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The world should join Pope Francis' call to stop US war in Syria

by Mairead Maguire

Perspective

Pope Francis has set Saturday as a worldwide day of prayer and fasting for peace in Syria. The Vatican has declared that it is against "armed intervention," pointing to the havoc caused by the U.S.-led war to topple Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003.

I would like to add my support to Pope Francis' appeal and pledge to pray and fast for peace on Sept. 7. I encourage people of all faiths and none to join that global day of fasting and prayer for peace and to act for peace and against U.S. military intervention by the United States in Syria.

One hundred years ago, a small incident took place in Bosnia, and it escalated into the first world war, causing the deaths of millions. Every act has its consequences, and every violent act, like the proposed U.S. military intervention, has its violent consequences, which will cause the deaths of more Syrian civilians and will result in many more refugees.

In the last decade, the world has watched in horror as the United States, the United Kingdom and NATO used military intervention in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and other countries. Now President Barack Obama has promised a military intervention on Syria "with teeth." In Iraq, we were promised military intervention with "shock and awe." We have also been promised he will continue to support the armed opposition in Syria, a majority of whom are members of Jabhat al-Nusra ("Victory Front") and other such al-Qaida groups.

There is still time to stop this mad rush to war. The people of America can do it. Just as the British people put pressure on their members of Parliament and insisted that enough is enough and said no to military intervention, so, too, can the American people mobilize and act to stop this proposed illegal war. (Without

a U.N. Security Council resolution, any U.S. government military action is illegal.)

Let us all support the peace movement by doing what we can: marching on Washington, speaking out, sitting in and engaging in nonviolent direct action to lobby U.S. political representatives to vote no to war.

A majority of American people are against this war. People around the world support those Americans working to stop this war.

Together, let us fast, pray and send a clear message to President Obama, the U.S. Senate and Congress: no war, no military attack, no support for armed opposition, no support for al-Qaida, no bombings. Give peace a chance.

[Mairead Maguire won the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize.]

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