

Anglo-Saudi Hysteria Mounts Over Syria, Iran Diplomacy

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Oct. 20—After spending months lobbying United Nations member-states, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia last week rejected a coveted seat on the Security Council in protest over the failure of the world body to overthrow the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad and its support for the ongoing P5+1 negotiations with Iran. Last month, after President Obama expressed openness to negotiating a deal with newly elected President Hassan Rouhani in Iran, the Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Saud bin-Faisal, cancelled his own scheduled speech before the General Assembly, an unprecedented action.

The primary target of Saudi rage, however, is the United States. In the eyes of the Saudi royal family, Washington has committed a series of betrayals, starting with the ouster of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in January 2011. The Saudi royals had been assured in September by the Obama Administration that the President was going to order military strikes against Syria, in retaliation for the alleged Syrian Army chemical weapons attack on the Damascus suburb of Goutha on Aug. 21. Never mind that the President cancelled those orders under immense pressure from his own Pentagon, and opposition from an overwhelming majority of the American people, who want nothing to do with another war in the Muslim world, after a decade of conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The single biggest betrayal of the so-called strategic partnership between Washington and Riyadh is the re-

cently restarted P5+1 negotiations with Iran. For the Saudi leadership, Shi'ite Iran is the number one enemy and rival for dominance over the Islamic world and the Persian Gulf. With the backing of King Abdullah, Prince Bandar bin-Sultan, the head of the Saudi intelligence service and the director of the National Security Council, has been waging an overt terror war against Iranian allies throughout the region, from Syria to Lebanon to Iraq.

Over the past month, Bandar's role in financing the al-Qaeda-linked Sunni insurgent groups al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, has been widely exposed, including in the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, and *Los Angeles Times*. It is no secret that the hard-core jihadist groups fighting a two-front war inside Syria—against the Assad government and against more secular rebel factions such as the Free Syrian Army—are being armed and bankrolled from the Persian Gulf through covert channels run by Bandar.

Saudi Sabotage

On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session last month in New York City, Jeffrey Feltman, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, excoriated the Saudi Kingdom for sabotaging U.S. policy in the Middle East. In a private discussion with Lebanese and Palestinian delegates, he reportedly fulminated for 20 minutes against the Saudi sabotage of any new government in Lebanon that would include Hezbollah, and



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to abandon its chemical weapons program and sign the CW ban treaty. Inspectors from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have been on the ground in Syria for the past several weeks, dismantling the CW production sites, and taking control over the extensive CW stockpiles, which had been built up as a deterrent against Israel's arsenal of nuclear weapons.

The OPCW work has gone well, prompting even U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to praise President Assad's compliance. On the basis of the CW agreement, which averted U.S. military strikes in September,

Inspectors from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have been on the ground in Syria for the past several weeks (shown here at an undisclosed site Oct. 8); CW stockpiles had been built up as a deterrent against Israel's arsenal of nuclear weapons.

Saudi asymmetric warfare inside Iraq aimed at breaking up the country. In the eyes of Bandar and other leading Saudi officials, the 2003 U.S. intervention in Iraq led to the creation of a Shi'ite government that Riyadh views as a puppet of Iran.

According to a senior U.S. intelligence official, it is well-known that Bandar is directly financing al-Qaeda networks inside Iraq that have waged a terror war for months, using suicide bombs and truck bombs to kill more Iraqi civilians than at any time in years. The Saudi objective is to break up Iraq into three parts—a Shi'ite South, a Sunni North, and a Kurdish region in the north along the Turkish border. Over the Summer, the U.S. announced \$4 billion in arms sales to the Iraqi military, including counterinsurgency weapons systems to fight the Saudi-backed Sunni insurgency.

At the same time that the rift between sections of leading Washington institutions and Riyadh has reached unprecedented levels—going beyond the break that followed the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks—the same U.S. forces are working closely with Russia and others on the diplomatic front. This week, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced that the Geneva II conference, in the works for the past 18 months, will take place in late November. The breakthrough making this possible was the Russian-brokered deal in September to get the Assad government

Russia seized the opportunity—with U.S. support—to make another attempt at a ceasefire and peace agreement to end the two-and-a-half year conflict.

Bandar is doing everything possible to sabotage that effort. Voice of Russia reported recently that the Putin government has evidence that it was Bandar who orchestrated the Goutha CW attack as a “false flag” covert operation aimed at forcing a U.S. military intervention to overthrow Assad.

Potential for a Deal

The Oct. 15-16 Geneva working meeting of the P5+1 with Iran was another important event, indicating that, for the first time, there is a genuine possibility of a binding deal. The Iranian delegation presented a detailed, step-by-step proposal to end any concerns that Iran is pursuing a nuclear bomb, and end the Western sanctions. At the end of the talks, a joint statement was issued by Catherine Ashton, the European Union's chief representative and the delegated head of the P5+1, and Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, reporting significant progress. At the behest of Iran, all details of the proposal and the negotiations were to be kept secret, to assure continuing progress. Another session has been scheduled for early November, and Iran has proposed that it be at the ministerial level.

According to sources close to the talks, Russia, the

U.S. and Germany all delivered identical messages to the Iranians: Reach a deal now, because time is running out for a comprehensive settlement in everyone's interest. The P5+1 states share the concern that hardline factions inside Iran could lean on Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei to break off the negotiations, as they have successfully done in the past.

The greatest danger, however, does not come from Iran, although there are factions associated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps who are adamantly opposed to any deal that would foreclose development of a nuclear weapon. Nor does it come solely from the Saudi Kingdom, which views a P5+1-Iran deal as a grave threat to its position in the region. The British Crown and intelligence establishment are pursuing their own policy of what a senior U.S. intelligence official described as "managed chaos." British policy is to exploit and intensify the Sunni versus Shi'ite warfare inside the Islamic world to create the conditions for a new Hundred Years War across Eurasia.

The British Crown is committed to a policy of radical population reduction globally, and a prolonged conflict among the world's 1.4 billion Muslims is an active part of that agenda. Earlier this year, the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) published a paper titled "Return to East of Suez," which spelled out ambitious British plans to move back into the Persian Gulf as Washington pivots to Asia and the Pacific.

While the U.K.'s Cameron government will play the P5+1 game, the underlying British policy is to sabotage anything that could bring durable peace to the region. Blindness to the British game could prove deadly. It should be remembered that London forged a partnership with Riyadh under the Al-Yamamah arms-for-oil barter program, which created an enormous offshore slush fund to run joint covert operations. That Al-Yamamah deal was brokered back in 1985 by none other than Prince Bandar.

The British also have a powerful grip on the White House through the City of London/Wall Street control over the President himself. In April 2009, Lyndon LaRouche had warned that Obama was both a dangerous narcissist and a British tool, who would do everything in his power to destroy the United States. It took a powerful institutional intervention last month to get Obama to reverse his orders for military strikes against Syria, strikes that would have triggered a much bigger war,

leading potentially to a thermonuclear showdown between the United States and Russia. President Obama was boxed in to begrudging acceptance of the Russian initiative. The war danger was set back but was not eliminated altogether. This week Lyndon LaRouche stated that the only durable war avoidance is to impeach Obama.