

Trans-Atlantic War Faction Pushes Back

by Jeffrey Steinberg

July 17—A senior U.S. intelligence official has warned, ironically, that with the shift to support for Glass-Steagall taken by a powerful faction in the City of London, the danger of a war provocation emanating from opposing factions, in both Britain and the United States, has actually increased the danger of general war in the short term.

This assessment, presented by a high-ranking U.S. official, on condition of anonymity, coheres with a number of developments that indicate that the drive for a confrontation with Russia and China, ostensibly over Syria and/or Iran, has not been halted altogether, and that a new war-avoidance push is urgently needed—for as long as President Obama remains in office.

The most obvious and immediate flashpoint for a general war is the ongoing regime-change campaign against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. As Russian officials, including both Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and President Vladimir Putin, have made clear, repeatedly, the Western powers, notably the Obama Administration, France, and Britain, along with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, are committed to the overthrow of the Assad government. While the Permanent Five UN Security Council members, along with Turkey and Qatar, signed the most recent document by UN and Arab League envoy Kofi Annan, pledging to work for an immediate ceasefire in Syria, none of those countries has lifted a finger in that direction, and all have continued to finance and arm the opposition, with the goal of

fueling a full-scale civil war and the overthrow of Assad.

In a recent annual address to the Russian diplomatic corps, President Putin made it clear that, under no circumstances would Russia tolerate a replay of the NATO overthrow of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi. Foreign Minister Lavrov has issued daily statements denouncing the West for fueling the violence in Syria. Last week, Putin dispatched 11 Russian warships to the eastern Mediterranean, in a move intended to put further muscle behind his words. Some of those Russian Navy ships just completed a port of call to Cyprus and will be arriving at the Syrian port of Tartus within days at most.

Looking for Confrontation

According to the senior U.S. intelligence sources, a faction in London is obsessed with President Putin, and is out to provoke direct confrontation with Moscow, regardless of the risk of general war, even thermonuclear war. That same faction is now also looking at the Iranian situation as another potential flashpoint.

After three rounds of talks between Iran and the P5+1 (5 permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany), talks have been resumed at the technical level, to attempt to iron out the wide gaps remaining between the Iranian and P5+1 positions. The next negotiating session is scheduled to take place in Istanbul on July 24, between European Union negotiator Helga

Schmidd and Iran's deputy national security advisor Ali Bagheri.

Gen. James Mattis, head of the U.S. Central Command (Centcom), has told senior Administration officials that he is growing increasingly concerned that Israel could launch a unilateral attack on Iran's nuclear and missile facilities during late July/early August or mid-September. While Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a pledge to President Obama in March that Israel would coordinate any military actions with the U.S., and would not strike before the November U.S. elections, there is a growing concern that Netanyahu could break that deal and attack this Summer.

Netanyahu has so far been blocked from launching such a unilateral attack by a strong war-avoidance faction inside the Israeli defense and intelligence establishments, working in tandem with the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, who are even more committed to preventing another war in the Muslim world.

Beyond the renewed threat of an Israeli preventive strike, Mattis has reported to Washington that he is increasingly worried about an incident at sea, involving Iranian Revolutionary Guard ships, or a possible Iranian move to temporarily shut the Strait of Hormuz, and he has requested a significant increase in U.S. Naval firepower in the region. There are now two U.S. aircraft carrier groups positioned in the Persian Gulf/Arabian Sea area, and a third carrier group has been dispatched to the region four months ahead of schedule. The U.S. has also deployed a large number of underwater drones to bolster existing mine-sweeping capabilities. An additional squadron of Air Force F-22s have also been pre-positioned in the area.

While these deployments are intended as a deterrent against any actions by a pro-war faction inside the IRGC, the build-up also puts the region on a hair-trigger for military confrontation.

Militaries Try To Prevent War

Last week, Gen. Nikolai Makarov, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia and First Deputy Minister of Defense, was in Washington for three days of meetings, including with U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey. In a recent speech in Norfolk, Va., Dempsey had emphasized that the U.S. armed forces are adamantly opposed to any military attack on Syria, and are committed to further boosting of cooperation with Russia. The U.S. and Russia are deeply involved in joint efforts against ter-

rorism and narcotics trafficking, and the Russians are providing indispensable logistical support for the U.S./NATO mission in Afghanistan. As the U.S. military withdrawal begins this year, that Russian cooperation will be even more pivotal. And Russia and China will both be key to stability in Afghanistan and Central Asia once the U.S. forces have been withdrawn.

These military war-avoidance efforts are vital, but may not be sufficient. President Obama had made clear, following the assassination of Qaddafi, that he was prepared to move immediately ahead with military regime-change operations targeting both Syria and Iran. The efforts of the Joint Chiefs, the Russians, and military/intelligence circles in Israel and others, to prevent an outbreak of war have succeeded so far. The war party factions in the U.S., the U.K., and France have been further weakened by the onrushing financial and economic disintegration of the entire trans-Atlantic region.

Yet, the war danger has not been eliminated, and there are once again serious voices, like Generals Dempsey and Mattis, who are expressing grave concerns that the Guns of August may be fired. As a senior U.S. intelligence official recently commented to *EIR*, the war avoidance effort involves a thousand battles, and so far we have won them all. But all it takes is one loss and the war becomes unstoppable. The source warned that the combined impact of the new crippling sanctions on Iran, and evidence of a renewed factional battle at the top of the Iranian leadership over control of dwindling resources and capital, are wildcard factors that Washington has little control over.

The reality is that the Guns of August can be silenced if Obama is removed from office, by Constitutional means, before the start of the Democratic Convention on Sept. 3. So long as Obama is in power, the war party in London has a grip on the U.S. thermonuclear arsenal; that is a risk that is too grave to allow. American patriots have a limited capacity to effect the power struggle in Tehran, but they have the means to bring down Obama, on the basis of the myriad high crimes and misdemeanors that he has already committed.

A recent *Esquire* magazine article provided a detailed account of the premeditated, extra-judicial assassination of American citizens Anwar al-Awlaki and his 16-year-old son. Describing Obama as the "Lethal President," the article itself could form the basis for impeachment and war crimes prosecution at the Hague.