
From: Office of Terje Rod-Larsen [REDACTED]
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The Daily Beast

Obama's New Syria Options

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The Wall Street Journal

Syria's Gas Attack on Civilization

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Syria will require more than cruise missiles

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Article 1.

The Daily Beast

Obama's New-Syria Options

Leslie H. Gelb <<http://www.thedailybeast.com/contributors/leslie-h-gelb.html>>

Aug 25, 2013-- After the most recent use of chemical weapons in Syria=>
<<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/08/21/new-chem=cal-weapons-attack-could-kill-obama-s-syria-strategy.html>> , President Obama is sheltering his next moves even from his closest adviser= as the whole Obama administration inches painfully toward what they all s=e as the moment of truth in Syria.

Once again, he could walk away from the use of force because that o=tion has little backing either in his administration or among Americans ge=erally. But after an endless run of inter-agency meetings at the White House, the sense is that he is nearing three conclus=ons: first, the Syrian government has put his credibility on the line irre=ocably and inescapably; second, he now must take direct military action to=punish the government of President Bashar al-Assad, though not in a manner that commits him to further use of=force; and third, he needs to combine whatever force he uses now with dram=tic and diplomatic initiatives.

Officials expect White House decis=ons to come quickly at this point. Most officials openly lament how they a=e being whipsawed between a general consensus in the administration against employing U.S. military force backed by huge=opposition to doing so (60 percent) among polled Americans, and a growing =nd potent consensus among foreign policy experts and politicians to give A=sad a hard punch.

Most administration officials and most Americans just can't see a=y lasting benefits from any form of direct U.S. military involvement in Sy=ia, and they fear that initial actions would lead only to more and more force. On the other hand, policy experts =nd politicians are arguing with increasing vigor that America's and Obam='s credibility in the Middle East and in the world are on the line, that=he has drawn so many red lines
<<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/05/05/obama-s=yrain-red-line-could-return-us-to-the-mistakes-of-iraq.html>> against Assad's use of chemicals that neither he nor the U.S. can afford further thumb-suc=ing. This

credibility argument is deeply reinforced by a humanitarian one.=The refugee <<http://www.thedailybeast.com/witw/articles/2013/08/23/syr-an-refugee-crisis-reaches-one-million-children.html>> and death tolls <<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/08/27/syrian-u=rising-body-count-spikes-as-assad-forces-massacre-civilians.html>> are already sky high and leaping daily and now require more than mere rhetoric and emergen=y aid.

With these pressures and considerations in mind, here are the overl=pping policy choices the Obama team has looked at over the last week:

1. Wait on the reports of U.N. inspectors, now apparently heading t=ward the site where chemical weapons were, in all probability, fired off. =he expectation is the inspectors will find that such weapons were, in fact, employed. Few expect the inspectors =an come to a definitive conclusion on whether the government or the rebels=fired them. But the presumption is bound to be that the weapons belong to =he government and that the government was responsible. As quickly as possible, take the matter to the U.N. Secur=ty Council, but anticipate a Russian and Chinese veto of military action. =aking these steps is more or less a given for Obama to satisfy his impulse= to bow to international law.
2. Meantime, go to friendly Arab states, such as Saudi Arabia and t= Gulf Emirates, plus key European allies such as Britain and France and s=e if they will join a military coalition as they did in Libya <<http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2011/04/03/nicolas=arkozy-s-war-on-gaddafi-influenced-by-philosopher-bernard-henri-levy.html>> . This wouldn't provide full international or legal cover, but it would he=p. U.S. officials don't expect much support from Arab states, but hope f=r some from Paris and London. All this is to ensure the U.S. doesn't hav= to act alone.
3. Provide more and better military =rms to the rebels, and this time actually expedite the equipment. Mo=t administration officials still don't like this option. They remain unconvinced that they know enough about the rebel= to make sure the aid doesn't fall into the wrong hands <<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/06/15/will-arming-syrian-rebels-lead-to-disaster.html>> .
4. Attack Syrian government military targets with cruise missiles, =rones or with the foregoing plus piloted U.S. aircraft. The number of atta=ks would be limited. The U.S. military still doesn't care for this option any more than it likes the idea of ar=ing the rebels. They don't see its having much effect on either Syrian c=ability or morale. They worry that it will produce only demands for more =ombing.
5. Go further than air attacks and establish no fly zones over part= of Syria. These zones would border Turkey and Jordan, and perhaps Iraq, w=th the intent of protecting refugees and hitting Syrian fighters when and where possible. Some Congressional ha=ks love this option, but in the view of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, it=would be very difficult to establish and conduct. The logistical problems =re enormous and at least Turkey and Jordan would have to participate, an unlikely prospect.
6. Try to use the horror and political pressures of the latest che=ical weapons attack to launch a new diplomatic negotiating initiative, per=aps focused on a cease-fire. To have any chance of success, this would require two things: first, genuine help =rom Russia to pressure the Assad government for compromises; and second, a=U.S. willingness to make a deal with the Assad government plus some, but n=t all, of the rebels. No official is holding his breath on this one, but they all think it's worth marryin= to any direct U.S. military force. The one concern is that diplomatic fai=ure would serve to ramp up pressures for further military action. Besides,=there's great uncertainty about how Assad will react to U.S. intervention, i.e., with more defiance or a willi=gness to talk.
7. Offer a significantly upgraded aid package for refugees in Turk=y, Jordan, and Lebanon, and a new and dramatic proposal for humanitarian a=d to all needy Syrians inside Syria. Of course, the latter would require agreement and participation by Damascu=. It might also be a good way to lay the groundwork for future negotiation=.

Obama has tried every which way to avoid any semblance of another war for America in the Middle East. It's the last thing he wants. But he may well have reached the point where taking some limited military action is the best way to build a wall against pressures for even more escalation.

Leslie H. Gelb, http://www.cfr.org/bios/3325/leslie_h_gel-.html, a former New York Times columnist and senior government official, is author of *Power Rules: How Common Sense Can Rescue American Foreign Policy* (<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/061714542/thedaibea-20>) (HarperCollins, 2009), a book that shows how to think about and use power in the 21st century. He is president emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations (<http://www.cfr.org/>).

Article 2.<=p>

The Wall Street Journal

Syria's Gas Attack on Civilization

Andrew Roberts

August 25, 2013 -- =Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! An ecstasy of fumbling, fitting the clumsy helmets =ust in time; but someone still was yelling out and stumbling, and flound'r=ng like a man in fire or lime"

Wilfred Owen's poem= "Dulce et Decorum Est," describing his experience of a chlorine=gas attack in World War I, highlights its horror and explains in part the =hinking behind the Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, which compreh=nsively outlawed such weapons in 1925.

