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Russian Cossacks Strip Trump of 'Honorary' Status Amid Syria Threats

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A Russian warrior clan has stripped U.S. President Donald Trump of his "honorary Russian Cossack" status and promised to burn his effigy in the wake of U.S. threats to target Syria with airstrikes.

The Irbis Cossacks of St. Petersburg named Trump an "honorary Cossack" after he pledged to cut NATO funding and repair ties with Moscow following his 2016 election victory. They began having second thoughts after U.S. missile strikes targeted a Syrian airbase in April 2017 following a suspected chemical attack against civilians.

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"Political events began to unfold not as pleasantly as we'd like. Realizing that we were

mistaken, we made a decision to demote Trump and expel him from the organization in disgrace," Ataman Andrei Polyakov, the Cossack group's leader, told the Rosbalt.ru news website on Wednesday.

Polyakov said the decision was motivated by "insults against the state, which cannot be tolerated."

Later on Wednesday, Trump warned Russia to "get ready" for "nice and new and 'smart!'" U.S. missiles on Syria after a suspected deadly chemical attack that he blamed on the Syrian government and its ally Moscow.

The Cossacks plan to "douse in gasoline and burn [Trump's effigy] with an American flag," Polyakov added.

The Cossacks are a traditional military order with a long history in Russia, Ukraine, and other neighboring countries. They often take on the controversial role of security guards, working with the police to maintain peace in Russia's streets.

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