

Blinken: US Policy Is to ‘Oppose the Reconstruction of Syria’

The US has ruled out normalizing with Syria

By [Dave DeCamp](#)

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On Wednesday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken [said the US position on Syria is to “oppose” the country’s reconstruction](#) and not support any attempts at normalization with the government of Bashar al-Assad.

At a [joint press conference](#) with his Israeli and UAE counterparts, Blinken said the US has not “changed our position to oppose the reconstruction of Syria until there is irreversible progress toward a political solution.”

More and more Arab countries are accepting that Assad isn’t going anywhere and have taken steps to normalize, including Jordan, [which opened its border with Syria in September](#). Blinken said the US does not intend to “express any support for efforts to normalize relations or rehabilitate Mr. Assad” or lift a “single sanction” unless there is regime change in Damascus.

US sanctions under the Caesar Act against Syria specifically target the energy and construction sectors to impede the country’s ability to rebuild after 10 brutal years of war. The sanctions can target any person regardless of nationality, discouraging Syria’s neighbors from helping in the reconstruction.

On top of the sanctions, the US also maintains an occupation force of about 900 soldiers in eastern Syria and supports the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in the region. This area of Syria is where most of the country’s oil fields are, so the US presence keeps vital resource out of the hands of Damascus.

Washington’s economic warfare against Syria is exacerbating the country’s food shortages. [According to the UN](#), as of February, the number of Syrians that are close to starvation is at 12.4 million, or 60 percent of the population.

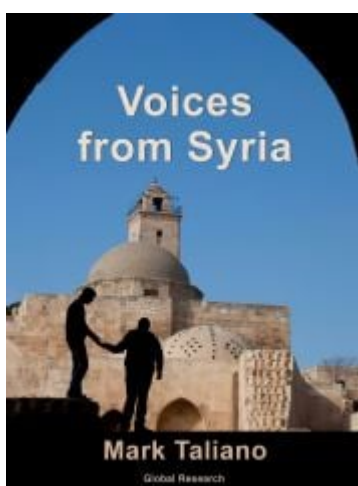
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