

Obama, Netanyahu Intensify Push for World War III

by Jeffrey Steinberg and Michele Steinberg

Aug. 14—Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met over the past weekend with Turkish government officials, to create what the Aug. 12 *New York Times* described as a “nerve center for information sharing and planning” for the overthrow of the Bashar Assad government in Syria.

According to the *Times* report on Clinton’s Ankara press conference on Aug. 11 with her Turkish counterpart, Ahmet Davutoglu, “a unified task force with intelligence, military and political leaders from both countries would be formed immediately to track Syria’s present and plan for its future.” However, under direct questioning from reporters, Clinton backed off from recent White House leaks and statements by John Brennan, President Obama’s chief counter-terrorism advisor, that the U.S. was seriously considering the establishment of a no-fly zone over areas of Syrian territory near the Turkish border, to create a safe haven for rebels.

Sources inside the Obama Administration have confirmed that the Syria policy is coming directly from the White House, and that Clinton is being tightly scripted.

The Arab League had been scheduled to meet on Aug. 11 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to appoint a replacement to Kofi Annan, who resigned from his post as Arab League/United Nations envoy to Syria, effective the end of August. But the Arab League meeting was postponed, apparently over a failure to reach a consensus on where to go next, and whom to appoint as Annan’s replacement.

While the Russians and Chinese continue to push

for diplomatic solutions in Syria, *and* for Iran, including a replacement for Annan’s mission, the Obama Administration is on a brazen war course, threatening confrontation with the other nuclear superpower, Russia.

Who Gives Obama the Authority?

The widely read website of Col. Patrick Lang, Sic Semper Tyrannis, published a scathing attack on President Obama Aug. 12, for his Syria policy, asking where Obama got the authority to create a coordination center to work with Syrian rebels to overthrow the Assad government. “There is no UN resolution or other sanction in international law for this effort to depose a sovereign government that is a member of the United Nations. What is the legal basis for this action within American law? Is it a presidential finding under the National Defense Act? If it is, then we should consider the fact that such a ‘finding’ authorizes a covert action without benefit of congressional agreement. Has the president of the United States now assumed the right and power to issue a personal decree that a foreign government should be overthrown? If that is the case, then any government, anywhere, would be a possible future target of any future US Administration.”

Lang went on to pose a number of pointed questions, following from his attack on Obama’s unconstitutional schemes: What is the assessment of the U.S. intelligence community (IC) on the Syrian opposition? Is Hillary the nominal leader of the Syria regime-change plan because of massive Pentagon and Joint



White House/Pete Souza

As Obama sets up his task force in Ankara to coordinate a regime-change war in Syria, his pal Netanyahu is gearing up for war against Iran. Unless cooler heads prevail, these plans could quickly escalate into a superpower confrontation, and global war.

Chiefs resistance to another war in a Muslim country? Where did Sen. John McCain get the report, which he conveyed on TV talk shows Aug. 12, that al-Qaeda is building a larger presence in Syria?

Lang called for open Congressional hearings with Generals Clapper, Petraeus, and Flynn (DNI, CIA, and DIA heads, respectively), to take up all these issues. In fact, according to some news accounts, a major element of the foreign jihadis now flooding into Syria are members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, an organization that the UN says is linked to al-Qaeda.

Despite the propaganda barrage, reports from inside Syria, indicate that the Syrian Army remains loyal to the Assad government; the Sunni business community

in both Aleppo and Damascus remain loyal; and the rebels are incapable of taking over the country, despite the influx of heavier weaponry.

In a further twist on the devolving situation in Syria and in the broader eastern Mediterranean and Near East region, both the U.S. and Turkey are reportedly trying to stem the flow of heavy weapons to the known al-Qaeda and neo-Salafi elements on the ground, but once the weapons flow begins, this will become impossible. (Shoulder-held, anti-aircraft, heat-seeking missiles have been delivered recently, from stockpiles seized in Libya after the Qaddafi overthrow and assassination).

The Anglo-Saudi newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat*, on Aug. 11, advocated the expanded weapons flow and the creation of a no-fly zone, and praised the new sanctions against Hezbollah that Hillary Clinton announced while in Turkey. "So what we must be aware of today is that al-Assad's fall is inevitable, however, delaying this will mean paying a higher price, therefore we must arm the Syrian revolutionaries, impose buffer zones, as well as a no-fly zone. Doing otherwise is nothing more than being partners with Iran and Hezbollah in suppressing the Syrian people."

Thermonuclear World War III?

As the regime change campaign against Syria moves into its 17th month, a growing chorus of sane international voices are warning that an attempted replay of Libya in Syria could lead to a larger war—even a thermonuclear war, involving the U.S., Russia, and China.

In an Aug. 12 interview with ARD television in Germany, the country's Minister for Developing Sector Relations, Dirk Niebel, warned that Germany would oppose any no-fly zone, since it would require a UN Security Council resolution, and that no such resolution will be supported by Russia or China, which have already vetoed several Security Council resolutions on Syria authorizing outside intervention. Niebel warned that a no-fly zone would be a military operation, when the only viable outcome is a negotiated political solution.

The *Christian Science Monitor* on Aug. 14 directly warned that any further escalation against Syria could lead to war with Russia. And China's *People's Daily*, the same day, warned that any regime change in Syria would be a "calamity" leading to ethnic cleansing, a refugee crisis, regional war, and a new U.S. quagmire. Beijing-based diplomats have confirmed to *EIR* that

China's position is that they will never allow "another Libya" in Syria, and that the issue of Syria's national sovereignty is sacrosanct.

Netanyahu and Barak Escalate Threats

At the same time that Obama is escalating against Syria, using Secretary of State Clinton as the foil for a policy wholly devised at the White House, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak are issuing a constant stream of threats to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities in the coming days.

In recent days, Netanyahu has rammed through a new series of Cabinet procedures to streamline the process of authorization for war, knowing that a majority of his security Cabinet, and the entire institutional leadership of Israel's defense and intelligence establishment, are adamantly opposed to his berserker war plans.

Veteran Israeli reporter Amir Oren wrote an op-ed Aug. 12 for *Ha'aretz* titled, "Obama must speak out against war with Iran," warning that, "This is the last chance—for Obama and the Israelis—to say their piece beforehand, instead of regretting their silence afterward."

The responsibility to stop the Israeli crazies in Bibi's faction lies with Obama, says Oren. "Without clear statements at the highest levels—publicly, not halfheartedly behind closed doors—the impression will remain that the Americans have come to terms with such an operation. By the time they deny that this is the case, it might be too late."

The reality is that Obama is not opposed to an Israeli strike on Iran, even if it comes before the Nov. 6 national elections in the U.S. Indeed, Obama's National Security Advisor, Thomas Donilon, recently was dispatched by the President to Israel to brief Netanyahu and Barak on the U.S. Administration's own war plans against Iran, and to share new U.S. intelligence ostensibly corroborating Israeli claims that Iran was aggressively moving ahead with plans to build a nuclear bomb.

When Barak publicly claimed that the U.S. intelligence community had completed a new National Intelligence Estimate corroborating Iran's advanced nuclear weapons efforts, top Obama Administration officials immediately came out and denied Barak's claims, asserting that there was still plenty of time for diplomacy and sanctions to work.

In effect, Israel has been given the green light to

launch what is known as a "breakaway ally" attack on Iran, at a moment of Netanyahu and Barak's choosing, with a de facto blessing from Obama, but with plausible U.S. denial.

Bibi Grabs War Powers

Oren's commentary comes as Netanyahu's effort to give himself total power to launch war, without Cabinet or Knesset interference, reached a new high point. According to Israel's Ynet news, Netanyahu forced through a new protocol, now approved by "the government" of Israel that will give him unprecedented power, according to opposition leaders from Kadima and Labor, and which threatens Israel's "democracy." Among the changes in decision-making, are that Bibi will be able to delay any decision made by a ministerial committee and force a new vote before a decision is implemented—again and again, until he gets the vote he wants; he will be able to sit in on any committee and vote; the current week-long window for making a decision on a vote will be reduced to 12 hours; and Netanyahu has taken away the right of members of the ministerial committees to vote in absentia.

At the same series of government meetings where this was arranged, Bibi declared the Iran war to be of the highest importance: "All of the threats on the home front shrink in the face of another threat—Iran cannot be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons."

Even the Prime Minister's own legal advisor, Shlomit Barnea Fargo, questioned the legality of this decision, which allows Netanyahu to undermine the decisions of government-appointed committees.

Opposition leaders denounced the change as an effort to speed up the process of attacking Iran, without consulting the Knesset.

At the same time, there is another wave of high-level opposition to Netanyahu's war. These include a top IDF retired general, former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, and a retired Canadian NATO general, who played a key command role in the Libya war of 2011.

Despite these war-avoidance efforts by patriotic forces in Israel, the United States, Russia, and China, the reality is: So long as Obama and Netanyahu remain in power, the "Guns of August" will remain cocked and loaded. An Israeli attack on Iran, or even a U.S. military action to enforce a no-fly zone over parts of Syria would be the spark to set off a super-power confrontation—a confrontation all but certain to lead to thermonuclear war.