US Military Cargo Drop in Syria: A Time Bomb on War on Terror

Ibrahim Babatunde Anoba
The war in Syria has generated more heat than any other conflicts in recent times in terms of both diplomatic interests and global security threat alerts. Primarily in face of the global clampdown on terrorism and Islamic extremism, dictated by the U.S.-Russia political mind games in military and diplomatic linings, besides, the long-term effects on global War on Terror as most analysts percept the situation in Syria to be a defining episode in the War on Terror.

- Since 2011, the Syria’s civil war has led to loss of more than 250,000 lives with hundreds of thousands of women and children in casualties.
- More than 11 million had fled their homes and around 4 million of them are in foreign land.

The recent United States cargo air drop of ammunitions for anti-Islamic State forces, in Hassakeh, of around 50 tons of military supplies to ‘vetted’ Syrian rebel groups fighting the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in northern Syria has generated global criticism as the world is weary of another spill-over of military artilleries into extremists possessions just like the Libya experience.

During the Libya uprising, opposition forces were armed by the U.S. led coalition, only for an alarming quota of them to subsequently fall in wrong hands, especially some affiliates of the notorious Al-Qaeda network. A disturbing reality is that currently, rebel groups in Libya are reportedly using most of the weapons not recovered by the U.S. government in the battle for central control, a crisis claiming innocent lives daily as the post-Gadhafi Libya struggles. In another case, revelations has it that the spilled U.S. assisted military artilleries in Libya are parts of the military arsenals of terrorist groups across the Al-Qaeda network especially in Africa south of the Sahara, notably the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) linked Boko Haram.

What the world needs to understand at this point is that the role America and Russia plays in Syria will effectively determine the rigidity or otherwise of the global terror-network especially as it concerns Africa. With a handful of African governments battling insurgency and terrorism - notably the Boko Haram and Al-Shabab, the most the U.S. and its allies cannot let to happen in Syria is to indirectly arm terrorists, as weak intelligence and security infrastructures in Africa will struggle to contain possible spill-overs.

It was revealed in some sections of the international media that some sects across the extremist-network are pledging physical allegiance to the course of the ISIS, which is to create Islamic caliphate in the Middle-East with affiliations globally, a bothering stance the international community cannot afford to let to chance.

More bothering is the blind diplomatic face-off between Washington and Moscow that has moved to the Syrian war front as both the U.S. and Russia is flaring military capabilities in affirming superiority at the expense of sensibility. In making a case, first was a U.S. failed attempt to train ‘vetted’ militias as part of the America’s Train and Equip (T&E) exercise in
Syria, the action allegedly cost the U.S. around $40 million of an initial budget of $500 million, as it had camps in Turkey and Jordan. However, the heavy Russian bombardments claimed to target ISIS militias led to the fleeing of most of these trained rebels while others later revealed extremists, now with the Alawite-led Assad government. Second was Russia’s alleged bombardment of ISIS militias, an action the U.S. claimed was targeted at anti-government rebels in Syria as a response for the support of the U.S.-led coalition in Syria. Russia, as claimed by Moscow conducted around 53 heavy aerial assaults on ISIS positions, a claim the pentagon said was absurd with evidence showing Russia air strikes actually targeted the U.S.’s backed Sunni dominated opposition.

- Russia (aerial assaults), Iran & Lebanon’s Hezbollah (ground forces) -- Alawite-led Assad govt. against U.S., Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, France and the United Kingdom – Sunni dominated opposition.

The key point here is that the U.S. needs an urgent revisiting of its agenda in Syria, as the world cannot afford to experience another spill-over of military hardware into territories of already raging terror networks, the Pentagon claimed it vetted rebel leaders before it engaged, but what about the members?

It is a development many considers not assuring enough as these rebel groups recruit fighters almost every day, with most of them being cross-border loyalists and the possibility of extremist elements in their legion is almost certain since the Middle-East is very much culturally and geographically connected. In Syria, the U.S. is risking more that it can possibly manage.

Syria is the hottest place on earth and any military or diplomatic commitments must be thoroughly conceived as the composition of parties to the war takes sporadic evolvement with every development, hence, the need to adopt a safer strategy other than propping a dynamic set of radicals no one can assuredly vet. Despite the U.S.’s claim of having a clear plan on its course of action in Syria and in relation to the arms drops, there are still indications Russia might want to revisit its course in Syria from targeting ISIS to officially providing aerial supports for Basher Al-Assad’s Alawite front, an action that might reignite the Cold War with the U.S.

In consideration of the Syria situation, the world has much to lose if America’s intervention goes south. How the world responds will shape the survival of other states secondarily affected by the war. The United Nations’ diplomatic olive branch should wade in more compellingly than it had done before, with a comprehensive scheme to end the war of wars, as the slightest misplacements of choices in Syria will ultimately lead to more situations the world can ever envisage.