

# U.s. position on syria crisis essay sample

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The Syrian crisis also known as the Syrian civil war (formally a “ non-international (internal) armed conflict occurring in Syria opposing Government Forces and a number of organized armed opposition groups operating in several parts of the country” as declared by the International Committee of the Red Cross on July 17, 2012 (ICRC. com)) started back in March 2011 as a natural part of the Arab Spring. With Middle East region being a home to many ongoing ethnical, religious, economic and political conflicts, Syria is not a lucky exception, but a country that arouses heightened interest among the world powers due to several reasons which will be discussed further. During the first year of the conflict the United States held to a stance of non-interference in the internal affairs of Syria, until the threat of the chemical weapons utilization came to the front and the President Obama created the concept of the “ red line”, the crossing of which should inflict the real actions from the U. S. The threshold has been overstepped on August 21, however it turned out that the proper countermeasures are yet to be decided by the world community, rather than solely by the U. S. While the policy of the country suffers inconsistency and lack of political foresight, the public and the government do not have a shared vision on the U. S. position towards the Syrian crisis, and all the factors have to be wisely considered before entering into another war in the same region that has already seen the American troops not so long ago. The Syrian crisis is multilateral and poses a number of threats in the region both to the United States, who support the rebels, and Russia and Iran, who support the Assad regime, depending on the outcome. Syria is a young former colonial state whose artificial borders outlined the

territory populated by the representatives of a range of ethnicities and religions, with Sunni Islam being represented by the vast majority of the country. That said, it is clear why the country is being torn apart by the religious (or better to say sectarian) confrontations, when the ruling family represents the minority Alawites. The family of the sitting president Bashar al-Assad has governed Syria since 1971, when Hafez al-Assad, the father of the sitting president Bashar al-Assad, took up the post himself. This government has suppressed most of the democratic initiatives, such as elections of the president and formation of multiparty system, and has faced multiple accusations of internal political repressions. Now, the rebels, who were at first simple protesters, but who managed to form a Free Syrian Army after months of persecution and rebuffs, consist primarily of the Sunni Muslims supported not only by defected soldiers and civilians, who responded to the call to arms, but also of the representatives of the Islamist groups, such as Al-Nusra Front sworn to Al-Qaeda. Though nowadays the FSA claims to have separated from such groups, even having confrontations with them in the past, its war crimes have been widely recognized, in particular by the Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch). It is quite predictable what can happen to the religious and ethnical minorities if the majority comes to power, possible acts of revenge may occur following the recent example of Iraq. Nonetheless, Barack Obama has recently waived the ban on the provision of weapons to the terrorists to keep the rebel forces strong. The natural question is: why doesn't the President fear that the guns and other military supplies will be transferred by the terrorist groups who will probably use them later against the U. S.? The answer given by the Sen. Bob

Corker isn't satisfying: " We understand some people are going to get arms that should not be getting arms. But we still should be doing everything we can to support the free Syrian opposition." (Washington Times) The threat posed by these actions can become a reality, and that's what Kremlin is afraid of as well. One of the reasons, why Russia supports Syrian government in this conflict is that the spread of Islamists movement to the north may bring the of Taliban gaining power again in Afghanistan, and these weapons, transferred to Al-Qaeda, will be used against Russia and NATO forces. At the same time, such actions from the American side can help gain power in another conflict. Iran is the last country in the region, whose majority of population is Shia Muslims (here is it very important to know that Alawites are very close to Shia Islam). Shia and Sunni Islam are two opposing sects, and if the Sunni Muslims come to power in Syria, Iran will be secluded from Lebanon, home to Hezbollah, who are Shia Muslims as well. This will weaken Iran, whose ongoing nuclear conflict with the United States and Israel is already a hot issue in the region. Iran is a major supporter of Syrian government, providing weapons, financial and humanitarian support, as well as fighters. If the Free Syrian Army and other rebels cut off the hostile forces of Iranian Shia Muslims, Assad will lose such an important supporter that the regime might actually fall without American physical presence on sight. Earlier in the American war history we've encountered the widely used term of ' war on terror'. While the concept became unpopular within the people of the United States and other nations, the humanitarian help thesis has also been left in the past. The evidence for that can be found in the fact that during the ongoing crisis the United States have not actively participated in

the resolving of humanitarian issues before the chemical attacks on August 21. The UN committee has been present on the sights of the chemical weapon attacks before that sad date, but as Russia and China started to actively oppose the international forces intervention in the conflict, the United States decided to act back.

The President Obama, who at the beginning of the conflict urged the Syria President Bashar al-Assad to resign after the latter took severe and brutal measures against the protesters and later against the formed opposition, declared the utilization of the chemical weapons as the crucial point of the war that demanded the U. S. military strike. However, Carla del Ponte, the member of the United Nations independent commission of inquiry on Syria, reported: " According to the testimonies we have gathered, the rebels have used chemical weapons, making use of sarin gas"(Telegraph. co. uk). It would be highly inconvenient to recognize this fact, but once the regime is allegedly using them, the U. S. and several other countries fail to recognize the possession of the chemical weapon by the rebels. After the attack on August 21, Bashar al-Assad has admitted owning of the aforementioned weapons, but has refused the utilization of them. We should keep in mind that Syrian government has never been obliged to refuse the possession or utilization of the chemical weapons, while other countries in the region have signed the Chemical Weapons Conventions. The reason for this decision lies in Israel policy according to which Israel signed but didn't ratify the Convention for the reasons of self-protection, though it did not officially admit the possession of chemical weapons. Thus, the United States shouldn't have used the treaty as an instrument in the conflict, but rather

turn to humanitarian conventions and treaties protecting civilians and non-combatants. The failure of the U. S. policy in this regard is widely discussed these days. The President has delivered a speech and has submitted a request to the Congress to approve of the military actions, but so far didn't get this approval. Meanwhile, the Russian President, who has been on the Assad's side since the beginning of the conflict, has suggested the diplomatic way out of the situation, suggesting Assad to transfer the weapon to the United Nations for further destruction. Here it is important to know that Syria has been also an ally of the former Soviet Union, and the two countries are now bound by commercial contracts of delivery of weapons, which highly contributes to the Russian economy, thus it is easier for both countries to have a constructive dialogue, as Russia is not only interested in helping Syria further on by selling weapons to the latter, but also because Russian last navy base in the Mediterranean is located in Syria, granting it some more power in the region to outbalance the marine forces of the United States. This all can explain why Barack Obama was hesitant of suggesting the diplomatic resort, but at the same time it has put him into unfavorable position among the public, whose views on the conflict will be discussed later.

The suggestion to enter the conflict due to the owning of chemical weapons has several weak points. First of all, it is not confirmed whether the Syrian government actually used the sarin weapons, or the rebels did. Second, it is a well-known fact that both the United States and Russia still possess the chemical weapons stockpile on their territories, the weapons that should have been already destroyed back in 2012 according to the agreements

reached between the two powers in 1990s (CNN. com). Only now have the two sides renewed the dialogue about the new actual timeframes for the elimination of the weapons. According to the United States, its stockpile will be eliminated by the 2020. Russia, possessing three times the amount of chemical weapon of the USA, will take even longer time to destroy its weapons. It is hard to imagine both countries destroying the weapon completely, though, because the two powers will never cease to prove their superiority in different world regions that aren't even located near their borders. This having been said, the demand for Assad to destroy its chemical weapon by the middle of 2014 sounds too harsh and hardly realistic. It may happen that the Syrian government will transfer its known chemical weapon to the United Nations, while keeping some minor stock. Thus, the demand for actions from the President Obama will be put on hold until such transfer is completed. Thirdly, under the Chemical Weapons Convention, even if it would be applicable to Syria, though it's not, as well as the Geneva Protocol (Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare), the United States should refrain from intervention until the agreement on the actions among other states-signatories. For the purpose of protection of his case, the President Obama has numerous times used the term ' international norm' as a reference. This vague concept does not refer to a specific legal instrument, but rather questions why these ' international norms' need to be used. It is obvious that the United States want to maintain its power in the region and is trying to use any loophole to bring troops of international forces into the country. That doesn't mean that the forces should be American, moreover, it

would be wise to refrain from sending more American soldiers for another several years of war to the region. By demanding the destruction of the chemical weapons, the U. S. may be preparing the next stage of the conflict suitable for its policy needs. The Syria crisis is unlikely to end in the nearest time, and the chemical weapons attacks will never cover the amount of people killed in the gunfire, so after the chemical weapons are gone, the UN will be forced to bring forces to the territory of this Middle Eastern country, unless both the Syrian government and the rebel forces agree to the cease-fire, which is unlikely, given that too many countries are interested in maintaining the conflict with Syria being a strategically important territory for the allies of the both parties. Meanwhile, the United States cannot fringe the international treaties it refers to and start military strikes on its own, because such actions will get a quick response from the international community, primarily, Russia and China, two allies of Syria, who keep on using their veto power in the Security Council.

This all being said, it's important to remember who is standing behind the Syrian conflicting parties. Those are the real parties that need to have diplomatic negotiations and sign peace treaties. Russia and the United States are not only exercising their powers, but trying to establish more solid positions in the region to meet their goals. After the Arab Spring, most of the countries rely on the USA as the protector, who will supply democratic regimes with sources that will help their maintenance. Iran openly developing nuclear weapons is the main enemy of the US, and it's vital to seclude it from the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon bordering with the other side of Syria. However, if the United States win in this war, Russia will lose its



powerful positions, as well as multibillion weapons commercial contracts.

And unless the United States elaborate a solid position that will not only help the country remain strong, but also help Syrian people without military intervention, either the President Obama will lose popularity, or the United States as a country.

The public opinion, according to the Pew Research Center, is also quite clear, when 70% of Americans “ oppose the U. S. and its allies sending arms and military supplies to anti-government groups in Syria”, 68% saying “ the U. S. is too overcommitted to get involved in another conflict”, 60% say that the opposition forces may be no better than the current government”, and “ by a 53%-36% margin, most agree that it is important for the U. S. to support people who oppose authoritarian regimes”. (Pew Research Center).

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