

Circles of War and Imperialism: The Proximity of Global Warfare. Derailing the War Spiral

By [Johnny Gaunt](#)

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In the UK we have to hold up a mirror to ourselves and accept our own culpability in this global horror-show. Britain's imperialist pursuit of wealth and power has never really stopped, only changed its mask to better hide its behaviour [1]. The present mask was created under the auspices of neoliberal dogma. It is producing terrible repercussions for our future generations [2].

The UK's imperialist policy fits snugly as a small piece within a much grander Western agenda. It has been a major contributor to extreme global inequality, brutal proxy wars and increases in poverty worldwide [3]. Societies caught up directly are now entering a process of either breaking down or rising up. This is happening in response to a neoliberal agenda being pushed by the US and the EU.

Breaking Down and Rising Up

Social unrest is no longer exclusive only to nations *outside* of Western Europe and the US. Serious internal problems are occurring in both regions. Whilst over 1.1 million people in the UK use food banks [4], states in the US are being compared to 'third worlds' [5].

Explosions of civil upheaval in Ferguson, Baltimore, New Orleans and Flint may seem like unrelated events but all are intrinsically linked to neoliberal policy [6]. A US police crack down was intended to keep protestors in check and assuage the rising public anger, but this has quickly mutated into a series of brutal murders and attacks, predominantly of people from black communities [7].

The Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton race, which looks to have finally ousted the one occasionally sensible voice in Bernie Sanders, has resulted from a *paring down* of public opinion by the US media. The level of debate has become so debased it has been forced to cling to simple 'truths' and re-spin them time and time again. 'Trump is a loudmouth racist' [8] has been used to drown out anything interesting he has to say if it runs at right-angles to neoliberal thinking. Despite being a product of corporatism, Trump has spent a lifetime being able to do as he pleases – a benefit of extreme wealth within the capitalist system – and this attitude has continued into the race for president. He has not had the political apprenticeship (indoctrination) of most other candidates, which coupled with his obvious forthright nature has lent him the ability to flit in and out of Overton's window [9] like a cat burglar.



Reversely, Hillary Clinton's *gender* has become a major focus point in her campaign [10], and the media who support her have used this to stifle debate about her ties with Wall Street and corporatism [11]. She expounds 'American exceptionalism' [13] with a view to promoting global conflict [14]. It's almost as though she feels to be taken seriously as a female politician, she must be *even more* hawkish than her male counterparts [15].

The people of the US have been robbed of an election. Instead of voting *for* a candidate, a major part of the electorate have found themselves voting to *keep out* the other [16]. Barely anywhere does it show that out of the two of them, Trump is by far less eager to go to war.

Europe's burgeoning extreme-right parties are posturing for power in Hungary, Austria and Poland [17], with the EU bolstering national policies of austerity with their own 'recommendations' [18] in line with neoliberal doctrine. The EU has in many ways *forced* member states into policies of austerity, as with the labour reforms in France [19]. Right now, the French public are in the midst of mass protests and blockades [20]. The scenes are reminiscent of the 1968 uprising [21]; the revolution that never was.

In Greece, the economic collapse has pushed an unelected body, the Troika (IMF, Eurozone & ECB), into a position that supersedes the democratically elected Syriza government [22]. Coupled with the refugee crisis, created in most part by Western interventionism in the Middle East and north Africa, the Greek people have been abandoned by the EU authorities to fend for themselves, just when European solidarity is most needed. This is no cruel accident, it is deliberate and meant to set an example to any other states thinking about using left-wing theory to escape crippling debt [23].

To believe we are ultimately more at risk of external terrorism than our own social implosion is to be blindly embedded deep within the 'comfort' of Western fictions.

Mainstream Media's Indifference to War



I doubt even regular readers of news, people who like to consider themselves up to date with global matters, have any real idea of the proximity of global war [24]. This is because the majority of mainstream news reports pumped into our society is at best biased towards Western imperialism [25], and at worst quite simply lies [26]. Unfortunately for Syrians, the conflict that began in Daraa in 2011 has come to best illustrate this.

Complex media channels are at work deep within the dynamics of the Syrian conflict to a degree never witnessed before. Misinformation springs from *unaccountable* groups and lands, via a fourth sector network, centre stage in Western news headlines.

The groups that I am referring to are the many LNGOs (Local Non Governmental Organisation) that have emerged in order to "support the Syrian people", each with a monopoly on the 'truth'. Many of these groups, including NGOs from nations funding the

opposition terrorists in Syria (Saudi, Qatar, US, etc), have backgrounds that have gone unchecked after an initial qualifying process:

Syrian organizations predominantly cropped up in response to the crisis and included grassroots organizations from inside the country as well as diaspora run organizations from the US, UK, Turkey and the Gulf... Less is known about Gulf supported NGOs. Gulf countries tend to fund their own national NGOs and Red Crescent organizations, which in turn fund Syrian organizations. [27]

It is only when some have been scrutinised more closely that their claims of impartiality have been blown out of the water.[28][29][30]

In an interview for *The Telegraph* in October, 2013, Peter Clarke, who sits on the board of the Charity Commission and a former head of anti-terrorism for the London Metropolitan Police said:

Once you get into these very difficult, dangerous areas it is hugely difficult for charities to track the final destination of their funds... It is one of these 'fog of war' issues where stuff can be diverted... It is perfectly feasible for charities to be established as a sort of cover. We have not seen clear evidence of that yet... You can think of a host of different ways in which people giving money with the best possible intentions could find that it has been misappropriated.[31]

The White Helmets [32], *The Syria Campaign* [33], *Syria Solidarity UK* [34] and *Hand in Hand for Syria* [34] are just four NGOs which hold questionable claim to their impartiality. They have polished websites which produce high quality, emotive social media *memes* that quickly spread over the internet. At the same time, established international non-profits like *Human Rights Watch* and *Amnesty Int*, have gradually aligned their fundamental principles with Western geopolitical goals [35], [36].

To anyone paying attention, it has become glaringly obvious that the number one priority of the US-led coalition in Syria is to bring about 'regime change' [37]. Way down that to-do list comes 'defeating terrorism', which is the official reason for foreign military power being in Syria. Although it hasn't stopped the US in Latin America [38], regime change is illegal under international law. But even if the Latin American example was followed and international law was ignored, removing Bashar al-Assad (who has recently been voted president by over 5 million Syrians out of a possible 8.3 million [39]) it would lead to a greatly worsened situation for the Syrian people. Look to recent adventurism in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya as examples of military failures [40].

The most likely replacement for the Assad government would come from the present fighting opposition, made up almost entirely of sectarian factions and terrorist groups (al Nusra; al Sham; Free Syrian Army; Army of Conquest; Farouk Brigades; etc) [41]. Granted, there maybe some Syrian civilians who would embrace a non-secular, salafist government, but there are also many more, including millions of Syrian women and girls, who would not.

The West's demonising of Bashar al-Assad is designed to fit with the spiralling war-loops of its foreign policy. Democracy does not come by way of bombs or arming terrorists to attack a sovereign government, despite the West's policy [42]. It comes by close diplomatic

engagement and appropriate international pressure to encourage change. But mainly, it comes from the voices of the Syrian people, because only they will decide Syria's fate.

Derailing the War Spiral

In order to change our direction away from perpetual cycles of conflict, we must understand the *commitment to war* some of our global public bodies and information services has. The UN has become a useless broker, usurped by the US who flaunts international law whenever it feels like it [43]. Neoliberalism actively pursues an aggressive foreign policy, and this doctrine has become prolific throughout the West. It has even bled into many of the institutions we might consider politically neutral, like *Amnesty*, *Avaaz* [44] or *Save the Children* [45].

Nietzsche said, 'Sometimes people don't *want* to hear the truth because they don't want their illusions destroyed.' Are we yet beginning to understand that true information is far more valuable than the capture of land or the endless chase of capital? If so [46], it is in part the commencement of a mindset shift that brings with it a more mentally independent Western citizen, able to analyse information for themselves. This means engaging with news from a *range of sources*, but remaining highly sceptical of them before accepting (or not accepting) what they have to say.

This is particularly useful with so-called 'liberal' outlets like *The Guardian*, *The Observer* or *The Independent*. The news groups and government organisations these belong to are embedded deep within the neoliberal apparatus surrounding us, and their decisions to publish or not publish certain information will always reflect this [47].

The ability to firmly grasp hold of the instruments navigating us to war and wrench at the wheel is within us all. We need to be brave and prepared to tolerate the anger and disapproval of authorities and individuals who do not yet see through bias, lies and omissions. The information that comes into our society has for centuries been controlled and filtered by elitist systems, such as today's media complex, academia [48] and publishing. The *evolution* of independent internet news outlets have been, in many ways, an organic development to circumvent these systems, although these too need to be engaged in a critical and analytical manner. Some with extreme *caution*!

The internet and neoliberalism have almost coincided. I wonder how much further down this path of destruction we would have been without it? Nonetheless, it is war that has the momentum right now, not peace.

Johnny Gaunt lives in Wales, UK. He is a peace activist, writer and occasional radiographer.

Notes

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