

The Foreign Hand of Intervention in Syria

by Eric Margolis via jalal - The National Interest *Monday, Aug 13 2012, 10:10am*

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It is no secret that Syria is on the neo-con regime change list, as is Iran; the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan and a number of resource rich former Soviet satellite nations have already succumbed to the illegal interventions of Western Corporate and Banker elites; but I would also state that most invaded nations requested assistance from COWARDLY China and Russia, the only combined force that is able to effectively resist the Imperial ambitions of US/NATO powers.

A quote from the article posted below essentially sums up the primary reason why fallen nations are so easily compromised by western intelligence agencies:

"Zionist ideologue Vladimir Jabotinsky, the father of Israel's right wing, observed nearly a century ago that much of the Arab world was a fragile mosaic. A few sharp blows, he wrote, would cause it to shatter, leaving Israel the region's dominant power."

The above principle clearly also applied to the Balkans where deep ideological and religious divisions in Yugoslavia did more to fragment and subjugate Yugoslavia than any amount of US corruption money, bombs, propaganda or weaponry. And as is historically evident today, the same could be said for Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan and other recently invaded nations.

So it is pointless blaming the CIA and other western agencies that all work on behalf of Transnational Corporations and large western Banks for these interventions; it is the FOLLY and DISUNITY among the people of targeted nations that is to blame, if blame is to be levelled at anyone.

The lesson for Arabs is CLEAR; however, inbred, distrusting and deeply divided Arabs have already fallen easy prey to western intrigues and interventions, so we expect the worst from Muslim morons, as trust and unity cannot be gained overnight.

Nevertheless -- as was the case with other invaded nations -- Russia and China are able to assist if they so choose, but who could forget the Russian military in the former Yugoslavia putting its tail between its legs and RUNNING, leaving their slavic brothers at the mercy of mass murdering western bandits -- Russia's cowardly action was a source of great mirth and derision among western elites for a considerable period. Yet, the fact remains; the only forces that are able to halt western Imperialism today are Russia and China -- the problem is of course CORRUPTION and COWARDICE, as Russia and China both failed to intervene when Libya and Yugoslavia PLEADED for help!

Just how far these two clearly cowardly, passive Asian 'superpowers' are willing to allow themselves to be militarily intimidated/surrounded, bullied, mocked and compromised, before they react, remains to be seen, but a DECADE of unimpeded western Imperialism is difficult to ignore.

Eric Margolis article follows:

The Polish Zionist ideologue Vladimir Jabotinsky, the father of Israel's right wing,

observed nearly a century ago that much of the Arab world was a fragile mosaic. A few sharp blows, he wrote, would cause it to shatter, leaving Israel the region's dominant power. Jabotinsky may have been right.

Even if the Bashar al-Assad regime manages to hang on in Syria, that country's economy is being wrecked, its people driven into poverty and neighbors tempted to intervene. Israel just threatened to attack Syria's modest store of chemical weapons. Turkey is stumbling into the morass, egged on by the Saudis and Gulf Arabs. Russia's national prestige is increasingly involved in Syria—which is as close to its borders as northern Mexico is to the United States. Iran may yet get involved.

We could be observing the beginning of a twenty-first-century version of the 1930s' Spanish civil war, which became a proxy struggle between Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union. The only thing we know for sure about Syria's civil war is that it is extremely dangerous to the entire region. Its outcome is entirely unpredictable. Meanwhile, the West keeps fueling the fires.

As a veteran correspondent who has covered fourteen conflicts and closely followed events in Syria since 1975, I have become convinced that there's much more to the civil war raging in Syria than Westerners are being told by their governments or the blinkered media.

Last week, Reuters reported a classified intelligence "finding" signed by President Obama authorizing aid to the Syrian rebels. This may be the tip of the iceberg that eventually reveals an extensive covert campaign by the United States, Britain, France, Saudi Arabia and Turkey to overthrow the Assad government in Damascus. According to this scenario, these U.S. allies would be using Qatar, assorted freelance jihadists and Lebanese rightists as cat's-paws to sustain the uprising. Jihadists, both Syrian and foreign, may also play a spearhead role in the fighting.

In fact, the Assad clan was long a target of jihadist wrath, described as godless tyrants oppressing good Muslims, in bed with the heretical Shia of Iran and too often cooperating with Western powers. Osama Bin Laden called on all jihadists to overthrow the Assads. Bin Laden is gone, of course, but the movement he sparked continues to gain momentum.

That revolution has erupted again in Syria is no surprise: the Assad family and its Alawite power base have brutally ruled Syria for over forty years. Rebellions by the Sunni majority, led by the underground Muslim Brotherhood, have been crushed with ferocity. This writer was outside the city of Hama in 1982 when government heavy guns and tanks put down a Sunni rebellion there, inflicting an estimated ten thousand casualties.

But until recently, Syria was in our good books. The Assad regime quietly cooperated with Western powers and Israel, jailed or liquidated Islamists, and kept quiet about the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights. The Bush administration even sent Islamist suspects to be imprisoned in Syria. Assad and his henchmen were another of our unsavory allies.

However, that was before war fever over Iran gripped Washington. Overthrowing the Assad government, Iran's only Arab ally, would be a natural first step in overthrowing Iran's Islamic government and isolating, then eliminating, Israel's bitter Lebanese foe,

Hezbollah.

If Syria were shattered into little confessional ministates and Hezbollah crushed, Lebanon likely would become an Israeli protectorate. Such was the strategic plan of Israel's General Ariel Sharon in 1982.

Western powers already may be employing destabilization methods in Syria that were perfected in Libya. The DGSE, French foreign intelligence, cobbled together a group of Libyan exiles to form the "National Forces Coalition," which rallied anti-Qaddafi elements in Benghazi. Britain's MI6 intelligence had been active there for decades stirring up opponents of the Qaddafi regime.

In Libya, NATO air power intervened on "humanitarian" grounds to halt killing of civilians. News reports showed only lightly armed civilians battling Qaddafi's regulars. Not shown were French, British and some other Western special forces disguised as Libyans that did much of the fighting and targeted air strikes.

France made use of a similar tactics in its brief border war with Libya in 1986 over the disputed Aouzou Strip on the Chadian-Libyan desert border. Chadian troops supposedly routed Libyan forces. In reality, the "Chadians" were actually tough French Foreign Legionnaires decked out in Bedouin dress. I interviewed some of the Legionnaires involved.

Fast-forward to today's Syria. As a former soldier, I cannot believe that anti-Assad forces in Syria have made such great strides on their own. All armed forces require command and control, specialized training, communications and logistics. How have anti-Assad forces moved so quickly and pushed back Syria's capable, well-equipped army? Where does all their ammo come from? Who is supplying all those modern assault rifles with optical sights?

How have so many Syrian T-72 tanks and other armored vehicles been knocked out? Not by amateur street fighters. Powerful antitank weapons—likely French, American or Turkish—have been used extensively. You don't blow up a modern T-72 tank with light, handheld RPG rockets. Powerful antitank weapons, like the U.S. TOW or French Milan, require professional, trained crews. The use of these weapons suggests that outside forces are involved in the fighting, as they were in Libya.

Now come reports that the rebels are receiving small numbers of man-portable anti-aircraft missiles. If properly used, they would threaten the Assad regime's armed helicopters. Yet using such missiles requires a good deal of training. I saw in Afghanistan in the 1980s how long it took the mujahidin to learn this skill from CIA instructors—and then how quickly the Red Air Force was denied air superiority.

If Syria's rebels are being trained, it is probably happening in Turkey (which makes the deadly U.S. Stinger AA missile under license). However, the United States has a major campaign under way to prevent jihadist groups from acquiring such man-portable missiles. If the Taliban received effective anti-aircraft missiles, U.S. military operations in Afghanistan would be seriously threatened.

According to Reuters sources, the United States may have worked with Turkish allies to set up a command HQ at Adana, close to its Incirlik airbase in eastern Turkey near the

Syrian border. This is where it would make sense for U.S. intelligence to coordinate the flow of arms, communications gear, medical supplies, food and munitions to the Syrian rebels.

Other unverified reports from the Mideast suggest that the U.S. mercenary firm formerly known as Blackwater (it recently changed its name to Academi) is training Syrian rebels in Turkey, moving in veteran mercenaries from Iraq, where there were once fifty thousand U.S.-paid private soldiers, and sending combat units into Syria.

Antiregime groups such as the Free Syrian Army probably would be ineffective without some kind of covert Western support. Whether they can grasp power from the jihadis who now dominate the streets remains to be seen. This gambit worked in Libya—at least so far. Syria, in contrast, is a very complex nation whose modern era has been marked by instability and coups.

After overthrowing one Syrian government in the late 1940s, Washington wisely backed off from Syria. Now it may get drawn back into the vortex of one of the Mideast's most difficult nations.

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US think tank plans military build-up against China

by Peter Symonds -- [WSWS](#)

A paper by the Washington think tank, the Centre for Strategic and Independent Studies (CSIS), titled "US Force Posture Strategy in the Asia Pacific Region: An Independent Assessment," provides what amounts to a blueprint for the Obama administration's military preparations for conflict with China.

While the CSIS is a non-government body, its assessment was commissioned by the US Defense Department, as required by the 2012 National Defense Authorisation Act, giving semi-official status to its findings and proposals. The paper involved extensive discussions with top US military personnel throughout the Pentagon's Pacific Command. The CSIS report was delivered to the Pentagon on June 27, but gained media coverage only after its principal authors—David Berteau and Michael Green—testified before the US House Armed Services Committee on August 1.

The report featured prominently in the Australian media, which headlined one of its proposals: to forward base an entire US aircraft carrier battle group at HMAS Stirling, a naval base in Western Australia. If implemented, the recommendation would transform the base, and the nearby city of Perth, into a potential target for Chinese and Russian nuclear missiles. The proposal serves to underscore the far-reaching implications of the CSIS assessment, which is in line with Obama administration's confrontational "pivot" to Asia, aimed against China.

The CSIS assessment declares that the underlying US geostrategic objective in the Asia-Pacific region has been to prevent "the rise of any hegemonic state from within the region that could threaten US interests by seeking to obstruct American access or dominate the maritime domain. From that perspective, the most significant problem for the United States in Asia today is China's rising power, influence, and expectations of regional pre-eminence." In other words, the prevailing American hegemony in the region must continue.

The document recognises that military strategy is bound up with economic imperatives. It identifies “trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement” as crucial to “a sustainable trans-Pacific trade architecture that sustains U.S. access and influence in the region.” While declaring that the US “must integrate all of these instruments of national power and not rely excessively on US military capabilities,” it is precisely America’s relative economic decline that is driving the use of military power to maintain its dominance in Asia, as in the Middle East.

Having identified China as the chief potential rival, the report rules out any repeat of the US containment strategy employed to isolate the Soviet Union during the Cold War—thus pointing to the United States’ economic dependence on China. Significantly, the authors reject a power-sharing arrangement with China, or, as described to the armed services committee, “a bipolar condominium that acknowledges Beijing’s core interests and implicitly divides the region.” This latter conception, in one form or another, is being promoted by some strategic analysts in the US and Australia as the only means of preventing war. The CSIS report rejects any pull back by the US from Asia, which would effectively cede the region to China.

Having ruled out peaceful alternatives, the CSIS paper sets out a military strategy. The authors do not openly advocate war with China, declaring that “the consequences of conflict with that nation are almost unthinkable and should be avoided to the greatest extent possible, consistent with U.S. interests.” They do not exclude the possibility of conflict in the event that US interests are at stake, however, adding that the ability to “maintain a favourable peace” depends on the perception that the US can prevail in the event of conflict. “U.S. force posture must demonstrate a readiness and capacity to fight and win, even under more challenging circumstances associated with A2AD [anti-access/area denial] and other threats to U.S. military operations in the Western Pacific,” the report states.

Thus, in the name of peace, the US is preparing for a catastrophic war with China. US strategic planners are especially concerned with China’s so-called A2AD military capacities—the development of sophisticated submarines, missiles and war planes capable of posing a danger to the US navy in the Western Pacific. While the US habitually presents such weaponry as a “threat” to its military, in reality China is defensively responding to the presence of overwhelming American naval power in waters close to the mainland. US naval preponderance in the East China Sea, the South China Sea and key “choke” points such as the Malacca Strait, menaces the shipping lanes from the Middle East and Africa on which China relies for energy and raw materials.

The CSIS report approves of the repositioning and strengthening of US military forces in the Western Pacific that has accelerated under the Obama administration’s “rebalance” to Asia. This includes: consolidating US bases, troops and military assets in Japan and South Korea; building up US forces on Guam and Northern Mariana Islands, strategically located in the Western Pacific; stationing in Singapore littoral combat ships—relatively small, fast, flexible warships capable of intelligence gathering, special operations and landing troops with armoured vehicles; and making greater use of Australian naval and air bases and positioning 2,500 Marines in the northern city of Darwin. In addition, the paper confirms that the US has held discussions with Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam over possible access to bases and joint training.

The document also reviews US efforts to strengthen military ties throughout Asia—from India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to Burma, Indonesia and New Zealand—as well as with its formal allies. Significantly, in ranking military contingencies from low to high intensity, it identifies Australia, Japan and South Korea as critical allies “at the higher spectrum of intensity”—in other words, military conflict with China—“with other allies and partners at the lower spectrum of intensity.”

While broadly dealing with all contingencies, the CSIS assessment is primarily focussed on “high intensity.” Its recommendations involve the further development of military arrangements with South Korea, Japan and Australia, and also between these allies. It recommends the implementation of the latest military agreements with Japan and South Korea. In relation to Japan, the document makes the strategic significance of Okinawa clear. It is “centrally located” between Northeast Asia and maritime Southeast Asia, and “positioned to fight tactically within the A2AD envelope in higher intensity scenarios”—that is, it is crucial in any war with China. The Obama administration has intransigently opposed Japanese government calls to relocate the large US Marine base at Futenma off Okinawa.

The CSIS document is not the official policy of the Obama administration: its findings are couched as recommendations. It considers all scenarios, including maintaining the status quo and winding back US forces from the Asia Pacific region, neither of which it favours. However, the most ominous aspect of the report deals with a substantial list of steps that could be taken to markedly strengthen the US military throughout the region.

As well as basing a US nuclear aircraft carrier in Western Australia, these include: doubling the number of nuclear attack submarines based at Guam; deploying littoral combat ships to South Korea; doubling the size of amphibious forces in Hawaii; permanently basing a bomber squadron on Guam; boosting manned and unmanned surveillance assets in Australia or Guam; upgrading anti-missile defences in Japan, South Korea and Guam; and strengthening US ground forces. While recommending consideration of all these options, the CSIS specifically calls for more attack submarines to be placed at Guam—that is, within easy striking distance of Chinese shipping routes and naval bases.

Any of these moves will only heighten tensions with China and the danger of an arms race and conflict in the Asia Pacific region. The CSIS assessment points to potential flashpoints, from the Korean peninsula and the Taiwan Strait to the South China Sea and the disputed borders between India and China. The report clearly represents the thinking more broadly within the Obama administration, and top US military and intelligence circles that are recklessly preparing and planning for war with China.

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