

Who is Really Waging War on Syria?

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As reported by the Sunday Times, British intelligence on Syrian troop movements is helping rebels launch successful attacks on regime forces. The newspaper quoted a Syrian opposition official who said that British authorities “know about and approve 100%” the intelligence from their Cyprus military bases being passed through Turkey to the rebel troops of the Free Syrian Army (FSA).

According to the official, the most valuable information has been on the movements of troops loyal to President Bashar al-Assad towards the town of Aleppo. The information the rebels get from British intelligence through Turkey enabled them, among other things, to ambush troops and a column of more than 40 tanks in a valley near Saraqib. “We cut them off and destroyed many of them with repeat attacks with rocket-propelled grenades.” said the official.

Also on Sunday, the German newspaper Bild also revealed that Germany is much more active in Syria than was previously believed. German spies, stationed on ships off the Syrian coast, are transmitting intelligence to the FSA to aid in their campaign against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

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The German newspaper also quotes an unnamed US intelligence official as saying that “No Western intelligence service has such good sources inside Syria” as Germany's BND.

The information really has a twofold impact.

On the one hand, it obviously shows that the West is in fact totally ignoring the UN

resolutions on Syria which exclude any outside interference. While starting open warfare would require a UN Security Council approval, the West is conducting clandestine operations and supplying arms to the rebels. How far are NATO countries from openly admitting that they already have both feet in the Syrian civil war still remains an open question.

But there remains another question that the NATO strategists are probably reluctant to face – let alone answer it. In the past one and a half year (or, probably even more) the West has spent a lot of resources on its attempts to picture the Syrian president as not just a bad guy, but likely the worst ever seen in the region.

That, by definition, would presuppose that the rebels fighting Bashar Assad are good guys. Otherwise it would be too difficult to sell to the public the fact that the West is supporting them.

But as events in Libya and other Arabic countries have shown, the forces triumphing after the oppressive regimes are toppled are far from even distantly resembling the ideals of “democracy” propagated by the West. In Syria, where sectarian differences are greater than anywhere in the Middle East (possibly excluding Lebanon), the task of finding real “good guys” seems even harder. While the West is obsessed with the idea of toppling Bashar Assad, it will continue to turn a blind eye to the fact. But once (and if) it succeeds, the outcome might be even more dreadful than whatever atrocities are now ascribed to the Syrian “dictator”.

This fact is already beginning to dawn upon at least some members of the Western media community. On Monday, the Washington Post published a story about one of the groups within the Syrian opposition movement. The group, the al-Nusra Front for the Protection of the People of the Levant, popularly known as the Jabhat al-Nusra, is fielding scores of fighters, some of them foreigners, in the battle for Aleppo, and reportedly in other locations, too.

The fact that it recruits foreigners does not seem strange in the context of the above information on foreign aid to the rebels. Indeed, the war in Syria has ceased to be a civil war and is turning into a combined operation of outside forces.

But what is more important is the fact that in this war the West is siding with forces it has been so keen to fight since 2001. The Jabhat al-Nusra is not just one of the anti-Assad groups (who are, by definition, good guys), but a jihadist group suspected of affiliations to al-Qaeda. And, according to the Washington Post, it is gaining prominence in the war to topple the current regime in Syria.

So, the question that remains unanswered is the following – what will the US and its NATO allies do after they manage to topple Bashar al-Assad? And what if the virus of the anti-establishment militancy spreads to the countries the West would not like to be infected, like Saudi Arabia and its Gulf satellites. There is little reason to mourn the Saudi regime, but there may be reason to be wary of the forces that might replace it.

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