

Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on June 3, 2013

McCain's Third-rate Escapade in Syria

“Third-rate men, of course, exist in all countries, but it is only here that they are in full control of the state,” wrote H.L. Mencken in his 1922 essay “On Being an American.”

A current case of third-rate performance is the surprise visit by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., with the rebels in Syria opposing President Bashar al-Assad's regime and McCain's call for the United States to become more militarily immersed in that dysfunctional nation's increasingly bloody civil war.



A critic of President Obama's apparent reluctance to get more involved in another war in the Middle East, McCain charged that Obama's "red line" on Syria is written in "disappearing ink."

A failure by the United States to get more involved in Syria, argues McCain, will further destabilize the region, as if the previous, enormously costly U.S. interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya have resulted in increased stability. Meeting with rebel leaders, McCain was accompanied on his trip by the leader of the Supreme Military Council of the Free Syrian Army, Gen. Salim Idris.

“We need American help to have change on the ground,” said Idris. “We are now in a very critical situation. What we want from the U.S. government is to (make) the decision to support the Syrian revolution with weapons and ammunition, anti-tank missiles and anti-aircraft weapons.”

Assad announced recently in a television interview that “Syria has received the first shipment of Russian anti-aircraft S-300 rockets. The rest of the shipment will arrive later today.”

With the U.S. federal debt already at \$16.8 trillion (more than 100 percent of GDP), not counting the unfunded liabilities of Medicare, Social Security and other outsized federal obligations (taking the red ink to \$90 trillion, or over 500 percent of GDP), there was nothing in the news of McCain's trip about the senator making a surprise stop in Riyadh to ask the Saudis to pick up the tab for the Syrian rebels' anti-aircraft weapons — and nothing from McCain about how pitting American anti-aircraft weapons against Russian anti-aircraft rockets would help stabilize the region or the world.

There also was nothing from McCain about the likelihood of U.S. weapons supplied to the rebels in Syria finding their way into the ranks of al-Qaeda and other anti-Western Islamic extremists, as occurred with weapons sent by the United States to the mujahedin “freedom fighters” opposing the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

And there's this from *The Guardian* in London: "Horrific video of a Syrian rebel commander eating the heart or lung of a dead government soldier has aroused furious international controversy, fueling an already heated debate over Western support for the armed uprising against President Bashar al-Assad's regime."

The proud perpetrator, Khaled al-Hamad, aka Abu Sakkar, said he also has footage of himself sawing a Syrian government soldier into “small and large pieces.”



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on June 3, 2013

On May 30, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the U.S.-funded news organization, reported that the leader of the strongest anti-Assad jihadist group in Syria, the Al-Nusra Front, had “pledged his allegiance to al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahri, who has a \$25 million bounty on his head.”

Ralph R. Reiland is an associate professor of economics and the B. Kenneth Simon professor of free enterprise at Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.