

Trump's Political Suicide Pushes China, Iran and Russia Closer

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*The first aspect to consider, following the US attack on Syria, is what **Putin, Xi, and Rohani**, leaders of the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, and Iran respectively, thought while American Tomahawks were hitting the Syrian air base of Shayrat.*

The last three years of the Obama presidency highlighted two very different strategies being advanced simultaneously by the US and the nations opposing its imperialistic overreach, principally Russia, China and Iran. The latter have been seeking cooperation, while the US, with its big hammer, has characteristically been on the search for nails to hammer. Yet the management of international relations has always sought to maintain wide diplomatic channels, even putting in place precautions in the military arena, such as direct communication lines at the height of tensions of 2014 in Ukraine.

With the DPRK, **Obama** adopted an attitude of strategic patience rather than the posture being employed by **Trump** of military bullying. With Iran, Obama's team negotiated a nuclear deal that included a lot of diplomacy between Moscow, Beijing and Washington. One could almost say that, with the exception of Ukraine and Syria, relations between Washington and major chancelleries in Eurasia had their ups and downs, but they rarely reached the levels of concern that were seen in the first days the Trump presidency.

Let us take Syria as an example. Obama resisted pressure to bomb the country following a false-flag chemical attack done by al Qaeda-type rebels. The media and intelligence accused Assad, but Obama saw through this and decided against further entanglement in the Syrian quagmire. Facing a similar situation, Trump instead decided to proceed and bomb a sovereign nation, creating a ripple effect whose ultimate results are at this stage difficult to discern.

Surely one of the first results has been the cancellation of any kind of cooperation between the US and Russia in Syria. This means that any nations operating against Islamist terrorism in Syria will be reluctant to grant further concessions to Washington. In recent weeks, Moscow and Damascus have preferred to hit Daesh and Nusra Front while inflicting relatively little damage to the Islamists in the country controlled by Washington and its allies, normally the FSA and its affiliates. This Russian posture was in deference to Kerry's original request to Lavrov that a clear distinction be made between terrorists and so-called moderate rebels.

Moscow was aware from the beginning that there is no substantial differences between Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda, and other minor Daesh acronyms gathered around the FSA. All

groups are armed and fighting against the legitimate Syrian government, making them legitimate targets, especially following America's unilateral bombing of Syria.

The strategy of Damascus, Tehran and Moscow was aimed at finding a common understanding, from the diplomatic point of view, in order to bring Washington to the negotiating table. Concessions by both parties were necessary, and from the perspective of Russian forces, focusing on Nusra Front and Daesh was a good bargaining chip to use.

After Trump's actions in Syria, all kinds of cooperation has been suspended, and it is anticipated that Damascus's allies will specifically target US proxy forces in Syria as a response. The consequence will be that the US will have even less influence in Syria than before lobbing its 60-or-so missiles. In addition to this, Trump's intention in the bombing should be seen as seeking to increase his negotiating position with Moscow on the question of Syria. What does not appear clear to the American president is that his actions may have the opposite effect. Putin is certainly not the type of person who lets others intimidate him or put him in a weak situation. If the intention of Trump was to create the ideal conditions for Tillerson and Lavrov to establish a cooperative relationship, perhaps it would be appropriate to ask what kind of understanding Trump has of international relations.

After this reckless action in Syria, Trump will have greater difficulty carrying out his plan to defeat Daesh, if this is still the plan. And so another election promise - the one to wipe Daesh off the map - is likely to be broken. This is not to mention that the SDF, the Kurdish forces, will from now on be viewed with more hostility by the Syrian and Russian forces, being ground troops who are undeclared by the US military.



Given the unpredictability of the US, Damascus cannot rule out the possibility that Washington's final intent is to further the original plan of partitioning Syria as proposed by the Brookings Institute and embraced by the neocons and liberal-interventionist crowd. Moscow and Damascus cannot trust Washington, and this precludes many opportunities for Trump to pursue a foreign policy that aligns with his election promises.

President Xi during the Syrian bombing was at a diplomatic meeting with Trump and was told about the military action at the end of the meeting. It is likely that Trump wanted to send a message to the Chinese president and, indirectly, to Kim Jong-un, the leader of the DPRK. For the American president, this was all about a show of force, aimed at restoring the US role in the world and dictating the diplomatic conditions on which to agree for the

resolution of various conflicts or areas of tension around the world. It is an approach that has almost entirely eliminated any possible cooperation with Beijing and Moscow.

Putin, Xi, and Rohani must leave behind any hopes for cooperation with Washington. It is important for them to send a strong message to Trump that the front opposing US imperialism is compact and ready to respond in the case of further provocations. Of course such a response need not necessarily be with military action but rather with all the alternatives available, such as with the areas of finance, the economy and diplomacy.

Until a few weeks ago, Moscow, Beijing and Tehran aimed at a resolution of problems with Washington in order to find a strategic balance in international relations. At this point in time, it should be clear that this strategy will not work. We are in a multipolar world that is synonymous with instability. The ideal conditions for a balance of political forces lie in a joint duopoly that recalls the situation that obtained during the Cold War. Even the unipolar moment guaranteed greater stability in a certain sense, given the unfortunate disproportion of force that the US enjoyed throughout the 1990s. What Trump finds hard to understand is that in a multipolar reality, the chances of clashes increase significantly.

Trump is meddling directly or indirectly in a lot of situations, ranging from Iran's involvement in Syria, threatened by American partners such as Saudi Arabia; to the use of Russian forces in Syria; passing by the perennial crisis in Ukraine; and instability in the Caucasus and Central Asia. In China we have the autonomous region of Xinjiang, the South China Sea, and not to forget tensions with New Delhi as well as the explosive situation in the DPRK. If Trump is confident in being able to test the waters in each of these situations, even with the use of the military, to arrive at better negotiating positions, it is best that we all prepare for a nuclear winter.

The key issue for China, Russia and Iran must necessarily be to place emphasis on increasing cooperation in several areas, such as finance, the economy, the military, and politics. Up until a month ago, as a result of Trump's victory over Hillary Clinton, all three of these nations aspired for cooperation in the field of international relations with the US on equal terms. After what happened in Syria, they have fully understood that this opportunity is now threatened by a clear desire by Trump to risk everything in order to improve his negotiating position. This is the reckless attitude of an unprepared POTUS.

Only a strong unity of purpose, under the economic umbrella of a jettisoning of the dollar as a reserve currency, can change the situation dramatically. In addition to this, the US dollar must be excluded in trade deals between cooperating nations. Another important effort lies with stocking up as much gold as possible. With these methods, it will be possible to stand up to the US's pressure without it leading to a military conflict. Organizations such as the BRICS, SCO, Eurasian Union and One Belt, One Road must necessarily take up the challenge thrown down by Trump with the launch of 59 missiles on Syria, and show what consequences Trump has brought on himself through his rash actions. Moscow, Tehran and Beijing have an impetus to finally overcome any lingering hesitation and to completely disengage from the western system. Instead of creating alternative ways to operate in the economic and financial sphere, they should try to replace the current one, making it irrelevant and inconvenient for other nations.

The primary objective for these three nations must be from now on to resolve every dispute between them and form an alliance that goes beyond the mere question of economic or financial convenience. The goal should be to create a cultural and social system that can

represent an opportunity for other third countries vis-a-vis a predatory capitalism and a rampant imperialistic approach that Trump appears to have signed onto.

Trump's actions ultimately worsened the US State of the World. The failure of the military operation involving the launch of the Tomahawks showed the US to be more of a paper tiger today than the unbeatable war machine it depicts itself to be. Decades of corruption at the highest levels of the military-industrial complex have finally started to affect the United State's ability to wage war. It is an observation that is a taboo amongst the US and its allies, who need to maintain the illusion for deterrence, as well as to allow for the gravy train to continue to line the pockets of those who profit from this corrupt system. Reality shows us that in any real conflict, the United States vulnerability and lack of combat readiness shows.



In a situation like this, the strategy of Moscow and its allies is to produce weapons systems capable of inflicting considerable damage to the United States at low cost, given that Moscow cannot simply print more money and pour debt on the rest of the world in order to finance its wars. A great example of this can be seen with the anti-ship missiles Moscow possesses, which are capable of destroying American aircraft carriers, considered the backbone of the US war strategy. A missile that costs hundreds of thousand of euros can cause damage to an aircraft carrier worth tens of billions of dollars, inflicting a mortal blow to the credibility of American military posture.

If Trump will continue down this destructive path, such as with encouraging the entrance of Montenegro into NATO after an election campaign where he labelled the Atlantic alliance obsolete, he will only get the opposite effect to the one desired, which is to say worse negotiating positions with peer American competitors like Moscow and Beijing. Maybe it is time to wonder whether Trump is really keen on a de-escalation model of international relations, aimed at brokering deals from positions of strength, or whether his ultimate aim is simply to preserve America's unipolar moment in any possible way, even with war. It is a perspective that should be discussed widely by nations such as Iran, Russia and China in order to find a perfect asymmetrical response through economic, financial, political and social means that avoid a direct conflict. The war between the American elites seems to have come to an end and the neoliberals and neocons seem to have won. Wars and chaos will continue, as with the last decades of US foreign policy. It is a sad prospect that the nations opposing Washington will have to deal with.

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