

Day one of Meet the Clubs has the largest student turn out to date

Taking a look at the first CSU trustee from the Valley



War with Syria is not the answer, despite what Obama says

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

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# OBAMA AT THE RED LINE

President pushes for military action after a U.S. report claims Assad used chemical weapons against civilians

## DEATH TOLL (SO FAR)

"THE SYRIAN OBSERVATORY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS SAID THE TOLL SINCE 2011 UPRISING NOW STANDS AT 110,371 PEOPLE, WITH AT LEAST 40,146 CIVILIANS KILLED INCLUDING NEARLY 4,000 WOMEN AND MORE THAN 5,800 CHILDREN."

INFORMATION COURTESY OF AL ARABIYA

## SYRIA

Almost seven million Syrians have either lost their home or are forced to leave their country.

INFORMATION COURTESY OF NBC

See SYRIA, page 4

## DAMASCUS

## CHEMICAL WEAPONS ATTACK

in Damascus suburbs on **August 21, 2013**:  
"More than **1,400** people were killed in the chemical weapons attack, including at least **426** children," according to the U.S. report.

## RELIGION

**74%** Sunni Muslim (Islam)

**16%** Other Muslim (includes Alawite, Druze)

**10%** Jewish

INFORMATION COURTESY OF SYRIA CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

**OVER 50% OF AGENCY SCHOOLS IN SYRIA ARE CLOSED DUE TO THE CONFLICT**

INFORMATION COURTESY OF UNRWA

"Children make up half of all refugees from the Syria conflict, according to the two agencies. Most have arrived in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. Increasingly, Syrians are fleeing to North Africa and Europe. Latest figures show that more than 768,000 Syrian child refugees are under the age of 11. Inside Syria, according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, some 7,000 children have been killed during the conflict. UNHCR and UNICEF estimate that more than 2 million children have been internally displaced within Syria."

INFORMATION COURTESY OF UNICEF

ILLUSTRATION BY JASMINE MOCHIZUKI / VISUAL EDITOR

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# Clubs greet students at Bayramian

**ALEX VEJAR**  
DAILY SUNDIAL

**NEARLY 1,000** students visited Bayramian Lawn for Meet the Clubs on Tuesday between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

The lawn was filled with more than 200 clubs. Each organization was stationed at a table where they distributed flyers, pamphlets, photos and more promoting their activities.

Adrian Porto, senior business management major, was on Bayramian Lawn promoting his fraternity. Porto said he would have “never joined” his fraternity if an event like Meet the Clubs did not exist.

“I think it’s important just because most people come to CSUN and are overwhelmed with the size of the school and the amount of people that are here,” said Porto. “I feel like this is the way to find out what you want to do on campus.”

A range of organizations participated in the event: religious-oriented clubs, academic clubs, fraternities, sororities, recreational clubs, athletic clubs, com-

munity involvement clubs and more.

Catherine Hartnek, senior electrical engineering major, is interested in potentially joining a sorority and a club associated with her major. She appreciated the face-to-face interactions that the event provided.

“I think it’s really great to see all the different clubs,” Hartnek said. “It’s a lot better than doing an online search for all of them. I’m getting a lot of good information on the different clubs that I had an interest in and getting to talk to them directly, so it’s been really helpful.”

Some clubs had display boards that contained information about their organization while handing out other material for curious students.

Canopies with representatives from Associated Students and the Matador Involvement Center were also present.

Freshman biology major Diego Zuniga feels that joining a club or organization makes the college experience more worthwhile for students.

“I know people who just come to school and then they leave. They don’t really get involved,” Zuni-

ga said as he searched for sports-oriented or community involvement clubs. “They won’t have as much fun or they won’t gain a whole different perspective of life if they weren’t to join a club or any organization here.”

Agustin Garibay, activities coordinator for clubs and organizations at the MIC, said this semester’s club-showcasing event is the largest they ever had.

“It’s a lot of visibility for our clubs,” Garibay said. “On the other end, it’s an opportunity for students to see what’s available on campus for involvement opportunities.”

Wednesday Sept. 4 is the last day of the Meet the Clubs event. It will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Bayramian Lawn.



**SCAN THIS QR CODE**  
for information on  
Meet the Clubs



ALEX VEJAR / DAILY SUNDIAL

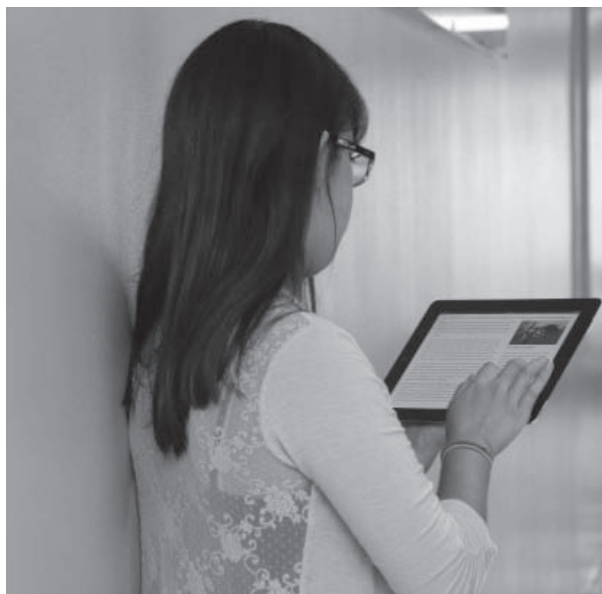
Patrick Cruz, 20, a kinesiology major, and Amy James, 21, a music education major, offer information about their clubs at Meet the Clubs day. Cruz uses his Jishin Taiko instrument to get the attention of students.

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# A.S. vice president pulls double duty

Public relations student has been chosen as the first ever CSU student trustee from CSUN, and is excited to start juggling senate and school duties

**ALEX VAJAR**  
DAILY SUNDIAL

EVER SINCE HIGH school, Talar Alexanian has been trying to make a difference in her community.

"I tried to take whatever opportunities came my way and I loved every minute of it," she said. "I enjoyed getting to know my high school campus and that's why that's the same spirit I brought with me when I came to CSUN."

That determination ultimately led her to where she is today: vice president of Associated Students at CSUN and the first-ever CSUN student trustee for the entire CSU school system.

The road to becoming a trustee was not an easy one. Alexanian had to go through six months of interviews — including one with Gov. Jerry Brown — before being awarded the position. As a result, she will have the unique opportunity of representing all 437,000 students in the 23 state schools in California.

"I'm so humbled by that

privilege," Alexanian said.

Her partner in crime, A.S. President Christopher Woolett, feels that Alexanian's double duty will not only help students at CSUN, but students across the board.

"I think that she can play a huge role in advocating for the students on our campus by advocating for all students in general whether it's on a national or state level," Woolett said.

Alexanian is looking forward to using her A.S. vice presidency as a tool to make her an effective trustee.

"I love that I'm having both roles because I feel like to be in the role of student trustee, you always have to have that connection to the students themselves," Alexanian said.

Alexanian was a go-getter from the beginning of her time with the student senate. A.S. General Manager David Crandall recalled a time when she asked to chair the strategic committee that sets annual goals for the campus.

"To be honest, I was a little skeptical," Crandall said, thinking that she would need his help in the beginning. "And then [I] got in there, and I was useless."

When Alexanian first arrived at CSUN, she immediately started working with the Matador Involvement Center. She later landed a position as an upper-division senator, which is where her love of student government stems from.

"My experiences [with the Matador Involvement Center] — interacting with the students, putting on different events for Unified We Serve, which is the volunteer program — really allowed me to see what the student population feels about this campus and what we can really do in terms of student advocates to reach out to not only our faculty and administration, but also even our politicians and people in our local community to make sure that CSUN is getting the best resources and making sure that we're putting on events that are really reaching out to our population," Alexanian said.

Crandall noticed Alexanian's potential right away, and feels that she will not only be a great vice president, but also be able to effortlessly balance her role as student trustee.

"I'm a big fan of Talar," Crandall said. "She continually reveals a capacity to do whatever the situation calls for."

Woolett feels like he has found a great colleague in Alexanian because of her positive attributes.

"The qualities I was looking for [in a vice president] is just someone with good integrity and with vision and I think she definitely has both of those," he said.

Currently, Alexanian is majoring in journalism with an emphasis in public relations. When she graduates from CSUN, Alexanian plans to combine her P.R. education with her love of political science.

"I see myself definitely giving back to my community and continuing to be an agent of social change through either public affairs or going into a career in politics and helping individuals in that way," she said.

With her two new positions, she is looking to encourage students to be more involved with the campus in various ways.

"I hope that by the end of this year, that students can feel more of a connection to the campus and feel enrooted [sic] in the CSUN community," she said.



JOHN SARINGO-RODRIGUEZ / PHOTO EDITOR

Talar Alexanian, 20, A.S. vice president and newly appointed CSU student trustee, said that she wants to make a difference in the community.



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**SYRIA***Continued from page 1***MONA ADEM**  
NEWS EDITOR

**PRESIDENT** Barack Obama won the support of important lawmakers Tuesday in his campaign for a military response to the Syrian government's alleged use of chemical weapons on Aug. 21, which killed 1,400 Syrians according to the Obama administration.

While congress remains divided, top House Republicans and Democrats have expressed support for limited military action, meaning no U.S. troops on the ground will be involved.

Less than a year ago, President Obama declared that if Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his regime, or the rebels fighting Assad, used chemical or biological weapons, a "red line" would be crossed, possibly triggering a U.S. military response. **The alleged use of chemical weapons**

According to an intelligence report published Aug. 30, the White House claimed with "high confidence" that Assad's regime crossed that "red line" when it attacked the suburbs of the Syrian capital of Damascus with chemical warfare.

According to the report, 426 children were among the more than 1,400 Syrians killed. The report also claimed that there is "no indication that opposi-

tion has carried out a large-scale, coordinated rocket and artillery attack like the one that occurred on August 21."

James Mitchell, a political professor at CSUN, said that the Iraq fiasco severely damaged U.S. reputation and credibility worldwide.

"The United States is going to have to go [through] great lengths to not only prove that chemical weapons were used, but also [to prove they were] used by the government," said Mitchell.

In response to fears that U.S. involvement in the Syria crisis would lead to a full-fledged war, Obama is arguing that there are no parallels to the beginning of the Iraq war in 2003.

"This is not Iraq, and this is not Afghanistan," Obama said to reporters Tuesday.

Mitchell said Obama's decision to seek congressional approval was very important and essentially a "no lose situation" for the president.

"If congress authorizes this, then you can say that he consulted with the legislatures and they supported his initiative policy, which then gives him more foundation," Mitchell said. "And if congress does not support it, then he can say he tried to do the right thing and they wouldn't back me on it. They represent the American people and [Obama] did what the constitution calls for."

Mitchell said going unilaterally, which means the U.S. will intervene on its own, is a very risky idea. Meanwhile, most people will ask the ques-



COURTESY OF MCT

President Barack Obama delivers a statement on Syria at the White House in Washington, D.C., Saturday, Aug. 31.

tion "why the U.S.?"

"Why does United States have to go in and be the self-appointed policemen of the world? You end up picking and choosing the atrocity that means something," Mitchell said

Lauren Nitta, a psychology major at CSUN, said that although the U.S. is still hurting financially from the previous military involvement, something needs to be done to solve the situation.

"It's totally unjust. You know he's using chemical

weapons against his own people so that's something that needs to be taken care of," Nitta said. "We are one of the world powers and we have a lot of alliances so maybe getting those involved and getting others involved too would work. There's power in numbers."

**Syria, from uprising to civil war**

Syria, a Middle Eastern country known officially as the Syrian Arab Republic, has a population of more than 21 million people. The two major religions are Islam and Chris-

tianity where Sunni Islamists, which make up about 70 percent of Syria's population. Assad and his family are Alawites, a minority sect of Shiite Islam that makes up about 12 percent of the country's population.

When the Arab Spring swept over Syria in March 2011, it began as a protest against an authoritarian regime.

"It started as a more peaceful movement to demand president Bashar regime to reform dictatorship and bring about democratic rules and principles into the politics of Syria," said Nayerah Tohidi, the founding director of the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies program at CSUN.

Tohidi said that president Bashar did not want to share power and responded to the protest with extreme violence.

"Gradually the movement became radicalized and militarized and when you repress a non-violent movement so violently, people either get depressed or you invite radical elements that are looking for an opportunity to [take] advantages of peoples frustration," Tohidi said.

Tohidi said that countries such as Iran, Turkey, Jordan and especially Saudi Arabia's involvement in the Syrian conflict turned the Syrian protest to a "war by proxy." It also reinforced the sectarian nature of the war, which occurs when violence erupts between different sects of one specific ideology or religion within a nation.

"It basically became a hegemonic, masculinist power game

between Shiites led by Iran and Shia Hezbollah in Lebanon and Sunni led by Saudi Arabia," said Tohidi. "The regional power game are using the poor Syrian people as the primary victims."

**Syria and the international standoff**

Tohidi said the international power game between Russia and U.S. also changed the face of the protest while creating a worldwide "moral bankruptcy."

"We have been waiting over two years while people have been bombed by a government that is killing its own people while abuse has been committed on both sides but nobody has done anything," Tohidi said.

Since 2011, the 15-nation security council with a primary goal to maintain international peace where each member has a vote, has been intensely divided on Syria.

"Certainly, Russia and China are likely to veto him in the security council but then he can also go to the general assembly," Mitchell said. "But [Obama] doesn't need to have UN support. He can also consult with NATO partners because NATO is authorized to act when the security council does not."

Jordan Bradley, senior history major, said that no matter what the U.S. decides to do, the outcome will remain negative.

"I think there are long term repercussions on whatever we end up doing," said Bradley. "There's already two million displaced refugee so is this really going to solve things or is it going to perpetuate things? I guess time will tell."

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# CAMPUS VOICE

DAILY SUNDIAL STAFF

**Q:** How do you feel about the situation in Syria?



**SARA VAZQUEZ**  
SOCIOLOGY

"I can't think of any other possibility of solving this problem, if not war. I'm stuck in the middle. We shouldn't go because we'll be losing more soldiers and family members and it's costly. But if there's no war then I don't know how else we'll be able to fix this."



**NALLELY MORAN**  
PSYCHOLOGY

"I don't think that it's right for us to declare war. We can support them and supply whatever they need, but I feel like we've been in so many wars already that aren't really relevant to us and I don't think we need more on our backs. We have to worry about fixing things here at home versus being out there, in wars with everyone."



**SHELBY RYAN**  
PSYCHOLOGY

"I really don't know what other solution there would be. I am not a fan of war, I think it totally destroys people, but unfortunately we're at that day in age where sometimes there's nothing else we can really do about it."



**CHRISTOPHER ICUTE**  
MARINE BIOLOGY

"I do think it's something that should be investigated and to see what's going on because I don't think that that's right at all. If we get another threat about war, then that's when I think we should slowly back off. I don't think it's right to risk the lives of Americans."

## BRIEF

### Students informed of emergency resource

President Dianne Harrison sent an email to students calling their attention to the Emergency Operations Desk Reference for Students, an important resource available online.

This desk reference guide informs students of the proper procedures to take in case of multiple emergency situations. "It would suck to not know what to do during an actual emergency," said Jacqueline Truong, 18-year-old kinesiology major.

Emergency situations covered in the guide include medical emergencies, fires and/or explosions, hazardous materials, bomb threats and/or suspicious objects and earthquakes.

The reference desk also includes guidelines for what to do in case of a shooting. Students aren't the only ones to receive an emergency guide. A desk reference for faculty and staff members has been provided as well.

"I'd follow the emergency procedure that the president would tell us," said 19-year-old Emily Redding when asked what she would do in the event of an emergency, "I should probably be more prepared, but I'd follow whatever the president was saying."

Redding wasn't the only student who thought it was important to be ready when faced with an emergency. 18-year-old Tiffany Khoo also had a response regarding the emergency situation help desk. "It's going to help a lot," said Khoo. "Especially if we don't know what to do in class and there's an emergency, we can look at it and hopefully get to safety."

—JAZZMYNE BOGARD  
DAILY SUNDIAL

## CORRECTION

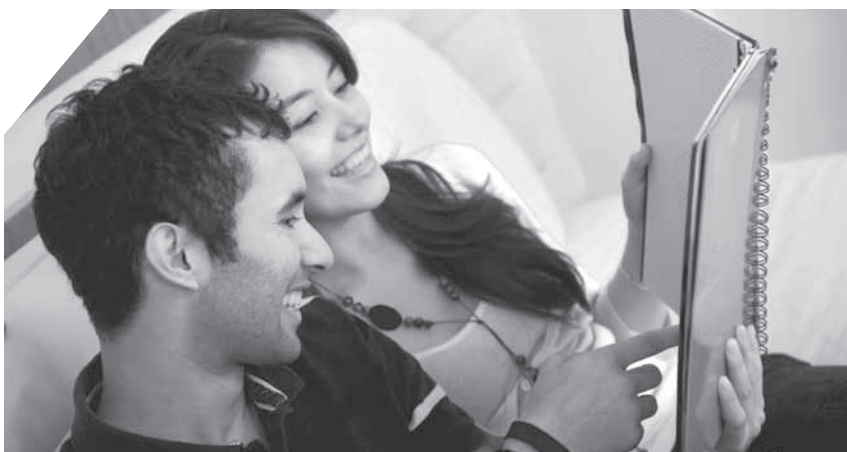
In the story "New bill helps undocumented students" which ran Sept. 3 the headline is both incorrect and misleading. The new immigration bill has not officially passed. Senate approved the bill but it has yet to be approved by the House of Representatives and signed by President Obama.

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SEPTEMBER 4, 2013

OPINION@SUNDIAL.CSUN.EDU

# Opinion

## American amnesia may lead to war

**LUIS RIVAS**  
OPINIONS EDITOR

**PRESIDENT OBAMA** just recently announced that he is seeking congressional approval for a military strike against Syria. This time though really guys, he said, it's gonna be different. Like, seriously.

More or less, that's what the president said, with witty paraphrasing done by the author of this article.

Obama and his supporters, including Secretary of State John F. Kerry, Vice President Joe Biden, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, Arizona Senator John McCain, U.S. House Speaker John Boehner, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and other U.S. officials and top lawmakers are beating the drums of war. The president's urgent message of striking against Syria comes as a needed response in the face of thousands of people that have been hurt or killed by chemical attacks. They have argued the case that military intervention is needed in order to protect the Syrian people.

But, as of now, there is no case for strikes against President Bashar al-Assad.

These are some of the same people that only a few years ago for another war, one headed by a Republican administration, weren't as supportive. But only on the surface. Both Biden and Kerry voted on a resolution for going to war with Iraq. Pelosi, on the other hand, voted against going to war. But this time around, she's fine with going to war with Syria. Is it because of a partisan bias?

Irony can kill.

In the face of allegations that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad used chemical weapons against his own people - or that at least it has not been irrefutably proven - both Kerry and Biden have gone as far as to say that any delay of military strikes, U.S. intervention and more analysis is divergent and unnecessary.

And don't let anyone trick you or pressure you into thinking that you can only be a fanatic pro-Assad supporter or an anti-Assad pro-war supporter. You can, and I would argue should, see the Assad presidency as one that has committed many crimes against its population in the context of a civil war.

It's messy and many have portrayed the civil war as having only two sides: Assad versus its unified population.

In the Aug. 28 edition of the Los Angeles Daily News, the front page headline read, "Ready to Strike?" all in caps, showing a Syrian man holding up his iPhone

Let's be clear. And for me to do so, I had to read for weeks on different stories, different websites, speak with different people, on what is really going on in Syria. And even then, I claim no expertise on Syria. But in spite of this, reading articles published in The Guardian, Christian Science Moni-

ly, he tackles the chemical weapons attacks. He puts forth, and answers, 13 questions on military involvement with Syria - making the case that the U.S., with the information that it currently has, should not attack Syria.

Everyone should read it, but more importantly Obama and other

al-Qaeda supporters. Some are secular.

He went on to say that there is very little militarily that the U.S. can do that will not further destroy Syria. But support should be given to refugees, a large percentage which have gone to Jordan, and humanitarian efforts.

War, as the nearly-dead cliché saying goes, is not the answer.

In a video interview of Syrian Ambassador Bashar Ja'afari by Christiane Amanpour on Sept. 3, she says

that proof has come out that Assad was behind the chemical attacks, based on a former Syrian forensic chemical doctor.

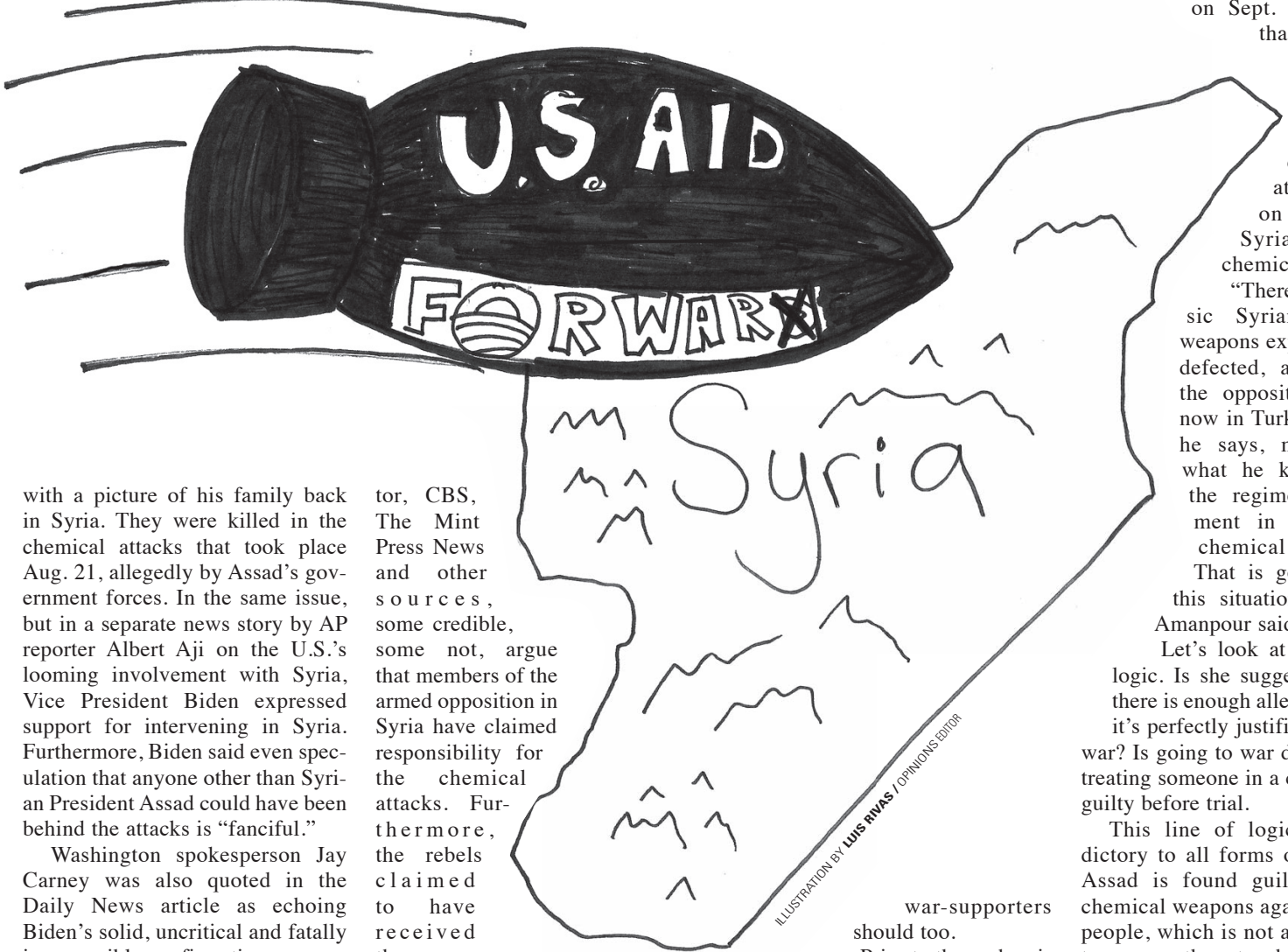
"There is a forensic Syrian chemical weapons expert who has defected, according to the opposition, and is now in Turkey and will, he says, make public what he knows about the regime's involvement in the use of chemical weapons. That is going to seal this situation, isn't it?" Amanpour said.

Let's look at that line of logic. Is she suggesting that if there is enough allegations, then it's perfectly justifiable to go to war? Is going to war different than treating someone in a courtroom as guilty before trial.

This line of logic is contradictory to all forms of justice. If Assad is found guilty of using chemical weapons against his own people, which is not an easy thing to prove, then try him in international court. But if it is found that it is not definitely provable that the government used chemical weapons against the Syrian people, then the U.S. has only two options: back off or suffer the consequences of the world seeing the U.S. as an imperialist nation with aggressive military expansion and dwindling support from its citizenry.

More than half the U.S. population does not want war against Syria, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll. But, really, that has never stopped the U.S. from going to war before. And it won't now.

### "THIS TIME IT'S DIFFERENT."



with a picture of his family back in Syria. They were killed in the chemical attacks that took place Aug. 21, allegedly by Assad's government forces. In the same issue, but in a separate news story by AP reporter Albert Aji on the U.S.'s looming involvement with Syria, Vice President Biden expressed support for intervening in Syria. Furthermore, Biden said even speculation that anyone other than Syrian President Assad could have been behind the attacks is "fanciful."

Washington spokesperson Jay Carney was also quoted in the Daily News article as echoing Biden's solid, uncritical and fatally irresponsible confirmation.

"Suggestions that there's any doubt about who's responsible for this are as preposterous as a suggestion that the attack did not occur," Carney said.

And this sort of shaky rhetoric of war has become the government's popular opinion.

Daily News is not, by any means, the only media outlet to give dominating coverage to notions that these attacks were done by Assad forces. Go to CNN's website and virtually all articles are on Syria, with arguments for military intervention - in and out of the opinion's section.

tor, CBS, The Mint Press News and other sources, some credible, some not, argue that members of the armed opposition in Syria have claimed responsibility for the chemical attacks. Furthermore, the rebels claimed to have received the weapons from Saudi nationals.

Take that for what you will. There is still no case that can be made against Assad.

William Polk probably wrote the best sober assessment on the U.S.'s looming involvement with Syria. Published in the Atlantic Monthly on Sep. 2, in a two-part essay introduced by James Fallows, Polk outlines the problems of going to war with Syria.

In this essay, Polk makes the points that there are still things that we don't know, and therefore shouldn't be acting upon. Primari-

war-supporters should too.

Prior to these chemical attacks, I was part of a group discussion on Syria, the rebels, Assad and the history of the country led by Ziad Abu-Rish, a doctoral candidate in the Department of History at UCLA. He is also co-editor of 2012 The Dawn of the Arab Uprisings: End of an Old Order? published by Pluto Press.

Abu-Rish presented a very sad reality of Syria. The rebels are not a unified, cohesive unit. Some are foreign to Syria, coming from and receiving substantial help from places such as Turkey, Tunisia, Libya, Chechnya and Saudi Arabia. Some are jihadists and

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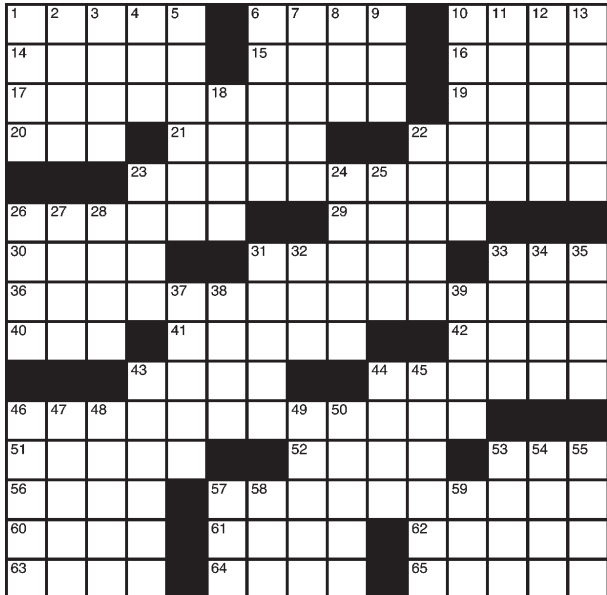
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**Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle**

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis

**ACROSS**

- 1 Saw point
- 6 Etching fluid
- 10 Touches affectionately
- 14 Prenatal exam, for short
- 15 Body part that smells
- 16 Jump in a skater's short program
- 17 Legend with an ax
- 19 Actress Hayworth
- 20 Dinner pair?
- 21 Like cough syrup
- 22 Indigenous New Zealander
- 23 Legend with a clarinet
- 26 Alcove
- 29 Not at all well-done
- 30 "Let's Get \_\_\_": Marvin Gaye hit
- 31 Udder parts
- 33 Jamaican genre
- 36 Legend with a vine
- 40 Animal on Michigan's state flag
- 41 Coffee shop cupful
- 42 Fishing tool
- 43 "Your Majesty"
- 44 It includes a bit of France
- 46 Legend with a bat
- 51 Betting every last chip
- 52 Hat-borne parasites
- 53 Toward the rudder
- 56 Charlatan, e.g.
- 57 Legend with a bathrobe
- 60 Sour
- 61 Actor Morales
- 62 Dutch pianist Egon who taught Victor Borge
- 63 Lime beverages
- 64 Holiday song
- 65 Important word for 17-, 23-, 36-, 46- and 57-Across



By Victor Barocas

9/4/13

**DOWN**

- 1 Packer's need
- 2 Arab League member
- 3 Burden
- 4 Up to, briefly
- 5 Bindle carriers
- 6 Former U.N. chief

- 7 How some flirt
- 8 Life-cabaret link
- 9 Place to relax
- 10 Where to see floats
- 11 Self-evident truth
- 12 Flashy tank swimmer
- 13 Like many characters in Shakespeare's dramas
- 18 Catering hall dispensers
- 22 Dashing inventor?
- 23 1885 Motorwagen maker
- 24 Reduce to small pieces
- 25 Inauguration Day pledge
- 26 Customary observance
- 27 Reference list abbr.
- 28 Bulletin board material
- 31 Icon on a pole
- 32 Immature newt
- 33 Goad
- 34 "Felicity" star Russell
- 35 Like the Flying Dutchman

**Tuesday's Puzzle Solved**



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- 37 "In space no one can hear you scream" film
- 38 Not, quaintly
- 39 On the safer side
- 43 Bypasses
- 44 Chickenpox symptom
- 45 Expletive replacements
- 46 Sicily neighbor
- 47 Epic that ends with Hector's funeral
- 48 County on the River Shannon
- 49 Pond plants
- 50 Zero, to Nero
- 53 Prefix with war or hero
- 54 Forest floor flora
- 55 High school math class
- 57 Feathery layer
- 58 Club for GIs
- 59 "... but \_\_\_ are chosen"

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## FOOTBALL

# Sundial sports picks: Super Bowl



BRIAN BERNSTEIN

PREDICTION

WINNER  
BRONCOS

**THE DENVER BRONCOS** are the heavy favorites to win the AFC with an arsenal of offensive and defensive weapons. Led by Peyton Manning, the offense will go as he does.

Their passing attack was led by Demaryius Thomas with 94 catches and 10 touchdowns, and Eric Decker with 85 catches for 13 touchdowns. Despite losing Brandon Stokley, the Broncos replenished their receiving core after signing wide receiver Wes Welker from the New England Patriots.

The Broncos defense is anchored by pro-bowlers Champ Bailey and Von Miller as well as emerging linebacker Wesley Woodyard. This trio creates nightmares for the opposition.

Atlanta, on the other hand, did not have a very eventful off-season but some notable moves were the resigning of future hall of fame tight end Tony Gonzalez, and the signing of running back Steven Jackson. They now have a strong running attack to compliment the aerial attack of Matt Ryan and arguably the best wide receiver tandem in the game, Roddy White and Julio Jones.

Along with a high-powered offense last season, their defense ranked fifth in the league in points allowed per game at 18.7. Led by cornerbacks Asante Samuel and Robert McClain, the Falcons are set up to rival

any team in the league.

Both the Denver Broncos and Atlanta Falcons have the right players and schemes to win the Super Bowl. Both are equipped with strong quarterbacks, wide receivers, running backs and stellar defenses, but the x-factor goes to the Broncos.

Having Peyton Manning as their quarterback makes the Broncos the favorite to win. He has been to two Super Bowls already (winning one), and the four-time NFL MVP will lead the Denver Broncos to the 2013-14 Super Bowl Championship over the Falcons.



RON ROKHY

PREDICTION

WINNER  
TEXANS

**EVERY SEASON**, football fans wonder who will come out on top of the AFC: Brady or Manning? This year, the answer is neither. It's...Matt Schaub.

The Texans' stingy defense

saw an upgrade as ball hawk Ed Reed joined the squad fresh off of winning a Super Bowl, and injured middle linebacker Brian Cushing returned from an ACL tear which caused him to miss

most of the 2012 campaign.

Drafting wideout DeAndre Hopkins to complement the Texans' deadly aerial assault, which routinely sees Andre Johnson haul in more than 1,500 yards a season, will help take the pressure off Johnson, who was targeted on a whopping 58.1 percent of Schaub's passes last season.

Halfback Arian Foster should also see improvement due to the addition of fullback Greg Jones, who helped Maurice Jones-Drew gain more than 7,000 yards, making him the league's sixth-leading active rusher.

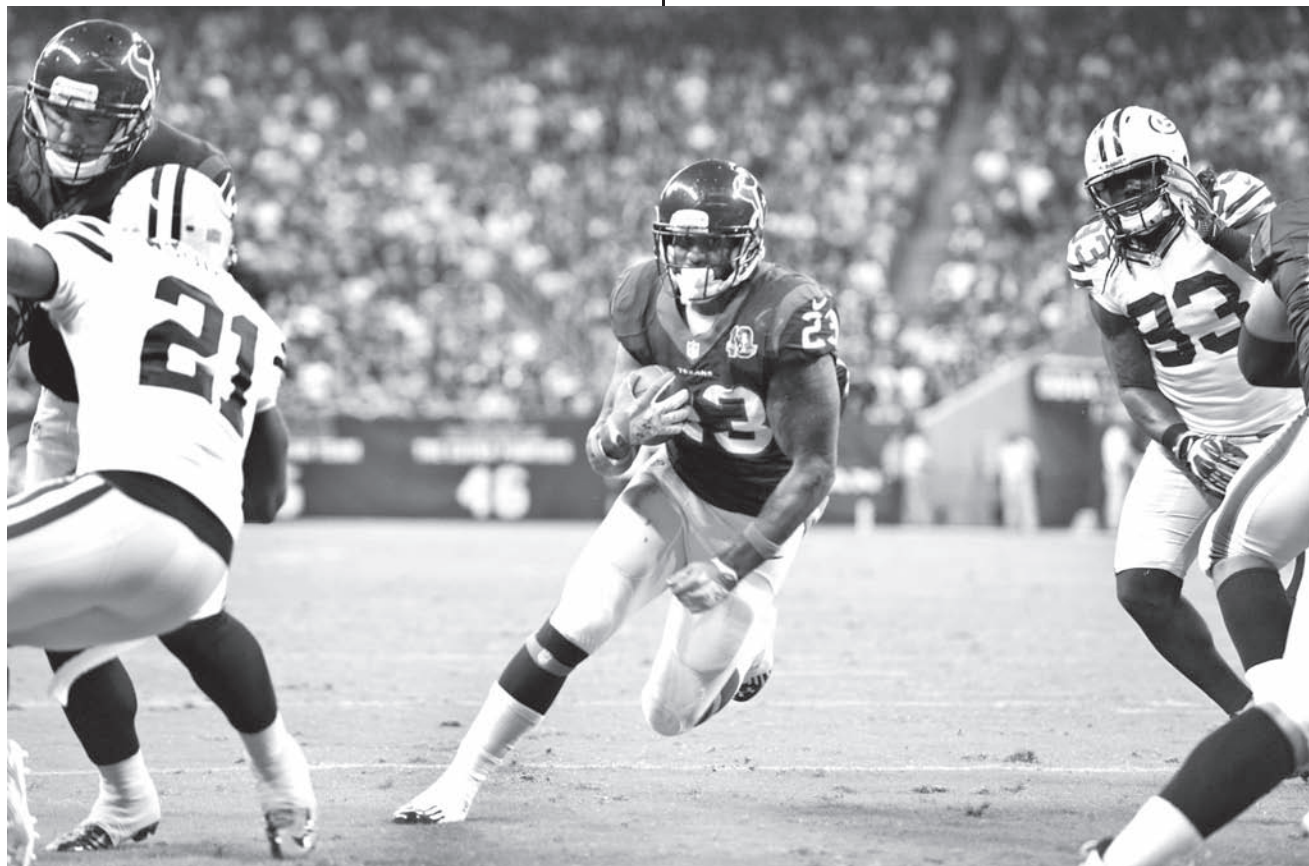
The climbing ages of Brady and Manning, along with the Texans' improvements, should have them atop the AFC.

Think the Niners will repeat? Think again. Not only has dynamic quarterback Colin Kaepernick lost the element of being unknown, San Francisco's offseason acquisitions won't put them ahead of Aaron Rodgers and the Green Bay Packers.

As defenses build schemes centered around stopping Kaepernick's running game, they'll forget all about Packers rookie running back, Eddie Lacy.

Lacy, who played for the Alabama Crimson Tide last year, finished his 2012 campaign with 1,322 yards and 17 touchdowns. It's no secret that Green Bay's run game has been weak over the last couple of seasons, but the addition of Lacy gives them the complete package.

Oh yeah, there's also that thing where Rodgers is currently the NFL's best quarterback.



COURTESY OF MCT

Houston Texans runningback Arian Foster looks to use his explosive running to punish opponents en route to the Super Bowl



DARKO DEBOGOCIC

PREDICTION

WINNER  
49ERS

**WITH AN 11** game winning-streak intact heading into the 2012 playoffs, the Denver Broncos were expected to contend for a Super Bowl title. Those aspirations were cut short by Joe Flacco's last second Hail Mary pass which sent the game into double-overtime, and Denver out of the playoffs.

Despite the loss, Denver's passing offense ranked second in the AFC and fifth best overall in 2012. Stud wideouts Demaryius Thomas and

Eric Decker accounted for 23 total touchdowns.

The addition of Wes Welker gives Peyton Manning a prolific slot threat to complement Thomas and Decker, creating nightmare match-ups for any defensive coordinator.

After Von Miller returns from suspension, expect them to make a lengthy run to New Jersey.

Unlike the Broncos, the San Francisco 49ers reached the Super Bowl, but saw their

title hopes slip away after they were stopped 7 yards short of the goal line.

A quarterback controversy surfaced following head coach Jim Harbaugh's decision to start rookie Colin Kaepernick in favor of veteran Alex Smith. The decision paid off as Kaepernick led them all the way to the Super Bowl, setting a single-season record for rushing yards by a quarterback in a playoff game, with 181 yards.

The strength of the 49ers is their defense led by All-Pro selections Patrick Willis, NaVorro Bowman and Justin Smith. Add Kaepernick's experience to this defense, and no one has it better than San Francisco.

In the NFL, offense doesn't win championships, balance does, and the 49ers are the most even-keeled team in the league.



ROY AZOULAY

PREDICTION

WINNER  
49ERS

**THE SAYING GOES** that offense wins games, but defense wins championships.

To make the most accurate prediction for the Super Bowl, one must first look at which teams had top tier defenses in the league last year. In the NFC, San Francisco 49ers allowed an NFC best 205.8 yards per game last season

The 49ers' front seven is a formidable beast led by linebacker Patrick Willis and the

nonbiological Smith brothers, Justin and Aldon, who combined for 22.5 sacks last season. In addition, they added pro-bowler Nnamdi Asomugha to their secondary, beefing up an already dangerous and explosive defense.

Their success will fall on quarterback Colin Kaepernick and his ability to manage the game and minimize mistakes. It helps that Kaepernick has a new toy in Anquan Boldin but his shaky

connection with tight end Vernon Davis will need to be resolved in order for them to make an appearance in New York in February. They have all the tools needed to take home Mr. Lombardi.

In the AFC, my pick is the Houston Texans who have the NFL sack leader, J.J. Watt, who brought down opposing QB's 20.5 times last season. A defense's best friend is a great running game, and in that department, Houston excels. Halfback Arian Foster has proved to be a top-tier running back who has one of the best offensive lines in the league. On top of that, they added Super Bowl champion Ed Reed to an already potent defense. The Texans will punch their ticket to the Big Apple to face the 49ers in February at MetLife Stadium in Super Bowl 48.

Don't forget to tweet us your predictions @sundialsports57

