

# Editorial Opinion

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## In Syria, Putin takes advantage of Obama administration

**“Russia hits Assad’s foes, angering U.S.”**

— *Headline, The Wall Street Journal, Oct. 1*

WASHINGTON—If it had the wit, the Obama administration would be not angered, but appropriately humiliated. President Barack Obama has, once again, been totally outmaneuvered by Vladimir Putin.

Two days earlier at the United Nations, Obama had welcomed the return, in force, of the Russian military to the Middle East — for the first time in decades — to help fight the Islamic State group.

The ruse was transparent from the beginning. Russia is not in Syria to fight the Islamic State. The Kremlin was sending fighter planes, air-to-air missiles and SA-22 anti-aircraft batteries. Against an Islamic State that has no air force, no planes, no helicopters?

Russia then sent recon-



**CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER**  
COMMENTARY

naissance drones over Idlib and Hama, where there are no Islamic State fighters. Followed by bombing attacks on Homs and other opposition strongholds that had nothing to do with the Islamic State.

Indeed, some of these bombed fighters were U.S. trained and equipped. Asked if we didn’t have an obligation to support our own allies on the ground, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter bumbled that Russia’s actions exposed its policy as self-contradictory.

Carter made it sound as if the Russian offense was to have perpetrated an oxymoron, rather than a

provocation — and a direct challenge to what’s left of the U.S. policy of supporting a moderate opposition.

The whole point of Russian intervention is to maintain Syrian President Bashar Assad in power. Putin has no interest in fighting the Islamic State. Indeed, the second round of Russian air attacks was on rival insurgents opposed to the Islamic State. The Islamic State is nothing but a pretense for Russian intervention. And Obama fell for it.

Just three weeks ago, Obama chided Russia for its military buildup, wagging his finger that it was “doomed to failure.” Yet by Monday he was publicly welcoming Russia to join the fight against the Islamic State. He not only acquiesced to the Russian buildup, he held an ostentatious meeting with Putin on the subject, thereby marking the ignominious collapse of Obama’s vaunted campaign to isolate Putin diplomatically over Crimea.

Putin then showed his utter contempt for Obama by launching his air campaign against our erstwhile anti-Assad allies not 48 hours after meeting Obama. Which the U.S. found out about when a Russian general knocked on the door of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and delivered a brusque démarche announcing that the attack would begin within an hour and warning the U.S. to get out of the way.

In his subsequent news conference, Secretary Carter averred that he found such Russian behavior “unprofessional.”

Good grief. Russia, with its inferior military and hemorrhaging economy, had just eaten Carter’s lunch, seizing the initiative and exposing American powerlessness — and the secretary of defense deplores what? Russia’s lack of professional etiquette.

Makes you want to weep.

Consider: When Obama became president, the surge in Iraq had succeeded and the U.S. had emerged as the dominant regional actor, able to project power throughout the region. Last Sunday, Iraq announced the establishment of a joint intelligence-gathering center with Iran, Syria and Russia, symbolizing the new “Shiite-crescent” alliance stretching from Iran across the northern Middle East to the Mediterranean, under the umbrella of Russia, the rising regional hegemon.

Russian planes roam free over Syria, attacking Assad’s opposition as we stand by helpless. Meanwhile, the U.S. secretary of state beseeches the Russians to negotiate “de-conflict” arrangements — so that we and they can each bomb our own targets safely. It has come to this.

Why is Putin moving so quickly and so brazenly? Because he’s got only 16 more months to push

on the open door that is Obama. He knows he’ll never again see an American president such as this — one who once told the U.N. General Assembly that “no one nation can or should try to dominate another nation” and told it again last Monday of “believing in my core that we, the nations of the world, cannot return to the old ways of conflict and coercion.”

They cannot? Has he looked at the world around him — from Homs to Kunduz, from Sanaa to Donetsk — ablaze with conflict and coercion?

Wouldn’t you take advantage of these last 16 months if you were Putin, facing a man living in a faculty-lounge fantasy world? Where was Obama when Putin began bombing Syria? Leading a U.N. meeting on countering violent extremism.

Seminar to follow.

The Washington Post Writers Group

### On this date

Today is the 277th day of 2015 and the 12th day of autumn.

**Today’s history:** In 1535, the complete English translation of the Bible was printed for the first time.

**In 1957,** the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, into orbit.

**In 1958,** trans-Atlantic passenger jet service began with commercial flights between New York and London.

**In 1965,** Pope Paul VI became the first reigning pontiff to visit the U.S.

**Today’s birthdays:** Rutherford B. Hayes (1822-93), 19th U.S. president; Edward Stratemeyer (1862-1930), children’s author; Buster Keaton (1895-1966), comedian/filmmaker; Charlton Heston (1923-2008), actor; Jackie Collins (1937-2015), author; Anne Rice, author, is 74; Tony La Russa, baseball manager, is 71; Susan Sarandon, actress, is 69; Christoph Waltz, actor, is 59; Liev Schreiber, actor, is 48; Alicia Silverstone, actress, is 39; Rachael Leigh Cook, actress, is 36; Derrick Rose, basketball player, is 27.

**Today’s fact:** Singapore Airlines Flight 21 was the longest regularly scheduled nonstop passenger flight in the world before it was discontinued in 2013. The flight departed from Newark, New Jersey, for Singapore with a scheduled length of 18 hours, 50 minutes.

**Today’s quote:** “As knowledge spreads, wealth spreads. To diffuse knowledge is to diffuse wealth. To give all an equal chance to acquire knowledge is the best and surest way to give all an equal chance to acquire property.” — **Rutherford B. Hayes**  
**Today’s number: 184** — weight (in pounds) of Sputnik, according to Soviet news agency TASS on the day of its launch.

**Bible quote:** “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” — **James 1:5**

### Sound off

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### LETTERS

Jorgen Albrechtsen, *Naples*

#### Open season

The dogs of hell have been unleashed on Donald Trump.

But for once, the powerful socialist cabal and the corrupt crony capitalists are scared. I’ve never seen them this outraged, this vicious, this motivated or this coordinated. The over-the-top reaction to Trump by politicians of both parties, the media and the biggest corporations of America has been so swift and angry that it suggests they are all threatened and frightened like never before.

All the rules are out the window if Trump wins the presidency. The other politicians will protect Barack Obama and his aides, but Trump won’t. Remember: Trump is the guy who publicly questioned Obama’s birth certificate. He questioned Obama’s college records and how a mediocre student got into an Ivy League university.

Now, he’s doing something no Republican has the chutzpah to do. He’s questioning our relationship with Mexico; questioning why the border is wide open; questioning why no wall has been

built across the border; questioning if allowing millions of illegal immigrants into America is in our best interests; questioning why so many illegal immigrants commit violent crimes yet are not deported, and questioning why our trade deals with Mexico, Russia and China are so bad.

If left unchecked telling the raw truth and asking questions everyone else is afraid to ask, Trump could wake a sleeping giant. Trump’s election would be a nightmare. Trump will investigate. Trump will prosecute.

Yes, it’s become open season on Donald Trump. The left and the right are determined to attack his policies, harm his businesses and, if possible, even keep him out of the coming debates. But they can’t silence or intimidate him. The more they try, the more the public will realize that he’s the one telling the truth. The left can’t stand that.

Walter O’Brien, *LaBelle*

#### Holiness visit

Before the pope came, I was on the fence about whether Catholic Americans are loyal to the Catho-

lic Church or to the USA.

After seeing the reaction of Catholics to their pope’s visit, I am no longer on the fence. I now know what my father meant when he said papists were loyal to their church, not to the USA.

Bernice Richmond, *Naples*

#### Globalization

“Globalization.” The word hit me as I listened to the radio. It suddenly rang clear that we in the United States are not just the first but the only repository of a treasure — our values as protected by the Constitution.

As long as continents and countries were isolated and transportation difficult, our experiment in human freedom and dignity was safe from tyrants, dictators, degenerate monarchies and collectivists.

Blessed isolation exists no more. The transportation and communications revolutions have smacked our values up against the rock face of tyrants of every stripe. They cannot tolerate their people turning on their computers to see that freedom exists ... and that they do not have it.

### Guest commentary | Domestic Violence Awareness Month

## Learn the signs, start the conversation, end the abuse

By **Linda Oberhaus**

Executive director,  
The Shelter for Abused Women & Children

It was 2 a.m. Jennifer awoke to Jay’s demand that she make him a sandwich. When she told him she was tired, he pulled her off the bed by her legs, climbed on top of her and began punching her in the face and arms. Nearby in his crib, their 3-month-old son awoke to the screams and began to cry. Jennifer struggled free, grabbed the baby and ran outside.

A neighbor heard her cries for help and ran out to see what was happening. Jay grabbed Jennifer by the hair and pulled her back into the house. He threw her on the couch and told her if she ever ran from him again, he would kill her. To drive the point home, he grabbed their cat by the neck and cut the terrified pet with a kitchen knife.

He had Jennifer pinned against the wall when sheriff’s deputies arrived. Jay was arrested. Deputies told Jennifer about The Shelter for Abused Women & Chil-

dren and she arrived hours later with her baby, her cat and a bag of clothes.

At the shelter, Jennifer received counseling and legal assistance. A judge granted her a 10-year injunction for protection. She and her son began to heal. Today she is piecing her life back together.

Although the names were changed, Jennifer’s story is true. She is one of thousands of survivors served by the shelter since it began in 1989. Jennifer is among the 1 in 4 American women who suffer physical violence at the hands of spouses, intimate partners or family members during her lifetime. That’s more women than are affected by breast cancer, ovarian cancer and lung cancer combined.

During October’s Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the shelter is calling on every Collier County resident to take a stand of support for countless victims and survivors like Jennifer, their children and families, their friends and their communities impacted by domestic violence.

You can help raise awareness. Start the conversation at your dinner table, in your social circle or at the office water cooler. Daily news items, social media, radio and tele-

vision offer a variety of stories to start the conversation.

I never thought the sports section of the newspaper would be a source of conversation until the Ray Rice case broke last fall. If you need some tips on how to start the conversation, check our website at [naplesshelter.org](http://naplesshelter.org).

Although the shelter is probably best known for providing protection, it is but one leg of our three-pronged mission — to prevent, to protect, to prevail.

Prevention is the key to social change. It begins at home, at school and in the workplace. In partnership with Collier County Public Schools, The Shelter for Abused Women & Children seeks to prevent domestic violence before it even begins. Young children receive the message that Hands are for Helping, Not for Hitting. Teens learn to recognize unhealthy relationships and early signs of abuse. Through the Raising Gentlemen program, young men and boys challenge traditional male stereotypes of aggression and control.

The shelter’s community and professional education programs provide employers, medical personnel and first responders with the tools needed to recognize and

The worst power-lusters hide behind a cloak of religion, attempting to use our freedom of religion against us. They demand our tolerance of them, while exercising none for us. Leftist media regales in supporting their absurd assertions.

Any system which is religious, social and political is forging a weapon, a ghastly machine of total domination, which will grind up individual rights, spitting out human flesh — all the while boasting that their barbarism shows moral superiority. The “peace” they tout is the peace of the graveyard.

Globalization has forced a worldwide confrontation between the values of the life-seekers and the death-seekers. We and the Constitution are threats to their evil. Yet, our Constitution is under siege from our own internal power-lusters.

The Supreme Court, created to compare laws to the Constitution, now makes laws of its own choosing. With his pen, the president issues executive orders and makes treaties with secret codicils. Leftists make Congress flaccid.

Save the Constitution. Go to: <https://vimeo.com/140227745>.

provide assistance when they suspect abuse.

Jennifer’s life might have been different had she learned the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship. Perhaps her employer or physician might have intervened had he or she known the signs of abuse and how to offer her assistance. Jay’s life might have been impacted by a Raising Gentlemen advocate. We will never know.

What we do know is domestic violence is not “somebody else’s problem.” Last year in Collier County, there were 1,539 reported domestic violence offenses, including two murders, 16 forcible rapes and 236 aggravated assaults. Chances are very likely you know at least one of these victims.

We cannot remain silent upon experiencing, witnessing or hearing about incidents of domestic violence. We must take a stand to help victims and, ultimately, put an end to domestic violence in Collier County.

Assistance is a phone call away. If you or someone you know is impacted by domestic violence, call the shelter’s crisis line at 239-775-1101. If you want to learn how you can take a stand, call 239-775-3862 or go online to [naplesshelter.org](http://naplesshelter.org).