

“Wag the Dog”: Who’s the Next Expedient Target For the US War Machine?

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Global Research, April 13, 2018

[New Eastern Outlook](#) 12 April 2018

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

Theme: [Intelligence, Militarization and WMD, US NATO War Agenda](#)

As the noose of impeachment closes tighter around Donald Trump neck, he is finding that running his mouth has limitations. Like Nixon before him, he is hoping that the world can be twisted to become what he says it is. The only question is whether he is capable of realising that no one is able to do that, no matter how many people they can fool [at a given time](#).

But even while he continues promoting his typical politician’s fantasy world Trump will be trying to find some way out. It has emerged that the raid on his lawyers’ office, considered a great attack on himself, was actually conducted by legal [staff handpicked](#) by himself. So are they changing sides, or has Trump raided his own lawyers’ office to ensure any incriminating material is removed by his own people before Mueller can get it?

Wag the Dog

One of the [oldest tricks](#) a cornered, compromised and vulnerable politician uses is to start a war. When your domestic situation is intolerable you simply change the focus. Everyone rallies round the country and is commander-in-chief, even if no one trusts them the rest of the time, simply because they are the man or woman in the job. Or at least that’s the theory, provided you can [sell the war](#) to the public. It is not difficult, especially when you make good use of spin doctors.

Let’s not forget that Trump came into office promising he would end US involvement in expensive and needless foreign wars. This was taken as a sign that America was finally becoming a grown-up nation, able to live alongside others it disagreed with without demanding its ways be adopted in those countries, whilst denying the people of those same countries the American values they actually want.

But what has happened? The US is still fighting a lost cause in Syria for the sake of it, and is moving ever closer to conflict with North Korea. Maybe these are proxy conflicts with Russia, like the Spanish Civil War was a proxy conflict with Nazi Germany. But the fact the US is still happy to enter into them, when its president said it would not, demonstrates that any little country is still seen as fair game as long as the US can pursue what it considers its “national interest”, despite alienating billions of would-be friends by doing so.

So if Trump wants a way out, and the Deep State is happy to play along to get more funding to pursue its broader agendas, who is next? Global conflicts have a habit of [breaking out](#) over small, target countries. So where is Trump likely to look to rally his people round the flag? Who can expect to be the next target of a US “reconstruction effort” which, like so many before, is all about the US and not themselves?

Too obvious targets

There are certain consistent patterns to US foreign policy. One is supporting partner regimes no matter what they do, actively encouraging the same crimes they criticise their opponents for committing. There was no excuse for Soviet repression, but residents of murderous CIA-trained South and Central American dictatorships, which justified their actions by being “anti-Communist”, will tell you East Europeans weren’t the only ones who suffered in such a way.

Another is a willingness to achieve regime change by any means possible. US support for its chosen terrorists is nothing new. From the Taliban to the KLA in Kosovo it has always been happy to wreak havoc to protect populations from themselves. Even if that means directly assassinating the man at the top, [so be it](#).

Russians always complain, with much justification, that their country is surrounded by US bases armed with missiles pointed at them. It would not be difficult to start a war with Russia by using these missiles. But it would be diplomatically impractical to try.

While Russia has always seen itself as needing protection, the US continues to build it up into a major threat, too big and powerful to confront with a good chance of winning. This is what has enabled Russia to build up its strength, despite the inherent weakness of its traditional autocratic system. But the US has also gained so much from promoting this view that it is not going to risk the exposure of actual conflict.

The target of any US attack would be a small country, further away, which the US public perceives to be “foreign” and “anti-American”. North Korea fits the bill here. But if the US wanted to go there it would have done so during the gap between it being bankrolled by the Soviet Union and being bankrolled by China. North Korea is too useful as a demonstration of what the US thinks is wrong with any country, and is only coming to strategic prominence now because it looks too much like the US for comfort. This is why it is being appeased, rather than attacked, for having a nuclear programme of doubtful utility.

Donald Trump has always supported Brexit, and is trying to get the EU to make a bigger contribution to NATO. He calls this making Europe pay its fair share. In fact it is a means of trying to separate the strategically important countries from the EU whilst ridding itself of the dependent hangers-on.

As long as the likes of Bulgaria have US bases, the EU can look after the rest of their needs if it chooses. Meanwhile bigger countries like the UK are being encouraged to choose the US over Europe, because the US is prepared to pay for what they can offer, be it bases, materials, energy or access to sea and air routes.



The promised new military base on Gibraltar is unnecessary, according to the UK which owns the territory and has steadily reduced its commitment there over the years. But the US needs it to control the Mediterranean. Controlling sea trade would increase US influence over the EU, whilst also giving non-members preferential treatment they would not otherwise enjoy. It is also easier to shoot down planes than sink ships nowadays, and the US has been using commercial shipping to transport military hardware since [at least the Lusitania](#).

But the other advantage of having a larger base on Gibraltar, which might be British in name but in effect be an Eastern Europe-style “dual control” operation, is that it would reduce the need for the US to be so active at the other end of the Mediterranean. Of course it also needs to control the Bosphorus to project its influence in the Black Sea region. But there it has to rely on an increasingly independent partner, Erdogan’s Turkey, which is going in the opposite direction to the UK – mixing with a better class of country, and thus allowing those other regional powers, such as Russia and Iran, more influence over its affairs.

Let them not sort it out themselves

Turkey is exactly the sort of country the US invades others for being: authoritarian, Muslim, supportive of allies the US regards as the wrong type of terrorist. Furthermore, it gets away with it. It would be easy to portray Turkey as a regressive state, even a member of NATO, which once upon a time wanted to join Europe. But now it is perceived as a threat to it, even though the US put it there for that purpose, and US protection has given it the means to strike out on its own.



However Turkey is unlikely to be directly attacked either. Who will trust the Balkan States, who would need to be involved, to do US bidding? They may be US allies, but are hardly being treated as such, so you can’t rely on them to repay US “loyalty” if push comes to shove.

No one cares about the former Eastern Bloc counties anymore, and cannot even remember the [Warsaw Pact](#). Its former members are still struggling to shake off their Soviet-era images of repression and backwardness because the EU and the US wants them to remain like that. They also have their own agendas, with deep historical roots, and only went into the US camp to pursue these rather than because they wanted US or EU domination when they were trying to rebuild their nations. Not all are toeing the line, such as seen by the [recent elections](#) in Hungary—and elected three times in a row.

In an extremely divisive campaign, Orbán essentially focused on one single issue, warning against Hungary’s “downfall” at the hands of “immigrants.” It appears that a majority of Hungarian voters view him as the only guarantee against such a scenario. And this is but one country on the bad side of the US.

The same EU, and international financiers based in the same United States, are also doing their best to destroy Greece. This is being punished for adopting the same failed policies which led the world to financial crisis, by the same people who encouraged it to adopt those policies to show it was a serious, modern country. Consequently it is being deprived of the

resources to fight any war, even if it were encouraged to do so. But is also unlikely to help the US pursue its plans through the so-called “coalition of the civilized,” which has recently become the US way of getting what it wants.

However, there is one point on which Greece and Turkey will never agree – Cyprus. Split into a self-proclaimed “Turkish Republic” in the north and the predominantly Greek south, neither side grants the other any recognition or legitimacy. Both sides blame the others’ patrons, Turkey and Greece, for the problems inflicted upon them and the actions they have taken. Both sides feel that their patrons are fraternising with the enemy to too great a degree, betraying their allies on the island for the sake of their own ambitions, which are still seen with suspicion by Turkey and Greece themselves.

With Greece unable to do anything about Cyprus because it’s functionally bankrupt and the EU is unwilling because it can’t risk losing to Turkey, only the US can maintain the status quo there. At one time conflict with Turkey would leave US bases in Turkey itself and the rest of the Eastern Mediterranean vulnerable. But only if the US got control of Gibraltar... and that would put everything right again.

Yesterday, today and tomorrow

We don’t hear much about the frozen conflict in Cyprus now. But neither did we hear much about a number of countries caught up in the Arab Spring, before it happened. The longstanding anti-Gaddafi rhetoric was merely transferred to similar-sounding places, like Yemen, and used to explain events the US had planned long before. This was a better strategy than ramping up propaganda about places few American listeners would get enthusiastic about. It is all about arms sales, and Saudi has all those Petro Dollars to be brought back to the US, and for that, the US administration can turn a blind eye to human rights and an unjust war.

And it does not stop there: just look and see if there is any current rhetoric which could be used to justify an intervention in Cyprus or Lebanon? Just look at what Trump is saying about Jerusalem, and is he mad or he really believes himself. He is not presenting the change of US policy as a change of mind, but as the correction of a historic injustice. Apparently Jerusalem has always rightfully been the capital of Israel, and Trump is simply doing what is right by saying so, and beginning [to treat it as such](#).

Intervening to restore Greek rule in the whole of Cyprus would be presented as restoring the legitimate government to its rightful place. Legally, that would be so. The Turkish invasion of 1974 which established the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” was just that, a military aggression against a sovereign state by a foreign power. Whatever the justice of the Turkish Cypriot community’s case, the US should be resisting such actions on principle, in the same way it resisted Saddam Hussein’s invasion [of Kuwait in 1990](#).

If the US no longer needs Turkey so much because it has Gibraltar, through which it could prosecute and supply such a conflict, it will not tread with the caution the EU does against this suspicious “foreign” power. Without Gibraltar, it is unlikely to win such a conflict because it would need a lot of support from EU partners who have no intention of starting such a war. With it, and a compliant UK desperate to offset the effects of Brexit, it can take unilateral action whilst still maintaining that a “coalition of civilized countries” is involved, due to the legal justice of the cause.

“Fuck the EU” in Spades

If Erdogan loses Northern Cyprus, after all he has said about restoring the Ottoman Empire and being the regional bully boy, he will be dead meat at home, perhaps literally. Such a victory would also, in US envoy Victoria Nuland’s infamous words, [“Fuck the EU”](#)

If the US can walk into the Mediterranean and do what it likes, ostensibly on behalf of EU member Greece, when the EU has failed to do it for 40 years the EU will be seen as ineffectual and compromised, and the predicted post-Brexit referendum exodus of countries might actually happen.

Reconstructing Cyprus afterwards would make the post-war problems in Iraq and Afghanistan look like a cakewalk. But if you want to stay in power when you know what your enemies know, do you consider such things? No one is going to impeach Trump is he pulls this off, and few would trust him to behave responsibly at the best of times, let alone what he will live through when [Robert Mueller](#) presents his final report, he is already seeing red over the former FBI director’s latest antics.

My hole has to be your hole

The US is in a strong position to intervene in Cyprus if it can rely on different partners. Erdogan could only prevent it if he sent more troops to Northern Cyprus, all the excuse the US would need to move in. The huge Greek and Greek Cypriot Diaspora, much more vocal than the Turkish one, would be overjoyed and make Trump a national hero for evermore.



No one else will like it, but who will help Northern Cyprus? It has had since 1974 to win friends, but even today only Turkey recognises it as an independent state.

Furthermore, the whole of Cyprus was British until 1960. The UK may not agree with the action, but it will be presented as helping an old friend which now needs its former Empire. This will encourage other former British colonies to think the US might help them due to this historic “Special Relationship”. Trump may well decide he has more to gain than lose by constructing a bloc of Anglophile nations to counter those who don’t respect him.

It would be a very sad day for the world if conflict in Cyprus kicked off again. But Trump will not care if he can protect himself, and the more we hear about his deeds and his friends, the more he will need that protection to emerge from even less than one term with his assets and liberty intact.

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