

Washington Arming Syrian Insurgents

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It's no surprise. It's an open secret. It's been ongoing since early last year directly and/or indirectly. Rhetorically supporting peace while waging war exposes Washington's transparent hypocrisy.

On June 15, the [UK Daily Telegraph](#) headlined "US holds high-level talks with Syrian rebels seeking weapons in Washington," saying:

In the past week, a Free Syrian Army (FSA) representative met with outgoing Syrian ambassador Robert Ford and special Syrian coordinator Frederick Hof at the State Department.

Meetings with senior National Security Council officials were also held.

FSA members want heavy weapons. They include anti-tank missiles and heavy machine guns.

"(T)he Daily Telegraph has learned that advanced contingency plans are already in place to supply heavy weapons to the rebels, including sophisticated anti-tank weapons and surface to-air-missiles."

Plans may crystallize at the upcoming June 30 Geneva Friends of Syria meeting. The June 18-19 Los Cabos, Mexico summit will focus more on Eurozone economic crisis conditions.

Syria discussions won't change Russian and Chinese opposition to military intervention.

Nonetheless, Obama and Putin will hold bilateral talks. It'll be their first meeting since Putin's reelection. Obama will also meet privately with Chinese President Hu Jintao. Expect no Syrian breakthroughs.

Unnamed "(s)enior Middle East diplomatic sources" said large insurgent weapons supplies are already stockpiled. "(I)nevitable" intervention is coming. At issue is toppling Assad. One unnamed source said:

It “will happen. It is not a question of ‘if,’ but ‘when.’ “

“Middle Eastern diplomatic sources said that the Obama administration was fully aware of the preparations being made to arm Syrian opposition groups.”

“The US has also agreed to be part of a group of countries that coordinates assistance to the rebels, the sources said, but was still deliberating over the time frame for escalation.”

On June 16, [DEBKAFfile](#) said Washington “is very near a decision on the types of weapons to be shipped to the Syrian rebels and when.”

Most supplied are bought and paid for. Saudi Arabia and Qatar funds were used. “The White House is also close to deciding on the format of its military operation in Syria.”

“Some sources” call it “Libya lite.” It includes a no-fly zone. It also involves “direct air and other strikes....”

If implemented, expect full-scale war. Washington always resolves issues this way when other interventionist measures fail.

According to [Alexei Pushkov](#), Chairman of the Russian Duma’s International Affairs Committee:

Thousands of insurgents are waging war on Syria. They’re using “heavy weapons.” They include “heavy machine guns (and) anti-tank guns....”

They’re coming from Libya. Lebanese authorities interdicted a ship. It was “full of US weapons....”

Syria is secular, multi-ethnic and multi-religious. Syrians lived together peacefully for years. If war erupts, “100 thousand” may die.

If protracted and intense, it could be many more. Libya’s population numbers around six million. Syria is four times its size.

Some estimates say 100,000 or more Libyans died. Conflict continues. Casualties mount daily. Syria could be Libya 2.0. Imagine the potential toll and regional destabilization.

Pushkov added:

“We think that the Libyan example showed that these kinds of interventions lead to chaos and to the creation of a parallel international law....”

Russia rejects subverting rule of law principles. “We don’t want to accept a world where there would be another international law instead of the internationally accepted one.”

“Syria is just a very serious example of the Russian desire to fight for international law which is universally accepted.”

In May, Ford and Hof held State Department meetings with Syrian Kurdish National Council members. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman attended.

At issue was enlisting anti-Assad support and creating an autonomous Syrian independent Kurdistan region together with Iraq’s Kurdish north.

Turkey is fundamentally opposed. At issue losing some of its territory for a Greater Kurdistan. Resolving that issue appears distant.

In 2007, Bush administration officials held talks with then Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns were involved.

At the time, then State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said:

“We’re not going to manage Israeli foreign policy. But let’s take a look at Syria’s behavior over the recent past, and I don’t think you’re going to find many indications of Syria showing the rest of the world that they are interested in playing a constructive, positive role in trying to bring about a more peaceful, secure region.”

Macormack accused Assad of supporting Lebanese “terrorist groups” linked to Iran. He meant Hezbollah without saying so.

US and Israeli officials met to discuss possible war with Syria. Then Prime Minister Ehud Olmert contacted Assad secretly.

At issue was discussing peace in return for Syria severing ties with Iran and Hezbollah. Rejection was assured.

Olmert claimed Assad declined his offer. Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem said he was ready to negotiate based on land for peace. He added that Israel signaled no interest.

Since Israel annexed Golan and other Syrian territory in 1967, it showed no willingness to relinquish it. Hostile relations continued. Hawkish Israelis believe withdrawing from any part of Judea and Samaria exposes Israel to annihilation.

Then opposition leader Netanyahu asked:

“What is a peace agreement with Syria worth? A piece of paper!” His comment left no ambiguity. It also suggested Israel’s preference for war, not peace.

At the time, Israeli intelligence suggested that Syria, Iran and Hezbollah planned joint preparations for war. An alleged Syrian arms build-up was claimed, including sophisticated Russian anti-aircraft systems and long-range missiles. Any part of Israel could be attacked.

In response, Israel conducted military exercises. Syria became Israel’s top focus. Then Chief of General Staff General Gabi Ashkenazi said:

“The IDF is preparing for an escalation on both the Palestinian and the northern fronts.”

Israeli cabinet ministers expected Syrian war preparations completed within weeks. Israel television showed IDF tanks positioned in case of attack.

A ministerial committee on Syria was established. Preparations for war were readied. Cooler heads worried it could happen by “miscalculation.” Damascus could misinterpret Israel’s mobilization or vice versa.

At the time, Dick Cheney favored conflict, not diplomacy. Condoleezza Rice turned hardline. She demanded Syria close its Iraq border and crack down on Palestinian “extremists.” Normalizing relations with Washington depended on it. She accused Assad of regional destabilization.

Syria believed Israel wanted war. It prepared countermeasures just in case. On September 6, 2007, Israeli warplanes invaded Syrian airspace. They bombed an alleged nuclear site.

Later evidence showed none existed. Damascus denounced the raid but didn’t retaliate. At the time, IAEA head Mohamed ElBaradei said satellite imagery showed little likelihood that the building struck was a nuclear facility.

After days of initial reports, Israel said little more about it. War might have erupted. What was avoided then threatens now. Washington wants it. Israel may as well. It’s coming. Expect it. Only its timing is unknown.

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