

SPEAKING AT UN, OBAMA TRIES TO CLAIM HE WAS ALWAYS FOR DIPLOMACY IN SYRIA

I had seen several indications this morning that Obama planned to call for a diplomatic approach to the ongoing conflict in Syria despite the earlier indications that he intended to pursue a military strike even if the UK did not join and the UN did not provide a resolution authorizing force. I was hopeful that this new-found reliance on diplomacy would go all the way to calling for a ceasefire to provide safe conditions for the gathering and destruction of Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons.

Alas, my hopes were once again dashed as Obama fell far short of proposing a ceasefire and he wound up delivering very convoluted remarks as he tried to maintain the fiction that Bashar al-Assad's forces have been proven to have carried out the August 21 chemical weapons attack and that he favors diplomacy over military action. The quotations I will use here are from the Washington Post's transcript of his speech.

In a move that approaches Colin Powell's historic spinning of lies before the invasion of Iraq, Obama stated that there is no dispute that Syrian forces are responsible for the August 21 attack:

The evidence is overwhelming that the Assad regime used such weapons on August 21st. U.N. inspectors gave a clear accounting that advanced rockets fired large quantities of sarin gas at civilians. These rockets were fired from a regime-controlled neighborhood and landed in opposition neighborhoods.

It's an insult to human reason and to the legitimacy of this institution to suggest that anyone other than the

regime carried out this attack.

As I stated shortly after the UN report came out, the report did not show that the rockets for which they determined trajectories carried sarin. That argument is strengthened further by the subsequent realization by others that not one of the environmental samples from the Moadamiyah site came back as positive for sarin. So now one of the famous lines that cross at a Syrian military installation has to be disregarded entirely because there is no evidence of sarin at the point of rocket impact. [Look for the website and reporters for the linked post to be attacked mercilessly. Both the Global Research site I linked to in one questioning post and the Mint Press site which suggested a Saudi false flag operation have been attacked savagely as to their credibility. Remarkably, I have yet to see any of those attacks actually contradict the questions that have been raised.*]

Let's take a look at Obama's logical gymnastics as he tried to justify both his initial intent to attack Syria and then his rediscovery that he prefers a diplomatic approach. Early in his Syria comments, he claimed "A peace process is stillborn." He gave no evidence of what, if any, role the US played in the peace process. In fact, his next sentence provides a partial clue to just how the peace process died: "America and others have worked to bolster the moderate opposition, but extremist groups have still taken root to exploit the crisis."

You see, those moderate groups that we are arming are not able to defeat the extremists that others are arming. Sounds like a child caught fighting who says "he hit me back first".

So that background of a stillborn peace process is why, even before the weak evidence from the UN that the US is misrepresenting came out, Obama insisted that he had to attack Assad. Obama's ploy to support his actions approached a George W. Bush administration level of disdain

for the UN itself as he supplied his rationalization:

Now, I know that in the immediate aftermath of the attack there were those who questioned the legitimacy of even a limited strike in the absence of a clear mandate from the Security Council. But without a credible military threat, the Security Council had demonstrated no inclination to act at all.

Yes, today Obama stood in front of the UN General Assembly and openly said that he has the right to carry out a military attack unilaterally if there is “no inclination to act at all” from the UN Security Council.

But fear not! Obama has actually been in favor of diplomacy all along (well, actually only since he and Kerry got boxed into it by Lavrov, Putin, Assad and Rouhani, but who’s keeping score anyway; certainly not the corporate press in the US):

However, as I’ve discussed with President Putin for over a year, most recently in St. Petersburg, my preference has always been a diplomatic resolution to this issue. And in the past several weeks, the United States, Russia and our allies have reached an agreement to place Syria’s chemical weapons under international control and then to destroy them.

But of course, all this diplomacy soft-talk still has to have room for Obama to blast the shit out of Assad later if he decides it’s necessary:

The Syrian government took a first step by giving an accounting of its stockpiles. Now, there must be a strong Security Council resolution to verify that the Assad regime is keeping its commitments. And there must be

consequences if they fail to do so. If we cannot agree even on this, then it will show that the United Nations is incapable of enforcing the most basic of international laws.

You know, Obama might just want to tread carefully on upbraiding the UN about its capability to enforce “the most basic of international laws”. Last time I looked, there were basic international laws against torture, wars of aggression and extrajudicial killing. Just sayin’.

***Update:** In a new post at Brown Moses, we learn from Dan Kaszeta that while sarin itself was not found at Moadamiyah in the environmental samples, sarin degradation products were. That means there is evidence that at least some sarin was at the site. It is very encouraging to see questions met with evidence rather than attacks on the questioner’s credibility. Informed back and forth analysis of this sort is very constructive in attempting to find the truth.