

Next Step for Peace in Syria — Stop the “Lethal Aid”

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Now that public pressure has foiled U.S. plans to bomb Syria, the next urgent step is to build public pressure for stopping the deluge of weapons into that country.

Top officials in Washington are happy that American “lethal aid” has begun to flow into Syria, and they act as though such arms shipments are unstoppable. In a similar way, just a few short weeks ago, they — and the conventional wisdom — insisted that U.S. missile strikes on Syria were imminent and inevitable.

But public opinion, when activated, can screw up the best-laid plans of war-makers. And political conditions are now ripe for cutting off the flow of weaponry to Syria — again giving new meaning to the adage that “when the people lead, the leaders will follow.”

Contrary to what many assume, the latest polls show that a large majority of Americans are opposed to the U.S. government sending weapons to Syria. For instance, in a CNN/ORC survey taken September 6-8, a whopping 85 percent of people nationwide answered “not either side” when asked whether the United States “should take the side of the Syrian government, or take the side of the Syrian rebels, or not take either side.”

A recent ABC News/Washington Post Poll — asking “Do you support or oppose the United States and its allies supplying weapons to the Syrian rebels?” — found that 70 percent “oppose.”

The results of the new polling could hardly be clearer. The vast majority of Americans are opposed to the U.S. government doing what it’s doing — sending weapons into Syria to fuel the flames of a horrific war.

Collectively — in much the same way people upended the conventional wisdom that President Obama was sure to fulfill his announced desire to launch missiles at Syria — we have a real chance to put a stopper in the pipelines bringing weapons and other military supplies to Syria. We must, again, challenge the calculus in Congress and disempower the war-crazed leaderships of both parties.

This is no longer just an idea — it’s now a [nationwide campaign](#). The launch came on Monday (September 16). That day, more than 15,000 people sent emails to their senators and representative in Congress urging them to stop the shipments of weapons to Syria.

Those emails told lawmakers: “As a constituent, I urge you to halt all ‘lethal aid’ in the Syrian conflict. The last thing Syria needs is more weapons, ammunition and other military supplies. The U.S. government and allies should stop sending lethal aid to rebels in Syria, while working for a reciprocal cutoff of all military assistance to the Syrian government by Russia and Iran.”

[\(If you'd like to send that message to your senators and representative, as well as to President Obama, click here.\)](#)

This RootsAction.org campaign has begun in hopes that many other groups and individuals will take it up — demanding an end to supplying weapons for the Syria conflagration. As [nationwide polling numbers](#) show, most of the public already agrees with us. What remains is for a wide array of political activists to galvanize that agreement into a powerful political force, so we can overwhelm Congress on the weapons-to-Syria issue as just occurred on the bomb-Syria issue.

The United States has now joined with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other allies — directly supplying weaponry to an array of fighters against the Syrian government. That aid supplements the longtime U.S. role in helping several countries to airlift weapons and other military equipment to rebel forces.

“The CIA has begun delivering weapons to rebels in Syria,” the Washington Post [reported](#) last week. Those shipments have combined with “separate deliveries by the State Department of vehicles and other gear — a flow of material that marks a major escalation of the U.S. role in Syria’s civil war.”

But as the RootsAction appeal points out, “Recent days have shown that diplomacy is possible to avert even more catastrophic events in Syria. Contrary to scoffers, Russia and the United States could help to quash the war flames instead of fueling them with more gasoline. By halting its own shipments of weapons into Syria and exerting pressure on its allies to do the same, the United States could induce Russia and its ally Iran to stop supplying the Syrian government with weapons — and to work for a ceasefire.”

Now, with a big opening in U.S. politics, this is crucial work toward peace in Syria. Let’s get it done.

Norman Solomon is co-founder of RootsAction.org and founding director of the Institute for Public Accuracy. His books include “War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death.” Information about the documentary based on the book is at www.WarMadeEasyTheMovie.org.

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