

THE DAILY CALLER

Karl Rove, Joe Lieberman pressure Obama to bomb Syria

By [Brendan Bordelon](#) 08/27/2013

A group of 66 foreign policy “experts” signed a letter on Tuesday urging President Obama to conduct unrestricted military strikes against the Syrian government after last week’s deadly gas attack on civilians.

“Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad has once again violated your red line, using chemical weapons to kill as many as 1,400 people in the suburbs of Damascus,” the letter begins.

“We urge you to respond decisively by imposing meaningful consequences on the Assad regime,” it continues, advocating for the use of “standoff weapons and airpower” against the forces responsible for deploying chemical weapons.

The experts also express support for a broader military campaign, including attacks on “pillars of the Assad regime” and an “accelerate[d] effort to vet, train, and arm moderate elements of Syria’s armed opposition, with the goal of empowering them to prevail against both the Assad regime and the growing presence of Al Qaeda-affiliated and other extremist rebel factions in the country.”

“Left unanswered, the Assad regime’s mounting attacks with chemical weapon will show the world that America’s red lines are only empty threats,” the letter concludes. “It is a dangerous and destabilizing message that will surely come to haunt us.”

The signatories come from a variety of professions and include policy analysts, former lawmakers and political consultants.

Former Minnesota Republican Governor Tim Pawlenty joined with former Connecticut independent Sen. Joe Lieberman and ex-Minnesota Republican Sen. Norm Coleman in signing the letter.

Republican political strategist Karl Rove was a co-signer, as was French intellectual Bernard Henri-Levy and Ambassador Paul Bremer, the U.S. Administrator of Iraq immediately following America’s occupation in 2003.

Bill Kristol, editor of the right-leaning Weekly Standard, joined with Leon Wieseltier, the literary editor of the left-wing New Republic, in calling for broader strikes.

Think-tank fixtures like Michael Auslin from the conservative American Enterprise Institute and Robert Kagan from the liberal Brookings Institution were also both co-signers.

But not all foreign policy scholars signed onto the letter. Ben Friedman from the libertarian Cato Institute said that while the co-signers’ credibility is not at issue, “they’re

hawks, almost all of whom can be counted on to support most proposed U.S. military actions.”

“I doubt the actions they mention will do much to deliver their goals,” he told The Daily Caller News Foundation.

He also questioned the importance of maintaining “credibility” after Obama’s “red line” remarks last year.

“History suggests that foreign credibility to intervene, or lack thereof, does not travel that easily across borders,” he said. “And autocrats clinging to power are unlikely to care much about what outsiders say anyway.”

While a broad swath of the Washington intelligentsia is increasingly vocal in support of military action, the majority of Americans are skeptical of further involvement in Syria’s bloody internal conflict.

Polls over the last week indicate that just nine percent of likely voters want their government to bomb Syria, and only 3 in 10 support any assistance to the Syrian rebels whatsoever.

Many of those who signed on to the Syria letter also had their signatures appended to letters supporting the Iraq war.