

Students at Northern Virginia Community College oppose war in Syria

Our reporters

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Last Tuesday, members of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) spoke to students at Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale, Virginia about the drive toward war with Syria and its implications.

Despite its relative proximity to the nation's capital, reporters met with near-unanimous opposition and distrust toward the motives of the US government as it attempts to railroad the United States' population into yet another military conflagration in the Middle East. Handing out the recent statement on the war given by IYSSE National Secretary Andre Damon during a protest that was held by the IYSSE in Detroit, the reporters met with a considerable amount of agreement from students and young people.

Warsan welcomed the stance of the IYSSE on the war, stating that earlier during the day she had been listening to a National Public Radio (NPR) broadcast which had declared that the average student "didn't care about anything but themselves."

"Of course I'm against the war," she stated, adding that "the US does more spending on its military forces than the rest of the world combined," and that by sending armed forces into Syria the government would "just cause more lives to be taken."

Jeremy, a bio-engineering major, expressed uncertainty about the basis for heading into war, saying "we could easily be attacked if we decide to become involved." When pressed about the circumstances surrounding the war-drive, including the lack of evidence denoting the Syrian government's guilt for the so-called nerve gassings, Jeremy became even more opposed, declaring that, "The US should stop trying to be the world's police."

Another student, Devyn, expressed similar sentiments about the US's global role while connecting the

military's drive with the "pre-emptive" war doctrine of former President Bush, declaring that, "America is the big brother of all nations and we try to keep our little brothers in check." Devyn expressed support for a diplomatic resolution to the conflict, stating that "another option" is always available.

In relation to the potential casualties which a war with Syria would produce, Devyn stated that many loved ones would be lost. "I have friends who are currently in the army, and to have them sent over, you know? It's like they were my family."

Desiree, who is studying for a degree in medical technology, stated that rather than a confrontation in Syria, "the US has more important things that it needs to address right here at home." In response to the claim that the US is supposedly bringing democracy to the peoples of the Middle East, she asked, "how can we do that if our own government won't even let us see the evidence of chemical weapons or consult with us first?"

In relation to the revelations produced by former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden about the vast growth of US spying in the name of "keeping us safe from terrorism," she replied "that's B.S. Nothing has gotten safer or better for Americans in the past ten years since this surveillance has been put up; the only thing it creates for us is more debt and less funds for the things we need."

Benny, a business administration major at the campus, stopped for an extensive discussion with IYSSE members on the questions of war, the role of the US government, and socialism.

"I'm sure you saw the YouTube video of the Syrian opposition member cutting the heart out of the soldier's chest and eating it," he said. "How can the US be spreading democracy if these are the sorts of people they are calling moderate? These people aren't

spreading democracy, they are killing society.”

On the question of socialism Benny said, “I agree, we need a movement of the working class to overcome the problems society faces,” adding, “I never supported Obama, I didn’t even vote in the last election. I knew he wasn’t going to change anything.”



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