

# Veterans For Peace Statement on Syria

August 26, 2013

Veterans For Peace strongly opposes U.S. military intervention, whether direct or indirect, in the war that is currently raging in Syria.

U.S. military aid to rebels in Syria only deepens the suffering and increases the casualties among the Syrian people. It destabilizes the region and risks escalating the conflict into a regional war. It violates the U.N. Charter and international law.

There should be no U.S. military intervention in any form, including a so-called “no-fly zone,”

which would be a direct act of military aggression. Only the Syrian people can decide who should govern Syria.

Veterans For Peace calls for an escalation of diplomacy, not war. We call for a ceasefire from all combatants in Syria. We call for urgent diplomacy to stop the bloodshed and address the humanitarian crises in Syria and among Syrian refugees in neighboring countries.

## 11 Reasons Why the U.S. Must Not Attack Syria

Adapted from David Swanson's 10 Problems with the Latest Excuse for War

If you own a television or read a newspaper you've probably heard that we need another war because the Syrian government used chemical weapons.

**Here are 11 reasons why an attack by the U.S. on Syria is immoral and simply a bad idea.**

**1** War is not made legal by accusations. Current reasoning can't be found in the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the U.N. Charter, or the U.S. Constitution. It can, however, be found in U.S. war propaganda of the 2002 vintage when the Bush Administration attacked Iraq claiming Saddam Hussein had a connection to the September 11 attacks and possessed weapons of mass destruction. Of course the truth is that Iraq had no connection to September 11 and there were no weapons of mass destruction. What is the truth in Syria?

**2** The United States itself possesses and uses internationally condemned weapons, including white phosphorus, napalm, cluster bombs, and depleted uranium. Whether you praise these actions, don't think about them, or join us in condemning them,

they are not a legal or moral justification for any foreign nation to bomb us, or the U.S. to bomb Syria. Killing people to prevent those same people from being killed by the wrong kind of weapons is twisted logic that is clearly motivated by self-interests not altruism.

**3** Recently declassified CIA documents confirm that the U.S. knew about, and in one case helped Iraq with a chemical weapons attack against Iran in the 1980's. According to the documents obtained by Foreign Policy, the U.S. secretly had evidence of Iraqi chemical attacks in 1983. The evidence, FP writes, is “tantamount to an official American admission of complicity in some of the most gruesome chemical weapons attacks ever launched.” So now the U.S. claims it has the right to punish a nation for the same act it once ignored and even helped facilitate? The U.S. has no moral standing here.

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**4** An expanded war in Syria could become regional or global with uncontrollable consequences. Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Russia, China, the United States, the Gulf States, and the NATO States ... does this sound like the sort of conflict we want? Does it sound like a conflict anyone will survive? Why in the world risk such a thing?

**5** Creating a “no-fly zone” is not a matter of making an announcement, but of dropping bombs. It would involve bombing urban areas and unavoidably killing large numbers of people. This happened in Libya, and given the locations of the sites to be bombed it would happen on a much larger scale in Syria.

**6** Both sides in Syria have used horrible weapons and committed horrible atrocities. Surely even those who imagine people should be killed to prevent their deaths by different weapons can see the insanity of arming both sides to protect them from each other. Why is it not, then, just as insane to arm one side in a conflict that involves similar abuses by both?

**7** With the United States on the side of the opposition in Syria, the U.S. will be blamed for the opposition’s crimes. Most people in Western Asia hate al Qaeda and other terrorists. They are also coming to hate the United States and its drones, missiles, bases, night raids, lies, and hypocrisy. Imagine the levels of hatred that will be reached when al Qaeda and the United States team up to overthrow the government of Syria and create an Iraq or Afghanistan like tragedy in its place.

**8** A rebellion put into power by outside forces does not usually result in a stable government. In fact there is not yet on record a case of U.S. humanitarian war benefitting humanity and U.S. nation-building in the region actually building a nation. Why would Syria, which looks even less auspicious than most potential targets, be the exception to the rule?

**9** Does the U.S. government not remember the meaning of blowback or lessons learned from Afghanistan in the creation of al Qaeda? Just as we should have learned a lesson from the lies about WMD by now, our government should have learned the lesson of arming the enemy of the enemy long before this moment.

**10** The precedent of another lawless act by the United States, whether arming proxies or engaging directly, sets a dangerous example to the world and to those in Washington for whom Iran is next on the list

**11** A strong majority of Americans, despite all of the media’s efforts thus far, opposes arming the rebels or engaging directly. Instead, a plurality supports providing humanitarian aid.



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