

US airstrikes on Syria

United States Launches Airstrikes in Syria - Real Target Is Assad

Late Monday evening, September 22, the United States began the first of its airstrikes inside Syria

By Brandon Turbeville - Seemorerocks 22 September, 2014

Although details are still murky about where the attacks took place and what targets were actually hit, the Pentagon has acknowledged responsibility for the bombings.

According to USA Today, Rear Admiral John Kirby stated that "I can confirm that U.S. military and partner nation forces are undertaking military action against ISIL terrorists in Syria using a mix of fighter, bomber and Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles. Given that these operations are ongoing, we are not in a position to provide additional details at this time."

USA Today reports that the strikes were carried out both by bomber jets and by ships firing cruise missiles. It is said that the strikes have hit about 20 ISIS targets, including what is being called "headquarters buildings" for "militants who have based their movement in Syria."

The attacks were not carried out with the coordination and cooperation of the Syrian government. Nor were they carried out with Syrian government permission.

While Syria has already stated that any airstrikes conducted over Syrian airspace would be considered an act of war and that Syria might very well shoot down any American planes conducting those strikes, it is as of yet unclear as to how the Syrian government will respond.

The United States **has repeatedly stated** that it refuses to coordinate any airstrikes with the Syrian government and responded with an Orwellian statement that it would oust Assad military if he dare defend himself against American attacks.

The attacks come after a decision made by the White House and approved by Congress on September 17, 2014, to arm and train the alleged "moderate" Syrian rebels. The vote was 273-156 in favor of the \$500 million plan. Of course, the bill in question was actually an amendment that was **cynically attached to a bill** designed to continue funding for the federal government in the short-term, ensuring maximum support from members of the House.

Then, on Thursday September 19, the **U.S. Senate followed** suit by approving

the plan as well. The support for the plan in the Senate was, as expected, bipartisan with members such as Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid, John McCain, John Boehner, and **Lindsey Graham** voting “Yes” on the bill.

The **Obama administration reiterated** that it was neither asking for permission nor for a new authorization to use military force. The White House asserts that it has all the authority it needs to achieve its goals under the authorizations to use military force that were approved after the 9/11 attacks and in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Essentially, as Obama stated in his address to the American people on September 10, the consultation of Congress was a mere formality. The plan to aid the “moderate rebels” fighting against Assad and engage in airstrikes against the secular government was going ahead regardless of the decision by Congress.

Much like the decision to invade Afghanistan and Iraq as well as passing the PATRIOT ACT, and other Constitution-shredding legislation, Congress was convinced to support the plan both because their handlers directed them to do so or because the risk of revealing themselves as completely irrelevant was too damaging to undertake.

Yet, while the amendment was sold to the American people and even members of Congress as Obama’s plan to “detect and degrade” ISIS, the reality is that the plan is nothing more than a plan to detect and destroy the Syrian government to benefit of ISIS and other fundamentalist groups that the United States has created, funded, trained, and directed since the very beginning of the Syrian crisis.

Even Congressman Justin Amash was able to recognize the fact that this new amendment was a clever disguise for a war on the secular government of Syria with no options off the table, including the use of ground troops. **In his own statement** announcing his opposition to the amendment, Amash stated, Today’s amendment ostensibly is aimed at destroying ISIS—yet you’d hardly know it from reading the amendment’s text. The world has witnessed with horror the evil of ISIS: the public beheading of innocents, the killing of Christians, Muslims, and others.

The amendment’s focus—arming groups fighting the Assad government in Syria—has little to do with defeating ISIS. The mission that the amendment advances plainly isn’t the defeat of ISIS; it’s the defeat of Assad.

[...]

The Obama administration has tried to rally support for U.S. involvement in the Syrian civil war by implying that our help would be at arm’s length. The amendment Congress will vote on broadly authorizes “assistance” to groups in

Syria. It does not specify what types of weapons our government will give the groups. It does not prohibit boots on the ground. (The amendment is silent on the president's power to order our troops to fight in the civil war; it states only that Congress doesn't provide "specific statutory authorization" for such escalation.) It does not state the financial cost of the war.

[...]

If the Syrian groups that are "appropriately vetted" (the amendment's language) succeed and oust Assad, what would result? Would the groups assemble a coalition government of anti-Assad fighters, and would that coalition include ISIS? What would happen to the Alawites and Christians who stood with Assad? To what extent would the U.S. government be obligated to occupy Syria to rebuild the government? If each of the groups went its own way, would Syria's territory be broken apart, and if so, would ISIS control one of the resulting countries?

While Amash was correct to suggest that Congress should have opposed the amendment and that the amendment was actually a plan for an assault against the Syrian government as well as the fact that that anarchy, chaos, and unspeakable violence will reign supreme in Syria if the "appropriately vetted" groups managed to gain control of the country, Amash does miss part of the point.

The truth is not that "we don't know much about the groups we are funding in Syria." The truth is that "we" know full well that they are ISIS/Al-Qaeda terrorists, with only an occasional name change and branch off due to Western political motives or internal squabbling. That has been and still is the whole point.

There never were any moderates to support in Syria to begin with.

There Are No Moderate Syrian Rebels

As Tony Cartalucci wrote in his article, "**In Syria, There Are No Moderates**," there were never, nor are there any "moderates" operating in Syria. **The West has intentionally armed and funded Al Qaeda and other sectarian extremists since as early as 2007 in preparation for an engineered sectarian bloodbath serving US-Saudi-Israeli interests. This latest bid to portray the terrorists operating along and within Syria's borders as "divided" along extremists/moderate lines is a ploy to justify the continued flow of Western cash and arms into Syria to perpetuate the conflict, as well as create conditions along Syria's borders with which Western partners, Israel, Jordan, and Turkey, can justify direct military intervention.** Indeed, even the New York Times has been forced to admit that there are, as Cartalucci expertly argues in his article, no moderates in the ranks of the Syrian death squads. **As Ben Hubbard wrote in April, 2013,** In Syria's largest city, Aleppo, rebels aligned with Al Qaeda control the power plant, run the bakeries and head a court that applies Islamic law. Elsewhere,

they have seized government oil fields, put employees back to work and now profit from the crude they produce.

Across Syria, rebel-held areas are dotted with Islamic courts staffed by lawyers and clerics, and by fighting brigades led by extremists. Even the Supreme Military Council, the umbrella rebel organization whose formation the West had hoped would sideline radical groups, is stocked with commanders who want to infuse Islamic law into a future Syrian government.

Nowhere in rebel-controlled Syria is there a secular fighting force to speak of.[emphasis added]

Even one of the FSA commanders, Bassel Idriss, recently admitted to openly collaborating with ISIS and al-Nusra, revealing yet another example of the fact that the “moderate rebels” are not moderate at all.

In an interview with the Daily Star of Lebanon, Idriss stated “We are collaborating with the Islamic State and the Nusra Front by attacking the Syrian Army’s gatherings in . . . Qalamoun Let’s face it: The Nusra Front is the biggest power present right now in Qalamoun and we as FSA would collaborate on any mission they launch as long as it coincides with our values.”

Idriss also admitted that many FSA fighters had pledged allegiance to ISIS. He said, “[ISIS] wanted to enhance its presence in the Western Qalamoun area. After the fall of Yabroud and the FSA’s retreat into the hills [around Aarsal], many units pledged allegiance [to ISIS]”.

Abu Fidaa, a retired Syrian Army Colonel who is now a part of the Revolutionary Council in the Qalamoun, corroborated Idriss’ statements by saying that “A very large number of FSA members [in Aarsal] have joined ISIS and Nusra. In the end, people want to eat, they want to live, and the Islamic State has everything.”

Not only the FSA, but also the Syrian Revolutionary Front has also openly admitted to working with Nusra and al-Qaeda. The leader of the SRF, Jamaal Maarouf **admitted that his brigades** coordinate with Nusra and al-Qaeda regularly.

ISIS Is Controlled By The U.S. And NATO

It is important to point out that the Islamic State is not some shadowy force that emerged from the caves of Afghanistan to form an effective military force that is funded by Twitter donations and murky secretive finance deals. IS is entirely the **creation of NATO** and the West and it **remains in control of the organization**.

As Tony Cartalucci writes in his article “**Implausible Deniability: West’s ISIS Terror Hordes In Iraq**,”

Beginning in 2011 - and actually even as early as 2007 - the United States has been arming, funding, and supporting the Muslim Brotherhood and a myriad of armed terrorist organizations to overthrow the government of Syria, fight Hezbollah in Lebanon, and undermine the power and influence of Iran, which of course includes any other government or group in the MENA region friendly toward Tehran.

Billions in cash have been funneled into the hands of terrorist groups including Al Nusra, Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), and what is now being called "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria" or ISIS. One can see clearly by any map of ISIS held territory that it butts up directly against Turkey's borders with defined corridors ISIS uses to invade southward - this is because it is precisely from NATO territory this terrorist scourge originated.

ISIS was harbored on NATO territory, armed and funded by US CIA agents with cash and weapons brought in from the Saudis, Qataris, and NATO members themselves. The "non-lethal aid" the US and British sent **including the vehicles we now see ISIS driving around in.**

They didn't "take" this gear from "moderates." There were never any moderates to begin with. The deadly sectarian genocide we now see unfolding was long ago predicted by those in the Pentagon - current and former officials - interviewed in 2007 by Pulitzer Prize-winning veteran **journalist Seymour Hersh**. Hersh's 9-page 2007 report, "**The Redirection**" states explicitly: **To undermine Iran, which is predominantly Shiite, the Bush Administration has decided, in effect, to reconfigure its priorities in the Middle East. In Lebanon, the Administration has cooperated with Saudi Arabia's government, which is Sunni, in clandestine operations that are intended to weaken Hezbollah, the Shiite organization that is backed by Iran. The U.S. has also taken part in clandestine operations aimed at Iran and its ally Syria. A by-product of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to Al Qaeda.**

"Extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam" and are "sympathetic to Al Qaeda" - is a verbatim definition of what ISIS is today. Clearly the words of Hersh were as prophetic as they were factually informed, grounded in the reality of a regional conflict already engineered and taking shape as early as 2007. Hersh's report would also forewarn the sectarian nature of the coming conflict, and in particular mention the region's Christians who were admittedly being protected by Hezbollah.

While Hersh's report was written in 2007, knowledge of the plan to use death squads to target Middle Eastern countries, particularly Syria, had been reported on even as far back as 2005 by Michael Hirsh and John Barry for Newsweek in an article entitled "**The Salvador Option.**"

Regardless, Cartalucci states in a separate article, "**NATO's Terror Hordes In Iraq A Pretext For Syria Invasion,**"

In actuality, ISIS is the product of a joint NATO-GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] conspiracy stretching back as far as 2007 where US-Saudi policymakers sought

to ignite a region-wide sectarian war to purge the Middle East of Iran's arch of influence stretching from its borders, across Syria and Iraq, and as far west as Lebanon and the coast of the Mediterranean. ISIS has been harbored, trained, armed, and extensively funded by a coalition of NATO and Persian Gulf states within Turkey's (NATO territory) borders and has launched invasions into northern Syria with, at times, both Turkish artillery and air cover. The most recent example of this was the cross-border invasion by Al Qaeda into Kasab village, Latikia province in northwest Syria.

Cartalucci is referring to a **cross-border invasion** that was **coordinated with NATO, Turkey, Israel, and the death squads** where Israel acted as air force cover while Turkey facilitated the death squad invasion from inside its own borders.

Keep in mind also that, prior to the rapid appearance and seizure of territory by ISIS in Syria and Iraq, European media outlets like **Der Spiegel reported** that hundreds of fighters were being trained in Jordan by Western intelligence and military personnel for the purpose of deployment in Syria to fight against Assad.

The numbers were said to be expected to reach about 10,000 fighters when the reports were issued in March, 2013. Although Western and European media outlets would try to spin the operation as the training of "moderate rebels," subsequent reports revealed that these fighters **were actually ISIS fighters**.

Western media outlets have also gone to great lengths to spin the fact that ISIS is operating in both Syria and Iraq with an alarming number of American weapons and equipment. **As Business Insider** stated, "The report [study by the London-based small arms research organization Conflict Armament Research] said the jihadists disposed of 'significant quantities' of US-made small arms including M16 assault rifles and included photos showing the markings 'Property of US Govt.'"

The article also acknowledged that a large number of the weapons used by ISIS were provided by Saudi Arabia, a close American ally.

ISIS Attack On Taqba Airbase – The Precursor To A NATO Attack On Syria

Keeping in mind that ISIS is controlled and directed by NATO and Western intelligence, the fact that the death squads have recently focused on the **Taqba Airbase in Raqqa province** is significant. Particularly when viewed in context of the recent "debate" taking place in front of the American public by the Obama administration on whether or not to engage in targeted airstrikes inside Syria.

For those who may not **see the pattern** – while the United States and NATO deliberated engaging in targeted airstrikes in Syria and the Syrian government

subsequently states its opposition to those attacks and its intentions to shoot down the planes delivering those strikes if they do not coordinate with the Syrian government, death squads have effectively eliminated the air defense capability of the Syrian government in the east of the country.

After all, the Pentagon even stated that **one of the biggest threats** to an airstrike operation in Syria is the Syrian government's air defenses. Thanks to ISIS, those air defenses no longer exist in the east of Syria.

This was the end game of the ISIS battle to take over Taqba from the start – eliminate air defenses so that the NATO powers can launch airstrikes against the Syrian military and thus freeing up a launching pad for the terrorists to conduct attacks even deeper into Syria.

Propaganda Purposes in August, 2014 – American Bombing Of Syria

As I have written on a number of occasions in the past, the goal has been to drum up support from the American people for a bombing campaign or “limited strikes” inside Syria for the purpose of creating a buffer zone, a desire of **NATO since the destabilization** campaign began.

The reason that ISIS was allowed to seize such large swaths of territory across Iraq was an attempt to create a justification for the eventual invasion of Syria in addition to the reinvasion of Iraq. Indeed, any deployment of American troops, **airstrikes**, or any other type of US military force, will necessitate a battle against ISIS inside Iraq as well as “cross-border” strikes against the organization in Syria. Such “cross-border” strikes would likely be met with apathetic support from the American people since any restraint regarding borders will be presented and then viewed as placing “handcuffs on the troops.”

Any military action taken across the border inside Syria will not be taken for the purposes of eliminating ISIS. The truth is that such military action will be nothing more than a backdoor attempt at establishing the “buffer zone” that NATO so ardently desired early on in the Syrian conflict. With the establishment of this “buffer zone,” a new staging ground will be opened that allows terrorists such as ISIS and others the ability to conduct attacks even deeper inside Syria.

This pretext has already been publicly discussed in mainstream media outlets across the world. Take, for instance, the article by Patrick Cockburn published in The Independent on June 19, 2014 entitled “**Iraq Crisis Exclusive: US Rules Out Military Action Until Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki Stands Down,**” where Cockburn argues the necessity of a series of airstrikes to be launched against both Iraq and Syria.

Cockburn writes,

The general support for the Sunni revolt in northern and western Iraq will make it very difficult for any counter-offensive, which would be facing far more opponents than Isis originally fielded. Isis now controls almost all the Euphrates valley from Fallujah west of Baghdad through western Iraq and eastern Syria as far as the Turkish border. Any long-term campaign against Isis by the Iraqi government backed by US air power would require air strikes in Syria as well as Iraq. The two countries have effectively become a single battlefield.

Consider also, the writings of former State Department Director of Policy Planning under the Obama administration, **Anne Marie Slaughter**, who has been foaming at the mouth every bit as much as John McCain when it comes to the prospect of intervening militarily in Syria. In her most recent op-ed in the New York Times, "**Don't Fight In Iraq And Ignore Syria**," the appropriately-named Slaughter writes,

Deciding that the Syrian government, as bad as it is, was still better than the alternative of ISIS profoundly missed the point. As long as we allow the Syrian government to continue perpetrating the worst campaign of crimes against humanity since Rwanda, support for ISIS will continue. As long as we choose Prime Minister Maliki over the interests of his citizens, all his citizens, his government can never be safe.

President Obama should be asking the same question in Iraq and Syria. What course of action will be best, in the short and the long term, for the Iraqi and Syrian people? What course of action will be most likely to stop the violence and misery they experience on a daily basis? What course of action will give them the best chance of peace, prosperity and a decent government?

The answer to those questions may well involve the use of force on a limited but immediate basis, in both countries. Enough force to remind all parties that we can, from the air, see and retaliate against not only Al Qaeda members, whom our drones track for months, but also any individuals guilty of mass atrocities and crimes against humanity. Enough force to compel governments and rebels alike to the negotiating table. And enough force to create a breathing space in which decent leaders can begin to consolidate power.

Bombing Syria – A Strike At Russia

Slaughter's previous op-eds, of course, betray an underlying reason for her obsessive warmongering against Syria – the strategic desire to weaken Russia. In this, Slaughter reveals herself as an adherent to the **Brzezinski doctrine** as it is espoused in **The Grand Chessboard**.^[1] Even if Slaughter does not openly state her affinity for such a destructive and provocative foreign policy by name, her ideology is revealed by both her actions and her work. It is important to point out that Slaughter's position should not be construed as merely her own, but as a representation of the desires of the NATO powers that employ her.

Indeed, in her April, 2014 op-ed for Project Syndicate, entitled “**Stopping Russia Starts In Syria**,” Slaughter is nothing if not obvious about her offensive geopolitical targeting of the Russian Federation as well as that of **China and Japan**. She writes that,

The solution to the crisis in Ukraine lies in part in Syria. It is time for US President Barack Obama to demonstrate that he can order the offensive use of force in circumstances other than secret drone attacks or covert operations. The result will change the strategic calculus not only in Damascus, but also in Moscow, not to mention Beijing and Tokyo.

Slaughter essentially argues that Putin is much too strong to inflict damaging geopolitical costs in Ukraine. She suggests that Putin is much weaker in Syria, however, and, therefore, it is Syria where the United States must strike.

Slaughter states,

Regardless of Putin’s initial motivations, he is now operating in an environment in which he is quite certain of the parameters of play. He is weighing the value of further dismemberment of Ukraine, with some pieces either joining Russia or becoming Russian vassal states, against the pain of much stronger and more comprehensive economic sanctions. Western use of force, other than to send arms to a fairly hapless Ukrainian army, is not part of the equation.

That is a problem. In the case of Syria, the US, the world’s largest and most flexible military power, has chosen to negotiate with its hands tied behind its back for more than three years. This is no less of a mistake in the case of Russia, with a leader like Putin who measures himself and his fellow leaders in terms of crude machismo.

It is time to change Putin’s calculations, and Syria is the place to do it.

After repeating the tired, disproven, and borderline idiotic propaganda of Assad’s alleged “chemical weapons attacks,” “killing his own people,” and “barrel bombs,” Slaughter attempts to cover up what is nothing more than a geopolitical strategy as a humanitarian issue.

Slaughter laments the fact that “It is impossible to strike Syria legally so long as Russia sits on the United Nations Security Council, given its ability to veto any resolution authorizing the use of force.” However, she continues her article by stating that the United States should act anyway, unilaterally or multilaterally, by striking Syria and, at the very least, destroying its “fixed wing aircraft.”

The US, together with as many countries as will cooperate, could use force to eliminate Syria’s fixed-wing aircraft as a first step toward enforcing Resolution 2139. “Aerial bombardment” would still likely continue via helicopter, but such a strike would announce immediately that the game has changed. After the strike, the US, France, and Britain should ask for the Security Council’s approval of the action taken, as they did after NATO’s intervention in Kosovo in 1999,” she states.

Slaughter continues by writing,

Equally important, shots fired by the US in Syria will echo loudly in Russia. The great irony is that Putin is now seeking to do in Ukraine exactly what Assad has done so successfully: portray a legitimate political opposition as a gang of thugs and terrorists, while relying on provocations and lies to turn non-violent protest into violent attacks that then justify an armed response.

Slaughter, of course, was angry that the incessant and nonsensical propaganda of her former office, the US State Department, and other Western governments across the world had largely failed to manufacture a string of lies that would serve to effectively motivate Americans to gear up for war yet again.

Indeed, up until this point, on this particular issue, American apathy largely contributed to preventing a war.

Unfortunately, with slightly more clever propaganda narratives, that apathy was finally converted to the benefit of the world oligarchy. Such techniques of propaganda are well understood by elites the world over.

For those of us who have tried to warn of and prevent a direct military intervention in Syria, we must now continue to keep the Syrian people in our thoughts and prayers.

But we must also keep the United States in those thoughts and prayers. For what has been done in our name, we have just earned some terrible karmic consequences.

The United States has sown some very bitter seeds in recent years. Unfortunately, there will be a day when we all are forced to reap the bitter harvest.

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