



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on April 14, 2018

## Serious in Syria: Does WW III-philia Afflict Washington?

"I am more worried [about nuclear war] than I have ever been in my life, at least since the Cuban missile crisis." So said Stephen Cohen, professor emeritus of Russian studies at Princeton University and New York University, on Thursday's edition of *Tucker Carlson Tonight*. Cohen was, of course, addressing the impending attack on Syria, which is now a reality.



A reality as well is that this is a very dangerous game. As Cohen also warned, "If Russians die, if Damascus is attacked (the capital of Syria), Russia will retaliate with its excellent weapons, every bit as good as ours.... Some people say in some regards the missile technology better."

In the Syria attack's wake, this now doesn't seem likely. While Russian ambassador Anatoly Antonov [warned](#) that the US's "actions will not be left without consequences," my guess (and it is only a surmise) is that the Kremlin will play down any Russian casualties to save face and, perhaps, just respond in the cyber-attack realm, if anything — this time. They don't want war with us. But should we be continually poking the Russian bear even though no apparent American national interest is at stake? What's the point?

Before delving into how the claim that Syrian president Bashar al-Assad used chemical weapons doesn't justify last night's action, we should examine how the Syria attacks (we bombed the nation last year as well) are a departure from American-Russian-relations norms.

Professor Cohen pointed out that "there are Russian soldiers embedded in almost all Syrian army units, even in dormitories," which means that even "surgical strikes" would likely claim Russian lives. Yet all throughout the Cold War, Americans killing Russians and Russians killing Americans has always been a "no-no," said Cohen. "Why would anybody even think of it?" (video below).

For sure. The Cold War standard was this: We may neither like nor trust each other — the Soviets may call us decadent and we may rightly brand them the "evil empire" — but we don't step on each other's toes. For example, it was unjust and tyrannical that the USSR dominated Eastern Europe and reduced its nations to satellite states; nonetheless, direct American military action there was unfathomable.

And when this principle was violated, when the Soviets began installing nuclear missiles in Cuba, it led to a 13-day military standoff that brought us to the brink of nuclear war. The Soviets ultimately backed down, however, precisely because they were in our backyard stepping on our toes — and knew that because of this *we couldn't back down*.

Yet as Tucker Carlson pointed out, American officials have boasted about killing more than 200 Russian citizens in Syria in recent weeks. Is this wise?



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on April 14, 2018

(Note: The Left's incessant pushing of the Trump-Russia-collusion narrative has no doubt exacerbated this situation, since it has pressured the Trump administration to engage in anti-Russian chest-pounding to prove it's not in Putin's pocket. Do the Democrats consider starting WWII an acceptable price to pay for political power?)

The kicker, again, is that we have no apparent national interest in Syria. What does the risk/reward factor inform here? What is the upside to risking conflict with another nuclear superpower?

Strikingly, while Democrats and Republicans — all the swampy establishment chicken hawks — have lined up behind the Syria attack, no one can explain what that national interest might be. Tellingly, in fact, Senator Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) was interviewed by Carlson on Monday and had no answer, aside from implying that the host was a Putin tool just for asking the question (video below).

Of course, the purpose (pretext?) for the attack is to punish Assad for allegedly using chemical weapons on his own people. Yet Carlson and others have wondered if Assad really perpetrated the act, given that Trump had announced his intention to withdraw US forces from Syria just a week before. Why would Assad take an action guaranteeing the last thing he wants, prolonged U.S. involvement in his nation? Could the carnage instead have been the handiwork of an entity that wants our presence extended?

It's true that Trump is privy to intelligence we don't have. But given the scandals and missteps plaguing our intelligence agencies in recent years, can we take their claims at face value?

Note here that not only our own, but also foreign intelligence agencies, insisted 16 years ago that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Democrats consequently voted for the Iraq War in 2002, only to claim years later that it was G.W. Bush's war and that "Bush lied and people died." If Syria ever grew into a military quagmire, one could imagine the same game being played on Trump.

(One difference, however, is that Congress at least voted to give President Bush the authority to go to war against Iraq. Trump, in what has become an unconstitutional modern-president status quo, is acting without congressional authorization.)

Yet even if Assad did perpetrate the chemical attack, what is last night's action's rationale? Yes, Assad is a bad guy. But he's confronted by bad guys who may be worse guys. Thus is it wise that toppling him isn't our goal, as that would perhaps create another Libya.

Given this, though, we should ask how damaging Assad — who has common cause with us in defeating jihadist rebels on his soil — improves the situation. How about if he were to regain control over his nation and stabilize it? This would end the war; stop the outflow of people, billed as "refugees" and used as a pretext for Muslim wave migration into Europe; and eliminate the possibility that anyone on any side would repeat the use of chemical weapons.

That we're instead shaking the hornets' nest further — despite Trump having inveighed against such actions prior to winning office — makes one wonder who's whispering in his ear. National Security Advisor John Bolton, who assumed office April 9, is a known hawk. Moreover, it was [revealed](#) that Ivanka Trump influenced her father, the president, to launch last year's Syrian attack, moved as she was by the photos of child victims of the 2017 chemical weapons atrocity.

Of course, it's unsurprising that a relatively young mother of three would react emotionally to such heart-rending photos, but that's perhaps why a relatively young mother of three shouldn't be (and hasn't been) elected president. "Passion governs, and she never governs wisely," as Ben Franklin warned.



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on April 14, 2018

---

Emotionalism is as good an explanation as any for what seems an irrational policy. More damnably, though, our government appears infested with people who believe that America just isn't doing her job unless she's bombing someone, somewhere.

*U.S. Tomahawk missile fired against Syria: U.S. Navy photo*



## Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,  
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



**Subscribe**

### What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.