



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on March 22, 2012

John McCain: “Shameful” That U.S. Hasn’t Intervened in Syria

Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) says it is “shameful” that NATO hasn’t acted to suppress the unrest in Syria.

At an [event sponsored by the Atlantic Council](#), McCain continued beating the war drum for American military intervention in yet another Middle Eastern civil conflict.

“Is it now the policy of NATO that we will stand by as rulers kill their people by the thousands, and our alliance won’t even discuss what we might do to help stop them? This is shameful,” McCain told the Capitol Hill crowd gathered to discuss the upcoming NATO summit to be held in Chicago in May.



For his part, current Secretary-General of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen claims that the military alliance has no plan to begin any operations in Syria. The former Danish Prime Minister went on to say that he “does not envision” such an intervention.

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While stating that NATO strongly condemns the brutality of the Assad regime, Rasmussen [told reporters in February](#) that he believes that “the allies find that a regional solution to the problem in Syria is the best way forward.”

According to insiders, the deployment of NATO forces to Damascus is not on the official agenda for [the summit in Chicago](#).

Obviously, Senator McCain is dismayed by NATO’s reluctance to fly the flag of globalism over camps in Syria. He declared:

Shame on us and shame on the alliance, if we neglect our responsibilities to support brave peoples who are struggling and dying in an unfair fight for the same values that are at the heart of our alliance.

One topic that will certainly dominate the discussions at the NATO event will be the future of Afghanistan. Leaders will likely lay out their respective opinions as to the goals that should be set and met for governing the transition of control over military operations in Afghanistan from NATO to domestic Afghan security forces.

Additionally, NATO member nations will need to discover some common ground on which to construct a post-transition Afghanistan policy.

Despite the thousands of American troops who have died ostensibly freeing that nation from the Taliban — an organization now being invited by Hillary Clinton to contribute to the building of a peacetime governing partnership — McCain touts the involvement of the United States and NATO as a success.



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In order to keep an American finger in the pot of Afghan administration, the one-time GOP presidential candidate suggests that the tack taken by NATO should be one of “international commitment” to the region, rather than “abandonment.”

There was no comment by the Senator on the abandonment of constitutional principles that would be required for any involvement in these foreign conflicts.

Worried that the United States might actually allow another sovereign nation to govern itself without our continuing contribution, retired General [David Barno](#) (who, like McCain, is a member of the internationalist Council on Foreign Relations) told the audience that, “Reaching some type of strategic partnership agreement with [Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai’s] government and having that be a key point from the outcome of the summit would be a tremendous success and we’re not at all certain that that’s going to happen as we look ahead.” General Barno commanded coalition armed forces in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2005.

Senator McCain echoed the general’s warning. McCain recommended that the United States extend its role in Afghanistan by drafting a Strategic Partnership Agreement with the government of President Karzai.

This official arrangement could, McCain said, permit the United States “to continue taking the fight to Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, thereby ensuring that those groups can never again pose a military threat to Afghanistan, our allies, and us.”

Again, there was no corresponding explanation offered by the Senator as to the military threat posed to the United States by the Taliban or al-Qaeda, nor did he delve into the constitutional source for the authority of the U.S. military to defend the security of Afghanistan or any other nation.

Seemingly, Senator McCain could not have chosen a less hospitable climate in which to blow the trumpet of Afghan intervention.

Has the Senator not heard that an American Army Staff Sergeant (Robert Bales) is [accused of having killed 16 Afghan civilians](#) in cold blood? Has he not heard the subsequent rising din of voices in that country and our own demanding an end to the now-decade long American military occupation of Afghanistan?

Perhaps Senator McCain has also forgotten about the [burning of copies on the Koran by American troops](#) that occurred only a month ago? For now, Afghan citizens are burning American flags and soldiers in effigy, but should our commitment to continuing our control of the country remain firm as is being promoted by McCain, the attacks will move from mannequins to men.

The protests that followed the burning of the Islamic holy book resulted in the [death of six American servicemen and 30 civilians](#). So inflamed was the outrage that President Karzai remarked that he is at “[the end of the rope](#)” regarding the perpetuation of American military involvement in his country.

Undaunted, however, the commanding general of U.S. forces in Afghanistan reported to Congress that [the war is still “on track”](#) and that American forces will continue their mission until at least 2014, the date set by President Obama for withdrawal.

McCain is certainly on board with delaying the deployment. “Though much of the news over the past month has been discouraging, it does not change the national security interests that are stake in Afghanistan for all NATO countries. Nor does it mean the war is lost. It is not.”

It would be instructive and enlightening for all if Senator McCain would have referred to the



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declaration of war made by Congress as provided for in the Constitution. (As a historic aside, the last time Congress approved a declaration of war was on June 5, 1942, against Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania.) Or, in the alternative, if he would have been a bit clearer in the definition of the American security interests in Afghanistan and how those interests should be inextricably intertwined with those of the continent of Europe.

Ignoring those questions, McCain declared his desire that the United States remain irrevocably bound to the protection of Europe security.

To that end, McCain mentioned that a prime spot on the NATO summit agenda will be given to the so-called "Smart Defense" initiative. Drafters of that program promote it as a plan to foster cooperation among member nations in the "developing, acquiring and maintaining military capabilities to meet current security problems in accordance with the new NATO strategic concept. That means pooling and sharing capabilities, setting priorities and coordinating efforts better."

Commending the plan, McCain said:

As we have seen in Libya and Afghanistan, it is essential for NATO countries to make intelligent defense investments that foster interoperability and complementary capabilities. But what Smart Defense cannot become ... is an excuse for our NATO allies to cut their defense budgets even further. Frankly, it should not be an excuse for America to do the same.

To summarize, a sitting American Senator is on record recommending that the military of the United States should be deployed in the defense of Europe, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria. Further, he decries any effort by other lawmakers to cut the defense budget if such reductions would limit our ability to serve as the combat arm of the transatlantic organization or the world.



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