

Preventing an attack on Syria

The proposed attack on Syria has resulted in some fascinating reactions, both at home and abroad. Some are almost as odd as the fact that it was proposed at all, and by the President.

The 'red line' statement was a mistake, of course. It was meant to dissuade the Syrian government from using chemical weapons to suppress rebellion, but it had unintended consequences. One of them was to give the rebels, especially the Al Quada variety, an incentive to make it appear they were used. A small-scale attempt was evidently made, but it was unconvincing.

Whether the recent gas attack was done by the rebels, by the government, or a rogue element of the Syrian army, is not clear. With over 100,000 dead already, and 2 million refugees having to flee the country, a case could be made that using such weapons to end the war quickly would save more lives than would be lost. That is the same argument the US used to justify using nuclear weapons on Japan.

Nevertheless, nothing specific was threatened as a reaction to 'crossing the red line'. It would not have to be a military attack on Syria. War crimes, if proven, may be punished by the World Court. One or two nations acting as vigilantes is not justice.

Any attack with missiles or bombs is likely to result in more deaths, including innocent civilians. It would not shorten the war, but probably intensify it.

Even if it were possible without sending US troops to insure a rebel victory, it should be asked if that was desirable. Despite its lack of democracy, the present government has been tolerant of minority sects and of Christians living in Syria. The Sunni-aligned rebels show no such tendency.

Almost as odd as the President choosing a military attack is France supporting it. The French were absolutely right in staying out of Iraq, and opposing the US invasion there, yet now they advocate the opposite.

The neocon agenda still exists, and it would seem there are some behind the scenes with the power to pressure the administration to follow at least some of it, as senseless as it is.

As divided as Americans are politically, largely due to corporate-financed propaganda, the opposition to military strikes on Syria come from both sides of the ideological line. We will be hearing some opposing it because they are against everything Obama is for. So be it. We must grit our teeth, ignore their reasons, and accept their alliance against a dangerous and unlawful act of war.

For their part (though they're unlikely to heed my advice), they would be more effective if they kept to the issue and de-emphasized the hateful rhetoric.

We need to drop the idea that a person, a group, or a nation is either all good or all evil. It is possible to be wrong on some issues and right on others. The Russian President Putin is a good example. While we may not approve of his authoritarianism and the Russian anti-gay bigotry,

among other things, he is absolutely right to oppose interference in Syria, and his opposition is valuable.

Whatever the politics of your Senators and Representative, they should be clearly told of their constituents' opposition. Write them or call them.

-cosmicrat Sept. 6, 2013