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## FOREIGN TROOPS INSIDE SYRIA: The Failed UN Brokered "Peace Plan" Sets the Stage for War?

By Michel Chossudovsky

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*"How you define your role, and where and how you decide to pursue it, is of vital interest to the United Nations, given the long tradition of cooperation and coordination between NATO and the UN in matters of war and peace."* (Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General, Address at NATO headquarters in Brussels on UN-NATO collaboration in the context of the 50th anniversary of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NATO, January 1999)

In late February, 13 French military officers were arrested in Homs at the height of the armed insurrection, pointing to the presence of foreign troops on Syrian soil in derogation of international law. The *Daily Star* (March 5, 2012) report suggested that the arrested officers could have been part of "a larger contingent" of French Parachutistes (special forces) operating within the ranks of the rebel Free Syrian Army (FSA):

**"It was not clear why the officers were in Syria, when they had arrived or whether they were part of a larger contingent [100 Parachutistes according to an unconfirmed report] in the city [Homs]."**

Strategic Homs was targeted in a 26-day shelling bombardment by the Syrian Army, which overran the city **where anti-Assad protests and Free Syrian Army operations have been focused.** ([The Daily Star](#) March 5, 2012)

The French government initially denied the report, insisting that "not a single French soldier is on Syrian soil." Yet sources confirmed that negotiations between Paris and Damascus were held, in all probability regarding the repatriation of the French military officers:

"A French Foreign Ministry spokesman said: "We deny the idea that there are French troops on the ground in Syria. A Defense Ministry spokesman added: "**We have no information on this. We neither confirm nor deny it.**"

According to various reports in the British media, the Daily Star ... the **supposed French captives were being held in a field hospital in Homs.**"([Report: 13 French officers captured in Syria - Israel News, Ynetnews](#), emphasis added)

While this arrest of military officers from a NATO member country was barely mentioned by the Western media, it is by no means an isolated incident. This is not the first time that foreign forces are arrested in Syria since the outset of the insurgency.

There is evidence of large numbers of foreign troops on the ground inside Syria including British, French, Turkish and Qatari special forces, British MI6 intelligence operatives as well a large number of mercenaries from Arab countries:

"As the unrest and killings escalate in the troubled Arab state, **agents from MI6 and the CIA are already in Syria assessing the situation**, a security official has revealed. **Special forces are also talking to Syrian dissident soldiers.** They want to know about weapons and communications kit rebel forces will need if the Government decides to help.

"MI6 and the CIA are in Syria to infiltrate and get at the truth," said the well-placed source. "We have SAS and SBS not far away who want to know what is happening and are finding out **what kit dissident soldiers need.**" " ([Syria will be bloodiest yet](#), Daily Star). (emphasis added)

The Elites Forces UK website acknowledges that:

"**British Special forces have met up with members of the Free Syrian Army (FSA)**... The apparent goal of this initial contact was to establish the rebel forces' strength and to pave the way for any future training operations. ... More recent reports have stated that **British and French Special Forces have been actively training members of the FSA, from a base in Turkey.** Some reports indicate that training is also taking place in locations in Libya and Northern Lebanon. **British MI6 operatives and UKSF (SAS/SBS) personnel have reportedly been training the rebels in urban warfare** as well as supplying them with arms and equipment. US CIA operatives and special forces are believed to be providing communications assistance to the rebels." [Elite Forces UK](#), January 5, 2012 (emphasis added)

## **NATO Recruits Mujahideen Mercenaries**

Mercenaries from Arab countries are operating within highly trained terrorist brigades, financed by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. In this regard, Israeli intelligence sources (August 2011) point to the direct involvement of NATO in the recruitment of jihadist "Muslim Volunteers", in coordination with the Turkish military:

"Also discussed in Brussels and Ankara, our sources report, is a campaign to **enlist thousands of Muslim volunteers in Middle East countries and the Muslim world to fight alongside the Syrian rebels**. The Turkish army would house these volunteers, train them and secure their passage into Syria. (<http://www.debka.com/article/21255/> Debkafile, August 31, 2011 emphasis added)

In Homs, the Al Qaeda Faruq Brigade which includes mercenaries from Libya and Iraq have been involved in terrorizing the civilian population. They "have succeeded in expelling most of the Christians in Homs and have seized their homes by force". "Snipers were stationed in the street ... preventing people from leaving their homes for two months, targeting passers-by and cars and anything that moved in the streets, adding that the terrorists also robbed houses, committed massacres, murders and kidnapping."

### **The Kofi Annan "Peace Plan"**

The arrest of the French military officers (circa 22nd of February) --which coincided with the beginning of Kofi Annan's peacemaking mandate (February 28th)-- was hushed up by the Al Assad government, largely with a view to avoiding undue controversy within the sphere of United Nations diplomacy.

Yet the decision by the Al Assad government to avoid raising the issue of Western military support to "opposition" forces has provided Washington and its allies with the upper hand. While claiming to represent the "international community", the Atlantic Alliance is not only behind the armed insurrection, it is providing support and training to Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist brigades.

With Western forces and military advisers inside Syria, the so-called peace plan brokered by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has all the appearances of a staged event.

Peace Plan with Whom? A "Cease Fire" cannot be implemented without clearly identifying the identity of the parties involved. A real peace plan would require addressing the illegal presence of foreign military personnel on Syrian soil.

The Kofi Annan peace plan called for a cease-fire on "both sides", while failing to acknowledge that foreign forces from NATO countries are directly involved in the conflict, on the "side" of the "opposition".

Not surprisingly, immediately upon the adoption of the UN Arab League brokered Peace Plan, the "opposition" forces including the terrorist brigades, under the guidance of their foreign military handlers, decided to ignore the peace plan: renewed attacks by opposition gunmen

directed against Syrian forces and civilians were reported in several cities immediately following the adoption of the peace plan. Meanwhile, the Al Assad government was urged to "halt the killings" and Damascus was casually blamed for "breaking the ceasefire".

This "scenario" had been carefully planned in advance of the adoption of the six points Peace Plan.

The Kofi Annan Peace Plan, which was endorsed by Syria, China and Russia was slated to fail from the outset. It was also intended to be used as a propaganda ploy against the Al Assad government. Immediately following the endorsement of the Annan Peace Plan, a new wave of baseless accusations was directed against the Al Assad government, accusing "Syrian forces [of] deliberately attacking children in horrendous tactics ordered directly by President Bashar al-Assad, the UN human rights chief has claimed."

The Western Military alliance is not committed to peace.

A "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) intervention under a NATO mandate remains on the drawing board of the Pentagon. Dimitry Rogozin, Russia's Deputy Prime Minister intimated last September that NATO is planning a military campaign against Syria, with specific attack scenarios. More recently, in January 2012, two months prior to the outset of the Kofi Annan Peace Initiative, Britain's Ministry of Defence confirmed that it "is drawing up secret plans for a NATO-sponsored no-fly zone [for Syria] [in coordination with its allies] "but first it needs backing from the United Nations Security Council." (*Syria will be bloodiest yet*, Daily Star). According to these secret plans: "fighting in Syria could be bigger and bloodier than the battle against Gaddafi". (Ibid ).

What is the role of Kofi Annan?

Is it an agenda for peace? Or is it a "Peacemaking Psyop" which is intended to set the stage for an R2P NATO "humanitarian intervention"?

Prior to becoming Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan as Undersecretary of of UN Peacekeeping, faithfully served the interests of Washington, upholding the legitimacy of US and NATO military interventions. "He was elevated to the post of Secretary-General by U.S. preference, with the U.S. vetoing a second five-year term in 1996 for his less amenable predecessor Boutros Boutros-Ghali...":

"As the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping for Yugoslavia, [Kofi Annan] sanctioned *Operation Deliberate Force*, NATO's bombing campaign against the Bosnian Serbs in 1995. Annan's prominent support for NATO's 1999 war was significant. In an address he delivered at NATO headquarters in Brussels two months before the war, he urged NATO members to "recall the lessons of Bosnia" -- "particularly those with the capacity to act." **NATO's 1999 bombing war against Yugoslavia was an early but clear example of what R2P means in the real world, long before the phrase "responsibility to protect" had entered common usage.** (Edward S. Herman and David Peterson , *The Responsibility to Protect, the International Criminal Court, and Foreign Policy in Focus*, Subverting the UN Charter in the Name of Human

Rights, Global Research, August 2009, emphasis added)

Lest we forget, Kofi Annan was one of main architects of the "Responsibility to Protect" doctrine. Under his helm as UN Secretary General, R2P was unanimously endorsed in 2005 at the U.N. World Summit. The decision, which essentially set the stage for NATO's R2P "humanitarian intervention" in Libya, called upon the international community to use all "appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means ... to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity." (See Carrie Crawford, [The 'Responsibility to Protect' and the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), Global Research, November 24, 2011)