GlobalResearch
Center for Research on Globalization

Syria Chemical Weapons: Canadian Special Forces to Assist "Opposition"?

By Eric Walberg
Global Research, December 15, 2012

Region: Canada, Middle East & North Africa
Theme: US NATO War Agenda
In-depth Report: SYRIA

France and Britain have begun to circle Syria like vultures (my apologies to vultures, who politely wait for their prey to die). They plan to save Syria from chemical bombs – a surreal replay of Suez 1956, where France and Britain cooked up a pretext to invade Egypt with the US posing as the more restrained gang member, not to mention Iraq 2003, when they reversed their roles.

Meanwhile, Canada sings on demand for its US-Israeli sponsors. The Canadian government solemnly announced this week it is ready — if asked by NATO — to deploy the Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit, which handles chemical, biological and radioactive attacks. Canada will also send a Disaster Assistance Response Team to provide clean water to Syrians, as well as engineers and staff who can help set up a field hospital. A friendly navy frigate is already offshore.

Once again Prime Minister Stephen Harper plays his supporting role in the NATO-scripted drama unfolding in the Middle East. He takes "the threat of chemical weapons in Syria very seriously", but demurs on whether Canada will send CF-18 fighter jets over Syria, as it did in Libya to enforce a no-fly zone, or put combat troops on the ground. He has not yet given the current opposition coalition, the Syrian National Coalition (SNC), his blessing, although US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton formally recognized the opposition at a Friends of Syria summit in Morocco on Wednesday, joining the Euro crowd.

The Canadian government has no foreign policy anymore, doing exactly as it is told by its Israeli advisers, so the reason for Harper's coyness must be found there. Israel itself is in a quandary about Syria.

Israeli policy during the past three decades has following the divide-and-conquer Yinon Doctrine, playing various forces among its Arab neighbors against each other — Maronite and Orthodox Christian, Sunni and Shia Muslim, Druze, etc — in order to keep the Middle East weak and unstable.

In Syria, that even meant quietly supporting the Muslim Brotherhood during its ill-fated uprising in 1981, not because Israel wanted an Islamist Syria, but to keep the Syrian government off-balance. The secular and nationalist Baathist regime, together with Egypt, fought a war with Israel in 1967. These secular governments were the big threat, and it was only natural to try and cripple the regimes of Egypt and Syria, even if that meant working with Islamists.

Today, the West is eagerly arming the SNC, where Islamists predominate, even as Israel and

Canada dawdle. How can this be?

The explanation is simple. As Kissinger said of Iraq and Iran during their war in the 1980s, “A pity they both can’t lose.” Or Truman when the Germans invaded Russia 22 June 1941: “If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible.” Not only is Egypt now rediscovering its Islamic, very anti-Zionist roots, making Egyptian Islamists the main enemy, but there is no guarantee the SNC will defeat the Syrian army, and unlike far away France, Britain and the US, Israel must live chock-a-block with whoever is in Damascus — and Cairo — when the mustard gas clears.

Ha, ha. Only joking. What about the chemical weapons threat? Syria is one of the few countries that has not signed the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). (Israel has signed but not ratified it.) But Assad has made it clear he will not approve their use on civilians. Saddam Hussein’s example is proof enough of the madness of that. The real worry over WMDs is that whatever supplies the Syrian government has could soon fall into the hands of the western-backed rebels, in particular, al-Nusrah Front (aka, al-Qaeda in Iraq).

However, who can blame Assad if he drops a few on invading Brits, French, and yes Americans? It would be a perfect way to ‘celebrate’ the centenary of WWI, where holier-than-thou Germany, Britain and France pioneered their use, despite having signed the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 banning them. Britain used chlorine against the Germans in 1915 but the wind blew back on the British trenches — a case of ‘friendly gas’. The US took their use to new heights in Vietnam with Agent Orange. Only the one-time US ally Saddam Hussein was ever brought to justice for using them. The US and Russia still have stockpiles (not to mention nuclear and biological weapons), despite their obligation under the CWC to destroy them all.

The Syrians would get special satisfaction from gassing the French, who carved up and invaded Syria in 1920. Syria was promised France by Britain as its reward for the 1.7 million French who died in the WWI bloodbath that killed 16 million (Britain lost ‘less than’ a million). The only ‘positive’ outcome for the Allies was the destruction and occupation of the Ottoman Caliphate and the creation of a Jewish state there.

This was an outrageous betrayal of the Arabs, who had arguably tipped the balance in WWI — at great loss — in Britain’s favor, on the promise of post-war independence. But, as the Spanish say, ‘You don’t dance with the devil; he dances with *you*.” Britain wanted Iraq for its oil and Palestine for a Jewish state, “the hill citadel of Jerusalem” according to geopolitical theorist Halford Mackinder — the last link in the British empire. With a wink and a nod from Britain, France invaded Syria in 1920 and crushed a heroic uprising in 1925–1927, killing thousands. Greater Syria was divided into southern Turkey, French-occupied Lebanon/ Syria, and British-occupied Jordan/ Palestine.

It was not till 1946 that the French were finally booted out — kicking and screaming. Post-WWII Syrian politics is a litany of coups, egged on by the US, until the army and socialist Baathists finally settled on Hafiz al-Assad in 1971. Trying to pick up the pieces after the brutal French occupation and living next door to permanent nightmare Israel are not conducive to the charade of western-style pluralism, so the subsequent harsh dictatorship of Assad I and the new-improved Assad II are not surprising. The SNC alternative has no prospects for ruling a united Syria. Syria’s future under the SNC is already being played out in Iraq, though Assad is far more popular and sensible than Saddam Hussein, and his demise

will take down much of the Syria social order with him.

This is fine from an Israeli point of view as long as the Islamists are kept busy fighting their coalition 'allies' within the SNC. But if the Islamists dominate in the SNC, and if the power vacuum allows al-Qaeda to take root (it already has), this could be a problem for Israel. Look what happened to the Islamists in Gaza, where they surged and triumphed in elections in 2006 and remain strong. Israel has only to look south to Egypt to see how a revolutionary coalition can turn into an Islamic government which is not nearly as pliable as the secular dictatorship it replaced. This is what keeps many Israelis rooting for Assad.

When France was colonizing Syria a century ago, Canada was already the great colonial success story as a 'white dominion', and was allowed to join the ranks of the imperial rich, unlike Syria et al. (Lawrence 'of Arabia' lobbied Churchill to create a united Arab British mandate as the first 'brown dominion', with no success.)

As a former colony of both France and Britain, the loyal 'white dominion' of yesteryear, Canada may look like the perfect intermediary today: 'Be nice and you too can graduate from colony to dominion.' However, the flip side of white dominion status is that, like Israel or South Africa, you have built your society on the bones of the 'brown' natives. So it is not surprising that this week, even as Harper was toying with recognizing the SNC (who cares?), he faces ongoing protests over government neglect of Canada's First Nations.

Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence began a hunger strike in Ottawa charging the government with "marginalizing our political leadership, along with the enforced segregation of our people so that our rich heritage can be wiped out and the great bounty contained in our traditional lands be made available for exploitation by large multi-national companies." But Canada's First Nations — what's left of them — can thank their lucky stars they weren't born in the 'brown colonies' of the Middle East.

Eric Walberg is author of Postmodern Imperialism: Geopolitics and the Great Games http://claritypress.com/Walberg.html You can reach him at http://ericwalberg.com/
A version of this appeared at http://www.presstv.com/detail/2012/12/14/278033/white-dominions-brown-colonies/http://www.presstv.com/detail/2012/12/14/278033/white-dominions-brown-colonies/
http://ericwalberg.com/

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © Eric Walberg, Global Research, 2012

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: Eric Walberg

About the author:

Canadian Eric Walberg is known worldwide as a journalist specializing in the Middle East, Central Asia

and Russia. A graduate of University of Toronto and Cambridge in economics, he has been writing on East-West relations since the 1980s. He has lived in both the Soviet Union and Russia, and then Uzbekistan, as a UN adviser, writer, translator and lecturer. Presently a writer for the foremost Cairo newspaper, Al Ahram, he is also a regular contributor to Counterpunch, Dissident Voice, Global Research, Al-Jazeerah and Turkish Weekly, and is a commentator on Voice of the Cape radio. Eric Walberg was a moderator and speaker at the Leaders for Change Summit in Istanbul in 2011.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca