

# Dissent for Peace, Not More War

Fifty-one mid-level U.S. diplomats signed a “dissent cable” calling for the U.S. military to launch air strikes against the Syrian military to tilt the civil war back in favor of the rebels, a mistake, writes ex-U.S. diplomat Ann Wright.

By Ann Wright

I served 16 years as a U.S. diplomat. But, in late February 2003, I wrote a dissent cable to Secretary of State Colin Powell expressing my strong concerns about the Bush administration’s hot rhetoric about the need for regime change in Iraq and predicted the chaos that a U.S. invasion and occupation would have.

My dissent had no effect on the Bush administration and three weeks later on the eve of the beginning of the war on Iraq, I sent Colin Powell another cable – this time with my resignation.

I was OPPOSING the use of military force for “regime change” that was couched in the terminology of allegations of weapons of mass destruction. These 51 U.S. diplomats are now lobbying FOR military action essentially for “regime change” couched in the words of “bring Assad to the negotiating table.”

None of us condone the Assad’s government dropping horrific “barrel bombs” on anyone, but after seeing the chaos of Iraq and Libya after their leaders were removed by U.S. military action, I fail to understand how removing Bashar al-Assad by U.S. military force will have any other result than increasing chaos and violence in Syria and giving an opening for groups to gain control that may perpetrate even worse violence on the people of Syria.

Although I don’t know the names or history of the diplomats who signed the dissent cable, as mid-level officers they probably have worked in the State Department 10 to 15 years and have known nothing but U.S. wars since 2001, that is 15 years of war.

War is now the U.S. government’s norm and their viewpoints seem to be coming from that perspective, despite some resounding non-violent successes to address political disagreements in Cuba and Iran.

The U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were the matches that lit the fires in Libya and Syria, brought thousands of international mercenary fighters to the region and precipitated the terrible attacks in Paris, Brussels, San Bernardino and possibly Orlando.

Sadly and dangerously, the diplomats who signed this letter either do not recognize or do not care that attempting to bomb Assad for “regime change”

may satisfy Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, our “allies” in blood, but would create an even stronger anti-American blaze in the region and around the world that could be uncontrollable.

**Ann Wright served 29 years in the US Army/Army Reserves and retired as a Colonel. She also served 16 years as a U.S. diplomat in U.S. Embassies in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia, Afghanistan and Mongolia. After sending a dissent cable on the pending Iraq war, she resigned from the U.S. Department of State in March, 2003. She is the co-author of *Dissent: Voices of Conscience*.**

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