

Syria Roulette

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In Las Vegas, the house seldom loses. Rarely are dirty Washington schemes foiled. It's playing hardball against Syria.

Its dirty hands are all over months of violence. In a July 18 press briefing, State Department spokesman Patrick Ventrell refused to condemn Wednesday's cold-blooded killings.

Syrian Defense Minister Dawood Rajiha, his deputy General Asef Shawkat, and Assistant Vice President General Hassan Turkmani died.

A terrorist bombing killed them at Damascus National Security headquarters. At the time, a ministerial, military, and security meeting was in progress. Others attending were injured.

Pressed for an answer on whether the Obama administration believes killing high-level Syrian officials is good or bad, he stressed only that Washington is:

“focused on ending the bloodshed. It is the Assad regime that, in slaughtering its own people, has created these chaotic conditions....(W)e want a peaceful, orderly transition.”

In other words, cold-blooded murder is OK as long as it advances America's imperium. Uncooperative countries will be ravaged. Body counts don't matter. Top officials are fair game. So are all imaginable lawless tactics.

Washington's dirty hands are all over Wednesday's attack. Death squad diplomacy is prioritized. Hillary Clinton warned about a price to be paid.

Unexplained was that it's far beyond murdering officials. Turning Syria into a charnel house is planned. Daily death squad killings increase body counts. Western and perhaps Qatari special forces as well as intelligence operatives direct them.

Satellite and other communications aid them. Taking the battle to Damascus streets ups the stakes. Scurrilous propaganda conveys the impression that the Assad's government is collapsing. Insurgent attacks alone can't defeat him.

Only body counts increase. Civilians and security forces suffer most.

All sorts of spurious reports circulate. Fake videos are used. Al Jazeera uses footage produced on a Qatar sound stage. Isolated images distort the larger picture. Disreputable sources are cited.

Al Jazeera claimed “the latest developments” reflect a “turning point” in the conflict. “The prestige of the regime has been shattered. Losing control of Damascus (means) the regime is slowly losing its grip over the country.”

Nonsense!

Washington and/or NATO countries designated Syria’s capital fighting “Operation Damascus Volcano.” They call it a full-scale offensive. Insurgent commander Qassem Saadeddine said “(t)here is no going back. The Damascus battle has priority for us. We have started the operation to liberate Damascus.”

Without elaborating, he said “expect surprises.”

Washington’s longstanding plans involve destroying, not liberating, Syria. Claimed end game operations in Damascus is propaganda. Media scoundrels repeat it. At issue is winning the information war, intensifying death squad attacks, and sustaining conflict on the ground.

After defecting, Syria’s former Iraq ambassador, Nawaf Fares, made spurious accusations. He’s in the tank for Washington.

He claimed Syrian officials told him to enlist “Jihadi units” to fight US forces in Iraq. Most recently he suggests Assad used chemical weapons in Homs.

He admits he can’t confirm it, but believes Assad will use them if threatened.

Security Council Showdown

On July 19, Britain, America, France, Germany, Portugal, and Ireland tabled a resolution for consideration. Eleven nations voted aye. Others besides sponsoring countries included Azerbaijan, Colombia, Guatemala, India, Morocco, and Togo. South Africa and Pakistan abstained.

Russia and China vetoed it. Invoking UN Chapter VII, it effectively declared war.

Moscow and Beijing acted responsibly. They did so for the third time. They want conflict resolution not bombs away. They need to go further. Hopefully they’ll get more assertive.

At issue is forthrightly denouncing Washington’s war on Syria. Drawing a line in the sand is crucial. Raging conflict can’t be tolerated. Arming and otherwise supporting their Syrian ally is vital.

The entire region’s up for grabs. Both countries have vital interests at stake. Only they can protect them. Months of diplomacy failed. Realpolitik dictates assertive action. Washington understands it. It won’t risk war at this time with either country.

The resolution’s text in part said “the situation constitutes a threat to international peace and security.”

UN Charter Chapter VII was invoked. It authorizes measures ranging from economic sanctions to blockades or direct military intervention if other measures fail.

It endorsed the June 30 Geneva agreement text. It called for ending armed conflict,

implementing Annan's peace plan, adhering to provisions of Security Council Resolutions 2042 and 2043, releasing detainees, permitting humanitarian access to areas needing help, and other steps to be taken.

It called for Syrian-led political transition. Its guidelines included establishing a firm timeline. It urged avoiding further bloodshed and violence.

It ignored what Assad already accomplished. In February, Syrians overwhelmingly supported new constitutional provisions by national referendum. Despite opposition boycotts and violence, 89.4% of eligible voters approved it. Another 9% opposed, and 1.2% of ballots were declared invalid.

Among other reforms, political pluralism was established for the first time. So were presidential term limits and press freedom.

On May 7, first time ever parliamentary elections were held. It was a milestone political event. Independent candidates participated.

Turnout was high. Voting went smoothly. Independent monitors called the process open, free and fair. Ba'ath party members won a 60% majority. Opposition party members were also elected.

Demanding a repeat of what's accomplished responsibly is unconscionable. Thursday's resolution also called for implementing Annan's peace plan, withdrawing troops from populated areas, and effectively surrendering unilaterally.

Other provisions extended the UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) another 45 days, made Syrian authorities responsible for "its full unimpeded, and immediate freedom of movement," allowed UN member states the right to provide "appropriate air transportation assets," and permitted "unobstructed communications."

Failure of Syrian compliance within 10 days called for implementing Chapter VII, Article 41. It triggers measures short of armed intervention.

They "may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations."

Provisions also called for "assess(ing) the implementation of this resolution and to consider further steps as appropriate."

Implied was implementing Chapter VII Article 42 measures. They "may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations."

If conflict resolution isn't achieved, subsequent articles authorize force. Article 46 calls for "(p)lans for the application of armed force (to) be made by the Security Council with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee."

Washington and key NATO partners endorse it. Russia and China stand firmly opposed. Following their veto, Western UN envoys denounced them. Moscow UN envoy Vitaly Churkin called their comments "unacceptable."

He accused them of putting their own geopolitical interests ahead of the Syrian people. The Security Council has until midnight Friday to decide whether UNSMIS' mandate will be renewed.

Russia proposed a resolution extending its mission 90 days with no sanctions. Churkin said Western countries stonewalled him. As a result, Moscow won't ask for a Security Council vote.

Vladimir Putin earlier ruled out Libya 2.0. Moscow also said adopting the West's resolution would "direct(ly) support" insurgent mercenaries.

Western and regional states already supply weapons, other equipment, funding, training, and direction. Expect stepped up efforts ahead.

Washington and key NATO partners reflect gross hypocrisy. They bear full responsibility for ongoing violence. Calling off their dogs can end it. Resolutions are sham cover for imperial lawlessness.

Expect daily bloodshed to continue. Assad will be wrongfully blamed. He's doing his job responsibly. Conflict resolution is nowhere in sight.

A Final Comment

Two previous articles exposed the ICRC's imperial agenda. It's a predatory NGO profiteer. It's closely linked to Western political and intelligence interests. It falsely called Syrian violence a civil war "subject to the rules of international humanitarian law."

There's nothing civil about Washington's war on Syria. It rages. The laws of war apply. ICRC's statement changed nothing.

Nonetheless, media scoundrels jumped on ICRC's declaration. The Wall Street Journal headlined an editorial "The Syrian Civil War."

Allegations of Syrian war crimes were raised. Syrians now suffer the consequences it said. The region's stability is at risk. Washington, other Western, and regional nations have options. The longer they wait, "the harder it becomes to shape the outcome in Syria."

Other media scoundrels hype the same theme. Doing so doesn't resolve conflict. It furthers it. Washington planned it that way.

It won't quit until Syria is ravaged and destroyed. "Liberation" following "humanitarian intervention" will be claimed. That's been the scheme from the get-go.

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