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## Syria, the Latest Crusade

***They Are At it Again***

by ANDRE VLTCHKEK

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The West is striking again; it is stabbing the very center, the heart of the Arab World.

This time it is targeting the group – ISIS – which it created itself, and which it had been arming, feeding and pampering until just very recently.

Airplanes and missiles are flying, and bombs are falling. The war has begun.

But is it really a war, or just a brutal game, a gigantic PlayStation operated by thousands of hooked-up maniacs in the Pentagon and all over Washington, Brussels and some servile capitals in the Middle East?

A war is, after all, when two sides are facing each other, when two sides fight, when two sides are risking their lives.

In this surreal and post-modern ‘war’, the only victims will be the people of the Middle East, most likely civilians. Their lives will be risked by those who are sitting, in safety, on their destroyers and in control rooms, hundreds and thousands of miles away, drinking coffee and cracking jokes.

The Übermenschen of the West will not descend from the sky, in order to fight, – man to man – in order to minimize the casualties of a peaceful population. The killing will be done by Tomahawks and F22's (at least those have real pilots), and by drones.

This is actually not a war but a massacre, a mass murder.

Another massacre. This one may last very long and take millions of human lives in the most brutal circumstances.

Western leaders are ready... to sacrifice the lives of the “others”; the regime is ready. You can read it on Obama's face, and on the face of Cameron.

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The Empire began attacks against its own creation – the Islamic State or ISIS as it is known here in the Middle East. Countless ISIS cadres were armed and trained in the NATO-run refugee camps in Turkey and Jordan, right on the Syrian border. And the main purpose of ISIS was to destabilize and destroy Bashar al-Assad's Government in Damascus.

ISIS did not fall from the sky. Nor is it some sort of spontaneous movement. Like the Mujahedeen forces in Afghanistan, which fought both, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) and later the Soviet Union, ISIS were paid, armed and trained by the United States and its allies.

It is a common tactic used by the West, to identify and groom the most radical forms of Islam, including Wahhabism, which is now choking Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region.

I was told in Istanbul by a leading Turkish documentary filmmaker from Ulusal TV, Serkan Koc, who has produced several ground-breaking works on the subject of the ‘Syrian opposition’:

“Of course you do realize that those people are not really ‘Syrian opposition’. They are modern-day legionnaires collected from various Arab countries, including Qatar and Saudi Arabia, paid by western imperialist powers. Some are members of Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. Most are militant Sunni Muslims. One could describe them as rogue elements hired to fight the Assad government.”

I have covered those border camps for more than two years, often risking my life, occasionally being harassed and detained by Turkish intelligence.

In 2012 and 2013, I visited the areas around the Turkish city of Hatay, and camps like Apaydin, where various ISIS fighters were being trained by Western and Turkish intelligence. I investigated the situation at the border and also around Incirlik air-force base near Adana, which both the RAF and USAF use. And I worked in Jordan, at the camps that are openly utilized for the training of the ‘Syrian opposition’, a fact that is not concealed, even by the regional press.

I thought that my reports, and the reports by Serkan Koc, Huseyin Guler and others, dispersed the myth of a 'spontaneous uprising against the President al-Assad'.

But obviously our efforts could not match the tremendous propaganda and brainwashing campaign unleashed by Western corporate media.

In a totally irrational, logically bizarre pirouette, the US accused Syria of not destroying Islamic State, that unsavory offspring of Western imperialist policy.

As reported by Reuters:

"In a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power wrote, "The Syrian regime has shown that it cannot and will not confront these safe-havens effectively itself."

The strikes were needed to eliminate a threat to Iraq, the United States and its allies, she wrote, citing Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, which covers an individual or collective right to self-defense against armed attack."

To interpret what was written above: 'Bashar al-Assad, we helped to create ISIS in order to overthrow you... Now we hold you responsible for not managing to destroy our offspring... Therefore, we are going to bomb your country, kill thousands of your people, and possibly overthrow you in the process.'

The Western public is fully ignorant; it is indoctrinated and brainwashed, otherwise hundreds of millions of European and North American citizens would be now rolling around all over the streets, many dying of laughter.

The statements made by Obama and Power are so absurd and philosophically foul, that they would make even Orwell and Huxley blush in embarrassment. Even the most brilliant of novelists could not invent such twists of logic!

The Middle East is well informed, it is aware of the game, but people in so many countries here are too scared to protest, or even to speak up. The West overthrew progressive and truly patriotic governments, and upheld the most oppressive tyrannies.

There is some commonsense left, of course. In Lebanon, Hezbollah snapped back, most likely expressing the feelings of a great number of the people living in the Middle East. In its televised address, the leader of Hezbollah, Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah, clearly stated his position:

"The U.S. isn't qualified morally to lead an anti-terrorist coalition. In our view, America is the mother of terrorism and the cause of terrorism in the world... Everyone knows that Hezbollah is against ISIS and Takfiri groups and is fighting them... However, that doesn't mean we support U.S military intervention in the region. Hezbollah is against any US-led coalition that uses terrorism as an excuse for a military intervention in Syria and Iraq."

And one could add: and most likely, one day, in Iran...

It is clear that in this region; almost nobody is fooled by empty clichés and the twisting of language. ISIS is a multi-purpose, flexible stick in the hands of the West. It is also ‘helpful’ when it operates on its own, when it ‘gets out of control’. It served as a weapon against Mr. al-Assad and now it is turning into a perfect scarecrow, a justification for the direct invasion of Syria, for redeployment, or more precisely for an increase of the Western military might in the region, for the creation of a pro-Western puppet Kurdish state, and quite likely, for deposing the government in Damascus.

The trigger-happy Turkish government is already making noises, promising to get involved, militarily, but only if the goal is defined concretely and openly: to overthrow Mr. al-Assad.

To overthrow the government in Damascus is, of course, the main goal of Washington, as well, but Mr. Obama is not as honest and open as his counterpart and ally in Ankara.

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All this can be, of course, only the beginning of something truly horrendous. One should never forget that the Empire and its Saudi, Qatari and Israeli allies are always ‘thinking big’.

There is always more to destabilize, to ruin, and to conquer – there is Iran on the horizon, and much more.

To them – to the Empire – places like Syria or Iran do not constitute some of the oldest and greatest cultures on Earth, inhabited by gentle and peaceful people. To the Empire, these places are only booty, consisting of natural resources and strategic locations.

People mean nothing. If one million die, if two or three millions vanish, it makes absolutely no difference. Cultures mean nothing, as they are not Western, as they are not Christian ones, as they are not ‘white’.

Obama and Cameron are building on that grand old tradition of the deranged British colonial empire. It was, after all, only 80 years ago when then British Prime Minister Lloyd George commented on Britain’s success in undermining a disarmament conference— which would have barred the use of air-power against civilians, particularly those in the Middle East. He pointed out that it was a success. His secretary and second wife Frances wrote:

“At Geneva, other countries would have agreed not to use aeroplanes for bombing purposes, but we insisted on reserving the right, as D[avid] puts it, to bomb niggers! Whereupon the whole thing fell through, & we add 5 million to our air armaments expenditure...”

Decades later, the Empire retains this and many other similar ‘rights’.

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What is left, how much is left, of the Arab world?

And I don't mean those few flashy airports, complemented by '6-star hotels', shopping malls for the elites, and European limousines. I don't only mean those oil wells and artificial islands with palm-tree-shaped villas.

This part of the world used to be a beacon, one of the lighthouses of humanity. This is where the first universities were erected, the first public hospitals, and this is where the very ideas of 'social', of 'egalitarian' and of 'compassionate' values, came to life.

The Arab world and Persia were where the greatest doctors, architects, astronomers, scientists and poets used to reside and create.

This is where many great men like the first Sultan of Egypt and Syria – Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn – defended the world against those brutal European hordes, invading in the name of the cross, while being obsessed with looting and rape.

After centuries of colonial wars, Western cruelty and militarism finally won. They conquered Arabia, as well as the rest of the planet.

The Arab world was reduced to subservient kingdoms and states, ruled by a few outrageously rich and ruthless families.

In Egypt and Iran, the heroic attempts to create egalitarian and socialist societies in the post-WWII era, were brutally crushed by the Western powers. Nihilism, cynicism, corruption and militarism were introduced and upheld.

In modern days, even those relatively socially-oriented states like Iraq and Libya, were annihilated, at the cost of hundreds of thousands, even millions of human lives. Oil had to belong to the international corporations, not to the state, not to the people.

Now what is here, are a few countries in total ruins, including Iraq, Libya and Syria. There are several staunch allies of the West, states like Qatar and Saudi Arabia, governed by secretive and oppressive monarchies that are spreading the most tyrannical form of Islam all over the region, and as far away as Southeast Asia, while enjoying the full support of the West, as well as impunity.

What else can be seen in this devastated part of the world? Egypt where pro-Western elites and the military managed to choke all hopes of what used to be called the 'Arab Spring', that strife for social justice and true freedom from foreign diktats.

There is Bahrain, where a Shia majority is immobilized by fear, Yemen once socialist but now repressive, 'extremist' and miserable. In places like UAE there are pockets of luxury for the rich and hell on earth plus humiliation for the migrant workers who built the place but are left with almost no rights.

Palestine is bleeding from its wounds, as it has been, for countless decades. Israel and its backers are blocking all solutions for full Palestinian independence. Almost the entire world votes in support of Palestinian state, almost the entire world condemns Israel. But it clearly shows, who are in charge of the planet and the region: the Empire determinedly vetoes all resolutions and blocks anything that could lead to justice for the Palestinian people.

Jordan has become something of a huge refugee camp for Palestinians, Syrians and Iraqis, as well as the service station for Western interests, from the military ones to those of the ‘development agencies’.

Lebanon, once the jewel of the region, is suffering from spillovers of various conflicts, as well as from Israeli incursions. It has basically no functioning government, and the socially-oriented and anti-Western Hezbollah has been placed on the “terrorist list” by the US and that of several European countries. This is of course consistent with the twisted logic of the Western regime: caring for the welfare of one’s people is seen as the worst imaginable crime, punishable by death.

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This is all consistent with the legacy of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism.

The Empire has entered its final gaga stage. In the youngest and the mightiest part of it – a nation that came to life through people like Jefferson and Lincoln (not saints, but at least giants), has now ended up by being controlled by the souk, by the market vendors. And it shows.

If one were detached, it all seems so comical, so grotesque.

It is also tremendously vulgar.

One feels like laughing, like cracking sarcastic jokes.

But then, laughter freezes in our thoughts. It does, when we suddenly realize that all this is actually for real! Missiles are flying towards Syria, and so are the bombers.

And children are howling in horror. And bodies are torn to pieces. Millions of refugees are on the move. Millions of men, women and children have lost their homes. Women are being raped. Entire communities have ceased to exist.

There used to be countries like Iraq, like Libya, like Syria. True, Iraq was shaped by British colonialism, and so was Kuwait, but it was there for decades. It is no more. Now Western imperialism is reshaping the region again, at a horrendous cost to the local population.

The Empire is ‘experimenting’. It uses ‘trial and error’ tactics. ‘We created the Syrian opposition and now let us see what will happen. The ‘opposition’ mutates into a militant regional force, which dares to cross our interests? Let’s bomb it and let’s also arm the Kurds so they can form their own, pro-Western state, in the middle of the region. Let’s see how it goes... Once we are on

the move, we can also, perhaps, overthrow al-Assad... And who knows, maybe we can also find a reason to invade Iran.'

The Empire is using people as if they were guinea pigs. There is no consideration for the well being of the Arab population, there is no respect for human lives. All basic human rights chapters are being violated; most of the Geneva Convention clauses are spat on.

The world is so conditioned, so shackled, that this latest attack is being accepted without any major protests or debates.

If questions are being asked, publicly, then there are no essential questions. Entire debate is twisted. It is presumed that the West is doing right thing, that it is defending the world against terrorism.

It is also accepted by a great majority of people and countries, that the Empire enjoys absolute impunity, that it is above the law, that there is no international body that can challenge it, or to make it reverse its devastating and destructive course.

The West has finally reached the highest level of 'freedom'. It is a freedom for itself – a terrible freedom to play with the world as if it were a ball, a cheap and insignificant thing.

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As al-Qaeda is derived from the US-backed Mujahedin fighters in Afghanistan, so ISIS was a part of the anti-Assad 'opposition' supported by the West and its regional allies. The West played masterfully on local intolerances: Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is generally secular, but belongs to the Alawite sect, which is considered to be heretical in some Sunni Muslim circles, especially in the most radical ones. That helped to mobilize and recruit extreme religious cadres. And religious cadres historically, are very determined fighters.

The Empire groomed both al-Qaeda (or more precisely, its predecessors) and ISIS as true 'multi-purpose' groups. One helped to destroy the Soviet Union and the other mortally wounded Syria and then, they became the justification for the 'Global War on Terror' and in the latest case, for an attack against Syria.

Both could be described as the 5th columns of the West in the Arab world. Just like the West, they care nothing about the welfare of the people in this region. The true socially-oriented groups here, like Hezbollah, are actually fighting against ISIS, but are designated by the West as 'terrorist organizations'.

And so the Kafkaesque destruction of the region by Western lunatics continues.

Of course all this is nothing new. This is how, for centuries, the European and later North American colonial terror functioned: divide and rule, destroy all that stands on your way. Sacrifice millions of people for your economic and geopolitical goals, even if you are not yet fully certain exactly what your goals are.

Without the Western gaga/racist/PlayStation/genocidal realm, there would be no al-Qaedas and no ISISs. There would be, however, several authoritarian but rich and socially-balanced countries like Iraq and Libya, as well as well-educated and secular Syria. If the West had not battered the region with its invasions and coup d'états after WWII, there would have been at least two powerful and socialist countries here: Egypt and Iran. In fact, most likely, entire region would be by now socialist.

ISIS is an implant, which is now serving as the justification for an invasion.

It is so obvious. Not to see it requires great discipline. But the world, or at least both Europe and the United States, appears to be increasingly disciplined, obedient, even submissive.

And so the Western crusaders are again, as they had for centuries, riding their horses, spreading devastation and fear wherever they pass.

But now, there is no brave, enlightened and compassionate Sultan – no modern-day Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn – to stop them: in the name of life itself, in the name of justice and of our entire humanity.