

Lying About Syria, and the Lying Liars Who Lie About the Lying

By [David Swanson](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

“U.S. prepares for possible retaliatory strike against Syria,” [announces](#) a *Los Angeles Times* headline, even though Syria has not attacked the United States or any of its occupied territories or imperial forces and has no intention to do so.

Quoth the article:

“the president made no decisions, but the high-level talks came as the Pentagon acknowledged it was moving U.S. forces into position in the region.”

Forgive me, but who the SNAFU made *that* decision? Does the commander in chief have any say in this? Does he get to make speeches explaining how wrong it would be to attack Syria, meet with top military officials who leave the meeting to prepare for attacks on Syria, and go down in history as having been uninvolved in, if not opposed to, his own policies?

Threatening to attack Syria, and moving ships into position to do it, are significant, and illegal, and immoral actions. The president can claim not to have decided to push the button, but he can't pretend that all the preparations to do so just happen like the weather. Or he couldn't if newspapers reported news.

(Yes, *illegal*. Read the U.N. Charter:

“All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.”)

“The Defense Department has a responsibility to provide the president with options for all contingencies,” said the so-called Defense Secretary, but do any of the contingencies involve defending the United States? Do any of them involve peace-making? If not, is it really accurate to talk about “all” contingencies?

In fact, Chuck Hagel only has that “responsibility” because Obama [instructed him](#) to provide, not all options, but all military options.

Syrian rebels understand that under all possible U.S. policies, faking chemical weapons attacks can get them guns, while shifting to nonviolent resistance can only get them as ignored as [Bahrain](#). (Ba-who?)

“Obama also called British Prime Minister David Cameron,” says the *LA Times*, “to talk over the developments in Syria. The two are ‘united’ in their opposition to the use of chemical weapons, the White House said in a statement issued after the call.” Well, except for white phosphorus and napalm. Those are *good* chemical weapons, and the United States government is against *bad* chemical weapons, so really your newspaper isn’t lying to you at all.

What did Obama [say to CNN](#) on Thursday?

“[T]he notion that the U.S. can somehow solve what is a sectarian, complex problem inside of Syria sometimes is overstated”

Ya think?

CNN’s Chris Cuomo (son of Mario) pushed for war:

“But delay can be deadly, right, Mr. President?”

Obama replied that he was still verifying the latest chemical weapons horseshit. Cuomo brushed that aside:

“There’s strong proof they used them already, though, in the past.”

Obama didn’t reply to that lie, but spouted some vacuous rhetoric.

Cuomo, his thirst for dead Syrian flesh perhaps getting a bit frustrated, reached for the standard John McCainism. Senator McCain, Cuomo said, thinks U.S. “credibility” is lost if Syria is not attacked. (And if the U.S. government were to suddenly claim *not* to be an institution of mass-murder, and to act on that — *then* how would its credibility be?)

Obama, undeterred, went right on preaching against what he was about to do. “Sometimes,” Obama said, “what we’ve seen is that folks will call for immediate action, jumping into stuff, that does not turn out well, gets us mired in very difficult situations, can result in us being drawn into very expensive, difficult, costly interventions that actually breed more resentment in the region.”

But you *promised*, whined Cuomo, that chemical weapons use would be the crossing of a Red Line!

Obama replied that international law should be complied with. (For the uninitiated, international law actually forbids attacking and overturning other nations’ governments — even Libya’s.) And, Obama pointed out, there are options other than the military.

There are?!

I’ve found that when Obama starts talking sense like this, he’s actually moving rapidly in the opposite direction. The more he explains why it would be wrong and illegal and stupid and immoral to attack Syria, the more you can be sure he’s about to do just that.

Here are my, previously published, top 10 reasons not to attack Syria, even if the latest chemical weapons lies were true:

1. War is not made legal by such an excuse. It can't be found in the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the United Nations Charter, or the U.S. Constitution. It can, however, be found in U.S. war propaganda of the 2002 vintage. (Who says our government doesn't promote recycling?)

2. The United States itself possesses and uses internationally condemned weapons, including white phosphorus, napalm, cluster bombs, and depleted uranium. Whether you praise [these actions](#), avoid thinking about them, or join me in condemning them, they are not a legal or moral justification for any foreign nation to bomb us, or to bomb some other nation where the U.S. military is operating. Killing people to prevent their being killed with the *wrong kind* of weapons is a policy that must come out of some sort of sickness. Call it Pre-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

3. An expanded war in Syria could become regional or global with uncontrollable consequences. Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Russia, China, the United States, the Gulf states, the NATO states . . . does this sound like the sort of conflict we want? Does it sound like a conflict anyone will survive? Why in the world risk such a thing?

4. Just creating a "no fly zone" would involve bombing urban areas and unavoidably killing large numbers of people. This happened in Libya and we looked away. But it would happen on a much larger scale in Syria, given the locations of the sites to be bombed. Creating a "no fly zone" is not a matter of making an announcement, but of dropping bombs.

5. Both sides in Syria have used horrible weapons and committed horrible atrocities. Surely even those who imagine people should be killed to prevent their being killed with different weapons can see the insanity of arming both sides to protect each other side. Why is it not, then, just as insane to arm one side in a conflict that involves similar abuses by both?

6. With the United States on the side of the opposition in Syria, the United States will be blamed for the opposition's crimes. Most people in Western Asia hate al Qaeda and other terrorists. They are also coming to hate the United States and its drones, missiles, bases, night raids, lies, and hypocrisy. Imagine the levels of hatred that will be reached when al Qaeda and the United States team up to overthrow the government of Syria and create [an Iraq-like hell](#) in its place.

7. An unpopular rebellion put into power by outside force does not usually result in a stable government. In fact there is not yet on record a case of U.S. humanitarian war benefitting humanity or of nation-building actually building a nation. Why would Syria, which looks even less auspicious than most potential targets, be the exception to the rule?

8. This opposition is not interested in creating a democracy, or — for that matter — in taking instructions from the U.S. government. On the contrary, blowback from these allies is likely. Just as we should have [learned the lesson of lies](#) about weapons by now, our government should have learned the lesson of arming the enemy of the enemy long before this moment.

9. The precedent of another lawless act by the United States, whether arming proxies or engaging directly, sets a dangerous example to the world and to those in Washington for whom [Iran is next](#) on the list.

10. A strong majority of Americans, despite all the media's efforts thus far, [opposes](#) arming the rebels or engaging directly. Instead, a plurality supports providing humanitarian aid.

In sum, making the Syrian people worse off is not a way to help them.

But — guess what? — the evidence [suggests strongly](#) that the latest chemical weapons claims are as phony as all the previous ones.

Who would have ever [predicted](#)?

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