

UN General Assembly targets Syria as US proxy war escalates

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The UN General Assembly voted 133-12, with 31 abstentions, to endorse a resolution denouncing the Syrian government yesterday, as fighting escalated in the US-led proxy war in Syria. The vote was the focus of a massive propaganda campaign, aiming at placing blame for the bloody proxy war waged by the US and its European and Middle Eastern allies on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Having been blocked by Russian and Chinese vetoes at the UN Security Council from passing resolutions condemning Syria and giving a legal fig leaf for a US-led invasion, the US and its allies proceeded to organize a vote at the UN General Assembly.

The resolution effectively blamed Assad for the fighting, stating that “the first step in the cessation of violence has to be made by the Syrian authorities.” It denounced “the increasing use by the Syrian authorities of heavy weapons, including indiscriminate shelling from tanks and helicopters, and the failure to withdraw its troops and the heavy weapons to their barracks.”

This is nothing other than a demand that the Syrian government commit political suicide, by unilaterally disarming in the face of an international Islamist insurgency armed, financed, and organized by the US and its allies.

The vote came only days after reports emerged confirming that US President Barack Obama had previously signed a “finding” ordering US intelligence agencies to give covert aid to anti-Assad forces. It had already been widely reported that Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar are arming oppositional forces in Syria, which include a large number of foreign fighters recruited by Al Qaeda-affiliated groups. Their operations are directed

from Adana, the site of the United States’ Incirlik air base in nearby Turkey.

Yesterday British Foreign Secretary William Hague confirmed that Britain is also giving covert support to anti-Assad forces. He said, “I do not ever comment on intelligence matters, but I can say that we are helping elements of the Syrian opposition, but in a practical and non-lethal way. We have helped them with communications of that kind, and we will help them more.”

Hague added that the British government aims to “isolate the Assad regime from its remaining associates, or friends, in the world.”

The UN General Assembly resolution also criticized the UN Security Council for its “failure” to act against Syria, in a barely veiled attack on Russia and China. They have voted against Security Resolutions criticizing Syria, fearing that such resolutions could allow Washington to openly attack Syria, the way NATO used UN resolution 1973 last year to justify its aggression in Libya. Both Russia and China voted against the resolution at the General Assembly.

With the lopsided General Assembly vote and its enthusiastic reception in the American and European press, the UN and the media functioned as lackeys of imperialism. Were it not for the deadly seriousness of the situation—the Syrian war alone has already cost over 10,000 lives, with 200,000 Syrians fleeing their country, and over 1 million turned into refugees inside Syria—the absurdity of the UN resolution would be laughable.

The UN resolution was drafted by the Saudi, Qatari, and Bahraini absolute monarchies. News reports presented the

handiwork of these ultra-right Sunni-sectarian regimes, freshly covered in blood from their crushing of last spring's mass protests in Bahrain, as part of a democratic US campaign to protect civilians from authoritarian governments!

Nor did anyone seek to explain what principles make the Assad regime's use of heavy weapons in a proxy war with Washington more reprehensible than the Turkey's bombings of Kurdish villages, as part of its long-standing military suppression of Turkey's Kurdish minority.

All of these points are well known to the diplomats who gathered at the UN and voted for the resolution. One suspects that for many governments, their decision on how to vote was quickly settled by their financial dependence on US subsidies. The rest heeded the examples of heads of state who crossed Washington—Libya's Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, murdered in the streets of his bombed-out home town after being sodomized with a bayonet, or Assad, for whom the *Washington Post* recently predicted that the “only exit may be [a] body bag.”

In its slavish hypocrisy and propaganda, special mention must be reserved for the role of the American media, which is moving into full war mode. On Friday morning, the *New York Times* published a lead article by C.J. Chivers, which opened by declaring that “diplomatic efforts [are] dead and the future of Syria [is] playing out on the battlefield.” The announcement by Kofi Annan on Friday that he will resign as UN negotiator for Syria is seen as confirmation of the end to all negotiations with the Assad government.

The US media has enthusiastically endorsed the anti-Assad forces, even after it has been widely reported that Al Qaeda is active among them. This ranges from the sympathetic portrayal on last night's ABC News show of anti-Assad youth, armed with Kalashnikovs and driven to fight by faith in Allah, to Chivers and the *Times* praising anti-Assad insurgents' use of roadside bombs.

In the Orwellian world of American bourgeois politics, no one stops to ask how to resolve the crying contradiction between US policy in Syria and its claim it is fighting a “war on terror.”

If the media cannot answer or indeed even ask such

questions, it is because the answer is too explosive: the “war on terror”—ostensibly the basis of US politics for over a decade—is a pack of lies. Washington makes or breaks de facto alliances with Al Qaeda purely based on the cynical calculation of its imperialist interests.

Why is Washington fighting Assad and backing the brutal regime of Afghan President Hamid Karzai? The answer has nothing to do with democracy or a fight against Islamist terrorism. It is that the US and its allies have first pickings of Afghanistan's mineral wealth and enjoy the advantages of controlling its highly strategic location. Syria, however, is as an ally of Iran and Russia. It is considered a threat to Israel and, more broadly, to US hegemony in the Middle East.

As a result, the anti-Assad forces are lionized by US officials and the media, even as reports emerge of their hostility to the Syrian population and their mass killings of political opponents.

Thus yesterday Abu Ahmed, an official in the Syrian town of Azaz near the Turkish border, told Reuters: “The Free Syrian Army is causing us headaches now. If they don't like the actions of a person, they tie him up, beat him, and arrest him. Personality differences between brigade members are being settled using kidnappings and force.”

A widely circulated video also appeared on YouTube showing the interrogation of Ali Zein al-Abidine Berri, a pro-Assad leader of an Aleppo clan who was captured by anti-Assad forces. The video shows him, his arm bandaged and his mouth bloodied, answering questions and shielding himself with his arms. He was reportedly executed after the interrogation.



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