

No to war against Syria!

Political Committee of the Socialist Equality Party (US)
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1. The Socialist Equality Party and the International Committee of the Fourth International call on workers and youth in the United States, Europe and throughout the world to mobilize their collective strength against the plans of the Obama administration and its allies for a military assault on Syria.

The statement of President Obama on Saturday that he would seek congressional authorization for the bombing of Syria means only that the attack has been delayed, not that it has been called off.

The recourse to a vote in Congress is a cynical political maneuver aimed at legitimizing a war based on lies. After Thursday's stunning defeat in the British parliament of a pro-war resolution, the Obama administration is scrambling to create a political cover for an illegal war opposed by the overwhelming majority of the American people. Obama expects, with good reason, that Congress will sanction the attack on Syria. Moreover, the charade of a congressional debate will enable Obama to claim that the decision for war has been arrived at democratically and expresses the "will of the people." This argument will be invoked to justify increased repression against those who oppose the war.

2. Among the central lies being employed by the Obama administration is the claim that military action will be "limited," aimed only at punishing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for using chemical weapons.

There is nothing limited about the massive bombardment that will be unleashed against Syria. In his Rose Garden speech, Obama stated that the attacks would seek to "degrade [the] capacity" of the Syrian military. This will require the large-scale destruction of equipment and the killing of thousands of soldiers and civilians. The US military plan will be a repeat in all but name of the "shock and awe" tactics employed against Iraq in 2003.

US military action will continue until it meets its

strategic aims: reversing the course of the civil war in Syria in favor of the US-backed opposition, killing President Assad if possible, crippling the regime and clearing the way for the installation of a puppet government of the United States.

Beyond Syria, the aim is to undermine the influence of Iran, Russia and other US competitors in the region. The war against Syria will lead rapidly to a military confrontation with Iran. The *New York Times* reported on Sunday that Obama told his staff that the most "compelling" reason for seeking congressional authorization was that "acting alone would undercut him if in the next three years he needed congressional authority for his next military confrontation in the Middle East, perhaps with Iran."

3. There is no question but that the administration is in serious crisis. The road to war has not gone as smoothly as Obama expected. Obama believed that the allegations of a poison gas attack would succeed in stampeding the public into war. The missiles were to be fired and the bombs dropped before any questions could be asked, let alone answered. These plans suffered a setback after the vote in the British Parliament, when it became clear that Prime Minister David Cameron could not substantiate any allegations of Syrian use of chemical weapons.

While Obama was prepared to go to war without public support within the United States—polls put support for military strikes on Syria as low as nine percent—the defeat in Parliament created a politically untenable situation. The administration concluded that it would be politically dangerous to begin war without either domestic support or credible international backing. The vote in Congress is intended to create the pretense of broad public support for war.

4. With the date for the beginning of a congressional debate only one week away, the days ahead will witness a massive media propaganda campaign in

support of war, centered on claims of Syrian government use of chemical weapons.

These allegations have no credibility. Numerous reports already implicate the opposition, dominated by Al Qaeda-affiliated terrorist organizations, in the gas attack. These reports include statements from witnesses who assert that the opposition forces used chemical weapons provided by the intelligence agencies of Saudi Arabia, which opposes Assad. Moreover, it is a fact that US-backed opposition forces have used chemical weapons before and have been caught in possession of sarin nerve gas.

The US spy agencies' "intelligence assessment" released by Secretary of State John Kerry on Friday is a compendium of lies and empty assertions unsupported by any concrete evidence. The administration has refused calls from Russia to make its evidence available to the United Nations for independent review.

5. Even if it were to be established that the Syrian military had used poison gas, this would not change the predatory and imperialist character of the US intervention. For two years, the US has worked with allies in the region, along with Britain and France, to stoke a civil war, aiming at regime change. The Assad regime has long been perceived as a potential obstacle to US machinations in the Middle East, largely due to its close relations with Iran and Russia.

The hypocritical claims of the Obama administration to be motivated by "humanitarian" concerns are exposed by its long and bloody record in the Middle East. Most recently, the US had no trouble accepting the mass killing carried out by the Egyptian military, funded with billions of dollars in US subsidies.

A determined struggle against the disaster that is being prepared is necessary. In opposing war, however, no confidence can be placed in the Congress—an institution that, no less than the White House, is controlled by the corporate and financial elite.

The top officials of both parties, Democratic and Republican, have already declared their support for war, and the entire political establishment has waged more than a decade of unending war, under the rubric of the "war on terror." Even if the war resolution is voted down, it will at best delay but not stop the drive to war. The same is true in Britain, where maneuvers are already underway to hold another vote to authorize war, following action by the US Congress.

6. If war is to be stopped, action independent of the Congress and the two big business parties must be taken by working people, students and youth. The fight against war must be made the spearhead of the fight against the relentless attacks on the living standards and basic democratic rights of the working class. This is, in essence, a struggle against capitalism.

This is a time not for watchful waiting, but for conscious political action. This must begin at once. It is necessary for all those who oppose the war to make their voices heard. The question of war must be taken out of the hands of the ruling elite and its political representatives.

The Socialist Equality Party in the United States and its sister parties internationally call for the organization of demonstrations, rallies, teach-ins and other popular manifestations of antiwar sentiment. These must be organized in workplaces and schools.

The *World Socialist Web Site* will continue to analyze the political situation and expose the war conspiracy. The SEP and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality, in political solidarity with the ICFI, will do all that we can to encourage and organize popular opposition to war. We appeal to the readers of the WSWS to join us in this struggle. (To get involved, [click here](#))



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