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## Hillary's "Cowboy Diplomacy": There will be hell to pay for NATO's Holy War

By Pepe Escobar

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*US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is running out of rhetorical ammunition in the US's Holy War against Syria. Perhaps it's the strain of launching a NATO war bypassing the UN Security Council. Perhaps it's the strain of being eaten for breakfast routinely by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov*

Hillary has just called on "Western powers" and their Arab stooges - the NATOGCC compound [1] that passes for the "international community" - to "make it clear that Russia and China will pay a price because they are holding up progress" regarding weaponized regime change in Syria.

In non-newspeak, this means, "If you block our new war, there will be payback".

Howls of laughter in the corridors of the Kremlin and the Zhongnanhai notwithstanding, this shows how desperate the NATOGCC compound is to force regime change in Syria as a stopover in cutting off Iran's privileged connection with the Arab world. And this while Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan - leading NATO's eastern flank - itches to attack Syria but can't find a way to sell it to Turkish public opinion.

Into this incandescent context plunges WikiLeaks - releasing a batch of very embarrassing

emails against the Assad system and the NATO rebels as well. A possible side effect will be to inspire waves of so-called progressives all across the West to start supporting the Holy War on Syria. A realistic effect will be to show how unsavory both sides - the police state Assad system and the armed opposition - really are.

### **Car bombing tourism, anyone?**

It's useful to examine what price Washington itself, not to mention its NATO subjects, could be paying for this Holy War branch-out fought with - who else - the same bunch of "terrorists" who until yesterday were about to destroy Western civilization and turn it into a giant Caliphate.

Washington, London and Paris have tried - twice - to twist the UN Security Council into yet another war. They were blocked by Russia and China. So plan B was to bypass the UN and launch a NATO war. Problem is NATO has no stomach - and no funds - for a very risky war with a country that can actually defend itself.

Thus plan C is to bet on a prolonged civil war, using the Far-from-Free Syrian Army (FSA), crammed with mercenaries and jihadists, and the band of opportunistic exiles known as the Syrian National Council (SNC).

The SNC has actually called for a Libya-style no-fly zone over Syria - shorthand for a NATO war. Turkey also formally asked NATO for a no-fly zone. NATO commanders may be inept - but they have a certain amount of experience with major embarrassment (see Afghanistan). They flatly refused it.

The SNC - and the FSA - could not be more un-representative. The "Friends of Syria" - as in Hillary and the Arab stooges - barely acknowledge the existence of the National Coordination Body for Democratic Change (NCB), the main indigenous opposition movement in Syria, composed of 13 political parties, mostly from the Left, Arab nationalists and including one Kurdish party. The NCB firmly denounces any form of militarization and totally dismisses the FSA.

Iraq's Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari - a Kurd - has warned that Salafi-jihadists of the al-Qaeda mould are moving into Syria in droves. Apparently this bunch still listens very closely to "invisible" al-Qaeda ideologue Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri; five months ago he issued these marching orders to jihadis in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. It also helps that many of them are being weaponized - via different networks - by the House of Saud and Qatar.

For months everybody knows that the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) of al-Qaeda-linked Abdul Hakim Belhaj has been active in Syria - as well as remnants of al-Qaeda in Iraq now responsible for car bombings even in Damascus.

In the event of a post-Assad Syria dominated by hardcore Sunnis infiltrated by Wahhabis and Salafi-jihadists, guaranteed blowback will leave Afghanistan after the 1980s anti-Soviet jihad

looking like a ride on Disneyland Hong Kong.

### **We accept yuan and rubles**

As for China, it's laughing about Hillary's desperation all the way to the bank. As the House of Saud becomes ever more paranoid with what it sees as the Obama administration flirting with democracy in the Arab world, Beijing jacked up trade ties by delivering a bunch of new missiles to Riyadh.

And while the "West" flirts with Holy War, Beijing's state-sponsored corporations have been buying commodities like crazy all across the Middle East, North Africa and South America - as well as stockpiling rare earths for strategic reserves. China produces no less than 97% of the world's rare earths - used on everything from iPads to those shiny new missiles now frying in the Arabian desert.

Other side effects as in "the price to pay" for the bypassing of the UN and the obsession on NATO as global Robocop will be inevitable. It shouldn't be forgotten that the Holy War on Syria is a stopover on the way to Tehran. For instance, a new system of maritime insurance, as well as a new international exchange mechanism - bypassing Western diktats - may be about to be born.

Yet the most important element may be a concerted move by Russia, Iran and China to reorganize the global energy market by transacting outside of the petrodollar.

So Washington cuts Iran off from SWIFT - the international bank clearing system? Iran's central bank counterpunches; if you want to do business with us, you can pay in any currency apart from the US dollar, or you can pay with gold.

This is the Holy Grail of the Holy War - not Syria; one thing is for Tehran to accept euros as payment for its oil and gas; another thing is to accept gold. On top of it with full support from both Russia and China.

In a nutshell; the whole Holy War syndrome is accelerating the end of the US dollar as global reserve currency. And when it happens, will there be an American Spring? Or will US elites - like the Mob - have the guts, and the muscle, to force Russia and China to pay the price?

#### ***Note:***

1. NATOGCC is a compound of the North Atlantic treaty Organization and the Gulf Cooperation Council.