



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 18, 2012

## More Rhetoric to Encourage Syria Intervention

So anxious, it seems, are Washington officials to get involved in Syria that they have admitted falsifying information to manipulate nations into getting onboard. Recently, the United States has made claims that Russia is shipping weapons to Syria, but the *New York Times* [reports](#) that a senior Defense Department official admitted that U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton intentionally made false claims regarding a shipment of Russian weapons in order to “put the Russians in a difficult position.”



The *Times* reports, “Mrs. Clinton’s claim about the helicopters, administration officials said, is part of a calculated effort to raise the pressure on Russia to abandon President Bashar al-Assad, its main ally in the Middle East.”

In response to Clinton’s allegations, Russian foreign minister Sergey V. Lavrov accused the United States of hypocrisy, asserting that it has been supplying weapons to be used against demonstrators in other areas of the Middle East. He also stated that Russia is not supplying weapons that could be used in the civil war.

“We are not providing Syria or any other place with things which can be used in struggle with peaceful demonstrators, unlike the United States, which regularly supplies such equipment to this region,” Lavrov said.

In defense of Clinton’s statements, White House press secretary Jay Carney said, “What Secretary Clinton said was a continuation of what we’ve been saying.”

“The situation in Syria is obviously terrible. Assad’s brutality is unacceptable. He will go down in history as a tyrant who will be loathed by generations of Syrians who are the victims of his brutality,” he added.

Members of Congress and of the Obama administration have been looking to get involved in Syria, mostly citing humanitarian causes such as the recent massacre of over 90 people in Houla. Immediately, the United States, France, Great Britain, and Germany blamed al-Assad for the massacre and expelled Syrian’s ambassadors from their countries in protest.

But later reports increasingly pointed to evidence that the massacre was not in fact caused by al-Assad, but by anti-al-Assad rebel forces. The *National Review* writes:

But according to [a new report](#) in Germany’s leading daily, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), the Houla massacre was in fact committed by anti-Assad Sunni militants, and the bulk of the victims were member of the Alawi and Shia minorities, which have been largely supportive of Assad. For its account of the massacre, the report cites opponents of Assad, who, however, declined to have their names appear in print out of fear of reprisals from armed opposition groups.

At the time, the United States unquestionably blamed Assad’s regime for the slaughter.

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said, “We hold the Syrian government responsible for



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this slaughter of innocent lives, This massacre is the most unambiguous indictment to date of the Syrian government's flagrant violations of its U.N. Security Council obligations."

Likewise, the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International jumped on board with anti-Assad rhetoric.

Meanwhile, a number of lawmakers were using that massacre as a means to push for military intervention in Syria.

Senator John McCain was [outraged](#) by the news of what took place in Syria and has called for greater international intervention. Calling Obama's policies in Syria "feckless," McCain said, "This is a shameful episode in American history. And it's really an abdication of everything that America stands for and believes in. And on Memorial Day, we should be especially moved by this incredible inaction and failure to assert American leadership."

Presidential candidate Mitt Romney was also banging the war drum, and used the entire incident to question President Obama's leadership in the Middle East.

"After nearly a year and a half of slaughter, it is far past time for the United States to begin to lead and put an end to the Assad regime. President Obama can no longer ignore calls from congressional leaders in both parties to take more assertive steps," Romney said. "The United States should work with partners to organize and arm Syrian opposition groups so they can defend themselves. The bloodshed in Houla makes clear that our goal must be a new Syrian government."

Unfortunately, it seems it was those opposition groups with whom Romney recommended that the U.S. military work that caused the massacre.

But despite this, the *Washington Post* confirmed that Syrian rebels have received an "influx of arms with Gulf neighbors' money" through U.S. coordination:

Syrian rebels battling the regime of President Bashar al-Assad have begun receiving significantly more and better weapons in recent weeks, an effort paid for by Persian Gulf nations and coordinated in part by the United States, according to opposition activists and U.S. and foreign officials.

A senior State Department official said, "We are increasing our nonlethal assistance to the Syrian opposition, and we continue to coordinate our efforts with friends and allies in the region and beyond in order to have the biggest impact on what we are collectively doing."

But despite claims of nonlethal assistance, there are already reports that the United States has been involved in covert warfare in Syria.

A leaked [e-mail](#), written by Reva Bhalla, director of analysis for the Austin, Texas-based global intelligence firm Stratfor, reveals details of a December 6 Pentagon meeting attended by members of the U.S. Air Force Strategic Studies Group, as well as other military officers.

Bhalla learned that despite official assertions by the U.S. government, there were already NATO powers on the ground in Syria. The e-mail states:

After a couple hours of talking, they said without saying that SOF [Special Operations Forces] teams (presumably from US, UK, France, Jordan, Turkey) are already on the ground focused on recce [reconnaissance] missions and training opposition forces.

[The mission's purpose is to] commit guerrilla attacks, assassination campaigns, try to break the



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back of the Alawite forces, elicit collapse from within.

According to Bhalla's e-mail, the goal was to "prepare contingencies and be ready to act within 2-3 months."

Russia's relationship with Syria has been an obstacle to overcome, however. The *New York Times* reports:

Syria has long been a staunch Russian ally and is home to Russia's only naval base on the Mediterranean Sea. But American officials have warned the Russians that Mr. Assad's exit is inevitable, and that if Russia wants to preserve its influence in Syria, it needs to be part of the effort to arrange a political transition. If Russia is viewed as complicit in the Assad government's attack on its own people, these officials said, it would be shunned by any new Syrian government, as well as by the rest of the Arab world, which is increasingly appalled by the violence.

The U.S. government has relied heavily on fear, humanitarianism, and a sense of urgency to advocate for intervention in Syria. Secretary Clinton has stated that the United Nations Security Council must make a decision by mid-July because "if there is no discernible movement by then, it will be very difficult to extend a mission that is increasingly dangerous for the observers on the ground."

*Photo of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton: AP Images*



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