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Imperial Exceptionalism: a Cause Worthy of Defeat

By John Wight
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Rather than accept the onset of multipolarity demanded by the emergence of Russia and China as major strategic, military and/or economic powers, Washington and its proxies are determined to increase military, economic, and geopolitical pressure on both with the objective of returning them to their 'rightful place' in service to US hegemony.

On the frontlines in this struggle – in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Pacific and South China Sea – tensions have deepened in recent weeks, to the point where the prospect of direct military confrontation between East and West is closer now than it has been since the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The Middle East

In the Middle East the continuing advance of Kurdish forces in Raqqa province in northern Syria with US air and logistical support carries with it the seeds of a post-ISIS conflict between the Kurds and the Syrian government. Indeed, as they close in on Raqqa City, the de facto capital of the so-called Islamic State, the Kurds and non-Kurds who make up the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) look increasingly like the third force that Washington and its allies have been trying to locate and cultivate since Syrian the opposition came to be dominated by Salafist-jihadist groups in 2012.

Not that crushing ISIS militarily has been anything less than a non-negotiable priority of right-thinking humanity from the moment the Salafist death cult erupted across a large swathe of northern Iraq and Syria in 2014. It absolutely has been. However, with this process now well underway, it would be folly for anyone to believe that once ISIS – and also al-Nusra – have been defeated that Syria's sovereignty will be secure. The fact that Russia's recent offer to the US of coordinating airstrikes and support for the SDF and Kurdish advance was rebuffed tells its own story. It is a story that began in March with a gathering of Kurdish leaders and representatives of various other disparate groups and factions that took place in the northern Syrian town of Rmeilan in Hasakah province, at which an autonomous federation across a section of northern Syria was declared. Predictably, the declaration was immediately and firmly rejected by Damascus.

However the violence that broke out between pro Assad and Kurdish militia forces in the northern Syrian town of Qamishli the following month, clashes in which twelve people were killed, leave no doubt the Kurds are serious when it comes to creating an autonomous province in the country post-ISIS, confident of US support and, with it, success.

Washington's objective of regime change in Syria may have been forced off the table by Russia's military intervention in support of the government in Damascus, but this doesn't mean it has been abandoned altogether. How could it be when Assad's removal is, as a tranche of Clinton's leaked emails confirmed recently, the key plank of a strategy to isolate and weaken Iran while rendering Hezbollah's threat to Israel moot along the way?

Off the table means under the table ready to be rolled out again should the opportunity present itself, which given where we are right now will be under either a Clinton or Trump administration in Washington. Certainly, Washington's regional allies, the Turks and Saudis, remain fully committed to this objective; the Saudis in particular upping the rhetoric only recently with it in mind, levelling threats of resorting to a 'Plan B' when it comes to removing Assad from power should diplomatic efforts fail to make any headway in this regard.

The mere thought of the Saudis emerging from the conflict in Syria strengthened in the region rather than weakened is a sobering one. In fact, no greater injustice could there be than this when we consider what Syria and its people have suffered during the course of a struggle against the forces of hell in the form of thousands of crazed Salafist-jihadists hell-bent on the genocidal extirpation of the country's minorities.

Eastern Europe

When it comes to Eastern Europe, the Obama administration's determination to plough ahead with the deployment of its controversial Aegis missile defense system, which has just gone operational in Romania, proves that the US political and military establishment is not about to give up the unipolarity it has enjoyed over the past three and half decades without a struggle.

As it was after the Second World War so it remains over seven decades on when it comes to US strategy towards Moscow – the establishment of a cordon sanitaire with the objective not only of containing Russia's military capability but placing its government under the kind of pressure it

hopes will strengthen political opposition within the country to Putin and the policy of challenging the accomplished fact of US global hegemony.

Moscow has demonstrated remarkable restraint given the provocation it has been subjected to in recent weeks and months. Specifically, we are talking the increased presence of US navy ships patrolling in the Baltic Sea; NATO military exercises conducted on the Estonian-Russian border with the participation of German troops in the very week Russia held its annual Victory Day celebration, commemorating its triumph over the Nazis in the Second World War; and the prolongation of US and EU economic sanctions over the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

China's security threatened by Thaad deployment

Washington also plans to deploy its Thaad anti-ballistic missile system in South Korea, ostensibly to meet the threat posed by North Korea across its border. However the Thaad system threatens China's security, with Beijing announcing in response its intention of deploying nuclear-armed subs to patrol the Pacific for the first time in the nation's history, necessary in order to maintain their nuclear deterrence.

Obama, who completed a week-long tour of various Asian countries in the run up to the meeting of the G7 in Japan, gave a speech in Hanoi during which, referring to the ongoing territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas involving China, Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines, without even a hint of self reflection had the temerity to declare: "Nations are sovereign and no matter how large or small a nation may be, its territory should be respected."

Washington is currently engaged in raising the temperature in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Asia as the Obama presidency limps towards an ignominious close. The objective is neither the spread of freedom nor democracy and human rights. The objective is solidifying an empire in the name of US exceptionalism.

It is a cause worthy of defeat.