

Washington's lethal intervention in Syria

Bill Van Auken
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While publicly insisting that it is only providing “non-lethal” aid to elements seeking the overthrow of the Assad regime in Syria, Washington is coordinating the shipment of arms into the country and working to expand the deadly conflict.

This was the thrust of a lead article in the *Washington Post* Tuesday. The Syrian “rebels,” the *Post* reported, “have begun receiving significantly more and better weapons in recent weeks, an effort paid for by Persian Gulf nations and coordinated in part by the United States according to opposition activists and US and foreign officials.”

The growing role played by Washington in organizing the arming of elements attacking Syrian government forces is linked to a perspective that “an expanding military confrontation is inevitable,” according to the newspaper. While formally supporting the cease-fire and political transition plan brokered by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the administration is stoking a violent confrontation with the obvious aim of scuttling this plan and opening the way to more direct military intervention.

Saudi Arabia and Qatar, both among Washington's closest allies in the region, openly called for arming the anti-Assad forces and have poured millions of dollars into this effort. The *Post* article indicates that the decisions as to who receives these weapons are being made in Washington, which “has expanded contacts with opposition forces to provide the gulf nations with assessments of rebel credibility and command-and-control infrastructure.”

The *Post* also revealed that Obama administration officials hosted talks this week with representatives of the Kurdish opposition centered in eastern Syria, who have so far refrained from joining the armed revolt against Assad. This is in large part due to their distrust of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Sunni sectarian

elements which dominate the leadership of the opposition, and who are hostile to Kurdish demands.

The aim of the talks, according to the report, was to discuss “opening a second front against Assad's forces that would compel him to move resources from the west.”

Nothing could more graphically underscore the cynicism of the warriors for “human rights” and “democracy” in the Obama administration. While seeking to foment an armed revolt by Kurds in Syria, Washington is simultaneously aiding the Turkish military in the crushing of such a revolt just across the border in Turkey. As the *Wall Street Journal* revealed on Wednesday, a US drone being used to spot Kurdish targets for Turkish warplanes passed on intelligence that led to an air strike in which 35 civilians were slaughtered last December.

The State Department took issue with the *Post* story on Wednesday, with spokesperson Victoria Nuland charging that the article contained “assertions that were unsubstantiated,” while refusing to refute its substance. She spouted platitudes about Washington choosing to back “the civilian opposition in nonlethal ways,” while respecting the “sovereign decision” of the monarchical dictatorships of the Arab peninsula to ship tons of arms and ammunition into Syria.

Pressed by a reporter to explain why, if Washington ostensibly opposes “adding fuel to the fire” in Syria with arms shipments, it is coordinating the delivery of weapons with the Saudi and Qatari regimes, Nuland responded, “That's what the Friends of the Syrian people is about. It's about coordinating.”

While fomenting civil war and terrorist attacks within Syria—such as last week's Damascus bombings that killed 55 people and wounded nearly 400 more—Washington and its allies are also ratcheting up the threats of direct military intervention.

This week, just miles from Syria's southern border in

Jordan, some 11,000 soldiers, led by American special operations troops, are staging war games dubbed “Eager Lion 2012.” Among the participants are the armed forces of the Gulf powers openly backing Assad’s armed overthrow, including Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

US imperialism is waging a not-so-secret war for regime-change in Syria. For all of its rhetorical expressions about supposed concern in the White House for the violence in Syria and the democratic rights of the Syrian people, the Obama administration is prepared to sacrifice as many Syrian lives as necessary to advance its strategic aims.

The Syrian intervention is part of an increasingly militaristic and reckless policy being pursued in the region under the Democratic president. It is simultaneously orchestrating a war in Yemen to prop up a US-backed regime, using dozens of drone missile attacks and military assaults directed by American special forces troops deployed inside the country.

At the same time, the Obama White House has ordered the resumption of US military aid to Bahrain and last week hosted the Gulf oil emirate’s crown prince at the White House, even as reports of torture and ruthless repression of the country’s Shia majority population by the US-backed Sunni monarchy continue to pour out of the country.

What links these superficially discordant American interventions—one being carried out in Syria under the banners of “democracy”, “human rights” and “regime-change” and the others in Yemen and Bahrain under less stirring slogans of “stability” and “security”—is a broader US policy of militarily encircling and preparing for war against the country seen as US imperialism’s principal rival for hegemony over the oil-rich Persian Gulf: Iran.

In Syria, it seeks to topple Iran’s closest ally in the Arab world and install a US client regime. In Yemen it is backing a regime that is seeking to quell multiple rebellions that are viewed as threatening to expand Iranian influence. And in Bahrain, it is supporting the apartheid-style repression of 70 percent of the population because it is Shi’ite, co-religionists of the Iranians, and their achieving democratic rights is seen as a threat to the US-backed despots of the Gulf.

In remarks delivered on the eve of his trip to the US for the G-8 summit, Russian Prime Minister Dmitri

Medvedev warned Washington against “hasty military operations in foreign states,” adding that these actions “could result in a fully fledged regional war. And even—although I do not want to scare anyone—the use of a nuclear weapon.”

This is the grim reality behind all of the talk of the Obama administration about a “receding tide of war.” The continuing and deepening attempt by US imperialism to offset its historic crisis and decline by military means is bringing mankind face to face with the threat of a new world conflagration.

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