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USA/Syria

U.S. Hands Off Syria!

- IV Online magazine - 2013 - IV464 - September 2013 -

Publication date: Monday 9 September 2013

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This statement was published as the editorial in the 3 September 2013 issue of [Socialist Action](#).

The Barak Obama-led march to yet another "war" suffered an important but far from definitive setback when the usual U.S. "coalition of the willing" failed to materialize in late August to lend a fig leaf of Great Power authority to what then appeared to be an imminent U.S. attack on Syria. But Obama's threatened deadly missile strike still remains high on the imperial agenda and requires nothing less than massive and united mobilizations of all antiwar forces to challenge it.

We wish to stress here that the term war, in the context of endless U.S. "wars" in the Middle East today and beyond, where millions are slaughtered in the name of defending America's "national security" (that is, oil interests), is horribly abused. What we are looking at today is not war in the traditional sense but rather the unilateral publicly announced and wholesale murder of innocent people.

The "other side," the victims of imperialist and chauvinist domination, rarely fire a shot in return. The kill figures usually record a few dozen Americans dead, mostly by "friendly fire," alongside thousands or millions of the "enemy," as in Iraq, where 1.5 million were slaughtered. The imperialist-fabricated lie, now fully exposed, that Iraq harbored "weapons of mass destruction" has come home to haunt today's warmakers.

Whatever military equipment the victims of imperialist war might possess is obliterated in the first hours of today's modern "wars." The world's most sophisticated military behemoth is capable of mass murder and destruction without a single boot on the ground or incurring a single dead or wounded soldier. This is what Obama hopes to accomplish in Syria today.

The central U.S. objective is to impose a government capable of repressing the Syrian masses' struggle for freedom and equality while simultaneously promoting U.S. interests in Syria and the region. Currently, the U.S. finds itself unable to establish any "friendly" and viable "transitional national council" with a semblance of credibility among the Syrian masses. Syria's most principled and effective fighters oppose Assad, U.S. intervention, and reactionary fundamentalist or other "rebels" forces armed and beholden to imperialism.

Obama has prescribed "limited" and "precise" Tomahawk Missile strikes, perhaps 300, launched from four "ready on the alert" U.S. warships stationed in the Mediterranean Sea in order to "punish" Syria. However, the British Parliament's vote to reject support to U.S. military action against Syria, followed by Chancellor Angela Merkel's statement that Germany would not become involved militarily (at least for now), has slowed the U.S. war machine's desire for an immediate strike. More-over, despite the enormous pressures they have exerted, U.S. diplomats failed to announce any significant support from Middle Eastern nations, including from the Arab League and countries that are even more intimately aligned with US policy.

Although he lacked UN, NATO, or Middle Eastern support, or even a partner among the ranks of top U.S. allies, and despite the fact that national polls demonstrated majority American opposition to a war against Syria, Secretary of State John Kerry nevertheless pressed on for a "go it alone" military strike. But Obama's rush to war was at least temporarily stalled when bipartisan Congressional opposition indicated that even in the legislative belly of the imperial beast the president might not have majority support.

Obama virtually taunted Congress to defy him, declaring at the White House on Aug. 31, "I am ready to give the

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order." However, a section of the ruling rich no doubt believes that little or nothing would be accomplished with Obama's proposed adventure, and much more might be lost with regard to the already severely diminished U.S. credibility.

FOR A UNITED MASS MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL U.S. INTERVENTION AND WAR!

The matter will supposedly be decided when Congress resumes on Monday, Sept. 9. In the interim, antiwar and social justice forces are mobilizing for protests across the country in almost in every instance, properly focusing on the demand, "No U.S. War on Syria!"

Socialist Action fully supports this critical focus and the efforts of the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) to unite and mobilize the broadest sections of the antiwar movement and all social justice fighters in mass actions to stop any U.S. attack on Syria. UNAC have properly made explicit their coalition's view that everyone opposed to U.S. imperialist intervention, regardless of their views on the civil war in Syria, must take to the streets in united efforts to stop the proposed U.S. military strike now.

Socialist Action stands squarely opposed to all U.S. intervention in Syria while simultaneously supporting the right of the people of Syria to self-determination. Socialist Action was among the first to hail the massive and repeated popular and peaceful uprisings that challenged the dictatorial regime and neoliberal economic policies of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. These mobilizations were regularly met with brute military force.

Today these forces, organized largely in Local Coordinating Committees that provide a modicum of defense and significant vital social services to Syria's beleaguered people, if they prove capable of sinking deep roots into the entire population, can become central to any working-class challenge to Assad's power, or that of any other tyrant who might follow. The critical need to build a revolutionary socialist party and associated mass working-class formations, however limited the opportunities today, remains essential to any successful challenge to Syria's capitalist order.

Socialist Action rejects support to the U.S. or Saudi-Qatari-funded forces, or to any others in the region that funnel aid to achieve U.S. objectives. Many of these semi-secret U.S. weapons providers, while advancing U.S. corporate interests, simultaneously seek to impose on the popular opposition, and on Syria itself, a reactionary fundamentalist ideology and practice that would have Syria ruled by clerical reaction rather than the oppressed working masses.

It is not at all peculiar that the fundamentalist forces that are militarily backed, directly or indirectly, by U.S. imperialism are the very same forces simultaneously deemed as terrorists by the Obama administration. U.S. imperialism has no qualms about supporting the most heinous elements provided only that they are subordinate to its global pursuits.

Tragically, Syrian society is deeply divided, with even a portion of the secular forces in the diffuse Free Syrian Army demanding and receiving U.S. imperialist aid, acceptance of which never comes without agreements to subordinate the interest of the vast population to the rich and powerful in Syria or their U.S. benefactors. However fraught with immense difficulties at the present juncture, Syria's future rests in the capacity of its working masses to chart a revolutionary and independent course the only political and social course to capable of effectively defeating Assad's dictatorship and imperialist efforts to re-colonize Syria.

WASHINGTON IS THE BIGGEST TERRORIST!

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The U.S. antiwar movement in the main has courageously and properly stood above Obama's effort to justify a U.S. war based on the unproven charge that the Assad regime used Sarin gas to murder hundreds of Syrians. So deep has been the expose of previous U.S. pretexts for war, that there are few takers who today automatically jump to the conclusion that the evidence produced by U.S. spy agencies is true.

From "Remember the Maine!" (the 1898 pretext used to conquer Cuba and take Guantanamo Bay), to the Tonkin Bay fabrication that was employed to justify escalating the Vietnam War that killed four million Vietnamese, to Iraq's alleged "weapons of mass destruction," a deep skepticism has permeated the American conscience.

No doubt the massive spying on the e-mails and all other phone and electronic communications of virtually all Americans, revealed by Edward Snowden, add to the ever deepening questioning by millions of people as to the truth of anything put forward by U.S. politicians. A Jan. 1, 2013 report on a recent Gallup poll is headlined "Congress begins 2013 with 14% approval: Average approval for 2012 is the lowest in history."

Even if the Assad government were proven to have employed Sarin gas, virtually no one in the U.S. antiwar movement would argue that the U.S. would-be "cop of the world," whose routine torture and imprisonment of prisoners without charges or access to counsel has been universally condemned, has the moral or political standing to attack anyone. Syria's future resides in the will of its people to deal with their oppressors, not on U.S. imperialism, whose presidents allied with, funded, and helped orchestrate Iraq President Saddam Hussein's 1980-88 war against Iran.

With the full knowledge and consent of the U.S., Hussein's government employed Sarin gas against Iranian Kurds which killed thousands. That secretly U.S.-funded war is estimated to have taken the lives of well over a million people.

U.S. imperialism's aim then was to punish the Iranian people for their revolutionary ouster of the U.S.-imposed Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi regime, installed in 1953 by a U.S.-orchestrated, CIA-led coup. Today, no one doubts that the overriding objective of that U.S.-instigated and funded Iraq-Iran War was to recoup the oil resources of the region.

Each and every U.S. war in the Middle East has been met with, and continues to be met with, the concerted opposition of the people of the occupied nations. However distorted this opposition may be at any given time, it is clear that the re-colonization of the Middle East today by the world's top superpower is detested by the world's people.^a