

# War and the “Fiscal Cliff”: Economic Crisis Fuels Military Intervention in Syria

The Chemical Weapons “Threat” Becomes The New Pretext

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Global Research, December 11, 2012

Theme: [Global Economy](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*The US economy is sluggish with fears of a new recession. The Democrats and Republicans once more cannot agree on what to do about the alleged “fiscal cliff” that threatens to further unravel the economy, even as analysts say that the whole notion of going over the “cliff “ has been fabricated by the right to force more cuts in social benefits.*

Consumer confidence is dipping in this festive season of global shopping—not a good sign, since consumption and spending at the malls is an economic driver with 70% of economic activity based on getting consumers to buy even when it means they must go deeper and deeper in debt using credit cards and loans.

What can the Obama government do? The political stalemate has blocked new jobs and stimulus programs so reliance on Federal Reserve Bank interventions has grown, but they are not printing enough money to turn things around.

This is what’s behind the pressure for new wars that primes the spending pump with national security always used as the pretext. Largely unreported has been a quite escalation of selling arms and advanced weaponry, using threats from terrorists and Iran as the way to get a nervous public on board.

The White House has dipped into the Bush Administration Iraq playbook to seek out a new threat that can justify intervention. Non-Existent WMDs were used then to prepare the political/psychological conditions for the taking on Saddam Hussein. Now, the danger of Syria’s alleged use of “chemical weapons” is being trotted out and reinforced daily in briefings happily carried on our media.

Buried in the press is a related but unspoken memory: Washington supplied chemical weapons to Saddam Hussein, weapons he later used against civilians challenging his regime and in the Iraq-Iran war.

Here’s one report published on Counterpunch back in 2004:

“From...1985 until 1990 “the US government approved for export to Iraq of \$1.5 billion worth of biological agents and high-tech equipment with military application. US export control policy was directed by US foreign policy formulated by the State Department, and it was US foreign policy to assist the regime of Saddam Hussein.” A 1994 US Senate report revealed that US companies were licenced by the commerce department to export a “witch’s brew” of biological and chemical materials, including bacillus

anthracis (causes anthrax) and clostridium botulinum (cause of botulism). The American Type Culture Collection made 70 shipments of the anthrax bug and other pathogenic agents...:

So, let us remind ourselves, Washington's knowledge of chemical weapons comes in part from its role in manufacturing them.

This seeming bogus threat is being invoked as the basis of a new military intervention, now underway, that the Israeli intelligence and propaganda organ, Debka is hyping:

### [USS Eisenhower aircraft carrier arrives off Syrian shore](#)

"The USS Eisenhower Strike Group transited the Suez Canal from the Persian Gulf Saturday, Dec. 1, sailing up to the Syrian coast Tuesday in a heavy storm, with 8 fighter bomber squadrons of Air Wing Seven on its decks and 8,000 sailors, airmen and Marines. The USS Eisenhower group joins the USS Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group which carries 2,500 Marines.

Facing Syria now are 10,000 US fighting men, 70 fighter-bombers and at least 17 warships, including the three Iwo Jima amphibious craft, a guided missile cruiser and 10 destroyers and frigates. Four of these vessels are armed with Aegis missile interceptors.

This mighty US armada brings immense pressure to bear on the beleaguered Assad regime after it survived an almost two-year buffeting by an armed uprising. Its presence indicates that the United States now stands ready for direct military intervention in the Syrian conflict..."

All of this follows efforts by Hillary Clinton, NATO and the Pentagon on a second track to forge a new Syrian "united" opposition that can be presented to the Western press and media as the legitimate heir to the discredited Assad government. (To achieve this, the current coalition is, again, for public consumption, stripping its links to the terrorist groups that have done the most effective fighting, whatever the human rights cost in recent months, even as reports now confirm that the US similar armed terror groups fighting Gadaffi in Libya.)

As the New York Times reported, "Pressure is building on the new "National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces"...pulled together from a variety of opposition groups... last month in Doha, Qatar, convened by the US... to choose leaders and transform itself into a political force that could earn formal recognition from the US and other countries, as a viable alternative to the Syrian government..."

While US pressure remains in the background, U.S. troops move into the foreground, with arms sales hovering in the shadows, as Nick Turse reports on Tom Dispatch.com. These developments that have been downplayed in the same media outlets hyping the unsubstantiated chemical weapons threat.

"Last month, for instance, the U.S. quietly announced plans to further flood the Middle East with advanced weaponry. According to November notices sent by the Pentagon to Congress, the Department of Defense intends to oversee a \$300 million deal with Saudi Arabia for spare parts for Abrams Tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, and Humvees, and another for \$6.7 billion in new advanced aircraft.

Add to this a proposed sale of \$9.9 billion in Patriot missiles to Qatar, a \$96 million deal with Oman for hundreds of Javelin guided missiles, and more than \$1.1 billion in Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missiles for the United Arab Emirates. And this was on top of deals struck earlier in the year that include a \$63 million sale of Huey II helicopters to Lebanon, \$4.2 billion in Patriot missiles for Kuwait, a \$3 billion agreement to arm Qatar with advanced Apache attack helicopters, more than \$1 billion in upgrades for Abrams tanks belonging to Morocco's military, and the sale of \$428 million worth of radar equipment and tactical vehicles to Iraq."

While weapons flow outwards, urgently needed money flows in to the U.S., to keep the weapons factories humming and the military industrial complex in command.

Other nations like South Africa—from where I am writing have been pressured to cut off oil imports from Iran in favor of pricier petrol from Saudi Arabia. This pumps more money into the Kingdom that it can then use to finance its latest wave of weapons procurement.

This formula of "oil out/weapons in" was followed for many years by the deposed Shah of Iran as a way to enrich him and US military suppliers. The Shah is gone, but the game goes on all in the name of geo-political stability.

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