

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

Asia Times Online

## NATO dreams of civil war in Syria

By Pepe Escobar

12/14/2011

Every grain of sand in the Syrian desert now knows there won't be a "responsibility to protect"-enabled North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) "humanitarian" intervention to provoke regime change in Damascus. A protracted war like in Libya is not feasible - even though those faultless democratic practitioners, the House of Saud, have offered to pay for it, lavishly.

Yet the fog of near war remains impenetrable. What is NATO really up to in Syria?

It was already established (see [The shadow war in Syria](#) Asia Times Online, December 2, 2011) that NATO had set up a command and control center in Turkey's southern Hatay province - where British commandos and French intelligence are training the dodgy Free Syria Army (FSA). The target: to foment a civil war engulfing northern Syria.

Now comes the confirmation, via the website of former United States Federal Bureau of Investigation whistleblower Sibel Edmonds, that a pincer movement may be in effect, involving Jordan. [1]

Edmonds quotes local sources according to whom "hundreds of soldiers who speak languages other than Arabic" have been "moving back and forth ... between the King Hussein air base in al-Mafraq" and "Jordanian villages adjacent to the Syrian border".

Edmonds sustains none of this is being reported by US media because of a gag order from above that in theory expired this Tuesday. And don't try asking King Abdullah of Jordan about it.

The base at al-Mafraq is virtually across the border from Dar'a. A lot of action has been going on in Dar'a recently - an epicenter of the anti-President Bashar al-Assad movement. As far as the Syrian news agency Sana is concerned, security forces have been routinely killed by "terrorist gangs". As far as the "rebels" are concerned, these are patriotic army defectors attacking military supply lines.

## **Let's hit plan B**

By adopting this pincer movement, NATO in Syria is now actively diversifying into an Iraq-in-the-1990s strategy; to submit Syria to a prolonged state of siege before eventually going for the kill.

Yet as much as NATO would pray to Allah for the contrary, Syria is not Libya. It's much smaller and compact, but more populated and with a real, battle-tested army. On top of being immensely estranged from each other by the current eurodrama, the Brits and former colonial power France have calculated they have everything to lose economically if they engage in the folly of a conventional war.

As for the Syrian opposition stalwarts - the Syrian National Council (SNC) - they are a joke. Most are Muslim Brotherhood, with a sprinkling of Kurds. The leader, Burhan Ghalioun, is an opportunist Paris exile with zero credibility (for the average Syrian) although in a recent Wall Street Journal interview he made all the right noises to appease the Israel lobby (no more ties with Iran, no more support to Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza).

The FSA claims 15,000 army defectors. But it's infected with mercenaries and what scores of Syrian civilians describe as armed gangs. The SNC, in thesis, is anti-guerrilla. But that's exactly what the FSA is actively practicing, attacking Syrian soldiers and Ba'ath party offices.

The SNC key tactic for now is to sell Western public opinion the Libya-style "potential" nightmare of an imminent massacre in Homs. Not many are buying it - apart from the usual, strident, corporate media suspects. Although both are based in Istanbul, the SNC and the FSA can't seem to get their act together; they look like a lethal version of The Three Stooges.

Then there is the Arab League, which is now controlled by The Eight Stooges; the six GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council, aka Gulf Counter-revolution Club) monarchies plus "invited" GCC members Morocco and Jordan. The stooges are subcontractors of NATO's Greater Middle East on (humanitarian) steroids. Nobody, though, is asking where were the stooges were when Beirut and southern Lebanon were destroyed in 2006, and when Gaza was destroyed in 2008 - in both instances by Israel. The stooges don't dare question the divine rights of the US/Israel axis.

NATO's tactics in Syria have been crystal clear for a while now. France, under neo-Napoleonic liberator of Libya President Nicolas Sarkozy, concentrates on turbo-charging escalation. At the same time, Paris is trying to position the rise and rise of the Muslim Brotherhood all across the Arab world as a strategic Western interest - as in curbing Iranian influence.

Then there's the ongoing economic blockade - impossible without cooperation from Iraq (it won't happen), Lebanon (it won't happen) and Jordan (it could, but to Jordan's detriment).

But NATO's wet dream is really to push Turkey to do the dirty work. Irretrievably broke as they are, NATO countries - including the US - simply cannot launch yet another Middle East war that would send oil prices through the roof.

What NATO cannot fathom is the possibility of a sectarian Sunni-Shi'ite war re-exploding in Iraq. In this case, the only safe haven would be Iraqi Kurdistan. And that would strengthen Kurdish unity - from Iraq to Syria, from Turkey to Iran. Turkey in this case would have more pertinent fish to fry than to get embroiled in a war in Syria.

### **Turkey's double game**

Still, the great imponderable in this complex chessboard is Turkey - as in what precisely happened to their much-lauded foreign policy of "zero problems with our neighbors", devised by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu.

Faced with Riyadh's impotence, and Cairo in turmoil, Ankara seems to have monopolized the mantle of Sunni leadership - or guardian of Sunni orthodoxy facing those Shi'ite heretics, mostly from Iran (but also Iraq, Alawis in Syria and Hezbollah).

At the same time, to please NATO and the US, Ankara allows the deployment of missile defense in its territory - which is directed not only against Iran but most of all against Russia. Not to mention Ankara harbors the secret - forbidden - desire to "solve" the Kurdish question for good by establishing an autonomous zone in Syrian territory.

And Ankara also wants to make money; winners in Libya were British and French oil interests, while losers were the Italians and the Turks. But so far Turkey is also losing, especially in Hatay province near the Syrian border, as a free-trade agreement between both countries has been canceled.

To the West's despair, the Assad regime is far from being strangled. To counteract the hefty package of Arab League/Turkish sanctions, the regime has accelerated trade with China - by bartering and bypassing the international financial system.

No wonder Washington is taking the long-haul approach. It has deployed back to Damascus its ambassador Robert Ford - a former assistant to the sinister former destabilizer of Nicaragua John Negroponte when he was ambassador in Baghdad, and a current enthusiast of the House of Saud counter-revolution.

Ford will have plenty of time to exchange e-mails with a Syrian opposition totally in bed with former colonial power France. Talk about a stooge festival; this one is bound to carve its own niche in the annals of Middle East infamy.