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Obama set for holy Tomahawk war

By Pepe Escobar

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The "responsibility to protect" (R2P) doctrine invoked to legitimize the 2011 war on Libya has just transmogrified into "responsibility to attack" (R2A) Syria. Just because the Obama administration says so.

On Sunday, the White House said it had "very little doubt" that the Bashar al-Assad government used chemical weapons against its own citizens. On Monday, Secretary of State John Kerry ramped it up to "undeniable" - and accused Assad of "moral obscenity".

So when the US bombed Fallujah with white phosphorus in late 2004 it was just taking the moral high ground. And when the US helped Saddam Hussein to [gas Iranians](#) in 1988 it was also taking the moral high ground.

The Obama administration has ruled that Assad allowed UN chemical weapons inspectors into Syria, and to celebrate their arrival unleashed a chemical weapons attack mostly against women and children only 15 kilometers away from the inspectors' hotel. If you don't believe it, you subscribe to a conspiracy theory.

Evidence? Who cares about evidence? Assad's offer of access for the inspectors came "too late". Anyway, the UN team is only mandated to determine whether chemical weapons were deployed - but not by who, according to UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon's spokesman.

As far as the Obama administration and UK Prime Minister David "of Arabia" Cameron are concerned - supported by a barrage of corporate media missiles - that's irrelevant; Obama's "red line" has been crossed by Assad, period. Washington and London are in no-holds-barred mode to dismiss any facts contradicting the decision. Newspeak - of the R2A kind - rules. If this all looks like Iraq 2.0 that's because it is. Time to fix the facts around the policy - all over again. Time for weapons of mass deception - all over again.

The Saudi-Israeli axis of fun

The window of opportunity for war is now. Assad's forces were winning from Qusayr to Homs; pounding "rebel" remnants out of the periphery of Damascus; deploying around Der'ah to counterpunch CIA-trained "rebels" with advanced weapons crossing the Syrian-Jordanian border; and organizing a push to expel "rebels" and jihadis from suburbs of Aleppo.

Now, Israel and Saudi Arabia are oh so excited because they are getting exactly what they dream just by good ol' Wag the Dog methods. Tel Aviv has even telegraphed how it wants it: this Monday, the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper headlined with "On the Way to Attack" and even printed the ideal Order of Battle. (see photo)



Months ago, even AMAN, the Intelligence Directorate of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) concluded that Assad was not a fool to cross Obama's chemical weapon "red line". So they came up with the concept of "two entwined red lines", the second line being the Syrian government

"losing control of its chemical weapons depots and production sites". AMAN then proposed different strategies to Washington, from a no-fly zone to actually seizing the weapons (implying a ground attack).

It's now back to the number one option - air strikes on the chemical weapons depots. As if the US - and Israel - had up-to-the-minute intelligence on exactly where they are.

The House of Saud had also telegraphed its wishes - after Prince Bandar bin Sultan, aka Bandar Bush, was appointed by King Abdullah as head of Saudi General Intelligence. Abdullah's hard on is explained by his mother and two of his wives coming from an influential, ultra-conservative Sunni tribe in Syria. As for Bandar Bush, he has more longevity than Rambo or the Terminator; he's back in the same role he played in the 1980s Afghan jihad, when he was the go-to guy helping the CIA to weaponize president Ronald Reagan's "freedom fighters".

Jordan - a fiction of a country totally dependent on the Saudis - was easily manipulated into becoming a "secret" war operation center. And who's in charge? No less than Bandar's younger half-brother, and deputy national security adviser, Salman bin Sultan, also known as "mini-Bandar". Talk about an Arab version of Dr Evil and Mini Me.

Still, there are more CIA assets than Saudis in the Jordanian front.

The importance of this report cannot be overstated enough. It was initially leaked to Lebanon's Al-Safir newspaper. [Here's](#) Bandar's whole strategy, unveiled in his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, already reported by Asia Times Online. After trying - for four hours - to convince Putin to drop Syria, Bandar is adamant: "There is no escape from the military option."

Mix Kosovo with Libya and voila!

Former president Bill Clinton resurfaced with perfect timing to compare Obama's options in Syria to Reagan's jihad in Afghanistan. Bubba was right in terms of positioning Bandar's role. But he must have inhaled something if he was thinking in terms of consequences - which include everything from the Taliban to that mythical entity, "al-Qaeda". Well, at least al-Qaeda is already active in Syria; they don't need to invent it.

As for that bunch of amateurs surrounding Obama - including R2P groupies such as Susan Rice and new Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power, all of them liberal hawks - they are all suckers for Kosovo. Kosovo - with a Libya add-on - is being spun as the ideal model for Syria; R2P via (illegal) air strikes. Right on cue, the New York Times is already frantically parroting the idea.

Facts are, of course, absent from the narrative - including the blowing up of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade (a remix in Syria with the Russian embassy?) and getting to the brink of a war with Russia.

Syria has nothing to do with the Balkans. This is a civil war. Arguably the bulk of the Syrian urban population, not the country bumpkins, support Damascus - based on despicable "rebel"

behavior in places they control; and the absolute majority wants a political solution, as in the now near-totally torpedoed Geneva II conference.

The Jordanian scheme - inundating southern Syria with heavily weaponized mercenaries - is a remix of what the CIA and the Saudis did to AfPak; and the only winner will be Jabhat al-Nusra jihadis. As for the Israeli solution for Obama - indiscriminate bombing of chemical weapons depots - it will certainly result in horrendous collateral damage, as in R2A killing even more civilians.

The prospects remain grim. Damn another coalition of the willing; Washington already has the British and French poodles in the bag, and full support - in air-con safety - from the democratic Gulf Cooperation Council petro-monarchies, minion Jordan and nuclear power Israel. This is what passes for "international community" in the newspeak age.

The Brits are already heavily spinning that no UN Security Council resolution is needed; who cares if we do Iraq 2.0? For the War Party, the fact that Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey said Syrian "rebels" could not promote US interests seems to be irrelevant.

Washington already has what it takes for the Holy Tomahawks to start flying; 384 of them are already positioned in the Eastern Mediterranean. B-1 bombers can be deployed from Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. And bunker-busting bombs will certainly be part of the picture.

What happens next requires concentric crystal balls - from Tomahawks to a barrage of air strikes to Special Ops commandos on the ground to a sustained air campaign lasting months. In his long [interview](#) to Izvestia, Assad gives the impression he thinks Obama is bluffing.

What's certain is that Syria won't be a "piece of cake" like Libya; even depleted on all fronts, Gaddafi resisted for eight long months after NATO started its humanitarian bombing. Syria has a weary but still strong army of 200,000; loads of Soviet and Russian weapons; very good anti-aircraft systems; and full support from asymmetrical warfare experts Iran and Hezbollah. Not to mention Russia, which just needs to forward a few S-300 air defense batteries and relay solid intelligence.

So get used to how international relations work in the age of newspeak. General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's army in Egypt can kill hundreds of his own people who were protesting against a military coup. Washington couldn't care less - as in the coup that is not a coup and the bloodbath that is not a bloodbath.

No one knows for sure what exactly happened in the chemical weapons saga near Damascus. But that's the pretext for yet another American war - just a few days before a Group of 20 summit hosted by Putin in St Petersburg. Holy Tomahawk! R2A, here we go.