

# Ignorant U.S. Involvement. The 51 U.S. “Diplomats” Memo to Wage an All out War on Syria

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*The message 51 US diplomats and officials, many said to be Middle East specialists, sent via the “Dissent Channel” to State Department top brass shows that service in this region does not necessarily prove to be informative or promote understanding.*

*In this message the signatories criticised President Barack Obama’s refusal to use US military strikes in the drive to oust Syrian President Bashar Assad.*

The authors of the memorandum argue that a judicious use of force to compel the Syrian army to abide by the fragile cessation of hostilities, selectively imposed last February, and agree to “negotiate a political solution in good faith”.

Of course, the “solution”, not stated, involves the removal or resignation of Assad, who is blamed preposterously for unrest in the region, which was, in fact, precipitated by the two Bush wars on Iraq and other US meddling.

US Secretary of State John Kerry, who disagrees with President Obama’s approach to Syria, called the memorandum “very good” and met with 10 of its authors.

Later his spokesman said Kerry did not endorse the contents of the memorandum but considered it “well written”.

Such weasel words will convince no one. Kerry has long preferred the limited use of US military force against Damascus.

The document mentions “moderate rebel groups” striving to defeat Daesh, when there are no “moderate rebel groups” with muscle with the exception of the Democratic Forces largely composed of Kurdish leftists.

They have close connections to the Turkish Kurdish Workers’ Party, which has been fighting Ankara for autonomy or independence for 38 years and is regarded as a “terrorist” movement by Washington.

The collection of non-Kurdish armed opposition groups are not only takfirists, but also pair with and share fighters and arms with Daesh and Al Qaeda’s Jabhat Al Nusra, branded as “terrorist” groups by the UN and the US.

The 51 call on the Obama administration to “protect and preserve opposition-held communities, by defending them from [Assad’s] air force and artillery”, and claim the

government is starving and bombing Sunnis.

The majority of Syria's Sunnis dwells in Damascus, the coastal cities, Homs, Hama and other government held-cities.

Indeed there has been an influx of Sunnis into government-controlled areas, including the capital where, the population has, perhaps, doubled during the war years.

Two-thirds of those in Aleppo live in the government-held sectors. These demographic facts expose the falsity of the 51's claim that Sunnis "view the[Assad] regime as the primary enemy in the conflict" and "prospects for rolling back Daesh's hold on territory are bleak without Sunni Arabs".

Furthermore, the authors of this misleading and dangerous document do not admit that Sunni Arabs form the majority of Syrian soldiers fighting Daesh, Al Nusra and the other takfirists.

One thing they are right about, however, is that non-Kurdish forces cannot be expected to fight Daesh in non-Kurdish areas.

Nevertheless, Washington has been pressing US-backed Kurds to go for Daesh's capital at Raqqa, a Sunni city, but the Kurds have expressed opposition to such a plan.

Pressure on the Kurds is likely to increase as government forces turn their attention to Raqqa, Damascus' next military objective. Commentators speak of a "race" to conquer Raqqa pitting Damascus, backed by Russia and Iran, against Washington's Kurdish allies.

The 51 dissidents call on the US to ground Syria's air force and strike Syrian army artillery in order to encourage civilians to stay put in insurgent-held areas.

These diplomats and officials argue this would stem the flow of refugees to Europe, but they fail to mention that Russian warplanes might very well be ordered to protect Syrian aircraft, bases, and artillery positions with the aim of obstructing US efforts to weaken a government Moscow and Tehran have backed over the past five years.

The dissidents call for the US to assert leadership and resolve the Syrian crisis in such a way as to promote US interests without mentioning that in Syria there are multiple external actors with their own interests who could oppose and undermine US leadership.

It is significant that, so far, the names and positions of the 51 signatories remain secret. They are said to be second-rank State Department personnel.

They appear to have adopted the deadly and disastrous approach promoted by former US ambassador to Syria Robert Ford who, in 2011, told Syrian critics of the government to protest and nothing would happen to them.

He knew full well that the government would crack down as did the Mubarak government in Egypt when confronted by far more massive protests than the demonstrations that took place in Syria.

If Ford had kept quiet rather than given protesters the impression the US was behind them,

they might not have mounted demonstrations that turned violent and launched a civil conflict which rival external players have exploited for their own devious ends.

It must be taken into account that over the past 25 years, direct US intervention in Arab affairs, starting with the 1991 Gulf war, have been disastrous.

The 1991 war, opposed by the late King Hussein, divided Iraq into Kurdish and Arab entities and set Sunnis against Shiites when US president George H. W. Bush urged Shiites to revolt against Iraqi president Saddam Hussein.

Following this war, the US supported Iraqi opposition forces dominated by Iran-backed fundamentalist Shiites who were installed in power in Baghdad by US president George W. Bush after his 2003 invasion and occupation of the country.

During the eight-year reign of Iraqi prime minister Nouri Al Maliki, chosen by the US, Sunnis were persecuted and marginalised, prompting the rise of Al Qaeda and its brutal offshoots, Daesh and Al Nusra, as well as other takfirist groups.

US interventions in Afghanistan and Libya have turned these countries into failed states and created a vacuum filled by the Taliban, Daesh, and other takfirist factions.

Thanks to US interventions, more than a million people may have died in Iraq, while 150,000 and upwards have been slain in Syria. Millions have been driven from their homes, and millions are fleeing the region.

These terrible things are happening because ignorant US involvement is too great rather than too little.

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