

The CIA war against Syria

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After US President Barack Obama's so-called "peace" trip to Israel last week, on the tenth anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq, Washington is escalating its bloody intervention in the Middle East.

After threatening Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his main ally, oil-rich Iran, in a speech in Jerusalem, Obama is intensifying the US proxy war against Syria. Immediately after Obama's visit, US Secretary of State John Kerry visited Iraq and summarily ordered it to block alleged Iranian weapons shipments through Iraq to Syria.

On Monday the *New York Times* published a report titled "Arms Airlift to Syria Rebels Expands, with CIA Aid," giving a detailed picture of how the CIA, for its part, is arming Western-backed militias fighting Assad's forces inside Syria.

"With help from the C.I.A., Arab governments and Turkey have sharply increased their military aid to Syria's opposition fighters in recent months, expanding a secret airlift of arms and equipment for the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad, according to air traffic data, interviews with officials in several countries and the accounts of rebel commanders," the *New York Times* writes.

It adds that "the airlift, which began on a small scale in early 2012" has grown to "include more than 160 military cargo flights by Jordanian, Saudi and Qatari military-style cargo planes landing at Esenboga Airport near Ankara, and, to a lesser degree, at other Turkish and Jordanian airports."

This "cataract of weaponry," in the words of one official, is organized and overseen by the CIA. The *Times* writes, "From offices at secret locations, American intelligence officers have helped the Arab governments shop for weapons, including a large procurement from Croatia, and have vetted rebel commanders and groups to determine who should receive the weapons as they arrive."

Times quotes one analyst: "The intensity and frequency of these flights are suggestive of a well-planned and coordinated clandestine military logistics operation."

These reports make clear that the Obama administration's claims that it is only providing "non-lethal" aid to the opposition are lies. It substantiates the *World Socialist Web Site's* analysis that the war in Syria is a CIA operation, aimed at unseating Assad, an ally of Iran and seen as an obstacle to US interests in the region.

During the two-year war in Syria, already around 70,000 people have been killed and millions displaced. Large parts of Syria, one of the cradles of human civilization along with Iraq, have been destroyed. The CIA has mobilized and helped arm the most right-wing Islamist forces—such as Jabhat al-Nusra, the Syrian offshoot of Al Qaeda—that massacre religious minorities and carry out suicide bomb attacks against civilians.

The cynicism and criminality of US imperialism is staggering. While arming Al-Qaeda organizations to the teeth, Obama warns of the danger of "Syria becoming an enclave for extremism" and maintains the cynical pretense that Washington is fighting a "war on terror."

The Syrian war exposes the pretensions of the Obama administration and its European allies that they were carrying out a fundamentally different policy than Bush's hated war in Iraq. During the invasion and the subsequent ten-year US occupation of Iraq, hundreds of thousands Iraqis were killed and millions made refugees as their country was destroyed, on the basis of false claims that Iraq had "weapons of mass destruction."

The imperialist powers' response to the first revolutionary upheavals that toppled US-backed dictators in Egypt and Tunisia in 2011 is an extension of the program of neo-colonial conquest of the Middle

East begun by Bush: a NATO war to conquer Libya, a proxy war in Syria, and continuous war threats against Iran.

In the course of these operations, a host of pseudo-left groups have functioned as enablers—the International Socialist Organization in the US, the New Anti-capitalist Party in France, the Socialist Workers Party in Britain, the Left Party in Germany and their Middle Eastern counterparts.

These forces sought to subordinate the working class to various factions of the Arab bourgeoisie to halt and divert the initial revolutionary upsurge in Egypt and Tunisia away from a struggle by the working class to take power.

By promoting the NATO war against Libya and the bloody CIA intervention in Syria as “humanitarian” interventions, or even as “social revolutions,” they have functioned as propagandists for the CIA and agents of imperialism. Their criticisms of the US and European powers amount to a call for more arms to be shipped to Syrian opposition forces they called “revolutionaries.”

After heavily arming Al-Qaeda linked groups, the Western powers have begun to raise concerns about what will happen if they take political power. To the extent that imperialism seeks to sideline forces that it has utilized throughout the conflict, it will turn to the very social forces most heavily promoted by the pseudo-left.

To stop the imperialist offensive the working class must renew the revolutionary upsurge begun two years ago. This time however it must be consciously directed against imperialism, the Arab bourgeoisie, and its pseudo-left appendages.

The way forward for the working class to end imperialist war and capitalist oppression is to base its struggles on an international socialist program that articulates its independent political interests.



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