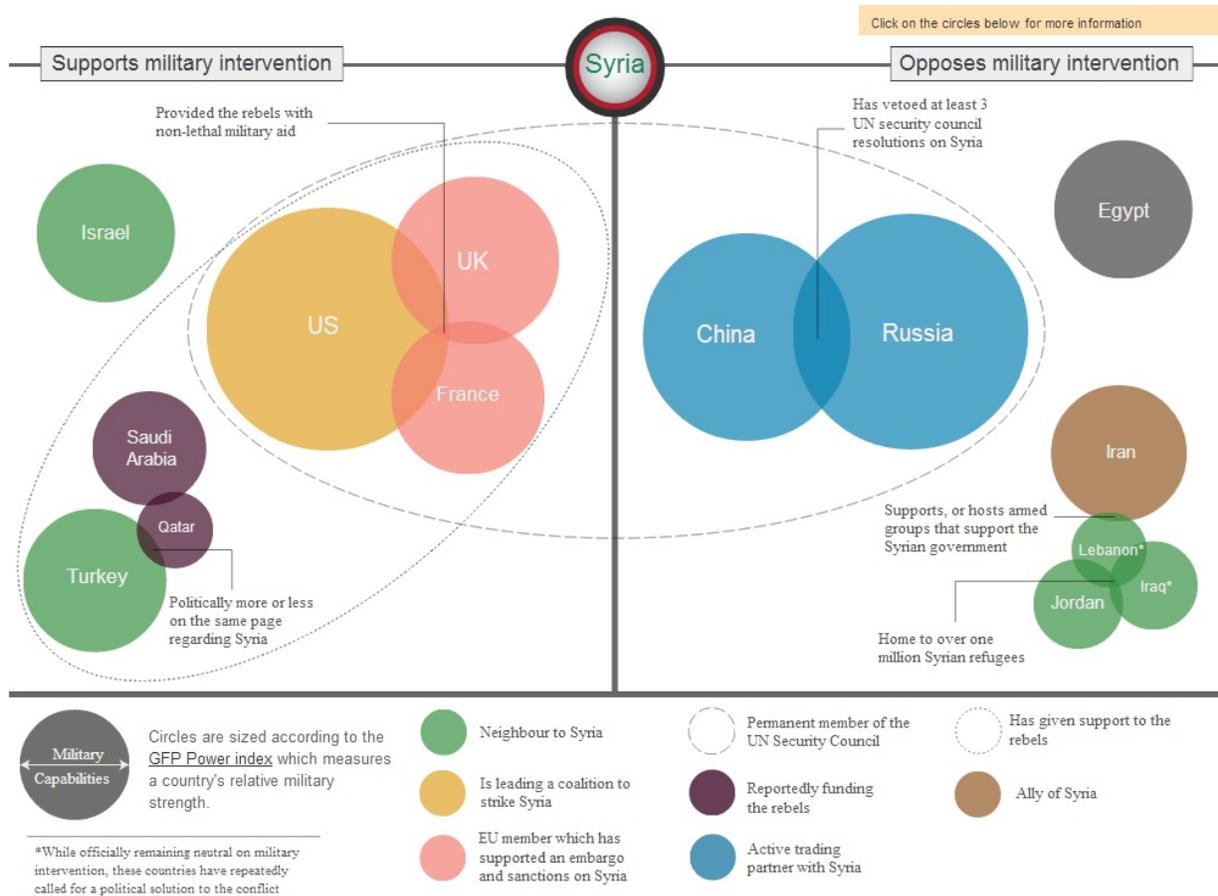


Syria's Allies and Enemies at a Glance



Supporting Military Intervention

France

France has been a fierce Assad regime critic since the civil war began. French President Francois Hollande has said that a military strike on Syria could come quickly. He told the daily newspaper Le Monde that he supported taking "firm" punitive action over the alleged chemical attack near Damascus and said he would work closely with France's allies. After reports of the attack, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said the situation could be handled "in other ways" than through the UN Security Council. France was the first Western power to back the Syrian National Coalition as the Syrian people's legitimate representative. In May, France and Britain successfully campaigned for the EU's arms embargo to be lifted in order to supply rebel fighters.

Israel

Israel has already taken unilateral action, launching three air strikes after shells landed near the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Israel's Prime Minister has accused Syrian forces of using chemical weapons on civilians and has stated that while Israel has sought to stay out of the crisis, they would

respond forcefully to any attempt to attack it. The state has strengthened its missile defenses in preparation for a possible attack and the Israeli army have been placed on high alert along the border.

Qatar

Qatar has played a key role providing financial and diplomatic support to various rebel groups since the armed rebellion began.

Saudi Arabia

An arch-rival of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Saudi Arabia's monarchy views the conflict partially in sectarian terms.

Turkey

Turkey has urged the international community to act almost from the beginning of the Syrian crisis. Turkey is home to hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees and serves as an important conduit for aid groups and allegedly for rebel fighters.

United Kingdom

Prime Minister David Cameron had been eager to act in the past couple of months, even without a UN resolution. However, Cameron and his coalition government failed to pass a motion that would have authorized military action against Syria in principle by 285 to 272 votes.

United States

The US has been reluctant to intervene militarily since the conflict began. Their position on Syria toughened after the alleged use of chemical weapons in Damascus. US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said the Obama administration was consulting with allies on options for a response to the alleged attack. President Barack Obama has prepared for the possibility of launching unilateral American military action against Syria within days, as the US increased its naval presence in the eastern Mediterranean.

Opposing Military Intervention

China

China, along with Russia, has thwarted UN Security Council resolution proposals against Syria. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said any military intervention in Syria would worsen turmoil in the Middle East and a political resolution was "the only way out for the Syrian issue". He said there should be no rush to prejudge the findings of the UN chemical weapons investigation team in Syria. The official Xinhua news agency has said the situation was "reminiscent of the lead-up to the Iraq War, which the United States staged with allegations about weapons of mass destruction that later turned out to be false."

Egypt

Mohamed Morsi cut ties with Syria before he was ousted as Egypt's president in June. The interim Egyptian government announced it would not attend talks on Syria in Jordan on Monday because it was "not in favor of the military option in Syria" and hoped for a political solution to the crisis.

Iran

Iran supports the Assad regime and considers the rhetoric against Syria to be part of an effort to target the "Resistance Axis" of Syria, Iran and Hezbollah because of Israel. Iran has been Syria's main backer in the region since well before the current conflict and has been highly critical of any prospect of intervention.

Iraq

Iraq officially remains neutral in the Syrian conflict. The Shia-led government in Baghdad has repeatedly called for a peaceful, political solution to the crisis, although it has also warned that a victory for the rebels would unleash sectarian war in Iraq and Lebanon. Iraq's Kurdistan region has given refuge to almost 200,000 Syrians, including about 47,000 in the last two weeks of August.

Jordan

Jordan hosts a US air base that could carry out strikes, but has said it will not be a "launchpad" for attacks on Syria. King Abdullah has said that dialogue was the "only option" to end the conflict in Syria. The king has said his country stands ready to respond to any threat from Syria. The US left about 700 combat-equipped troops in Jordan after a training exercise in June, reportedly taking its troop presence there to 1,000. An estimated 500,000 Syrian refugees have fled to Jordan to escape the civil war.

Lebanon

Lebanon officially remains neutral. Adnan Mansour, Lebanon's Foreign Minister, told Lebanese radio that he did not support the idea of strikes on Syria, saying: "I don't think this action would serve peace, stability and security in the region." Two bomb attacks which killed almost 60 people in Lebanon this month (August) were linked to tensions over the Syrian conflict. The Lebanese Shia movement Hezbollah has openly taken part in combat in Syria on the side of the government, and there have been reports of some in the Sunni community fighting on the side of the rebels. The country is already playing host to the largest number of Syrian refugees.

Russia

Russia is one of Assad's most important international backers and has said it opposes any UN Security Council resolution that would permit military strikes against the Syrian regime. It has said there is no evidence the Syrian regime was responsible for the chemical attack on civilians.

Map of the Middle East



Graphic and Text from Al Jazeera English.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2013/08/201383111193558894.html>