

The Tweet that Is Shaking the War Party

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Most of the Donald's tweets amount to street brawling with his political enemies, but occasionally one of them slices through Imperial Washington's sanctimonious cant. Indeed, Monday evening's 140 characters of solid cut right to the bone:

The **Amazon Washington Post** fabricated the facts on my ending massive, dangerous, and wasteful payments to Syrian rebels fighting Assad.....

Needless to say, we are referencing not the dig at the empire of Bezos, but the characterization of Washington's anti-Assad policy as "massive, dangerous and wasteful".

No stouter blow to the neocon/Deep State "regime change" folly has ever been issued by an elected public official. Yet there it is – the self-composed words of the man in the Oval Office. It makes you even want to buy some Twitter stock!

Predictably, the chief proponent of illegal, covert, cowardly attacks on foreign governments via proxies, mercenaries, drones and special forces, Senator McWar of Arizona, fairly leapt out of his hospital bed to denounce the President's action:

"If these reports are true, the administration is playing right into the hands of Vladimir Putin."

That's just plain pathetic because the issue is the gross stupidity and massive harm that has been done by McCain's personally inspired and directed war on Assad – not Putin and not Russia's historic role as an ally of the Syrian regime.

Since 2011, Senator McCain has been to the region countless times. There he has made it his business to strut about in the manner of an imperial proconsul – advising, organizing and directing a CIA recruited, trained and supplied army of rebels dedicated to the overthrow of Syria's constitutionally legitimate government.

At length, several billions were spent on training and arms, thereby turning a fleeting popular uprising against the despotic Assad regime during the 2011 "Arab spring" into the most vicious, destructive civil war of modern times, if ever. That is, without the massive outside assistance of Washington, Saudi Arabia and the emirates, the Syrian uprising would have been snuffed out as fast as it was in Egypt and Bahrain by dictators which had Washington's approval and arms.

As it has happened, however, Syria's great historic cities of Aleppo and Damascus have been virtually destroyed – along with its lesser towns and villages and nearly the entirety of its economy. There are 400,000 dead and 11 million internal and external refugees from an original population of hardly 18 million. The human toll of death, displacement, disease and disorder which has been inflicted on this hapless land staggers the imagination.

Yet at bottom this crime against humanity – there is no other word for it – is not mainly Assad's or Putin's doing. It can be properly described as "McCain's War" in the manner in which (Congressman) Charlie Wilson's War in Afghanistan during the 1980's created the monster which became Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda.

Even the fact that the butchers of ISIS were able to establish a temporary foothold in the Sunni villages and towns of the Upper Euphrates portion of Syria is the direct doing of McCain, Lindsay Graham and their War Party confederates in the Congress and the national security apparatus. That's because Syria's air force and army would have stopped ISIS cold when it invaded in 2014 if it had not been weakened and beleaguered by Washington's oppositions armies.

But why did Washington launch McCain's War in the first place?

The government of Syria has never, ever done harm to the American homeland. It has no military capacity to attack anything much beyond its own borders – including Israel, which could dispatch Assad's aging air force without breaking a sweat.



Moreover, even if a purely sectarian civil war in this strategically irrelevant land was any of Imperial Washington's business, which it isn't, Senator McCain and his War Party confederates have been on the wrong side from the get-go. The Assad regime going back to the 1970 was Arab Baathist – a form of nationalistic and anti-colonial socialism that was secular and inclusive in its religious orientation.

Indeed, as representatives of the minority Alawite tribes (15% of the population, at best), the Assad regime was based on Syria's non-Sunni Arab minorities – including Christians, Druze, Kurds, Jews, Yazidis, Turkomans, and sundry others. Never once did the Assad's seek to impose religious conformity – to say nothing of the harsh regime of Sharia Law and medieval religious observance demanded by the Sunni jihadists.

The point is, the Syrian opposition recruited by Washington for McCain's War exploited the grievances of ordinary Sunni citizens, but it was led by radical jihadist military commanders. Washington's endless charade of "vetting" these opposition fighters to ensure that aid only went to "moderates" was a sick joke.

Such moderates as existed were mainly opportunistic politicians who operated far from the

battle in Turkish safe havens – or even from temporary residences in the beltway. It is a proven fact that most of the weapons supplied by the CIA and the gulf states were either sold to the Nusra Front and other jihadist factions or ended up in their hands when the CIA's "moderate" trainees defected to the radicals.

So the question recurs. Why did Washington embark on this tremendous, pointless folly?

The answer is straight forward. Washington has become an Imperial City populated by a permanent class of sunshine patriots and self-appointed global field marshals like Senator McCain, who do the bidding of the military/industrial complex and its far-flung Warfare State apparatus.

That is, they identify and demonize the enemies and villains that are needed to keep the money flowing into the Empire's \$700 billion budget. In this case, Assad drew the short straw because as a member of the greater Shiite confession in the Islamic world he was naturally allied with the Shiite regime of Iran.

In part 2 we will take up the real reason for McCain's War in Syria. It was a proxy war and a provocation designed to prosecute the real neocon target – the endlessly vilified Shiite regime in Tehran.

Part 2

Syria was never meant to be a real country. Its borders were scratched on a map in 1916 by Messrs. Picot and Sykes of the French and British foreign office, respectively, and was an old-fashioned exercise in dividing the spoils of war amidst the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. It was most definitely not a product of what in the present era Imperial Washington is pleased to call "nation-building".

The short history of the next hundred years is that Syria never worked as a nation because the straight lines traced to the map by the Sykes-Picot ruler encompassed an immense gaggle of ethnic and sectarian peoples, tribes and regions that could not get along and had no common bonds of nationality. The polyglot of Sunni and Alawite (Shiite) Arabs, Sunni Kurds, Druse, Christians, Jews, Yazidis, Turkmen, and sundry more were kept intact under the unitary state in Damascus only due to a succession of strongmen and generals who took turns ruling the gaggle by bribe and sword.

At length, Syria became a pawn in the cold war when the anti-communism obsessed Dulles brothers decided to stiff Colonel Nasser of Egypt for not sharing their Christian zeal against the godless rulers of the Kremlin. The latter then offered to build the Aswan Dam when Washington canned the funding.

That led, in turn, to the short-lived Egypt-Syria merger, a failed CIA coup in Damascus and the eventual permanent alliance of Hafez Assad (Bashar's father) with the Soviets after he consolidated power in the early 1970s.

Whether Washington's animosity to the Syrian regime owing to its choice of cold-war patrons ever made any difference to the security and safety of the American people is surely debatable, but when the cold war ended so should have the debate. Whatever happened in the polyglot of Syria thereafter had absolutely no bearing on the security of the American homeland – including indirectly via its nearby ally in Israel.

That is, once the cold war was over and the Soviet Union descended into economic and military senescence after 1991, the Israelis had overwhelming military superiority over Damascus, and needed no help from Washington. But that pregnant opportunity for Washington to put Syria out of sight and out of mind entirely was killed in the cradle at nearly the moment it arose.

In a word, the Washington War Party desperately needed an enemy once the Soviet Union was no more – in order to justify the massive girth of its global empire and the vastly elevated spending levels for conventional war-making (600 ship Navy, new tanks and fighters, airlift and cruise missiles etc.) that Ronald Reagan had unfortunately set in place. So the neocons in the administration of Bush the Elder seized on the Iranians.

Needless to say, with memories of the prolonged hostage crisis in Tehran of a decade earlier still fresh in the memories of the American public, it was easy for Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, et al. to vilify Tehran as the seat of an America-hating Islamist theocracy. But so doing, they put America on the wrong side of the 1300-year old Sunni/Shiite divide.

That's because the minor sliver of Islam motivated by fanatical jihadism and the duty to eradicate nonbelievers and apostates is rooted in the Wahhabi branch of the Sunni confession and is domiciled in Arabia, not the Shiite communities on its periphery. The latter are spread in a crescent arcing from Iran through lower Iraq and extending to the Alawite and Shiite communities of Syria and southern Lebanon – including the territories dominated by Lebanon's largest political party (Hezbollah).

The 40 years prior to 1991 had given the Iranians plenty of cause to despise Washington, beginning with the CIA-sponsored coup against the democratically elected Mosaddeq in 1953. That move, in turn, paved the way for the rapacious and brutal regime of the Shah until 1978 when he was overthrown by a massive uprising of the Iranian people led by Shiite clerics.

But to add insult to injury, the Reagan White House effected a "tilt" to Saddam Hussein after he invaded Iran in September 1980, and provided the satellite based tracking services that enabled Saddam's horrific chemical attacks on Iranian troops in the field, many of them barely armed teenagers.

So Tehran had valid reasons for its rhetorical assaults on Washington, but there was no symmetry to it. That is, Washington had no honest beef against Tehran, and no dog in the Sunni-Shiite fight.

The only fig leaf of justification we've ever heard is that the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983 by local Shiite militants was allegedly aided by the Iranians. But your editor sat on the national security council at the time and recalls vividly that Ronald Reagan's decision was not to take the fight to Tehran, but to question why the Marines needed to be in harms' way in the first place and to "reposition" them quickly to the safety of a Naval aircraft carrier deep in the Mediterranean

In any event, the Iranians elected a moderate President in 1988, and Rafsanjani did seek rapprochement with Washington – even helping to free some American hostages in Lebanon as a good will gesture to the incoming George HW Bush Administration.

But it was for naught once Cheney and his neocon henchman piled into the equation. The

military-industrial complex needed an enemy and Cheney & Co. saw to it that the Shiite regime in Tehran became just that.

And that get's us to our Part 1 thesis about McCain's War in Syria and its prototype in Charlie Wilson's War in Afghanistan during the 1980s. In fact, the latter wasn't just a model; it was the proximate cause.



That is, Wilson's War via the covert CIA training and arming of the Mujahedeen and the recruitment of Sunni Arab fighters from Saudi Arabia and other Sunni tribes ultimately gifted the world with al-Qaeda, but even then it took the feckless Imperial arm of Washington to complete the nightmare.

Bin-Laden was actually celebrated as a hero in the West until 1991. Thereupon history flowed around a hinge point marked by the demise of the Soviet Union on one side and George HW Bush's utterly pointless war against Saddam Hussein in February 1991 on the other.

In this case Washington's pretext for intervention was a petty squabble over directional drilling in the Rumaila oil field which straddled the border of Kuwait and Iraq. But there wasn't an iota of homeland security at issue in that tiff between opulent Emir of Kuwait and the bombastic dictator from Baghdad.

In fact, Kuwait wasn't even a real country; it was (and still is) essentially a large bank account with its own oilfield that had been scratched on a map by the British in 1913 as part of its maneuvering for hegemony in the Persian Gulf region.

Likewise, Iraq was also the product of the infamous Sykes-Picot straight-edged ruler of 1916, but the world price of oil would not have changed in the longer run by a single cent – whether Kuwait remained independent or was incorporated as the 19th province of the arbitrary but serviceable state of Baathist Iraq.

Beyond the false case of oil economics was the even more ridiculous underlying proposition that the oilfield boundary in dispute – which had been haggled out in an Arab League meeting in 1960 – implicated the safety and security of American citizens in Lincoln NE and Springfield MA.

No it didn't – not in the slightest. But what did dramatically implicate their security was George HW Bush's peevish insistence that Saddam be given a good, hard spanking, which resulted in 500,000 pairs of "crusader" boots on the sacred soil of Arabia.

Right there bin-Laden swiveled on a dime and launched his demented crusade to rid the

“land of the holy shrines” of the American occupation. Right there the mujahedeen became al-Qaeda, modern jihadi terrorism was born and the catastrophe of 9/11 and all that followed was set in motion.

Yes, it took the even greater folly of Bush the Younger to actually light the fuse with his insensible and idiotic “shock and awe” demolition of Iraq after March 2003. But that did open the gates of Hell – even if the actual agents were the mujahedeen fighters and their followers and assigns who assembled in (Sunni) Anbar province after it was laid to waste by the Pentagon.

In a word, Bush and his neocon warriors destroyed the serviceable state of Iraq and the tenuous Sunni/Shiite/Kurd modus vivendi that Saddam had enforced with the spoils of the oilfields and the superiority of his arms. In that context the idea that the government in Baghdad represented a nation and fielded an Iraqi national army was a sheer fairy tale.

What Bush and Obama left behind was a vengeful, incompetent, corrupt sectarian government backed by sundry Shiite militia. To spend \$25 billion – as Washington did – training and arming a ghost nation was an act of incomparable folly.

It guaranteed a hot war between the Sunni and Shiite, and that the billions of state of the art weapons Washington left behind for the self-defense of the nation it hadn’t built would fall into the hands of the Sunni terrorists.

At length, they did. The crucible of Anbar gave rise to ISIS and the tens of thousands of Humvees, tanks, heavy artillery pieces and millions of light weapons bivouacked in Mosul fell into its hands when the Shiite militias fled from Iraq’s second city and predominately Sunni enclave in June 2014.

And then McCain’s proxy War in Syria against the Iranians did its part. That is, the Sunni villages and towns of the Euphrates Valley had always been the most tenuous components of the Assads’ system of rule.

But when the McCain/CIA rebel armies badly impaired Assad’s military and economic capacity to pacify his country in the normal middle eastern manner of repression, a giant power vacuum was created into which ISIS rushed and from which the Islamic caliphate was born.

In a word, Wilson’s War begat Sunni jihadism; HW Bush’s war turned it against America; Dubya’s War opened the gates of Hell in Anbar province; and McCain’s War enabled the destruction of the Syrian state and the rise of a medievalist chamber of butchery and demented Sharia extremism in Raqqa, Mosul and the hapless Sunni lands in between.

At last, however, this chain of imperial pretense and insanity has been broken with a 140 character Tweet.

Bravo, Donald!

By sending the War Party into a paroxysm of denunciation and self-righteous indignation Trump actually provoked the Deep State into spilling the beans.

To wit, its neocon megaphone at the *Washington Post*, David Ignatius, penned an unhinged column immediately after Trump’s tweet about ending “massive, dangerous, and wasteful

payments to Syrian rebels fighting Assad”, lamenting that the US hadn’t given jihadist “rebels” antiaircraft missiles!

But in a full bore eruption of outrage, Ignatius also revealed new information based on a quote from an official with intimate knowledge of the CIA program:

*Run from secret operations centers in Turkey and Jordan, **the program pumped many hundreds of millions of dollars** to many dozens of militia groups. One knowledgeable official estimates that the CIA-backed fighters **may have killed or wounded 100,000 Syrian soldiers and their allies over the past four years.***

Whether that was an exaggeration or proximate expression of the truth doesn’t really matter. It means Imperial Washington has been carrying on a world-scale war in Syria with not even the pretense of a Gulf of Tonkin Resolution or authorization for the use of force as in Iraq in 2003.

So that’s McCain’s War. Eleven million refugees, a destroyed country, 400,000 civilians dead and a decimated army of a nation that poses a zero threat to the American homeland. And all for the purpose of hazing the rulers of Tehran who never did have a program to get a nuke, according to Washington’s own 17-agency NIEs (national intelligence estimates); and gave it up anyway with ironclad mechanisms for international enforcement.

We have no idea where this will lead, but by the day it increasingly looks as if McCain’s War is indeed being shutdown.

We can only hope for a respite to the folly, and that the Donald keeps on tweeting exactly this sort of madman’s stab at rationality.

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