

Target Syria: Will a New War be the October Surprise?

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It's official. The Syrian Army assisted by Russian air support is closing in on the last major pocket of terrorists remaining in the country in the province of Idlib near Aleppo. The United States, which has trained and armed some of the trapped gunmen and even as recently as a year ago [described the province as](#) "al-Qaeda's largest safe haven since 9/11," has perhaps predictably warned Syria off. The White House initially threatened a harsh reaction if the Bashar al-Assad government were to employ any chemical weapons in its final attack, setting the stage for the terrorists themselves to carry out a false flag operation blamed on Damascus that would bring with it a brutal response against the regime and its armed forces by the U.S., Britain and France.

In support of the claims relating to chemical weapons use, the Trump Administration, which is itself illegally occupying part of Syria, is as usual creating a bogus *casus belli*. U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley [said in a news conference](#) that

"This is a tragic situation, and if they [Russia and Iran] want to continue to go the route of taking over Syria, they can do that. But they cannot do it with chemical weapons. They can't do it assaulting their people and we're not going to fall for it. If there are chemical weapons that are used, we know exactly who's going to use them."

As with all Haley commentary, the appropriate response should be expressing wonderment at her ability to predict who will do something before it occurs followed by "Not quite Nikki." She should familiarize herself with her own State Department's [travel warning on Syria](#) which states explicitly that "tactics of ISIS, [al-Qaeda affiliate in Idlib] Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, and other violent extremist groups include the use of...chemical weapons."

Setting the stage for a false flag provoked attack on a country that does not threaten the United States was bad enough, but now Washington has apparently hardened its line, indicating that any use of the Syrian Army to clear the province of rebels will "...not be tolerated. Period." Haley [again spoke out](#) at the United Nations, saying "...an offensive against Idlib would be a reckless escalation. The regime and its backers must stop their military campaign in all its forms." In support of its inflexible stance, the White House has been citing the presence of a large civilian population also trapped in the pocket even though there is no evidence whatsoever that anyone in Washington actually cares about

Syrian civilian casualties.

And there is always Iran just waiting to get kicked around, when all else fails. Haley, always blissfully ignorant but never quiet, [commented](#) while preparing to take over the presidency of the U.N. Security Council last Friday, that Russia and Syria “want to bomb schools, hospitals, and homes” before launching into a tirade about Iran, [saying that](#)

“President Trump is very adamant that we have to start making sure that Iran is falling in line with international order. If you continue to look at the spread Iran has had in supporting terrorism, if you continue to look at the ballistic missile testing that they are doing, if you continue to look at the sales of weapons we see with the Huthis in Yemen — these are all violations of security council resolution. These are all threats to the region, and these are all things that the international community needs to talk about.”

And there is the usual hypocrisy over long term objectives. President Donald Trump said in April that “it’s time” to bring American troops home from Syria -once the jihadists of Islamic State have been definitively defeated. But now that that objective is in sight, there has to be some question about who is actually determining the policies that come out of the White House, which is reported to be in more than usual disarray due to the appearance last week of the *New York Times* [anonymous op-ed](#) describing a “resistance” movement within the West Wing that has been deliberately undermining and sometimes ignoring the president to further Establishment/Deep State friendly policies. The op-ed, perhaps by no coincidence whatsoever, appeared one week before the release of the new book by Bob Woodward [Fear: Trump in the White House](#), which has a similar tale to tell and came out on Amazon today.

The book and op-ed mesh nicely in describing how Donald Trump is a walking disaster who is deliberately circumvented by his staff. One section of the op-ed is particularly telling and suggestive of neocon foreign policy, describing how the White House staff has succeeded in “[calling out] countries like Russia...for meddling and [having them] punished accordingly” in spite of the president’s desire for détente. It then goes on to elaborate on Russia and Trump, describing how “...the president was reluctant to expel so many of Mr. Putin’s spies as punishment for the poisoning of a former Russian spy in Britain. He complained for weeks about senior staff members letting him get boxed into further confrontation with Russia, and he expressed frustration that the United States continued to impose sanctions on the country for its malign behavior. But the national security team knew better – such actions had to be taken to hold Moscow accountable.”

If the op-ed and Woodward book are in any way accurate, one has to ask “Whose policy? An elected president or a cabal of disgruntled staffers who might well identify as neoconservatives?” Be that as it may, the White House is desperately pushing back while at the same time searching for the traitor, which suggests to many in Washington that it will right the sinking ship prior to November elections by the time honored and approved method used by politicians worldwide, which means starting a war to rally the nation behind the government.

As North Korea is nuclear armed, the obvious targets for a new or upgraded war would be Iran and Syria. As Iran might actually fight back effectively and the Pentagon always prefers an enemy that is easy to defeat, one suspects that some kind of expansion of the current effort in Syria would be preferable. It would be desirable, one presumes, to avoid an open conflict with Russia, which would be unpredictable, but an attack on Syrian government

forces that would produce a quick result which could plausibly be described as a victory would certainly be worth considering.

By all appearances, the preparation of the public for an attack on Syria is already well underway. The mainstream media has been deluged with descriptions of tyrant Bashar al-Assad, who allegedly has killed hundreds of thousands of his own people. The rhetoric coming out of the usual government sources is remarkable for its truculence, particularly when one considers that Damascus is trying to regain control over what is indisputably its own sovereign territory from groups that everyone agrees are at least in large part terrorists.

Last week, the Trump White House approved the [new U.S. plan](#) for Syria, which, unlike the old plan of withdrawal, envisions something like a permanent presence in the country. It includes a continued occupation of the country's northeast, which is the Kurdish region; forcing Iran plus its proxies including Hezbollah to leave the country completely; and continued pressure on Damascus to bring about regime change.

Washington has also shifted its perception of who is trapped in Idlib, with [newly appointed](#) U.S. Special Representative for Syria James Jeffrey arguing that "... they're not terrorists, but people fighting a civil war against a brutal dictator." Jeffrey, it should be noted, was pulled out of retirement where he was a fellow with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), an American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) spin off. On his recent trip to the Middle East he stopped off in Israel nine days ago to meet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The change in policy, which is totally in line with Israeli demands, would suggest that Jeffrey received his instructions during the visit.

Israel is indeed upping its involvement in Syria. It [has bombed](#) the country 200 times in the past 18 months and is now threatening to extend the war by attacking Iranians in neighboring Iraq. It has also been providing [arms to the terrorist groups operating inside Syria](#).

And Netanyahu also appears to be preparing his followers for a bit of bloodshed. In a recent ceremony, [he boasted that](#) "the weak are slaughtered" while "the strong" survive — "for good or ill." Commentators in Israel noted that the words were very close to those used by Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf* in a chapter describing the historical inevitability of domination by the Aryan race. They also observed that Netanyahu, like Trump, also needs a war to free himself from his legal problems.

Taking the president, the U.N. Ambassador, the Israeli Prime Minister and the U.S. Special Representative for Syria at their words, it would appear that the Washington Establishment and its Israeli manipulators have narrowed the options for dealing with Syria and its regional supporter Iran to either war or war. Add to that the closing time window for doing something to ameliorate the Trump Administration's panic over the impending midterm election, and it would seem that there is a certain inevitability regarding the process whereby the United States military will again be on the march in the Middle East.

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