

The Interventionists: Embracing the Logic of Empire

Media Hypocrisy regarding a Military Intervention in Syria

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The call for intervention in Syria has gone to a massive battle cry in just a couple of days following the chemical weapons attack allegedly committed by the Syrian government, though the information is dubious at best.[1]

The Obama administration as well as media pundits are calling for intervention, yet ignore their own hypocrisy- and in many cases irony- in regards to the entire situation.

Just last month, Ian Hurd of the New York Times argued that the US should intervene in Syria because the alleged use of chemical weapons “demand[s] an urgent response to deter further massacres and to punish President Bashar al-Assad.”[2] It is quite fascinating that Hurd is so concerned with Assad’s alleged use of chemical weapons, while ignoring the fact that the rebels very well may have used chemical weapons as well in May, earlier this year. [3]

Nor do I see him and other pro-interventionists discussing that fact or the fact that the US and its allies have used chemical weapons before and not given a hoot.[4]

There is more hypocrisy when the argument of saving civilians is bought up. People such as Warren Kinsella at London Free Press claim to care about civilians. Kinsella states that “Inaction in the face of such terrible war crimes is complicity.”[5] However he ignores the fact that if he and others so much about morality and protecting civilians from deadly state repression, why were they not pushing for intervention when civilians were getting killed and brutally repressed by their governments in Bahrain?[6] How about in Egypt?[7] Many of these same people were nowhere to be found.

There is also a rather large amount of irony in regards to Syria. There are those that criticize President Bush for his Iraq debacle, namely on the fact that Bush had based the war on fabricated evidence, however, they are willing to accept Kerry’s assertion that “there’s ‘no doubt’ the Assad regime was behind this ‘crime against humanity.’”[8] This would be humorous if the consequences weren’t going to be so horrific. Bush used the same ‘just trust me’ rhetoric that Obama is currently using, however, at least Bush presented evidence, albeit false evidence. In a way, it is even worse for Obama because he has not presented any evidence that the Assad regime committed the chemical attacks and there is evidence that they were not involved.[9]

Furthermore, the hypocrisy continues as there were critics that argued that the Iraq invasion was illegal, yet they back the intervention in Syria, with the aforementioned Ian Hurd having the audacity to say that we should “bomb Syria, even if it is illegal” and that “there are

moral reasons for disregarding the law.”[10] The fact that the US has no legal standing whatsoever for its intervention in Syria doesn’t seem to matter at all.

A final touch of irony is that many are lamenting the federal sequestration which has wreaked havoc on local communities such as Salem, Oregon where “a Salem day center where the homeless went to get out of the heat and cold, do laundry and shower have severely cut hours and services”[12] and cuts in education which has resulted in

- Services cut or eliminated for millions of students.
- Funding for children living in poverty, special education, and Head Start slashed by billions.
- Ballooning class sizes.
- Elimination of after-school programs.
- Decimation of programs for our most vulnerable—homeless students, English language learners, and high-poverty, struggling schools.
- Slashing of financial aid for college students.
- Loss of tens of thousands of education jobs—at early childhood, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels.[13]

Yet, they will gladly spend more money on war, which is expected to cost \$100 million[14] or perhaps even more if Assad falls.[15]

For all of their talk, the interventionists seem oblivious to the greatest irony of their cause: They may very well end up killing civilians so they can save civilians.[16] They have embraced the logic of empire.

Notes

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(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10039672/UN-accuses-Syrian-rebels-of-chemical-weapons-use.html>)

4: Zoltan Grossman, “A Short History of Bio-Chemical Weapons,” Counterpunch, September 2, 2013

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5: Warren Kinsella, “Five Reasons To Intervene In Syria,” London Free Press, August 20, 2012

(<http://www.lfpress.com/comment/2012/08/20/20119696.html>)

6: Human Rights Watch, World Report 2012: Bahrain,

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7: Kareem Fahim and David D. Kirkpatrick, "Army Kills 51, Crisis Deepens In Egypt," New York Times, July 8, 2013

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<http://www.myfoxdc.com/story/23301298/kerry-1429-killed-in-syrian-chemical-attack#axzz2e2SwUDPX> (August 30, 2013)

9: Yahya Ababneh and Dave Gavlak, "Syrians In Ghouta Claim Saudi-Supplied Rebels Behind Chemical Attack," Mint Press News, August 29, 2013

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10: New York Times, August 27, 2013

11: Eric Posner, "The U.S. Has No Legal Basis to Intervene in Syria," Slate, August 28, 2013

(http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/view_from_chicago/2013/08/the_u_s_has_no_legal_basis_for_its_action_in_syria_but_that_won_t_stop_us.html)

12: Saerom Yoo, "Federal Sequester Means Cuts to Local Social Services," Statesman Journal, August 27, 2013

(<http://www.statesmanjournal.com/article/20130827/UPDATE/130827028/Federal-sequester-means-cuts-local-social-services>)

13: National Education Association, Impact of Sequestration on Federal Education Programs – State-by-State, <http://www.nea.org/home/52610.htm>

14: Mattea Kramer, The Cost of Military Intervention In Syria, National Priorities Project,

<http://nationalpriorities.org/en/blog/2013/09/05/cost-military-intervention-syria/> (September 5, 2013)

15: Kristina Wong, "Aftermath of US Intervention In Syria Would Cost Billions," Washington Times, August 30, 2013

(<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/aug/30/aftermath-us-intervention-syria-would-cost-billions/>)

16: Oliver Holmes and Khaled Yacoub Oweis, "Syria Army Defectors Say US Strikes Could Kill Assad Opponents," Reuters, August 30, 2013

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