

# Council on Foreign Relations Marshals Public Opinion to Tout Syrian Destabilization

By [James F. Tracy](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*In a [recent article](#) the influential Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) declares Americans are “appalled by the depredations of the [Bashar al-]Assad regime and seek its removal from power.” Short of committing troops, the US “[p]ublic wants tough action ... including the imposition of tougher sanctions, and the creation of safe havens to protect civilians,” the CFR’s Stewart M. Patrick writes.*

There are two underlying problems with this claim. First, the CFR is furtively exerting its own policy objectives by pointing to opinion polls the body has had a direct hand in creating. Second, the CFR is gauging the sentiment of a vastly disinformed public on a Syrian destabilization policy the organization vigorously advocates.

The more authoritative polling of US and international opinion cited in the piece was conducted by the CFR, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CFR’s Chicago affiliate), and the University of Maryland’s [Program on Policy Attitudes](#) (PIPA). Despite its scholarly veneer, PIPA director [Steven Kull and half of the research group’s board of advisers](#) are CFR members. In addition, PIPA receives financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation.[1]

Since its inception in 1921 the CFR has [claimed](#) to be “an independent, nonpartisan membership organization, think tank, and publisher.” Yet over the years the entity has recruited political and corporate leaders closest to the levers of institutional power, exerted decisive influence on US foreign policy throughout the twentieth century, was a central proponent of the postwar national security state, and “believes national boundaries should be obliterated and one-world rule established,” according to CFR historian Carroll Quigley.[2]

The CFR’s efforts to measure and tout public opinion regarding Syria is of particular concern since it has been a strong advocate of destabilizing the Assad regime through recruitment and support of death squads comprised of foreign Al Qaeda and Libyan Islamic Fighting Group mercenaries. “The influx of jihadis,” [the CFR recently gloated](#), “brings discipline, religious fervor, battle experience from Iraq, funding from Sunni sympathizers in the Gulf, and most importantly, deadly results.”

This strategy has continued ceaselessly since February 2011 when the so-called “Arab Spring” began throughout the Middle East. An almost identical strategy was carried out concurrently in Libya, resulting in the August 2011 overthrow of the Muammar Qaddafi regime and its replacement with a fundamentalist Islamic state.

The CFR’s use and interpretation of opinion polling to justify continued terrorism against the

Syrian people is illustrative of the psychological and rhetorical trickery employed by Anglo American power elites and their intellectual mouthpieces. Such efforts are intended to muddy the issues, confuse journalists, and thereby disorient the broader public—the same public the organization now solicits to endorse even more widescale bloodshed and destruction. For example, the CFR’s [Patrick claims](#) Americans and their European counterparts are strangely “ambivalent” over what the next steps in Syria should be.

“Americans support a no-fly zone in theory, though oppose bombing air defenses—a necessary component of establishing a no-fly zone.”

A much more honest and forthright line of questioning might include, “Do you believe the US and its allies should be providing the bulk of material and logistical support to Al Qaeda and related terrorist groups so they may carry out grievous atrocities against the Syrian civilian population en route to establishing a nightmarish theocratic state in Syria and throughout the Middle East?”

#### Notes

[1] As [James Petras observes](#), “The CIA uses philanthropic foundations as the most effective conduit to channel large sums of money to Agency projects without alerting the recipients to their source.” Given that [the CIA is actively supporting Syria’s rebels](#), it is not unreasonable to surmise that interpretations of American public opinion may also be incrementally introduced into the public mind to eventually justify overt military action.

[2] Carroll Quigley, *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time*, GSG and Associates, 1966/1975, 955.

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James F. Tracy was a tenured Associate Professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Florida Atlantic University from 2002 to 2016. He was fired by FAU ostensibly for violating the university's policies imposed on the free speech rights of faculty. Tracy has

filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the university, with trial set to begin November 27, 2017. Tracy received his PhD from University of Iowa. His work on media history, politics and culture has appeared in a wide variety of academic journals, edited volumes, and alternative news and opinion outlets. Additional information is available at MemoryHoleBlog.com, TracyLegalDefense.org, and jamesftracy.wordpress.com.

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