

## Cheerleading War

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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*Wars of aggression are called liberating ones. Bombs away is called humanitarian intervention. Nations are destroyed to free them. Plunder is called economic development.*

*Unchallenged imperial control is called democracy.*

*Code language conceals real motives. Monied interests alone benefit. They choose US leaders. They decide policy. They have final say.*

*When they want war they get it.*

On August 27, the Wall Street Journal headlined " ['Little Doubt' Syria Gassed Opposition](#)," saying:

John Kerry "mad(e) (the) case for US action." He cited "undeniable evidence."

He failed to produce it. None exists. The Journal didn't explain. Inflammatory headlines substitute.

It's standard scoundrel media practice. They regurgitate Big Lies. They do so unconscionably. They do it unapologetically. They bear direct responsibility for lawless aggression that follows.

A same day Journal [editorial](#) added insult to injury. It headlined "The Problem is Assad," saying:

"The goal of US military action should be regime change in Damascus."

"(T)oken bombing" falls short. (L)obbing in a few cruise missiles" won't work. "(I)ntervention with enough strength" is needed.

Special forces should be used "to destroy or capture Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles."

The case for "acting boldly is strategic." US interests are at stake, say Journal editors. "If Assad wins in Syria, Iran's (quest for regional dominance) will have to be accommodate(d)."

"Israel will be more besieged than at any time since the mid-1960s." Washington may face "a larger and more costly conflict down the road." It may be in a "far weaker position" to do so.

"The real problem in Syria isn't the chemical weapons. It is the leader who has used them. This is where to focus the military response." Journal editors want regime change.

They're not alone. [Chicago Tribune](#) editors headlined "Syrian showdown," saying:

“A sharp military retaliation by the US and its allies will show not only the Syrian strongman but other dictators around the globe that they cannot deploy such terrible weapons with impunity.”

[Los Angeles Times](#) editors headlined “Enforcing a ‘red line’ in Syria,” saying:

“If new reports of a government chemical weapons attack are confirmed, the US must act.”

[Dallas News](#) editors headlined “No more silence on Syria,” saying:

“(I)naction by the international community, especially Washington, (gives) Assad a green light.”

[New York Times](#) editors headlined “Responding to Syrian Atrocities,” saying:

“There is little doubt now that President Obama is planning some kind of military response to what the administration says without equivocation was a chemical weapons attack by the Syrian government that killed hundreds of civilians.”

Obama’s “credibility (is) on the line. If (he) forgo(es) (Security Council authorization), he will need strong endorsements from the Arab League and” EU nations.

“(T)he aim is to punish Mr. Assad for slaughtering his people with chemical arms”

Separately, [Times editors asked](#): “Is an Attack on Syria Justified? A NYT-style debate followed. A previous article explained how they work. They’re polar opposite how they should.

Debates are an ancient tradition. Ideas are freely aired. Beliefs are challenged. Truths are sought. Critical thinking is stimulated.

Opinions are formed. Conclusions are reached. They’re gotten through free and open dialogue and discussion.

Real debates give opposing sides full opportunity to air views. They’re evenly matched. They’re able to challenge opinions contrary to their own.

Times editors hold them their way. Their rules apply. Views opposing state policy are prohibited, censored or marginalized. Constraints prevent truth and full disclosure.

Public thinking and perceptions are manipulated and controlled. Groupthink is sought. So is manufactured consent. Opinions contradicting official policy get short shrift. Most often they’re suppressed.

Seven Times contributors commented on Syria. Micah Zenko's a Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) member.

A previous article quoted historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. (1917 - 2007) once calling it a "front organization (for) the heart of the American Establishment."

Zenko [headlined](#) "Limited Strike Will Lead to Deeper Intervention," saying:

"An attack will aid the opposition, not just suppress the use of chemical weapons. So it will likely turn to a campaign to topple Assad."

"Obama should state it publicly. (He) should provide a narrative of victory for how the United States, with a small number of partner countries, can and will achieve this."

Radwan Ziadeh's an opposition Syrian National Council (SNC) spokesman. It's a US-sponsored/CIA-backed anti-Assad front group. He [headlined](#) "The West Must Finally Respond," saying:

He "hold(s) Assad accountable for the ever-increasing killings and atrocities perpetrated by his forces in Syria."

He wrongfully blames him for Western-enlisted death squad crimes. They repeat with disturbing regularity. Ziadeh turned truth on its head.

Times editors gave him op-ed space to do so. It doesn't surprise. It echoes their views. They reflect Big Lies.

Reuel Marc Gerecht's a former Project for the New American Century's Middle East Initiative. He also served as a CIA case officer.

He's currently a Foundation for Defense of Democracies senior fellow. It's a neocon think tank. It promotes war. It deplores peace.

Its leaders and advisors include a rogue's gallery of war criminals.

Gerecht [headlined](#) "Assad Has Called Obama's Bluff," saying:

He crossed Obama's red line. "America's credibility in the region - which is overwhelmingly built on Washington's willingness to use force - will be zero unless Obama militarily intercedes now to (destroy his) regime."

Dan Schueftan's a former Yitzhak Rabin/Ariel Sharon advisor. He heads Haifa University's National Security Studies Center.

He's a senior Shalem Center in Jerusalem fellow. It's funded by right-wing Zionist organizations and foundations.

He [headlined](#) "A Measured, Calculated Action Could Work."

He calls a major attack "harmful and potentially dangerous. A token tomahawk display will send the wrong signal."

"But a measured punitive action - with open options of further escalation if Assad persists in the present course - could be strategically invaluable."

Mona Yacoubian's a Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) member. Currently she heads the right-wing Stimson Center's Pathways to Progress: Peace, Prosperity and Change in the Middle East.

It's a pro-Western imperial initiative. She [headlined](#) "A Catch-22 With Russia," saying:

"Military strikes could force a negotiated end to Assad's rule."

"The United States should lead an allied cruise missile attack against Syria if evidence of the Syrian government's culpability is conclusive."

"The costs of inaction outweigh the significant risks of military intervention."

"Yet, US policy makers should also expect that a military response likely will extinguish any hope for US-Russian cooperation on Syria - at least in the short term."

Stephen Walt is Harvard University Professor of International Affairs. He [headlined](#) "Weapons Assad Uses Shouldn't Affect US Policy," saying:

"Of course it is not good that Assad's forces may have used chemical weapons, but it is not obvious why the choice of weaponry changes the calculus of US interests in this case."

"The brutal nature of the Assad regime has been apparent for decades, and its forces have already killed thousands with conventional means."

"Does it really matter whether Assad is killing his opponents using 500-pound bombs, mortar shells, cluster munitions, machine guns, icepicks or sarin gas?"

"Dead is dead, no matter how it is done."

At the same time, Walt opposes US intervention. He calls it a "bad idea." It can't "eliminate Assad's chemical (arsenal). (It's) unlikely to tip the balance in favor of the rebels."

"US power is most credible when it is used to protect vital US interests."

“The United States has little interest in getting bogged down in Syria, and the use of chemical weapons by Syrian government forces does not alter that fact.”

Mary Ellen O’Connell is Notre Dame University Professor of Law. She’s Research Professor of International Dispute Resolution.

She [headlined](#) “Attack Needs UN Approval to Be Legal,” saying:

“Chemical weapon use is banned, so is unauthorized military force.”

US officials are “confident” Assad used chemical weapons. Doing so is “unlawful.” So is a “military attack in response unless authorized by the United Nations Security Council.”

Times editors support ousting Assad. Their so-called debate omitted notable peace advocates. They’re denied Times space.

So is truth and full disclosure. It’s verboten. It defeats US imperial ambitions. It promotes war. It spurns peace. It denies readers what they most need to know. It failed to explain Syria is Washington’s war.

It supports wrong over right. It lets America ravage one country after another. It permits unconscionable mass killing and destruction.

It supports wealth, power, privilege and dominance. It sacrifices popular interest mattering most. It does so shamelessly.

It does it with no regard for legal, moral or ethical standards. It’s longstanding Times policy.

“All the News That’s Fit to Print” is rhetoric, not policy. Don’t expect Times editors to explain.

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