Turkey’s foreign minister demands war in the name of “human rights”

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The Turkish government has again called on the United States and the European powers to take direct military action against Syria.

Speaking to Britain’s *Guardian* newspaper on Friday, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu claimed that such an intervention was required to “stop the bloodshed” and resolve the refugee crisis in Syria.

"We [Turkey] are doing all we can to help these people, using all diplomatic capacity to stop this bloodshed,” Davutoglu told *Guardian* columnist and Assistant Editor Simon Tisdall. “But there should be a much more concerted effort by the international community. The best way we can see now is direct humanitarian intervention.”

This statement turns reality on its head, as Davutoglu and the *Guardian* editors well know. It is Turkey and its NATO allies, together with the Gulf monarchies of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, all operating under the aegis of the United States government,that are the principal sponsors of the 18-month old Syrian conflict.

Led by Washington, these powers have supplied hundreds of millions of dollars in money, arms and other materiel to the “rebel” militias fighting the government of Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Much of this military aid has gone directly to Sunni extremist groups, including those with links to Al Qaeda.

As the *New York Times* reported last week, top US intelligence officials in Washington have acknowledged that “most of the arms shipped at the behest of Saudi Arabia and Qatar to supply Syrian rebel groups fighting the government of Bashar al-Assad are going to hard-line Islamic jihadists.”

These US-backed Islamist groups have turned the conflict in Syria into a sectarian civil war, in which Sunni-based “rebel” forces target members of the Alawite, Shiite, Druze and Christian minorities, as well as other civilians who have refused to join or support their “jihad.” Pro-regime forces have responded in kind, with reports of reprisal attacks in villages and neighborhoods used as bases by the opposition fighters.

Asked by Tisdall about the prominence of hard-line Islamist groups in the Syrian opposition, Davutoglu responded by calling for an even more rapid deployment of military force: “The presence of some groups on the ground should not be used as an excuse for not being active. Prolonging the crisis will create a much more critical environment concerning these groups. We must have a solution and act as soon as possible to avoid a power vacuum in Syria.”

Davutoglu called for direct military action within Syria’s borders. “All means can be discussed… There has to be humanitarian access, a humanitarian mission inside Syria, and the international community must be ready to protect it. This is the question, whether it is a buffer zone or humanitarian access—how these people are to be protected inside Syria. We are calling for an international humanitarian mission to go into Syria and be protected to stop the refugee flow.”

The establishment of “humanitarian corridors” or “no-fly zones” inside Syrian territory by Turkey and its allies would amount to a declaration of war against the Assad regime. It would require a massive air campaign to overcome Syria’s air defense systems, likely followed by an invasion by ground forces.

“The international community must make a decision. Humanitarian access must be guaranteed by any means that is acceptable,” the Turkish foreign minister said.

Referring to the more direct military role that Ankara expects its allies in Washington and Europe to play in the Syrian conflict, Davutoglu stated that he expected “the leading powers of the international community to be more firm, more decisive and clear in their policy

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regarding oppression in Syria."

Davutoglu's choice of the *Guardian* to make his bellicose demands is not accidental. The British newspaper gives voice to liberal and "left" bourgeois opinion, whose special function is to dress up imperialist violence in the language of "humanitarianism."

Speaking to this constituency, Davutoglu compared the fighting in Syria to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1990s, claiming that the "international community" should not "stay idle."

The decade of inter-communal violence that accompanied the Western-backed break-up of Yugoslavia from 1991, including the Bosnian conflict and the 1999 US-led air war against Serbia, provided the occasion for a whole layer of pseudo-left politicians, academics and media commentators to move sharply to the right.

This layer, many of whom made names for themselves through their involvement in the anti-war or radical milieus, have gone on to forge lucrative careers and are now thoroughly integrated within the bourgeois establishment. Concerned with their stock portfolios, think tank positions, newspaper columns, etc., they have used the pretext of "human rights" to support imperialist interventions in Libya and now Syria aimed at installing more pliant regimes and strengthening the grip of US and Western corporations on the oil riches of the Middle East and North Africa.

Imperialism in the name of "human rights" finds is most enthusiastic pitchmen among fake-left groups such as the Socialist Workers Party in Britain, the International Socialist Organization in the US, and the New Anti-Capitalist Party in France, all of which obscure the real interests and activities of the major powers in the Syrian conflict, while presenting the US-backed proxy war in Syria as a "revolution."

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