



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on September 9, 2013

Despite Big Push by Obama, Support for Syrian Attack Dwindles

Secretary of State John Kerry, following his meetings with more than two dozen European foreign ministers on Saturday in Lithuania, [insisted that his efforts were successful](#) in generating support for President Obama's planned attack on Syria. However, none of this support endorsed military action but only stated that a "clear and strong response" was needed without providing details. And then Kerry admitted that the United States had agreed "to provide additional information to those [skeptical] ministers who were not yet convinced that Assad orchestrated the attack."



In other words, it's a bridge too far: claiming that the attacks (which no doubt occurred) took place on direct orders from Assad.

The more the president and his handlers and promoters push the idea as justification for the impending attacks, the more the idea is failing to rally support for them. Britain's Parliament voted — twice — against supporting Obama. France continues to sit on its collective hands, waiting, it is claimed, for the final report from the UN inspectors to provide the smoking gun. That's going to be a long wait as Martin Nesirky, the chief UN spokesman for the matter, said there would be no "preliminary" report and that the final report will be available only "once the lab analysis is complete," suggesting it could be weeks or months.

White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough, appearing on CNN's *State of the Union* on Sunday, was pressed pretty hard about just how much support Obama really has from the international community and was forced, finally, to respond: "[None at this point.](#)" But he remained optimistic that if every member of Congress would just sit down and watch a few of those vetted videos on YouTube, they would know what to do:

I hope that every member of Congress, before he or she decides how they'll cast their vote, will look at those pictures....

Everybody believes that Bashar al-Assad used chemical weapons against his own people ... killing nearly 1,500 on August 21.

Well, not everybody. Unfortunately for McDonough and Obama, the votes are already in. Lawmakers are getting calls from constituents that are running [10 to 1 or more against military action](#) while informal polls show more than 190 members of the House either oppose such action outright or are leaning against, with barely 30 members supporting. That's awfully close to the 218 votes needed to send any resolution offered down to defeat and may be the reason some are suggesting that Speaker Boehner, [who supports the president in his effort](#), may not even bring the matter up when Congress



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returns from its break on Monday.

Over in the Senate, support is melting away as well. At the moment, an AP survey shows Obama support at a razor-thin 34-32, leaving 34 undecideds. That's a very long way from the estimate provided by the ever-enthusiastic war hawk Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who opined that "I think we're going to get 60 votes."

Ultra-liberal Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-Calif.) made the most sense in discussing the matter on NBC's *Meet the Press* on Sunday:

I haven't heard that Assad wants to use weapons against us. I haven't heard that he wants to use weapons against our allies, that he's moving them to terrorist organizations....

So for the president to say: "This is just, you know, a very quick thing and we're out of there" ... that's how long wars start.

Another ultra-liberal Democrat from California, Rep. Barbara Lee, [is voting no and explained why](#) on CNN's *State of the Union* on Sunday:

For me, first of all, these crimes against humanity ... it's horrendous....

What I worry about is more of this: More retaliation, more use of force, more efforts to escalate the war....

And so I worry that the unintended consequences could even be more stark and dire.

I'm very reluctant to authorize the use of force because I think the ramifications and unintended consequences could be very grave.

Even the president himself has admitted that his arguments to persuade may be [too thin and too late](#):

Failing to respond would send a signal to rogue nations ... that they can develop and use weapons of mass destruction and not pay a consequence....

[But it's] conceivable at the end of the day [that] I don't persuade a majority of the American people that [an attack] is the right thing to do.

While backing off on his [threat to filibuster](#) any attempt by the Senate to pass a resolution because it would delay the vote, Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) shifted emphasis to demanding that the Senate pass an amendment that any vote against Obama's plan would be binding on the president:

I will insist there is a full debate on this and I will insist that I get an amendment ... that the vote is binding — that the president cannot, if we vote him down, decide to go to war anyway.

That's the way I interpret the Constitution, and I will insist on at least one vote where we say, "this is a binding vote."

I would say the Constitution was intended to let Congress initiate war and the president [to] execute war, and I don't think any of that's changed.

Even the Vatican [held a four-hour Syria peace vigil](#) in St. Peter's Square on Saturday — the first of its kind in history — which was attended by an estimated 100,000 people protesting U.S. military action. Pope Francis directed his ire at both Assad and Obama, claiming they are "captivated by the idols of dominion and power" and that those gathered and others around the world must "cry out forcefully. Violence and war are never the way to peace. May the noise of weapons cease. War always marks the failure of peace; it is always a defeat for humanity."



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Upon his return from the G20 meeting this week the president has promised a full-on argument on television on Tuesday evening for his plan to attack Assad. With sentiment rising exponentially against such a move, the question must be asked: Who will be watching?

Photo of President Barack Obama: AP Images

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