

Foiling Peace: The Imperial “Friends” of Syria

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As the proposed April 10 Syrian ceasefire goes up in smoke, so, too, does the hope for a Syrian-led political process to resolve the crisis.

Quite predictably, the U.S. propaganda machine has rushed to lay blame for the abortive ceasefire solely at the feet of the Syrian government. As a [New York Times](#) headline averred Monday: “Cease-fire in Doubt as Syria Demands New Conditions.” These “new” conditions, the article detailed, include “‘written guarantees’ that rebels would stop fighting before it pulled back its troops under the cease-fire plan.”

Of course, the [six-point peace initiative](#) proposed by joint United Nations and Arab League special envoy Kofi Annan, which has already been agreed upon by the Syrian government, explicitly calls for the “cessation of violence in all its forms by all parties to protect civilians and stabilize the country.”

In service to propaganda, however, the U.S. media has largely sidestepped such matters in propagating a narrative of one-sided Syrian governmental intransigence. Thus, the maneuvering over the weekend by the armed Syrian opposition to undermine the Tuesday ceasefire was largely ignored. Yet as [Reuters](#) reported Saturday, “Rebel Free Syrian Army commander Colonel Riad al-Asaad said his men would cease fire, provided ‘the regime ... withdraws from the cities and returns to its original barracks.’” *Reuters* went on to admit, “Annan’s plan does not stipulate a complete army withdrawal to barracks or mention police.”

Still, the concerted move to undo the Annan peace initiative did not begin this past weekend. Rather, it began a full week prior.

Imperial “Friends”

In their April 1 meeting in Turkey, the so-called “Friends of Syria” proudly announced their plans to increase foreign aid to the armed Syrian opposition. At the summit of some 70 nations, Arab states Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates (all such bastions of democracy) pledged a total of \$100 million to pay the individual salaries of those in the rebel “Free Syrian Army.” As [Al Jazeera](#) reported, “One delegate described the fund as a ‘pot of gold’ to undermine Assad’s army.”

Lest one forgets, the armed Syrian opposition, which the self-proclaimed “friends” of the Syrian people so readily laud and seek to now shower with cash, was publicly chided a mere two weeks ago by Human Rights Watch for committing myriad human-rights abuses against the Syrian people. According to [Human Rights Watch](#), armed opposition groups have been

implicated in the “kidnapping, detention, and torture of security force members, government supporters, and people identified as members of pro-government militias, called *shabeeha*.”

Unmoved by such reports, Washington, too, decided at the April Fools “Friends” summit to offer up its own gold. In total, the U.S. pledged \$12 million for “non-lethal” and “humanitarian” aid to the Syrian rebels. For good measure, London pitched in an additional \$800,000 in “practical non-lethal support.” But as the [New York Times](#) reported, this “non-lethal” support will not only included satellite communications equipment, but night-vision goggles as well.

It ought to be quite clear, then, that despite the official claims to the contrary, such “non-lethal” aid will ultimately be put to lethal use. Moreover, such equipment will undoubtedly help enhance the coordination between the Syrian rebels and their NATO military advisers, the latter whom are already on the ground inside Syria, according to [multiple reports](#).

Such a torpedoing of the Annan proposed ceasefire and peace plan, though, is the direct aim of the imperial minded “Friends of Syria.”

Orchestrating Continued Violence

By sustaining the rebels fighters, the international imperial alliance forged between NATO and its Arab client states seeks the perpetuation of violence within Syria. For by maintaining the violence, the calls for the forcible removal of the tyrant Bashar al-Assad will predictably come to reverberate ever-louder throughout the Western press. The purpose here, we shall see, being to build the necessary momentum for a new U.N. Security Council resolution approving a NATO intervention akin to that which ousted Colonel Gaddafi in Libya.

Indeed, for as British Foreign Secretary William Hague told the [BBC](#): “We’re working on coordinating our sanctions together and sending a clear message that there isn’t an unlimited period of time for this, for the Kofi Annan process to work before many of the nations here want us to go back to the U.N. Security Council,”

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has added much the same. As the [Washington Post](#) reported:

Once Annan determines that “we’re not getting any results...we would go back to the Security Council,” Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Sunday in an interview with CBS News. “Now, what would Russia and China say?”

Annan, Clinton said, “has gone to Moscow, he’s gone to Beijing, he’s met with them. They support his plan. They have urged publicly that Assad follow the plan.”

“So, if we have to go back to the Security Council to get authority” for more assistance to the Syrian opposition, she said, “I think we’ll be in a stronger position than we would if [Annan] hadn’t had a chance to go and try to negotiate.”

Setting the Table for a Protracted Proxy War

Whether Russia and China shall feel pressured to capitulate to a NATO sponsored “regime change” resolution in the Security Council analogous to the one they vetoed back in February remains doubtful. For even as some Western news outlets, like the [Associated Press](#), eagerly report that Russia has begun to soften its alliance with Damascus, Moscow is unlikely to abandon its lone Arab ally.

In fact, as [Reuters](#) reported, on April 4, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov bluntly warned: “It is clear as day that even if the opposition is armed to the teeth, it will not defeat the Syrian army, and there will simply be slaughter and mutual destruction for long, long years,”

Instead then, the maneuvering of the international “Friends of Syria” shall likely bring the specter of a protracted proxy war nearer. As the [New York Times](#) cautions:

The offer to provide salaries and communications equipment to rebel fighters known as the Free Syrian Army — with the hopes that the money might encourage government soldiers to defect, officials said — is bringing the loose Friends of Syria coalition to the edge of a proxy war against Mr. Assad’s government and its international supporters, principally Iran and Russia.

And it is Iran, of course, that colors the NATO and Arab League interest in Syria. For ousting Assad will no doubt deliver a strategic blow to Tehran: the long favored nemesis of NATO and its Arab clients. And with a weakened and further isolated Iran, the opportunity will develop for the furtherance of NATO aggression in the Middle East under the auspices of combating the non-existent Iranian nuclear weapons program.

For the imperialist self-proclaimed “Friends of Syria,” we see, ordinary Syrians are merely pawns to be exploited for imperial gains.

Therefore, for those truly seeking to aid the struggle of the Syrian people, work must hasten in building popular resistance to the NATO agenda. For let there be no doubt: no revolution can proceed under an imperialist military intervention of any sort.

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