

Politicians are often accused of reacting too slowly to issues but too quickly to events. This week is a case in point. In the interim period of me writing this column and you reading it, Parliament will have been recalled to debate whether we intervene in Syria. By the time the paper goes in the recycle box, our armed forces could yet again be in action in another part of the world.

At the start of the conflict my views were robust and in fact I used my column in June to outline my opposition to arming the rebels. Since then the debate from providing equipment to the opposition has moved on to military intervention and yet I still need to be convinced about our involvement.

The TV images of the alleged chemical attack in Damascus were horrifying. I found myself, probably like others, deeply upset by what I saw on my screen. However something didn't feel right about it and that is why I remain hesitant to intervention. We do not yet know for certain who conducted these attacks. We do not know the level of Al-Qaeda involvement in the rebel movement. We do not know what kind of chemical was used.

Nor do we know if we do provide military assistance what impact it will have on diplomatic relations with Russia. We do not know if it will provide long term stability to the country. There are simply too many unknowns.

I have canvassed the opinion of hundreds of constituents and was genuinely surprised with the overwhelming support for my own opinion. Diplomatic solutions should be sought. Humanitarian aid should be offered to those countries that are supporting refugees.

It will no doubt be a difficult vote to cast, but then one constituent summed it up brilliantly: "the only thing that worries me more than not doing anything in Syria is doing something".