Military Intervention In Syria : 8 Possible Explanations Why President Obama Met Today With John McCain, The Dean Of Blunder.

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Michael Matthew Bloomer, September 3, 2013

WASHINGTON (AP), September 2, 2013 — President Barack Obama, seeking a congressional endorsement for U.S. military intervention in civil war-wracked Syria, is inviting two leading Capitol Hill foreign policy hawks to the White House in efforts to sell the idea to a nation deeply scarred by more than a decade of war. . . Sen. John McCain, Obama's White House opponent in 2008, will be joined for the talks later Monday by Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, who like McCain has argued that Obama must not only punish the Syrian regime with surgical missile strikes but must seek to change the course of the civil war and oust President Bashar Assad from power. [click for complete Bloomberg BusinessWeek story]

I wonder, why would President Obama seek John McCain's counsel, a man with a reputation as short-sighted, irresponsibly bellicose, and often inept when he assesses anything containing the word "military"? Eight possible explanations (two are tongue-in-cheek) follow below after a setting-the-stage introduction.

Read on . . .

'Will no one rid me of this troublesome Senator?'

Michael Matthew Bloomer, They Will Say *ANYTHING!*, *September 2, 2013*

Quote based upon the words ascribed to England's King Henry II in

regard to the "troublesome" Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket

Now, truly, I don't wish upon Senator John McCain the ending that followed for Thomas Becket soon after four of King Henry's quite literal knights rode off to Canterbury, perhaps not initially to dispatch the Archbishop, but in the end, dispatch him they did. I wouldn't squash a cricket in my kitchen. Nevertheless, while wishing the courageous war-tested John McCain no bodily harm, with deep formality and ever so politely, I request he consider the following concerns encased below in a nifty blue box:ing:

- **please compare your past military-related predictions of easy success with the eventual results, in Iraq, in Afghanistan;**

- **check the accuracy of your dismissive estimates of our enemies' resilience;**
- **ponder your inconsistent opinions of a President' war powers;**
- **mull over your reflexive urge to expand military action beyond what many within the armed forces brass consider "sane";**
- **focus like a spotlight on the human costs - U.S., allies, civilians - resulting from your often haphazard or irresponsible definitions of "national security," and "imminent threat";**
- **do the math and analyze the monetary costs of our often questionable military adventures regardless of any private sector "fiscal stimulus" provided by endless war - consider opportunity costs; and**
- **once finished those tasks, turn to face the implications, and then,**
- ***shut the heck up.***

Respectfully submitted.

Is that really too much to ask? Probably. So then, short of interminably awaiting the Senator's responses to the above, let's travel another avenue. What light does President Obama's choice to meet McCain (and that cipher, Lindsey Graham) shine on the President's perception of McCain? Admittedly indirect, adequate light shines to illuminates both Obama's and McCain's attributes, political and personal. Viewing McCain through President Obama's political lens also makes McCain less opaque, if not more understandable.

For starters, what possible good outcome *in re* Syria did the President believe would follow from a sit down with John "Doctor Wrong" McCain? Did he seek wayward advice in an effort to touch all bases? If so, then why not assemble as well all the first round Jeopardy losers as well? Where was the brain trust known as the cast of the Housewives of New Jersey? They have many opinions and enjoy sharing them. Failing these, Newt Gingrich ought to have been on the guest list. Accompanied by his peerless *verborum bombus*, Gingo's always chock full of stunningly capricious and harebrained guidance. I mean, if you're firm in your desire to listen to *McCain*, then why not include all these other brainiacs? Why leave any stones unturned, or, à la George Bernard Shaw, leave any turns unstoned? No shortage of astounding misjudgment exists, if that's what you need. *I'm* available.

Back to Mr. front-and-center, John McCain. Below, read a small selection of McCain's incontrovertible counterfactuals, no comments necessary, inasmuch as, well, *res ipsa loquitur*:

We're going to prevail and we will win and it'll be one of the best things that's happened to America
and the world in a long time 'cause it'll reverberate throughout the Middle East.

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'Let me offer my thumb drive!'[/caption]

Senator John McCain, on the Iraq war, "Meet the Press" interview, March 3, 2003

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"[T]here's no doubt in my mind that we will prevail and there's no doubt in my mind, once these people are gone,

that we will be welcomed as liberators."

March 24, 2003, edition of Hardball -- several days after the U.S.-led coalition had invaded Iraq

&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&

"Afghanistan, we don't read about anymore, because it's succeeded."

Charlie Rose Show, October 31, 2005

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And yesterday, although a bit loopy in syntax, we know what he means:

"Every time the US has acted decisively there is no retaliation against the retaliations,

so I am not worried about the retaliations."

McCain says Israel shaken by US dallying
The Times of Israel, September 1, 2013

The Resistance of Memory. The last quote's a doozy even for McCain (and many more doozies exist), Therein, McCain's clearly forgotten the most provocative Iraqi retaliatory response to the coalition's actions against it during the initial Gulf War. One DOD summary of Iraq's SCUD missile attacks, *Iraq's Scud Ballistic Missiles*, highlighted their retaliatory attacks against Israel, *i.e.*, the kind of strikes that McCain believes do not occur "when we act decisively." Were we *in*decisive when we let loose the dogs of war in 1991? And these data seem like retaliation data to me:

F. Scud Incidents in Israel

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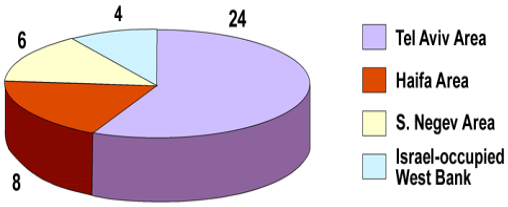

Figure 6. DOD Information Paper, Iraq's Scud Ballistic Missiles, Released July 25, 2000 -- Iraqi SCUD strikes against Israel, 1991 Gulf War[/caption]

Iraq fired 42 Scuds that reached Israel or nearby areas of Jordan beginning on January 18, 1991. Iraq launched these missiles from Western Iraq against three general target areas Tel Aviv, Haifa, and the Negev Desert in Southern Israel, specifically, Dimona where Israel had nuclear facility. Figure 6 summarizes the general impact areas for these strikes. [complete report]

There are other specific examples, but, broadly, the word "retaliation" defines, in general, the entire spate of terrorism throughout the Middle East even before 9/11, and especially related to our invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Is McCain willfully ignorant? No. He *knows* these facts, once accessible, stored nowadays somewhere in apparently poorly indexed mental memory files. Just 24 hours ago, in Israel, he proclaimed with the smug authority he often marshals,

"Every time the US has acted decisively there is no retaliation against the retaliations, so I am not worried about the retaliations."

He's not worried. Dandy. Comedian Steve Martin's signature exclamation, *"EXCUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUSE ME!"* applies quite nicely. In truth, the Senator's words would stun many experienced and qualified psychiatrists, and signify to them a serious memory insufficiency. Although through no fault of his own - this is not mere political artifice - at 77, due to advancing age perhaps cockamamie now approaches dementia.

With that settled - for me anyway - the initial question remains: Why did President Obama choose to meet with John McCain, the Prince of Error, and to publicly announce it? Possible answers include:

> ***1. to pander to him in an effort to shut him up*** - like letting your Mad Uncle Jake carve the Thanksgiving turkey to assure a whine-free evening. But, in reality, its counterintuitive and counterproductive in spades to provide the talkative publicity hound John McCain with a highly publicized meeting and expect him to quiet down afterward. Obama and the White House staff know this very well, indeed. So why be seen with him? Inexplicable? Perhaps. Read on.
>
> ***2. to talk him down*** - This reason for Obama's sit down with McCain seems more realistic. The White House always has justifiable concerns whenever John McCain opens his mouth on foreign interventions. His stance always hyperbolic, the President may have tried to convince him that courting a wide-ranging Syrian military adventure may not only lead to unimaginable complications, but also may spook any allies who still remain open to supporting us. Extreme warmongering makes England's David Cameron far less likely to persuade Commons to revisit the issue about which they last week gave a big thumbs down.
>
> ***3. to split the difference*** - For Obama, there are worse things than having McCain on your side. Having him running around in his loose cannon costume would potentially cause more havoc than having McCain in your corner. So, how to accomplish this? Political bargaining ,of course. In this scenario, Obama perhaps offered McCain something he wants - for example, promise stepped up military aid for Syrian rebels, not boots on the ground, but increased weaponry, a few more CIA posses, increased Intel, whatever - for something the President wanted, most notably for McCain to put a lid on it and let the administration call the shots with a strike against Syria which, at the outset at least, is far more limited (rational) than McCain desires. McCain's flattered and grudgingly satisfied, and there you go, Bob's your uncle.
>
> ***4. to introduce him to reality*** - McCain's like a guy on a 10th story ledge holding an entire country in his grip and, with maniacal giggles, threatening to just chuck it

overboard. As always, as mentioned above, he proposes a Syrian intervention on a Napoleonic scale; yesterday, about Syria he said a military strike

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The Great Johndini

'Arm yourself and look into my eye.'
[/caption]

"can't just be, in my view, pinprick cruise missiles." Today, it was, *"the best way to eliminate the threat of Bashar Assad's continued use of chemical weapons -- and, by the way, we know he's used them a number of times before -- would be the threat of his removal from power. And that, I believe, has to be part of -- of what we tell the American people."*

In truth, McCain stands just a step away from the border of recommending a general Middle east conflict:

"And this is a horrible [situation] -- two years ago [Libya], this was much easier. We've let it deteriorate to the point where it's extremely difficult and we have now a regional conflict. And those who believe that this conflict can be contained are wrong. Already, Jordan is destabilized, Lebanon. Syria has become a haven for Al Qaida, with Syria and Iraq, and it's unraveling. The whole region is going to be engulfed by this, and that would be a threat to the United States vital national security." [full transcript of September 1, 2013 Face the Nation appearance]

So, with McCain blustering all about, a sensible President would explain to him the truth of his own words. And that may help decipher the President's otherwise incomprehensible decision to pow wow earlier today, wherein a patient Commander In Chief may have explained:

"Yes, John, you've put your finger on it. The entire Middle east is, if not now, then close

thereupon to a regional military conflict, although with due respect to you opinion, it is not presently so. But close. Therefore, Senator, may your counsel of a wide-ranging U.S. military intervention there that would go far beyond what we now plan would, if the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan mean anything, bring about possibly cataclysmic results on a world-wide scale. With respect."

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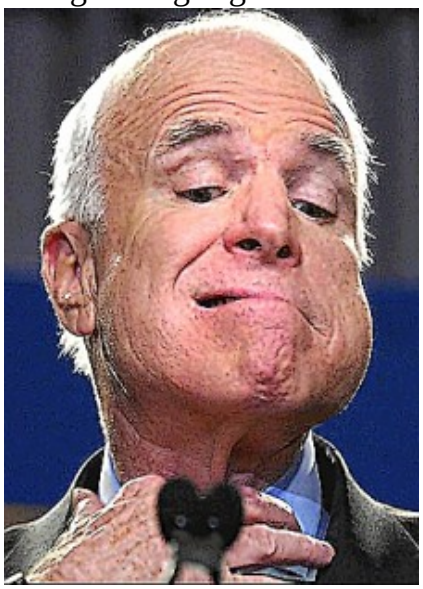


Before I speak, I shall adjust my foreign tie. No, seriously folks . . .[/caption]

Although McCain seems blithely unaware of it, his advice of a wild-assed all-in Syrian beat-down would very likely bring about the very destruction of the micro-dot of Middle Eastern stability. Submitted: Only a person with less sense than a donkey on Quaaludes would advise such a supremely - nakedly - provocative act. Obama likely tried to convince McCain of his folly, or at least keep his attention for a few moments.

5. to sound out McCain on Congressional authorization and the War Powers Resolution - McCain told an Israeli interviewer yesterday that the President has “encouraged our enemies” by seeking congressional support for a military response. That sentiment uncovers a surprising lack of concern with consistency, assuming he's aware of the nature or importance of his inconsistency. Conservatives are notoriously comfortable with their own inconsistencies, if they recognize them at all. Therefore, let's consider our nation's 2011 Libyan adventure, and Senator McCain's role.

On June 21, 2011, McCain spoke from the Senate floor and chided the Obama administration for not seeking authorization for U.S. military intervention in Libya which

began months before on March 19, 2011. By the time McCain spoke from the Senate floor, the U.S. had relinquished to NATO its enforcement of the no-fly zone on March 24, 2011, which signified the carrying out of Obama's limited engagement policy.

McCain's June 21st speech coincided with the House threat of a vote to cut off funds for any further military involvement in Libya. McCain strongly opposed this, his speech in June was primarily to rally support for continued funding of a U.S. military presence. As for *today's* John McCain, note that in that June 2011 speech, he scolded the administration for maintaining that the level of military action in Libya ***did not require*** Congressional authorization. McCain argued, *then:*

"I know the administration has made it clear that it believes it does not need a congressional authorization such as this because it is their view that U.S. military operations in Libya do not rise to the level of hostility . . . I certainly agree that actions such as these do not amount to a full-fledged state of war , and I will certainly grant that I am no legal scholar, but I find it hard to swallow that U.S. Armed Forces dropping bombs and killing enemy personnel in a foreign country does not amount to a state of hostilities. . . What is worse, this is just the latest way in which this administration has mishandled its responsibility with regard to Congress. The President could have asked to authorize our intervention in Libya months ago, and I believe it could have received a strong, though certainly not unanimous, show of support." Congressional Record, S3941, June 21, 2011**]**

Yet, in Israel yesterday, *in re* Syria, McCain again scolded the President, but did so by arguing ***against*** his own June 2011 argument in *re* Libya, asserting the President "encouraged our enemies" by, ***this*** time, ***seeking*** congressional support for a military response. On Sunday's *Face the Nation*, he explained:

When Mr. Obama said the use of chemical weapons in Syria would mark a "red line" that Assad wouldn't be allowed to cross with impunity, McCain said, "he didn't say, 'It's a red line - and by the way I'm going to have to seek the approval of Congress.' He said it was a red line, and that the United States of America would act. And that's a big difference, and that's one of the reasons why this is so problematic. . ." [and] [McCain] warned, "the consequences of the Congress of the United States overriding a decision of the President of the United States of this magnitude are really very, very dangerous." **[**full story**]**

So, does this really need comment, except ***HUH?*** Differences between the two situations exist, but they militate toward even ***stronger reasons*** than existed during the Libyan crisis for President Obama to now seek Congressional authorization regarding Syria. Unlike McCain's charge against the President's 2011 Libyan actions where McCain asserted that U.S. armed forces *"dropping bombs and killing enemy personnel in a foreign country"*

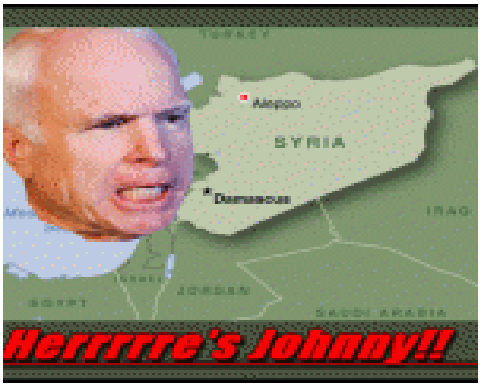
equals *"a state of hostilities,"* presently, President Obama and the administration speak in no uncertain terms, most notably Secretary of State John Kerry: any U.S. military action *will* be hostile, *quite* hostile, even if limited in scope and in duration.

That's *"hostile* as in *"hostilities,"* Senator McCain, the very condition that you claimed required the President to seek Congressional authorization during the 2011 Libyan crisis. Notwithstanding, and seemingly not realizing, the flagrant inconsistency in his positions in 2011 and today, John McCain.2013 shakes his finger at the President, but this time, ***for daring to seek*** Congressional consultation and authorization.

When does John McCain, "maverick" become John McCain, "schmaverick"? If a concern over a war powers struggle with McCain was a rationale for Obama's meeting with him, it was a good reason, and hopefully will result in McCain dropping the issue. (In fact, his point is moot since the President now seeks Congressional authorization, which officially began at today's Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing.)

5. ***to appeal to McCain admirers and loyalists*** **-** but why? Perhaps the President and his political advisors believe that McCain's loud and vocal support will draw in certain radically right-wing constituencies who would normally knee-jerk their negative opinions of anything the President does, plans, proposes, or thinks of proposing. Perhaps that's it. After all, the administration surely hopes to reduce the caterwauling on the far right and having a generally uncomplaining McCain on board can advance that goal. This proposed intervention has "uphill climb" written all over it. Having a few usually recalcitrant "McCanaanites" help with the hike uphill, even though holding their noses, will support Obama (if, in the end, his true goal is to attack Syria, and not to have the Congress stay his hand. But that's another story for tomorrow. . .)

6. to provide a loving intervention **-** Perhaps friends, family, colleagues, and the President himself believe the good Senator needs a time-



out. Yet, like all war addicts, the Senator needs to be actively confronted with the hard truth by a caring cadre of those who love him, or at the least, do not yet hate him. Everyone knows of the President's warm heart, and the First Lady's activities on behalf of mental health care. Senator McCain's behavior, never entirely "heads up," deteriorates

daily, as we have seen.

He contradicts his own statements without pause. Without so much as a "how dee doo" in reality's direction, he suggests activities that could quite easily lead to planetary-wide conflict. He appears to have forgotten the 1991 Gulf War, and other U.S. misadventures since, not the least, Iraq and Afghanistan, the latter of which continues apace at a reduced level. His instability grows more noticeable as the prospects for *less* war move beyond his direct control. So, a loving intervention is not beyond the realm of reasons for the President's tête-à-tête with a man whose own tête is positively scrambled.

7. to obey the demented Martian nanobeings now controlling our President's mind - The President's present obsession with military power indicates a man not himself. His bellicosity, while sometimes on display in the past, has risen very quickly towards Syria, like a sudden and serious fever. True, the use of WMD by the Assad forces - as yet incompletely proven - merits serious attention, and perhaps much increased non-military sanctions. But for Obama, a man of peaceful nature, to resort, apparently from the git-go, to a military intervention strikes many as uncharacteristic of his personality.

There is, of course, but one explanation, teensy weensy Martian entities have invaded and occupied the President's brain. From there they direct his every thought. And everyone knows Martians are war-like by nature [see here, and here, and, *especially*, here, from CIA declassified files]. They've named their planet after Mars, the Greek god of war, *for Heaven's sake!* So, in general, citizens, look to the skies. Be on the look-out for alien nanobeings, so small they cannot be detected by even our most powerful microscope. And, in particular, pray for our President's deliverance from his itinerant planetary nanobums.

The end. That's my list of possible reasons President Obama chose to meet with John McCain [and Lindsey Graham.] If you think of any more possibilities just add them in the comments section, unless you are a Martian nanobum. If you are, well, ***GIT!***

Conclusions. What's the best guess or guesses from the above list?

- On a serious note, my guesses are 1, 2, and 3.
- Number 4 is unlikely, most people know McCain long ago abandoned his relationship with reality, particularly regarding foreign policy.
- Number 5, regarding War Powers, etc., well, that's essentially moot at this point, and, in *realpolitik*, as we've seen, John McCain has a record of inconsistency on presidential war powers. He counseled caution in Libya, and now chides the President for asking Congress for approval.
- Number 6. Though this is obviously (I hope) tongue in cheek, I ask you, is it not true an

intervention would be advisable? John McCain, a true American hero, to me and many others, has devolved to wild swings, unexpected course reversals, a man who more often than ever before contradicts well-known facts, and himself. McCain may have gone 'round the twist, certainly he's not mad as a hatter, but he displays the symptoms of the three disorders listed below as described in the mental health profession's Bible, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-V):

- ***"loopy"*:** a. eccentric; b. befuddled or confused,
- ***"wacky"*:** odd or irrational, ***and***
- ***"dotty"*:** eccentric, combined with being very enthusiastic or infatuated with one's own eccentric ideas or beliefs.

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'*Even if I were allowed to leave,*

I just would not do it!'
[/caption]

- Finally, number 7. I am one of many native denizens of New York's South Shore of Long Island who, although a Maryland resident since 1981, knows successful Martian attacks have occurred in Missouri, with the mass of the Martian contingent now residing in Branson, families now in their third generation. Is there another way to explain Branson, Missouri? (See picture at right) According to my various institutionalized sources, these Nano-Bransonites possess the power to strike at any target with submicroscopic warriors carrying stupid genes that replace smart genes in any human brains they strike, and without Congressional approval either. We ought to keep a close watch on the President, his meeting today with John McCain and Lindsey Graham was so improbable, one can feel Nano-Bransonite claws all over it. Be alert for Nano-Bransonite warriors so small they cannot be detected by our most powerful microscope. Be on the lookout.

In the days ahead, when not scanning the your living rooms for Nano-Bransons, *also* watch for John McCain. He's still a potent opponent of whatever he opposes, although don't look for rational argument, farsightedness, or consistency over time. Expect bluster, with hurricane force winds, from all directions.

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4. Snapshot Series : Military Strike On Syria – Short, Limited, Surgical – It's Easy Peasy
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8. Despite John McCain's Push For Military Intervention In Syria, What's The Rush?
9. Does Syria Really Need More Heating Up?
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