



TALKING POINTS

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Talking Points for: John Calabrese, Middle East Institute

The international community has been unable to end the bloodshed in Syria for three main reasons: 1) the fragmentation of the opposition and intransigence of the Assad regime 2) the political divisions among the major international and regional powers; and 3) the conflict dynamics (i.e. the deterioration of the situation in Syria), which has rendered it increasingly unlikely that the opposition would countenance a “power sharing” arrangement with the regime.

Major powers appear to have ruled out a direct military intervention, including the imposition of a “no fly” zone. Yet, indirect foreign intervention has been occurring in the form of weapons supplies, training, and logistical and communications support. Thus the question is no longer between intervention and non-intervention but between maintaining or raising the existing levels of intervention by 1) introducing heavy weaponry and/or 2) seeking to create safe zones, buffer zones, or humanitarian corridors.

The consequences of a post-Assad Syria for the wider region largely depend on when and under which circumstances the regime is dislodged and replaced. There are several possible scenarios, including a situation whereby violence persists, with an array of localized military structures and insurgent groups (many of a sectarian character) fighting to control/defend swaths of territory. The prolongation of violence in a setting where the Syrian state is fragmented, highly decentralized and dysfunctional is likely to have a number of negative spillover effects (e.g., the intensification of region-wide sectarian tensions and unrest and an increased humanitarian burden on neighboring states).

* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.