

Globally Top-Respected Experts on Middle East Warn Syrian War May Produce WW III

By [Eric Zuesse](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [Military Militarization](#) and [WMD](#), [Terrorism](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?, SYRIA](#)

[Abdel Bari Atwan](#), the retired editor-in-chief (1989-2013) of the pan-Arab newspaper *Al Quds Al Arabi* and author of widely respected books on the Middle East, headlined on February 18th, [“A superpower confrontation could be triggered by accident in Syria”](#) and he opened:

Qatar’s plans to build a gas pipeline to the Mediterranean were a major cause of the outbreak of the Syrian civil war. Seven years on, Syria’s oil and gas reserves east of the Euphrates, and especially around Deir az-Zour, have the potential to trigger World War III.

Four military aircraft were downed over Syria in the course of one week: an Israel F-16 shot down by a Russian-made Syrian missile; a Russian jet hit by an American-made shoulder-fired MANPADS; an Iranian pilotless drone intercepted by Israeli missiles; and a Turkish helicopter brought down in the countryside of Afrin by US-backed Kurdish fighters.

Warplanes from at least six countries crowd Syria’s airspace, including those of the American and Russian superpowers, while numerous proxy wars rage on the ground below involving Arab, regional and international parties.

Atwan goes on to note the reason why the war has ratcheted up after **Donald Trump** became America’s President:

The US has made clear that it has no intention of withdrawing its 2,000 military personnel from Syria even after the expiry of the original pretext for deploying them, namely to fight the Islamic State (IS) group. Administration officials have repeatedly affirmed that these forces will remain indefinitely in order to counter Iranian influence in the country.

Trump has abandoned former U.S. **President Barack Obama**’s excuse for invading Syria, and replaced it by what is now clearly an American hot war against Iran, which indisputably has become the U.S. President’s target — no longer (even if only as an excuse) ISIS or “radical Islamic terrorism.”

Iran never attacked the U.S. However, Iran did overthrow the U.S.-installed Shah in 1979 and capture the U.S. Embassy, which had ruled Iran (and allowed or disallowed what the

Shah did) ever since America's 1953 coup there overthrew Iran's democratically elected progressive secular Government and installed instead the Shah's brutal dictatorship. But the aggression was by the U.S. Government, *not* by Iran's Government.

And, after 1979, Iran never committed aggression against the United States; so, the U.S. is entirely in the wrong, now, to be planning (or instructing Israel) how to destroy Iran.

This U.S. President clearly wants an invasion of Iran, which Israel is now preparing to launch.

Iran is an ally of Russia. On February 19th, Russia's Tass news agency headlined ["Moscow calls on US not to play with fire in Syria"](#) and reported the Russian Foreign Minister's statement: "I once again call on our American colleagues not to play with fire and measure their steps proceeding not from immediate needs of today's political environment, but rather from long-term interests of the Syrian people and of all peoples of this region."

Here is a description of what will likely be entailed if Israel launches a military attack against Iran; it was published on February 22nd, by Russian geostrategic expert **Peter Korzun**, under the headline ["Israel and Iran: Inching Toward Conflict"](#):

If Iran itself is attacked, its sites related to its nuclear program will top the list of the prime targets for Israel's F-35, F-15, F-16, and Kfir fighters, drones, and intermediate-range Jericho missiles. There are different routes they could take, but all of them would require flying through the airspaces of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, or Turkey. None of these Muslim countries will openly allow Israel to use their airspace, but anti-Iran sentiments are strong in the Sunni-dominated Arab states. Some of them might be willing to look the other way. A clandestine agreement to tacitly allow Israeli aircraft to cross their air space is entirely possible. Anger could be vented publicly once the mission has been completed.

Iraq is not focused on monitoring its airspace - it has many other problems to deal with and Israel could take advantage of that. The route through Iraq looks like it might be the best option.

The distance that would need to be covered would be between 1,500 km (930 miles) and 1,800 km (1,120 miles). The aircraft will also have to make a return trip, so in-flight refueling will be a necessity. Israel is only believed to own between eight and ten large tanker aircraft (such as Boeing 707s). That will hardly be enough. The Israeli military is not particularly adept at aerial refuelling. If the aircraft have to fly undetected, the F-35s will have to forgo their externally mounted weapons in order to preserve their stealth capabilities. Then their payload will be reduced to only two JDAM-guided bombs in the internal bay. Pretty underwhelming.

Then Iran's radars will have to be spoofed, and its air defenses, especially the Russian-made S-300, will have to be knocked out. It won't be easy.

Israel has a few dozen laser-guided bunker buster bombs (the GBU-28). The Jericho III is an Israeli three-stage solid propellant missile with a payload of more than a ton and capable of carrying multiple low-yield independently targeted reentry warheads. All the targets in Iran fall within its range of up to 6,500 km (4,038 miles). These missile strikes are capable of destroying every command and control site, as well as all major nuclear facilities.

The Heron-2 and Eitan drones can hover in the air for more than 20 consecutive hours to provide guidance and intelligence and to jam Iranian communications and confuse its radar.

Israel would wage electronic warfare against Iran's military and civilian infrastructure, such as its electric grids and Internet, creating interference with Iran's emergency frequencies.

After the war has begun, Israel will come under rocket and missile attack from Iran's proxies: Hamas in the Gaza Strip and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Hezbollah has up to 150,000 rockets that can reach anywhere in Israel. It is true however, that Israel possesses a sophisticated, multilayer, air-defense shield. A first-class intelligence and early-warning system will mitigate the fallout, but substantial damage will be unavoidable.

Israeli troops will have to deploy in the Strip and move across the Lebanese border. But the Shia group will have to fight on two fronts: in Syria to prop up the Assad government, and in Lebanon against Israel. Syria is likely to find itself involved in combat operations. Israel will go to any length to keep Iran and Hezbollah away from its border.

Iran may try to block the Strait of Hormuz. But even if it does not, global oil prices would go up. Iran or its proxies might attack US forces in the Middle East, primarily in Syria and Iraq. Should that happen, Iraq would likely become a battleground between US forces and Iranian proxies, with American reinforcements rushing in. Iran could punish the Americans for their support of Israel in Afghanistan.

An attack against Russia's ally would be an attack that will significantly weaken Russia. Will Russia come to the defense of its ally, the victim of this uncalled-for invasion by America's proxy, Israel? Will Russia retaliate by destroying Israel — and maybe destroying also its sponsor?

Most scenarios for a world-ending nuclear war entail "errors," or else a traditional non-nuclear conflict (perhaps in Syria, or in Ukraine — or it could be in Iran, or in North Korea) producing victory for one side (it could be either the U.S. versus Russia, in Syria, Ukraine, or Iran; or else the U.S. versus China, in North Korea), unless the other side (it could be either Russia versus the U.S., or else China versus the U.S.) blitz-launches almost its entire nuclear arsenal against the other side and against the other side's strategically key allies. (For example, if Israel invades Iran, then perhaps Russia will launch a blitz-nuclear invasion of both Israel and the United States.) The first-to-strike in an all-out war between the nuclear superpowers will have the best chance of winning (i.e., in military parlance "winning" means simply inflicting more damage on the other side than it inflicts upon the "winner" — regardless of how damaged both sides — and the rest of the world — are). If the U.S. or its allies invade more than they've already done (practically all allies of Russia), then a blitz from Russia and/or China would be reasonable, because then obviously the U.S. aims to become conqueror of the entire world — the *only* super-power. Once one side has lost the traditional conflict in Syria and/or Ukraine, or elsewhere, the other side will either unleash its nuclear stockpile against the other (except for whatever anti-missiles it holds in reserve against any of the enemy's missiles that haven't yet been destroyed in that blitz-attack), or else it will surrender to the other. There will be a 'winner', but the entire world will be the loser. This is what America's ['democracy'](#) has brought us to.

Billionaires (including owners of controlling interests in weapons-manufacturers whose main or only customers are the U.S. Government and its allied governments — the 'democratic' decision-makers who had won political power because of donations from those billionaires) are planning to survive nuclear war. There seem to be two main ways:

Google this line:

billionaires moving to “new zealand”

Others are buying bunkers deep underground in countries where they already reside — such as [here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#) — to protect themselves from the nuclear blasts, though nothing can protect anyone (not even, ultimately in New Zealand) from the resulting nuclear winter, and global famine and die-off.

More about what’s behind this can be seen in an excellent article by **Edward Curtin**, which has been published at a number of terrific news-sites — especially [Greenville Post](#), [Counter Currents](#), [Global Research](#), and [Off-Guardian](#) (all four of which sites are prime ones to visit regularly, if a person wants to understand today’s world) — and it is aptly titled [“The Coming Wars to End All Wars”](#).

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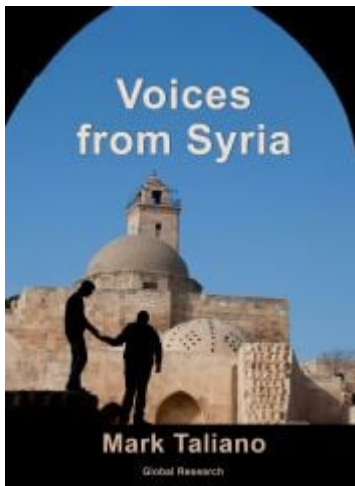
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*Investigative historian **Eric Zuesse** is the author, most recently, of [They’re Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST’S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).*

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