

**What is about to happen in Syria?** Suat Kiniklioglu, Today's Zaman 11 April 2012 These are days when one would like to have a crystal ball to look into in order to see what is going to happen in Syria. Would we see the demise of the Assad regime, or is it more likely that he and his cronies will be able to survive? Will the obstructions created by Russia and China suffice or merely delay the inevitable? Is the White House going to change its inactivity, or will it succumb to election politics in the US?

What seems to be happening right now is a flurry of diplomatic activity that bets on the success of the Annan plan, the results of which we should be able to see within a day or so. Annan has now appealed to Tehran to ask for help, while the Russians play a delicate diplomatic game to limit the damage inflicted on them by the Syrian crisis. Yet, the basics have not changed. Assad's regime continues to attack the opposition forces. Snipers, tanks and the Shabiha are doing overtime. Turkey is expecting the Annan plan to fail and for them to push for a new UN Security Council resolution, which seems unlikely to pass. As was stipulated in our Foreign Ministry statement on Tuesday, Syria is not honoring its commitments in accordance with the UN-Arab League envoy Kofi Annan's peace plan.

According to the plan, Syria was supposed to immediately cease troop movements, end the use of heavy weapons in population centers and begin the pullback of military concentrations in and around population centers by Tuesday morning. In other words, nothing new on the southern front. (...)

(...) It is clear Assad is not going to compromise or leave unless he sees a credible force ready to intervene against him. Turkey must be the leading force behind such an intervention. Ankara must continue to form a coalition of countries -- preferably with international legitimacy, but this is not necessarily a precondition. (...) The international community has a **responsibility to protect**

the people of Syria, whose regime is clearly not doing that. The UN General Assembly's overwhelming vote provides a clear political expression as to where a crushing majority of countries stand on Syria. The UN Security Council must step up. Most importantly the Obama administration needs to revise its policy on Syria and think beyond US election politics.

In the absence of a diplomatic breakthrough we should arm the opposition. (...) We cannot look away from this situation for too much longer. Our territory is being violated by Syrian security forces. The Syrian army fired at people who sought refuge in our territory. They have wounded 21 people -- including two Turkish citizens -- in the process. (...) I believe diplomatically what needed to be done has been done. Yet, the main issue -- the removal of the Assad regime and the transition to a normal democratic order there -- remains unresolved. Let us hope that Russia and China will understand that the Annan plan is a last chance for a diplomatic solution and lend their full support and exert due pressure on Mr. Assad. Otherwise, we will be entering a new phase, the parameters of which could turn out to be very discomfoting for them.

To read the full article, see [here](#)

.