

US Air Strike on Syria



April 7
Jack and Ron,

Liberals, including some of my liberal friends, either support the air strike in Syria without comment, or support it with criticisms about legality/constitutionality.

It is easy to agree about legality/constitutionality, but we know that this is largely beside the point. Arguing against 'moralists' (we are acting against an agreed-upon horror) has its difficulties. It seems to me that the most important point is to oppose the deployment of USA military might because it is used highly selectively, and only when it is in the interests of USA hegemony in the world. It causes far more suffering (of innocent people) in the world than it saves innocent lives. One can cite the situations not acted against, and also the role and results of US military power when it is used.

Do you have thoughts on this?

Rod

April 7
Rod,

I oppose the US airstrike, as I oppose Assad's chemical attack on civilians, and am against any further escalation of the war. I support an immediate cease-fire, the commencement of peace negotiations among all Syrian parties, and the withdrawal of all foreign forces, including those of the Russians, the Iranians, and Hezbollah, and foreign-based Islamists. Until I learn more details, I still have a military-tactical support to the non-Islamist/anti-Assad opposition, but I think that at this time, it is most important to stop the fighting as soon as possible. Of course, I wish that the Syrian people of all religious persuasions would unite, rise up, and kick out Assad and all the imperialists and Islamists, etc., but at this point, this is dreaming. What I would say to liberals and other supporters of US involvement is: many, many times over the decades, it has looked at first as if US intervention was intended to and would further the cause of peace, democracy, the rights of women and religious and ethnic minorities, but almost inevitably, it has made the situation worse.

Ron



April 8

I believe the issue is, at best, moot. The chemical attacks, while reprehensible in and of themselves, are nothing compared to the devastation, death and suffering caused by all sides in the Syrian war and entire Middle East (with the few exceptions of calm, like Iran, Jordan and the "calm" of nations like Saudi Arabia and Egypt). The use of depleted uranium and phosphorus weapons by US and Israeli armies (far more by the US which not only has contaminated Iraq for centuries to come but also the Balkans under Clinton's war there).

So I find almost any indignation regarding the recent attacks without considering the history and context of the recent period (20+ yrs.) to be pretty lame. We should have been, and many of us were, indignant and downright in a state of revolution, over this mostly entirely US manufactured mess.



Yes, Syria was a totalitarian regime, as was Iraq, but the US support/invasions multiplied that suffering by many orders of magnitude. What is worse/better? To be ruled autocratically, without freedom of religion or choice of political representation yet have a decent standard of living, education, etc.? Or to be in the process of liberation, starving, diseased, dying in droves and watching your families burn, be buried in rubble or forced to do heinous acts to survive the assassin's bullet to the head? I pick the former and recall a National Geographic article on Iraq just before the invasion women were in beauty parlors having their hair done, gabbing (mostly in fear of the impending invasion), shop keepers, educators, the average "Joe" just living life. Yes, Saddam's sons or Assad's police may have come at any time and taken away one or several to be never again seen. Protests were quashed and dissident movements (Kurds in Iraq) brutally destroyed. Yet by the time of the invasion, Saddam had accounted for and destroyed all of his WMD, was completely corralled and ineffective in the region. Unfortunately promises made to him by Bush 1 caused a world of hurt to the dwellers in the wetlands around Basra.

But I digress. Indignation for this specific war crime and any support of the US response is vacuous and only serves to make one feel a little bit better, if one needs that kind of support. We are in and have been in and complicit in war crimes in the last 30 years that make most of WWII pale. (Hitler's pogroms and the fire bombings of Dresden, Tokyo and other horrendous acts that violated every convention of the rules of war (how stupid is that

anyway?). Hitler's commanders were held to account in the famous trial we are all aware of but the US has never been held to any standard for those acts I mentioned or the wholesale destruction of Indo-China. All told, 10s of millions of lives lost because of us. So I guess I'm saying to keep it all in historical context. The chemical attacks deserve intense condemnation but starting a war will not help that but will worsen it. Until we accept, as an entire society, that we are part of the greatest killing machine worldwide, in perhaps all of history, then we are merely squawking. We need to accept our roles and stop participating in every way possible. There is no time left for political discourse, sadly. The Democrats made sure of that of that.

Peace,

Brian
