

The Syrian No Fly Zone

and

Memories of the Yom Kippur War

It appears as though the concept of a Syrian No Fly Zone equivalent to the No Fly Zone in Libya may be launched in the near future.

Senior European sources said that Arab jet fighters, and possibly Turkish warplanes, backed by American logistic support will implement a no fly zone in Syria's skies, after the Arab League will issue a decision, under its Charter, calling for the protection of Syrian civilians.

The sources told Kuwait's al Rai daily that the no fly ban will include a ban on the movement of Syrian military vehicles, including tanks, personnel carriers and artillery, adding that this move would aim at curbing the movement of Assad forces, and cripple their ability to bomb cities. The European sources said the no fly ban might lead to the paralysis of the Syrian regime forces "in less than 24 hours."

Meanwhile, it is reported that the leadership of the Turkish General Staff informed all the concerned parties with the Syrian issue its rejection of the idea that the Turkish army would launch any invasion to the Syrian territory including the area adjacent to the Turkish border to establish a "buffer zone" to protect civilians fleeing the violence.

(<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/no-fly-zone-over-syria-imminent>)

According to Stratfor.com, the George H. W. Bush has left the Fifth Fleet Area of Responsibility (AOR) and is now in the Sixth Fleet AOR somewhere in the general vicinity of Syria. While it appears that this is a trial balloon floated through a Kuwaiti newspaper, it is undoubtedly meant to pressure Bashar Assad into leaving Syria.

At the same time Dimitri Medvedev has made some serious pronouncements regarding the missile shield that the US plans to install in Europe.

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia will deploy new missiles aimed at U.S. missile defense sites in Europe if Washington goes ahead with the planned shield despite Russia's concerns, President Dmitry Medvedev said Wednesday.

Russia will station missiles in its westernmost Kaliningrad region and other areas if Russia and NATO fail to reach a deal on the U.S.-led missile defense plans, he said in a tough statement that seemed to be aimed at rallying domestic support.

Russia considers the plans for missile shields in Europe, including in Romania and Poland, to be a threat to its nuclear forces, but the Obama administration insists they are meant to fend off a potential threat from Iran. (<http://news.yahoo.com/medvedev-russia-may-target-missile-defense-sites-123047622.html>)

Please read all of the articles cited for more important information.

Analysis. It is evident from the Russian moves, such as putting three of their naval vessels off Tartus, That Russia is serious about preventing the fall of the Assad regime in the same manner as Qaddafi was brought down. Syria has been a client state of the Soviet Union and now Russia for at least 60 years. The Russians are not about to let their only naval base in the Mediterranean go down without a fight.

This situation reminds me a lot of the end of the Yom Kippur war when Arik Sharon's armored columns were close to 20 miles from Damascus having just defeated the Egyptian Army on the Suez Canal. The Soviet Union was not about to let its last client state in the region be defeated for then all of Soviet client states would have been defeated. This would be a geopolitical disaster for the Soviet Union.

So the Soviets readied troops to be flown into Syria to act as a "trip wire" exactly as our forces on the DMZ in Korea do. If Israeli troops clashed with Soviet troops, the Soviets would retaliate destroying Israel. In response, the United States generated its strategic forces. We were quite literally staring World War Three in the face. We finally convinced the Israelis to stop and thermonuclear war was averted. I have personal knowledge of this as I was on a B-52 crew as a navigator during these events.

Beyond the argument over the missile shield, Medvedev is speaking in almost exactly the same manner as the leaders of the Soviet Union were in 1973. Medvedev faces two problems that have nagged Russia for a long time: invasions and geopolitics.

Russia has been invaded four times in the last 200 years: Napoleon in 1812, Germany during World War One, Germany during World War Two, and by the Allies in Siberia in 1919. It is part of the Russian psyche to be paranoid about invasions from Western Europe. That essentially why the Warsaw Pact was created. It was designed to exhaust an invader on territory other than Mother Russia. Now the Warsaw Pact is gone and the nations that constituted Russia's buffer zone are members, for the most part, of NATO. Russia has no buffer zone other than Beylorussia. Not a very big buffer.

This is why the Russians are paranoid about the missile defense system and why they are insisting on joint control of the missile shield. That is why Medvedev is again threatening that Russia will move Iskander missiles into the Kalinigrad enclave. Those missiles will be used to "destroy the command and control networks" that the missile defense system requires to function. This command and control system is also linked into the Israeli missile defense system.

Yet it is of critical importance to the anti Iran coalition that Syria be neutralized as an offensive force and logistics support base. Without neutralizing Syria, the Saudis plus Jordan will be required to defeat the Syrian Army while the Saudis with the Gulf States also defend the eastern oil provinces against Iranian and possibly Iraqi Shiite forces. This the Saudis and Jordanians will find very difficult to do as any use of Egyptian forces is tenuous at best due to the continuing riots in Tahrir Square and across Egypt.

The Arab League meets next week probably to make decisions on a No Fly zone. This is where things get serious. At its root this a religious war over the leadership of Islam. We are in it because of our defense of Israel and the requirement announced by President Bush during Desert Storm that there be a free flow of oil at market prices. The United States is arguably the only country with the ability to

keep open or reopen the Straits of Hormuz should Iran choose to close them.

Again, this brings us into possible direct conflict with Russia and possibly the People's Republic of China. Both countries have made it clear in the Security Council that they do not support a repeat of the Libyan adventure in Syria. Given the Russian's natural anxiety about invasion, it is, I believe, probable that we may be facing a fully generated Russian strategic force. I suspect that the PRC would heat up Korea to force us to spread out our forces in two widely separated theaters of conflict. They might even threaten Taiwan.