

“RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT” SYRIA: A US-NATO “TROJAN HORSE”

"Friends of Syria" Sabotage UN "Peace Plan"

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Kofi Annan, Special Envoy for the United Nations and Arab League stated, in his remarks to the United Nations informal session of the General Assembly, April 6, 2012: “I ask all States with influence on the parties in Syria to use it now to ensure an end to the bloodshed and the beginning of dialogue.” Annan stated that, the Syrian government having agreed to withdraw troops from population centers by April 10, “a cessation of violence is demanded of the opposition by April 12,” and he twice stated: “I call upon all parties with influence on the opposition to urge that they also cease all violence.” United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated, in his opening remarks to that meeting: “Further militarization of the conflict is not a solution,” and Qatar’s ambassador Nasser Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the General Assembly, acknowledged that the ramifications of policies: “depending on what comes next, could have an impact on the whole region.” According to The New York Times description of the April 1 “Friends of Syria,” meeting in Istanbul:

“The United States and dozens of other countries moved closer on Sunday to direct intervention in the fighting in Syria, with Arab nations pledging \$100 million to pay opposition fighters, and the Obama administration agreeing to send ‘communication equipment to help the rebels organize and evade Syria’s military’...the moves reflected a growing consensus, at least among the officials who met here under the rubric “Friends of Syria,” that mediation efforts by the United Nations peace envoy Kofi Annan, were failing to end the violence....With Russia and China blocking United Nations measures that could open the way for military action, the countries lined up against the government of President Bashar al-Assad sought to bolster Syria’s beleaguered opposition through means that seemed to stretch the definition of humanitarian assistance and blur the line between so-called lethal and non-lethal support.”

Although this is a surprisingly candid disclosure by The New York Times concerning the nature of “support” for the Syrian opposition, the Times article apparently misses the point. In fact, it is the threat that UN Special Envoy Kofi Annan might succeed in bringing about some form of cessation of violence in Syria, without demanding regime change, that motivates the “Friends of Syria” commitment of financial and military aid for the Syrian opposition on April 1, ten days before the deadline set by Kofi Annan for Syrian government withdrawal from population centers (a deadline initially accepted by the Syrian government) and 12 days before the demand that the opposition similarly cease all forms of violence. In one stroke, on April 1, the Friends of Syria’s commitment of financial and military aid to the opposition eliminated any incentive or need for the opposition to enter into dialogue with the Syrian government, which would be the first step toward peace in that country.

“Leading from behind,” US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared, at a press conference that day: “Assad must go.”

Assured of massive external support that might enable them to fight successfully to overthrow the government of Assad, the Al-Qaeda infiltrated opposition has every reason for confidence in ultimate victory, and has every reason for sabotaging the success of Kofi Annan’s efforts. So far, the United Nations has failed to support or provide legal justification for the military intervention that would be required to overthrow the government of Assad, and the Presidential Statements unanimously issued by the Security Council support Kofi Annan’s six point proposal, which omits the requirement that Assad relinquish power, and demands that both the Syrian government and the opposition engage in dialogue. The Security Council Presidential Statement contains calls for a “mechanism to monitor the end of violence,” and Syria’s government welcomed the arrival of the UN team, led by Norwegian Major General Robert Mood, to prepare for the deployment of observers. There is, however, an Achilles’ heel in the April 5th Security Council Presidential Statement which concludes: “The Security Council requests the Envoy to update the council on the cessation of violence in accordance with the above timeline, and progress toward implementation of his six-point proposal in its entirety. In the light of these reports, the Security Council will consider further steps as appropriate.” What those “further steps” will be is not made explicit. However, in the context of history, it does not take much imagination to recognize the potential (and probably intended) threat contained in the final sentence of UNSC Presidential Statement S/PRST/2012/10.

On February 17, the United States Director of National Intelligence, James R. Clapper, told Congress that Syrian opposition groups have been infiltrated by Al-Qaeda, allegations that are confirmed by the leader of Al-Qaeda, Ayman-al-Zawahri declaring his support for the Syrian opposition, and exhorting Muslims in Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan to aid the Syrian rebels. The “Friends of Syria” pledge of support to the Syrian opposition is no less than support for increased action by terrorists, now unabashedly encouraged by the US commitment of aid to the Anti-Assad forces.

On April 4th, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated: “Everybody backed Kofi Annan’s peace plan. Then all of a sudden another meeting of the Friends of Syria group makes decisions urging the Syria opposition to refuse negotiations and arm, promising new sanctions against Syria.” On April 7, President Assad stated that terrorist acts had increased, stating: “The terrorist acts committed by the armed terrorist groups in Syria have increased during the last few days, particularly after reaching an understanding on Kofi Annan’s plan,” said Assad’s letter to the United Nations Secretary General and President of the UN Security Council. On March 21, the Security Council had issued a press statement condemning the terrorist attacks that occurred in Damascus on 17th and 19th March, and in Aleppo on March 18. However, according to background reports, the UK President of the Security Council for March refused to agree to the press statement urged by the Russian Federation, condemning the terrorist attacks, until Russia agreed to support the Presidential Statement, the same day, threatening the “further steps.” If true, this alleged blackmail of Russia, withholding condemnation of terrorism to force Russia’s acceptance of the “further steps,” raises serious questions about the motive of the Security Council President who was, very likely acting at the behest of the US/NATO states supporting the Syrian opposition, and their admittedly terrorist members.

Escalating terrorist action, in the days just preceding the April 10th deadline inevitably

provokes the Syrian government, and as bloodshed continues, the Syrian government is now requiring a written commitment by the opposition of support for the peace plan drawn up by Kofi Annan. One could make a strong case that the April 1 Friends of Syria declaration of financial and military support for the opposition was deliberately intended to sabotage Kofi Annan's efforts for a cease-fire and negotiated peace, and set the stage for civil war, which will be portrayed, inevitably as the responsibility of the Syrian government. At this point the now infamous "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) will be invoked.

On February 21, Indian Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, a member of the Security Council stated: "As developments in Libya and Syria show, the principle of R2P is being used for regime change. Consider this: Resolution 1973 had five points - ceasefire with the mediation of the AU, use of all necessary means to protect civilians, no-fly zone, arms embargo and targeted sanctions. How was Resolution 1973 implemented? As soon as the resolution was adopted, the overenthusiastic members of the international community stopped talking of the AU. Its efforts to bring about a ceasefire were completely ignored. The only aspect of the resolution of interest to them was "use of all necessary means" to bomb the hell out of Libya."

" In clear violation of the resolution, arms were supplied to civilians without any consideration of its consequences. No-fly zone was selectively implemented only for flights in and out of Tripoli. And targeted measures were implemented insofar as they suited the objective of regime change. All kinds of mechanisms were created to support one party of the conflict and attempts were made to bypass the sanctions committee by proposing resolutions to the council. It goes without saying that the pro-interventionist powers did not ever try to bring about a peaceful end to the crisis in Libya. Now consider Syria...as early as May 2011 a resolution was proposed to impose sanctions. President Assad was declared to have lost legitimacy. The opposition was discouraged to engage with the government and the armed groups started receiving support ostensibly to defend themselves. These examples clearly underline the problem. The problem in the eyes of the vast majority of the international community is simple and clear: the principle of R2P is being selectively used to promote national interest rather than protect civilians...If this does not change, I am afraid the noble idea of R2P will come into disrepute. Indeed, the Libyan case has already given R2P a bad name...We must not end with a situation where saving hundreds causes the killing of thousands. The UN must act impartially and must not take sides."

Maneuvers to manipulate the United Nations into some form of support for military action in Syria included violating UN General Assembly Rules of Procedure to force passage by the General Assembly of draft resolution A/66/L.36, "condemning human rights violations by the Syrian authorities" on February 16th. The Russian Federation voted against the resolution, stating that it did not meet the criteria for ending the violence in Syria. The Russian "proposals to place reasonable demands on the opposition forces to disassociate themselves from armed groups, and to demand that those groups cease their attacks, had not been accepted."

Though the February 16th UN General Assembly resolution is not legally binding, as a Security Council resolution would have been, its public relations impact should not be underestimated, and can be used to make a case for invoking R2P to attempt to justify military intervention in Syria. Whether or not US/NATO forces get the legal authorization for military intervention from the United Nations will be determined in the very near future, and will depend largely upon the strength of Russia and China's position. The geopolitical stakes are huge. Syria is Russia's last foothold in the Middle East. And it appears that NATO is

establishing a foothold within the very heart of Russia, having obtained agreement for a NATO transit hub on the Volga, the river connecting European Russia with the vast oil wealth and resource rich Eastern part of the Russian Federation.

On March 9th, US Senate Minority leader Richard Luger introduced the "NATO Enhancement Act" which seeks to encompass Georgia and Ukraine within NATO's umbrella. The Pentagon is planning to deploy "missile defense" in Asia and the Middle East, which will constitute a threat to China, similar to the threat to Russia resulting from the placement of "missile defense" in Europe. It now appears possible that the only curb on NATO's global dominance will be the economic crisis plaguing NATO's capitalist partners, and the violent riots now occurring in NATO countries, as civilian victims of "austerity measures" are demonstrating to protest the slashing of social protection programs required to service the enormous cost of militarization necessary for NATO membership.

Will there eventually be a "NATO Spring" of popular uprisings against the dictatorship of NATO, and the militarization of the planet?



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