

US-NATO Sponsored “Free Syrian Army” is Falling Apart. Government Forces Have the Upper Hand

The FSA continues to shine like a dead star

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While the French press persists in announcing the “imminent fall” of Syria and the “flight of Bashar al-Assad,” the reality on the ground has turned around completely. Even though chaos is plaguing most of the territory, the “liberated zones” have melted like snow in the sun. Deprived of its anchor points, the FSA has been left with no prospects in sight, while Washington and Moscow are poised to blow the whistle to end the game.

The countdown has begun. As soon as the new Obama administration will be confirmed by the Senate, it will present a peace plan for Syria to the Security Council. Legally, though President Obama succeeds himself, his former administration is only responsible for the managing of current affairs and can not take any major initiative. Politically, Obama failed to react when, in the midst of the presidential race, some of his colleagues torpedoed the Geneva Agreement. But he proceeded with a general housecleaning right after the announcement of his reelection. As expected, General David Petraeus, the architect of the war on Syria, fell into the trap that had been set up for him and was forced to resign. As expected, the NATO and Missile Shield chiefs – adverse to an agreement with Russia – have been put under investigation for corruption and obliged to remain silent. Also as expected, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has been taken out of the game. Only the method chosen to eliminate her came as a surprise: a serious health accident that plunged her into a coma.

Meanwhile back at the UN, things have moved on. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) signed a Memorandum with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in September. In October, it monitored CSTO maneuvers in Kazakhstan simulating a deployment of “blue chapkas” in Syria. In December, the DPKO convened the military representatives of the permanent Security Council members to brief them on the manner in which the deployment could be carried out. Despite their opposition to this solution, the French and the British bowed to the wishes of the United States.



Nevertheless, France attempted to use the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Lakhdar Brahimi, to modify the Geneva peace plan in line with the objections it had raised on June 30th. Ultimately, Brahimi carefully refrained from taking a position, and instead contented himself with transmitting messages to and from between the various parties to the conflict.

The truth is that on the ground the upper hand is held by the Syrian government. The military situation has been reversed. The French themselves have ceased to mention the “liberated zones” they yearned to govern through a United Nations mandate. These areas have been steadily shrinking, and those that are still holding out are in the hands of the disreputable Salafists. The FSA troops were instructed to abandon their positions and regroup around the capital for a final assault. The Contras were hoping to rally the Palestinian refugees, mainly Sunni Moslem, against the inter-denominational Syrian regime in the same manner that the Hariris in Lebanon tried to arouse the Sunni Palestinians of the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp against the Shiite Hezbollah. As in Lebanon this objective failed because the Palestinians know very well who their friends are and who is really fighting for the liberation of their land. Concretely, in Israel’s recent 8-day war on Gaza, it was the Iranian and Syrian weapons that saved the day, while the Gulf monarchies did not move a finger.

Certain elements of Hamas, loyal to Khaled Meshaal and funded by Qatar, opened the doors of the Yarmouk camp to a few hundred fighters of the Front to Protect the Levant (Syrian-Lebanese branch of Al-Qaeda), also related Qatar. They fought mainly against members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC). Via SMS, the Syrian government asked the 180 000 camp residents to evacuate the premises as soon as possible and offered them temporary accommodation in Damascus hotels, schools and gyms. Some preferred to go to Lebanon. The next day, the Syrian Arab army attacked the camp with heavy artillery and regained control. 14 Palestinian organizations then signed an agreement declaring the camp a “neutral zone”. The FSA fighters withdrew in an orderly fashion and resumed their war against Syria in the surrounding countryside, while the civilians returned to their homes. They found a devastated camp where schools and hospitals had been systematically destroyed.

In strategic terms, the war is already over: the FSA has lost the popular support it had enjoyed at one point and has no chance of achieving victory. The Europeans still think they

can replace the regime by bribing top officials and causing a coup, but they realize that it will be impossible to bring off with the FSA. Contras continue to roll in, but the flow of money and weapons is drying up. Much of the international support has stopped although the consequences on the battlefield cannot yet be seen, much like a star that can continue to shine long after its death.

The United States has clearly decided to turn the page and to sacrifice the FSA. It gives it senseless instructions that lead the Contras to their death. Thousands were killed last month. Meanwhile, in Washington, the National Intelligence Council cynically announced that "international jihadism" will soon disappear. Other allies of the United States should now ask themselves whether this new equation does not imply that they too will be sacrificed.

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