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Resist This: the United States is at War With Syria

By Jim Kavanagh

June 21, 2017 |

The United States is at war with Syria. Though few Americans wanted to face it, this has been the case implicitly since the Obama administration began building bases and sending Special Ops, really-not-there, American troops, and it has been the case explicitly since August 3, 2015, when the Obama administration [announced](#) that it would “allow airstrikes to defend Syrian rebels trained by the U.S. military from any attackers, even if the enemies hail from forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.” With the U.S. Air Force—under Trump, following Obama’s declared policy—shooting down a Syrian plane in Syrian airspace, this is now undeniable. The United States is overtly engaged in another aggression against a sovereign country that poses no conceivable, let alone actual or imminent, threat to the nation. This is an act of war.

As an act of war, this is unconstitutional, and would demand a congressional declaration. Will Trump ask for this? Will any Democratic or Republican congresscritter demand it? Is the Pope a Hindu?

Would it make any difference? Why should Trump bother? Obama set the stage when he completely ignored the War Powers Act, the Constitution, Congress, and his own Attorney General and legal advisers, and went right ahead with a war on Libya, under the theory that, if ~~we pretend~~ no American troops are on the ground, it isn’t really a war or “hostilities” at all. Which I guess means if the Chinese Air Force starts shooting down American planes in American airspace in defense of Black Lives Matter’s assault on the White House, it wouldn’t really be engaging in an act of war.

It’s impossible to overstate the danger in these executive war-making prerogatives that Obama normalized—with the irresponsible connivance of his progressive groupies, who pretend not to know where this would lead: In 2012, referring to the precedent of Obama’s policies, Mitt Romney [said](#): “I don’t believe at this stage, therefore, if I’m president that we need to have a war powers approval or special authorization for military force. The president

has that capacity now.” Following Obama, for Trump, and every Republican and Democratic president, it now goes without saying.

As an aggressive, unprovoked war, this is also illegal under international law, and all the political and military authorities undertaking it are war criminals, who would be prosecuted as such, if there were an international legal regime that had not already been undermined by the United States.

Syria is now under explicit attack by the armed forces of the U.S., Turkey, and other NATO states. *Sixteen countries* have combat aircraft buzzing around Syrian airspace under the effective command of the United States, and a number of them have attacked Syria’s army.

Americans, and certainly self-identified “progressives,” have to be crystal clear about this: American armed forces have no right to be in Syria, have no right to restrict the Syrian government from using any of its airspace, or to prevent it from regaining control of any of its own territory from foreign-backed jihadi armies.

The Syrian state and its allies (Iran and Russia), on the other hand, are engaged in the legitimate self-defense of a sovereign state, and have the right to respond with full military force to any attack on Syrian forces or any attempt by the United States to balkanize or occupy Syrian territory, or to overthrow the Syrian government.

So please, do not pretend to be shocked, shocked, if Syria and its allies fight back, inflicting American casualties. Don’t pose as the morally superior victim when Americans are killed by the people they are attacking. And don’t be preaching about how everyone has to support our troops in a criminal, unconstitutional, aggressive attack on a country that has not threatened ours in any way. American soldiers and pilots executing this policy are not heroes, and are not fighting to protect America or advance democracy; they are criminal aggressors and legitimate targets. In response to American aggression, the Syrian Army has every right to strike back at the American military apparatus, everywhere. Every casualty of this war, however big it gets, is the ethico-political responsibility of the attacking party – US. The first responsibility of every American is not to “support our troops,” but to stop this war. Right now. Before it gets worse

It’s quite obvious, in fact, that the United States regime is deliberately making targets of its military personnel, in the hopes of provoking a response from Syrian or allied armed forces that will kill some Americans, and be used to gin up popular support for the exactly the kind of major military attack on Syria and/or Russia and/or Iran that the American people would otherwise reject with disgust. Anyone who professes concern for “our troops” should be screaming to stop that.

It’s also quite clear now, that the War on ISIS is a sham, that ISIS was always just a pretext to get the American military directly involved in attacking the Syrian army and destroying the coherence of the Syrian state. If the U.S. wanted to defeat ISIS, it could do so easily by coordinating their actions with, and not against, the forces who have been most effectively fighting it: the Syrian Arab Army, Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah.

Instead, it’s attacking the Syrian army *precisely because it has been defeating ISIS* and other jihadi forces, and regaining its own territory and control of its own border with Iraq. The U.S. does not want that to happen. At the very least—if it cannot immediately engender that

massive offensive to overthrow the Baathist government—the U.S. wants to control part of the border with Iraq and to occupy a swath of eastern Syria. It wants to establish permanent bases from which to provision and protect jihadi armies, achieving a *de facto* partitioning of the Syrian state, maintaining a constant state of armed attack against the Damascus government, and reducing Syria to a weakened, rump state that can never present any effective resistance to American, Israeli, or Saudi designs on the region.

This is extremely dangerous, since the Syrians, Russians, and Iranians seem determined not to let this happen. Trump seems to have abrogated authority to his generals to make decisions of enormous political consequence. Perhaps that's why aggressive actions like the shoot-down of the Syrian plane have been occurring more frequently, and why it's not likely they'll abate. There's a dynamic in motion that will inevitably lead each side to confront a choice of whether to back down, in a way that's obvious, or escalate. Generals aren't good at backing down. A regional or global war is a real possibility, and becomes more likely with every such incident.

Though most American politicians and media outlets do not want to say it (and therefore, most citizens cannot see it clearly enough), *such a war is the objective* of a powerful faction of the Deep State which has been persistent and determined in seeking it. If the generals are loathe to back down in a battle, the neocons are adamant about not backing down on their plans for the Middle East. They will not be stopped by anything less than overwhelming popular resistance and international pushback.

The upside of these attacks on Syrian forces is that they wipe the lipstick off the pig of the American project in Syria. Everyone—European countries who profess concern for international law and stability, and the American people who are fed up with constant wars that have no benefit for them—can see exactly what kind of blatant aggression is unfolding, and decide whether they want to go along with it.

In that regard, any self-identified “liberal” or “progressive” American—and particularly any such American politician—who spent (and may still spend) their political energy attacking Bush, *et. al.*, for that crazy war in Iraq, and who goes along with, or hesitates to immediately and energetically denounce this war, *which is already underway*, is a political hypocrite, resisting nothing but the obvious.