

## **SAY NO TO US MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SYRIA**

It's happening again. Once again, we are being told that it's imperative that the U.S. employ military force to intervene with a horrendous situation in a foreign country, in this case Syria.

East Bay Citizens for Peace agrees wholeheartedly that the situation in Syria is horrific and heartbreaking. It's a human rights atrocity! We believe that the government of Bashar-Al Assad has been brutal in the treatment of the Syrian people. However, we also believe that any military intervention by the U.S. will fail to improve conditions for the Syrian people. In fact we believe that any military action we take will probably make things worse in Syria, as well as in the rest of the Middle East. Here are some of our primary concerns and objections:

We do not know with 100% certainty that it was Assad who ordered the sarin nerve gas attack. Remembering the lessons of Iraq and weapons of mass destruction, we ask: Why don't we wait for the UN report? In any case, violations of International Law (including the use of chemical weapons) should be brought to the Hague. Also, any military intervention we take in Syria will be our own violation of international law.

Yes, Assad is a cruel and inhumane dictator. But some of those opposing him are no less brutal. Do we know enough about Syria, its culture and tribal divisions to intervene with any surety about what we are doing? Who are the good guys among the opposition forces? We know, for example, that Al Qaeda has joined some of the rebel forces. The Civil War in Syria is at least in part a religious war. Syrian president Assad is an Alawite, part of Shia Islam. His opposition is primarily Sunni. The only thing we know with any certainty is that both the government and opposition forces will fight to the end. Our military intervention may well serve to give them a common enemy—namely the U.S. There will most likely be unintended consequences such as increased Al Qaeda recruitment and violence against American interests in the Middle East.

The Arab world looks on the U.S. with distrust. Attacking another Muslim country will only strengthen the enmity we already face. We will not be making any friends by our intervention, and we may, in fact, strengthen Assad's position. There also doesn't seem to be evidence to support the idea that the Syrian people would welcome an attack by the U.S.

Have we learned nothing from Iraq and Afghanistan? So many men and women lost their lives there. Can anyone say if anything positive was achieved by our actions? We do know that these wars left the United States with a huge debt and a weakened economy. There is no guarantee, no matter what Congressional restrictions are placed on U.S. military action in Syria, that our action will be limited in scope.

U.S. Military intervention in Syria may well create a larger war between Sunni and Shia populations in the Mideast. Sunni states such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UAE have indicated that they would aid United States efforts in Syria, but then the possibility exists that Shia dominated Iran may draw its own line in the sand. Last week the new Iranian President said that the Shia government of Iran would work with Russia to protect Syria. Military intervention by the U.S. could be the first step in creating a larger full blown war between increasingly belligerent Sunni and Shia factions throughout the Mideast.

The American public is not in favor of intervention. Most of us believe that we do not have the resources or economic means to “police” the world. We simply cannot afford it. We shouldn’t attack Syria or any other country unless our own country is in imminent danger.

Syria is in desperate trouble. The Syrian Civil War has left the country with close to two million refugees, half of whom are children under the age of eleven. Even a limited attack by the U.S. military will only make things worse, not better. We are all appalled by the photos coming from Syria. But Syria needs humanitarian aid, not a military strike. This is the moral high ground that we should be taking.

We need to do everything we can to find better, more intelligent, and reasoned diplomatic solutions. Hassan Rouhani, the new more moderate president of Iran, has indicated that he has a softer stance toward the West. Iran is historically concerned about the use of chemical weapons. Since Rouhani certainly understands the problems and possible repercussions of war, this situation might provide the opportunity to approach him, using diplomatic channels to avoid an almost certain disaster. This is something we should certainly try before we even begin to think of doing anything else. This is our opportunity to “Give Peace a Chance.”

Call our representatives: **SAY NO TO US MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SYRIA**

RI Senator Jack Reed 401-943-3100

RI Senator Sheldon Whitehouse 401-453-5294

RI Congressman David Cicilline 401-729-5600

MA Senator Elizabeth Warren 617-565-3170

MA Senator Edward Markey 617-565-8519

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