

EIR: Senator, please give us your views on the Syria war.

Black: That's my primary interest right now, to stop the war in Syria. And I've told my local Congressman, "I will do *anything* that I can do, to stop this war."

What's so interesting, is that they have evidence that the gas was used, and this is in all of the media, and nobody says who used it! I'm a former prosecutor, and you always look for motive. What's the motive to do it?

Well, there was no motive, whatsoever, for the Syrian government to do this. President Assad has gas supplies. He's sworn not to use them, and in very difficult battles, particularly in Aleppo and Idlib, where things are not going real well for the Syrian government, he has withheld the use of gas, and he's fought conventionally, at *great* cost, often losing battles. So, if he's going to avoid using gas where it would benefit him militarily, why would he turn around and use it on civilians? It's rather absurd.

EIR: There is a lot of talk of limited actions, only strategic strikes. How do you assess the likelihood of the action remaining limited, or how do you see the danger of escalating and expanding the conflict?

Black: I think the argument that it will be limited, is designed to get us into the war. Something similar happened with Libya: We had absolutely *no reason* to attack Libya, *nothing*, but we said, "Well, we're going to bomb a little bit out in the desert, to do..."—I don't know exactly what our express purpose was. But before it was over, we had bombed Libya into the Dark Ages!

Today, it has no government, it has no police force. People are raped and murdered at will. There's no economy. Absolutely everything was destroyed.

I suspect Libya has some connection with Syria. The Libyan government controlled high-tech anti-aircraft weapons; there's at least *some* indication that when Ambassador [Christopher] Stevens was killed [on Sept. 11, 2012], he was in the process of trying to arrange the movement of those anti-aircraft missiles to



Virginia State Sen. Richard Black

Interview: State Sen. Richard Black

'I Will Do *Anything* To Stop This War'

Sept. 7—Virginia State Sen. Richard Black (R) gave the following interview to EIR correspondents Martin Kaiser and Werner Zuse in Munich, Germany on Sept. 4. Black, who sponsored a bill to restore Glass-Steagall in the Virginia Senate last year, spoke on both the war and the economic crisis. Here, we present his views on the threat of war.

Syria, for use by al-Qaeda rebels. Now, they're not all al-Qaeda, but they're dominated by al-Qaeda. And so, there seems to be a connection.

Probably the best evidence of where we're headed is from comments made by Sen. John McCain [R-Ariz.]. He is sort of the leading warhawk, and he has said that it makes no sense to go in there, if we're not going to topple President Assad. And then, he speaks about a regional war, and the idea that ultimately we need to go into Iran.

Many people don't realize, but Iran is a *very large* country. It's very large and it's very populous. It borders on Russia, so Russia, while they've had their tensions with Iran over time, they're forced, I think, to funnel supplies into Iran, if it becomes a big war.

The problem with Syria is that it's a linchpin for the spread of regional conflict, conceivably a world war. The Chinese have been making more strident remarks, in opposition to the war. So, if you've got the Chinese, and if you've got the Russians implicated, and you have Iran—

Yellow Journalism

What I was thinking about, as I prepared for this interview: Children used to study in American history about “yellow journalism,” and the classic case was the sinking of the battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor. The Spanish at the time were using wooden-hulled sailing ships, with smooth-bore cannon that fired cannon balls! We had the most modern Navy on Earth, with gigantic, armor-plated battleships that fired shells, that made just such a tremendous difference. And it's very similar, because when the *Maine* was sunk, all the news media said, “Remember the Maine! We've got to get even for the Maine!” No one asked, “What is the motivation for this weak empire of Spain, to attack an American battleship, 90 miles from our shore?” It was absurd! . . .

People don't realize that a great portion of wars are not based on genuine facts. They're based on a pretext, on something that's designed to get the public worked up into a frenzy. And it's not that every war has no underlying motive, but with a great number of them, particularly with nations that aspire to empire, there's almost a playbook of how you contrive something, and put it out there.

It goes back to the fact that, with the release of gas in civilian areas in Damascus, the rebels have *every* possible motivation to do it, and the government has *none*.

Furthermore, the only time that the United Nations has held someone accountable for the use of poison gas, it was the rebels. [Carla Del Ponte](#) rendered a finding that they had used gas. They never have rendered a finding that the Syrian government has used gas.

EIR: What do you think is the danger of moving to a nuclear confrontation, as some people have warned? And also Mr. LaRouche has warned that we are in a completely different game right now. How would you assess the danger?

Black: I don't think we're close to that at this point, but these things move from one step to the next. And once you set the steps in motion, you don't know where they're going to end up. Not even the most cunning and cynical politicians know where these things will end up. So, I think it's conceivable; I don't think we're anywhere close to that, yet.

But, the two countries that seem to be most intensely interested in war are Saudi Arabia and Israel. And of course, the Israelis are nuclear armed, and they have a very significant nuclear arsenal, from what I have read. And so, I think it is worrisome for the United States, because we have these foreign powers that are lobbying very intensely to pull us into war.

And then, of course, we have what we call the “neo-cons”: They are people who basically don't care about anything except war and empire. And I really believe that there is a desire to create a neo-colonial empire in the Mideast that spans from Iran to the Sudan.

Constitutional and International Law

EIR: What do you think is the legitimacy of the action of the United States, under both international law and U.S. Constitutional law?

Black: Under United States Constitutional law, the Commander-in-Chief has a great deal of power. There's always been this struggle, that the Commander-in-Chief needs to get a declaration of war [from Congress], but I'm not sure that's the current state of the law.

However, since the President has said he will hold a vote of the Congress, my guess is that he will be bound by that. If Congress votes “no,” I would be surprised if the President would move forward.

There's tremendous opposition. The people do not want this! You could see what happened in Great Britain, where I think the support for military action is even lower than in Germany. Their rate of acceptance for this

attack is just almost nothing. In France, which is the strongest proponent, the strongest ally the United States has, the people are two-to-one opposed to a Syrian war.

So there's very little support. You know, the Vatican has come out against it, and the United Nations, the International Red Cross, a great number of countries. Germany has simply said, "We're just not going to participate."...

EIR: Some members of Congress, most notably Walter Jones [R-N.C.], have stated that President Obama will be guilty of an impeachable offense, if he goes to war without the consent of the Congress. What do you think?

Black: Well, impeachable offenses are very broadly described in the law, and while I think that it's technically true, President Obama is going to Congress. And I think that will probably provide him whatever political support he needs.

Now, another question, of course, is the legality of this under international law, where you have a country that has not attacked us or any other nation. It's a civil war, and the United Nations has not given sanction and will not give sanction.

Of course, international law is always a flexible thing. It's really a tool of power, rather than a normal tool of law. So, I don't think the real problem for President Obama will be legal. I think the real problem will be the lack of public support. And I think that's really where we either win or lose on this issue, by mobilizing public support against military action. . . .

EIR: You said that there are two countries in the Middle East that have an interest in an escalation of the war against Syria: Israel and Saudi Arabia. Yesterday, the Russians reported that the Israelis had sent two rockets eastwards, and they were monitored by the Russians. What do you think?

Why would Israel or Saudi Arabia have an interest in an escalation?

Black: They're very much an odd couple, because the Saudis are extremely radical Islamists. They have absolute disdain for the Jews. But they have a common interest: Israel is concerned about the nuclear weapons in Iran; and I think to some extent that's the motive of Saudi Arabia. I worry a little bit about the motive of Saudi Arabia being more than that, because they, I believe, have an interest in spreading a jihadist mentality across the world. And it's a very dangerous thing.

If Syria were to fall, it would quickly be controlled by al-Qaeda and its affiliates. These are barbaric, incredibly vicious people, who have been beheading priests and raping nuns. They hate the Christians! Nobody ever talks about the Christians, but there's a large Christian community, *literally* the communities that were established by the original Apostles who broke bread with Jesus Christ. And they went out into Syria, they planted these communities, and they've remained solid.

And so, if Syria were to fall, the al-Qaeda people have made it clear that they intend to purge the "infidels," to murder and destroy.

And a worry is that Turkey has become increasingly Islamist. They were very neutral, which was wonderful for the West, for many years; they were fairly good allies of the West. But Prime Minister [Recep Tayyip] Erdogan moved them further and further [away from the government's traditional secularism]—he finally got the upper hand over the military. And if he should have a radical regime on his border, then I think it would accelerate the radicalization of Turkey, and Turkey could become a dagger at the heart of Europe.

I think it's a very real danger. It's not there yet. The people have tried rising up, just as the people rose up in Egypt. I think the greatest victory in the war on terror, wasn't any battles that *we* fought: It was the fact that [Egypt's] President Morsi moved too far, too fast; he tried to impose a dictatorial regime, and it didn't quite take! And all of a sudden, I think the estimate is *33 million people* showed up in the streets! This is the largest protest in human history, of any country!

And so, it's always struck me as absurd, the idea that somehow the military in Egypt staged a coup. No, the people staged a coup. When you have 33 million people in the streets, I think that all that the military could do, regardless of what they felt, was to try to make a peaceful transition, so that you didn't suddenly have all of the Muslim Brotherhood sympathizers just taken out and lynched on the lamp posts. Because it was very close to that!

So, I think there has been a positive development in Egypt, and one that we had nothing to do with. I think we were somewhat stunned by what happened. But they have begun to reestablish a secular government, one that will be good to work with for the Western powers. And so, getting involved in every problem doesn't always help.