

# Will Trump start WWII over the least plausible false flag yet?

By Richard Bardon

11 Apr.—US warships are reportedly steaming towards Syria and the Russian military is on high alert, as the world awaits US President Donald Trump's response to another Syrian Army "chemical attack" that never happened. If Trump follows through on his threat to exact a "big price" from Russia and Iran for supporting the legitimate, elected government of Syria, he may bring about the nuclear holocaust he himself warned against in February 2017, in his first press conference as President.

The parallels to the events of a year ago are enough to induce *déjà vu*. On 7 April 2017, less than three months into his presidency and just three weeks after that press conference, Trump reneged on his campaign promise to get out of Syria and his pledge to try to "get along" with Russia, and instead ordered a cruise missile attack on a Syrian Air Force base, ostensibly as retribution for a sarin gas attack three days earlier in the jihadist-occupied town of Khan Sheikhoun, in the Idlib Governorate of western Syria (AAS 12 Apr. 2017, pp. 3-6). Russian Defence Ministry spokesman Gen.-Maj. Igor Konashenkov had explained on 5 April 2017 that the Syrian Air Force had in fact carried out an airstrike—with conventional munitions—on the eastern outskirts of Khan Sheikhoun, which destroyed "a major ammunition storage facility ... [which] housed workshops to produce projectiles stuffed with toxic agents. From this major arsenal, chemical-laden weapons were delivered by militants to Iraq." Konashenkov suggested that civilians could have been affected by toxic smoke from the burning jihadist facility, and added that all relevant data had been forwarded to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for study. American investigative journalist Seymour Hersh later confirmed Russia's story via his own contacts in the US intelligence community, who had been advised of the airstrike *well in advance* via the US-Russian "de-confliction" channel; and this February, Trump's defence secretary James Mattis admitted to reporters that the USA has no evidence of the Assad government having ever used chemical weapons.

On 29 March 2018, during a speech on his plans to fix the USA's crumbling infrastructure, Trump again touted an imminent US withdrawal from Syria. With ISIS all but vanquished, "we're going to be coming out of there real soon", he said. "Going to get back to our country where we belong, where we want to be." The *Wall Street Journal* reported 31 March that Trump, overruling his advisors' objections, had ordered the State Department to freeze US\$200 million earmarked for operations in Syria. And at a 3 April White House press conference, Trump reiterated: "I want to get out [of Syria]. I want to bring our troops back home. I want to start rebuilding our nation. ... Seven trillion dollars [spent on wars in the Middle East] over a 17 year period, we have nothing—nothing except death and destruction. It's a horrible thing. So it's time." Reports emerged 2 April that Trump had also invited Russian President Vladimir Putin to a bilateral summit in the coming months, potentially at the White House, to begin anew the process of normalising US-Russia relations.

Meanwhile in Syria, with the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and its allies on the verge of fully reclaiming Damascus's Eastern Ghouta region from jihadist occupation, the infamous White Helmets—the same al-Qaeda-linked,

US/UK-funded propaganda construct that staged last year's non-existent sarin attack—on 8 April uploaded video of what they claimed were civilian victims of a chlorine gas attack the previous evening in Douma township, Eastern Ghouta's last jihadist enclave. And just like last year, Trump turned on a dime to condemn Assad—and this time Russia and Putin personally, to boot. "Many dead, including women and children, in mindless CHEMICAL attack in Syria", Trump raged on Twitter. "Area of atrocity is in lockdown and encircled by Syrian Army, making it completely inaccessible to outside world. President Putin, Russia and Iran are responsible for backing Animal Assad. Big price to pay. ... Another humanitarian disaster for no reason whatsoever. SICK!"

On 9 April Trump announced that he would decide upon a response within 48 hours. (The missile strike on Syria's Tiyas military airbase earlier that day was launched by Israeli jets operating illegally over Lebanon, and was apparently not related to the situation in Douma.) Sputnik News reported 10 April that the US Navy guided missile destroyer USS *Donald Cook* has moved into Tomahawk missile range off the Syrian coast, while according to the *Wall Street Journal* its sister ship USS *Porter* is *en route*. The *Porter* was one of the two ships which carried out last year's strike.

## Grave consequences

Russia's Foreign Ministry warned in an 8 April press release that "military interference in Syria ... under contrived and false pretexts is absolutely unacceptable and can lead to very grave consequences"—a warning reiterated by Permanent Representative to the UN Vasily Nebenzya at a UN Security Council meeting the next day. Already on 13 March Russia's Chief of General Staff Gen. Valery Gerasimov reported that jihadists in Eastern Ghouta were planning a false-flag chemical weapon attack to justify a "massive US strike" against the Syrian government. According to TASS, Gerasimov stated that there are Russian officials and military police working in Syrian Defence Ministry facilities throughout Damascus, and that "in the event of a threat to our military servicemen's lives, Russia's Armed Forces will take retaliatory measures to target both the missiles and their delivery vehicles."

According to independent journalist and political analyst John Helmer, the longest-serving foreign correspondent in Russia, Moscow's warnings should be taken deadly seriously. Alluding to the recent string of Western provocations against Russia, which culminated with the British-engineered travesty surrounding allegedly poisoned ex-Russian intelligence officer turned MI6 agent Sergei Skripal, Helmer wrote 9 April on his blog *Dances with Bears*: "When the rule of law was destroyed in Salisbury, London and The Hague, and the rule of fraud declared in Washington, that leaves only the rule of force in the world. The Stavka [an old term for a High Command comprising cabinet-level civil officials and the General Staff] met in Moscow on Good Friday and is ready. The Foreign Ministry announced on Sunday 'the gravest consequences'. This means one American shot at a Russian soldier, then we are at war. Not infowar, not cyberwar, not economic war, not proxy war. World War."

Presuming the Trump Administration does not start WWII in the coming days, the Douma false flag will likely be proven such in very short order—ironically, for the

very reasons Trump railed at in his Twitter rant. In Khan Sheikhoun last year, the jihadists and their Western intelligence handlers controlled the scene; but Douma is now fully under SAA and Russian control, and the OPCW has accepted their invitation to investigate the alleged incident. At the UN on Monday, Nebenzya advised that Russian chemical weapons experts were already on the scene,

and had discovered no traces of chemical weapons of any sort, while interviews of local residents, medical personnel and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent had turned up no accounts of any victims having been treated, contrary to the White Helmets' claims. Whether the Trump Administration awaits the OPCW's findings, or rushes to war to pre-empt them, remains to be seen.

## Israeli atrocities in Gaza expose Western hypocrisy

By Richard Bardon

Western governments refuse to so much as censure Israel for its shocking murder of unarmed protestors in full view of television cameras. This is the very same crime alleged against Syria's President Bashar al-Assad in 2011, and the mere allegation supposedly justified the Western-backed regime-change assault against Syria that is still ongoing.

The difference is that what the West called "protestors" in Syria were in fact armed extremists, many of them foreigners, who had infiltrated political rallies; and in many cases the Syrian Army lost men precisely because they *refused* to risk killing civilians by returning fire. In Palestine, the situation is reversed: Israeli occupation forces, among them fundamentalist Zionist fanatics recruited from around the world, openly massacre men, women and children whose land they have usurped, and get off scot-free by labelling their victims "terrorists".

The West's collective failure to condemn Israel's atrocities is both reprehensible in itself, and renders meaningless all talk of "human rights", the "rule of law" and other ideals of so-called "Western civilisation". The fact is that Western governments are perfectly content for civilians the world over to die for Anglo-American geopolitical purposes.

As of 10 April, Israeli forces have killed 30 Palestinian civilians and injured thousands more in the Gaza Strip since "Great March of Return" demonstrations began on 30 March. Palestinians commemorate that date as "Land Day", the day in 1976 when Israel expelled thousands of Arab families from the Galilee and confiscated their land. The protests are set to run for six weeks, concluding on Nakba Day (*Yawm al-Nakba*, Arabic for "Day of Disaster") on 15 May, the 70th anniversary of the establishment of formal "Israeli" rule over parts of Palestine in 1948.

Israeli forces killed 18 people and injured more than 1,400 on just the first day of the march, using a combination of snipers, artillery, and indiscriminate machine-gun fire, as well as tear gas and so-called sub-lethal munitions. Al-Masdar News, citing figures from the Palestinian Red Crescent, reported that 800 people were wounded by live ammunition. Videos have circulated on the internet of Palestinian youths being picked off by Israeli snipers as they kneel in prayer in an open field, others as they run for cover. Footage published by the Israelis themselves shows no evidence of firearms amongst the protestors. Some are "armed" with hand-thrown rocks—to which Israeli soldiers respond with automatic rifle fire, on the pretext that they must prevent damage to the steel-and-barbed-wire fence that is Gaza's border. In the days since, the Israelis have even resorted to airstrikes, supposedly targeting members of the militant Islamic Resistance Group (Hamas).

In a 31 March tweet, since deleted, the Israeli military stated of the shootings: "Nothing was carried out uncontrolled; everything was accurate and measured, and we know where every bullet landed." According to Middle East Eye, Israeli "Defence" Minister Avigdor Liberman

justified the slaughter with the claim, broadcast Sunday 8 April on Israel's public radio, that "There are no innocent people in the Gaza Strip. Everyone's connected to Hamas, everyone gets a salary from Hamas, and all the activists trying to challenge us and breach the border are Hamas military wing activists."

As always, the Anglo-Americans have stepped in to provide Israel with political cover. When Kuwait on 31 March introduced to the UN Security Council a proposed statement supporting UN Secretary General António Guterres's call for an "independent and transparent investigation" of the violence, affirming "the right to peaceful protest" and expressing "sorrow at the loss of innocent Palestinian lives", the United States blocked it. The sole member of the US Congress to speak, even weakly, against Israel's actions was Independent Senator Bernie Sanders, who in a 31 March tweet called the killings "tragic" and defended the Palestinians' right to peaceful protest. In an interview with CNN's Jake Tapper the following day, Sanders rejected the Israeli government's excuse that Hamas fighters had attacked its soldiers from amongst the crowd, reiterating that the protests were non-violent and stating that Israel had "overreacted".

In the UK, Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn stood once again as Westminster's voice of reason and principle. In a 7 April message to Palestine Solidarity Campaign demonstrations outside government offices in Downing Street, Corbyn called the killing and wounding of Gaza protestors an outrage. "The majority of the people of the Gaza Strip are stateless refugees, subject to a decade long blockade and the denial of basic human and political rights", Corbyn wrote. "More than two thirds are reliant on humanitarian assistance, with limited access to the most basic amenities, such as water and electricity. They have a right to protest against their appalling conditions and the continuing blockade and occupation of Palestinian land, and in support of their right to return to their homes and their right to self-determination."

Corbyn added that "firing live ammunition into crowds of unarmed civilians is illegal and inhumane and cannot be tolerated", and called upon the UK government to review its arms sales to Israel and support Guterres's call for an inquiry. According to various pro-Israel lobby groups, this makes him an "anti-Semite".

Meanwhile, as Israel is committing these atrocities in full view of the world, it is also escalating the regime-change drive against Syria. Israel bombed a Syrian airfield on 9 April following the latest fabricated chemical weapons attack in Douma, which all of the countries that stayed silent about Israel's killings in Gaza, including the USA, UK, EU and Australia, instantly condemned without evidence. Israel also demanded US President Donald Trump bomb Syria. Israeli government think tanks are on record advocating support for the monstrous ISIS terrorists in Syria, on the grounds that they are fighting Israel's enemies Syria and Iran.