



## Warmongering Republicans Support Obama

You've heard the story that Nero fiddled while Rome burned. I guess the modern equivalent is playing poker on your smartphone while debating going to war.

That's what Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), the top hawk on the Republican side of the aisle, was caught doing three days ago, during a hearing by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The Barack Obama Administration's top guns were there to testify in favor of a resolution authorizing a military strike against Syria.



McCain later joked about his lapse: "As much as I like to always listen in rapt attention constantly with the remarks of my colleagues over a three-and-a-half-hour period, occasionally I get a little bored."

Hey, who wouldn't, after hearing Secretary of State John Kerry's fumbling, bumbling [testimony](#)? Bet you'd also be desperate for any sort of distraction if you had to sit through several hours of mumbo-jumbo like the response Kerry gave to the question: "[A] prohibition for having American boots on the ground — is that something that the administration would accept as part of a resolution?":

Mr. Chairman, it would be preferable not to, not because there is any intention or any plan or any desire whatsoever to have boots on the ground. And I think the president will give you every assurance in the world, as am I, as has the secretary of defense and the chairman. But in the event Syria imploded, for instance, or in the event there was a threat of a chemical weapons cache falling into the hands of al-Nusra or someone else and it was clearly in the interest of our allies and all of us, the British, the French and others, to prevent those weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of the worst elements, I don't want to take off the table an option that might or might not be available to a president of the United States to secure our country.

Kerry was accompanied by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The trio had trudged up to Capitol Hill to seek support for a resolution authorizing military action in Syria. Kerry almost blew it when he suggested that the resolution shouldn't rule out the deployment of U.S. troops. He was forced to "clarify" his remarks:

Well, let me be very clear now because I don't want anything coming out of this hearing that leaves any door open to any possibility. So let's shut that door now as tight as we can. All I did was raise a



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hypothetical question about some possibility — and I’m thinking out loud — about how to protect America’s interests. But if you want to know whether there’s any — you know, the answer is, whatever prohibition clarifies it to Congress and the American people, there will not be American boots on the ground with respect to the civil war.

Kerry was also asked if all the various intelligence agencies came to the same conclusion: that Syria had used chemical weapons against its own citizens. He replied: “To my knowledge, I have no knowledge of any agency that was a dissenter or anybody who had, you know, an alternative theory.” No wonder McCain would rather play poker!

Meanwhile, Kerry’s boss was in Stockholm, Sweden, en route to a G-20 meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia. Obama tried to deny that he was the one who drew a “red line” regarding the use of chemical weapons. The present confrontation isn’t his fault, he insisted; it’s “the world’s” fault.

First of all, I didn’t set a red line. The world set a red line. The world set a red line when governments representing 98% of the world’s population said the use of chemical weapons are [sic] abhorrent and passed a treaty forbidding their use, even when countries are engaged in war.

Of course, that’s not what the President said last year, as [The Wall Street Journal](#) pointed out. On Aug. 20, 2012, he issued the following warning:

We have been very clear to the Assad regime, but also to other players on the ground, that a red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized. That would change my calculus. That would change my equation.

Oh, and if you won’t agree that the whole mess is the world’s fault, Obama had some other culprits to blame: You, me and his favorite whipping boy, Congress.

The President actually [declared](#): “My credibility is not on the line. The international community’s credibility is on the line.” And he added, “America and Congress’s credibility is on the line, because we give lip-service to the notion that these international norms are important.”

McCain had already declared his [fervent support](#) for letting the missiles fly.

Now that a resolution is going to be before the Congress of the United States, we want to work to make that resolution something that majorities of the members of both houses could support. A rejection of that, a vote against the resolution by Congress, I think would be catastrophic, because it would undermine the credibility of the United States of America and of the President of the United States. None of us want that.

Wrong again, Senator! Even after weeks of hearing about the Syrian president’s “crime against humanity” for using chemical weapons against his own citizens, 50 percent of Americans still oppose taking military action against Syria. That’s according to the latest [NBC News poll](#), which found that only 42 percent of Americans support a military response.

Nevertheless, at the end of the hearing, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved a resolution authorizing the President to use limited military force against Syria. No boots on the ground, you understand. No forcing Bashar Assad out of office. No, all we’re going to do is to “degrade” Assad’s ability to wage war on his own citizens.

No doubt, a majority of Democrats will meekly agree to give the President the war-making power he wants — even though many of them screamed to high heaven when Obama’s predecessor in the Oval Office sought Congressional approval for waging war against Saddam Hussein. Does anyone remember



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that Joe Biden and Obama were among the most fervent in their opposition? Biden even threatened to lead impeachment efforts against George W. Bush over the issue. But that was then and this now.

McCain's shilling for the war resolution probably won't affect the outcome in the Senate, where the Democratic majority will carry the day. If the measure is going to be defeated, it will have to happen in the House.

Sadly, the Republican leadership there is already [on record as supporting military intervention](#) in Syria. House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said: "I'm going to support the president's call for action. I believe that my colleagues should support this call for action."

And House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) said in a statement: "I intend to vote to provide the President of the United States the option to use military force in Syria."

We'll find out next week if enough members of Congress will say "no" to taking military action against Syria. Do you know how your Representative will vote? Now would be a very good time to find out. And let him know how you feel.

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

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