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Military Intervention in Syria: the worst or just one among many bad options?

Professor Stefan Wolff

"As Western rhetoric and resolve to 'do something' over the use of chemical weapons last week in Syria harden, one of the increasingly dominant logics is that with all other means exhausted, a military intervention of some sort is the last resort."

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Feedback

PM on 29 August 2013, **Peter Richardson** wrote

Thank you to Prof. Wolff for such an excellent distillation of the issues and moral ambiguities in the Syrian crisis. The 'limited' millitary option (presumably missile strikes) are in response to the appalling suffering inflicted in the recent chemical weapon assault on a suburb of Damscus. At the present moment, we do not have the full facts as to what happened and who was repsonsible. It seems more credible that the Assad regime would have the technical wherewithal to deliver such an attack, but it is not outside the bounds of credibility that 'rebel' (whatever that term encompasses) may have been responsible. Until the UN investigating team have assayed all the facts that may be available to them, we cannot say for certain that the Assad forces were responsible. Indeed, it has been pointed out that they were 'winning' the war against the rebels, and, hence, had no reason to carry out this act, one that would attract international condemnation. Remember the Sarajevo Market Place massacre in 1994? This was one of the events that were used to bolster the NATO/UN response of bombing of Belgrade. A subsequent investigation by a UN team concluded that the atrocity was unlikley to have been carried out by Serb forces, but this report and its unfortunate conclusions were ignored and scarcely reported. We must not carry out any military action against Assad and his forces until it has been conclusivley and forensically proven beyond any doubt that Loyalists were responsible for this heinous act.

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