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CONFRONTING IRAN, "PROTECTING ISRAEL": The Real Reason for America's War on Syria

By Prof. Michel Chossudovsky

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Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is calling for an R2P humanitarian military intervention in Syria to curb the atrocities allegedly ordered by the government of president Bashar Al Assad. In a twisted logic, Clinton recognizes that while "opposition forces" are integrated by Al Qaeda affiliated terrorists, the government rather than the terrorists is held responsible, without a shred of evidence, for the ongoing massacre of civilians.

Amplly documented, these sectarian killings and atrocities are being committed by foreign mercenaries and militia which are armed and supported by the Western military alliance. The killings are carried out quite deliberately as part of a diabolical covert operation. The enemy is then blamed for the resulting atrocities. The objective is to justify a military agenda on humanitarian grounds.

In US military jargon, it's called a "massive casualty producing event", the historical origins of which go back to "Operation Northwoods", an infamous 1962 Pentagon Plan, consisting in killing civilians in the Miami Cuban community, with a view to justifying a war on Cuba. (See Michel Chossudovsky, SYRIA: Killing Innocent Civilians as part of a US Covert Op. Mobilizing Public Support for a R2P War against Syria, Global Research, May 30, 2012)

"Code named Operation Northwoods, the plans reportedly included the possible assassination of Cuban émigrés, sinking boats of Cuban refugees on the high seas, hijacking planes, blowing up a U.S. ship, and even orchestrating violent terrorism in U.S. cities.

The plans were developed as ways to trick the American public and the international community into supporting a war to oust Cuba's then new leader, communist Fidel Castro." (U.S. Military Wanted to Provoke War With Cuba - ABC News emphasis added. This Secret Pentagon document was declassified and can be readily consulted, See Operation Northwoods, See also National Security Archive, 30 April 2001)

In the logic of Operation Northwoods, the killings in Syria are carried out to "create a helpful wave of indignation", to drum up public opinion in favor of an R2P US-NATO operation against Syria. "The international community cannot sit idly by, and we won't", said US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

What lies behind this outburst of humanitarian concern by "the international community". Is America coming to the rescue of the Syrian people? What is the real reason for America's war on Syria?

This question is addressed in a lead article by James P. Rubin, a Bloomberg executive editor and former State department official under the Clinton administration. The article appears in this month's Foreign Policy Magazine under the clear-cut title: "The Real Reason to Intervene in Syria"

In an unusual twist, "the answer to the question", namely "the real reason" is provided in the article's subtitle: "Cutting Iran's link to the Mediterranean Sea is a strategic prize worth the risk."

The subtitle should dispel --in the eyes of the reader-- the illusion that US foreign policy has an underlying "humanitarian mandate". Pentagon and US State department documents as well as independent reports confirm that military action against Syria has been contemplated by Washington and Tel Aviv for more than 20 years.

Targeting Iran, "Protecting Israel"

According to James P. Rubin, the war plans directed against Syria are intimately related to those pertaining to Iran. They are part of the same US-Israeli military agenda which consists in weakening Iran with a view to "protecting Israel". The latter objective is to be carried out through a pre-emptive attack against Iran: "We're not done with the possibility of an Israeli strike on Iran" says James P. Rubin.

According to Clifford D. May, president of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies ("a policy institute focusing on terrorism and Islamism"), the humanitarian concern is not the primary objective but rather a means to an end: "If the Arab League is unmoved by the massacres of Syrian women and children (their angry eyes fixed as ever on Israel), and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation doesn't give a fig about Muslims slaughtering Muslims, why should we Americans expend an ounce of energy? ... Because Syria, under the Assad

dictatorship, is Iran's most important ally and asset. And Iran is the single most important strategic threat facing the U.S. — hands down." (See National Review, May 30, 2012)

The military roadmap to Tehran goes through Damascus. The unspoken objective of the US-NATO-Israeli sponsored insurgency in Syria is to destabilize Syria as a Nation State and undermine Iran's influence in the region (including its support of the Palestinian Liberation movement and Hezbollah). The underlying objective is also to eliminate all forms of resistance to the Zionist State:

"That is where Syria comes in, says James P. Rubin. It is the strategic relationship between the Islamic Republic and the Assad regime that makes it possible for Iran to undermine Israel's security. Over the three decades of hostility between Iran and Israel, a direct military confrontation has never occurred -- but through Hezbollah, which is sustained and trained by Iran via Syria, the Islamic Republic has proven able to threaten Israeli security interests.

The collapse of the Assad regime would sunder this dangerous alliance. Defense Minister Ehud Barak, arguably the most important Israeli decision-maker on this question, recently told CNN's Christiane Amanpour that the Assad regime's fall "will be a major blow to the radical axis, major blow to Iran.... It's the only kind of outpost of the Iranian influence in the Arab world ... and it will weaken dramatically both Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza." (The Real Reason to Intervene in Syria - By James P. Rubin | Foreign Policy, June 2, 2012, emphasis added)

US-Israeli War Plans directed against Syria

Rubin candidly outlines the contours of US military intervention in Syria, which is to be implemented in close liaison with Israel. A diplomatic solution will not work, nor will economic sanctions: "only the threat or use of force will change the Syrian dictator's stance" says Rubin:

"U.S. President Barack Obama's administration has been understandably wary of engaging in an air operation in Syria similar to the campaign in Libya, for three main reasons. Unlike the Libyan opposition forces, the Syrian rebels are not unified and do not hold territory. The Arab League has not called for outside military intervention as it did in Libya. And the Russians, the longtime patron of the Assad regime, are staunchly opposed." (Ibid)

Washington's first step, according to James P. Rubin, should be to work with "its allies", the Arab sheikdoms --Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey-- "to organize, train, and arm Syrian rebel forces."

This "first step" has already been launched. It was implemented at the very outset of the insurgency in March 2012. The US and its allies have been actively supporting the Free Syrian Army (FSA) terrorists for over a year. The organization and training consisted in the deployment of Salafist and Al Qaeda affiliated terrorists, alongside the incursion of French, British, Qatari and Turkish special forces inside Syria. US-NATO sponsored mercenaries are recruited and trained in Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Sidetracking the UN

Rubin's proposed "second step" is "to secure international support for a coalition air operation." outside the mandate of the United Nations. "Russia will never support such a mission, so there is

no point operating through the U.N. Security Council" says Rubin. The air operation contemplated by Rubin is an all out war scenario, similar to the NATO air raids conducted in Libya.

Rubin is not expressing a personal opinion on the role of the UN. The option of "sidetracking" the UN Security Council has already been endorsed by Washington. The violation of international law does not seem to be an issue. US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice confirmed in late May, in no uncertain terms, that "the worst and most probable scenario" in Syria might be the option of "acting outside of the UN Security Council's authority".

"In the absence of either of those two scenarios, there seems to me to be only one other alternative, and that is indeed the worst case, which seems unfortunately at the present to be the most probable. And that is that the violence escalates, the conflict spreads and intensifies, it reaches a higher degree of severity... The Council's unity is exploded, the Annan plan is dead and members of this Council and members of the international community are left with the option only of having to consider whether they're prepared to take actions outside of the Annan plan and the authority of this Council." Actions outside UN Security Council Likely in Syria - Rice | World | RIA Novosti, May 31, 2012

Rubin also points to "the reluctance of some European states" to participate in an air operation against Syria: "this [military] operation will have to be a unique combination of Western and Middle East countries. Given Syria's extreme isolation within the Arab League, it should be possible to gain strong support from most Arab countries, led by Saudi Arabia and Turkey. U.S. leadership is indispensable, since most of the key countries will follow only if Washington leads."

The article calls for continued arming of the Syrian Free Army (FSA) as well carrying out air raids directed against Syria. No ground operations are to be envisaged. The air campaign would be used --as in the case of Libya-- to support the FSA foot soldiers integrated by mercenaries and Al Qaeda affiliated brigades:

"Whether an air operation should just create a no-fly zone that grounds the regimes' aircraft and helicopters or actually conduct air to ground attacks on Syrian tanks and artillery should be the subject of immediate military planning. ...

The larger point is that as long as Washington stays firm that no U.S. ground troops will be deployed, à la Kosovo and Libya, the cost to the United States will be limited. Victory may not come quickly or easily, but it will come. And the payoff will be substantial. Iran would be strategically isolated, unable to exert its influence in the Middle East. The resulting regime in Syria will likely regard the United States as more friend than enemy. Washington would gain substantial recognition as fighting for the people in the Arab world, not the corrupt regimes." (Rubin, op cit)

While the participation of Israel in military operations is not mentioned, the thrust of Rubin's article points to active cooperation between Washington and Tel Aviv in military and intelligence affairs, including the conduct of covert operations in support of the opposition

rebels. This coordination would also be carried out in the context of the bilateral military-intelligence cooperation agreement between Israel and Turkey.

"Coming to the rescue of the Syrian people" under a fake "humanitarian" R2P mandate is intended to destabilize Syria, weaken Iran and enable Israel to exert greater political control and influence over neighboring Arab states including Lebanon and Syria.

A war on Syria is also a war on Palestine. It would weaken the resistance movement in the occupied territories. It would reinforce the Netanyahu government's ambitions to create a "Greater Israel", initially, through the outright annexation of the Palestinian territories:

"With the Islamic Republic deprived of its gateway to the Arab world, the Israelis' rationale for a bolt from the blue attack on its nuclear facilities would diminish. A new Syrian regime might eventually even resume the frozen peace talks regarding the Golan Heights. In Lebanon, Hezbollah would be cut off from its Iranian sponsor, since Syria would no longer be a transit point for Iranian training, assistance, and missiles. All these strategic benefits combined with the moral purpose of saving tens of thousands of civilians from murder at the hands of the Assad regime ... make intervention in Syria a calculated risk, but still a risk worth taking." (Rubin, op cit)

War Crimes in the name of human rights: What we really need is "Regime Change" in the United States of America.... and Israel.