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## 4 Ways the U.S. Is Violently Meddling In the Syrian Civil War

*American intervention in this brutal war has involved arming the rebels and training people how to kill.*

2/25/2014

As the Syrian civil war grinds on and the brutality that accompanies it mounts, calls for deeper American involvement and armed intervention have increased. The fact that public pressure and a deal with Russia staved off a bombing campaign five months ago hasn't stopped prominent voices to call for the Obama administration to do something, anything, to stop the bloodshed engulfing Syria and the wider Middle East. What's frequently missing from these calls to intervene is that the US is already deeply involved in the violence in Syria.

A recent call for intervention was published by the Washington Post on February 14. The author, former Clinton national security adviser Sandy Berger, argued for stopping Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad's atrocities against civilians by force.

"Hindering Assad's use of helicopters and jets to kill civilians would enable the moderate Syrian opposition to demonstrate that it has helped deliver some freedom from the constant fear of death from the air," wrote Berger. "There are many ways to achieve this goal with partners and allies,

from working with proxies in the region to airstrikes — actions limited in scope and that do not involve U.S. troops on the ground.”

Calls for more intervention were also aired in the New York Times. On February 10, Danny Postel and Nader Hashemi, academics and co-editors of *The Syria Dilemma*, wrote that Assad’s use of hunger as a weapon of war should prompt action by the international community in the form of organizing Syria’s “democratically oriented rebel groups to provide the necessary force on the ground” and “air cover.” While Postel and Hashemi are no hawks, their policy prescriptions for Syria echo Berger’s call for force.

But anti-war advocates and writers point out that any further intervention in Syria would be for U.S. interests, like weakening an ally of Iran, and would encourage Assad’s allies to step up their armament shipments. The carnage would continue, and perhaps increase.

In a sharp rejoinder to Postel’s and Hashemi’s op-ed, Foreign Policy in Focus contributor Rob Prince wrote: “Perhaps the sorriest assumption of their argument is that the United States can save the day and end the humanitarian tragedy in Syria by riding in on its white heavenly horse laden with cruise missiles and drones. Are they forgetting Washington’s long record of supporting totalitarian regimes in exchange for oil in the Middle East and elsewhere, and whose involvement in the Syrian tragedy is, incidentally, far from innocent?”

The interventionists have pointed to the bleak reality on the ground as justification for Western action. It is indeed a dark reality.

In parts of cities like Homs and Aleppo, Syrian government sieges have lead to starvation. In Yarmouk, a suburb in Damascus, more than 80 people have reportedly died from starvation. Malnutrition has become a major problem, and some residents have been reduced to eating cats and dogs.

The Syrian civil war has created millions of refugees, and in recent weeks, some 500,000 civilians were forced to flee Aleppo under heavy, sustained bombardment from Syrian armed forces. Inside the refugee camps set up in Jordan and Lebanon, life is difficult. Some Syrian women have turned to prostitution. Some families have sold off their teenage daughters.

The deaths in Syria continue to increase on both sides. The United Nations has stopped counting the number of dead because on-the-ground information is hard to come by. The last time the UN

released figures, it said over 100,000 had been killed. One pro-opposition activist group, the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, reported that over 140,000 have been killed.