

“Funny Things” Keep Happening on the Way to the War On Syria. The Whole World is on a Dangerously Slippery Slope

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Funny things on the way to the War ON Syria have been happening ever since the war IN Syria began two and a half years ago, and they just keep piling on.

A recent one was US President Barack Obama’s announcement that he will hit Syria unilaterally, without a UN mandate and without waiting for the conclusions of UN inspectors on the issue of poison gas – but with a yes vote from Congress.

Then, as the debate opened in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he made it known that he would strike Syria “even if Congress votes No” to his war!

Yet at the same time, veteran Middle East reporter Dale Gaviak was posting, on Minnesota-based Mint Press, the results of his own investigations with Syrian rebels and their families in the chemical-weapons-hit Damascus suburb of Ghouta.

His findings: Saudi-paid rebels and their parents told him they received “tubes and bottles” from the Saudis “without knowing they contained poison gas”, and “an accident happened” as a result of “mishandling”, killing scores of civilians and fighters.

This is not the first time Syrian “rebels” have pleaded “accidents” in the face of evidence that they killed civilians.

The shock of the double Russia-China veto

And while US legislators were self-absorbedly busy with their tiresome moral grand-standing as Global-Cops, oblivious to US serial mass violations of Human rights for more than 60 years around the world, the UN’s Ban Ki-moon reminded them that “No attack on Syria can be carried out without a UN mandate”.

Funny things on the way to the War ON Syria started as early as October 2011 when Russia and China stunned the NATO/OECD Triad in the UN Security Council (US, UK and France) by opposing a double veto to a resolution aimed at opening the door to a Libya-2 in Syria.

The Libyan “rebels” had just triumphed over the Kadhafi régime and were installing their own brand of murderous chaos in Tripoli, after lynching and murdering the confused and confusing founder of the Jamahiriya himself, on camera.

NATO/OECD military intervention on the side of the “rebels” had made the difference in

Libya. With Russia and China abstaining, the Triad had managed to pass resolutions in the Security Council imposing sanctions on the Kadhafi régime, a “No Fly Zone” over Libya (rendering the Libyan Air Force useless), and omnibus provisions for “further necessary measures”.

Triumphant NATO hits a solid wall

Africom, the US/NATO command for Africa, was deployed on African soil for the first time since its creation by George W. Bush in 2007. Long-time CIA collaborators from Libya, military and civilian, some of them Al Qaeda jihadists, began operating on the ground, alongside “special forces” from NATO countries.

Syria’s own “Arab Spring” quickly morphed into a civil war involving Western- and Oil-kingdoms-armed and paid jihadi mercenaries from dozens of countries. Arms from Libya were transferred to Syria by CIA operatives.

So when Syria came up for a Libya-type scenario in the UN Security Council, Russia and China put their veto, saying they did not want a Libya-2 in Syria, and calling for a negotiated, political settlement. This was the first time since the end of the Cold War that the triumphant global march of the apparent NATO/OECD victors hit a wall, and a solid one.

The Triad had manoeuvred for 22 years within the UN, and often around it, to push its one-sided global military agenda – expansion of NATO, even into Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia after 9/11, two Iraq Wars, the “Silent Genocide” in the killing fields of the African Great Lakes region (Burundi-Rwanda-Congo), the dismemberment of Yugoslavia...

Cameron’s defeat and Obama’s appeal to Congress

Russia and China vetoed two further attempts by the NATO Triad in the Security Council, in February and July 2012, arguing the draft texts blamed the Assad régime and made no mention of the so-called “rebels” the authors of the resolutions were themselves funding, arming and assisting on the ground. Other attempts this year, after allegations of chemical weapons use, got no further than the consultation stage, for the same reasons. At some point Russia and China even refused to participate.

Things got so bad recently that, according to a Press TV report, US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel called his Chinese counterpart, Gen. Chang Wanquan, and he was told the minister was not available. The minister’s aide who answered the phone went on to reiterate that China would “never” allow adoption of any war resolution against Syria in the UN Security Council and that China stuck by its call for a negotiated political settlement.

Then came the amazing debate in the British House of Commons, where Prime minister David Cameron was revving up to attack Syria. Cameron lost the Syria War vote, with MPs from all parties, including his own, uniting against him. That huge setback alerted Barack Obama to the risks of staking his Presidency, and his Nobel Peace Prize, on a W Bush, “Chief Executive” type of military assault on Syria. His inside polls had been telling him what we now know: that more than 60% of Americans don’t want another war.

The BRICS, NAM and SCO convergence on multi-polarity

The debate in Congress hardly matched the level of diplomacy and the oratorical skills of

the British MPs, but it highlighted a major strategic shift of the US away from the UN, and towards a full-spectrum, Congress-approved, Lone-ranger militarized global diplomacy.

John Kerry repeated at will the Russian and Chinese vetoes had rendered the UN Security Council unworkable – and nobody mentioned all the US vetoes that keep sheltering Israeli war and occupation crimes against the Palestinians, including the use of chemical weapons as recently as 2009 on civilians in Gaza.

The pivotal Russia-China vetoes on Syria in October 2011 were no flukes. As partners within the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization, founded in June 2001, three months before 9/11), both countries, with four Central Asian partners, have been calling for a multi-polar world system to replace the uni-polar, US/NATO dominated one resulting from the end of the Cold War in 1989.

The emergent BRICS countries, with India, Brazil and South Africa demanding permanent membership and veto power in the UN Security Council, have converged with the multi-polar agenda of the SCO. So has the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), energized at its August 2012 Summit in Tehran, with members like Nigeria, Indonesia, Egypt, Mexico, Pakistan, also claiming membership of the UN Security Council – as do Germany, Japan and Italy, losers of WWII on the ashes of which the victors built the UN.

Syria, the SCO “Red line”, and the NATO response

Demands for reform of the UN have been on the table since the early 1990s, but the Triad has dragged its feet for two decades, looking instead to the WTO, to NATO, to an expanded G20 (from G8) to globalize its reach, and fiddling with the IFIs (International Financial Institutions like the World Bank and the IMF) to upgrade the voting power of countries like India and China, in a bid to co-opt them.

For Russia and China, for the SCO, as well as for the BRICS and NAM countries, Syria became a “Red line” to put a stop to US/NATO/OECD global military unilateralism aimed at opening NATO to countries as far-flung as South Korea, Australia and Colombia! And Syria became the “Test case” for returning global governance to the rule of international law and the UN Charter.

Judging from the Congress debates, the US and NATO have been framing their response to this major challenge. That response is now clear: the US, the UK and France will act on their own, and outside the UN if necessary, to further their interests and prolong their hegemony – while couching such unilateralism as selective “humanitarian imperative” to “protect civilians”.

France was the former colonial master of Syria, and (socialist) President François Hollande does not plan to ask the National Assembly for a vote. He is ready to attack – just waiting for the US Congress vote! The National Assembly had its own debate nonetheless, with oratory matching that of the British Parliament. It now seems if Obama wins in Congress (which is not certain, in the Republican-dominated House of Representatives especially), Cameron may bring the issue for a second vote in the House of Commons!

The first cracks within NATO since 1989

So much for the Triad. As for the rest of NATO, it does not seem as united as before. In fact, the funniest thing on the way to the War ON Syria has been the first major cracks within

NATO ranks since it proclaimed victory with the collapse of the Soviet Empire and went on to dismember Yugoslavia, occupy Afghanistan and deploy on African soil.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the harmless-looking but steely hawk of the NATO establishment, faced the media in Brussels last week to say NATO would not take part in the US attack on Syria. The European members are very divided on the issue, he said. In fact Europeans too do not want another war either, as they extricate themselves from 12 years of war, war with NATO in Afghanistan.

No doubt the mega-flap about the US National Security Agency (NSA) surveillance and electronic spying on European "allies" and on individual European leaders has severely damaged the Trans-Atlantic Partnership, and European resentment towards the US is still intense and raw.

This affair has also soured US-Russia relations, and it was surely a calculated move for Vladimir Putin to offer asylum to young Edward Snowden, the technical employee who leaked the voluminous NSA spying files to Wikileaks and to the media. US retaliation was swift as Obama called off his planned meeting with Putin at the G20 Summit last week in St Petersburg, and loud US demands for him to boycott the G20 altogether and to call for a boycott of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, five months from now.

The Snowden Effect and the "New Cold War"

For some time now, a new Cold War of sorts has been settling on US-Russia relations. The coming Syria showdown will surely heat things up - with unpredictable consequences. Outnumbered in St. Petersburg, the White House managed to extract from 11 of the G20 members a statement of "strong support" for a "firm reply" to the alleged use of chemical weapons by Syria.

Yet, back from St Petersburg, German chancellor Angela Merkel criticized her European colleagues for signing on to that text - with US allies like Saudi Arabia and South Korea, both members of the G20, while Venezuela is not! In France, opposition leaders were saying the US should have shown to the British House of Commons and to Congress the "solid" evidence it says it has on the use of chemical weapons by Syrian government forces.

But then, funniest of all twists, White House Chief of staff Denis McDonough, doing the Sunday rounds of US television networks, dropped a bombshell:

Evidence "not irrefutable", the White House says!

The administration, he said, does not have "irrefutable, beyond-a-reasonable-doubt evidence" that the Syrian régime used poison gas on its people. "This is not a court of law, he said. Intelligence does not work that way."

But, he added, the proof the US has "stands the common-sense test" - sufficient, in his view, to pass and execute the death and destruction sentences on countless Syrian civilians!

And this is where the fun stops: both the US and Russia have deployed huge fleets in the Eastern Mediterranean, with Putin saying Russia plans to react to the bombing of Syria. Obama's men repeat the strikes will be electronic and remote-controlled, targeted, limited, with no boots on the ground in Syria. But any strike will precipitate the whole world on a

dangerously slippery slope – and no one knows where that will lead.

Although, in light of the setbacks, inconsistencies and vacillations in the warmongers' camp, some useful idiots have begun spinning the ultimate “funny thing” : they are now saying that Obama’s strategy from the beginning may have been not to attack Syria at all, the (common sense?) “proof” being that he is doing everything to undermine support for his War on Syria policy!

Topping that, State Secretary John Kerry seemed to say Syria could avoid being attacked if it turned over its chemical weapons to “the international community”! He did not say he would ask Israel too to hand over its WMDs, including its nuclear arsenal, to open the way for a peaceful Middle East!

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