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What is the real American game in Syria?

By Jim W. Dean

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General Dempsey was in the news this week with his very sensible comments about the spiraling down Syrian debacle, whose vortex may catch those who don't expect it, but might be most deserving.

Seasoned observers are quite used to seeing mixed messages in diplomacy, especially when they are used as a tactic of war. If you take a variety of positions, even if a disaster does happen you can whip out an archive statement where you said this or that, but no one would listen to you.

As the Prussian military theorist Karl von Clausewitz said, "War is the continuation of diplomacy by other means." America seems to have chosen this war diplomacy policy for Syria while pretending not to be responsible.

This murky policy gets further complicated when you actually have competing factions within an administration, where verbal sniping and even verbal car bombs can be used to remind the opposing side that your views have to be taken into consideration.

Because General Dempsey is so highly respected across many divides in America his every word is absorbed and analyzed for both obvious and hinted meanings. If an administration wanted to send a message of a sincere potential policy shift, Dempsey would be the gold plated messenger.

But herein we must go into the historical closet where an event happened which is referred to in casual Intel talk circles as “pulling a Colin Powell” on them, regarding how he was used to justify the Iraq attack for bogus WMD. The current military brass are well aware of this bear trap, and I would bet that Dempsey would not be played for a chump. He's way too smart for that. Powell was not Bush's top military adviser, like Dempsey is to Obama.

Let's review some of who said what and when, and then try to figure out why. The Sunday April 7th Press TV report had the startling Dempsey headline quote, “Syria could become another Afghanistan”. He continued, “I have grave concerns that Syria could become an extended conflict”, that drags on for many years.

These were not off the cuff statements. They aired on a US funded Arabic satellite TV channel. Every word was pre-scripted. In the analysis business we often refer to this as 'a card being played'. So task number two is to figure out what is it really for.

Digging back to a March 18th Dempsey talk to a Washington think tank, “I don't think at this point I can see a military option that would create an understandable outcome...and until I do, it would be my advice to proceed cautiously.”

But we knew from our own sources and later published ones that a big covert arms push was already in process, flowing into various rebel staging areas as preparation for a sustained final push to topple Assad.

We know the CIA coordinated the operation with Jordan and Turkey logistically involved and the Saudis and Qatar paying the bills. This is what the Obama administration calls not providing lethal aid...proxies do it.

Dempsey is on record having favored arming the rebels for a quicker overthrow to avoid a drawn out contest which would risk leaving the Syria in ruins. Obama objected back then...but not now. They are doing it under the radar, sort of.

When Dempsey was asked if anything short of military intervention might be contemplated he gave a prepared, and what we know now to be a partially honest answer, that any such opportunities would be led by U.S. Allies.

He played another prepared card, “We very much do believe that the answer to Syrian is through partners, because...they'll understand the complexities better than we would.”

I could only wish to have been able to ask the general if he was so concerned about the 100 ring circus of rebel and insurgent groups operating against Assad, then would he like to address the Saudis providing bases, training, funding and arming of a new generation of Jihad fighters, even in northern Iraq. The Saudis are even running terror operations against Iraq now to keep them back on their heels.

Dempsey has to be aware of this. Any statements of America not arming these Syrian insurgent groups is duplicitous because we know that the Saudis are. They are supporting the Wahhabi extremists, who are taking heads as I write. Dempsey has to understand that when headhunters are loose on the land the Syrian Army and their militias are going to fight to the death.

We picked up a leak that an arms push would be coming soon by a 'card' Dempsey played during an airborne press interview. He said he would potentially consider arming the insurgents directly to end the fighting sooner and preserve the country's institutions from being destroyed in an uncivil war of attrition.

Dempsey acknowledged the obvious even back then that the end game of increased armaments could contribute to a more violent new civil war among the various groups after the fall of Assad. The Balkans analogy has been widely used in the media to describe it. Lots of heads got chopped off there, too.

All of these card clues are what we call psyops... 'preparing the minds' of the public for things you have in the works to test their reaction. This is standard 'game theory warfare'. Senator John 'Cowboy' McCain even has an acting roll, asking for bombing of Syria now which makes the covert arming of the rebels look like the non wild, cautious approach.

My bet is that all of these carefully played cards are a set up for two things, one of which is already in motion. Enough arms and ammo have been prestaged to back a final push to collapse Assad. The Syrian army counter strategy can clearly be seen to breakup up the rebel forward positions, find their hideouts and get their weapons caches. Press TV has photos of these operations all the time.

But if the Jihadis look like they could be the dominant force in an overthrow then the U.S. would come in with major arms supplies, but only for certain groups who would not only fight the Syrian army, but also the Wahhabis.

What kind of weapons are we talking about here? Start with longer range anti-armor and add ground to air missiles. I would bet that selected insurgents have already been trained in these weapons and are waiting for the right time to be deployed.

The Arab League seems to already know the general plan. You can look back now and see their violating their own charter to pre-empt the outcome by giving one faction of the rebels the Syrian seat. This was their assigned role in this slow motion train wreck.

And I predict some of them will regret setting this precedent.

But there is a wild card...the Russians, Chinese and the Iranians. The Russians man the Syrian air defenses, and they are not going to quietly sit by while the walls come tumbling down around them. If the U.S. felt that a 'deteriorating situation' justified intervention to 'save the country'...then other parties would thereby have permission to do the same.

I don't think they are going to just sit back and watch the carving up of their own ally and the threat that would pose to them not only in loss of face, but in future aggression. A failed intervention would be a huge blow to imperial militarism, as would the supplemental war bills that would be hitting the steps of Congress, requiring more red ink to fund.

Assad was correct when he stated, "If the unrest in Syria leads to the partitioning of the country, or if terrorists take control...the situation will spill over into neighboring countries and create a domino effect throughout the Middle East and beyond."

Some of you can dismiss this as a self serving statement, but I will pose one scenario for you. If there is an intervention where American weapons are used against the Jihadis, how long, how many days do you think it would take to see them with advance weapons themselves, like the very good Russian anti-tank one, and then ground to air defense missiles popping up out of thin air. Are they already there, and being saved?

The West killed any negotiated settlement with the big March arms push. They seem to be going for a military settlement, but one where a mess could be laid on someone's doorstep. But we all know the rebel groups will not negotiate because they feel they have the West behind them and time is on their side.

We have the blind leading the blind here in a situation which could trigger an even larger blood bath. So far the main beneficiary with virtually nothing to lose, once again, is Israel. The Israeli role seems now to keep banging the attack Iran war drum. John Kerry made a fool of himself on his Israeli visit with the silly 'all options on the table' substitute for a real policy. I can't think of a more stupid way to convince other nations that they need a nuclear deterrent.

Dempsey was right about not seeing 'an understandable outcome'. What the Western dummies and their proxies are doing is tossing a live hand grenade around in a circle. The outcome of that does not require a genius, or even an analyst...just someone who isn't crazy.