

Small group gathers to protest military action in Syria



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On the heels of the latest United States bombing campaign, Americans seem to be in favor of another war in the Middle East. Less than a week ago the President announced air strikes in Syria and Iraq against The Islamic State. According to a Washington Post/ABC News poll conducted recently, 71% of Americans are in favor of air strikes against the quasi-governmental terrorist organization most commonly referred to as ISIS. ISIS has recently been responsible for mass killings, beheadings and the acquisition of entire cities in Iraq.

A small but vocal minority of citizens have expressed concerns about this latest conflict involving the United States. Concerns range widely from the constitutionality of further aggression to, as one protester said, "Nobody knows who these

Syrian rebels (who we are training) are!", to what the CIA calls Blowback.



Standing on the corner of Kempton St. and Rockdale Ave. they held homemade signs and waved at cars passing by.

Blowback is defined as the radicalization of moderate civilians due to American military intervention.

On Wednesday afternoon a small group of roughly twelve people from the greater New Bedford and Fall River areas assembled to voice their grievances. Standing on the corner of Kempton St. and Rockdale Ave. they held homemade signs and waved at cars passing by. Even though the polls indicate that most of Americans are in favor of the bombing raids, there seemed to be overwhelming support for the protesters message of peace. The majority of people driving by either waved, honked their horns or yelled in support. Only two people expressed expletive laden opposition to the protesters.

"We're very upset at what seems to be an abuse of authority by the Obama administration." said Maryellen Kurkulos, a representative from The Quequechan Alliance. "We are told from Homeland Security and also the CIA that ISIS is not a threat to the U.S. Yet, despite the fact that congress has not given any authorization for any war or air strikes, nor has the U.N. Security Council, Obama and the Pentagon has decided to go ahead and bomb a country with air strikes." She continued "We

understand that one of the targets is a city of two hundred thousand people, and even if ISIS has strongholds there, you're going to have a lot of innocent people that are subjected to these horrible, horrible events."



What is your position on military action as a solution to ISIS?

Brian Pastori, who recently ran for School Committee in New Bedford, commented, "We think the president is rushing to war. We need to have a rational conversation about what it means to go to war, who we're going to war with and who we're supporting. I think we're making rash decisions that are going to come back and haunt us." When asked what he would do about ISIS if he had the final say, he said, "I wouldn't do anything immediately. I would try to have more intelligence on the ground, but also push for the Iraqi government to deal with it. We've been funding them and arming them for nine years, they have better training and equipment than ISIS they just don't have the will to fight. The Sunnis have no political champions right now except for ISIS." He continued, "We're looking at a 600 year old sectarian war that we got in the middle of, and we destroyed Iraq as a country and now, we're going to try it again – see if it works again, it doesn't make any sense."
