

Dr. Burgess Weekly Video Address September 6, 2013

“No Syrian Involvement”

Congressman Burgess: Well first off, I don't think the evidence has been presented that makes this unequivocal, but look your lead into this was the President's going to go to Congress to try to get the approval. Really, the President needs to go to the American people. My calls this morning are running 360 to 2 against this action. No one in this area believes it is advisable or a good idea, and let's remember right before going into Iraq the popularity of that invasion was about at 80%. And where were we three or four short years later, but at about a 20% popularity. This time if we go in with 20% popularity it's not long before you actually have a situation that's – that's unmanageable, that's ungovernable.

Marc Fein: You specifically said that the information was thin, thin being the – the operative word. How did the administration make its case to you? And why do you say it's thin?

Congressman Burgess: Well, I said it was thin because it was physically thin. I made a special trip up to Washington to go to the classified room to receive the classified documents the administration had made available to members of Congress. I was struck by the fact that there were just a few pages! I thought there would be a significant amount of scientific data. I thought there would be chemical analysis. I thought there would be autopsy reports and pictures, but no there were a few printed pages and that was it. So my comment that the evidence was thin literally referred to the fact that the evidence pack I was handed was thin.

Kristi Nelson: Well now, Nancy Pelosi said just a short time ago that from a humanitarian standpoint that we have to do something. We can't ignore the situation, so if not with the strike, how would you suggest we handle what's happening there?

Congressman Burgess: Well, that question of course could have been asked a year ago, or two years ago. What have we heard that 100,000 civilians died in Syria? The refugee floods across the border into Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon have been significant. I also sit on the Helsinki Commission, and we had a meeting about a month and a half ago about the status of the refugees in those countries. This has been a problem for some time, and the response doesn't seem like it's been well thought out. So now today we're talking about a shot across the bow, a pinprick of the Assad administration, but honestly where do you go from here? You send a few tomahawks and bomb a runway at his airfield, but what's next? He's still in control, he still controls all of the chemical weapons. If you really want to do something to degrade his ability to use those on his own people again, you have to treat as you did Saddam Hussein and that's at the end of a rope!

Marc Fein: Well, let me ask because you mentioned a “shot across the bow” and that term has been used a number of times, but after John McCain meet with the President, and he's been one of his staunchest critics. He said he thought it looked like there were more significant (video skip) ... does that allay maybe your concerns somewhat?

Congressman Burgess: Well I mean, obviously I'd have to hear that for myself. I've got the greatest respect for Senator McCain and have always been supportive of him and many of the things he's tried to do during his career, but he's privy to information that I have not seen. And I got to tell you, I left here with trying to keep an open mind on Sunday, went up and reviewed the

documents, sat through two and a half hours of the classified briefing, and I left that room with probably more questions than answers.

Kristi Nelson: One last question, what's next? What can we expect, the American, people expect?

Congressman Burgess: Well, tell you the truth I don't know, and I've told my scheduler in my office lets remain flexible for the remainder of the week and the weekend, so I'm prepared to go back at any time. What I have heard is that there will be hearings in the Senate this week, in the House next week, and the House is likely to take a vote sometime during the week next week. You've already seen the vote in Britain, France will take the vote after we take our vote, and it still remains to be whether or not the President will be respectful of whatever the will of the House is. He maintains he has the ability to make a decision irrespective of the House vote. We'll have to wait and see on that.

Kristi Nelson: Representative Michael Burgess, Thank you.