

September 2, 2013

It's time for a review of our Syria policy. Except, there doesn't seem to be a policy as we lurch from one thought to the next. Our country is quickly finding more ways to earn the world's contempt. Mark Steyn is first to comment on the hilarity.

I see the Obama "reset" is going so swimmingly that the president is now threatening to go to war against a dictator who gassed his own people. Don't worry, this isn't anything like the dictator who gassed his own people that the discredited warmonger Bush spent 2002 and early 2003 staggering ever more punchily around the country inveighing against. The 2003 dictator who gassed his own people was the leader of the Baath Party of Iraq. The 2013 dictator who gassed his own people is the leader of the Baath Party of Syria. Whole other ball of wax. The administration's ingenious plan is to lose this war in far less time than we usually take. In the unimprovable formulation of an unnamed official speaking to the Los Angeles Times, the White House is carefully calibrating a military action "just muscular enough not to get mocked." ...

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Meanwhile, the hyperpower is going to war because Obama wandered off prompter and accidentally made a threat. So he has to make good on it, or America will lose its credibility. But he only wants to make good on it in a perfunctory and ineffectual way. So America will lose its credibility anyway.

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John Steele Gordon is next.

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Obama, of course, was in the White House that day, playing cards. It was Navy Seals who put their lives on the line as they stormed the house in Abbottabad and “got” Bin Laden. (Can you imagine the mockery the media would have rained down on George W. Bush had he ever used such a construction? Bush, of course, a modest man, would never have said any such thing.)

Now Obama is planning a response to the gas attack by the Syrian government against its own people. Again, it’s all about him. Had Obama last year not indulged his bad habit of speaking when he should be quiet and announced with little apparent thought that the use of chemical weapons would be a red line that must not be crossed, no one thinks we would now be about to attack Syria. ...

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The administration now would do well to do something that the head of it has an irresistible urge not to do: Stop talking.

If a fourth military intervention is coming, it will not be to decisively alter events, which we cannot do, in a nation vital to U.S. interests, which Syria is not. Rather, its purpose will be to rescue Obama from his words

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Having leaked to the world, and thus to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, a detailed briefing of the coming U.S. air attack on Syria — (1) the source (offshore warships and perhaps a bomber or two), (2) the weapon (cruise missiles), (3) the duration (two or three days), (4) the purpose (punishment, not “regime change”) — perhaps we should be publishing the exact time the bombs will fall, lest we disrupt dinner in Damascus.

So much for the element of surprise. Into his third year of dithering, two years after declaring Assad had to go, one year after drawing — then erasing — his own red line on chemical weapons, Barack Obama has been stirred to action.

Or more accurately, shamed into action. Which is the worst possible reason. A president doesn’t commit soldiers to a war for which he has zero enthusiasm. Nor does one go to war for demonstration purposes.

Want to send a message? Call Western Union. ...

Craig Pirrong writes with the congressional stall in the news.

... Obama has several reasons to stall for time. Seeking Congressional approval permits him to do just that.

But in choosing this course, Obama has traded one risk for others. In particular, he risks being humiliated in Congress, as Cameron was humiliated in parliament. There are reports circulating, however, that Obama plans to proceed with a strike even if Congress does not approve. This risks a Constitutional crisis.

There's also the issue of how this will be perceived in Damascus, Tehran, Moscow, and elsewhere. No doubt the charmers in the echelons of power in those places are chortling, if not guffawing. They will conclude that Obama cannot even muster the fortitude to order a feckless strike-one that he again touted as feckless (but as a feature, not a bug). They are unlikely to place much stock in Constitutional niceties anyways, but the fact that Obama made this announcement after days of stories reporting that he would "consult" with Congress but not seek its approval will no doubt be interpreted as a loss of nerve.

Which could unleash another perverse dynamic. Part of Obama's motivation for an attack is to redeem his credibility, in the aftermath of his "red line" ad lib (I will pass over the "Assad must go" statement in silence). Obama may feel compelled to act more aggressively if this latest pause is widely perceived as an indication of his weakness and lack of will. ...

So does **John Podhoretz**.

... Some people compare foreign policy to a game of chess. Barack Obama is playing 52 pick-up.

Today's hilarity ends with a spoof from **Andy Horowitz** in The New Yorker.

Attempting to quell criticism of his proposal for a limited military mission in Syria, President Obama floated a more modest strategy today, saying that any U.S. action in Syria would have "no objective whatsoever."

"Let me be clear," he said in an interview on CNN. "Our goal will not be to effect régime change, or alter the balance of power in Syria, or bring the civil war there to an end. We will simply do something random there for one or two days and then leave."

"I want to reassure our allies and the people of Syria that what we are about to undertake, if we undertake it at all, will have no purpose or goal," he said. "This is consistent with U.S. foreign policy of the past."

While Mr. Obama clearly hoped that his proposal of a brief and pointless intervention in Syria would reassure the international community, it immediately drew howls of protest from U.S. allies, who argued that two days was too open-ended a timeframe for such a mission.

That criticism led White House spokesman Jay Carney to brief reporters later in the day, arguing that the President was willing to scale down the U.S. mission to "twenty-four hours, thirty-six tops."

"It may take twenty-four hours, but it could also take twelve," Mr. Carney said.

"Maybe we get in there, take a look around, and get out right away. But however long it takes, one thing will not change: this mission will have no point. The President is resolute about that."

National Review

An Accidental War

Perfunctory and ineffectual war-making in Syria is worse than nothing.

by Mark Steyn

I see the Obama "reset" is going so swimmingly that the president is now threatening to go to war against a dictator who gassed his own people. Don't worry, this isn't anything like the dictator who gassed his own people that the discredited warmonger Bush spent 2002 and early 2003 staggering ever more punchily around the country inveighing against. The 2003 dictator who gassed his own people was the leader of the Baath Party of Iraq. The 2013 dictator who gassed his own people is the leader of the Baath Party of Syria. Whole other ball of wax. The administration's ingenious plan is to lose this war in far less time than we usually take. In the unimprovable formulation of an unnamed official speaking to the *Los Angeles Times*, the White House is carefully calibrating a military action "just muscular enough not to get mocked."

That would make a great caption for a *Vanity Fair* photo shoot of Obama gamboling in the surf at Martha's Vineyard, but as a military strategy it's not exactly Alexander the Great or the Duke of Wellington. And it's trickier than it sounds: I'm sure Miley's choreographer assured her she was "just muscular enough not to get mocked," and one wouldn't want to see the United States reduced to twerking arrhythmically to no avail in front of an unimpressed Bashar Assad's Robin Thicke. Okay, okay, that metaphor's as thinly stretched as Miley's talent, so what does unmockable musculature boil down to? From the *New York Times*: "A wide range of officials characterize the action under consideration as 'limited,' perhaps lasting no more than a day or two."

Yeah, I know, that's what Edward III said about the Hundred Years' War. But Obama seems to mean it:

An American official said that the initial target lists included fewer than 50 sites, including air bases where Syria's Russian-made attack helicopters are. The list includes command and control centers as well as a variety of conventional military targets. Perhaps two to three missiles would be aimed at each site.

Got that? So, if you're a Syrian air-base commander, you might want to think about moving those Russian helicopters, or at least yourself — perhaps to that black-eyed cutie's apartment, above the restaurant where the kibbeh with the pomegranate sauce is to die for, just for the night, until the Great Satan has twerked his ordnance at you twice or thrice and gone away to threaten the Yemenis or Somalis or whoever's next.

In the world's most legalistic culture, it was perhaps inevitable that battle plans would eventually be treated under courtroom discovery rules and have to be disclosed to the other side in your pre-war statement. But in this case it doesn't seem to be impressing anyone. Like his patrons in Tehran and Moscow, Assad's reaction to American threats is to double up with laughter and say, "Bring it, twerkypants." Headline from Friday's *Guardian* in London: "Syria: 'Napalm' Bomb Dropped on School Playground, BBC Claims" — which, if true, suggests that even a blood-soaked mass murderer is not without a sense of humor. Napalm, eh? There's a word I haven't heard since, oh, 40 years ago or thereabouts, somewhere in the general vicinity of southeast Asia.

The BBC footage is grisly; the British media have been far more invested in the Syrian civil war than their U.S. colleagues. But what's the net effect of all the harrowing human-interest stories? This week, David Cameron recalled Parliament from its summer recess to permit the people's representatives to express their support for the impending attack. Instead, for the first time since the British defeat at Yorktown in 1782, the House of Commons voted to deny Her Majesty's Government the use of force. Under the Obama "reset," even the Coalition of the Willing is unwilling. "It's clear to me that the British Parliament and the British people do not wish to see military action," said the prime minister. So the Brits are out, and, if he goes at all, Obama will be waging war without even Austin Powers's Union Jack fig leaf.

"This House will not fight for king and country"? Not exactly. What the British people are sick of, quite reasonably enough, is ineffectual warmongering, whether in the cause of Blairite liberal interventionism or of Bush's big-power assertiveness. The problem with the American way of war is that, technologically, it can't lose, but, in every other sense, it can't win. No one in his right mind wants to get into a tank battle or a naval bombardment with the guys responsible for over 40 percent of the planet's military expenditures. Which is why these days there aren't a lot of tank battles. The consummate interventionist Robert Kagan wrote in his recent book that the American military "remains unmatched." It's unmatched in the sense that the only guy in town with a tennis racket isn't going to be playing a lot of tennis matches. But the object of war, in Liddell Hart's famous distillation, is not to destroy the enemy's tanks (or Russian helicopters) but his will. And on that front America loses, always. The "unmatched" superpower cannot impose its will on Kabul kleptocrats, Pashtun goatherds, Egyptian generals, or Benghazi militia. There is no reason to believe Syria would be an exception to this rule. America's inability to win ought to be a burning national question, but it's not even being asked.

Let us stipulate that many of those war-weary masses are ignorant and myopic. But at a certain level they grasp something that their leaders don't: For a quarter-century, from Kuwait to Kosovo to Kandahar, the civilized world has gone to war only in order to save or liberate Muslims. The Pentagon is little more than central dispatch for the U.S. military's Muslim Fast Squad. And what do we have to show for it? Liberating Syria isn't like liberating the Netherlands: In the Middle East, the enemy of our enemy is also our enemy. Yes, those BBC images of schoolchildren with burning flesh are heart-rending. So we'll get rid of Assad and install the local branch of al-Qaeda or the Muslim Brotherhood or whatever plucky neophyte democrat makes it to the presidential palace first — and then, instead of napalmed schoolyards, there will be, as in Egypt, burning Christian churches and women raped for going uncovered.

So what do we want in Syria? Obama can't say, other than for him to look muscular without being mocked, like a camp bodybuilder admiring himself in the gym mirror.

Oh, well. If the British won't be along for the ride, the French are apparently still in. What was the old gag from a decade ago during those interminable U.N. resolutions with Chirac saying "Non!" every time? Ah, yes: "Going to war without the French is like going hunting without an accordion." Oddly enough, the worst setback for the Islamic imperialists in recent years has been President Hollande's intervention in Mali, where, unlike the money-no-object Pentagon, the French troops had such undernourished supply lines that they had to hitch a ride to the war on C-17 transports from the Royal Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force. And yet they won — insofar as anyone ever really wins on that benighted sod.

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Contentions

The Me, Myself, and I President

by John Steele Gordon

With Barack Obama, it's always all about him.

Asked at his early August press conference why there has been so little progress in getting the perpetrators of the Benghazi massacre after eleven months, Obama replied, that these things can take time and added by way of example that "I didn't get Bin Laden in eleven months." Obama, of course, was in the White House that day, [playing cards](#). It was Navy Seals who put their lives on the line as they stormed the house in Abbottabad and "got" Bin Laden. (Can you imagine the mockery the media would have rained down on George W. Bush had he ever used such a construction? Bush, of course, a modest man, would never have said any such thing.)

Now Obama is planning a response to the gas attack by the Syrian government against its own people. Again, it's all about him. Had Obama last year not indulged his bad habit of speaking when he should be quiet and announced with little apparent thought that the use of chemical weapons would be a red line that must not be crossed, no one thinks we would now be about to attack Syria.

But, having casually made the red line remark, he is stuck with it and his credibility (or what little is left of it in international affairs) is clearly on the line. If he let's Bashar al-Assad get away with his chemical attack unscathed, no one will believe a word Obama says in the future.

But his base fears and loathes American power, so, as Jonathan [noted](#) on Wednesday, the Obama administration has been leaking like a sieve to reassure supporters that any attack will be minimal. The fact that he is, inescapably, also reassuring the Assad regime (and even instructing it how to further minimize damage) is, evidently, neither here nor there. His relations with his base are what's important.

Today, *The Hill* is [reporting](#) the latest leak, one that completely gives away the game, quoting a “U.S. official” that “the White House is seeking a strike on Syria ‘just muscular enough not to get mocked.’” Whether the strike does any good (or does ill, for that matter) doesn’t matter. The risk that Obama might be mocked is all that counts.

History will not treat this man kindly.

Washington Post

[Obama is talking America into a war](#)

by George F. Will

Barack Obama’s foreign policy dream — cordial relations with a Middle East tranquilized by “smart diplomacy” — is in a death grapple with reality. His rhetorical writhings illustrate the perils of loquacity. He has a glutton’s, rather than a gourmet’s, appetite for his own rhetorical cuisine, and he has talked America to the precipice of a fourth military intervention in the crescent that extends from Libya to Afghanistan.

Characterizing the 2011 Libyan project with weirdly passive syntax (“[It is our military that is being volunteered by others to carry out missions](#)”), he explained his sashay into Libya’s civil war as preemptive: “I refused to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action.”

With characteristic self-satisfaction, Obama embraced the doctrine “R2P” — responsibility to protect civilians — and Libya looked like an opportunity for an inexpensive morality gesture using high explosives.

Last August, R2P reappeared when he startled his staff by offhandedly saying of Syria’s poison gas: “[A red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized.](#)” The interesting metric “whole bunch” made his principle mostly a loophole and advertised his reluctance to intervene, a reluctance more sensible than his words last week: Syria’s recidivism regarding gas is “[going to require America’s attention and hopefully the entire international community’s attention.](#)” Regarding that entirety: If “community” connotes substantial shared values and objectives, what community would encompass Denmark, Congo, Canada, North Korea, Portugal, Cuba, Norway, Iran, Britain, Saudi Arabia, Poland and Yemen?

Words, however, are so marvelously malleable in the Obama administration that the Oxford English Dictionary’s definition of “coup” (“a change in the government carried out violently or illegally”) somehow does not denote [what happened in Egypt](#). Last week, an Obama spokesman said: “[We have made the determination that making a decision about whether or not a coup occurred is not in the best interests of the United States.](#)” So convinced is this White House of its own majesty and of the consequent magic of its words, it considers this a clever way of saying the law is a nuisance.

[Section 508 of the Foreign Assistance Act forbids aid](#) to “any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup” until the president determines that “a democratically elected government” has been restored. Secretary of State John Kerry was perhaps preparing

to ignore this when he said something Egypt's generals have not had the effrontery to claim — that the coup amounted to [“restoring democracy.”](#)

Perhaps Section 508 unwisely abridges presidential discretion in foreign policy, where presidents arguably deserve the almost unfettered discretion they, with increasing aggressiveness, assert everywhere. And perhaps if Obama were not compiling such a remarkable record of indifference to law, it would be sensible to ignore his ignoring of this one.

But remember Libya. Since the [War Powers Resolution](#) was passed over [Richard Nixon's veto](#) in 1973, presidents have at least taken care to act “consistent with” its limits on unilateral presidential war-making. Regarding Libya, however, Obama was unprecedentedly cavalier, even though he had ample time to act consistent with the Constitution by involving a supportive Congress. As [Yale Law School's Bruce Ackerman then argued](#):

“Obama has overstepped even the dubious precedent set when President Bill Clinton bombed Kosovo in 1999. Then, the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel asserted that Congress had given its consent by appropriating funds for the Kosovo campaign. It was a big stretch, given the actual facts — but Obama can't even take advantage of this same desperate expedient, since Congress has appropriated no funds for the Libyan war. The president is simply using money appropriated to the Pentagon for general purposes to conduct the current air campaign.”

Obama is as dismissive of “red lines” he draws as he is of laws others enact. Last week, a State Department spokeswoman said his red line regarding chemical weapons was first crossed “a couple of months ago” and “the president took action” — presumably, announcing (non-lethal) aid to Syrian rebels — although [“we're not going to outline the inventory of what we did.”](#)

The administration now would do well to do something that the head of it has an irresistible urge not to do: Stop talking.

If a fourth military intervention is coming, it will not be to decisively alter events, which we cannot do, in a nation vital to U.S. interests, which Syria is not. Rather, its purpose will be to rescue Obama from his words.

Washington Post [Shamed into war?](#)

by Charles Krauthammer

Having leaked to the world, and thus to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, a [detailed briefing](#) of the coming U.S. air attack on Syria — (1) the source (offshore warships and perhaps a bomber or two), (2) the weapon (cruise missiles), (3) the duration (two or three days), (4) the purpose (punishment, not “regime change”) — perhaps we should be publishing the exact time the bombs will fall, lest we disrupt dinner in Damascus.

So much for the element of surprise. Into his third year of dithering, two years after [declaring Assad had to go](#), one year after [drawing](#) — then [erasing](#) — his own red line on chemical weapons, Barack Obama has been [stirred to action](#).

Or more accurately, shamed into action. Which is the worst possible reason. A president doesn't commit soldiers to a war for which he has zero enthusiasm. Nor does one go to war for demonstration purposes.

Want to send a message? Call Western Union. A Tomahawk missile is for killing. A serious instrument of war demands a serious purpose.

The purpose can be either punitive or strategic: either a spasm of conscience that will inflame our opponents yet leave not a trace, or a considered application of abundant American power to alter the strategic equation that is now heavily favoring our worst enemies in the heart of the Middle East.

There are risks to any attack. Blowback terror from Syria and its terrorist allies. [Threatened retaliation](#) by Iran or Hezbollah on Israel — that could lead to a guns-of-August regional conflagration. Moreover, a mere punitive pinprick after which Assad emerges from the smoke intact and emboldened would demonstrate nothing but U.S. weakness and ineffectiveness.

In 1998, after al-Qaeda blew up two U.S. embassies in Africa, Bill Clinton [lobbed a few cruise missiles](#) into empty tents in Afghanistan. That showed 'em.

It did. It showed terminal unseriousness. Al-Qaeda got the message. Two years later, [the USS Cole](#). A year after that, 9/11.

Yet even Clinton gathered the wherewithal to launch a [sustained air campaign against Serbia](#). That wasn't a mere message. That was a military strategy designed to stop the Serbs from ravaging Kosovo. It succeeded.

If Obama is planning a message-sending three-day attack, preceded by leaks telling the Syrians to move their important military assets to safety, better that he do nothing. Why run the considerable risk if nothing important is changed?

The only defensible action would be an attack with a strategic purpose, a sustained campaign aimed at changing the balance of forces by removing the Syrian regime's decisive military advantage — air power.

Of Assad's 20 air bases, notes retired Gen. Jack Keane, six are primary. Attack them: the runways, the fighters, the helicopters, the fuel depots, the nearby command structures. Render them inoperable.

We don't need to take down Syria's air defense system, [as we did in Libya](#). To disable air power, we can use standoff systems — cruise missiles fired from ships offshore and from aircraft loaded with long-range, smart munitions that need not overfly Syrian territory.

Depriving Assad of his total control of the air and making [resupply from Iran and Russia](#) far more difficult would alter the course of the war. That is a serious purpose.

Would the American people support it? They are justifiably war-weary and want no part of this conflict. And why should they? In three years, Obama has done nothing to prepare the country for such a serious engagement. Not one speech. No explanation of what's at stake.

On the contrary. Last year Obama told us repeatedly that the tide of war is receding. This year, he grandly declared that the entire war on terror "[must end](#)." If he wants Tomahawks to fly, he'd better have a good reason, tell it to the American people and get the support of [their representatives in Congress](#), the way George W. Bush did for both the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

It's rather shameful that while the British prime minister [recalled Parliament](#) to debate possible airstrikes — late Thursday, Parliament actually [voted down British participation](#) — Obama has made not a gesture in that direction.

If you are going to do this, Mr. President, do it constitutionally. And seriously. This is not about you and your conscience. It's about applying American power to do precisely what you now deny this is about — helping Assad go, as you told the world he must.

Otherwise, just send Assad a text message. You might incur a roaming charge, but it's still cheaper than a three-day, highly telegraphed, perfectly useless demonstration strike.

Streetwise Professor

Another Fine Mess Gets Even Finer

by Craig Pirrong

So Obama, in an oddly delayed statement, has stated to the surprise of many that he will seek Congressional approval for military action in Syria. This is the right thing to do, Constitutionally, but I don't think that Obama was struck by pangs of Constitutional conscience. His was a pragmatic decision. And likely an overdetermined one. There is no popular support for intervention. There is, no doubt, considerable unease in Congress, especially in the Democratic caucus, and especially in the progressive portion of that caucus that is Obama's political home. He knows that by going in without Congressional approval, he owns 100 percent of the outcome—which is unlikely to be a good one, or which at least has a high probability of being an ineffectual or ugly one.

And there's another potential factor. There is no way Obama wants to go to the G20 in Russia with TLAMs flying, or in the immediate aftermath of an attack. Hell, for him time with Putin is like a root canal without anesthesia even when he isn't attacking one of Russia's allies. One can only imagine how gruesome it would be when he is. Congress is in recess, and will not return until after Obama has returned to the US.

One last issue: Obama's heart is obviously not in an attack. Perhaps he believes, Micawber-like, that if he delays for a couple of weeks, something may turn up and relieve him of the burden of ordering an attack.

In other words, Obama has several reasons to stall for time. Seeking Congressional approval permits him to do just that.

But in choosing this course, Obama has traded one risk for others. In particular, he risks being humiliated in Congress, as Cameron was humiliated in parliament. There are reports circulating, however, that Obama plans to proceed with a strike even if Congress does not approve. This risks a Constitutional crisis.

There's also the issue of how this will be perceived in Damascus, Tehran, Moscow, and elsewhere. No doubt the charmers in the echelons of power in those places are chortling, if not guffawing. They will conclude that Obama cannot even muster the fortitude to order a feckless strike—one that he again *touted* as feckless (but as a feature, not a bug). They are unlikely to place much stock in Constitutional niceties anyways, but the fact that Obama made this announcement after days of stories reporting that he would “consult” with Congress but not seek its approval will no doubt be interpreted as a loss of nerve.

Which could unleash another perverse dynamic. Part of Obama's motivation for an attack is to redeem his credibility, in the aftermath of his “red line” ad lib (I will pass over the “Assad must go” statement in silence). Obama may feel compelled to act more aggressively if this latest pause is widely perceived as an indication of his weakness and lack of will.

Lost in all this is a coherent discussion of how an attack would serve American interests, or save the lives of innocent Syrians. Yet again, Obama's statement made it plain that he views a strike as a means of expressing disapproval of the use of chemical weapons. He was-again-at such pains to convey that any attack-if it ever happens-will be sharply limited. Therefore, there has been no discussion of how this would deter Assad (or any other dictator) from using chemical weapons, or advance American interests, or accelerate the end of the Syrian civil war.

In other words, the fine mess has gotten even finer.

Contentions

[Obama's Bizarre Syria Policy](#)

by John Podhoretz

The president just appeared in the Rose Garden to declare that he has the authority to strike Syria in a limited way to punish the regime for its barbaric use of chemical weapons. And he *will* strike Syria—but has decided to seek Congressional authorization before he strikes Syria.

On the face of it, this is literally nonsensical. If Obama has the authority, he does not need Congressional authorization, and since he is characterizing his need to act in moral terms, a useful punitive strike in the midst of a civil war in which thousands can be killed in a day *must as a moral matter* be undertaken as soon as possible in order to punish the regime and degrade its ability to kill its own people at will. Instead, he has declared his intention to wait until Congress comes back in session—*in eight days*—and then debate the matter for a couple of days and then vote. At which time he will act. Unless of course it votes against him. In which case...what? He has said he has the authority to strike; what does he do then?

Some people compare foreign policy to a game of chess. Barack Obama is playing 52 pick-up.

The New Yorker - Borowitz Report

Obama Promises Syria Strike Will Have No Objective

by Andy Horowitz

WASHINGTON ([The Borowitz Report](#))—Attempting to quell criticism of his proposal for a limited military mission in Syria, President Obama floated a more modest strategy today, saying that any U.S. action in Syria would have “no objective whatsoever.”

“Let me be clear,” he said in an interview on CNN. “Our goal will not be to effect régime change, or alter the balance of power in Syria, or bring the civil war there to an end. We will simply do something random there for one or two days and then leave.”

“I want to reassure our allies and the people of Syria that what we are about to undertake, if we undertake it at all, will have no purpose or goal,” he said. “This is consistent with U.S. foreign policy of the past.”

While Mr. Obama clearly hoped that his proposal of a brief and pointless intervention in Syria would reassure the international community, it immediately drew howls of protest from U.S. allies, who argued that two days was too open-ended a timeframe for such a mission.

That criticism led White House spokesman Jay Carney to brief reporters later in the day, arguing that the President was willing to scale down the U.S. mission to “twenty-four hours, thirty-six tops.”

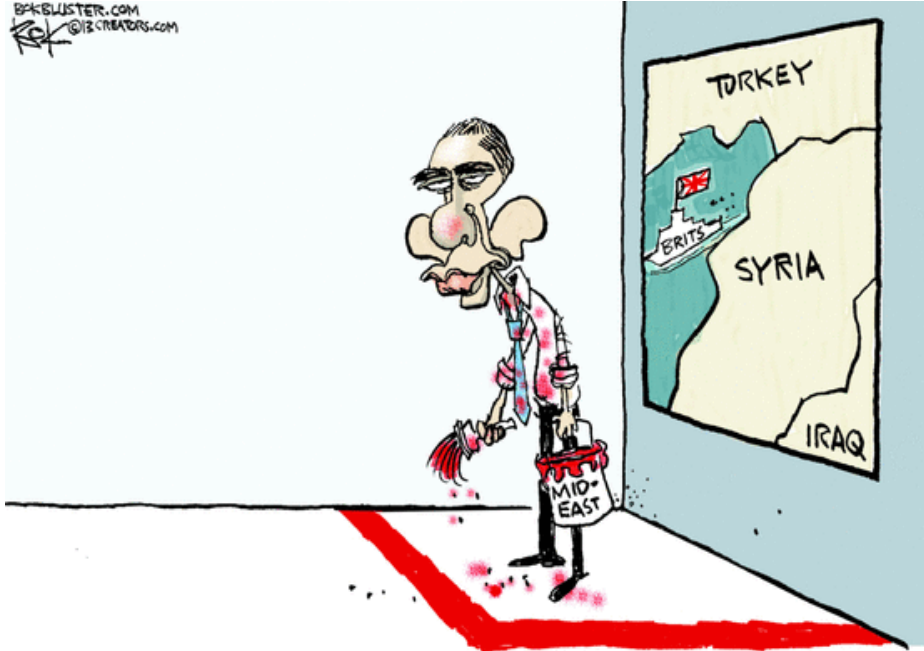
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“Maybe we get in there, take a look around, and get out right away. But however long it takes, one thing will not change: this mission will have no point. The President is resolute about that.”

Today, the anti-war left held a rally protesting U.S. involvement in Syria.

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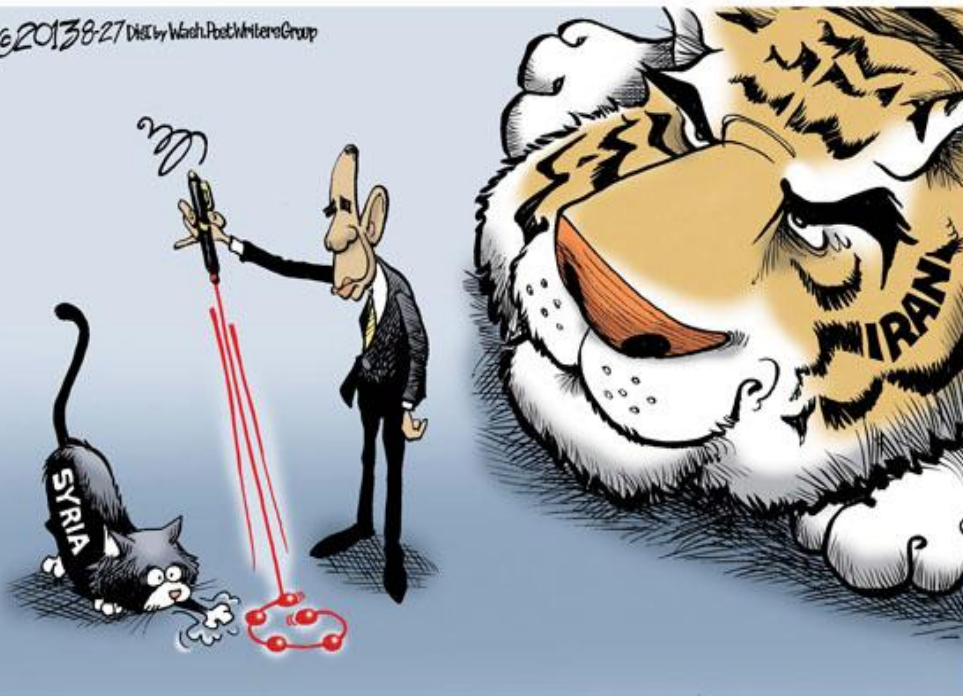


JUST AS MY POLICY THERE IS BRILLIANT BUT DUMB.



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