“CREDIBILITY”

An embarrassing number of people in DC have been saying publicly since Friday that we have to launch cruise missiles against Bashar al-Assad or risk the “credibility” of the United States. John McCain. Mike McCaul. Adam Schiff. Former NSC staffer Barry Pavel.

But this WSJ piece — after describing how central the Saudis were in presenting earlier claims that Assad had used chemical weapons and in the midst of descriptions of how central a role Bandar bin Sultan is playing in drumming up war against Syria — reports that Saudi King Abdullah and others were bitching about US credibility as early as April.

> In early April, said U.S. officials, the Saudi king sent a strongly worded message to Mr. Obama: America’s credibility was on the line if it let Mr. Assad and Iran prevail. The king warned of dire consequences of abdicating U.S. leadership and creating a vacuum, said U.S. officials briefed on the message.
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> Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal, who was the first Saudi official to publicly back arming the rebels, followed with a similar message during a meeting with Mr. Obama later that month, the officials said.

I wonder if we started taking Saudi taunts about our credibility more seriously after Bandar made a show of wooing Vladimir Putin?

In any case, here we go, hastily getting involved in the war in Syria and potentially escalating it across the region as a whole, without proper review much less a plan on how to actually improve the situation in Syria.

Credibility.

Apparently, the only kind of credibility that

matters for America's place in the role anymore is if our Saudi overlords suggest we lack credibility if we fail to do their explicit, and long-planned, bidding.

Credibility.

Meanwhile think of all the things American has squandered its position as unquestioned leader of the world without confronting. Poverty, hunger. The most obvious, of course, is climate change.

How much more "credibility" would the United States have by now if, at the start of his Administration, Obama had launched not just a Manhattan project to dramatically curb American use of fossil fuels, but also invested the goodwill Obama had (back before he expanded the drones) to find an equitable, global approach to climate change.

Credibility.

Apparently, the only thing the Villagers in DC think could or should win us "credibility" is in unquestioningly serving as global enforcer against the brutal dictators our brutal dictator friends the Saudis wants us to punish (though the Saudis are quite selective about which brutal dictators they stake our credibility on).

America could have used its power and leadership to earn real credibility. Instead, we're trying to suck up to Bandar Bush.