

1/* Links by [patrickm](#) on September 26, 2015

Drop any links that you think may be useful for getting to grips with 'Syrian issues' in this thread. Here is a [sample](#) .

2/* [patrickm](#) [September 26, 2015 at 8:49 pm](#)

P1 here is something I missed at the time

'During a state visit to Russia, President el-Sisi said that he had agreed with his Russian counterpart President Vladimir Putin to establish a Russian industrial zone as part of the new project.[33]' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Suez_Canal

3/* [patrickm](#) [September 27, 2015 at 12:45 pm](#)

P2 Asked about his meeting with Putin, Erdogan said they discussed Syria briefly. "To be frank, I still don't see any clarity in Russia's stance on Syria," he said. His remarks appeared to fly in the face of recent statements by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in which he clearly repeated Moscow's well-known position on the topic.

"But we decided to at least start a new initiative on the matter. We have the UN General Assembly up ahead. We agreed that the US, Russian and Turkish foreign ministers should engage in a triple initiative during the General Assembly," Erdogan said without going into details.

"According to the results we obtain from this, and provided they accept this process, we want to include Saudi Arabia and Iran in it. We can carry it forward later with the inclusion of the European Union, and countries such as Jordan and Qatar." Read more: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/09/turkey-russia-erdogan-visit-nothing-really-new.html#ixzz3mu1yDRsm>

4/* [patrickm](#) [September 29, 2015 at 6:20 pm](#)

P3 just a reminder of what Petraeus was saying earlier this year <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/03/20/what-petraeus-thinks-about-t-he-islamic-state-and-the-future-of-the-middle-east/>

5/* [patrickm](#) [September 30, 2015 at 2:10 pm](#)

This is probably what David meant to link to.
D4 Five Reasons Why The Inclusion of Assad in a Political Transition in Syria is Destined to Fail

Newsweek 30 September

<http://europe.newsweek.com/five-reasons-why-inclusion-assad-political-transition-syria-destined-fail-333826>

6/* patrickm

[October 2, 2015 at 11:47 am](#)

P4 '14 per cent of Russians agree that Moscow should provide "direct military support" to the Syrian government. '

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/11902347/Can-Russia-afford-to-fight-another-war-in-Syria.html> good start for an anti-war movement!

7/* patrickm

[October 5, 2015 at 2:50 am](#)

p5

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/10/04/egypt-backs-russia-asserts-itself-against-saudi-arab-ias-syria-strategy/> No doubt people are aware of this but it is an issue that demonstrates that everything comes at a price. You just can't please everyone. I wonder how Obama will deal with Egypt.

8/* patrickm

[October 6, 2015 at 10:25 pm](#)

p6

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Israel-to-fast-track-demolitions-of-Palestinian-homes-Netanyahu-says-420044> No doubt people are ALSO watching this opportunistic carry on. I wonder how Obama will deal with Netanyahu! They just just can't help themselves.

9/* patrickm

[October 8, 2015 at 12:20 am](#)

P7 Here is Putin's red line drawn by others!

<https://www.rt.com/news/317864-russian-warships-missiles-launch/>

10/* patrickm

[October 9, 2015 at 12:22 pm](#)

I think the link just posted by David drives with the power of a D9.
'The idea that Putin, the strategic genius, has succeeded where the West failed has been echoed by many Western commentators. In The Australian, Greg Sheridan favourably compared Putin's 'focused intent' to Obama's inertia. In his UN address, Obama had exceeded his allotted time, but done nothing. By contrast, Putin 'spoke for 20 minutes and transformed the strategic environment in the Middle East.'

In fact, Putin's intervention in Syria exemplifies the reckless improvisation and disregard for Russia's long-term interests that have lent a peculiar unpredictability to the foreign policy of his

third presidential term. This unpredictability is inextricably linked to the shock of the 'Bolotnaya' movement, the mass protests in 2011-2012 against election fraud and Putin's return to the Kremlin. At the height of those protests, Putin faced plummeting approval ratings, fractures in the elite and a pro-democracy movement that seemed unstoppable. Ultimately, order was restored in a coordinated crackdown, but it was only Putin's assault on Ukraine that enabled him to regain his ascendancy in the polls.

This political recuperation was achieved at a terrible cost. On a humanitarian level, 8,000 people, mostly civilians, were killed; many more were left maimed or traumatised. On a geopolitical level, Putin has created a legacy that will burden his successors for generations. In a few months, he guaranteed Ukraine's Western destiny, shook the confidence of allies like Kazakhstan, ensured a real NATO presence in the Baltic states, provoked economically damaging sanctions and weakened Russia's bargaining position with China.'

11/* patrickm

October 22, 2015 at 10:31 pm

Concretely, Bashar Assad was around the centre of power all his life as his rotten father ran the joint for 30 yrs prior to Bashar's now 15 yrs in the job! He was groomed and trained for exactly this job from 1994 by his experienced father etc., until he took over in 2000. That is 21 years! His earlier years were close quarter observation of the Lebanese civil war. That is a solid background even for a dolt or an Opthamologist, but there is no indication that he is a dolt.

Concretely, he is not now and was never a figurehead. He has been very much in some level of command. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bashar_al-Assad

Calling him a figurehead is the sort of junk that people write about GWBush. It flatly contradicts the evidence and shows an unhealthy interest in personalities. He hasn't left the country for all these years of civil war and he goes back and forth to Uncle Vlad because he can now fly to Moscow via Russian transports over Iraq and Iran!

No 'different government is now in command even though unannounced.' Everyone is covering their own backsides as around Syria it's pretty easy to end up dead if you don't watch out. The Syrian army and deep state is currently pulling in the one direction because they have some rebels to go kill with Uncle Vlad's boys, and they are doing just that. Because the utterly ruthless Syrian state is dependent on Russia, Hezbollah, Iran and significant Iraqi Shiite militias after having already over these years of ruthless slaughter and population shifting lost the war but without that direct help. They could not possibly break ranks now.

Now with that Russian help they are in far better shape and so as team Assad kill more 'terrorists' and cause many more to run to Turkey, the entire Assad nightmare COW is redrawing who is in control of what. In a couple of months time (we are only 3 weeks into this intervention) Assad's side will begin to negotiate with the 'legitimate opposition' that they end up finding. We will then see concessions to any groups that just want any kind of peace.

No doubt autonomy will be offered to areas that stop fighting and arming for attacking Assad's region. Provided some smaller Bantustan type areas stop allowing others to wage their Jihad they will strike political deals in the shiny new Federation. Assad's troops will stay out of these lightly armed regions and let them have peace like the more heavily armed Kurds have while Assad's region stays as the powerful force backed by Russia. Similar to Israel backed up by the U.S. when it was starting out.

That type of thinking is the basic plot. These guys are not throwing up their hands and surrendering to the FSA.

The Lebanon civil war is much more the model for what is unfolding in Syria and because 'There was no possibility of the previous government being allowed to participate in any share of government' there will not be one. There will be a 'Federal' arrangement.

Is Putin assisting in the establishment of the new Sunni dominated Syria that will be established sans Assad and Co having first smashed up a lot of rebel territory and killed a lot of people they both call terrorists because the population of Syria was mostly Sunni – and is this being achieved with the use of all these Shiite forces? No.

People not concerned with personalities of leaders have often been wrong footed when despite clear national interest decisions have been taken by single decision makers that make no national sense and the disasters have unfolded.

It is standard that empires and bits of older ones, even if they call themselves countries, get smashed and not put together again so this regime is losing the war and that is what happens with wars but why must Syria hold together? No reason that I can see at all.

I think that there is a bad Putin led COW that having now formed constitutes in the current (concrete) context a Mediterranean power prepared to fight about issues and test the matters over a long time. I intend to keep reading and watching the news items and being prepared for yet more struggle and protracted war.

Syria is fractured into a Kurdish region, an Alawite PLUS region – not based at Latakia – that is fighting an ongoing war with several weak and divided Sunni regions. Who knows how long that can go on. The entire civilised world is being forced into war against the worst monsters from the Saudi dominated swamp. So Putin has an anvil.

Ending the war on one front against the Assad regime in a settlement that was victory would definitely enable the revolutionary opposition to fight more on the other front but the revolutionary opposition are currently being killed and driven out of the country by the very powerful Russian led offensive.

It would seem clear that the broad Shia COW is after being confronted with the reality of Sunni terror sorting out the maps and will in that process naturally push the Assad regime to the side, but not just now.

12/* patrickm

[October 30, 2015 at 12:50 am](#)

Last week when I saw the photo of Lavrov up against Turkey's and KSA FM's and Kerry I commented to Anita that that will mean the next meeting will have to include Egypt and Iran, so this is not any surprise.

Have you worked out there is no urgent coup yet?

13/* patrickm

[October 31, 2015 at 5:31 pm](#)

The timing – especially after the death of a soldier in Iraq last week in the (great) rescue raid – is no surprise to me. Sent to the Kurdish regions they are vital to make assessments and preparations for what is IMV inevitably on the way just so that something effective can come out of those Kurdish regions -heading east towards Aleppo and heading west towards Aleppo-going through Daesh if they want. But the Kurds are not going to be used by the US led COW and they have their own interests. The other COW might want them to go south against other Daesh areas! Nice to be wanted by both and bombed by neither! The Turks aren't even permitted to beat up on them, how good is that.

From any POV ground forces must be on the way in some form with any COW that eventually deals with Daesh and if that COW is to be led by the US they have to have some boots. <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/u-s-deploy-special-operations-forces-syria-official-n454506> But note how the MSM effort from the DoD includes reminding everybody that some A10's have been deployed and that is a reasonably clear message to me at any rate. It would thus be a fair bet for another contingent of Russians to be displayed as they arrive most probably with vehicles in the next few weeks probably before the next scheduled FM's talks. If the Russians are to turn up I would be surprised if some Iranians did not also show up and I can't guess what the Egyptians might do about their 'observers'.

The Obama admin 'micro managing' continues the dithering! The military leadership in the region must by this stage be ropeable at this level of humiliation.

Last week the Russians told everyone they would be coming south

http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/23/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-jordan-idUSKCN0SH1ER20151023?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=Russian+Airstrikes+in+Syria%3A+September+30+-+October+28%2C+2015&utm_campaign=Russian+Airstrikes+in+Syria%3A+September+30+-+October+28%2C+2015&utm_medium=email

and now they have (as promised) started to do so

<http://www.ibtimes.com/russian-forces-strike-syrias-southern-rebels-preparation-pro-regime-ground-offensive-2162300>

Incidentally I think the hospital issue as shown in the photo above is again no co-incident 'accident'. I think that attacking hospitals is policy. I think that this is clearly true in the case of the KSA in Yemen and it is true for the Russians as they make refugee causing war in Syria currently. I do not think that it was or is policy with the US and so I am still unsatisfied as to the earlier attack that was 'called in' and was so discrediting to the US at such a vital moment. I will return to this.

Also Australia has special forces suitable for use out of Jordan similar to their use in the previous advances but I suspect that the current Turnbull Government would not be as courageous in involving these troops as was Howard after he had had the direct experience of 9/11 and understood the US were really committed to war. Obama can't generate the confidence that the US are fully committed because he is not. He lost Canada out of the COW as his world builds up for a Paris climate talkfest 'led' by Prince Charles types. Oh well 446 days to go.

14/* patrickm

[December 2, 2015 at 9:08 am](#)

P8 Much more detail on the conference

<http://english.aawsat.com/2015/12/article55345694/55345694>

P9 also found this interesting as the division in Iran is important in long run

<http://english.aawsat.com/2015/11/article55345688/for-putin-big-sortie-in-tehran>

15/* patrickm

[December 7, 2015 at 6:28 pm](#)

Barry said '...the decisions of the Vienna talks will not go away and I think we can expect ground forces to assist in ensuring their implementation.' Do people think there will be more of the current Hezbollah, Russian, Iranian or Iraqi shia militia troops that are along with 50 U.S. special forces the only outside troops currently in Syria? I think there will be more of them including U.S..

Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq are all broken and as soon as you start to think this through you will see the mirage of Syria just evaporates. Any country that has a big free Kurdish region is not getting it back other than in some 'formal' Iraqi style federal formula and Syria has such a region. Even Arthur has conceded that the Kurds are not being brought back into any 'Syria', that Free Kurdish region is something the Turks did not want but it's happening and when these Kurds have what they want they will not have themselves be used to attack Assad nor anyone else to their south. There are Kurdish people to the north and they are slipping back into a war

with Turks who have oppressed them for let's just say quite a while. IMV Kurds are now and will be in the short term future quite reasonably looking out for their own interests.

The indisputable current fact is that Assad the root cause of this terrible war now has full air cover over his troops. No one is permitted to attack the root cause of this war without facing Russian air, naval and artillery assets and the Russian troops that use them. BUT the NATO backed rebels are being attacked at will by the Russian COW.

Just recall this line from 12 years ago 1 May 03 'The next logical step for the new policy is to establish a viable Palestinian state. Bush has put himself in a position where he can and must take that step. Naturally, he will not admit to the enormous strategic and policy retreat that such a step implies, so he has preceded it with enough triumphalist rhetoric to make even the Fox News team look queasy.'

Now I have never doubted the absolute requirement to end the war for Greater Israel that is so profoundly harming U.S. and western interests BUT STILL this viable Palestinian State is not delivered. Nothing has altered the direction and it is mind numbingly still not done but consider what has been done. Gaza evacuated of settlers and then the whole joint turned to rubble. The sheer depravity just goes on.

Barry you might have looked at the text of the Minsk agreement that the Russians are flouting as flagrantly as they are killing every day of every week Assad enemies formed up as the FSA types and as they actually protect Assad with a total air cover that is not going home any time soon. The parallel with Munich is the whole peace in our time twaddle while Putin calls black white.

For Christ's sakes didn't you listen to the Russians last year over Ukraine? Agreements are what Putin makes and breaks at will. He freezes and unfreezes conflicts that he fights, with the end result control of territory determined by Russian armed forces. You can drive a truck through this paper junk from Vlad the honest. If it was a genuine attempt to move Assad aside and launch democracy in Syria then there would be zero requirement for the tension/conflict with Turkey. That is now what the Russians are building up on as will be the fact that the US COW will now want included groups of the opposition that last year they themselves bombed as terrorists and the Russians will laugh their head off over that negotiation while they continue to bomb US/Turkey backed FSA types every day.

You know full well the root cause of this war is Assad and Putin has backed him as he has gone along every step of the way.

There are sides and Putin is on some! There will be no one Syria while Russia and Iran are involved in sorting out who to bomb and shoot.

You say 'I can't see how it can be done without lots of boots on the ground, plus air support as required.' Good now take a step back to the notion of negotiating in good faith. What evidence do you have that the Russian Iran COW intend to do such a thing?

Just as Arthur's urgent coup evaporated and became a secret coup with Assad now as figurehead for another government so will that dopey formula evaporate.

Only after the Paris killings a vote in the British parliament goes 397 v 223. How would the vote have gone if they were putting in the required soldiers? There won't be British nor Australian troops. No such problems in Iran and Russia.

'The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based group that monitors the conflict in Syria, said Levant Front was supported in the fighting by the Ahrar al-Sham Islamist group and the al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front.

Observatory director Rami Abdulrahman said the rebels had received "new support, which is coming in continuously" from Turkey, a U.S. ally in the fight against Islamic State. "Turkish groups against U.S. groups — it's odd," he said.' There is plenty that is odd in the swamp.

With half the former Syrian population engaged in a refugee manner internally and externally the forces fighting across the country can't bring the war to an end and start peaceful development. There was no genuine peaceful development in the past when there was development and the people sought revolution with the Arab spring. The majority of Syrians were fought by Assad in a manner that Putin has approved of and assisted.

So now Syria is divided into 5 types of regions. Daesh type, Kurd type, FSA type, Assad type and Contested

When this thread started in September Turnbull had just become PM. I thought the west was led badly but since then – well – out of the frying pan https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justin_Trudeau Point being the bloke that would like to shirt front Putin is out and the guy that pragmatically accepts Assad staying is in. The sensible proposal to send Australian special forces was later made by Abbott and his defence minister and rejected by Turnbull and his defence minister. Putin would have had second thought if McCain were POTUS. Individuals also matter.

16/* patrickm

[December 12, 2015 at 12:45 am](#)

Why would Kilcullen without any indication of the coming Russian intervention be so worthy of a guernsey in Steve's links? Here is the 10 July condensed version

P10

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jul/10/i-see-no-alternative-to-a-larger-more-intense-conventional-war-against-isis>

here is his post Russian take.

P11

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-01/david-kilcullen-russian-airstrikes-in-syria/6818946>

But watch 2009 5 May he didn't think that Obama was a looming disaster.

P12 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rq58N24bvXU>

Curious to drag him out when Putin and the Iranians are making war.

17/* patrickm

December 15, 2015 at 11:27 am

First just some news re Nepal for those interested

P13 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35041366>

Here are some links I've been coming across. **Usually their title is enough so that people have no real need to follow them. It's the overall direction that is more my point.** Just to indicate the all round but expected menacing moves etc.

Events have shown that without a doubt no deception agreement between Putin and Erdogan was ever involved!

P14

<http://news.yahoo.com/turkey-angered-rocket-brandishing-russian-naval-ship-passing-152051520.html> the push and shove is very real.

Putin is upping the actions towards Turkey and being an all round friend of the Kurds,

P 15

<http://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/europe/2015/11/russia-hits-turkey-changing-syria-game-151129172933416.html>

Russians are bullying everywhere

P16 <http://www.dw.com/en/russian-military-helicopters-stationed-near-turkey/a-18902803>

and even waving the big stick

P17 <https://www.rt.com/news/325744-russia-ballistic-missile-launch/>

and more trouble emerges in a long frozen conflict

P18 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/10/azerbaijan-shells-nagorno-karabakh>

then Russia says no we didn't come out from another frozen gangster enclave.

P19 <http://news.yahoo.com/georgia-accuses-russia-violating-airspace-144137571.html>

But 'Russian Mi-8 combat helicopter had crossed into Georgia's airspace over an area adjacent to the rebel Georgian region of South Ossetia. "It violated the airspace controlled by the central government and flew over a local municipality and police buildings," the ministry said.

We can expect more bad faith in all directions amidst the not so subtle threats.

P20

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/12/02/us-ukraine-crisis-nato-idUSKBN0TL1FA20151202#qWhHffuSZKhAwvJ.97>

Turkey and the oil issue is a good example.

P21

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/12/02/us-mideast-crisis-russia-turkey-idUSKBN0TL19S20151202#oFav8XbEWHioVYay.97>

"The irony of the Russians raising this concern is that there's plenty of evidence to indicate that the largest consumer of ISIL oil is actually Bashar al-Assad and his regime, a regime that only remains in place because it is being propped up by the Russians," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said. Will the US 63 plus 2 COW now bomb the entire oil industry of Syria including the vital Assad assets that are supposedly protected from attack? That could force Assad to import from the mediterranean via direct Russian-Iranian COW support.

There is a bigger picture for the Russian elite.

Up north of Turkey, Moldova is an interesting example of the Russian swamp.

P22 <http://tass.ru/en/world/840969>

and some time back

P23

<http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2015-10-19/putin-s-win-in-moldova-shows-where-ukraine-is-vulnerable>

A little bit of British democratic 'know how'.

P24

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-europe-meets-georgian-foreign-minister-for-wardrop-dialogue-in-london>

'The Good Governance Fund is a multi-year programme to provide expert advice, training and assistance to the governments of Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia, and Bosnia Herzegovina.' So Russians want to piss the Brits off and only having hammers wave them about..

P25 <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-35076794>

In this the 1st paragraph points to how divisive even silly Cameron is. Perhaps a new British Labour leader in the making see last paragraph, they need one.

P26 <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/hilary-benn-speech-syria-vote-6944272>

Exactly the type of issues develop that one would expect as this gets deeper

P27 <http://news.yahoo.com/us-led-coalition-denies-strikes-hit-syria-army-093730455.html>

The Hezbollah, Iran, Russia, Iraq shia, Syrian (HIRIS) COW is not such a strange beast after all. It's happy to share the old Syria with Kurds + some other acceptable opposition (now being gathered together like those left in Homs for example) and Putin now says elements of the FSA are being protected and even armed by Russia (later 'corrected' by a spokesman to not armed just protected). No doubt Assad took note.

HIRIS seems focused on driving off Turkey the only force that was able and semi willing to do the big lift of removing the Assad regime IF only Obama had 'fully' backed them at the red line time. But that time came and went.

My view is that Ahrar al-Sham will most probably be the first big demonstration of bad faith negotiating as they are what counts on the ground and the US -65- COW hold their nose and want them included; so they could be bombed at will for some time by the Russian COW that protects Assad.

Nice to see leaders looked after and protected for life...

P28 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/11/tajikistan-emomali-rahmon-legal-immunity>

Midst all the war making there are the very ODD No Bomb Zone proposals. NFZ's and safe zones and humanitarian corridors are a little bit hard to get from Vlad but HIRIS is making it's own.

P29

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/11/safe-havens-needed-syria-151108085808311.html>

And like a slow train it nevertheless comes on relentlessly.

P30

<http://news.yahoo.com/kerrys-one-state-comments-cause-consternation-israel-102406091.html>

IMV this is more the style of how and when Assad will be cut out of the ongoing governing of parts of Syria P31

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/12/assad-ultimatum-151208103650609.html>

Not sure where people think the half theory stands at the moment. The expected coup is NOT any quick affair and any deception involved clearly does NOT include ANY western governments whatever.

HIRIS has far greater current war fighting capacity deployed than what was dismissed as just a few russian aircraft that can't alter the direction of this war. What is more, much of this keeps unfolding in very much old style Russia against Turkey style; while it's clearly harming the economic interests of everybody in the process.

The currently unknown Russian strategy is fully linked to the big regional locals. Iran that has some form of twisted democracy -internally conflicted with a revolution lurking just below the surface of it's guided voting- is on board with Russia and will have a big say on just when Assad is 'transitioned'.

Russia is trying to link at least obliquely to Egypt where the coup leader has identified the KSA influenced religious backwardness as his biggest problem so he can't afford real voting.

Russia is linked to big players in Iraq militias that constitute an uncontrollable element that the Iraqi government also Shia dominated just can't fight even if they wanted to.

Russia is friendly with the all important Kurdish wild card right in the middle of Turkey's resumption of its own internal and external war and there is also the minor groups now emerging like the Armenians that have as a people their own memories of Turkish historical inclusiveness.

There are a dozen other minor groupings that Daesh, Nusra (Al Qaeda) and Ahrar al-Sham types largely present a great danger to like the Yazidis, Druze, Turkmen etc so as often as not are not fully committed to war against the Assad regime

P32

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sectarianism_and_minorities_in_the_Syrian_Civil_War

That big lineup is mostly a fighting front against Russia's historical enemy the remains of the Ottoman empire AND Russia's current enemy the other oil giant and centre of Islamic terror the KSA.

So this seems to me to be the start of a deeper involvement rather than Nixonian style bombing on the way out of Syria.

Nevertheless given that EVERYONE agrees that Assad will be cut loose at some stage and that acceptable opposition forces WILL be found to form some new arrangement of government – determined by the Syrians (democratically no less) – enclaves seems reasonable for the next year of war making to get to frozen conflict status.

Given what has happened to half the Syrian peoples as displaced and refugees I think we are now looking at the plan for a 3 or 4 or more state solution.

What is about to be done to the Daesh areas is bound to drag on for longer than Obama's 402 days.

In other words another frozen conflict where something will turn up is more to be expected so we could expect Assad to outlast Obama. But he may not if the Iranians and Russians tell him times up, or if a bomber gets lucky.

....

On another front it's good to see the Libyan war being rejoined with western support. But it's because DAESH and Al Qaeda sorts are there and coming out to play in Paris etc and so are now seen as a problem otherwise the Obama doctrine of let the ragheads kill each other has been followed for these last 4 years.

The message NOW to the groups in Libya is sign up to this democratic deal or be attacked by those who have signed up backed up by the US – NATO and look both ways Egypt. This deal even has mother Russia's blessing, as if they could make trouble anyway so may as well get brownie points.

The Russians have clearly demonstrated how to set up tripwire deployments so NATO now has a first rate disaster to deal with and I am beginning to think it may have to wait for the Iranian-Turkish-Kurdish-Egyptian revolution to even begin to patch this up.

It might take decades to expel Russia from club Med where I agree it ought have no place being!

The half theory posited Russia as playing a useful role in rapidly ending the Assad government – now to a complete time table established at Vienna and thus bringing peace to Syria with a transfer to what could only be some peacekeepers (German etc) followed by power sharing constitutional government. I still think this is more than doubtful so I think sect type control of ‘not quite sect’ regions is more probable.

Stability in a Lebanese type peace after a civil war is a model that makes sense to me. But slow descent into a full blown regional war is also still possible.

People might want to show a long term upside of any of this from a Russian perspective because I am unable to identify where it lies. Putin has not managed a smart downsizing but tried to reverse history IMV.

The world has ruled out any chance of a truce with al nusra front (al Qaeda), Daesh, etc and they with the world. ‘Joulani ruled out any chances of a truce or political settlement with the Assad government, adding Syrian forces only control about 20 percent of the country’s territory. “As far as we are concerned, the regime is all but finished ... and in fact it has become more factions than a regime, controlled by this colonel or that general,” said Joulani.

...

After launching military action in September, Russia has so far failed to make any significant advances and will fail in propping up the Syrian government, said Joulani.’

P33

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/12/al-nusra-front-leader-condemns-saudi-syria-talks-151212210441946.html>

The half theory is similarly premised but I think it is Joulani that is in greater danger of being finished FIRST now that the world has been re-focussed. Assad was being defeated and will be defeated but so will Joulani etc so when and how Assad is to be ‘transitioned’ and what HIRIS will be left with is still some time away IMV

18/* patrickm

[January 1, 2016 at 6:44 pm](#)

Arthur said less than a month back December 3, 2015 at 6:13 am ‘Haven’t found link confirming, but it’s fairly clear the terrorist list Jordan is drawing up will simply be those joining the agreed process vs those rejecting it and classified with Daesh and Al Nusra).’

That is NOT what the Russians think. P34 <http://tass.ru/en/politics/848093>

'The Russian side so far believes it is unnecessary to make public its proposals for the list of terrorist groups...'

That is what I thought they would do and when I thought they would do it. That is how this delay process works.

Ethnic cleansing is what I have expected and what is being asserted by the Turks. P35

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35049591>

and Assad victories are also what I have expected and

SO13 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35048404>

is in the exact mold of what that expectation was, as now some 'acceptable opposition' emerge in this manner and the unacceptable get bussed to another killing ground or flee the country in the case of some of these refugees. This area is now safe from barrel bombing air attacks and provided there are no attacks out of it on the Assad government troops all is now good and those who remain are all some who can sing with the choir.

19/* patrickm

[January 3, 2016 at 4:25 pm](#)

For nine years all manner of Iraq's worst elements – Baathists officers and Sunni supremacists – as well as other Al Qaeda types had been sheltering in Syria and conducting war from there back into Iraq against a US COW essentially unwilling to retaliate and escalate and then against the new Iraqi democratic government that was necessarily dominated by the hated Shia. These bastards were backed by a rotten KSA or that government turned a blind eye to the Saudi extremists that were backing the bombers. The west and every European government ought to have gone mental then but instead people tut tutted about the US having started this by freeing the Iraqi people from the Baathist tyranny.

Then the US went wobbly and drifted!

Then came the Arab spring and it spread to Syria 2011. Assad repression starting out as substantially a civil war BUT it is now 2016 and the Assad regime is not disbanding or disintegrating though it was clear that this regime (the known root cause of that Syrian civil war) was in 2015 slowly losing a war that had dragged on for all these years. That has changed as has Yemen and Turkey and the situation of the Kurds and so on all the way back to Ukraine. That Syrian war had changed from civil to a regional war in the fighting. The Sunni and Shia power blocks got involved and Europe stayed out and a 'proxy' style conflict had emerged that sees moderate Islamist Turkey hold its nose and work more closely with the KSA filth. I don't think Erdogan would have killed Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr and the US didn't want it but could not stop the rats of the KSA government from doing this. But Turkey has slipped back into its own civil war. Kurds and Armenians [Putin's best pals now did you know that Lavrov was ½ Armenian] are restive and people are again dying right across the breadth of Turkey and right through the old Soviet sphere. This has been spreading.

Assad losing – as he was – eventually leads to disbanding or disintegrating and has now after the dramatic Russian led HIRIS COW intervention been reversed. How long this new direction will last is dependent on how willing is that coalition of the willing. I think they are more willing than Arthur thinks they are.

For the last 3 months there is extra effort and troops and 2 quite distinct COW's that have region wide issues with no reason for either to back down yet and Syria that had been shattered in a systematic way became more shattered to a big plan. Almost half it's population has been displaced and a policy of destroying everything from homes to hospitals has been implemented for years. The result is that areas of control have been established and the Assad areas are not rubble. They have a no fly zone protective air cover over them and the other areas that fight against the regime do not. The Assad zones have become the safe place to live if you don't engage in politics and just do as you have always done in this police state.

Since the war started people have fled in both directions, and even those that would have liked to have seen an end to the tyranny know that there are now other monsters loose. The Assad region still has a mass base that is in relatively good shape.

The assertion is 'There is now a process in train [Vienna] to bring together the forces willing to tolerate and work with other forces to form a post-Assad government.'

Dave said as recently as Dec20 'The Assad regime is on the verge of collapse and Russia and Iran are presently staging holding operations aimed mainly at keeping Daesh and similar groups at bay.'

I think Assad has established a HIRIS barrier to Turkey and protected his zones from air attack. We are seeing exactly the same events and I say people do not disband or disintegrate when slaughter is before them. They retreat in as orderly manner as they can manage. Disunity is death.

Once a counter revolutionary great power Coalition enters the fight with a Coalition Of Willing partners, years of slaughter for the revolutionary people is almost bound to unfold. Russia with Iran and Iraqi Shia, Hezbollah and Syrians is such a counter revolutionary COW.

20/* patrickm

[January 13, 2016 at 4:52 pm](#)

For anyone not familiar with him, this young Dutchman is doing great work
P36 <https://twitter.com/@arabthomness>

Two weeks from song selection negotiations – and this is useful for numbers in particular P37

<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2015/11/yes-there-are-70000-moderate-opposition-fighters-in-syria-heres-what-we-know-about-them/>

I noticed Failaq al-Sham just pulled out of its coalition with Nusra and retreated to Aleppo so they will try their best to be acceptable but I doubt that they will be. The KSA will naturally accept them and so will the U.S. so they will be OK for supplies – but I guess HIRIS will not accept them till Failaq call a ceasefire and accept some negotiated territorial limits. Who is to control what territory is the key. BUT Nusra is truly 'embedded' across a big chunk of rebel territory that is currently under HIRIS attack as they expand and solidify on all fronts. But terrorists are able to be attacked anytime with Daesh and Nusra specified as only the base constant by everyone! Daesh is mostly isolated and east and Nusra is mostly embedded and west.

Nusra as a reformed and developing Al Qaeda is smarter and going to be harder to defeat regardless of the Russian intervention than Daesh. They are a more long term problem. This might help people get a handle on what some of the Syrian fighting groups are
P38 <http://www.mediafire.com/convkey/04ed/dpwvmuqv8aa7qsqzg.jpg>

There are going to be a lot of 'acceptable' groups for HIRIS to negotiate with as they are starting to negotiate now, and as these talks produce ceasefire agreements to freeze the various fronts. But HIRIS is a fundamentally anti KSA COW and whatever it's games it is going to stay that way. It is a Shia-plus all manner of others including liberal Sunnis and Russia COW, and is attempting to deal with Sunni groups as well as the real problem – any Syrian masses that seek to live in relatively democratic dignity. Nusra and the more stupid Daesh are only the first defined Sunni terror groups, there will be more. The anti- terror-anti Assad fighting masses and hapless peoples' who are still left in rubble-stan in non Daesh areas will often be able to be attacked even with the current formula because of the good job done by Nusra of becoming widespread and embedded.

People who are Assad 'supporters' had better choose armed separation because if they don't then they will face demographic domination by day and death squads by night! That is how it has unfolded in Iraq and Lebanon before that. That is how the world of gangster rule works. Ethnic cleansing has been going on for years and has made a new reality. Assad has played games, as have the Russians and the Iranians and now their interests are all tangled up together for this coming year. Assad will last out the remaining 372 days of Obama because it is in HIRIS interests that he does.

The recent history of Bahrain demonstrates that the KSA is THE big swamp blockage (that is up against very stiff competition) and that if you are unarmed then an armed minority will just deny you – any rights at all – backed by the power of the KSA! The KSA just told a big chunk of it's own population that anyone who even talks about having rights will be killed in Daesh fashion. The Shia right across the region have to face that reality after years of Sunni idiocy from the likes of Saddam all the way through to the Al Qaeda / Daesh market place bombers. They have

to face the cultural backwardness of the KSA that personifies a worse than 'Shah' that the shia toppled. Both the progressive and the more reactionary in Iran know that the KSA is a massive problem that must be confronted on the ground in Syria. They have had to confront it in Iraq for years!

Failaq al-Sham have stepped away from the already declared terrorists while clearly still talking about the fight against the Shia and Iran etc P39

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-rebels-idUSKBN0UH08Q20160103>

This BBC 'roadmap' discussion from Dec 19 showed that a song is a long way from settled. P40

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2015/12/roadmap-peace-syria-151219173919232.html> It also showed – what is agreed on – and that is that Assad is not central to the

Russians. But that he has 'hi-jacked' a seat at the table, that really belongs to those that can't get rid of him just at the moment. Talk of democratic elections in this part of the swamp to be held in 18 months is from my POV a Putin style joke. The Government of Bahrain is a bit like that I suppose but then they were propped up with overwhelming KSA force. KSA soldiers putting the hated Shia in their effectively slave status! The KSA is a big part of what the democratic revolution has to sort out in the swamp. Failaq al-Sham will keep KSA backing, but they will also keep being bombed and shot at by HIRIS because they 'can't be trusted' or rather like everyone else in the swamp they can be trusted to oppress the hated other.

The following is the exact type of issue that was always on the – too difficult to talk about list P41

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/12087780/Cologne-assault-Cultural-difference-is-no-excuse-for-rape.html> just like people drowning! Devil take the hindmost types sloshing about now in their millions is bound to backfire on leftists. Developing respectful conversations as part of investigations about the full spectrum of refugee issues is essential for any viable left. Actually any respectful conversation and inquiry is essential and those that can't manage it place themselves in another category altogether.

For four months it has been clear that ... 'the Russians are not attacking Daesh but are in fact attacking the Salafi forces the Saudis are arming and financing.' So the notion that Putin's intervention is on balance a good thing because 'The regime has needed somebody it could surrender to rather than simply be massacred by for quite some time.' is for my money a start of a longer argument. Such an argument – that accounts for the Russian etc., bombing where 80% of those bombs are targeted at the people who are actually better to surrender too – is not as clear to me as the bombing. Upsetting those people would only seem best practice IF another grand COW had turned up and could be relied on to smash that 2nd enemy anyway and people intend to stay armed in the manner of Hezbollah and all the others of Lebanon . This western backed fight against Daesh can be relied on and that is what has the KSA so furious. KSA fury demonstrates to all the world why Iran is bound to stick in HIRIS and why no one wants to end up as a Bahraini or a Palestinian!

Turns out that the U.S. COW is now fighting pretty well and has the Kurds and the Iraqi forces rolling back Daesh. They will not stop and at some point people who have declared Assad as their target as some Kurdish ground forces in the north have will have finished with their Daesh work and have that HIRIS problem to face. Enter the Russians from the south P42

<https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/NewsReports/566448-russia-deploying-advisors-near-palmyra-rebel-media>

At that point they might feel protected enough by the US COW but more probably they will be looking at what is happening to their Kurdish people further north. The Iraqi forces that are rolling back Daesh include the Iranian backed Shia militias that have also sent contingents into Syria. The very heavy lifting in Iraq is being done by the Iraqi government forces and they are steadily making progress as they work without very many COW boots on the ground. There are many Iranians in Iraq these days! There is also reports of their aircraft now being deployed as one would expect from all POV's P43

<https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/NewsReports/566325-irans-air-force-to-enter-syria-conflict-report>

'Running low on Syrian manpower, Assad's war effort is increasingly managed by Iran, another power pushing for partition. In recent negotiations over the besieged town of Zabadani, Iran demanded a Sunni-Shia population exchange. It seems Assad and the Iranians aim to retrench in an area stretching from the coast through Homs along the Lebanese border to Damascus – their version of what the French occupiers called 'la Syrie utile'. The cleansing of strategic zones – currently Zabadani and the Damascus suburbs – is part of this plan.'

Four months on from this article P44

<http://qunfuz.com/2015/09/02/instead-of-freedom-annihilation/> Daesh have lost territory to the Kurds but so has various 'acceptable' rebel types and HIRIS territory has expanded. Areas that were being barrel bombed have had even more people killed and refugees made and Daesh still mostly left alone. But that is no worry to HIRIS because the French and British and even the Germans (the whole west really even Canada in it's own way) have been provoked into action against Daesh. That suggests to me that the border regions of unlivable rubblestan are expanding and the safe Assad areas are also expanding in a systematic way. A full theory would have to account for areas that are surrendering to HIRIS.

The half theory would have to establish why this style of war making right now? If Putin intends to end the HIRIS war by splitting his COW and ending the regime (and this is all now spelt out and just waiting for the delayed meetings apparently) why kill more of those that are acceptable to hand over to! Why not kill lots of Daesh and where you can single them out Nusra and start the negotiations with the acceptable on time?

Has this Putin led challenge to the west on who is and is not going to sort out Syria endeared Russia to all grateful western governments? Not one bit!

What is so unthinkable now – after four months of intense HIRIS intervention – of a Lebanese style ‘end’ and a result that leaves the KSA upset? After all the KSA is upset and the Iranians are confronted by Bahrain style bastardry from them as usual.

‘It turns out there was an alternative and we are now seeing it. It will take longer and be bloodier than if the West had intervened but it will end the catastrophe.’ sounds like a theory that the Iranians are about to back down to Sunni forces that they have just been complicit in systematically ethnically cleansed with barrel bombing over several years. HIRIS were losing and if the Iranians had stepped up the war making then either Turkey and the US would have stepped in or the KSA would have BUT enter R and HIRIS is a horse of a different colour. HIRIS is not losing now. Shielded as they now are Iran CAN step in all it wants and I think it wants.

All sides having agreed to elections -with a democratic constitution including minority rights – the acceptable new government will arrive after a vote of the entire Syrian people. So Sunni demographic domination will result just as Shia has resulted in Iraq. Then Syria will wriggle out of the HIRI sphere! Keeping Russian bases and staying in that embrace is not what those now being barrel and cluster bombed will want. The new government run by acceptable opposition will be backed by the unreformed KSA. This is to emerge after ceasefire (not inclusive) after some 18 months of something essentially already agreed. That acceptable new government will settle down and take the country in the KSA direction?!? I doubt that HIRI will go along with that. Now the half theory is a bit quiet on when Russia is to go home in this already agreed plan. Nixon knew the U.S. WERE going home. So the Russians will not keep their bases on the Mediterranean and presumably understand that they won’t be able to stop the new direction that democratic Syria either drifts or lurches towards. The majority of Syria is Sunni and KSA backed and the majority in Bahrain is Shia and Iranian backed but nothing like democracy is resolved in that case nor has democracy anything to do with the KSA. In Iran the democratic struggle is now intense but the conservatives still have the upper hand on this external matter.

Even ‘Obama will be able to boast success’ having left office while Assad was still barrel bombing those that don’t accept the HIRIS conditions for a ceasefire. I don’t think so. ‘and the EU will be able to boast success.’ despite the fact that perhaps a hundred thousand peacekeeping troops will be required from a Europe NOT yet prepared to supply them! The reason ‘Public opinion will remain as bewildered as Patrick.’ is presumably because the fabulously insightful articles can’t be put in the MSM because they are all too tedious to be written. We will just have to wait like the starving that are currently under siege!

I would think every year down the track the Syrian people will recall who backed Assad for many many decades. They could also recall a U.S. led west that left them to their fate, a west that had earlier brought calamity on the Palestinians and left them under Netanyahu bombing. How does the half theory cope with the notion that all have agreed that Assad is not central to H,I,R,I or S and what is planned on being retained is the Syrian deep state because democracy can’t be unleashed or Syria will slowly expel all those that have been complicit in what has just been done over these years of bombing and ethnic cleansing.

The ½ theory has not solved any of these issues. Cutting up Syria in a frozen conflict is not unthinkable. Putin works as the protective Don in a COW of gangsters up against some other gangsters and the various peoples revolutions are caught in the middle. Assad will outlast Obama (unless some bomber gets lucky). Putin would probably like that bomber to get lucky as would Iran etc., as they could properly assist in the re-arrange the chairs process then. But they can't kill him themselves (and get away with it)! They can't grab him and move him to Russia with some Hezbollah manned palace coup that was predicted by the busy half theorist! Assad is still a player and not yet so utterly dependent on HIRI as to be a figurehead only as has been wrongly asserted – yet HIRIS will go on after Assad.

The war making goes on to a real plan that has not been fully explained because Vienna has settled the issues. This has been deliberately turned into a sectarian conflict where democracy is proclaimed by day and death squads stalk by night. So I think people will keep their guns and hold their enclaves as best they can.

I have already said what I expect after six months and that time is 1 month on. The thing is I would love to be wrong. No problem yet – said the man as he fell from the 6 story building. Obama has 372 days remaining and a worldwide capitalist crisis is again (at least not unrealistically) in the offing, with all the 1% V 99% implications, spreading gangsterism and so forth.

I think Hezbollah, Iran, Putin's Russia and Iraqi Shia Militias and Assad himself have an interest in humiliating Obama and the U.S. COW -(like Netanyahu and Clinton wants to get a crack at him from month 1) and so as this would be humiliating I am backing that horse called self interest. I have been open to thinking about this HIRIS COW since the dramatic intervention brought it into a war making reality despite the assertions that the Russians are not doing enough to have an impact. There have been no coups, no replacement of the actual Syrian gangster regime personnel and no disunity because that would really be death. What there has been is war making Russian style in a COW and the KSA is fuming and killing 'reasonable' Shia clerics. Getting matters to the point of freezing this war seems a big enough task for HIRIS. I recall there was going to be a ceasefire and meeting a fortnight ago. It didn't happen. Now we have to wait 12 more days to see what song the next meeting produces. Both the Iranians and KSA say their issues won't disrupt the great progress to be unfolded in Syria; well we will see. Barry do you think Assad will outlast Obama?

21/* patrickm

[January 28, 2016 at 7:33 pm](#)

Steve; from 23rd September over the next 113 days to 13 January I wrote 84 pages of various notes on one thread – collected here

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m_Djb5BHPqwoIjS1DoPn5hNvrFcF-qbAgnAJuTPzI8s/edit#

and 20 pages on the links thread including some long notes – collected here

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FVZ2UB_XvT37lfeCcGhrO-evvryueWRAMWy_5aGLnHs/edit#

That is less than a page a day of blogging in the face of such dramatic events and in the context of such a flat out dispute as to what events ARE really before us. So I don't think I have been as excessive as all that. But I have developed my views on the region wide conflict and what the HIRIS coalition is up to as events have unfolded and I hope people have no doubt on what I think.

Others made some comments collected here

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nZUkJxK6YCqIzmMdMD29qcL0HkHD55St35is91fRs_E/edit and also in the links collection.

Now another 15 days have slipped by while we have ALL watched the war being waged and the diplomatic carry on proceeding alongside and there are now less than 358 days remaining of the Obama Administration will Assad last that long? Well it's NOT unrealistic like the ½ theory.

The Biden visit to Turkey, when this is the type of situation unfolding is more than 'show' <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/27/hundreds-flee-turkish-city-diyarbakir-kurdish-militants> 'At the moment, 19 Kurdish-majority cities are under curfew and many are fighting against the Turkish military.'

blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2016/01/25/are-the-syrian-democratic-forces-any-of-the-above/ 'The SDF coalition was announced on Oct. 11, 2015, hours before a major U.S. airdrop delivered 50 tons of ammunition to the Kurdish-controlled area in northern Syria. This indicated a clear shift in U.S. policy toward the rebel groups fighting on the ground, and the Syrian Democratic Forces seems to have been designed not to alienate Turkey.'

The Turks said they were not prepared to see the Kurds control territory west of the Euphrates! So though the latest map shows another yellow expansion of the Tishrin Dam salient, this territory therefore has to be SDF controlled!!

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/11/Syrian%2C_Iraqi%2C_and_Lebanese_insurgencies.png The latest credible map shows that the Iraqi government's advance is blocking (as expected) easy KSA access to the sunni peoples of Both Iraq and Syria. We might expect a subsequent advance to show a link up of Assad and Iraqi control colours whatever the actual solid reality is. The 'democratic' salient begins to call the Turkish bluff. Everyone is a democrat!!

So there is another page of open honest thinking for you! I think Putin has the brains of a WW2 Japanese militarist! <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-markets-idUSKCN0UZ15C>

Steve it is very hard for me (for example) to say. So why not give us your view on what YOU think the real problem is? [on retaking Mosul]

23/* patrickm

[February 12, 2016 at 5:19 pm](#)

Must is a pretty big word. I think that statement could just as well be deception but as the US under Obama is not going to put in the level of ground troops required to do the work on either side of the border you are probably correct! Plus the Iraqi Shia do not seem to want to fight the same war as the US and the west generally would want them to fight. But to be clear nothing is obvious to me on this front right now except that the KSA is going to be kept from supplying their favoured elements in either Iraq or Syria. I called this a region wide war getting underway some time back so that is the way I look at events.

I note that the Kurds (as the SDF) ARE moving from the west-east and fighting against anyone in their way with Russian support and have captured an old airbase and also crossed the Euphrates and are heading west, so the die is cast as far as I can see and they intend to link up north of Aleppo right across. The Turks are fuming at the US as they fight the PKK north of the border. The Kurds have just set up a mission in Moscow as well. So the plan continues as I said it would.

Now the HIRIS COW is requiring a slight pause to regroup they announced a willingness to do just that!

24/* patrickm

[February 14, 2016 at 1:50 pm](#)

Moving through the fifth month of this current Russian led war making and I think it's fair to say that the Vienna agreement schedule of meetings ended in a humiliating fiasco in Geneva. The Russians were not surprised and outplayed by Assad who caused this but rather – and obviously so – the war is being waged in a full team effort with Iran and all the others included led by 'captain blood' Vlad.

The HIRIS agreed plan scuttled the process with massive war making particularly around Aleppo causing tens of thousands of refugees and NOW Russia is making it clear in a rapid further escalation via massive military exercises that there is more war making on the way to either Georgia, Ukraine or Syria as the leader sees fit.

<http://news.yahoo.com/russian-troops-put-high-alert-part-massive-drills-143101073.html>

This from NATO could well be seen as a bit little and very late and will be responded to by the Russians http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_127982.htm

IMV an action response is coming and more and substantial forces will be sent to Syria but there may very well be more than one push! Whatever is the big news all three areas of blatant Russian aggression will see more Russian troops deployed – not less. Georgia's Pankisi Gorge is as good a next move as Ukraine or Syria. All that is required is the 'plausible' excuse created or responded to.

Like everyone else I have no idea what the 'superman' will do next but it will not be any positive contribution by removing Assad and bringing the Syrian war to an end.

<http://journal-neo.org/2016/02/04/georgia-s-pankisi-gorge-in-the-news-again-still-too-many-awkward-questions/>

The Russian led attacks (that clearly and dramatically escalated and thus smashed the UN meetings and sent the Saudis and Turks into open talk of troop deployments) were directed against the FSA types and my guess is that a reasonable estimate of 250,000 people have been made refugees and have been ethnically cleansed from the country and as many again internally displaced. The effort has in my view been affecting 3,000 plus people each and every day! This has required a strong pushback and instead we got the latest Kerry humiliation and this time in Munich no less.

Currently I would have thought there is much to talk through. The Turks and the Saudis ARE pushing back and wanting much more from the US, the Europeans and all other anti Assad western and regional forces and the HIRIS COW is making its response plain. Further Russian deployments ought to be expected.

What do people say is happening now?

25/* patrickm

February 15, 2016 at 8:49 pm

The conflict between the FSA supported by people commenting on this thread and the Kurds supported by the same people presents an interesting problem for us. The Kurds are heading east taking full advantage of the Russian led Assad offensive and going right through the FSA in order so they say to fight Daesh but also as predicted towards a link up with the other Kurds formed up as the SDF heading West. Those heading east are being shelled by the Turks who have said they will not tolerate a Kurdish state on their border! So my guess is that events might start to move even faster. Complexity heaped upon more complexity as the HIRIS and (perhaps the US) backs the Kurds and the Turks and Saudi led group 'supported' by the US prepare to bomb them. HIRIS won't stand for that so what can we expect?

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/02/syria-kurds-won-retreat-turkish-shelling-160214141157968.html>

We can expect no halt to hostilities and more reports of escalation from the side that appears to have some kind of plan including not tolerating a Saudi/Turkey ground effort against anyone in Syria!

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/iran-ramps-number-fighters-sent-syria-1542569> story on 8th
[http://news.yahoo.com/iraqi-says-moving-troops-preparing-offensive-retake-mosul-191951430.h
tml](http://news.yahoo.com/iraqi-says-moving-troops-preparing-offensive-retake-mosul-191951430.html) and on Mosul

There now seems to be an inevitability in what is building up in the last year of the Obama presidency.

<http://news.yahoo.com/20-nations-join-major-military-manoeuve-saudi-154926975.html>