

US blocks UN resolution condemning Damascus terror bombings

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Yesterday, US officials blocked a Russian-sponsored resolution at the United Nations Security Council condemning Thursday's multiple terror bombings in the Syrian capital, Damascus.

The death toll of the bombings, which came amid the ongoing US-led proxy war to oust Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, rose to 83 yesterday, with over 200 wounded. Some 22 people died in three car bombings in northern Damascus. The main car bomb in central Damascus near the ruling Baath Party headquarters and a school killed 63, including many children.

Though no one has taken responsibility for the bombing, it is widely suspected to be the work of the Al Nusra Front, an Al Qaeda-linked group active in the US-backed opposition to Assad, which recently declared that it would launch an offensive to "liberate Damascus."

When Russian officials presented a UN Security Council Resolution condemning the Damascus terror bombings, the US delegation refused to pass it. Whatever tactical differences exist in Washington over how extensively to arm Al Qaeda and the broader, Islamist-dominated Syrian opposition, the US government stands behind terrorism and mass murder as tools of its Middle East policy.

Explaining its position, US mission spokeswoman Erin Peltin said: "We agreed with the Russian draft of a statement from the Security Council and only sought to add similar language on the regime's brutal attacks on the Syrian people. Unfortunately, Russia refused to engage on a credible text."

This is a cynical dodge, aimed at downplaying the responsibility of the United States and its allies in terror attacks in Syria.

Peltin's comments make clear that, confronted with a resolution denouncing the bombings, the US delegation

recognized that it was not the Assad regime that was being criticized. It therefore added text to the resolution attacking the Syrian government—though it was in fact the target of the terror bombing—and trying to direct blame away from the terrorist forces in the US-backed opposition. Russia then refused to pass the resolution as amended by US officials.

The Syrian National Coalition, the Western-backed opposition umbrella group, descended into absurdity as it blamed the bombings on Assad. Yesterday it issued a statement on its Facebook page: "The terrorist Assad regime bears the most responsibility for all the crimes that happen in the homeland, because it has opened the doors to those with different agendas to enter Syria and harm its stability, so it can hide behind this and use it as an excuse to justify its crimes."

It is well known that the opposition forces are carrying out terror bombings and stoking a sectarian civil war with the support of the US and its European and Middle East allies. In December, when the US State Department finally designated the Al Nusra Front as a terrorist group, it admitted that Al Nusra had carried out nearly 600 terror bombings in Syria over the previous year.

The anti-Assad opposition has received hundreds of millions of dollars from the Western-backed Saudi and Qatari monarchies. The day before the bombing, Qatar's Al Thani monarchy gave another \$100 million to the opposition. Such funds go to pay for weapons and salaries for opposition fighters, many of whom are mercenaries of the ultra-conservative Persian Gulf petromonarchies.

The backing given by the US government at the UN to terrorist acts of mass murder highlights the fraudulency of the "war on terror." Administrations, both Democratic and Republican, cited the threat of Al

Qaeda to justify fundamental assaults on democratic rights: the virtual elimination of restrictions on electronic surveillance, the use of torture, and, ultimately, the US president's right to order extrajudicial murders by drone strikes.

These policies were not dictated by principled opposition to terrorism, but by the cynical pursuit of US imperialist interests. In Syria, this has meant an unstable collaboration between Washington and Al Qaeda. The Assad regime is a key ally of Iran, a country with massive oil reserves that is currently the main obstacle to US neo-colonial hegemony in the Middle East. To topple the Syrian regime and increase pressure on Iran, Washington was more than willing to politically support terror operations.

US-backed mass murder in Damascus constitutes a searing indictment of forces who argued that imperialist-backed guerrillas, and not a revolutionary struggle of the Syrian working class, would settle accounts with the Assad dictatorship. In the imperialist countries, these forces include both the mass media and petty-bourgeois "left" parties—like the International Socialist Organization in the United States, the Socialist Workers Party in Britain, the Left Party in Germany, and the New Anti-capitalist Party in France.

They bear political responsibility for crimes against the Syrian people carried out by forces that they have spent years promoting.

Washington's policy in Syria is stoking a confrontation not only with Syria and Iran, but also with China and Russia, Syria's main ally. As then-US President George W. Bush noted in 2007, such conflicts threaten to ignite World War III. (See: "Iran: Why does Bush invoke the threat of World War III?")

After consultations with Chinese officials, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov denounced the US vote on the Syria terror bombing at the UN Security Council. He said, "We believe these are double standards, and see in it a very dangerous tendency by our American colleagues to depart from the fundamental principle of unconditional condemnation of any terrorist act—a principle which secures the unity of the international community in the fight against terrorism."

The aggressive US policy in the Middle East—together with the US-backed policy in the Pacific of the new right-wing Japanese government of Prime Minister

Shinzo Abe—appears to be driving China and Russia into a defensive alliance against Washington. On Thursday it was announced that the first foreign visit of China's incoming president, Xi Jinping, would be to Moscow, sometime in March.

There, he reportedly plans to discuss boosting Chinese energy imports from Russia to limit at least temporarily Chinese dependence on Middle East oil and countries such as Syria and Iran that are threatened with US attack.



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