

Syria

Some of you want to talk about Syria and want to know why I have not written about it. The main purpose of this website is to raise issues I am pursuing for constituents and for the wider nation. The aim is not to mirror the concerns of the media all the time, or to try to repeat what they do. Nor am I going to post items which assert that the main news media have got this story of the missile attack factually wrong.

I aim to present news, not recycle olds in the way so many media journalists do. That is why I have wanted in the last few days to highlight Network Rail's losses on derivatives and foreign currency borrowing, because you cannot see or read that elsewhere. That is why I have sought to provide background and new analysis to the policy work and exchanges underway over Gibraltar, Brexit and Scotland.

I have not so far sought to intervene in the recent debate about Syria. This is mainly a matter for the USA, the country that decided to take limited military action against the Assad regime. It does not look as if Mr Trump wants to get involved in a major way in the Syrian civil war, which is probably wise.

As I have pointed out before I do not back either Sunni or Shia. I have no view on who could best govern Syrian and reunite it around a peaceful governing policy that can bring people together. I have no love of the barbaric attacks on his own people by Assad, but nor do I have any time for one of his main opponents, the terrorist movement ISIL. I am also aware that there are other unpleasant murderous groups at large who also do not deserve our support. I have heard previous UK ministers in the Coalition argue we need to help so called moderate rebels. So far there is no evidence of a powerful enough group who could both defeat ISIL and Assad simultaneously and then rule a peace loving country thereafter. One of the reasons the West's interventions have been sporadic and so far unsuccessful is trying to find a side we want to win the war.

Mr Obama threatened Assad if he used chemical weapons but failed to enforce his threat. Mr Obama allowed Russia to take a much more prominent role in support of Assad, making it more dangerous and difficult for the west to intervene militarily.

I suspect Mr Trump will not wish to extend his military involvement, and will hope Assad will now desist from using chemical ordnance. Presumably were Assad to use chemical weapons again there would be further US attacks. The aim seems to be to try to get more of the protagonists into talks. Recent events will clearly disturb efforts for there to be more collaboration between Russia and the USA to fix world problems. Mr Trump hopes that Russia will now exercise more discipline over Assad, and will see the need to seek a peaceful political solution to Syria's riven factions in conjunction with others around the negotiating table. Let's hope that works out.