

WCCR Analysis - Syrian Situation

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Contrary to what some Americans may want to believe, what is happening in Syria directly affects the Security of the United States, its forces deployed overseas, its outposts, ships, bases, personnel as well as its friends in the region and beyond.

The international community cannot allow the Syrian chemical weapons to proliferate to extremist groups. If the Kerry initiative to turn over these chemicals is pursued, it must include this possibility and the possibility must be intentionally mitigated.

Extremist groups and other regimes are watching to see how the United States handles this situation and will take from it lessons on how to best attack in the future. Not only may non-intervention serve to arm the enemies of freedom with weapons of mass destruction, any action or inaction in the region will be viewed through the analytical eyes of our enemies.

As Iran chants "Death to America," and actively pursues proxy wars against the US and the West in Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, the US and the West through the UN Security Council must send them a strong message supported by the international community. If the West chooses not to act, the consequences are high during these uncertain times. Iran is making nuclear material that can be delivered to any one of their puppets in the Middle East, Africa, or even locales closer to the Americas.

One must learn from history by taking threats to the United States and its allies around the world seriously. In 1999, U.S. President Bill Clinton determined that Osama Bin Laden must be stopped, and the U.S. Navy hit Bin Laden's conclave with 66 Cruise Missiles, missing Osama by a matter of hours. After the CIA confirmed this, Bill Clinton was said to reply, "We rattled his cage." The World saw what happened 2 years later on 9-11.

Although John Kerry's proposal on Syria appears to address the latest issue regarding the use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime, there remains utmost skepticism regarding the actual impact such a weapons ban agreement will have on the violence and outcome in Syria. And there is sound reason for healthy skepticism. Arab countries know all too well that Syria has always made amazing agreements in negotiations yet all of those agreements were never met. The Syrians have never followed through on their end, and it has become readily apparent that the agreements were for manipulation purposes only.

It is understandable that the American public hopes and wishes to avoid unnecessary entanglements. But the USA and the West — are, in the minds of the extremists, already entangled in the web of change and violence experienced in Syria and in the region in general. If the US and the West retracts on determination, they see this as a sign of weakness and such a verbal retreat emboldens them to pursue their goals with an even stronger zeal. The West cannot run away from the challenges of the extremists. The confrontation will either be on the West's timeline or theirs.

If we ignore the chaos created by the illegitimate regime of Assad, the challenges will not simply disappear. It only means that the West will be choosing to give these extremists time to organize, regroup, strengthen and embolden their aspirations further. The West's inaction serves to embolden the extremists.

The War on Terror has, ironically, focused on Sunni extremists and thus has given a green light to Shiite extremists. While the West fights in Iraq and Afghanistan and is progressing positively, a green light to Iran and Hezbollah has caused the war on terror to expand in a negative and apparently unforeseen direction - to a point that this oversight is affecting the National Security of the United States and its allies. Iran and Hezbollah have deployed to Iraq (because of the vacuum created by our mistake of pulling out), to Syria where they are actively fighting, and to Lebanon where they effectively took over a democratically elected democracy that had the support of 74% of the population. In addition to support of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Iran is actively supporting terror groups to manipulate the balance of power in Afghanistan and Egypt as well as entrenching Hezbollah into the African nations, European nations, South America, Canada and the United States. A strategy to confront this extremism must be the top priority of the U.S. and the West.

Syria's fabric is secular in nature. If properly supported, a free and democratic Syria is within the realm of reality. The extremists are entering Syria because of the vacuum that has been created by the lack of support by the West of the larger Free Syrian Army.

The Free Syrian Army and the Syrian National Council is the largest group in the Opposition with 200,000 members and is mostly made up of former secular Syrian Army soldiers and officers, politicians, and volunteers. The Syrian people, the region and the extremists are analyzing the West's support of this group – or the lack of such support – and making determinations regarding the best approach to achieve their goals. Do such goals line up with U.S. values? Do such goals protect Western interests? Whose goals and interests should we be seeking to protect?

Let us not forget what this Syrian Regime has done to the United States, the West and our friends and allies. For years, 33 terrorist groups have claimed Damascus as their headquarters. Through the support of these terror gangs, peace negotiations in the region have been derailed for decades, not to mention that Syria has been implicated by our State Department as facilitating, and in some cases actively supporting, the bombing of the Marine Barracks in Beirut (1983), the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Lebanon (1983), the kidnapping of Americans in Lebanon (1983-1984), and the bombing of the U.S. Embassy Annex in Lebanon (1984). The Syrian regime has also killed thousands of Lebanese, killed thousands of Syrians in Hama, and continues to kill innocent Syrians today. This Syrian regime still holds Lebanese in prisons that the Lebanese will never forget. Assad has lost the legitimacy of his people and has long lost that legitimacy on the world stage. Assad does not plan to stop the atrocities against his own people any time soon.

What must not be forgotten is the pursuit of the guilty. A demand must be pursued that whomever did the Chemical Atrocities, that the world community join in asking for an international criminal tribunal to prosecute all those whom bear this responsibility and for the number of crimes committed during this Syrian Civil crisis and numerous other atrocities listed above. If the West turns their heads away from justice the World will bear the consequences.

It is important to note that there are more parties present on the ground in Syria than the Assad regime and extremist elements. In this recent debate regarding what should be done in Syria, the media and the Administration are ignoring the very people we seek to protect, the innocent civilians, often supporters of secular democracy. Although we should endorse U.S. involvement in setting up a no fly zone in Syria for the express purpose of protecting Christians, Kurds and secular Muslims, any protection of extremist elements cannot not be tolerated – even if that protection involves inaction on the part of the U.S. and the West.

The hasty withdrawal from Iraq precipitated by the current Administration has been damaging to our interests there. This action squandered all of our gains in the region, strengthened Iran, and allowed them direct access to Syria, Lebanon, and the eastern Mediterranean.

President Obama's weakness on the world stage is doing great harm to America's diplomatic power, further emboldening our enemies.

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