

Trump's Strike on Syria Driven by the Deep State

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*The US airstrike on Shayrat airbase last week, while limited in effectiveness with only 23 of 59 striking their target, sent a clear message to Assad. He is not dealing with the more cautious approach of **Barack Obama**, who was content to support terrorist proxies, along with an ineffectual campaign against ISIS.*

He is dealing with a man who has done a 180-degree turn from non-interventionism and eschewing regime change, to reactive, reckless strikes waged illegally in response to an incident where the facts are still to be revealed. It is the action of a man driven by emotions, not something that inspires confidence when that man is the most powerful in the world. Most significantly, it reveals a crazy streak, a man willing to court military confrontation with Russia, a scenario that could go nuclear quickly. While the speed of the strikes gives much credence to these beliefs, there is, as always, much more to the story.

In reality the strikes were the work of "Mad Dog" Mattis, Votel and McMaster.

With Flynn pushed out and Bannon removed from his post on the National Security Council, **Trump's inner foreign policy circle are all war-hardened veterans, establishment through and through.** While Trump may have made moves to drain the swamp, the swamp turned around and refilled itself. The neocons are in charge now. Agitators like McCain, Graham and Rubio finally get to see American power pummel those who raise its ire. They have been yearning this moment for several years. No more do they need to urge more direct US intervention in Syria; they may now revel in it.

[An indication of the pro-interventionists](#) is provided by **Larry Chin** who writes:

National Security Adviser **H.R. McMaster** and Defense Secretary **Mattis** pushed for the strike. White House advisor and son-in-law **Jared Kushner** and daughter **Ivanka Trump** reportedly also pushed for the strike. **White House advisor Steve Bannon advised against the strike, and was rebuked.**

McMaster is a [loyalist of disgraced former CIA director and convicted criminal General David Petraeus](#), being a part of his inner circle during the disastrous occupation of Iraq. As **Mike Cernovich** says, it is now "Trump supporters out, pro-war Petraeus puppets in." Interestingly, Petraeus and **Hillary Clinton** are two peas in a pod in their embrace of military interventionism and American exceptionalism. Do we have Clinton in the White House by stealth?

What else apart from a security establishment coup driven by those in the service of the military industrial complex lies behind Trump's decision to strike Syria? I believe Trump,

rocked by the losses of people like Flynn has lost the heart for the fight. **He wants to settle the deep state civil war and get on with business.** The main business for Trump is making America great again by focusing on the domestic agenda and the grand plans he announced of cutting taxes, bringing jobs back home, massive infrastructure projects, protecting the borders and deporting illegal immigrants. In return for being allowed to pursue these goals he must sacrifice his previous views and embrace NATO, abandon détente with Russia in favour of the prevailing hostility, embark on military adventurism with gay abandon and sign on to the regime change agenda in Syria. In other words, he has to assign foreign policy to the Generals in his administration, war hawks in Congress and war planners in the think tank community.



Trump's generals

Another motivation is the ceaseless, relentless war staged on him by the media establishment. They are like a dog with a bone and they will not let go until he is impeached. The [RussiaGate](#) scandal, though it [lost some momentum](#), will not be let go of by the media. While the real scandals are the surveillance on Trump which implicates Obama and the felony of leaking Flynn's surveilled conversations, the media remains fixated on RussiaGate and election interference - another groundless accusation that the media insists is an indisputable fact.

Now, after Trump's strike on Syria - purportedly as a humane reaction to the horrendous suffering of civilians at the hands of the "animal" Assad - voila, we have a media swooning over him like a love-struck teenager. All is forgiven and Trump gets a honeymoon ride...at least for a little while. He has adopted American exceptionalism and its manifest destiny to police the world and punish evildoers who offend the US-led world order. He has shown himself willing to be the figurehead of an empire desperately pushing back against the withering of its hegemony. **This is what is demanded by the media:** control of the world first, domestic concerns second.

The honeymoon won't last however. He has set the bar very high with his transformation into a gun-toting crazy. **Any relaxing of his hyper aggression will be judged as losing his nerve and he will face the wrath of the ravenous war media.** He will also not get much of a reprieve on the domestic front, criticized mercilessly in the media for his promise to get rid of Obamacare, the immigration ban, and allegations of racism and sexism. It will be interesting to see if RussiaGate picks up momentum again after being relegated to the

back pages, or if the Russian hacking of the DNC continues to be used to batter Trump.

Trump was castigated for saying Assad didn't need to leave. The Neocons' [shocked response](#) was heightened by comments from [Haley](#) and [Tillerson](#) that implied it was up to the Syrian people to decide his future. Surrounded by war hawks who see diplomacy as something that happens after you have destroyed your enemy, Trump, being viewed as too soft, went on the offensive and showed how tough he can be. It worked like a charm. Media figures previously baying for his blood are now [gushing with praise](#). **Fareed Zakaria** declared on CNN,

"I think Donald Trump became president of the United States" last night.

On MSNBC, **Nicholas Kristof**, an aggressive Trump critic, said he "did the right thing" by bombing Syria. But the one who really took the cake (perhaps the same delicious chocolate cake Trump ate while bombing Syria?) was **Brian Williams** of MSNBC who couldn't have been more glowing in expressing awe at the "beautiful" sight of Tomahawk missiles, invoking the words of **Leonard Cohen**,

"I am guided by the beauty of our weapons."

Another factor, commonplace for past presidents who used the glorification and rally-around-the-flag effect of war, may have been to boost Trump's very low approval ratings. If that is the case, it had minimal effect. [Rasmussen approval polls](#) show a rise from 43% on 4 April to 48% on 14 April, [Real Clear Politics](#) just a single percentage point from 40 to 41% between 4 and 15 April and [Gallup](#) actually shows a decline from 42% on 4 April, to 39% on 14 April. Though those figures are now up to 50%, 42.5%, and 41%, respectively.

The strikes sent the signal: we are crazy enough to flirt with conflict with Russia to exact a toll on **Bashar Al-Assad**. Next was the switch to the diplomatic campaign, and that has gone into full gear at breakneck speed. It is more accurate to call it an intense psychological assault on Russia, seeking to overwhelm it with accusations of collusion with Assad and that the only way to disentangle itself is to abandon him and allow for his departure.

Trump has done an [about-turn from imperial light to imperial heavy duty](#) at a speed which has critics and friends alike scratching their heads. Luckily for him, the heads belonging to the neocons and the mainstream media are nodding in approval. As **Pepe Escobar** writes:

NATO was "obsolete." Then it was "no longer obsolete." China was a currency manipulator. Then it was no longer a currency manipulator. There would be no more adventures in the Middle East. Then it's back to pulling a Hillary and bombing Syria. Russia was supposed to be a partner - basically in oil and gas deals, while a Kissingerian Divide and Rule remix would try to unravel the Russia-China strategic partnership. Then Russia is bad because supporting "animal" (sic) Assad.

Some (other) things never change. Iran will continue to be demonized. The NATO-GCC combo will continue to be bolstered. The House of Saud terrorizing Yemen will continue to be a close GWOT (Global War on Terror) ally.

We can add to this list that **support for Israel is like no previous administration and it will be heartened by the turn to war of Trump**, eager to carve out more of the Golan Heights. As well as the support for Saudi Arabia decimating Yemen, Trump himself [dramatically expanded the level of drone strikes](#). After being in office less than two weeks a strike, which resulted in the death of one navy seal, also [killed over 30 civilians](#) including more than 10 children.

Trump has an admiration for the military and is fawning over its prowess, which he believes leaves all adversaries lagging far behind. Trump [told Fox News](#),

“We are sending an armada. Very powerful. We have submarines. Very powerful. Far more powerful than the aircraft carrier. That I can tell you.”

What is concerning is not just what Trump said, but how he said it. Like a kid with a brand new (war) toy. Or a grown man moved to war over a delicious chocolate cake.



As for Moscow, it has made it clear it does not trust Washington. As masters of diplomacy, it does not say it outright, unlike the belligerent hawks littering Congress. It has grown frustrated at the constant US sabotage in Syria, the baseless accusations of interfering in the election and the intransigence in Ukraine, which the Trump administration seems to have lost interest in.

Moscow will need time to absorb and analyse the rapid move to militarism and just who is driving the foreign policy of Trump. The meetings of Tillerson with both Lavrov and Putin will have been useful in gathering the information needed to respond wisely to the increased US aggression.

After reflecting on what drove Trump to strike Syria we mustn't forget that it was done before any solid evidence emerged. Inevitably, that is happening now, and what is being revealed is making the media's uniform opinion of Assad's guilt and the belligerence of Trump and his team look decidedly shaky.

Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS) have [written a memo to Trump](#) urging he pull back from the dangerous escalation with Russia. They agree with the Syrian Airforce statement that their aircraft bombed a weapons depot near Khan Shekhoun that turned out to be full of chemicals, which subsequently leaked into the atmosphere.

Leading chemical weapons expert **Professor Theodore Postol** of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), who [debunked the Ghouta claim of 2013](#) that Assad gassed his own civilians, reviewed a [four-page intelligence brief from the White House](#), after which he said it

[“contains absolutely no evidence that this attack was the result of a munition being dropped from an aircraft.”](#)

Scott Ritter, a former United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq points out that Trump made a [radical change in policy](#) in directly confronting the Syrian armed forces and risking a confrontation with its Russian backers based on a “visceral” reaction to photos and videos from anti-government groups, including the notorious White Helmets.

Trump ignored the rational, calm approach of evidence gathering and analysis, flipping it so that military action preceded any investigation. Before the election [Trump said](#),

“Now we’re backing rebels against Syria, and we have no idea who these people are.”

Well Mr. Trump you had no real idea of what happened at Khan Shekhoun, yet you still launched airstrikes which benefited rebels that you have no real idea of.

Vladimir Putin himself was forthright in calling the Khan Shekhoun attack a [false flag](#) and warned of more false flags to come around Damascus. The [horrific bombing of the besieged residents of Foua and Kefraya](#) may end up justifying another, to be blamed on Assad as revenge for the victims. Or perhaps there isn’t any more to the airstrike than Trump crying at his daughter Ivanka crying over a White Helmets video.

In reality this is just the cherry on the top of an ongoing psyops war, tugging at the heartstrings of the public to win their support for a blatant violation of international law based on a blatant lie. If it were true, it would be no more comforting an explanation, as it shows an impulsive, reckless man risking large-scale military conflict on behalf of Al-Qaeda. Truth is most definitely stranger than fiction.

***Paul Mansfield** is a budding freelance writer who currently works in the welfare industry in Melbourne, Australia. Areas of interest include: Russia/US conflict, wars in the Middle East, particularly Syria, the conflict in Ukraine, the occupation of Palestine by Israel, the damage to our economies from the global financial markets, the debt trap imposed on states by bankers seeking to privatize assets and “reform” economies while they line their pockets with cash and impoverish local populations.*

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