

confirmed the identities of 1288 of these victims. We have basically their pictures, their first name, last name all documented. We still have quite a few who have been- who were buried without taken their identities. So we are still working through the final confirmation.

The Syrian Coalition believes that a strategic and decisive U.S. action is needed. First to hold the Assad regime responsible for chemical weapons against innocent civilians as well as to stop the Assad forces from using chemical weapons in the future against Syrians. And until now there has not been a clear signal sent to the Assad regime that the indiscriminate use of force against innocent civilians will go unpunished. And let me be clear about this; the Syrian Coalition is not asking for an open-ended intervention in Syria. We are not asking for boots on the ground. Instead, we are encouraging limited and focused use of force in Syria to be able to stop Assad from using chemical weapons against Syrians in the future. U.S. inaction is not an option. We believe not only that the Assad regime is watching very carefully, but North Korea is watching. Iran is watching. Hezbollah militias are all watching. We are expecting the U.S.- we are asking the U.S. Congress to authorize President Obama's decision to take actions against the Assad-Assad regime.

In parallel with any future military action in Syria, the U.S. and international community must also increase pressure and intensify their pressure on the Assad regime and its allies to come to the negotiating table. The Syrian Coalition remains committed to a political solution. This is something that we have shown both in words and actions. You can compare that to what Bashaar al Assad said in his last interviews, where he said that the only way to deal with the opposition is by destroying them. This is a vast contrast from the position that the Syrian Coalition takes. Finally, since the establishment of the Syrian Coalition, one of the main initiatives that the Syrian Coalition worked on is the establishment of the Supreme Military Council, the SMC, which was established about a week after the establishment of the Syrian Coalition. The SMC controls over 100.000 fighting soldiers on the ground. It is under the leadership of General Salim Idris. We have made it clear that a U.S. action in Syria, as well as increased support to the SMC, will strengthen our ability to repel the Assad regime from using chemical weapons in the future. With that I am going to open it for Q and A. I will be taking the questions, Dr. Najib, and Ms Attasi as well. Bassil you want to run the Q and A.

MODERATOR: Yeah go ahead.

MR.SALEH: Okay.

QUESTION: Hi, I am Susan Cornwell with Reuters. I was wondering if any U.S. provided arms had yet arrived with the rebels, and why do you think there has been a delay in this process, and do you hope that because of what is going on now that- that somehow this will be stepped up- that is provision of arms? Do you have any signs from the administration that that would happen?

MODERATOR: Dr. Najib.

MR.GHADBIAN: Yes, we can confirm, in fact, that the U.S. administration has increased its support of the Opposition and of the SMC, and if you listen to the administration's statements. I think they are focusing on two tracks. One is dealing with the chemical weapons side, and they are trying to make this related to the latest use of chemical weapons, and punish those who carried out those, and establish deterrence for future use. The other one, which in fact many of them have announced that they will continue to support the Opposition, the SMC, in order to achieve the larger objective which is political settlement and democratic transition in Syria. So I think we should expect more support on that front as well.

MODERATOR: Any questions? Yes.

QUESTION: Thank you. I am Indira Lakshmanan from Bloomberg News. I wanted to ask whether the Opposition feels abandoned by the Obama administration, and that the public statements made by President Obama have been only with reference to chemical weapons. He has explicitly said he does not want to shift the balance in favor of the Opposition or- you know- do anything that would oust Assad. So particularly now with this Russian proposal on the table, do you think that the administration is leaving you guys hanging and not supporting you?

MR.GHADBIAN: Um, no, we do not feel the administration has abandoned us. I believe that I- we do understand that the administration has to convince a very skeptical public about supporting taking military action, and so that is why they are trying to- you know- focus on the chemical weapons question. I do agree that we have not seen much debate about the Opposition; much debate about Syrians; much debate about the larger, in fact, context, and that is, I think, is a weakness of- of the whole discourse, in fact, about Syria. You know, up to the use of chemical weapons, we have not seen much coverage. Many of you guys were not even reporting Syria even though there were 100, 200 people killed on a daily basis. And all of a sudden now, everybody is interested in Syria, but definitely, much of the focus is on the chemical weapons, but from our point of view, and this is why we have this press conference, we want to bring the larger context. We want to bring the- and pinpoint to the source of all of these tragedies, and that is this regime has been engaged in systematic killing of Syrians from day one of this Revolution in March 2011. So again, while we understand the administration's kind of, you know, point of view, we are in touch with the administration. They are, in fact, in daily touch with us. Secretary Kerry is talking to the President of the Coalition almost, I would say, on a daily basis to coordinate efforts. So in that sense, I mean, you know, this is why we, the Syrians, want to talk about Syria- that is the purpose of this press conference- and bring to your attention the fact that it is not about chemical weapons. Chemical weapons is a small thing, you know, small component of this. The larger context is Syrians deserve to be protected by the international community, and the international community has failed to carry out this responsibility. In fact, Syria had been an ideal case for R2P, under the UN 2005. And the- of course, the UN has been

paralyzed by Russia's obstructionist behavior at the Security Council. That is why, I think, the U.S., the Obama administration finally taking leadership. I would just mention that when Obama decided to put the credible threat of the use of force, we see now responses, not only from the Syrian regime but from Russia and Iran, and they are willing to talk about other issues. That is why we support the administration's effort again to carry out decisive and strategic action.

MODERATOR: Any questions? Yes at the back.

QUESTION: (inaudible) from Al Jazeera English. I just wonder if you could perhaps be more specific on what kind of support you have received from the Americans; specifically regarding military hardware. There has been a lot of talk over- kind of- whether arms are, in fact, getting to the SMC, so I am wondering if might be able to be specific about that. And also do you take a specific point of view as regards the new Russian proposal, even though it is in its infancy? the international custody of the chemical weapons.

MR.GHADBIAN: On the first part, we do not want to discuss the details of that in fact. We are not going to comment on what kind of support they are providing to the SMC. On the second part of the question, you know, the president stated that he sees a positive potential in the Russian proposal. From our point of view, we do want that these chemical weapons be secured; preferably under international, some kind of control. But within a- the larger context of the following: this is not only again about securing the stockpiles of chemical weapons, but we want to make sure that those who carried out these attacks be held accountable. I think any solution for that would not take into account this point would be incomplete. The third element, of course, and that is, the element of a political solution that, in fact, again we want to bring into the attention that 110.000 Syrians were killed before the latest use of chemical weapons, and I think, that is too, accountability has to be included in any political solution. That is why when Geneva was brought into the table, our position was Assad should not be, in fact, be included because of the accountability factor; because the Human Rights Council- International Human Rights Organizations designation that those who committed crimes against humanity against the Syrian people should not be part of the transition; should not be part of the future of Syria. So, I think, if we take those elements and, you know, again, other conditions, then we think we could discuss that proposal. Final point, we do not trust the Syrian regime. We do not trust the Russians.

QUESTION: As you do not trust the proposal that has been just made? You do not trust (inaudible).

MR.GHADBIAN: You want to come to—

MS.ATTASI: Actually, I just would like to make some clarification about the Supreme Military Council headed by General Salim Idris because there had been lot of misinformation recently at the media about the Free Syrian Army, and there are certain accusations and claims that they are violating, you know, certain Geneva Accords. I

would like just to stress the idea why we are here. We are here to introduce to you who is the Syrian Opposition forces; the political one and the military one. The political one, as you see, the Syrian National Coalition is a group of different Syrian forces united together behind one goal; end of dictatorship and end of tyranny. We want freedom. We want justice. The Syrian people are not whatsoever fighting for revenge. They are fighting for justice. This group consists of different opposition forces inside and outside Syria, and we are here to represent them. We are here to answer any questions you may have about these political leaders that they are fighting Assad regime. As far as the military- Supreme Military Council, we all know that these- the Free Syrian Army are Syrian defected officers. They are Syrian soldiers who defected from the Syrian regime and refused to point their weapons against their own people. And they decided to join the Syrian forces against Bashaar al Assad. So some of them are civilians. Some of them are military leaders like, for instance, General Salim Idris- he holds PhD in Engineering. He is educated person; highly refined person. All the Free Syrian Army, was formed in December of 2012- they did not violate any Geneva norms or accords, you know the Geneva Convention accords. But what I would like to stress here regarding the help, I think the United States really did not give the full support for the Free Syrian Army and for General Salim Idris, and mainly the focus was on humanitarian and medical relief. They did not help with the intelligence support, they did not help with the logistic support, and of course, they did not help of aiding the Free Syrian Army with sophisticated weapon at least to protect the liberated area, whereas we have the Iranian and the militia of Hezbollah and the Russians aiding the regime with \$500 million a month to help the Syrian regime fight our own people. So we stress the importance of the U.S. administration actually not only to held the regime accountable for the crimes that he committed in September, but also to help- it is an opportunity right now to support the Free Syrian Army and to support the Syrian National Coalition in their cause. We started this Revolution, and we can end this Revolution. But, of course, we need the help for- from the U.S. administration. And just really quickly about the Russian proposal, definitely we do not trust the Russians. After two and a half years of manipulating the Syrian Revolution; of manipulating the situation on the ground; of aiding the regime with military weapons, with Scuds, with money, with intelligence, with all the support, how we can trust them? They become part of the problem. They are not part of the solution. So we definitely, we will weigh what is this initiative is all about, and we will work according to the Syrian Revolution interest. That will be our answer to this initiative. Thank you.

MODERATOR: You got it.

QUESTION: Thanks. This is Dana Liebelson with Mother Jones Magazine. I was just wondering if you could tell me a little bit about the (inaudible) process the SMC is currently using to determine which units are receiving lethal and non-lethal aid.

MR.SALEH: So one of – one of the concerns of the international community is ensuring that the weapons- lethal or non-lethal aid does not fall into the wrong hands. And this is also a concern that is shared by the Syrian Coalition. After the establishment

of the SMC, the Supreme Military Council, there were specific talk about even the future shape of Syria. We are talking about democratic pluralistic society in Syria. Every FSA brigade that joins the SMC must meet certain conditions. When the SMC was first started, there was 564 brigades that actually joined. Since then, there are more brigades that are joining. One of the things they first- one of the things that these brigades must sign on first- they must agree and abide by the by-laws and constitution of the SMC. Some of the other things they must agree for regular monitoring and audits that are conducted by the SMC and some of the partner countries as well to ensure how the aid, whether lethal and non-lethal, is used. Some of the kind of finer points that the SMC looks after, and you want to kind of keep those in mind, if any of the brigades is found that they have used a minor, anybody younger than 18, to fight- to conduct any kind of operation, they will be cut off completely from supplies from the SMC. If any of the brigades has any foreign fighter amongst its ranks, they will be cut off from supplies received from the SMC. Now, we have established- we have established those rules back in November of 2012, and as you can imagine, we continue to refine them. This is something that we are working on very closely. However, the international community, that also looks carefully at the auditing mechanisms that we have, is trusting the SMC further. The U.S. is using- is contributing non-lethal aid, and as we confirmed some lethal assistance as well to the SMC because they are sure that the mechanisms that the SMC has established are well-tested, and they will ensure that weapons are not- are not falling to the wrong hands.

QUESTION: Is the United States performing auditing with other counties?

MR.SALEH: I cannot comment about which countries are performing. I can say some of the- our partner countries who want to- who share the same goal as us are doing some of these audits.

QUESTION: Robert Worthman, New York Times. Has there been a much internal dialogue and discussion about the possibility of an American airstrike? My understanding is that some people in the Coalition or its partners may feel that if actually it is a very limited airstrike it might do more harm than good.

MR.SALEH: I will let Dr. Najib take that.

MR.GHADBIAN: We definitely want this strike- we are using the words decisive and strategic- to achieve military objectives, that is degrade the ability of the Syrian regime to carry out further attacks whether chemical or otherwise. But we definitely want it to lead to a political solution. Again, we believe this conflict must end with democratic transition. The Syrian people have sacrificed more than 100.000 people in order to achieve their objectives of transferring this country from a one party rule into a multi-party state; from, you know, the mafia-type of rule of the Assad into state rule by rule of law and into a democratic inclusive Syria. So we believe this is the opportunity. I think the weakness of all of the previous political initiatives, some of which were presented by the Coalition- by Syrian groups- by the Arab League. And by the way, the Russian vetoed two resolutions which called for political solution along the line of the Arab

League which called for Assad maybe to delegate his power to his Vice-President and then open the chance for a political solution. Now we believe, with the U.S. taking up leadership which was lacking. You heard my colleague Ms. Farah talking about how, in fact, we were complaining about the lack of leadership of the Obama administration. Now this has been, in fact, introduced to the whole discussion, we believe there is an opportunity not only to address this specific again of the use of chemical weapons, which is important, but to go, and in fact, deal with the larger context- larger conflict, and that is the Assad again continues and will continue to use force against the Syrian people unless, again, really you know checked by the international community. So from our point of view, no, we are not just, you know, focusing on that. In fact, all of the efforts of the Coalition, of the SMC is for the hours after the attacks; how we are going to try to present order- law and order to these areas, protect, you know, maybe, civilians, and fill the vacuum that might be created. We see this as an opportunity again to end this conflict and to move into democratic transition.

QUESTION: But sorry are you just- did you conduct internal deliberations? Were there differences- any differences of opinion inside the Coalition about whether it is a good idea for the U.S. to conduct a limited strike?

MR.GHADBIAN: No, on this issue, I think, there is consensus that we need this. This is, in fact, a necessary step in order to bring that kind of political solution.

MS.ATTASI: May I just add that the Syrian Coalition is the voice of the Syrian Revolution, and this is what the Syrian people wants. We are not saying what we want as political leaders. We are here to convey the voice of the Syrian people inside Syria who has been under this genocide and war that the Assad regime is waging on them. So we cannot- we are not in a position here to say what we think as Syrians or as Syrian Americans. We are here to convey what the Syrian people inside Syria who has been suffering; who has been misplaced; who has been kidnapped, women being raped. This is- we are here to convey their message to the United States. And Also I have some message to the anti-war. This is not a war. This is Iraqi war. This is not another Libyan war. We have been in a popular uprising for the past two and a half years. The Syrian people are fighting alone in this battle, and we- we never asked for a U.S. direct military intervention, and again as my colleague said, we never asked for boots on the ground. We have been fighting this alone with a very limited tool, with a very limited help. We are not fighting Assad regime as we said. We are fighting on so many fronts. So that is why we are here to say we are not- the Syrian people are not advocating for war. The Syrian people advocate for peace, and the Syrian people want the peace and want end of this conflict. However, there is a war inside Syria. It is a regime war that he is waging against his own people. Where is the anti-war movement when Syrian people have been slaughtered and killed, and you know, got all the humiliation? Where was the anti-war voices around- at that time, when the Syrian people cried for help. Yes we want to end the war for- once and for all. We want to end the war and the genocide that the Assad regime is conducting in Syria, and that is our message to the U.S. public.

MODERATOR: More questions?

QUESTION: Hi, Sarah Lee with Conservative Intelligence Briefing. There have been some reports that the SMC is fracturing and there are some leadership contentiousness, can you respond to that?

MR.SALEH: So the- like I mentioned, when the SMC was established, it had 564 brigades amongst its ranks. Since then, more brigades have joined the SMC. It actually had grown in numbers. When the SMC was first started we are talking about 65 to 70 thousand opposition soldiers. Now, we are close to 100.000 opposition soldiers. What I see actually on the ground, especially given the last attack by Assad using chemical weapons against innocent civilians- that actually helped solidify the leadership of the SMC. More brigades are finding the need to coordinate very closely with the SMC and join the ranks of the SMC. This also points to a very important step- when we have been asking the international community, any country that want to support the Revolutionary forces on the ground, they must use the SMC as the credible channel; a channel that the Syrian Coalition stands behind. I think this is something that we are- we are seeing in the last few months.

QUESTION: So basically by asking people to use that official channel you are hoping that would solidify some of the fractures–

MR.SALEH: Like I said, any ways people are coming together, they are finding that the SMC has professional military leadership. They are able to do much better military planning than each of the brigades fighting on its own trying to do the planning. Now you have coordinated operations running in different provinces, and this is something we did not have previously. Although Assad used chemical weapons on the 21st of August, if you look at the previous 30 days to his use of chemical weapons, the SMC and the FSA fighting brigades on the ground were able to achieve 63 strategic victories all across Syria. They were able to push Assad forces in Aleppo, in Idlib, in Deir Ez Zoe. They were able to push them also in Dera'a. So the SMC has proven as a credible legitimate authority over the Free Syrian Army brigades.

QUESTION: I was just wondering. This is (inaudible), but could you confirm whether or not SMC has received lethal aid from Qatar and Saudi Arabia?

MR.SALEH: I cannot comment on these specific countries. I can say some of our- some of the supporting countries are providing lethal assistance to the SMC.

MODERATOR: Yes, question on the side.

QUESTION: (inaudible) I want to clarify something–

MR.SALEH: Dr. Najib.

MR.GHADBIAN: Najib.

QUESTION: –said earlier that you did not want to negotiate with the current regime of Bahaar al Assad can you (inaudible) what have been the mortalities (inaudible) you folks have been refusing to negotiate until this point, is that accurate?

MR.GHADBIAN: No, no, that is not accurate.

QUESTION: But is not that what you were saying?

MR.GHADBIAN: No, I, let me be very specific. We supported every political initiative to end this conflict. We supported the Arab League initiative, which begins with Assad delegating his powers to his vice-president. We thought that that was a good idea. We supported the elements of Geneva I, and we were willing- in fact, we were working to go to Geneva II, but our understanding of Geneva I is the following: there will be a transitional government with full executive authorities including the security and military areas, which means Assad has no role in these areas. That is our understanding of Geneva I, so we were going to Geneva II with this understanding. We wanted to include an element of accountability in the negotiations- in the political process, and that is why we believe that Bashaar al Assad has committed crimes against humanity, and he is not acceptable as a person. We believe his departure from the scene is a positive step for any political solution by any means, you know. And definitely after the use of chemical weapons, he is absolutely not acceptable; he, his brother, and those who are implicated in the use of chemical weapons. Now, there are a lot of people who support Bashaar al Assad. They are Syrians. Some of them are forced to do so. Some of them, in fact, are under the propaganda of the regime; some of them defending their privileges. It is those element, in fact, we want to talk to. Those are Syrians, I mean, and that is what we want to talk about. So, again, we want a political solution that again would include some elements of accountability. And, again, we believe that Bashaar al Assad is basically destructive element in any negotiations. So that is the way we understand Geneva I and any political solution. After the use of chemical weapons, he, in fact, should be brought to justice preferably very soon. And any- any international maybe effort by our friends at the UN should include that. Otherwise, we will not support it.

QUESTION: Just to clarify so it is not a new position. It has been you consistent position over time that you will not sit down with him for negotiations. You want to sit down and negotiate with other factions–

MR.GHADBIAN: Right.

QUESTION: — or parties but you tried well prior to this over the last two and a half years. You will not sit down...

MR.GHADBIAN: Let me be, I mean- that position evolved. Early on, before the regime committed atrocities of, you know, the mass scale. I mean, early on, we were- we appealed to Bashaar al Assad, before the Revolution, in the first few weeks of the Revolution to take serious reformist step to bring Syria into a democratic kind of

conclusion. But, you know, the regime was using lethal weapons- using live ammunition from day one in Dera'a remember? And so immediately as the regime continued- and it was obvious that they did not believe in a political solution. Bahaar al Assad, up to the use of chemical weapons, he communicated to us, I mean, directly indirectly, that he can achieve a military victory, and he is working toward that end. He is talking Geneva, but he is not going to go to Geneva. Why should he talk about his departure? Why should he talk about his stepping down? I mean it does not make sense, but I think, for us again- for- since the Arab League initiative, we took that position that if he, in fact, were to delegate his powers, at that point, delegating powers. Maybe he could stay for a while, but as he continues to commit atrocities, crimes against humanity- against the Syrian people, we were clear we will not negotiate with individuals who committed crimes against humanity against the Syrian people. Again, that is a principal position. We continue to stick by that position.

MS.ATTASI: You know, may I add just the question today actually; especially after the Russian initiative: is Bahaar al Assad ready to give up his chemical weapon arsenal, and he is not ready to give power? Is that- is that the right message the Syrian people really getting that he is ready to give the whole CW arsenals, and he is not ready to give up his seat just to save Syria and stop this ongoing cycle of killing? I think if United States managed to work with the Russian on pressuring Assad regime to give up his arsenal- chemical weapon arsenal- they can work with them to pressure him to give up his seat after two and a half years of continuous bloodshed and killing.

MODERATOR: Any other questions up here? Well any other questions?

QUESTION: I wanted to ask about the different factions, for example, the Kurds. How are you working with them? And also how do you- for in a post Assad plan, how do you intend to fold in Alawites without any kind of attrition?

MR.GHADBIAN: Syria is a diverse country, has, you know, several ethnic and religious groups, and I think there is a majority of Syrians from all backgrounds that want change in Syria. The Kurdish Movement has been, in fact, affiliated and supported the opposition. They have been in the opposition for long time. They do share the objectives of the Syrian Coalition and before that the Syrian National Council of a finding a solution for the Kurdish problem within a unified Syria. That is they get all the rights they were, in fact, deprived of under the Assad regime. And so that is a majority position among the Kurds. I think we have an issue. The Kurds have been represented in the SNC and now in the Syrian Coalition, and they were founding members of the Syrian Coalition. There have been some issues among the Kurdish parties, and there are many of them over, you know, the percentage of representation. And there is ongoing discussions between the Kurdish National Council and the Syrian National Council to address that question, but I think we all agree on the overall objectives. Let me say that there is some element within the Kurdish Movement that still affiliated with the regime. Those are the Syrian PKK side and they clash, in fact, with the Free Syrian Army, in some areas. But we believe that the Kurdish question can be solved again within Syria. As far as the Alwaites, they are definitely Syrians. They have all the rights of Syrians. I

think, as I said, there- some of them are, in fact, part of the other side. The way we believe in this any political solution for Syria must include a transitional justice element in which, again, nobody will be held accountable because of their affiliation, because of who they are. Only those who committed crimes against the Syrian people, I think, should be held accountable whether they are Sunnis, Christians, Alawites, whatever background they have. We are trying to create a Syria that is based on equal citizenship, respects all of its citizens, and in fact, celebrate the diversity that exist in Syria. So I do not think we have a problem. In fact, we have concerns that there might be some prospect of retaliation against some communities. And, within the Coalition and SMC, we are, you know, pursuing plans to protect Syrian civilians of all backgrounds; especially those who might, in fact, be targeted. This is- this is a difference between our position and the other side. Bashaar al Assad does not see in those who oppose him humans. If you listen to his interview last night, "they are all extremists." Charlie Rose, you know, pressed him: "do you think they are all extremists, they are all terrorists?" He said yes, they are all. No, we do not see it that way. We feel so sorry when a Syrian is killed whether from the other side or from our side. I think that kind of high moral ground is what distinguishes us from the other side. So we want to create, again, a state that is, in fact, for all of its citizens.

MODERATOR: Yes there.

QUESTION: Christina Moheb at the Huffington Post. In the past half hour the U.S. has said that it is prepared to move forward with the- with a big UN framework for Assad's chemical war- chemical weapons. Are you- are you suggesting that you would- that you would sit out any, I mean, if any kind of a broad inter multi-international talks on chemical weapons in Syria? Will you actively oppose international efforts to secure them as long as they are- the Assad regime is in place? Is this- are you going to take a position opposing efforts to rid Syria of chemical weapons?

MR.GHADBIAN: The quick answer no. we will not- we will work with the international community. Remember that we worked with the UN on so many issues related to Syria. We trust, for instance, you know, our allies and friends; the French, the British, the U.S. in fact, will want to include an element of accountability for the latest use of chemical weapons. So we will make sure that that, in fact, should be included in any international efforts. As I said, I think, the problem with the international efforts; especially at the level of the Security Council was Russia, and to some extent China supporting Russia's position. The three resolutions that Russia vetoed, one is condemning the use of violence, which was much much, you know, small scale than what we have seen since then. The other two related to presenting political solution along the line of the Arab League, and that same solution received 137 votes in the General Assembly. So we believe that the international community, most countries of the world, are, in fact, taking the right side of this conflict, and we believe we can work with them. But I think what was lacking in this effort, and that is we bring- come back to why we are here, is that fact that there was a lack of credible threat of use of force to, in fact, bring some accountability, to bring some element of consequences. I mean, the

third actually- specifically resolution that Russia veto was a UK resolution, when the international observers were still in Syria to introduce consequences. If, you know, the regime does not abide by that there should be consequences, and they vetoed that. So I think our problem with the international effort was either it has been, you know, obstructed by Russia or there was really lack of credible threat of the use of force, which- when we see the President finally introduce, you started to see progress. That is why we believe this should go on to the very end. We urge members of the House to support the President in this effort. We urge the U.S. public to support the President. And I think the more this country is shown as united in this effort, the more likely we will get to a political solution that fulfills the aspirations of the Syrian people.

MODERATOR: Yes up here.

QUESTION: (inaudible) Professor, our delegation, they say they are being bombarded with people overwhelmingly calling emailing texting whatever saying they oppose U.S. intervention in. A lot of them just seem war-weary at this point. Why do you think there is so much public opposition or hesitance and what would you say to them?

MR.GHADBIAN: I totally understand that perspective. Again, the background to that is the Iraq war. Before is Afghanistan. This country has been, in fact, involved in two wars for so long. This country has offered so many sacrifices in terms of human sacrifices and in terms of, you know, material sacrifices. So I do understand that that fatigue that we all, in fact, witnessing now. But I think there is a couple of points I would mention. Number one, the more you know about Syria, the more you learn about it, you understand that context, the history, the evolution of this conflict, you would support the effort of the President. Second, this is a President that is very reluctant to take the country into a war. He was elected, we all understand, on a platform to end wars. And I think we should trust that he is not, you know, someone who is just going jump at any opportunity to involve this country into again another war. So I think he took his time. In fact, for many of us, we were critical of his lack of leadership; politically sometimes on the question of Syria. A third factor I think I see, and that is, you know, all this again you see the internal politics coming into play. You see it in the House. There are so many people who are opposed to the President for, you know, specific reasons; you know, on the democratic side and on the republican side. And our message again to members of the House is that this is not a domestic issue. I think this is a serious issue that does affect the national security- the national interest of this county. I think Congress- it is in the best interest of Congress to show unity and stand behind the President on this issue. Believe me the Obama administration is not a warmonger administration. The President himself is- is painfully making the case to the American public because he sees there is no other way. And again, I think what happened over the last 24 hours should be a last point to the U.S. public that when the U.S. administration showed seriousness, willingness to take, you know basically a decision, you see progress. So what I would say to most Americans do support your President, urge you members of Congress to vote for this, in fact, legislation, and we, in fact, we may not

need to even use military force. But- my last point again- please go read about this. I mean I see a lack of knowledge, a lot of, you know, a lack of context in the discussions about this issue. So this is the right, I think, course for action for the U.S. public.

MODERATOR: We will take one more question and the (inaudible) of the day will be available if you want to come and speak to them and all (inaudible) information in the folders is attributable as written statements from the Coalition. We can also collect your business cards. The women on the hand over there can collect them for follow up (inaudible).

QUESTION: Hi, Paul Shinkman with US News and World Report. You talked about how you would be able to maintain stability in the case of a U.S. missile strike on Syria. Have you been coordinating with the U.S.? Or had you asked to on what is the extent of that strike will be and where it would strike to ensure you would be able to do that?

MR.SALEH: Let me first start by saying, we know that the Assad regime does not have the intelligence or the military capability to respond to any action by the international community. What worries- since we are talking about limited strikes that might go as you read in the different news outlets-we are talking about strikes that will be from 2 to 3 days. What worries Assad the most is the movement by the SMC, the Supreme Military Council, by the Free Syrian Army on the ground during the strike and afterwards- the aftermath of those strikes. What I can say is that the SMC leadership is coordinating with different countries from the core 11, those countries who might be interested- who might be participating in carrying out those strikes. The SMC has very well established plans to benefit from the strikes if they do take place, as well as, the SMC has very detailed plans to secure specific area, protect specific neighborhoods that might have some minorities living in them- secure some different parts such as public services if the regime is impacted and is not able to keep security in Syria.

QUESTION: So do you know now where these strikes will take place?

MR.SALEH: I cannot comment about that. As you can see the discussion is still going on. We do not know if these strikes are going to take place or not. With that we thank you guys for coming. We are going to be available for the next 10 to 15 minutes over here to answer any other questions you might have. Thank you.