

Dangerous Crossroads: Russian Naval Exercises Off the Syrian Coast. U.S. Military Deployment in the East Mediterranean

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)
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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)
Theme: [Militarization and WMD, US NATO War Agenda](#)
In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

The Russian based media [Pravda reported on April 11](#), that “Russian warships kicked off naval exercises near the coast of Syria”. According to the [Moscow Times](#), “The Russian Navy is reportedly scheduled to launch firing drills off the coast of Syria on April 11 (Wednesday) **amid fears of an imminent U.S. airstrike against Syria following a suspected chemical attack**”.

We are at a Dangerous crossroads: According to the report (which has not been addressed by the Western media): **on Wednesday**. U.S. President Donald Trump later directly warned Russia that missiles were “coming” to Syria after blaming Damascus for an alleged deadly gas attack in the town of Douma.”

Russian Naval Exercises Scheduled Off Syrian Coast Amid Expected U.S. Airstrike



Screenshot of Moscow Times, April 11, 2018

While, Pravda.ru's report intimates that "Russia Closes Airspace above Syrian Coast", there is however no official confirmation from the Russian Ministry of Defense other than a routine advisory pertaining to the conduct of war games off the Syrian coastline. According to Pravda.ru:

The message contains coordinates of the closed area and states the fact of firing exercises. The area of the exercises located in international waters of the Mediterranean is adjacent to the sea border of Syria. **It will be closed on April 11-12, April 17-19 and on April 25-26 from 10 to 18 Moscow time.**

Russia currently has about 15 warships and logistics vessels of the Black Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea, including Admiral Grigorovich and Admiral Essen frigates (they carry Caliber cruise missiles), as well as submarines.

These war games are conducted in response to ongoing US military threats directed against Syria, not to mention the ongoing deployment of US naval power in the Eastern Mediterranean.

It is also worth noting that according to the Daily Star (April 6, 2018) Russian warships have also been conducting **naval war games in the Baltic Sea off the coast of Latvia**. See screenshot below

Russian warships hold massive WAR GAMES as Britain warned ‘don’t play with FIRE’

RUSSIAN warships have begun huge live fire war drills in a “show of force” amid Vladimir Putin’s bitter row with NATO and Britain.



By **Henry Holloway** / Published 6th April 2018



Who is Playing with Fire? Russia or US-NATO?

According to [Foreign Policy \(April 9\)](#).

If U.S. President Donald Trump decides to take military action against the Syrian government in response to Saturday’s chemical weapons attack outside of Damascus, **he would almost certainly have to approve a wider operation than the limited strikes he ordered just over a year ago.**

“In order for the administration to actually inflict enough pain on the [Bashar al-]Assad government to send the signal that Trump wants, the U.S. would have to hit a wider package of targets,” says Nicholas Heras, a fellow at the Center for a New American Security. “That would essentially cripple Assad’s military capabilities.”

Trump’s Chemical Weapons justification to bomb Syria is based on **the presumption that**

President Assad is allegedly killing his own people is fabricated. This is a lie. Moreover, there is ample evidence that the U.S sponsored “rebels” (aka Al Qaeda affiliated terrorists) rather than the government of Bashar Al Assad are not only in possession of chemical weapons, they have been trained by the Pentagon.

According to CNN report by Barbara Starr dated September 2013:

Pentagon proposes training moderate Syrian rebels

By Barbara Starr, CNN Pentagon Correspondent

Updated 1131 GMT (1931 HKT) September 19, 2013



Who is doing the training of terrorists in the use of chemical weapons? From the horse's mouth: CNN



Sources: US helping underwrite Syrian rebel training on securing ...
CNN (blog) - Dec 9, 2012

By Elise Labott ... European allies are using defense contractors to train Syrian rebels on how to secure **chemical weapons** stockpiles in Syria, ...

[Sources: U.S. helping underwrite Syrian rebel training on securing chemical weapons](#)

For further details see Michel Chossudovsky [Pentagon Trained Syria's Al Qaeda “Rebels” in the Use of Chemical Weapons, Confirmed by CNN](#), Global Research, April 9, 2018

US Naval Deployments in the Eastern Mediterranean

According to the *Washington Times*, coinciding with the commencement of Russia's war games off the Syrian coast, the US Navy has deployed several warships in the Eastern Mediterranean. including the USS Ramage, USS Mahan, USS Gravelly and USS Barry which are armed with ballistic missiles. ([Washington Times](#), April 10, 2018)

Say hello, Assad: See the Navy warships off the coast of Syria

The Navy has sent four warships — USS Ramage, USS Mahan, USS Gravelly and USS Barry — armed with ballistic missiles into the eastern Mediterranean Sea amid violence in Syria. Navy ships are capable of a variety of military actions, including launching Tomahawk cruise missiles as they did against Libya in 2011.

These deployments of US Naval power are to be followed by the dispatch of the USS Truman Carrier Strike Group “accompanied by the guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy and the guided-missile destroyers USS Arleigh Burke, USS Bulkeley, USS Forrest Sherman and USS Farragut.” ([Stars and Stripes](#), April 09, 2018). The Carrier group has 6500 sailors as well as air force personnel.

Truman strike group departs for Middle East, Europe deployment this week



The aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman transits the Atlantic Ocean with elements of its strike group during a training exercise, Feb. 16, 2018.

US Missile and Gunboat Diplomacy.

Dangerous crossroads.

Failures of the anti-war movement.

Distortion and omissions of the mainstream media.

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Articles by: [Prof Michel](#)

About the author:

Michel Chossudovsky is an award-winning author, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa, Founder and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal, Editor of Global Research. He has undertaken field research in Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific and has written extensively on the economies of developing countries with a focus on poverty and social inequality. He has also undertaken research in Health Economics (UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), UNFPA, CIDA, WHO, Government of Venezuela, John Hopkins International Journal of Health Services (1979, 1983) He is the author of 13 books including The Globalization of Poverty and The New World Order (2003), America's "War on Terrorism" (2005), The Globalization of War, America's Long War against Humanity (2015). He is a contributor to the Encyclopaedia Britannica. His writings have been published in more than twenty languages. In 2014, he was awarded the Gold Medal for Merit of the Republic of Serbia for his writings on NATO's war of aggression against Yugoslavia. He can be reached at crgeditor@yahoo.com

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