

US-Russia Trade on Syria

News:

The US and Russia announced their plan for Syria at a press conference in Geneva on September 9. US Secretary of State John Kerry told journalists, *"Today we are announcing an arrangement that we think has the capability of sticking, but it's dependent on people's choices,"* appearing alongside Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Kerry said the pact calls for the Syrian government and the opposition to respect a nationwide ceasefire scheduled to take effect at sundown Monday 12 September. The Syrian regime announced its support of the ceasefire deal, whilst almost all the rebel groups rejected it.

Comment:

Bashar al-Assad and the removal of his regime has now been removed from the discourse, and narrative and negotiations with the regime through ceasefires and talks has now become the new normal. Whilst the press conference attempted to highlight the ceasefire would stop barrel bombs attacks and indiscriminate attacks on defenceless towns and villages. This has now become a regular feature of all agreements, but never goes beyond the paper it's written on. After the announcement of the ceasefire over 90 people were killed by regime forces.

The deal does not include the presence of Iran's revolutionary guards and other Shi'ah militias — such as Hezbollah. It also said nothing about the tens of thousands languishing in Syrian government prisons. And while it spoke of allowing aid deliveries into besieged areas, it said nothing of lifting the sieges and restoring freedom of movement of goods and people. Like all previous ceasefires and agreements, they do not include the views of the people of Syria and in this latest deal only the US and Russian officials were present.

The agreement also included a ban on government airstrikes in specific areas and collaboration on strikes against jihadists, according to Lavrov. Russia and the US will target areas where they both agree Nusra or ISIS fighters are present. What that really means is anyone's guess as Russia and the US have been indiscriminately bene slaughtering anyone who they don't like. The US after long operating with the Kurds in the north of Syria turned their back on them and joined Turkey in taking over tertiary that had been taken by the Kurds in Jarablous. Whilst Russia has been targeting the rebel groups in Idlib.

The key part of the deal between the US and Russia was the coordination of airstrikes. Much to the dismay of the army and the Pentagon, the political leaders of the US have long bene looking to work with Russia in conducting and coordinating military strikes despite some tactical differences stopping real change in Syria has both nations working together. This deal comes in the context of Turkey's entry into Syria and at a time when the rebel groups are surrounded in Idlib and Aleppo.

What is now very clear that the future of Syria is being determined in Washington and Moscow and does not included the wishes and demands of the people of Syria who have sacrificed so much for over 5 years.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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