COMPARING SYRIA AND RWANDA

800,000 Rwandans were methodically hunted down and murdered as the US, other nations, and the UN stood by. The slogans “Never Again” and “Vow to Protect” afterward gained worldwide favor. Yet now thousands are being killed in Syria, and President Obama is receiving widespread criticism for not intervening and attacking the Assad government. Are these cases comparable, so that careful comparison will explain whether or not intervention in Syria is appropriate? --Dick

No. 4 at end

Contents #5 Sept. 2, 2013
Sign Petition August 31, 2013
Dick, Non-Violent Options Missing from US Response
Kahf, Analysis of Syrian Revolution
Kahf, Syrian Political Prisoners
Frank Brodhead via HAW
Davies, Why the Civil War Has Worsened
PBS Frontline Program 2011-Present
Gibson, It's Oil
Hobson, Religious War
Pierce, Making Not Going to War

Contents #6 Sept. 7, 2013
Druding, Call the President
Mohja Kahf, Two Essays
   Pain from My Syria
   It's Still a Revolution

*International Crisis Group’s analysis of the potential U.S. strikes*

Moyers: Bacevich, US Failed Foreign Policy
Falk, Western Colonialism
Goodman, Phyllis Bennis
Druding, Against Intervention

Comments on #6

What a great set of articles on Syria! Just outstanding! I really hope the newsletter reaches A LOT of people. I see that Arkansas’ reps in Congress, with the exception of Cotton, are being deluged with calls/emails from their constituents decrying any plan to attack Syria. Thank goodness! Now those in DC need to listen to the public!

sam

**Contents #7**

Realities
Kahf and Bartkowski, History: From Civil Resistance to Armed Rebellion
Syrian Refugees and Displaced Persons
Lewis, Don't Forget US Arsenal of Chemical Weapons

Nonviolent Resistance to Violence, Attack, War Around the World
Syrian Nonviolence Movement
Jessica Corbett, Resistance Outside Syria
UN: Syria Signs Chemical Weapons Ban Treaty
Craggs: Malala and PM Gordon Brown to Raise Money for Syrian Children in Lebanon
Dick, Send Linemen not Missiles
RootsAction, Petition to US: Stop Sending Weapons
Diverse Reports Offered by Moyers & CO.

Phil Donohue (Moyers & Co.) Interviews Andrew Bacevich
Ralph Nader Opposes Attack
Kucinich, 10 Unproven Claims for War
Pres. Obama’s Address to Nation Sept. 10, 2013 Rationalizing War But Accepting Russia’s Negotiation
Chomsky, Russia Saved Obama
Chemical Weapons a False Flag?

Dr Maciej Bartkowski and Dr Mohja Kahf,
links to the two-part piece on the Syrian resistance published yesterday and today on openDemocracy:
- **Civil resistance and armed rebellion in Syria** (part I)
- **Aborting the Syrian revolution and four fatal beliefs** (part II)

In the article, we assess the role and impact of the Syrian nonviolent resistance when it lasted and show how the armed resistance jeopardized what civil resistance had achieved. We also address myths pertaining to the resort to arms by the Syrian opposition. The decision to engage Assad regime at its strongest - via arms - was based on the misplaced beliefs in the efficacy of armed protection and the inadequate knowledge of the effects of civil resistance.

**GOOGLE Search Sept. 21, 2013 Syrian Refugees and Displaced**

1. Syrian refugees top 2 million as thousands flee daily | Al Jazeera ...
   america.aljazeera.com/.../2013/.../syrian-refugee-numbersswellto2million...
   Sep 3, 2013 - The exodus is part of a larger displacement within Syria's borders, with ...Of the $1.1 billion that the U.N. refugee agency requested in 2013, it has ... Chatty said internally displaced persons are even more difficult to reach and ...

2. Six Million Displaced by War in Syria - In Focus - The Atlantic
Sep 9, 2013 - Jordanian chefs and Syrian refugee workers prepare food for distribution... Most of the displaced people in the tent camp rising near this village on the ... Syrian civilians flee the northern Syrian city of Aleppo on April 12, 2013.

3. Syria Regional Response
data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php

Took Many Requests / Flooding Protection Please wait a few seconds and try again.

4. UNHCR - Syrian Arab Republic
www.unhcr.org › ... › Middle East and North Africa › Middle East

2013 UNHCR country operations profile - Syrian Arab Republic ... half of unrest in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) has displaced thousands of people and had ... Faced with growing risks to their lives, many refugees and asylum-seekers have ...

5. PACE: Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons
assembly.coe.int/nw/Committees/as-mig/as-mig-main-EN.asp

Assistance to Syrian refugees: after Lebanon, PACE rapporteur continues visit to Turkey. 21/08/2013; Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons. img550 ...

6. Refugees and Displaced People - The New York Times
topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/.../r/refugees/index.html

Commentary and archival information about refugees and displaced people from The... 24, 2013. Tens of thousands of Syrian Kurds have fled to northern Iraq, ...

7. News for Syrian refugees and displaced persons 2013

1. First Person: Five Things I Learned in Syrian Refugee Camps
National Geographic - 1 day ago

At a summer camp for hundreds of Syrian refugee children, the mission.... It will also be decided by millions of refugees and displaced people.

8. Refugees of the Syrian civil war - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refugees_of_the_Syrian_civil_war

Also according to the United Nations, 6 million people inside Syrians needed help and... By the early months of 2013 the UNHCR announced that the number of .... The exact number of newly displaced Syrian refugees was not clear but was ...

forcechange.com/67093/help-syrian-refugees-and-displaced-persons/

Help Syrian Refugees and Displaced Persons ... By the end of 2013 more than 10 million people and four million children within Syria will be dependent on aid.
10. [Syria's internally displaced – 'The world has forgotten us' | Amnesty...](https://www.amnesty.org/.../syria-s-internally-displaced-world-has-forgot...)

20 June 2013 ... Syrians sheltering in a camp for internally displaced people at Atmeh, near the Turkish border. ... Much has been reported about the dire situation faced by refugees who fled across the border to neighbouring countries. But the ...


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**US Still Hasn't Destroyed Its Own Chemical Arsenal**

*Paul Lewis, Guardian UK*, RSN 9-12-13

Lewis reports: "If the Obama administration wants an example of the difficulties involved in destroying chemical weapons, it might reflect upon its own struggles to get rid of cold-war era chemical arsenals stockpiled in tightly controlled storage facilities in Kentucky and Colorado."


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**RESISTANCE, HOPES, SYRIAN NONVIOLENCE MOVEMENT**

**Syrian Nonviolence Movement** English Facebook page: [https://www.facebook.com/SyrainNonviolence](https://www.facebook.com/SyrainNonviolence)

Website: [http://www.alharak.org/](http://www.alharak.org/)


**Syrian Nonviolence Movement was established in April, 2011, by a group of Syrians who believe in nonviolent struggle and civil resistance as a principle and method in achieving social, cultural, and political change in Syrian society.**

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**PEACE NEWS**

Welcome to Peace News, the newspaper for the UK grassroots peace and justice movement. We seek to oppose all forms of violence, and to create positive change based on cooperation and responsibility. [See more](https://www.peacenews.co.uk/about)

"Peace News has compiled an exemplary record... its tasks have never been more critically important than they are today." Noam Chomsky

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Nonviolence in Syria

Feature by Jessica Corbett

PN talks to Syrian activists inside the outside the country
Despite the civil war and the threat of US military intervention, the nonviolent movements that began the Syrian uprising continue to struggle for social change – and for a ceasefire.

‘Nonviolent civil resistance started this’, Mohja Kahf of the Syrian Non Violence Movement (SNVM) told PN. Kahf, who was born in Syria but grew up in the United States and is now an associate professor of Comparative Literature and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Arkansas, went on: ‘What people don’t understand is that civil resistance isn’t just the Egyptian model of people filling up the square, but it’s also people building alternate networks, alternate economies… alternate media, alternate schools, the alternate hospital network.’

Solidarity activist Ewa Jasiewicz, who worked in Syria earlier this year, points to the value of the nonviolent movements helping to develop self-government in areas of Syria outside regime control: ‘It’s really important to support grassroots efforts, and self-determination and self-organisation on the ground, because that is the way to empower local Syrians who are already organising without a state, without a government, and creating their own form of democracy, and that’s really inspiring.’

No one will win
Mosab Khalaf, who grew up in countryside around Damascus, experienced the transition from nonviolence to armed struggle, and watched as many of his close friends took up arms. When nearly 90 per cent of the resistance in his home region became armed, he decided to leave for the city of Damascus, where he could continue his nonviolent activism. However, his decision to pursue unarmed resistance caused some rifts with his friends.
'I tried so hard to tell my friends to be with me, but they tried so hard to make me be with them. They believe in the armed way. They believe that they can win this war,' he told PN. 'No one will win this war.'

Khalaf is currently based in Damascus, working with an organisation called ‘Building the Syrian State’ (BSS), co-founded in September 2011 by Rim Turkmani, a Syrian-born astrophysicist at Imperial College in London.

"The Syrian people don't want this situation. The Syrian people want a political solution, a nonviolent solution."

BSS, which has a media centre and organises civilian activities like leadership workshops, is committed to nonviolent struggle and opposes foreign intervention. The group has allowed Khalaf to ‘continue my work, to reach my target from the beginning of the revolution, in a good way, in a more effective way, in a more political field.’.

'I love my home, my country, because I know that there’s no place in the whole world where I would be comfortable in and welcome in except this place', Khalaf said. He sees a place for nations like Russia, Britain and the US in resolving the conflict – though not in the form of supplying arms or conducting air strikes. ‘They can stop the fighting,’ Khalaf said. ‘Take us to Geneva [where a second round of peace talks between the Assad regime and the opposition may take place], to a political conversation, to the political field. Stop this war.’

**Unarmed revolution**

Through his involvement with the BSS, Khalaf hopes to inform people in other nations: ‘to show the world that there are people from Syria who don’t accept this way – don’t accept this war – people who are not carrying any weapons, nonviolent people. Not all the protests, not all the revolution is armed.’

**Mohja Kahf’s** hope is that the entire grassroots peace movement will mobilise in the US and offer support to the Syrian grassroots movements in rebuilding their country and creating their own democracy. She recently developed a video project calling for the release of activists imprisoned in Syria, which has been endorsed by 18 Syrian groups and the Fellowship of Reconciliation US.

Amid the armed revolutionary efforts, grassroots activists within and outside Syria continue to find new ways to share information.

Activist Omar Al Assil recently worked with fellow members of the SNVM to create an interactive map of all the revolutionary actions taking place across Syria. The map uses an algorithm to display the relationships between the actions.

Al Assil told Amnesty International UK that it was created mainly ‘to motivate people, and the other aim is to document all these activities so interested people can have access to it easily.’

Even as grassroots groups continue their nonviolent pursuits, there is conversation among everyone from global political leaders to refugees and revolutionists about other nations getting involved in the conflict.
'They of course have a role. It’s not a choice for us because they are kind of controlling all this war,' Khalaf said. ‘Russia, for example, controlling the regime; America is controlling the protests and other militias.’

But with all the armed battles in Syria, many who are in Syria don’t see room for discussion until the fighting stops. ‘How can I communicate with [an] armed person?’ Khalaf wondered. ‘It’s not logical. If you are with the regime, I cannot talk to you. Maybe I can understand you. Maybe you understand me, but when [there is] armed resistance, there’s no talking anymore. I can’t talk with an armed person.’

While activists and Syrians have varied opinions about international intervention, most agree that the key actors in the UN security council can do some good – though not in the form of military strikes.

‘Friends of mine in Syria say they are looking for any kind of solution. They’re looking for a diplomatic solution,’ Jasiewicz said. ‘They don’t want bombardment; they don’t want war; but they also want the Assad regime to stop shelling them and killing them and their communities.

‘The moment you start to bring in armed intervention in the form of bombardment, in the form of a war, you immediately create the conditions for much more escalated levels of violence’.

Khalaf echoed those sentiments: ‘The Syrian people don’t want this situation. The Syrian people want a political solution, a nonviolent solution.’

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The Syrian Non-Violence Movement

The SNVM was formed by young Syrians in November 2011.

On their website, they say: ‘We believe that non-violence is a complete reform process and our work is not to achieve interim goals but rather is a continuous movement to change the society. It won’t reach its ends by toppling a regime or a president but by reaching a critical mass in the Syrian society that acknowledges the need for change and its means, and contributes in moving the society towards a new reality of consciousness, freedom and pluralism.

‘We stick to the non-violence principles in our thoughts and execution and we believe in the necessity to shoulder the civic and historic responsibility of the reality of injustice in the society, and in pushing towards making the human being an active, and not reactive, engine of change.

‘We do not have any political aspirations and we do not pretend to represent the Syrian people.

‘We are not part [of] and we do not support any activity based on foreign intervention.’

More info:
The Syria Nonviolence Map: [www.tinyurl.com/peacenews496](www.tinyurl.com/peacenews496)
Sign the petition to free nonviolent political prisoners being held by the Syrian government here: [www.tinyurl.com/peacenews499](www.tinyurl.com/peacenews499)
Ewa Jasiewicz is helping to raise £2,100 for an alternative communications system (a satellite mast that can provide internet and local Skype-telephone-access) in the north-eastern Syrian town of Ma’arrat al-Numan, being organised by local civil society group Basmet Amal that she visited this summer: [www.tinyurl.com/peacenews495](www.tinyurl.com/peacenews495)

Jessica Corbett is a US student journalist working in London with PN.

- Login or register to pos

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**United Nations**

**UN affirms Syria has signed chemical-weapons ban treaty**

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon confirms that Syria has signed the 1992 international treaty banning use of chemical weapons. Meanwhile, Lakhdar Brahimi, UN special envoy for Syria, is meeting jointly with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov today in Geneva about restarting Syrian peace talks. [International Business](http://www.bbc.com/), [Times](http://www.times.co.uk/) (9/13), [Reuters](http://www.reuters.com/) (9/13)

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**About UN Wire**

*UN Wire* is a free service sponsored by the [United Nations Foundation](http://www.unfoundation.org) which is dedicated to supporting the United Nations' efforts to address the most pressing humanitarian, socioeconomic and environmental challenges facing the world today.

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**Malala Raising $500 Million For Syrian Refugees**

[The Huffington Post](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/) | By Ryan Craggs | Posted: 09/12/2013 5:12 pm EDT | Updated: 09/12/2013 8:32 pm EDT
After being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, 16-year-old Malala Yousafzai is taking up another ambitious challenge: Educating the massive influx of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon.

Teaming with former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and rights organization "A World at School," the activist will work to raise $500 million over the next three years to provide education to the 300,000 Syrian school-age children living in Lebanon. According to Time, Lebanon estimates nearly 550,000 school-aged Syrian children will be in the country by the end of the year, outnumbering Lebanon's own 300,000 school-aged children.

To raise awareness for the program, Malala spoke via Skype with two refugees, Zahra and Om Koltoum Katou, who have been living in Lebanon for the last year since being forced from their home in Aleppo. The young refugees went six months without attending school, but are now enrolled in catch-up classes funded by UNICEF.

"I totally support you. You are very brave," Malala told the girls. "I believe that you will get your education, that you will go to school – and that no one can stop you."

According to a recent UNICEF report, nearly two million Syrian children have dropped out of school in the last year, amounting to almost 40 percent of all students between the first and ninth grades. Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in March 2011, more than 700,000 Syrians have fled to Lebanon, constituting nearly 20 percent of the country's population, NBC notes.

Altogether, nearly two million people have fled Syria since the beginning of the conflict. “For a country that was close to achieving universal primary education before the conflict started, the numbers are staggering” said Maria Calivis, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa.
In August, Malala won the International Children's Peace Prize for her dedication to promoting education. The young Pakistani activist rose to worldwide prominence after surviving an assassination attempt by the Taliban in 2012. She now lives and attends school in England.
We helped prevent U.S. missile strikes on Syria. Public pressure made Congress turn against an attack, opening the door to diplomacy.
Now let’s stop the flow of “lethal aid” to Syria.

“The CIA has begun delivering weapons to rebels in Syria,” the Washington Post reported last week. Those shipments have combined with “separate deliveries by the State Department of vehicles and other gear — a flow of material that marks a major escalation of the U.S. role in Syria’s civil war.” [1]

Tell your senators, representative and President Obama that you want this “lethal aid” to stop.

The United States has now joined with allies Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar — directly supplying weaponry to an array of fighters against the Syrian government. That aid supplements the CIA's longtime role in helping several governments to airlift weapons and other military equipment to rebel forces in Syria. [2]

The last thing Syria needs is more weapons.

Both sides are guilty of horrendous human rights abuses. [3]

Please click here to make clear that you don’t want the United States to help sustain the killing in Syria.

Recent days have shown that diplomacy is possible to avert even more catastrophic events in Syria. Contrary to scoffers, Russia and the United States could help to quash the war flames instead of fueling them with more gasoline.

By halting its own shipments of weapons into Syria and exerting pressure on its allies to do the same, the United States could induce Russia and its ally Iran to stop supplying the Syrian government with weapons — and to work for a ceasefire.

Click here to tell members of the Senate and House as well as the President that the United States should be working for peace — not fueling war — in Syria.

At this pivotal time, we can make a real difference!

To boost our impact, please forward this email to your friends.

-- The RootsAction.org team

P.S. RootsAction is an independent online force endorsed by Jim Hightower, Barbara Ehrenreich, Cornel West, Daniel Ellsberg, Glenn Greenwald, Naomi Klein, Bill Fletcher Jr., Laura Flanders, former U.S. Senator James Abourezk, Coleen Rowley, Frances Fox Piven, and many others.
SEND LINEMEN, CARPENTERS, NURSES, DOCTORS, MEDICINES TO SYRIA, NOT BOMBS.  Dick Bennett

On September 10, 2013, the ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE editorialized for empathy—for the people of rural Guatemala who lack electricity. The editorial focused mainly on the laudable Arkansas electric linemen who are dedicating their time to help the people of Huehuetenango, Guatemala. “Heroes are always welcome in the news.” Usually “heroes” for this newspaper refers to “the troops” in all the brutal (and brutalizing) and illegal wars the newspaper has supported (in Latin America alone: Guatemala, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Chile; see William Blum).

But here, at last, needs of the people arrest their attention. These heroes come to help the villagers. They are not the US troops around the world applying the armed force of the superpower, but generous citizens helping the needy around the world. And the editorialist hopes to support them in their noble and lonely tasks by quoting Jimmy Webb’s song “Wichita Lineman” made famous by Arkansan Glen Campbell.

Let us praise the newspaper for this rare glimpse of nonviolent, international compassion, and hold it to the values of protection, rescue, caring, the values of the Good Samaritan, which it has just shown it can understand. In contrast, it has supported invasion and intervention after invasion and intervention—over forty since the end of WWII, and none of them constitutional, just, or necessary.

Soon I hope to report on the ADG’s reporting on Syria. What’s their position on Syria? How thorough have they covered the rebellion and civil war? What was it on Libya?

“The Arkansas Lineman.” ADG (September 10, 2013).

MOYERS & CO.

- Drought Helped Spark Syria’s Civil War — Is it One of Many Climate Wars to Come?
- Book Excerpt: ‘Breach of Trust’ by Andrew Bacevich
- The Irreconcilable Paradox of Calls to Strike Syria
- Trying to Make Sense of Syria? Here’s Our Essential Reader

FULL EPISODE
- What Are We Doing in Syria?
  Andrew Bacevich on Taking Action in Syria
  Deborah Amos on Syria’s Refugee Crisis

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- End Well, Push for War Anyway
- Foreign Policy
- Military Mindset

Andrew Bacevich on Taking Action in Syria
September 6, 2013

The military historian and Vietnam veteran talks with guest host Phil Donahue about the questions that need answers before the U.S. intervenes in Syria. Is a military response justified and if we take action, where does it stop?
Andrew Bacevich on Taking Action in Syria

September 6, 2013

With the probability of American intervention, Syria is everywhere in the news. Phil Donahue, filling in for Bill Moyers, speaks with historian and Vietnam veteran Andrew Bacevich about America’s role in the world and the possible repercussions of our actions in the Middle East. Given what we know about what’s going on in Syria, is a U.S. response justified? And if we take action, where and when does it stop? Is a military response justified and if we take action, where does it stop?

“If you think back to 1980,” Bacevich tells Donahue, “and just sort of tick off the number of military enterprises that we have been engaged in that part of the world, large and small, you know, Beirut, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia — and on and on, and ask yourself, ‘What have we got done? What have we achieved? Is the region becoming more stable? Is it becoming more Democratic? Are we enhancing America’s standing in the eyes of the people of the Islamic world?’ ‘The answers are, ‘No, no, and no.’ So why, Mr. President, do you think that initiating yet another war in this protracted enterprise is going to produce a different outcome?’”

A graduate of West Point and Vietnam veteran, Andrew Bacevich served for 23 years in the military before becoming a professor at Boston University. His new book, Breach of Trust: How Americans Failed Their Soldiers and Their Country, asks whether our reliance on a professional military rather than a citizen’s army has lured us into a morass of endless war — a trap that threatens not only our global reputation but democracy itself.


More about Phil Donahue »
More about Andrew Bacevich »

Ralph Nader | Stopping Barry O'Bomber's Rush to War

Ralph Nader, Reader Supported News, Sept. 8, 2013

Nader writes: "Now, as if having learned nothing from the devastating and costly aftermaths of the military invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, you're beating the combustible drums to attack Syria."
Stopping Barry O'Bomber's Rush to War

By Ralph Nader, Reader Supported News
08 September 13

Dear President Obama:

Little did your school boy chums in Hawaii, watching you race up and down the basketball court, know how prescient they were when they nicknamed you "Barry O'Bomber."

Little did your fellow Harvard Law Review editors, who elected you to lead that venerable journal, ever imagine that you could be a president who chronically violates the Constitution, federal statutes,
international treaties and the separation of power at depths equal to or beyond the George W. Bush regime.

Nor would many of the voters who elected you in 2008 have conceived that your foreign policy would rely so much on brute military force at the expense of systemically waging peace. Certainly, voters who knew your background as a child of third world countries, a community organizer, a scholar of constitutional law and a critic of the Bush/Cheney years, never would have expected you to favor the giant warfare state so pleasing to the military industrial complex.

Now, as if having learned nothing from the devastating and costly aftermaths of the military invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, you're beating the combustible drums to attack Syria -- a country that is no threat to the U.S. and is embroiled in complex civil wars under a brutal regime.

This time, however, you may have pushed for too many acts of war. Public opinion and sizable numbers of members of both parties in Congress are opposed. These lawmakers oppose bombing Syria in spite of your corralling the cowardly leaders of both parties in the Congress.

Thus far, your chief achievement on the Syrian front has been support for your position from al-Qaeda affiliates fighting in Syria, the pro-Israeli government lobby, AIPAC, your chief nemesis in Congress, House Speaker John Boehner, and Dick Cheney. This is quite a gathering and a telling commentary on your ecumenical talents. Assuming the veracity of your declarations regarding the regime's resort to chemical warfare (first introduced into the Middle East by Winston Churchill's Royal Air Force's plastering of Iraqi tribesmen in the nineteen twenties), your motley support group is oblivious to the uncontrollable consequences that might stem from bombing Syria. One domestic consequence may be that Speaker Boehner expects to exact concessions from you on domestic issues before Congress in return for giving you such high visibility bipartisan cover.

Your argument for shelling Syria is to maintain "international credibility" in drawing that "red line" regardless, it seems, of the loss of innocent Syrian civilian life, causalities to our foreign service and armed forces in that wider region, and retaliation against the fearful Christian population in Syria (one in seven Syrians are Christian). But the more fundamental credibilities are to our Constitution, to the neglected necessities of the American people, and to the red line of observing international law and the UN Charter (which prohibit unilateral bombing in this situation).

There is another burgeoning cost -- that of the militarization of the State Department whose original charter invests it with the responsibility of diplomacy. Instead, Mr. Obama you have shaped the State Department into a belligerent "force projector" first under Generalissima Clinton and now under Generalissimo Kerry. The sidelined foreign service officers, who have knowledge and conflict avoidance experience, are left with reinforced fortress-like embassies as befits our Empire reputation abroad.

Secretary John Kerry descended to gibberish when, under questioning this week by a House Committee member, he asserted that your proposed attack was "not war" because there would be "no boots on the ground." In Kerry's view, bombing a country with missiles and air force bombers is not an act of war.

It is instructive to note how government autocracy feeds on itself. Start with unjustified government secrecy garnished by the words "national security." That leads to secret laws, secret evidence, secret courts,
secret prisons, secret prisoners, secret relationships with selected members of Congress, denial of standing for any citizen to file suit, secret drone strikes, secret incursions into other nations and all this directed by a president who alone decides when to be secret prosecutor, judge, jury and executioner. What a Republic, what a democracy, what a passive people we have become!

Voices of reason and experience have urged the proper path away from the metastasizing war that is plaguing Syria. As proposed by former President, Jimmy Carter, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and other seasoned diplomats and retired military, vigorous leadership by you is needed for an international peace conference with all parties at the table, including the countries supplying weapons to the various adversaries in Syria.

Mr. Obama, you may benefit from reading the writings of Coleman McCarthy, a leading advocate of peace studies in our schools and universities. He gives numerous examples of how waging peace avoided war and civil strife over the past 100 years.

Crowding out attention to America's serious domestic problems by yet another military adventure (opposed by many military officials), yet another attack on another small, non-threatening Muslim country by the powerful Christian nation (as many Muslims see it) is aggression camouflaging sheer madness.

Please, before you recklessly flout Congress, absorb the wisdom of the World Peace Foundation's Alex de Waal and Bridget Conley-Zilkic. Writing in the New York Times, they strongly condemn the use of nerve gas in Syria, brand the perpetrators as war criminals to be tried by an international war crimes tribunal and then declare:

"But it is folly to think that airstrikes can be limited: they are ill-conceived as punishment, fail to protect civilians and, most important, hinder peacemaking.... Punishment, protection and peace must be joined... An American assault on Syria would be an act of desperation with incalculable consequences. To borrow once more from Sir William Harcourt [the British parliamentarian who argued against British intervention in our Civil War (which cost 750,000 American lives)]: 'We are asked to go we know not whither, in order to do we know not what."

If and when the people and Congress turn you down this month, there will be one silver lining. Only a Right/Left coalition can stop this warring. Such convergence is strengthening monthly in the House of Representatives to stop future war crimes and the injurious blowback against America of the wrecksages from Empire.

History teaches that Empires always devour themselves.

Sincerely,  Ralph Nader

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Top 10 Unproven Claims for War Against Syria
By Dennis Kucinich, Reader Supported News
05 September 13
In the lead-up to the Iraq War, I researched, wrote and circulated a document to members of Congress which explored unanswered questions and refuted President Bush's claim for a cause for war. The document detailed how there was no proof Iraq was connected to 9/11 or tied to al Qaeda's role in 9/11,
that Iraq neither had WMDs nor was it a threat to the U.S., lacking intention and capability to attack. Unfortunately, not enough members of Congress performed due diligence before they approved the war.

Here are some key questions which President Obama has yet to answer in the call for congressional approval for war against Syria. This article is a call for independent thinking and congressional oversight, which rises above partisan considerations.

The questions the Obama administration needs to answer before Congress can even consider voting on Syria:

**Claim #1. The administration claims a chemical weapon was used.**
The UN inspectors are still completing their independent evaluation.

Who provided the physiological samples of sarin gas on which your evaluation is based? Were any other non-weaponized chemical agents discovered or sampled?

Who from the United States was responsible for the chain of custody?

Where was the laboratory analysis conducted?

Were U.S. officials present during the analysis of the samples? Does your sample show military grade or lower grade sarin gas?

Can you verify that your sample matches the exact composition of the alleged Syrian government composition?

*Further reading: Brown Moses blog; McClatchy News report; Global Research report.*

**Claim #2: The administration claims the opposition has not used chemical weapons.**
Which opposition?

Are you speaking of a specific group, or all groups working in Syria to overthrow President Assad and his government?

Has your administration independently and categorically dismissed the reports of rebel use of chemical weapons which have come from such disparate sources as Russia, the United Nations, and the Turkish state newspaper?

Have you investigated the rumors that the Saudis may have supplied the rebels with chemicals that could be weaponized?

Has the administration considered the ramifications of inadvertently supporting al Qaeda-affiliated Syrian rebels?
Was any intelligence received in the last year by the U.S. government indicating that sarin gas was brought into Syria by rebel factions, with or without the help of a foreign government or intelligence agents?

*Further reading:* [Global Research report](#); [Wall Street Journal article](#); [Reuters story](#); [Zaman story](#) (in Turkish – see Google translate from Turkish to English); [Atlantic Sentinel story](#); [AP story](#)

**Claim #3: The administration claims chemical weapons were used because the regime's conventional weapons were insufficient**

Who is responsible for the conjecture that the reason chemical weapons were used against the Damascus suburbs is that Assad's conventional weapons were insufficient to secure "large portions of Damascus"?

**Claim #4: The administration claims to have intelligence relating to the mixing of chemical weapons by regime elements**

Who saw the chemical weapons being mixed from August 18th on?

Was any warning afforded to the Syria opposition and if not, why not?

If, on August 21st a "regime element" was preparing for a chemical weapons attack, has an assessment been made which could definitively determine whether such preparation (using gas masks) was for purpose of defense, and not offense?

*Further reading:* [McClatchy report](#); [Brown Moses blog](#)

**Claim #5: The administration claims intelligence that Assad's brother ordered the attack**

What is the type of and source of intelligence which alleges that Assad's brother personally ordered the attack?

Who made the determination that Assad's brother ordered the attack, based on which intelligence, from what source?

*Further reading:* [here](#)

**Claim #6: The administration claims poison gas was released in a rocket attack**

Who was tracking the rocket and the artillery attack which preceded the poison gas release?

Did these events occur simultaneously or consecutively?

Could these events, the rocket launches and the release of poison gas, have been conflated?

Based upon the evidence, is it possible that a rocket attack by the Syrian government was aimed at rebels stationed among civilians and a chemical weapons attack was launched by rebels against the civilian population an hour and a half later?

Is it possible that chemical weapons were released by the rebels -- unintentionally?
Explain the 90-minute time interval between the rocket launch and chemical weapon attacks.

Has forensic evidence been gathered at the scene of the attack which would confirm the use of rockets to deliver the gas?

If there was a rocket launch would you supply evidence of wounds from the rockets impact and explosion?

What is the source of the government's analysis?

If the rockets were being tracked via "geospatial intelligence," what were the geospatial coordinates of the launching sites and termination locations?

Further reading: FAIR.org report
Claim #7: The administration claims 1,429 people died in the attack
Secretary Kerry claimed 1,429 deaths, including 426 children. From whom did that number first originate?

Further reading: McClatchy report
Claim #8: The administration has made repeated references to videos and photos of the attack as a basis for military action against Syria
When and where were the videos taken of the aftermath of the poison gas attack?

Further reading: FAIR.org report
Claim #9: The administration claims a key intercept proves the Assad regime's complicity in the chemical weapons attack
Will you release the original transcripts in the language in which it was recorded as well as the translations relied upon to determine the nature of the conversation allegedly intercepted?

What is the source of this transcript? What was the exact time of the intercept? Was it a U.S. intercept or supplied from a non-U.S. source?

Have you determined the transcripts' authenticity? Have you considered that the transcripts could have been doctored or fake?

Was the "senior official," whose communications were intercepted, a member of Assad's government?

How was he "familiar" with the offensive? Through a surprised acknowledgement that such an attack had taken place? Or through actual coordination of said attack? Release the transcripts!

Was he an intelligence asset of the U.S., or our allies? In what manner had he "confirmed" chemical weapons were used by the regime?
Who made the assessment that his intercepted communications were a confirmation of the use of chemical weapons by the regime on August 21st?

What is the source of information that the Syrian chemical weapons personnel were "directed to cease operations"?

Is this the same source who witnessed regime officials mixing the chemicals?

Does the transcript indicate whether the operations they were "directed to cease" were related to ceasing conventional or chemical attacks?

Will you release the transcripts and identify sources of this claim?

Do you have transcripts, eyewitness accounts or electronic intercepts of communications between Syrian commanders or other regime officials which link the CW attack directly to President Assad?

Who are the intelligence officials who made the assessment -- are they U.S. intelligence officials or did the initial analysis come from a non-U.S. source?

Further reading: F AIR.org report and AP story; Washington Post editorial

Claim #10: The administration claims that sustained shelling occurred after the chemical weapons attack in order to cover up the traces of the attack

Please release all intelligence and military assessments as to the reason for the sustained shelling, which is reported to have occurred after the chemical weapons attack.

Who made the determination that was this intended to cover up a chemical weapon attack? Or was it to counterattack those who released chemicals?

How does shelling make the residue of sarin gas disappear?

Further reading: here

The American people have a right to a full release and vetting of all facts before their elected representatives are asked to make a decision of great consequence for America, Syria and the world. Congress must be provided answers prior to the vote, in open hearings, not in closed sessions where information can be manipulated in the service of war. We've been there before. It's called Iraq.

PRESIDENT OBAMA
Good evening --
I just addressed the nation about the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Over the past two years, what began as a series of peaceful protests against the repressive regime of Bashar al-Assad has turned into a brutal civil war in Syria. Over 100,000 people have been killed.

In that time, we have worked with friends and allies to provide humanitarian support for the Syrian people, to help the moderate opposition within Syria, and to shape a political settlement. But we have resisted calls for military action because we cannot resolve someone else's civil war through force.

The situation profoundly changed in the early hours of August 21, when more than 1,000 Syrians -- including hundreds of children -- were killed by chemical weapons launched by the Assad government.

What happened to those people -- to those children -- is not only a violation of international law -- it's also a danger to our security. Here's why:

If we fail to act, the Assad regime will see no reason to stop using chemical weapons. As the ban against these deadly weapons erodes, other tyrants and authoritarian regimes will have no reason to think twice about acquiring poison gases and using them. Over time, our troops could face the prospect of chemical warfare on the battlefield. It could be easier for terrorist organizations to obtain these weapons and use them to attack civilians. If fighting spills beyond Syria's borders, these weapons could threaten our allies in the region.

So after careful deliberation, I determined that it is in the national security interests of the United States to respond to the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons through a targeted military strike. The purpose of this strike would be to deter Assad from using chemical weapons, to degrade his regime's ability to use them, and make clear to the world that we will not tolerate their use.

Though I possess the authority to order these strikes, in the absence of a direct threat to our security I believe that Congress should consider my decision to act. Our democracy is stronger when the President acts with the support of Congress -- and when Americans stand together as one people.

Over the last few days, as this debate unfolds, we've already begun to see signs that the credible threat of U.S. military action may produce a diplomatic breakthrough. The Russian government has indicated a willingness to join with the international community in pushing Assad to give up his chemical weapons and the Assad regime has now admitted that it has these weapons, and even said they'd join the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits their use.

It's too early to tell whether this offer will succeed, and any agreement must verify that the Assad regime keeps its commitments. But this initiative has the potential to remove the threat of chemical weapons without the use of force.

That's why I've asked the leaders of Congress to postpone a vote to authorize the use of force while we pursue this diplomatic path. I'm sending Secretary of State John Kerry to meet his Russian counterpart on Thursday, and I will continue my own discussions with President Putin. At the same time, we'll work with two of our closest allies -- France and the United
Kingdom -- to put forward a resolution at the U.N. Security Council requiring Assad to give up his chemical weapons, and to ultimately destroy them under international control.

Meanwhile, I've ordered our military to maintain their current posture to keep the pressure on Assad, and to be in a position to respond if diplomacy fails. And tonight, I give thanks again to our military and their families for their incredible strength and sacrifices.

As we continue this debate -- in Washington, and across the country -- I need your help to make sure that everyone understands the factors at play.

Please share this message with others to make sure they know where I stand, and how they can stay up to date on this situation. Anyone can find the latest information about the situation in Syria, including video of tonight's address, here:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/foreign-policy/syria

Thank you,

President Barack Obama

[This predictable speech exhibits another president committed to armed force rather than diplomacy and negotiation, but this time wriggling to escape worldwide disapprobation. What seems unpredictable and even astonishing is that the similar warrior President Putin was the agency of Obama's sudden switch to diplomacy. The decades of "Cold War" mirror-image US/SU subversion of United Nations authority continues, but at least this time the result will be the decrease rather than increase of WMD. See Chomsky following. –Dick]

12 September 13 AM

Reader Supported News

Noam Chomsky: Russian Plan Godsend for Obama

Noam Chomsky: Russian Plan Godsend for Obama

Democracy Now! RSN 9-12-13
Excerpt: "'The Russian plan is a godsend for Obama,' Chomsky says. 'It saves him from what would look like a very serious defeat. He has not been able to obtain virtually any international support, and it looked as though Congress wasn't going to support it either ...'"

READ MORE http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/266-32/19367-noam-chomsky-russian-plan-godsend-for-obama

http://www.globalresearch.ca/how-the-syrian-chemical-weapons-videos-were-staged/5350471 from Bo Long Sept. 22, 2013

How the Syrian Chemical Weapons Videos Were Staged

In the wake of the Syrian chemical weapons attack, shocking footage of the victims of that attack were widely circulated in an effort to raise the ire of the public and spur support for military intervention.

Now, a new report on that footage finds troubling inconsistencies and manipulation with the
video that calls the official narrative of the attack and its victims into question.

This is the GRTV Backgrounder on Global Research TV.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=EzLVfdrQRsY

Earlier this week, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon submitted the findings of the UN chemical weapons inspection team dispatched to Syria last month to gather evidence on the August 21st chemical weapons attack in Ghouta.

The report has been used as justification for the US and UK’s allegations that the attack originated from the Syrian government, but it does not in fact reach this conclusion. The inspection team’s mandate was limited to determining if an attack took place, not where it originated from, limiting their findings to a simple statement of fact:

“On the basis of the evidence obtained during our investigation of the Ghouta incident, the conclusion is that, on 21st August 2013, chemical weapons have been used in the ongoing conflict between the parties in the Syrian Arab Republic, also against civilians, including children, on a relatively large scale.”

The determination of where the attacks originated from is of course the key issue geopolitically speaking. If the attack originated with the Syrian government it would mark a serious escalation in the conflict, but if the weapons were launched by the terrorist insurgency it would mean the attack was a false flag provocation, designed to draw the US and its allies into armed military intervention in the country.

As analysts have been at pains to point out, the motive for such an attack has always suggested that it was more likely that the terrorists were the culprits in Ghouta, not the Syrian government. They have been losing the ground war against Syrian government forces for months, and they knew that the use of chemical weapons was the “red line” that Obama had set as the threshold for military intervention. Those who argue Assad’s culpability have to believe that not only did he suddenly and inexplicably resort to using chemical weapons on his own people for no strategic military reason, but that he waited until UN chemical weapons inspectors arrived in the country before doing so.

The background and history of the conflict also provide ample evidence that the terrorists have chemical weapons in their possession, and are trained and motivated to use them. Last December it was reported that US forces were training the terrorist forces in the handling of chemical weapons. Also last December the insurgents released a video showing their chemical weapons operations and threatening to use them against government supporters. And in July of this year, Russia submitted an exhaustive 100-page report to the UN outlining how the terrorist insurgency was in fact to blame for the March 19th chemical weapons attack in Khan al-Asal on the outskirts of Aleppo.

But in the light of this latest chemical weapons attack, the UK, the US and France have all released their own intelligence studies blaming Assad for the incident and calling on the “international community” to increase pressure on the Syrian government. The reports, however, contradict each other in numerous places, with wildly different estimates of casualties in the events suggesting that the intelligence agencies that produced the report cannot even agree on the most basic details of the attack.

Now, new evidence is emerging that the attacks were used and manipulated by the terrorists in order to provoke the US and its allies into armed intervention in Syria. This evidence suggests that the videos used by the US and its allies to conclude what happened in Ghouta
were in fact carefully stage managed to portray a narrative that would pin the blame for the attacks on Assad.

The first indications of this plot emerged early on, when expert analysis of the videos suggested inconsistencies in the footage itself.

That analysis was later expanded on by a report from ISTEAMS, a Syria-based human rights group working in conjunction with the International Institute for Peace, Justice and Human Rights. In this thorough report, published on GlobalResearch.ca on September 16th, numerous discrepancies and inconsistencies in the footage are documented.

The report documents through eyewitness testimony and video evidence that the affected areas had been largely abandoned by local residents in the days prior to the attack. Yet in the footage of the aftermath, there are large numbers of child victims who are portrayed. There exists very little footage of parents with their children, and what little footage exists portrays some of the parents apparently “discovering” their children on multiple occasions in different locations. Other footage shows the same children arranged in different formations in geographically distant neighborhoods. The report concludes that the footage was carefully stage managed to create the greatest emotional impact on foreign audiences. These videos were then used by the Obama administration to convince the Senate of their case for military intervention.

ISTEAMS President and one of the key researchers on the report, Mother Agnes Mariam, joined The Corbett Report to discuss the problems with the official narrative of the chemical weapon attack emanating from Washington and its allies last month.

The ISTEAMS report raises many troubling questions about the scenes in the Ghouta videos. Were the victims of the attack local children? If so, why were they there after these areas had been largely abandoned? Where are their parents? In the days after the attack, Dr. Bouthaina Shaaban, an advisor to the Assad government, provided an equally troubling answer to these questions to Sky News.

These reports dovetail with videos posted by the Mujahedeen Press Office to YouTube just six days before the attack confirming that the terrorists had kidnapped hundreds of women and children from the rural villages of Alawite stronghold Lattakia to use as bargaining chips in the conflict. Were these kidnap victims moved to Ghouta to be killed in the chemical weapons attack? Is this why so many children were there in these largely-vacated areas, and why so few parents appear on video mourning their children?

Although further research and investigation is urgently needed by third-party organizations to establish the identity of the Ghouta attack victims and the whereabouts of the kidnapped Lattakian families, the reports, if true, are evidence of the most disgraceful war crimes imaginable and the most cold-blooded manipulations of evidence to suit an agenda. Earlier this month, Global Research Director Michel Chossudovsky appeared on GRTV to discuss the nature of the terrorist insurgency.

Now, the US and its allies are trying to use the UN’s new report in combination with the video “evidence” of the attack’s aftermaths to justify the use of military force to back up the Syrian chemical disarmament process. Some are even calling for Assad to face war crimes prosecution on the back of this and similarly manipulated evidence.

In order to prevent this war agenda from proceeding any further or these propaganda images from being used in the pursuit of military intervention, it is vital that this latest ISTEAMS report is downloaded from Global Research, widely disseminated, and thoroughly
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Kahf: Women Demonstrate for Nonviolence
Reports on Syria from Frank Brodhead (via Historians Against War, HAW)

Dec. 2012

Jan. 1, 2013

Feb. 1, 2013

Feb. 18, 2013

Feb. 26, 2013

[Sorry, I thought these would be active links. They are available in the web site. http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/ —Dick]

END SYRIA NEWSLETTER #7

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Dick Bennett

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