

Obama: As Warlike as Bush, and Just as Lonely

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With obscene imperial arrogance, President Obama [proclaimed](#) that the “world” – not he – has drawn a bloody “red line” in Syria. “I didn’t set a red line,” said Obama, at a stop in Sweden on his way to a Group of 20 nations meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia. “The world set a red line.”

That’s news to the rest of the planet, including most of the Group of 20 and the meeting’s host, Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#), who described Obama’s claims that Syria used sarin gas against civilians in rebel-held areas as “completely ridiculous.” “It does not fit any logic,” said Putin, since Syrian President Assad’s forces “have the so-called rebels surrounded and are finishing them off.”

It’s news to China, which will surely join Russia in vetoing any Security Council motion to provide legal cover for Obama’s aggression. And it’s news to the usually compliant UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who this week [reaffirmed](#) that “the Security Council has primary responsibility for international peace and security” and “the use of force is lawful only when in exercise of self-defense in accordance with article 51 of the United Nations Charter and or when the Security Council approves such action.”

It’s news to Great Britain, America’s temporarily wayward poodle, whose parliament rejected any military entanglement in Obama’s red line. As esteemed political analyst William Blum points out, 64 percent of the people of France oppose their government’s planned participation Obama’s Battle of the Red Line.

Apparently, a young and impressionable Obama took the 1985 USA for Africa song “We are the World” too literally, and believes that all one need do is sing or shout the words to make it so.

A new Reuters poll shows [56 percent](#) of the American public oppose U.S. intervention in Syria, with only 19 percent backing Obama. The First Black U.S. President, who was hired (by corporate sponsors, and later elected) to put a new face on U.S. imperial policy after his predecessor’s defeat and international isolation over Iraq, now finds himself more alone in the world than George Bush, and with even less support at home.

Nevertheless, Obama will doubtless press forward with his aggression, for the same reason that Bush defied world opinion and a vibrant domestic anti-war movement, ten years ago. U.S. imperialism has no option but to bang its military fist on the table to reset the global game board, just as it attempted – and ultimately failed – to do in Iraq in 2003, and as a unified NATO temporarily accomplished, after a 7-month bombing campaign, in Libya in 2011.

Obama's Syria crisis is another chapter in the Euro-American response to the so-called "Arab Spring" that threatened to upset western dominance in the center of global energy extraction – the end game for global capitalism as we know it. Within a week of Mubarak's fall from power in Egypt, the U.S. State Department informed the press corps that Washington prefers monarchs to autocrats in the Middle East – a very loud signal that the U.S. had suddenly become far more dependent on the royal thieves of the Persian Gulf, the only Arab forces in the region on which the U.S. could depend. Peering into the abyss of sustained popular agitation in the Arab world, the U.S. and its European and royal Arabian allies attempted to leap ahead of the curve of events with a massive display of NATO force against Libya and a mobilization of jihadists in the region, mustered mainly by Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

The goal was to transform the character of the Arab Spring into a battle against secular socialist regimes in Tripoli and Damascus, along with a general Sunni jihad against heretical Shiites of one sect or another. The mission was to remove those states whose very existence threatened the monarchies while at the same time diverting the masses' energies into sectarianism. (All of which is fine with Israel, whose strategy since its founding has been to foster chaos and division in the Arab world.)

Libya fell with the assassination of Muammar Gaddafi ([Hillary Clinton](#): "We came, we saw, he died"), but the Assad government in Syria has held on for almost three years, and was prevailing in its battle against the U.S./Saudi/Qatari-backed jihadists. The 2011 game plan was coming undone. This summer in Egypt, where the West's nightmare of eviction from the entire Mideast began two and a half years ago, the military seized total power and went on a killing spree against the Muslim Brotherhood, exponentially complicating the U.S. regional jihadist strategy. General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's government, which is carrying out a ghastly pogrom against its own Islamists, opposes the U.S. strike against Syria and tells its followers that the U.S. might turn against the Egyptian military regime, next. (This, despite massive infusions of cash from the Arab monarchs to the military government.) *Both* sides in Egypt's divided society now accuse the other of being allied with Enemy Number One: the U.S. The crisis that Washington hoped to get ahead of, with the attack on Libya, had metastasized. Egypt was wholly unmanageable, and Syria was defeating Washington's jihadists.

Thus, the transparent frame-up of Assad, with direct U.S. participation. It was a panicky move, with the fate of the Empire at stake. Mistakes in execution were surely made, and will come to light – which is why U.S. intelligence agencies hedge their accusations against Assad, leaving room to construct alternative scenarios as the original fable falls apart under the weight of facts and logic.

Obama may well get permission from the U.S. Congress to smash the Syrian state. The president reserves the right to launch the attack, unilaterally, and will not be punished if he does so. It is quite possible that Assad will soon be dead, and Al-Nusra jihadists will be cutting off heads in what's left of central Damascus. But one thing is certain: the U.S. has no long term allies among the Arab people – certainly not the jihadists, who will also turn on their royal paymasters at the first opportunity. The game board cannot be reset – not for long – and, at some point in the not too distant future, the U.S. will be ejected from much of the Arab world.

Obama lays down his red line because – as in 2011 – he has no other options. It has been a twisted "Arab Spring" – but, for U.S. imperialism, it is winter in Arabia.

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