

US airstrikes on Syria: Hypocrisy and murder

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US President Donald Trump's cruise missile attack on a Syrian airbase can only ratchet up the horrors being inflicted on the Syrian people by multiple rival enemies. It is part of a stepped-up US-led intervention in Syria and Iraq that has already killed about 3,000 civilians, according to Airwars.org. Further, it threatens wider wars in the region and the whole world.

Although Trump claimed to be motivated by the sight of pictures of children choking and dying due to chemical weapons allegedly used by Syria's Bashar al-Assad regime, his attack came in the wake of US airstrikes that killed many hundreds of adults and children in Iraq and Syria, not with chemical weapons but high explosive Hellfire missiles and huge bombs. In March the US-led coalition bombed a mosque, school and bakery in Syria and then leveled apartment buildings in western Mosul in Iraq, killing as many as 230 people in that attack alone. It is very clear that Washington wants to defeat Daesh (ISIS) not to do anything good for the people of Iraq and Syria, who have been Islamic fundamentalism's main victims, but to impose its own domination and beat back other rivals. The same applies to the US strike on Syria's Shayrat airbase. It had nothing to do with protecting people in Syria and everything to do with the US's strategic interests in the region and globally.

If you want to know what kind of regime the US would welcome in Syria, look at Egypt. Nothing better illustrates what US domination means in this region than Trump's meeting with Egyptian strongman Abdel Fattah el-Sisi a few days before this attack. Trump told Sisi he was doing a "fantastic job in a very difficult situation" and publicly declared, "You have a great friend and ally in the United States and me."

Sisi's rule began with a military coup in 2013. Its opening act was the massacre of more than 800 Islamic Brotherhood supporters demonstrating against the toppling of its elected government. After attacking a protest camp, troops moved through a hospital systematically exterminating patients and staff. Since then, Egypt's prisons have been engorged with as many as 60,000 political prisoners, including not only Islamists but members of the secular youth organizations that spearheaded the 2011 Tahir Square uprising and dissenters of all stripes. Sisi now presides over a country where young people are called "the jail generation". The main difference between Sisi and Assad is that Sisi is in the US's pocket and Assad is not.

It is hard to imagine anything more hypocritical than Trump's claim to have undergone a "change of heart" about the Assad regime because of the suffering of Syrian children. The "heart" of Trump and the imperialist power he heads beats with the blood of hundreds of millions of its victims. From the nuclear bombs that murdered hundreds of thousands of people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the close of World War 2 to the carpet bombing of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the extensive spraying of poisonous Agent Orange during the US war to dominate South-east Asia and the use of depleted uranium shells in the invasion and occupation of Iraq, the deployment of weapons of mass

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destruction against civilians has been a hallmark of American warfighting.

The US had no objection when the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq, back when it considered Saddam an ally, used poison gas to inflict some 100,000 casualties during the Iran-Iraq war. The US enabled both sides and, along with Germany, the UK and France, knowingly supplied the chemicals. The US even blocked UN action against Saddam after his forces gassed the Iraqi Kurdish town of Hallabja, killing 5-8,000 people, including a very high proportion of women, children and elderly.

Further, as many people have pointed out, a man and a regime that ordered that not a single refugee be accepted from the war the US has been fuelling in Syria, even keeping out children scheduled to undergo life-saving medical procedures, cannot claim to act in the name of Syrian children and other victims. The same can be said of UK Prime Minister Theresa May, who claimed to be "appalled" by the "barbarism of the Syrian regime", when she herself has long been at the forefront of European Union policies that amount to deliberately letting Syrian and other refugees drown while fleeing crossing the Mediterranean. May shut down the British government programme to accept child refugees from the Mideast, which was originally slated to take in 3,500 children – itself a paltry number – after accepting only 350, on the grounds that there was "no more room".

This demonstration of the US's murderous power was meant to signal that it does not intend to let Arabs, Iranians, Kurds or anyone else but the US run the region. It was also a threat to North Korea and elsewhere. Right now it is hard to predict Trump's next act, or how the consequences of this one will unfold, internationally and within the US. But some of those who are already sure that this will be a "one-off" US action were – until today – arguing that Trump is all bluster. He has repeatedly said about nuclear weapons, "I don't want to rule out anything." The gravity of this situation should not be underestimated.

*** Samuel Albert writes for A World to Win News Service.**

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Article-Summary:

Nothing could be more hypocritical than Trump's claim to have bombed Syria because of the suffering of Syrian children. Deployment of weapons of mass destruction against civilians is a hallmark of America's wars. Moreover, how can a man who ordered that not a single refugee be accepted from Syria, even keeping out children scheduled to undergo life-saving medical procedures, claim to act in the name of Syrian children?

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