

Syrian civil war / United States is right to withdraw its troops

< Syrian civil war

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Position: United States is right to withdraw its troops

This position addresses the topic Syrian civil war.

For this position

“ Trump also deserves credit for standing up to the war hawks within his own administration who started inventing rationales for remaining in the country: countering Iran and seeing an end to the Assad regime. That is the definition of mission creep. While Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is a brutal dictator and should be tried at the Hague for international war crimes, the United States should not militarily overthrow him. ”

From Trump was right to pull out of Syria and Afghanistan. This is what he should do next., by Ro Khanna (*The Washington Post*, December 22, 2018) (view)

“ If Russia’s prestige has been enhanced in the Middle East, perhaps it is not so much the fecklessness of American intervention and the resolution of Putin, but that Russia simply had the more viable strategy. Russia has intervened on behalf of traditional state actors, Iran and Syria. The United States, since the Arab Spring, has fitfully allied itself with demotic and even revolutionary Sunni movements. The relationships of these movements to Sunni terrorist movements such as Al Nusra and ISIS has been rather fluid. ”

From Let’s Leave Syria, by Michael Brendan Dougherty (*National Review*, December 21, 2018) (view)

“ interventionists such as Sens. Lindsey Graham and Marco Rubio have portrayed the administration’s decision as a gift to Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah, the Shiite organization based in Lebanon, because they fear that those actors will fill the strategic vacuum we leave. But an American withdrawal from Syria makes it unlikely that those various factions will work in harmony together. Rather, they will more likely be at each other’s throats, along with Turkey, the Saudi-led Gulf Arab alliance and the Syrian government of Bashar Assad. There already are reports that Russia is trying to edge Iran out of Syria, because of competition for economic projects. ”

From Why Trump is right about withdrawing from Syria, by Akhilesh Pillalamarri (*Los Angeles Times*, December 21, 2018) (view)

“ Does anyone care that many legal experts – regardless of how evil Assad or Isis was and is – think sending troops into Syria was illegal, given that Congress never debated or approved sending troops there? Should we fight in Syria forever, just because Russia also thinks we should leave? What percentage of the American public even knew to begin with over 2,000 troops have been on the ground in Syria occupying a third of the country for years? ”

From Trump is right to withdraw US troops from Syria, by Trevor Timm (*The Guardian*, December 21, 2018) (view)

“ The idea that U.S. forces can compel Iran’s eviction makes little sense. Like Russia, Iran has long-standing interests in Syria that are stronger than ours, was invited by the regime to deploy forces, and is unlikely to pull them before the civil war is over. Leaving rivals the draining task of trying to stabilize Syria is hardly doing them a favor. Syria offers occupiers nothing that can vault them to greater power and lots of potential trouble. ”

From Trump is right to withdraw US troops from Syria. We've done our job by defeating ISIS., by Benjamin Friedman, Justin Logan (*USA Today*, December 20, 2018) (view)

“ Yes, it is lamentable that Assad is in cahoots with Iran and Russia. Certainly, President Trump was right to strike Syria with two major cruise missile attacks after the regime used chemical weapons. However, replacing Assad would require a major Iraq-style war and inflict deep suffering on a people who have already been devastated by eight years of bloody conflict. Furthermore, anti-Assad forces have proved incapable of achieving lasting military victory and some are worse than Assad, including Al Qaeda elements. ”

From Why Trump's Syria withdrawal is the right move, by Christian Whiton (*Fox News*, December 20, 2018) (view)

Against this position

“ Turkish troops are massing in northern Syria, with more crossing the border daily as they eye a possible offensive against Kurdish forces — yes, the same forces which have fought so bravely side by side with Americans against ISIS. It is one thing to give up the hope of regime change in Syria and know that the detested Bashar al-Assad — he who has gassed his own citizens — remains in charge. It is quite another to betray the Kurds and leave them vulnerable to an assault by Erdogan’s Turkey, which considers the militia a terrorist organization. ”

From Trump’s dangerous blunder in Syria endangers US ally, by The Boston Globe editorial board (*The Boston Globe*, December 26, 2018) (view)

“ In a strange example of camaraderie, turning a blind eye to grievous human rights violations in Syria is one of the few areas where Trump and Obama meet. Still, having the US involved – even minimally – complicated Assad’s scorched-earth campaign against the Syrian opposition. All he needs now is the north-western city of Idlib and the country is his (except that he has to share it with Russia and Iran). ”

From Trump’s Syria withdrawal has handed a huge gift to Islamic State, by Janine di Giovanni

(Comment is free, December 22, 2018) (view)

“ Putin, who helped tip the Syrian civil war in favor of Bashar Assad and was then able to establish a Russian presence in the Middle East for the first time in decades, will now enjoy the greater influence it attained knowing an American presence will no longer reside in Syria. We can't help but think this also gives Iran a strategic upper hand as it propped up Syria. Iran will now feel emboldened to create a greater threat to our only ally in the region, Israel, and to shore up its effort to become a regional hegemon. ”

From Trump's hasty Syria withdrawal means 'Merry Christmas' for Vladimir Putin, by The Dallas Morning News editorial board (*The Dallas Morning News*, December 20, 2018) (view)

“ As much as it would pain veterans of the Obama administration to admit, it was Trump who changed the rules of engagement in the battle with the Islamic State. It was Trump who oversaw their rout and retreat. But the Islamic State is not defeated. And even if the Islamic State stays on its collective heels, those who would replace them — Iran, Bashar al-Assad's regime and Russia — are greater threats to Americans in Iraq and to our ally Israel. ”

From In withdrawing from Syria, Trump makes a major error, by Hugh Hewitt (*The Washington Post*, December 20, 2018) (view)

“ These days Islamic State has about 1 percent of its former territory, but the group's poisonous ideology remains intact, as does a vacuum of power in war-torn Syria. Cancers of all types can recur: Bashar Assad is still the barbarous leader of Syria, while Russia and Iran are still playing destabilizing games. This is no time to up and leave. ”

From Trump's foolish decision to leave Syria, by Chicago Tribune editorial board (*Chicago Tribune*, December 20, 2018) (view)

“ Remember President Barack Obama's fateful 2013 decision to forgo enforcement of that infamous “red line” against use of chemical weapons by the Damascus regime? Just as then, leaving Syria now would mark a turning point in the war — for the worse — while delivering another blow to America's prestige and global power. ”

From The Syria withdrawal may be Trump's biggest blunder to date, by Benny Avni (*New York Post*, December 19, 2018) (view)

“ If there is one key lesson we have learned from fighting jihadist terrorist groups in the 17 years since 9/11 it is that they thrive in weak or failing Muslim states such as Syria, and other countries where the United States has little to no presence. The Syrian pullout would run the risk of negating so many of the gains that have been made against ISIS. It also leaves the United States' Syrian Kurdish partners, who have done the bulk of the fighting against ISIS, to fend for themselves against the powerful Turkish military, which regards them as terrorists. ”

From Trump's bizarre decision on Syria, by Peter Bergen (*CNN*, December 19, 2018) (view)

“ The withdrawal from Syria will also affect the administration's economic pressure campaign against Iran and its regional assets. The U.S.-controlled zone in eastern Syria is home to the bulk of the country's gas and oil fields, currently off limits to Assad. Thus, for years, Iran has been subsidizing its Syrian ally's energy needs, costing Tehran billions. The Assad regime, with Russian and Iranian support, will now prepare to retake these oil and gas fields. ”

From Trump reversal on Syria policy means big gains for Iran, by Tony Badran (*Democrat and Chronicle*, December 19, 2018) (view)

“ Mr. Trump’s assertion that the Islamic State is defeated is absurd. “We have won against ISIS,” he boasted in a video. The ability of the terrorists to strike has been significantly degraded and much of the territory they claimed for their so-called caliphate has been liberated. But the group still retains a pocket of land on the Syria-Iraq border and has roughly 20,000 to 30,000 fighters, according to military researchers. As Mr. Jeffrey said Monday, “The job is not yet done.”

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From Trump’s Decision to Withdraw From Syria Is Alarming. Just Ask His Advisers., by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, December 19, 2018) (view)

Mixed on this position

“ While the rapid drawdown solves one friction with a NATO ally and may encourage Ankara to buy Patriot missiles, the president’s move was an artless deal. He could have used the U.S. exit as leverage to get Iran to leave or curb its troop presence there. Instead, he gave it away for free, to Russian President Vladimir Putin’s delight.

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From Trump’s artless deal: The president’s Syria decision will have long-term consequences, by Andrew Malcolm (*The Charlotte Observer*, December 26, 2018) (view)

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