Does the United States Want to Fight Syria?

The US government’s decision to supply some types of weapons to the Syrian rebels has given rise to a wide variety of interpretations and assessments. Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham were quick to say that the United States should not limit itself to increasing aid to the Syrian rebels but should undertake a military operation — that it should use cruise missiles against Syrian government forces — and that helped things along. “But providing arms alone is not sufficient. That alone is not enough to change the military balance of power on the ground against Assad. The President must rally an international coalition to take military actions to degrade Assad’s ability to use airpower and ballistic missiles and to move and resupply his forces around the battlefield by air. This can be done, as we have said many times, using stand-off weapons such as cruise missiles,” McCain and Graham said in a joint statement. In addition, news reports from Washington have been saying that the United States is considering introducing a no-fly zone over Syria near the Syrian-Jordanian border. Plans call for establishing a temporary Syrian rebel government in the areas that would then be under rebel control.

Many analysts, including Russian analysts, have begun saying that the Iraqi or Libyan scenarios will be used against Damascus to overthrow the ruling regime. But how realistic would an action like that be in Syria?

Of course, we cannot rule out the possibility that the United States will respond to developments even though it does not have a UN Security Council resolution legitimizing a foreign military incursion in Syria. For now, however, that is difficult to believe. Therefore, the United States will probably act on the sly by beginning arms deliveries to the rebels in the near future, and it will intensify its information support for the rebels by employing modern news manipulation technologies.

In any event, another factor is completely clear — Washington clearly does not intend or does not want to cooperate with Russia in a serious effort to resolve the Syrian conflict despite the fact that in recent weeks it has been actively working with Moscow on the Geneva 2 conference. The Americans clearly want to fan the flames of war in order to show that they are involved in the Syrian conflict and to look good to their allies in the Wahhabi-Franco-British coalition.

The Obama administration’s decision was sparked by the Syrian army’s recent significant successes in
defeating numerous opposition units and restoring government control over a number of important areas in the country. It became clear that if this continues the rebels will soon be driven underground to employ guerrilla warfare methods and terrorist attacks, and that will ultimately lead to their dénouement as a political force.

It is quite clear that the United States’ allies, Britain, France, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, cannot and do not want to let that happen. After all, that would mean the complete failure of the Middle East political policy they have been pursuing for the last three years and the end of the Arab Spring — especially since neighboring Turkey, which was the Syrian opposition’s main base and a transit point for weapons being sent to the fighters in Syria, has seen the beginning of its own “revolutionary spring,” which for a time has taken Ankara out of the fight against Assad.

In addition, US President Obama has faced strong criticism on a daily basis from various hawks who have used the media to accuse him of unwillingness to get involved militarily in the Syrian conflict. Therefore, in part for propaganda reasons, he was forced to a decision that is contrary to international law and clearly not in tune with his personal opinion about the policy Washington should pursue in the Arab region should be.

Thus, on Friday the White House said that in using chemical weapons the government of Syria crossed red lines set by the United States, and America would respond. However, it presented no strong proof of that. Any excuse at all was needed to somehow explain such an extravagant decision. On Thursday, Obama’s Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes sent a clear message that a no-fly zone would not be an effective solution to the Syrian conflict and could be more costly than the same type of operation in Libya. Thus Obama tossed a bone to the hawks and came across to the voters as a strong leader. However, he set very clear limits on America’s involvement — US soldiers would not set foot on Syrian soil. Afghanistan and Iraq left their mark. Most Americans are with Obama on this issue — they do not want another war that would cost the lives of American soldiers.

However, we should not underestimate the significance of the White House decision. After all, the weapons that the United States reportedly intends to provide to the rebels include MANPADS, antitank missiles and light armored vehicles. These are significant items. Damascus will be forced to look for ways of neutralizing them in order to prevent a change in the military balance of power, which currently favors the legitimate government. Under the circumstances, Russia, which has already expressed its strong opposition to Obama’s decision, may very well help the Syrian authorities boost the fighting strength of the Syrian army with more modern weapons. Nor will Iran stand idly by.

The EU’s reaction to the White House decision has clearly been mixed. NATO is already split between the Franco-British “Crusaders,” who are depending on the Wahhabis — truly an alliance between Satan and Shaitan! — and Europe’s wholesome powers, which do not want wars and conflicts. After all, they have their own problems from the economic crisis to deal with. The West’s disarray only weakens the positions of the United States and the European Union, not to mention NATO, in a world where China is becoming increasingly active.

Time is needed to assess the impact of Washington’s decision and see how it will be implemented in practice. The White House most likely will take things slow while shouting loudly and belligerently for internal and external consumption. It is unlikely to begin arms deliveries before August. I would like to believe that by then the Syrian army will have soundly defeated the alliance of radicals, cannibals, terrorists, foreign mercenaries and those who are simply international scum. Then the people crying to the world about democratizing Syria and about its “bloody dictator Assad” can finally move to five-star hotels in Doha and onto Al Jazeera television, from where they can pour out their familiar angry speeches urging jihad. Qatar is always willing to give people wanting to complain about their failed dreams of grabbing power a shoulder to cry on and money to prevent them from getting too upset. Unless, that is, the Qatari government has been replaced by then — something many media outlets have been talking about for two weeks now — and Prince Tamim, its likely new ruler, changes his country’s approach to foreign policy. Otherwise, the natural gas “dwarf” could crack under the strain and its delusions of grandeur.

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