

Answer to Question

## The American, Russia, Iranian Dilemma in Syria!

(Translated)

### Question:

The Russian Chief of General Staff General Valery Gerasimov said: "Never mind the US, Russia's the one losing patience over Syria" (Al-Jazeera, ٢١/٠٦/٢٠١٦). That was in reference to Kerry's statement that the patience of America had run out when he said: "Russia needs to understand that our patience is not infinite, in fact it is very limited" (in regards to Syria ceasefire violations) (Al-Jazeera, ١٥/٠٦/٢٠١٦). And the Russian foreign minister Lavrov had responded to him during his participation in the international Petersburg forum on Thursday the ١٦<sup>th</sup> of June saying: "And saw the clarification made by the representative of the State Department. Still should be less impatient or more patient" (Russia Today, ١٦/٠٦/٢٠١٦). This is from one angle and from another, then before that and by the request of Iran, the defence ministers of Russia, Syria and Iran met together in Tehran on Thursday ٠٩/٠٦/٢٠١٦ to coordinate the military actions within Syria... **And the question is:** Does this mean that there is an America, Russian and Iranian dilemma in regards to the previous American plans for the solution (Negotiations, Geneva and the Riyadh delegation) and if so, then has the ground military intervention become a possible reality being on the horizon? Jazaakumullahu Khairan.

### Answer:

As for there being an America, Russian and Iranian dilemma in Syria then that is correct. It is also correct to say that it is to the highest degree an American dilemma because Russia and Iran represent auxiliaries to the US policy in Syria... As for whether this means that land intervention is expected to take place soon then this needs to be examined based upon the direction of events heading to... To understand the true reality of what is taking place it is necessary to take note of the following points:

١ – The last round of negotiations in Geneva came to an end on ٢٢/٠٤/٢٠١٦ with the withdrawal of the opposition due to the lack of its seriousness according to the opposition. Then this was followed by Muhammad Alloush, one of the 'major negotiators', quitting (Al-Arabiya.net ٢٠/٠٥/٢٠١٦). De Mistura backed off from announcing the start of a new round of negotiations after "UN Special envoy for Syria De Mistura said that a date for the start of a new round of Syrian talks will be announced at a later time on Thursday (٢٦ May ٢٠١٦), after consulting the International Security Council and that was in spite of the continuation of the acts of violence on the ground" (Al-Wasat site, ٢٦/٠٥/٢٠١٦). After that he returned on ٠٩/٠٦/٢٠١٦ and "UN Special envoy for Syria De Mistura Thursday, said that the international organisation will never hold a new round of Syrian peace talks in Geneva until the officials of all sides agree upon the criteria of an agreement upon a political transition the deadline of which to reach a decision is the ١<sup>st</sup> of August. And de Mistura told reporters, "The time is not yet mature for the official third round of the intra-Syrian talks." (Baladi News, ٠٩/٠٦/١٦).

٢ – In an uncustomary manner America announced the start of bombing in Syria launching from the Mediterranean and this represents the first time that America has implemented bombing like this within the region being launched from the Mediterranean since the occupation of Iraq in ٢٠٠٣. On ٠٩/٠٦/٢٠١٦, Russia Today cited news from the American newspaper, "*The Wall Street Journal mentioned that the US aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman made an unplanned diversion from the Gulf to the eastern Mediterranean last week—a quick pivot intended to send a clear message to Russia.*"

٣ – ٥١ diplomats and officials in the US State Department signed a document and then handed it to the President Obama calling him to undertake military action in Syria. The American newspaper *Wall Street Journal* mentioned in its Thursday ١٦<sup>th</sup> of June issue: "That ٥١ diplomats of the US state department signed a letter calling in it for Obama to undertake a military operation in Syria..." (Russia Today, ١٧/٠٦/٢٠١٦).

ξ – And finally, there was the visit by the Deputy Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman and his meeting with the President Obama on ١٧/٠٦/٢٠١٦ in the White House which is a rare procedural occurrence for non-heads of state. There was also the visit of the Saudi foreign minister to America and his discussing of the Syria crisis in particular with American officials...

ο – Scrutinising these host of visits, meetings and statements makes the following evident:

A – America feels like there has been a great failure in Syria as the negotiations have lost their momentum, some of its leaders have fallen away, America has not found a replacement for Assad, the revolution in Syria has not lost its vitality even whilst it is applying pressure against the negotiators. By revising what America has accomplished in terms of progress on the Syrian front, it becomes apparent that the most significant accomplishment was bringing the armed groups in to participate in the political process (the Riyadh delegation and Geneva). The announcement of the cessation of hostilities on ٢٧/٠٢/٢٠١٦ represented the major American hope to squeeze the Syrian revolution within the corridors of the political process in order to produce an alternative or replacement for Assad without a pressure on the ground from the revolution. This has been accompanied by the raising of voices noticeably within the armed movements who participated in the Riyadh delegation, voices which were against the political process, which have formed pressurising factors upon these military movements and other groups. In addition to the displeasure of the people from the path being taken by some of the movements within the political process representing a pressurising public opinion... All of that has generated an intensive military activeness against the regime, whether this was true or temporary to regain the confidence of the people, which as a consequence has led to regaining strategic regions in the south of Halab (Aleppo) upon a number of stages (the Battles of Al-'Ais, then Khan Touman and what came after them). All of that has dealt a heavy blow to the American-Russian announcement of a cessation of hostilities. There is therefore no longer any point in the continuation of the Geneva negotiations when the situation on the ground has exploded and which represents a virtual death bullet to the political path. And consequently America is in a dilemma.

B – The battles in the south of Halab (Aleppo) from an on-ground perspective represent a great defeat for the Iranian gathered fighters and its followers. Iran has therefore requested more ground forces within Syria. With the losses and small number of victories, other obstacles have been added to that related to the lightening of the economic embargo against it after signing the Geneva Iranian nuclear deal which led to a deficiency in monetary allocations for the Iranian military action in Syria. Therefore, Iran has in fact exhausted and drained itself in its military assistance to Assad. Iran has as such requested an injunction from America for help from Russia and it was this reason that the meeting of defence ministers in Tehran took place... which means that Iran is also in a dilemma.

C – As for Russia, then there are a number of new factors that have occurred of late which have made it incapable or unwilling to continue in its dirty acceptance of the American demands. That is because America wants Russia to increase its military actions to stop the revolutionaries at the borders that they are currently in control of i.e. to cut any hope of further advancement on the ground. This is the same as what Russia has been undertaking since its intervention in Syria on ٢٠/٠٩/٢٠١٥ and up until recently. US Secretary of State Kerry was speaking boldly at the Donors Summit for Syria held in London on ١١/٠٢/٢٠١٦ by saying: "That the opposition will be decimated within three months of (Russian) bombing". This goal and objective is what America was aspiring to accomplish through the Russian intervention. As for the factors that have occurred recently and which have made the Russian intervention indecisive, then they are as follows:

\* In addition to its great hostility towards Islam and its great fear of the Islamic nature of the Syrian revolution, Russia also saw an opportunity, via its intervention in Syria, to make prominent and restore the Russian might that had been lost since the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was eager to prominently display its air and space power, its calibre missiles in addition to its capability of bombing Syria from the Caspian Sea and Mediterranean. It had expected that these brutal attacks would accomplish the American purposes and force the people of Syria to negotiate with the regime upon the American conditions, but that failed.

\* Russia also wanted to break the international isolation and penalties that had been imposed upon it after it annexed Crimea and set the East of Ukraine alight. And this never happened but rather the indignation of the states increased against it and the abyss expanded dangerously between it and the European Union which not only cast accusations but also alluded to the

international criminal court. Britain was the most severe of the European states in its indignation against Russia and it was followed by Germany which had begun to place Russia under the category of 'foe' or enemy in its 'white' book. And so the German Chancellor, during the G<sup>20</sup> Summit held in Japan on 26/05/2016 refused to even discuss the subject of lightening the sanctions against Russia.

\* Russia is a weak state economically and it cannot continue to spend upon a war that is distant from its borders and particularly whilst it is struggling under western sanctions and it been weakened by the falling oil prices. The bleeding of its expenditures in Syria cannot be burdened for a long period. Attached to the Russian spending is its financial commitments to the Russian fighters in Syria which according to the Russian defence ministry numbers 20,000 people: "20,000 military and civilian Russians have participated since September 2015 in the war taking place in Syria in accordance to what the law passed by the Russian (parliamentary) representatives clarified, on Tuesday, in relation to affirming the situation of 'the old fighter' for this war." (Sky News Arabic 21/06/2016)

\* Russia is becoming very fearful about the future of its agreement with America in Syria and that relates to when the American administration changes over after the Presidential elections in November 2016. For that reason, Russia hopes to finish its war task in Syria before Obama's administration leaves office or that its intervention takes place in accordance to an openly declared agreement with America. Due to that, Russia has been, and in a continuous manner, requesting to bring out its coordination with America in Syria in an open manner, a matter which America is turning its face away from... And so it requested the undertaking of joint American-Russian strikes against the groups that violate the 'cessation of hostilities' but America refused to do that...

\* And it is a strange misunderstanding of Russia that makes it consider itself a partner to America in the very least in respect to the Syrian issue and so it wishes to interpret the meetings between Lavrov and Kerry, meaning the decisions related to the Syrian crisis, to be an open military alliance in Syria. As such Russia does not understand that the bilateral Lavrov-Kerry meetings had been devised by America in order to prevent the European states from interfering within the Syrian crisis and to confront the prominent appearance of Islam within the Syrian revolution. America utilises Iran and its followers on occasions and utilises Russia on other occasions. Despite that, Russia driven by its folly in respect to its imagined greatness believes that it is America's partner in Syria. This explains Kerry's statements in regards to America's patience being very limited in respect to Russia in Syria, meaning that it is demanding a quick push to save the collapsing forces of Assad in the south of Halab (Aleppo). It also explains Lavrov's surprise and disapproval at Kerry's statements and his call to America to be endowed with patience. So America views Russia to be chess piece that's in its hand whilst Russia views its intervention in Syria to represent a model of international partnership with America!... For all of these factors Russia is also in a dilemma.

7 – In this way America is in a dilemma, Russia is in a dilemma and Iran is in a dilemma, and as we mentioned earlier it is all in fact an American dilemma of the first degree. For this reason, this situation has represented a great difficult for America whilst (at the same time) there has been a major depletion of the forces of Assad, Iran and its supporters. It is evident that America has seen that Iran has exhausted itself in a non-simple manner in Syria and that the Iranian military intervention, even if it extends the life of the regime in Damascus, will nevertheless not assist in bringing a solution to Syria. And in the backdrop of Russia's failure to deal decisively with the situation in Syria by forcing the people of Syria into submission before the tyrannical regime in spite of the barbaric bombing and use of burning missiles, in the backdrop of this failure, the options open to American respect to Syria have become extremely difficult. This is particularly as it is currently in the elections period and each of the two parties, the Republicans and Democrats, will both attempt to exploit this period to display the shortcomings of one another. That is in addition to the memorandum of the diplomats who view that that America should intervene itself... America, therefore makes it appear that it is interested in looking into the issue of intervention... And it sent its aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman from the Gulf to the Mediterranean... And it bombed Syria from the Mediterranean... And it called up the Saudi Defence Minister Mohammad Bin Salman and he met with President Obama in the Oval Office, which is a rare occurrence for non-heads of state, which makes it appear to the one following that the purpose and aim (of the meeting) is distinctly military!

١ – Despite that the current policy of the US administration, as indicated to by the statements of its officials, is that the military intervention is primarily in the hands of the subordinates, followers and agents... The spokesman in the name of the US secretary of state for foreign affairs, Kerry, announced that America has not changed its policy in respect to Syria and Kerry said whilst commenting upon the possibility of a change of Washington’s policy in regards to Syria: “We still believe that a political resolution in Syria is the most preferred solution”. And Kerry also reiterated that the administration of the current US president, Barack Obama, will remain focused upon generating a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis until the end of his time in office (Russia Today, ١٧/٠٦/٢٠١٦) ... As for the memorandum of the diplomats then it is most likely that it will be dealt with politically and not militarily. It was reported by Jazeera.net on ١٨/٠٦/٢٠١٦ from the Washington Times Newspaper, “That the White House has struggled to downplay the fallout from a leaked internal State Department cable signed by more than ٥٠ midlevel diplomats slamming the White House’s Syria policy and calling for “targeted [US] military strikes”. Whilst White House spokeswoman Jennifer Friedman said the administration is “always open to new and different ideas when it comes to the challenges in Syria” but she stressed that Mr. Obama simply “does not see a military solution to the crisis in Syria, and that remains the case”. And the newspaper added that “the cable marks the latest in a pattern of frustration from current and former officials since ٢٠١٣... many of whom had worked within Obama’s administration itself”.

### Summary:

١ – It is true that America is in a dilemma... As for a US military ground intervention, then it is most probable that this will be delayed for a time. That is because the current US administration is working for the ground fighting to be undertaken by the subordinates, agents and followers and that this will continue until the end of Obama’s period in office... That is unless new matters outside of the (current) context arise.

٢ – However, the matter that is eye catching is that despite the absence of an international struggle in Syria, like that which is present in Libya and Yemen, and indeed the only international ‘Struggler’ is America which utilising alongside it Russia, Iran, the regime, subordinates and followers to conduct their various barbaric crimes... Despite that, America and its subordinates have failed to make the people of Syria submit until this very day to implement the US plans and participate with the tyrannical regime within the ruling. That is whilst the side and party that America is struggling against is the Syrian people with its material means and capabilities that do not compare to the capabilities of those states. In spite of that Ash-Shaam remains resilient against the covetous aims of those states, the subordinates and followers! The reason for that is the great Islam which has activated and moved the people of Ash-Shaam to resist the Kufir (disbelief), its people and oppression and its supporters... It is the great Islam that fills the hearts of the truthful and sincere... Even if Islam is activated within the hearts of some of the people in an emotional manner without being accompanied by the same level of thought... And even if it is motivated within the hearts of some others for purposes which are not entirely upright and correct... However, the Islamic sentiments represents the dominant flavour and colouring within the atmospheres whilst the Islamic thoughts are proclaimed openly by many... This is what has made America fail until this day: The rays of Islam within Ash-Shaam even if it has not yet been embodied within a state that unifies and gathers together the Ummah, so what would the situation be like if it had done that? In any case, this matter has that which follows it:

﴿وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ﴾

“And those who have oppressed will know to which return they will be returned to” [Ash-Shu’ara: ٢٢٧].

٢٢<sup>nd</sup> Ramadan ١٤٣٧ AH

٢٧/٠٦/٢٠١٦ CE