

Trump Has Now Committed Himself to Reversing Obama's Syria-Policy

By [Eric Zuesse](#)

Global Research, June 27, 2017

[Strategic Culture Foundation](#) 26 June 2017

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

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Media Disinformation](#),
[US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Right after the U.S. government shot down a Syrian government plane in Syria, the Russian government broke off the coordination of its operations along with the U.S. and America's allied forces in Syria (otherwise known as "deconfliction of forces" there), [and warned that](#):

"In areas where Russian aviation is conducting combat missions in the Syrian skies, any flying objects, including jets and unmanned aerial vehicles of the international coalition discovered west of the Euphrates River, will be followed by Russian air and ground defenses as air targets" — meaning ordered out, or else immediately shot down.

U.S. **President Donald Trump's** Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Marine Corps **General Joseph F. Dunford**, spoke at the National Press Club in Washington later that day. Only a [video from the National Press Club](#) is, as of yet, available of this important event (the first post-warning top U.S. government official public statement about it), no transcript yet; but here is what Dunford said (and the time he said it in the video), which struck this reporter as being important in his comments, at this historic moment when the likelihood of a nuclear war between the U.S. and Russia — World War III — was higher than it has been ever since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis between U.S. **President John Fitzgerald Kennedy** and U.S.S.R. **Premier Nikita Khrushchev**:

9:00- **"prosecute the defeat-ISIS campaign in Syria, which is the reason why we are in Syria"**

He said that to "defeat ISIS" is "the reason," *not* "a reason," we're there. Very important word-choice. Profoundly meaningful in this context.



Gen Joseph F. Dunford (Source: Marine Corps Association)

His stating that "the reason why we are in Syria" is to "prosecute the defeat-ISIS campaign in Syria," means that we are *not* in Syria in order to overthrow and replace Syria's government — that we are *not* there in order to conquer Syria. That's not "the reason," nor even "a reason," we're there. People who have been following the Syria-war matter closely

over the past few years will find this a shocking assertion from the U.S. government, because it is such a stark contrast to U.S. **President Barack Obama**'s constant demands that "Assad must go." And, it is being made not by Trump's U.N. Ambassador, nor by any other mere mouthpiece, but instead by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff, who would not be saying it unless he had just previously communicated directly with the President after that extremely grave Russian warning. Trump, it now seems, knows that this is serious, and by allowing his CJCS to go public with this, he is overriding here the many neocons whom he has appointed to lead the Defense Department. Dunford represents the President, not merely the military of which the President is the Commander-In-Chief. (Dunford's role, as CJCS, is purely advisory, both to the President and to the Secretary of Defense, but **he is** "the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense.") That clause in a sentence — and especially its "the" instead of an "a" — means more than most officials' entire speeches do.

12:25- **"Even as we support their [the anti-Assad Arabs' and the Kurdish] efforts to seize Raqqa, there is an ongoing effort, led by the State Department [Trump's least neocon people] to put together a governance body so that as soon as Raqqa is seized, there is effective local governance, that governance will leverage Arab leaders who are from Raqqa and it will also establish a local security force made up of local personnel."**

Those **"Arab leaders who are from Raqqa"** will be raging for revenge against ISIS and any other fundamentalist-Sunni group that had grabbed Raqqa away from the protection of those residents by Syria's government and subjected them to such hell for so long; and, so, when they **"establish a local security force made up of local personnel,"** that **"security force"** will certainly *not* be favorable toward either the jihadists — all of whom are fundamentalist Sunnis — nor toward any Kurds who want to break up Syria, such as the formation of a Kurdish republic would necessarily entail.

He was then asked about a forthcoming September Kurdish referendum on establishing a Kurdistan, which would mean breaking up one or more of three nations: Syria, Turkey, and Iraq. His answer focused only on Iraq, but no Kurdistan which is in only one of those three nations would be acceptable to Kurds, and so his answer needs to be understood in that light:

13:05: **"Our stated objective at this point is a stable secure and sovereign Iraq and we are supporting Iraqi security forces in defeating ISIS inside of Iraq, and I think that the issue of a Kurdish referendum is one that will have to be worked out between President Barzani and Prime Minister Abadi and the Iraqi people."**

This means that Trump respects the sovereignty of each individual nation. He is asserting this in specifically the case of Iraq. But its meaning reverberates clearly also in Damascus, and in Istanbul, just as well as it does in Baghdad. It means: no Kurdistan.

The CIA, and Israel, and DC's think-tanks such as the Brookings Institution, are all neoconservatives who favor breaking up Syria, and as part of that, establishing an independent Kurdistan across all three countries.

Trump's Pentagon, under the neocon **James Mattis**, had blatantly violated Syria's sovereignty on Syrian soil. But now, in Dunford's totally unhedged statements, immediately after the U.S. government had perpetrated that blatant violation, Trump's own Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was, effectively, committing the man whom he directly advises on military-strategic matters, this President, *against* the neoconservatives whom this same President had brought in to run his Pentagon. On strategic matters, the Joint Chiefs Chairman stands even closer to the Commander-in-Chief than does the Secretary of Defense or, sometimes, even, than does the National Security Advisor (the neocon **H.R. McMaster**, who has thus-far been loudly silent on this matter).

A 3PM update on June 19th, the day of Russia's warning — an update by this reporter to my news earlier that day which was headlined [“Russia Announces No-Fly Zone in Syria — War Against U.S. There”](#) — provided the earliest-published indications that Trump had turned away from the neocons whom he himself had appointed; and, here is that update, to provide broader context for Dunford's remarks:

Source: [National Press Club](#)

UPDATE: 3PM in NYC:

Al Masdar News, the go-to site for the latest news regarding the Syrian war, headlines, as of 3PM Eastern time, [“Pentagon changes disposition of US-led coalition aircraft in Syria”](#), and reports, from several reliable sources, such as Joseph Dunford, the head of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, indicate a U.S. climb-down, and a desire to cooperate with Russia in Syria. If this is not a lie (as so much from the U.S. government has turned out to be), then the U.S. will stop protecting its jihadists in Syria; and, consequently, the war in Syria will end on terms which are suitable to Syria, Russia, and Iran, but which have not heretofore been acceptable to [the U.S.-Saudi \(and other fundamentalist Sunni\) coalition](#).

The signs, at least as of 3PM, are that Trump will quit the war against the Syrian government, regardless of how much this might disappoint the Saudis (and the Israelis). Looking at the way the Western press are reporting on the matter, they're going to allow him to withdraw as quietly as possible. So, as soon as Russia made clear that it's willing to go all the way to defeat the U.S.-Saudi-Sunni-fundamentalist invasion, the West, apparently, will simply quit. All the jihadists in Syria will soon be scrambling to escape from there. Without U.S. protection, they can't win. But will Russia, Iran, and Syria, simply kill them all, right there? If not, then those jihadists will end up going back 'home', wherever that might happen to be, and far more dangerous in those countries than they had been there before.

However, some in the U.S. press are still continuing on with beating the war-drums against Syria. An example is the hyper-neoconservative newspaper the *Washington Post*, owned by **Jeff Bezos**, the chief owner and founder of Amazon — that's the company which supplies cloud computing services to the Pentagon. The *WP* has subsequently been beating the drums for WW III.

In an editorial on June 19th, [**"What happens after the Islamic State is defeated in Iraq and Syria?"**](#) Bezos's hired editorial writers condemned "the drive by Iran and Russia, along with their Syrian and Iraqi Shiite clients, to dominate the space that will be left when the Islamic State is driven from its capital of Raqqa in eastern Syria," as if Raqqa weren't sovereign Syrian national government territory, but instead was just a spot of land that the U.S. has some kind of legal authority over — an authority to dictate to the sovereign Syrian government about that spot of land.

To back that editorial up by 'news', his hired team of 'reporters' headlined on June 21st, [**"U.S. on collision course with Syria and Iran once de facto Islamic State capital falls"**](#), again as if Raqqa were U.S. instead of Syrian territory and Iran isn't defending Syria and U.S. attacking it; and they went on to report (from unnamed "senior White House officials" who are obviously selected neocons in the Trump Administration): "Officials said Syrian government claims on the area would also undermine progress toward a political settlement in the long-separate rebel war against Assad, intended to stabilize the country by limiting his control and eventually driving him from power." Here were 'reporters', for Bezos's 'news'paper, enabling unnamed U.S. officials to propagandize to the 'news'paper's dupes or subscribers, that the Syrian government had only "claims on the area," instead of sovereignty over the area and over the entirety of Syria.

Basically, what has happened is that the neoconservatives are still being allowed to allege through all their media, that the U.S. government has sovereignty over the entire world, even after Russia has finally told the U.S. regime: no further in Syria — if you dare, it will be war between Russia and the United States: WW III.

Trump speaks out of both sides of his mouth but Washington promotes only the neocon side; and, now that Russia has issued a warning that the *Washington Post's* [**editorial**](#) called "bluffing," and that CNBC's 'reporter' called [**'bluster'**](#), the world will see whether Trump is as stupid as America's unfortunately now permanent neoconservative government thinks he is. If Trump's Chairman of the joint Chiefs of Staff — who is neither an unnamed 'senior White House official' nor yet demonstrably a person who would lie for Trump — is to be believed, then Trump isn't quite so stupid as that. The question right now is: Is the American public so stupid as to believe 'news'media and 'reporters' such as that?

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**](#).

Featured image: Strategic Culture Foundation

The original source of this article is [Strategic Culture Foundation](#)
Copyright © [Eric Zuesse](#), [Strategic Culture Foundation](#), 2017

[**Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page**](#)

[**Become a Member of Global Research**](#)

Articles by: [**Eric Zuesse**](#)

About the author:

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**](#).

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca