

Headlines:

- **Trump's Impeachment Begins in a Political, Not Judicial, Process**
- **Trump Japan Demand: The World Continues to Pay for the American Empire**
- **Russia Continues to do America's Dirty Work in Syria**

Details:

Trump's Impeachment Begins in a Political, Not Judicial, Process

The United States Congress has now commenced its public impeachment hearings against US President Donald Trump. According to an editorial in the *Guardian*:

There are multiple reasons why Donald Trump ought not to be the president of the United States. However, there are only two ways of removing him from the office he has occupied for the past three years. One is to vote him out at the ballot box, which Americans will have the opportunity to do in a year's time. The other is for Congress to impeach him, a process that began on Capitol Hill in September, and which went into public session on Wednesday, when the first hearings were beamed around the US and the world.

Although much of Washington has talked of little else for weeks, the public hearings before the Democrat-controlled House intelligence committee sharply raise the visibility of the impeachment effort with the wider public. Presidential impeachment is rare and grave. This is only the fourth time it has happened in American history. But impeachment is also both a quasi-judicial process and an inescapably political one, as anyone who remembers the 1999 trial of Bill Clinton will understand.

It is political because the 435 strong House of Representatives, where the Democrats have a majority, will have to vote on articles of impeachment against Mr Trump, probably next month. Meanwhile the 100 members of the Senate, where there is a Republican majority, will conduct any trial, perhaps in January, in which two-thirds of them must vote to convict for the president to lose his office. But the politics is all the more bitter because this is happening against the backdrop of a quickening election campaign and in an American political mood of unprecedented partisanship. This poses inescapably delicate questions for all involved.

Much is made of the 'checks and balances' of Western democracies, first articulated by the French thinker Montesquieu in the early 18th Century, who praised the distributed powers of the British mixed ruling system and contrasted it with the all-powerful Ottoman Sultan who was the head of the Islamic Khilafah (Caliphate) State, whom Montesquieu alleged enjoyed the blind obedience of his subjects. However, the true reality of the then British system and all modern democracies is that their so-called checks and balances are actually designed for elite capture of the ruling apparatus. If Trump is truly guilty then a judge should be able to give a categorical verdict based on law. Why should it be necessary for 'political' decisions to be made?

This contrasts with the Islamic system, where the Khalifah (Caliph) enjoys zero immunity from the Islamic Shara' and can be summoned by a court of law if any of his actions, personal or governmental, are seen to be suspect. Furthermore, Islam compels the Ummah to view accounting the ruler not only as their right but as their duty, failing which they will be sinful. This is the reason that Islam remained in continuous implementation for well over a millennium.

Trump Japan Demand: The World continues to Pay for the American Empire

According to *Foreign Policy*:

As Washington seeks to renew denuclearization talks with Pyongyang, U.S. President Donald Trump is asking Japan, a longtime ally that the United States leans on for stability in the

region, to pay drastically more to cover the cost of a continued U.S. military presence in that country.

The administration has asked Tokyo to pay roughly four times as much per year to offset the costs of stationing more than 50,000 U.S. troops there, current and former U.S. officials familiar with the matter told *Foreign Policy*. Then-National Security Advisor John Bolton and Matt Pottinger, the National Security Council's Asia director at the time, delivered the request to Japanese officials during a trip to the region in July, the officials said.

Japan is not the only Asian ally the United States is asking to cough up more money for continued U.S. troop presence. The officials confirmed that during that same trip, Bolton and Pottinger made a similar demand of South Korea, which hosts 28,500 U.S. troops, asking Seoul to pay five times as much as it currently does. CNN and Reuters previously reported that Trump had demanded Seoul increase its contribution...

The news that the White House is seeking to squeeze Tokyo and Seoul is part of the Trump administration's broader push to get allies to pony up additional money for defense. The president has long criticized European allies, in particular, for not spending enough on their armed forces. His effort appears to be working—by the end of next year, NATO allies in Europe and Canada will have added more than \$100 billion to their defense spending since 2016.

Now, Trump appears to be turning his attention to the Pacific amid China's military buildup and renewed threats from North Korea. Both Japan and South Korea pay the United States billions of dollars to cover the cost of keeping tens of thousands of U.S. troops there, primarily under bilateral special measures agreements that are traditionally negotiated every five years.

"They have to be willing to pick up a larger share of the burden, as the president has emphasized globally, not just related to South Korea," said Randall Schriver, the assistant secretary of defense for Asia-Pacific policy, this week, ahead of a visit by Defense Secretary Mark Esper to the region.

Under Japan's special measures agreement, which expires in March 2021, Tokyo currently pays roughly \$2 billion to offset the cost of 54,000 U.S. troops there, roughly half of which are stationed at the U.S. air base in Okinawa. Ahead of the deadline, the administration has demanded a price hike—to roughly \$8 billion, or a 300 percent increase, according to three former defense officials.

Trump has asked Seoul for a similar price hike, but the deadline for negotiations will come sooner. Last year, when Korea's five-year special measures agreement expired, Trump asked for a 50 percent increase from Seoul, which under the terms of the agreement pays roughly \$1 billion to offset the cost of 28,500 U.S. troops there. After extended negotiations, the two sides agreed Seoul would pay 8 percent over the prior year's cost but would renegotiate the agreement yearly.

As the South Korean deal expires once again this year, Trump has raised the asking price to roughly \$5 billion—a 400 percent increase, a former defense official said.

"The President has been clear in the expectation that our allies around the world, including Japan and South Korea, can and should contribute more," said a senior administration official.

Other allies could face similar demands in the near future, Klingner said. The demands on South Korea are "the beginning of a new template for U.S. demands from our allies. It'll be applied to South, then Japan, then to other areas where the U.S. has troops," he said.

Although the West claims to have formally ended its empires shortly after World War II, the reality is that Western imperialism has only grown in the decades since then in the form of new means and styles developed to both conceal and to intensify Western exploitation. Although European imperialism faced significant internal challenges, the overwhelming reason for their dismantlement was the rise of the American superpower which demanded access to all of the world's continents for its own national interests. European powers continue today to maintain influence over some of their former colonies but most of them have been lost to the new American Empire. It is now America that primarily exploits the wealth and resources of the entire world for the material benefit of its privileged elite, using political, economic and cultural means but backed up by a vast network of American military bases, thought to number over 800,

distributed across the entire earth. However, with Allah's permission, the world shall soon witness the return of the Islamic superpower, the righteous Islamic Khilafah (Caliphate) State on the method of the Prophet (saw) that shall not only evict the rapacious Western powers from the lands of Muslims but restore peace, justice and balance to the entire world, as it once was before, containing and calming its geopolitical conflicts and securing the earth's wealth and beauty for all of its inhabitants.

Russia Continues to do America's Dirty Work in Syria

According to *Reuters*:

Russia landed attack helicopters and troops at a sprawling air base in northern Syria vacated by U.S. forces, the Russian Defence Ministry's Zvezda TV channel said on Friday.

Armed Russian military police were shown in footage aired on Zvezda flying into the Syrian air base in northern Aleppo province near the border with Turkey and fanning out to secure the area.

The move comes after U.S. President Donald Trump abruptly ordered the withdrawal of U.S. troops from parts of Syria last month.

The facility will be used as a center to distribute humanitarian aid for local residents and the military aerodrome is now controlled by Syrian government forces allied with Moscow, Zvezda said.

On Thursday, Zvezda said Russia had set up a helicopter base at an airport in the northeastern Syrian city of Qamishli, a move designed to increase Moscow's control over events on the ground there.

Russia and Turkey are carrying out joint patrols along Syria's border with Turkey as part of a deal struck between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan.

"We entered the base and took the inner and external perimeter under control," a senior Russian military police inspector was quoted by Zvezda as saying.

"Now sappers are looking and going through every building to make sure there aren't some kind of explosive substances left behind or some kind of surprises here for us," he said.

Zvezda aired footage of U.S. equipment such as medical supplies to treat sunburn that had been left behind as well as a gym and sleeping facilities.

Russia has two permanent military facilities in Syria, an air base in Latakia province used for air strikes against forces opposing President Bashar al-Assad, and a naval facility at Tartus on the Mediterranean.

It is America that continues to possess full control of Syria, and it is America that is responsible for all efforts to crush the Syrian revolution. After the military disasters in Iraq and Afghanistan, US President Obama experimented with a new approach, first in Libya and then in Syria by which he employed the armies of other countries, while Obama claimed that America would 'lead from behind'. However, whereas in Libya, America used rival European powers with their own conflicting interests, in the case of Syria, the US largely succeeded in keeping Europe far away and consolidating its control through allies and subordinate powers loyal to America alone. This includes Russia which has fallen very far from its former superpower status, not only because of the collapse of its ideology but also because of the collapse of its politics. Russia has now been largely captured by the siloviki, those from Russia's vast security apparatus. No state can be successful unless it enjoys strong political leadership, strongly rooted in the support of its general population.

With Allah's permission, the Syrian revolution will continue despite all American efforts, and the world shall soon witness the return of the righteous Islamic Khilafah on the method of the Prophet (saw) led by sincere, indigenous, ideological leadership loyal to the Ummah and her Deen and enjoying their full trust and support.