Bandar's proposal. This leak elaborated even further on the meeting between Bandar and Putin. Threats were made according to the second leak that was published in Arabic by the Lebanese newspaper *As-Safir* on August 21, 2013.

According to the Lebanese newspaper, not only did Prince Bandar tell the Russians during their first July meeting that the regimes of the GCC would not threaten the Russian gas monopoly in Europe, but he made promises to the Russians that they could keep their naval facility on the

Mediterranean coast of Syria and that he would give the House of Saud's guarantee to protect the 2014 Winter Olympics being held in the North Caucasian resort city of Sochi, on the eastern coast of the Black Sea, from the Chechen separatist militias under Saudi control. If Moscow cooperated with Riyadh and Washington against Damascus, the leak discloses that Bandar also stated that the same Chechen militants fighting inside Syria to topple the Syrian government would not be given a role in Syria's political future.

When the Russians refused to betray their Syrian allies, Prince Bandar then threatened Russia with the cancellation of the second planned peace conference in Geneva and with the unleashing of the military option against the Syrians the leak imparts.

This leak, which presents a veiled Saudi threat about the intended attacks on the Winter Olympics in Sochi, led to a frenzy of speculations internationally until the end of August 2013, amid the high tensions arising from the US threats to attack Syria and the threats coming from Iran to intervene on the side of their Syrians allies against the United States. Originating from the same politically affiliated media circle in Lebanon, reports about Russian military preparations to attack Saudi Arabia in response to a war against Syria began to circulate from the newspaper *Al-Ahed* also, further fueling the chain of speculations.

A House of Saud Spin on the Neo-Con “Redirection”

Seymour Hersh wrote in 2007 that after the 2006 defeat of Israel in Lebanon that the US government had a new strategy called the “redirection.” According to Hersh, the “redirection” had “brought the United States closer to an open confrontation with Iran and, in parts of the region, propelled it into a widening sectarian conflict between Shiite and Sunni Muslims.” With the cooperation of Saudi Arabia and all the same players that helped launch Osama bin Ladin's career in Afghanistan, the US government took “part in clandestine operations aimed at Iran and its ally Syria.” The most important thing to note is what Hersh says next: “A by-product of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to Al Qaeda.”

A new House of Saud spin on the “redirection” has begun. If there is anything the House of Saud knows well, it is rounding up fanatics as tools at the service of Saudi Arabia's patrons in Washington. They did it in Afghanistan, they did it Bosnia, they have done it in Russia's North Caucasus, they did it in Libya, and they are doing it in both Lebanon and Syria. It does not take the British newspaper *The Independent* to publish an article titled “Mass murder in the Middle East is funded by our friends the Saudis” for the well-informed to realize this.

The terrorist bombings in Lebanon mark a new phase of the conflict in Syria, which is aimed at forcing Hezbollah to retreat from Syria by fighting in a civil war on its home turf. The attacks are part of the “redirection.” The House of Saud has accented this new phase through its ties to the terrorist attacks on the Iranian Embassy in Beirut on November 19, 2013. The attacks were carried out by individuals linked to the notorious Ahmed Al-Assir who waged a reckless battle against the Lebanese military from the Lebanese city of Sidon as part of an effort to ignite a sectarian civil war in Lebanon.

Al-Assir's rise, however, was politically and logistically aided by the House of Saud and its shameless Hariri clients in Lebanon. He is also part of the same "redirection" policy and current that brought Fatah Al-Islam to Lebanon. This is why it is no surprise to see Hariri's Future Party flag flying alongside Al-Qaeda flags in Lebanon. After Al-Assir's failed attempt to start a sectarian Lebanese civil war, he went into hiding and it was even alleged that he was taken in by one of the GCC embassies.

In regard to the House of Saud's roles in the bombings in Lebanon, Hezbollah would confirm that the attack on the Iranian Embassy in Beirut was linked to the House of Saud. Hezbollah's leadership would report that the Abdullah Izzam Brigade, which is affiliated to Al-Qaeda and tied to the bombings, is directly linked to the intelligence services of Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, the Saudi agent, Majed Al-Majed, responsible for the attack would be apprehended by Lebanese security forces in late-December 2013. He had entered Lebanon after working with Al-Nusra in Syria. *Fars News Agency*, an Iranian media outlet, would report on January 2, 2014 that unnamed Lebanese sources had also confirmed that they had discovered that the attack was linked to Prince Bandar.



Wrath of the House of Saud Unleashed?

A lot changed between the first and second meetings that Prince Bandar and Vladimir Putin had, respectively in July 2013 and December 2013. The House of Saud expected its US patron to get the Pentagon involved in a conventional bombing campaign against Syria in the month of September. It is more than likely that Riyadh was in the dark about the nature of secret negotiations that the US and Iran were holding through the backchannel of Oman in the backdrop of what appeared to be an escalation towards open war.

Bandar's threat to reassess the House of Saud's ties with Washington is probably a direct result of the US government keeping the House of Saud in the dark about using Syria as a means of negotiating with the Iranian government. US officials may have instigated the House of Saud to intensify its offensive against Syria to catalyze the Iranians into making a deal to avoid an attack

on Syria and a regional war. Moreover, not only did the situation between the US and Iran change, Russia would eventually sign an important energy contract for Syrian natural gas in the Mediterranean Sea. The House of Saud has been undermined heavily in multiple ways and it is beginning to assess its own expendability.

If one scratches deep enough, they will find that the same ilk that attacked the Iranian Embassy in Beirut also attacked the Russian Embassy in Damascus. Both terrorist attacks were gifts to Iran and Russia, which served as reprisals for the Iranian and Russian roles in protecting Syria from regime change and a destructive war. It should, however, be discerned if the House of Saud is genuinely lashing out at Iran and Russia or if it being manipulated to further the goals of Washington in the US negotiations with Tehran, Moscow, and Damascus.

In the same manner, the House of Saud wants to generously reward Hezbollah too for its role in protecting Syria by crippling Hezbollah domestically in Lebanon. Riyadh may possibly not want a full scale war in Lebanon like the Israelis do, but it does want to neutralize and eliminate Hezbollah from the Lebanese landscape. In this regard, Saudi Arabia has earnestly been scheming to recruit Lebanon's President Michel Suleiman and the Lebanese military against Hezbollah and its supporters.

The Saudi grant of three billion dollars to the Lebanese Armed Forces is not only blood money being given to Lebanon as a means of exonerating Saudi Arabia for its role in the terrorist bombings that have gripped the Lebanese Republic since 2013, the Saudi money is also aimed at wishfully restructuring the Lebanese military as a means of using it to neutralize Hezbollah. In line with the House of Saud's efforts, pledges from the United Arab Emirates and reports that NATO countries are also planning on donating money and arms to the Lebanese military started.

In addition to the terrorists bombings in Lebanon and the attack on the Russian Embassy in Damascus, Russia has also been attacked. Since the Syrian conflict intensified there has been a flaring of tensions in Russia's North Caucasus and a breakout of terrorist attacks. Russian Muslim clerics, known for their views on co-existence between Russia's Christian and Muslim communities and anti-separatist views, have been murdered. The bombings in Volgograd are just the most recent cases and an expansion into the Volga of what is happening in the North Caucasus, but they come disturbingly close to the start of the Winter Olympics that Prince Bandar was saying would be "protected" if Moscow betrayed Syria.

Can the House of Saud Stand on its Own Feet?

It is a widely believed that you will find the US and Israelis pulling a lot of the strings if you look behind the dealings of the House of Saud. That view is being somewhat challenged now. Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the UK, threatened that Saudi Arabia will go it alone against Syria and Iran in a December 2013 article. The letter, like the Saudi rejection of their UN Security Council seat, was airing the House of Saud's rage against the realists running US foreign policy.

In this same context, it should be also be noted for those that think that Saudi Arabia has zero freedom of action that Israeli leaders have stressed for many years that Tel Aviv needs to

cooperate secretly with Saudi Arabia to manipulate the US against Iran. This is epitomized by the words of Israeli Brigadier-General Oded Tira: “We must clandestinely cooperate with Saudi Arabia so that it also persuades the US to strike Iran.”

Along similar lines, some may point out that together the House of Saud and Israel got France to delay an interim nuclear agreement between the Iranians and the P5+1 in Geneva. The House of Saud rewarded Paris through lucrative deals, which includes making sure that the grant it gives to the Lebanese military is spent on French military hardware. Saad Hariri, the main Saudi client in Lebanon, even met Francois Hollande and French officials in Saudi Arabia in context of the deal. Appeasing the House of Saud and Israel, French President Hollande has replicated France’s stonewalling of the P5+1 interim nuclear deal with Iran by trying to spoil the second Syria peace conference in Geneva by saying that there can be no political solution inside Syria if President Bashar Al-Assad stays in power.



Again, however, it has to be asked, is enraging Saudi Arabia part of a US strategy to make the Saudis exert maximum pressure on Tehran, Moscow, and Damascus so that the United States can maximize its gains in negotiations? After all, it did turn out that the US was in league with

France in Geneva and that the US used the French stonewalling of an agreement with Iran to make additional demands from the Iranians during the negotiations. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov revealed that the US negotiation team had actually circulated a draft agreement that had been amended in response to France's demands before Iran and the other world powers even had a chance to study them. The draft by the US team was passed around, in Foreign Minister Lavrov's own words, "literally at the last moment, when we were about to leave Geneva."

Instead of debating on the level of independence that the House of Saud possesses, it is important to ask if Saudi Arabia can act on its own and to what degree can the House of Saud act as an independent actor. This looks like a far easier question to answer. It is highly unlikely that Saudi Arabia can act on its own in most instances or even remain an intact state. This is why Israeli strategists very clearly state that Saudi Arabia is destined to fall apart. "The entire Arabian Peninsula is a natural candidate for dissolution due to internal and external pressures, and the matter is inevitable especially in Saudi Arabia," the Israeli Yinon Plan deems. Strategists in Washington are also aware of this and this is also why they have replicated models of a fragmented Saudi Arabia. This gives rise to another important question: if they US assess that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not a sustainable entity, will it use it until the burns out like a flame? Is this what is happening and is Saudi Arabia being sacrificed or setup to take the blame as the "fall guy" by the United States?

Who is Hiding Behind the House of Saud?

Looking back at Lebanon, the messages from international media outlets via their headlines is that the bombings in Lebanon highlight or reflect a power struggle between the House of Saud and Tehran in Lebanon and the rest of the region. Saying nothing about the major roles of the US, Israel, and their European allies, these misleading reports by the likes of reporters like Anne Barnard casually blame everything in Syria and Lebanon on a rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, erasing the entire history behind what has happened and casually sweeping all the interests behind the conflict(s) under the rug. This is dishonest and painting a twisted Orientalist narrative.

The outlets trying to make it sound like all the Middle East's problems are gravitating around some sort of Iranian and Saudi rivalry might as well write that "the Saudis and Iranians are the sources behind the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the sources behind the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq that crippled the most advanced Arab country, the ones that are blockading medication from reaching Gaza due to their rivalry, the ones who enforced a no-fly zone over Libya, the ones that are launching killer drone attacks on Yemen, and the ones that are responsible for the billions of dollars that disappeared from the Iraqi Treasury in 2003 after Washington and London invaded that country and controlled its finances." These outlets and reports are tacitly washing the hands of actors like Washington, Tel Aviv, Paris, and London clean of blood by trying to construct a series of false narratives that either blame everything on a regional rivalry between Tehran and Riyadh or the premise that the Sunni Muslims and Shia Muslims are fighting an eternal war that they are biologically programmed to wage against one another.

Arabs and Iranians and Shias and Sunnis are tacitly painted as un-human creatures that cannot be understood and savages to audiences. *The New York Times* even dishonestly implies that the Sunni Muslims and Shiite Muslims in Lebanon are killing one another in tit-for-tat attacks. It sneakily implies that Hezbollah and its Lebanese rivals are assassinating one another. Bernard, its reporter in Lebanon who was mentioned earlier, along with another colleague write:

In what have been seen as tit-for-tat attacks, car bombs have targeted Hezbollah-dominated neighborhoods in the southern suburbs of Beirut and Sunni mosques in the northern city of Tripoli.

On Friday, a powerful car bomb killed Mohamad B. Chatah, a former Lebanese finance minister who was a major figure in the Future bloc, a political group that is Hezbollah's main Sunni rival.

The New York Times is cunningly trying to make its readers think that Hezbollah was responsible for the bombing as part of a Shiite-Sunni sectarian conflict by concluding with an explanation that the slain former Lebanese finance minister belonged to "Hezbollah's main Sunni rival" after saying that the bombings in Lebanon "have been seen as tit-for-tat attacks" between the areas that support Hezbollah and "Sunni mosques" in Tripoli

The US and Israel wish that a Shiite-Sunni sectarian conflict was occurring in Lebanon and the rest of the Middle East. They have been working for this. It has been them that have been manipulating Saudi Arabia to instigate sectarianism. The US and Israel have been prodding the House of Saud—which does not represent the Sunni Muslims, let alone the people of Saudi Arabia which are under its occupation—against Iran, all the while trying to conceal and justify the conflict being instigated as some sort of "natural" rivalry between Shiites and Sunnis that is being played out across the Middle East.

It has been assessed with high confidence by outsiders concerned by the House of Saud's inner dealings that Prince Bandar is one of the three Al-Saud princes managing Saudi Arabia's security and foreign policy; the other two being Prince Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Saudi deputy foreign minister and one of King Abdullah's point men on Syria due to his ties to Syria from his maternal side, and Prince Mohammed bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the interior minister. All three of them are tied to the United States more than any of their predecessors. Prince Bandar himself has a long history of working closely with the United States, which explains the endearing moniker of "Bandar Bush" that he is widely called by. "Chemical Bandar" can be added to the list too, because of the reports about his ties to the Syrian chemical weapon attacks in Ghouta.

As a US client, Saudi Arabia is a source of instability because it has been conditioned hence by Washington. Fighting the terrorist and extremist threat is now being used by the US as a point of convergence with Iran, which coincidentally has authored the World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE) motion at the United Nations. In reality, the author of the regional problems and instability has been Washington itself. In a masterstroke, the realists now at the helm of foreign policy are pushing American-Iranian rapprochement on the basis of what Zbigniew Brzezinski, the former national security advisor of the US, said would be based on Tehran and Washington working together to secure Iran's "volatile regional environment." "Any eventual

reconciliation [between the US and Iranian governments] should be based on the recognition of a mutual strategic interest in stabilizing what currently is a very volatile regional environment for Iran,” he explains. The point should not be lost either that Brzezinski is the man who worked with the Saudis to arm the Afghan Mujahedeen against the Soviets after he organized an intelligence operation to fool the Soviets into militarily entering Afghanistan in the first place.

The House of Saud did not work alone in Afghanistan during the Cold War either. It was rigorously backed by Washington. The United States was even more involved in the fighting. It is the same in Syria. If the diplomatic leak is to be believed about the meeting between Bandar and Putin, it is of merit to note that “Bandar Bush” told Putin that any “Saudi-Russian understanding” would also be part of an “American-Russian understanding.”

Has the “Redirection” Seen its Stalingrad?

Volgograd was called Stalingrad for a part of Soviet history, in honour of the Republic of Georgia’s most famous son and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. It was Volgograd, back then called Stalingrad, where the Germans were stopped and the tide of war in Europe was turned against Hitler and his Axis allies in Europe. The Battle of Stalingrad was where the Nazis were defeated and it was in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe where the bulk of the fighting against the Germans was conducted. Nor is it any exaggeration to credit the Soviets—Russian, Kazakh, Uzbek, Tajik, Tartar, Georgian, Armenian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Chechen, and all—for doing most of the fighting to defeat the Germans in the Second World War.

Judging by the bellicose 2013 New Years Eve speech of Russian President Vladimir Putin, the terrorist attacks in Volgograd will be the start of another Battle of Stalingrad of some sorts and the launch of another Russian “war on terror.” Many of the terrorists that Russia will go after are in Syria and supported by the House of Saud.

The opponents of the Resistance Bloc that Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and the Palestinian resistance groups form have called the battlefields in Syria the Stalingrad of Iran and its regional allies. Syria has been a Stalingrad of some sorts too, but not for the Resistance Bloc. The alliance formed by the US, Britain, France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, and Israel has begun to unravel in its efforts to enforce regime change in Syria. The last few years have marked the beginning of a humiliating defeat for those funding extremism, separatism, and terrorism against countries like Russia, China, Iran, and Syria as a means of preventing Eurasian cohesion. Another front of this same battle is being politically waged by the US and the EU in the Ukraine in a move to prevent the Ukrainians from integrating with Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan.

Volgograd and the Conquest of Eurasia

While speculation has been entertained with warning in this text, most of what has been explained has not been speculative. The House of Saud has had a role in destabilizing the Russian Federation and organizing terrorist attacks inside Russia. Support or oppose the separatist movements in the North Caucasus, the point is that they have been opportunistically aided and used by the House of Saud and Washington. Despite the authenticity of the narrative about Bandar’s threats against Russia, Volgograd is about Syria and Syria is about Volgograd.

Both are events taking place as part of the same struggle. The US has been trying to encroach into Syria as a means of targeting Russia and encroaching deeper in the heart of Eurasia.

When George Orwell wrote *1984* he saw the world divided into several entities at constant or “eternal” war with one another. His fictitious superstates police language, use total surveillance, and utterly manipulate mass communication to indoctrinate and deceive their peoples. Roughly speaking, Orwell’s *Oceania* is formed by the US and its formal and informal territories in the Western Hemisphere, which the Monroe Doctrine has essentially declared are US colonies, confederated with Britain and the settler colonies-cum-dominions of the former British Empire (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and South Africa). The Orwellian concept of *Eurasia* is an amalgamation of the Soviet Union with continental Europe. The entity of *Eastasia* on the other hand is formed around China. Southeast Asia, India, and the parts of Africa that did not fall under the influence of *Oceanic* South Africa are disputed territory that is constantly fought for. Although not specifically mentioned, it can be extrapolated that Southwest Asia, where Syria is located, or parts of it are probably part of this fictional disputed territory, which includes North Africa.

If we try to fit Orwellian terms onto the present set of global relations, we can say that *Oceania* has made its moves against *Eurasia*/*Eastasia* for control of disputed territory (in the Middle East and North Africa).

1984 is not just a novel, it is a warning from the farseeing Orwell. Nonetheless, never did he imagine that his *Eurasia* would make cause with or include *Eastasia* through a core triple alliance and coalition comprised of Russia, China, and Iran. *Eurasia* will finish, in one way or another, what *Oceania* has started. All the while, as the House of Saud and the other rulers of the Arab petro-sheikhdoms continue to compete with one another in building fancy towers, the Sword of Damocles is getting heavier over their heads.

