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Obama Planning More War: Who is next? Syria? Iran? Both Countries are Targeted

By Stephen Lendman

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America's favorite pastime isn't baseball. It's war, permanent imperial wars that won't end in our lifetime Dick Cheney said earlier.

America is addicted to war. One nation after another is ravaged and plundered. Unchallenged global dominance is sought.

Who's next? Syria? Iran? Washington's long knives target both countries.

On June 29, AP headlined "US, Russia fail to reach agreement on Syria, jeopardizing Annan plan to end crisis," saying:

Before heading for Geneva, Hillary Clinton and Sergey Lavrov met in St. Petersburg. Differences between them weren't resolved.

Washington demands regime change. Moscow wants Syrians to decide who'll lead them. Lavrov said:

We "agreed to look for an agreement that will bring us closer based on a clear understanding of what's written in the Annan plan that (all) sides in Syria need an incentive for a national dialogue."

"But it's only up to the Syrians to make agreements on what the Syrian state will be like, who will hold (government) jobs and positions."

Putting a brave face on intractable differences, Lavrov hoped Geneva discussions would move closer to resolving Syria's conflict peacefully. "But I am not saying that we will agree on every dot."

Kofi Annan proposed unity government. Government and opposition members would be included. Elements seeking belligerent change would be excluded.

Russia and other major powers expressed support. Washington insists Assad must go. He told Iran's IRIB channel 4:

"We, in Syria, do not accept any model that is not Syrian and national, regardless of whether it was imposed by superpowers or proposed by friendly countries."

"No one knows how to resolve the problem in Syria as well as we do, as Syrians....so, any model that comes from abroad is unacceptable regardless of its content."

At the same time, he thanked Russia, China, and other countries for trying to resolve things peacefully to restore stability.

On June 30, America, Russia, China, Britain, France, Turkey, Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar met in Geneva. Moscow wanted Iran there. Washington rejected Tehran's participation.

Reports late Saturday said world powers struck a transitional government deal. What part Assad would play remains unclear.

Russia says Syrians must decide who'll lead them. The deal struck has no preconditions.

Ahead of word from Geneva, insurgent leaders rejected transitional government with Assad in it. Earlier they spurned peace initiatives. They take orders from Washington.

Expect little more now than earlier. America won't tolerate peaceful resolution. Regime change depends on violence and instability. What's next remains to be seen.

Iran is also targeted. On June 25, Aviation Week (AW) headlined "Raiding Iran Triggers Discussion of When and How," saying:

"Evidence is mounting that the U.S. defense community and the Obama administration view 2013 as the likely window for a bombing attack on Iran's

nuclear and missile facilities."

"It could be earlier, timed to use the chaos of the Syrian government's fall to disguise such an attack, or later, if international negotiations with Iran stretch out without failing completely."

"But there is evidence that Iran's intransigence over shutting down its uranium-enrichment program will not buy it much more time."

"The tools for (conducting) an attack are all operational."

Proponents in and outside America suggest Iran already conducted one or more nuclear tests in North Korea. Corroborating evidence didn't follow claims. They're baseless like other accusations about Tehran menacing the region.

Debate continues in Washington. To attack or not attack? If so, when? Electoral priorities dictate policy. Three unnamed retired senior war planners offered views. Comments were as follows:

"I think it would take an extraordinarily dumb move on the part of the Iranians to force U.S. kinetic interventions before the U.S. presidential election (by abandoning negotiations)."

"Israel has fewer reservations (about attacking) given the recent solidification of their government."

The most politically opportune time would be 2013 or 2014.

"The assessment I'm betting on is continued watching, but (with U.S. forces) close to action."

An attack "would employ a totally stealthy force of F-22s, B-2s and Jassms (joint air-to-surface standoff missiles) that are launched from F-15Es and (Block 40) F-16s."

Other advanced weapons and radar jamming devices would be used.

"We should give Iran advanced warning that we will damage and likely destroy its nuclear facilities. It is not an act of war against Iran, the Iranian people or Islam."

"It is a pre-emptive attack solely against their nuclear facilities and the military targets protecting them. We will take extraordinary measures to protect against collateral damage."

The above comment doesn't square with reality. An attack means war. Launching one assures many deaths. Vast destruction will occur. Civilian infrastructure and military targets will be struck. War planners know what's involved. The pattern repeats from one conflict to the next.

At a February Israeli security conference, Lt. General (ret.) Dan Halutz (former IDF chief of staff) said Iran's nuclear program shouldn't be used as an excuse for Israel to attack unilaterally.

"The military option should be last, and it should be led by others." He meant Washington, but Israel would be involved.

Another issue is Syria. It has surveillance and air defense capabilities. Damascus shares information with Tehran. Attacking Iran involves possible routes over Turkey, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Israel.

Syrian radar would detect it. Ousting Assad denies Iran advance warning.

According to America's Israeli ambassador Daniel Shapiro, Washington is ready to act if diplomatic talks fail. The military option is "not just available, it's ready," he said.

"The necessary planning has been done to ensure that it's ready. The international community has been notified."

According to US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta:

"The fundamental premise is that neither the U.S. nor the international community is going to allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon."

"We will do everything we can to prevent them from developing a weapon. We have plans to be able to implement any contingency we have to in order to defend ourselves."

Cyberattack is another option. According to US Lt. General (ret.) David Deptula:

"It depends on what the objectives are. What we want to be able to do is to get our foes to act in accordance with our strategic objectives without ever knowing they have been acted upon. Operations in cyberspace allow that to happen."

It's well known that Iran poses no nuclear threat. Claiming otherwise is red herring cover for regime change.

Its program is peaceful. It complies fully with NPT provisions. US intelligence and IAEA inspectors confirmed it. In contrast, Israel is nuclear armed and dangerous. It menaces the region and beyond. It passes under the radar unmentioned.

On June 21, Haaretz headlined "As nuclear talks fail, US experts urge Obama to weigh military option on Iran," saying:

Forty-four US senators wrote Obama. They want pressure, not more dialogue. They listed specific demands. They include shutting down Tehran's heavily protected Fordo facility, halting uranium enrichment above 5%, and shipping amounts above it offshore.

They urged options including military action if Iran doesn't comply.

The House Armed Services Committee heard testimonies on "Addressing the Iranian Nuclear Challenge: Understanding the Military Option." According to former Senator Charles Robb:

"(T)he dual approach of diplomacy and sanctions simply have not proved to be enough. We need the third track, and that is credible and visible preparations for a military option."

"(W)e are not urging Israel to take unilateral military action against Iran nuclear facilities, but we need to make their capability to do so stronger so that Iran will take that threat more seriously."

"We are not advocating another war in this region," he claimed. His comments, of course, don't square with reality.

Washington and Israel plan joint military exercises this fall. They were scheduled earlier but postponed. Called "Austere Challenge 12," it's expected to be the largest scale operation between the two countries.

Last March, Senator Barbara Boxer (D. CA) introduced S. 2165: United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012. On June 19, it was reported to committee. On June 29, it passed by voice vote.

HR 4133 is the companion House bill. On May 9, it passed overwhelmingly. John Dingell (D. MI) and Ron Paul (R. TX) cast the only "no" votes.

Paul called the measure "another piece of one-sided and counter-productive foreign policy legislation. This bill's real intent seems to be more saber-rattling against Iran and Syria, and it undermines U.S. diplomatic efforts by making clear that the U.S. is not an honest broker seeking peace for the Middle East."

"The bill calls for the United States to significantly increase our provision of sophisticated weaponry to Israel, and states that it is to be U.S. policy to 'help Israel preserve its qualitative military edge' in the region."

"While I absolutely believe that Israel – and any other nation - should be free to determine for itself what is necessary for its national security, I do not believe that those decisions should be underwritten by U.S. taxpayers and backed up by the U.S. military."

Paul added that the bill won't help America, Israel, or the Middle East. It implicitly authorizes greater US regional intervention at a time wars ravage it.

War with Syria and/or Iran will follow, he believes. According to Haaretz, Washington and Israel "continue preparations for strik(ing) Iran's nuclear facilities....A senior Israeli official (said) Netanyahu has decided to attack Iran before the US elections in November."

The US-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act reaffirms America's "unwavering commitment to the security of the State of Israel as a Jewish State." It's also to ensure its military strength.

House co-sponsor Eric Cantor (R. VA) said:

"This bill reaffirms Israel's right to defend itself against threats and puts Congress on the record about America's long-standing commitment to the US-Israel strategic relationship, a unique and special relationship founded on shared interests and shared democratic values."

"This bill recognizes the profound threats the U.S. and Israel face in the region and reiterates our commitment to standing side by side with Israel during this pivotal and dangerous period of transition and instability."

Following passage, AIPAC said:

"This vote is a testament to the broad, bipartisan support of the American people for bolstering the ties between the US and our ally Israel."

"The United States benefits greatly through enhanced cooperation with Israel, and this bipartisan bill recommends new avenues for the US-Israel relationship to grow and strengthen in the fields of missile defense, homeland security, energy, intelligence, and cyber security."

Congress recently voted to increase military aid for Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system. Israel gets more annual aid than all other nations combined. Most goes for military purposes.

Both countries are imperial partners. Together with Britain, France, other NATO allies and regional ones, they threaten humanity.