

The Syria Deception: The Public Has Been Hoodwinked Yet Again into Supporting a Criminal War of Aggression—and One that Has Been Effectively Lost

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United States warmakers have become so skilled at propaganda that not only can they wage a war of aggression without arousing protest; they can also compel liberals to denounce peace activists using language reminiscent of the McCarthy era.

Take the case of Syria. The people and groups one would normally count on to oppose wars have been the ones largely defending it. They have also often been the ones to label war opponents as “Assad apologists” or “genocide deniers”—causing them to be blacklisted.



Protest against bombing of Syria in Newark, New Jersey, in April 2017. Most protests against the war in Syria have been small like this, and protesters have been susceptible to ridicule as Assad lovers or apologists. [Source: [northjersey.com](#)]

In April, *The Nation* magazine published an essay by Gilbert Achcar, a professor of international relations at the University of London and co-author with Noam Chomsky of a book critical of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, entitled [“How to Avoid the Anti-Imperialism of Fools.”](#)

Achcar divides the Left into two factions—one which “opposes all forms of imperialism and oppression,” and one which “supports any regime or force that is the object of Washington’s hostility.” The latter includes “Russia’s thuggish capitalist and imperialist government, or Iran’s theocratic regime or the likes of Slobodan Milošević and Saddam Hussein.”^[1]

The binary Achcar paints is misleading because it does not take into account war critics’ attempts to present more nuanced portraits of American targets for regime change like Putin or Milošević or even Hussein that would account for their domestic popularity. Nor the value placed on the principle of national self-determination and sovereignty, and identification of the double standards of U.S. human rights concerns.

Achcar [supports military intervention in Syria under the UN doctrine of Responsibility to Protect \(R2P\)](#), which enables foreign military intervention if it will stop large-scale human rights abuses.

He quotes favorably in his *Nation* article from a 2019 [statement](#) signed by several prominent figures on the American Left—including Judith Butler, Noam Chomsky, the late David Graeber and David Harvey—demanding that the United States “continue military support for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Force,” in the face of Donald Trump’s announced withdrawal.

This position was based on fear that if the U.S. withdrew, the Kurds would be slaughtered by Turkey, the Islamic State in the Levant (ISIS) or the [“murderous Assad regime,”](#) as Achcar termed it.

The Kurds, however, were being used as a proxy force by the U.S. in a regime-change operation that would enable foreign exploitation of Syria’s oil and military domination of the Middle East—and would inevitably be abandoned.

Western empires had used the pretext of human rights many times before to justify colonization, and recruited disaffected minority groups, which was no different in this case.

Voices from Syria

Mark Taliano and Basma Qaddour’s book, *Voices from Syria*—now out in its second edition—offers a strong rebuttal to Achcar and others who consider opponents of U.S. military intervention in Syria to be foolish.

The authors—one a Montreal based teacher, the other a Syrian journalist—point out that the majority of Syrians consider Assad an authentic nationalist who has saved Syria from jihadist terrorists sponsored by the U.S., NATO, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel and Gulf Arab states like Qatar.

The terrorists have killed an estimated 150,000 civilians and another 260,000 fighters and kidnapped thousands more, some of whom were used for illegal organ harvesting.

Their goal is to impose a theocratic regime and to divide, plunder and exploit Syria and open

it up to predatory foreign corporations.

Taliano and Qaddour write that “Syria’s stand against the Western agencies of death and destruction is a stand for all humanity against the dark forces that fester beneath our politicians’ empty words and the courtesan media’s toxic lies.”

These lies have ensured that few in the U.S. or West have acknowledged Syria’s heroic victory against colonial aggression—a modern-day equivalent to Vietnam’s victory over the French at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

Long-Standing Plan for Regime Change

Two weeks after the September 11th attacks, General Wesley Clark was visited by a senior general who told him that the U.S. was going to attack Iraq: [“The decision has basically been made.”](#)

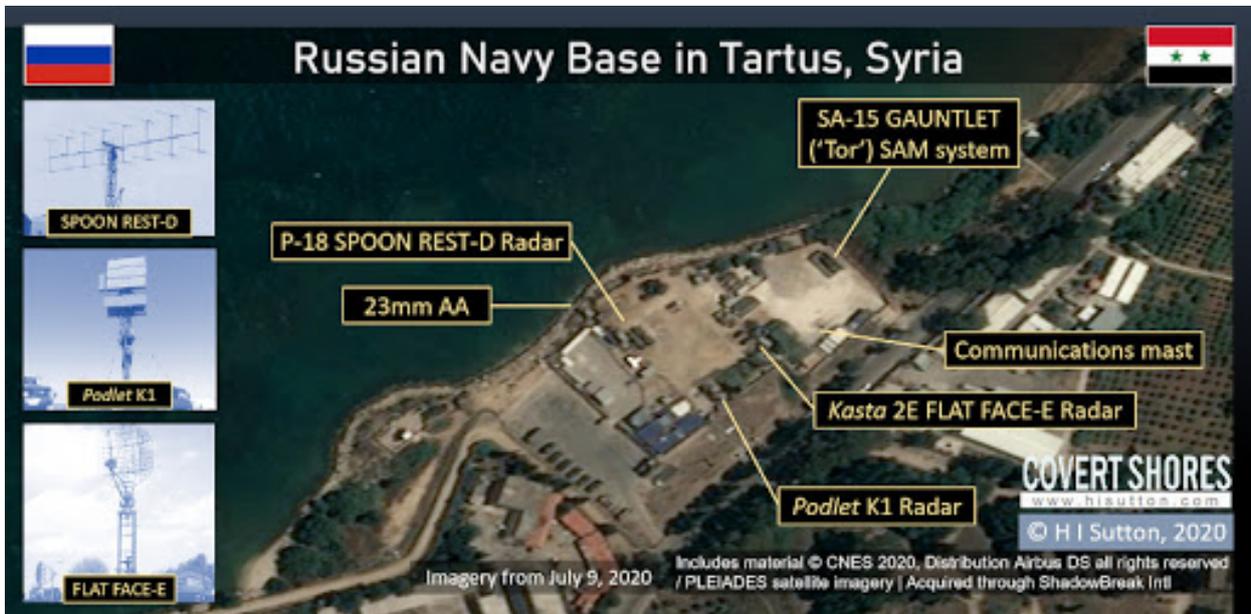
Six weeks later, when Clark returned to Washington to visit the same general and asked whether the plans for invading Iraq were still in place, the general responded, [“‘Oh, it’s worse than that,’ he said, holding up a memo on his desk. ‘Here’s the paper from the Office of the Secretary of Defense \[then Donald Rumsfeld\] outlining the strategy. We’re going to take out seven countries in five years.’ And he named them, starting with Iraq and Syria and ending with Iran.”](#)

The key to the success of these latter operations was to convince the U.S. public that wars of aggression were military interventions carried out for humanitarian purposes. The way to do that was to give off the illusion that the targeted leaders were brutal dictators intent on waging a campaign of genocide against their own people.

Assad’s Accomplishments

Syria was a main target on Rumsfeld’s list because its leader, Bashar al-Assad, was a secular nationalist like Saddam Hussein and Muammar Qaddafi of Libya, who was defiant of the West.

In 2000, Bashar succeeded his father Hafez al-Assad, who had long been a thorn in the side of the West. He had [allied Syria with the Soviet Union during the Cold War](#), and in 1971 allowed the Russians to establish a naval base at Tartus.



[Source: hisutton.com]

Though vilified in the West, Bashar retains support of the majority of Syrians because he has advanced free health care and education for Syrians and retained Syrian control over most of its economy while rallying the people against foreign aggression.



Syrian city of Aleppo before and after U.S.-backed war of aggression on Syria. [Source: petapixel.com]

While certainly there are brutal aspects to his rule like with his father, Assad's accomplishments before the war, according to Taliano and Qaddour, included: a)

construction and restoration of 10,000 mosques and 500 churches; b) construction of 8,000 schools; and c) construction of 600,000 apartment units for young people and 6,000 hospitals and clinics.

Further, salaries increased by 300 percent under Assad's rule, thousands of new businesses sprung up, agricultural and industrial capacity increased, the illiteracy rate was kept low, and the unemployment rate declined from 28 to 12 percent.



Assad family in 1980s. Hafez in lower right and Bashar on left. [Source: newrepublic.com]

These facts are at odds with the depiction of Assad as a genocidal tyrant.

The latter is part of a demonization campaign initiated by intelligence agencies and embraced by factions of the Left that have unwittingly helped to advance the agenda of the U.S. empire.

“Your Obama Leading Proxy War”

In March 2011, Americans were led to believe that idealistic pro-democracy demonstrations erupted in the southern city of Daraa—inspired by Arab Spring protests in Egypt and Tunisia, and following an incident of police brutality.

Seven police were killed by the demonstrators in the very first protests, and 60 security forces were massacred two weeks later. The plan of the mob was to provoke a police response that would make it seem like the security forces were reacting harshly, which would discredit Assad's regime.

For the first three weeks, police and security personnel were under orders, though, not to carry guns.

As the protests spread, foreign terrorists began descending on Syria and were paid \$300-\$400 per month. Although Syrian soldiers were paid only one-tenth of that amount, they remained mostly loyal to the Syrian government.

Majd al-Zaim, a Syrian, stated that what had happened in Syria was “not a revolution or civil war [as has been depicted in the Western media]. The terrorists are sent by your government [the U.S.]. They are Al-Qaeda, Jabhat al-Nusra, Wahhabi, Salafist, Taliban and the extremist jihadists are sent by the West, Saudis, Qataris, Turkey.... Your Obama and whoever is behind him or above him are supporting Al-Qaeda and leading a proxy war on my country.”

Historical Background

Historically, Syria faced divisions between secular nationalist and Shia Alawites and Sunni fundamentalists who allied with the Muslim Brotherhood.

In 1982, Hafez al-Assad crushed an Islamic rebellion (the Hama massacre), foreshadowing his son’s actions 30 years later.

A July 1986 declassified CIA document outlined a U.S. strategy in Syria that was hostile to Assad—as it remains. The document stated that [“In our view, U.S. interests would be best served by a Sunni regime controlled by business-oriented moderates. Business moderates would see a strong need for Western aid and investment to build Syria’s private economy, thus opening the way for stronger ties to Western governments.”](#)

The report acknowledged that the collapse of the Ba’athist state presided over by Assad could help to [empower “religious zealots” seeking to establish “an Islamic Republic.”](#) But this was a risk that Washington was willing to take.

Twenty years later, the Chargé D’affaires at the U.S. embassy in Damascus, William Roebuck, in a leaked diplomatic cable, referred to the threat to the Assad regime from Islamic extremists as [“an opportunity that the U.S. should take action to try to increase.”](#)

Roebuck also pushed for [better coordination with Egypt and Saudi Arabia in provoking sectarian divisions by exaggerating Iranian influence](#) along with a [rumor campaign against Assad, and arming of the Kurds](#) as part of a destabilization strategy, which was implemented under Obama.

An Inhuman Enemy

Voices from Syria tells the stories of the victims of U.S. policy like Ammar, whose sister was killed by a Wahhabi suicide bomber while she was on her way to the local university.

Ammar said that, after the first blast, another suicide bomber blew himself up in the same place, taking advantage of the gathering of people and ambulance teams. At the hospital, Ammar saw many burned and charred bodies, including his sister, who was now a “body without a soul”—like so many others.

Lilly Martin, an American living in Syria, is quoted in *Voices from Syria* as stating that she could not vote for Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election because Clinton had overseen “the transfer of weapons from Libya to Turkey to be used specifically by the American-backed terrorists.”

These terrorists destroyed Martin’s home on March 21, 2014, beheaded her Christian neighbors and kidnapped and raped the old ladies.

Image on the right: Lilly Martin [Source: muckrack.com]



Dr. Declan Hayes described an attack by al-Nusra (U.S.-backed jihadi group) on the village of Kesab where the terrorists swarmed across the border on motorbikes, pick-up trucks, and Western ambulances, and proceeded to desecrate all of Kesab's churches, loot the village graves and strip the houses of anything of value.

Pepken Djourian and his wife saw their only son executed in front of them, after which his body was left to rot in the sun before being thrown into the ground like a dog.

In another case, terrorists beheaded and executed a captured soldier while he was speaking to his father on the phone so he could hear his son being killed.

The terrorists further roasted bakery workers in a town loyal to Assad in an oven and slaughtered staff at a medical clinic and displayed their severed heads in the marketplace for intimidation.

Operation Timber Sycamore

Some of the head choppers were trained by U.S. military advisers at terrorist training camps in Jordan under the CIA's \$1 billion Operation Sycamore, the largest covert operation since the arming of the mujahadin fighters in Afghanistan to fight the Soviet Union in the 1980s.

Turkish helicopters could be seen overhead during armed terrorist invasions of towns while the Syrian Arab Army was fighting insurgents who wore Turkish military uniforms and carried Turkish military identification.

The Israelis allowed Al Qaeda militants, Jabhat al-Nusra, to use the occupied Golan Heights to fight against the Syrian Army, while the Israeli Air Force repeatedly bombed Syria.



[Source: [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)]

Russia to the Rescue

In [“How to Avoid the Anti-Imperialism of Fools,”](#) Gilbert Achcar criticized U.S. and British-based anti-war groups for failing to condemn Russian imperialism in Syria.

Many Syrians, however, laud the Russians for helping to save their country.

Ammar told Taliano and Qaddour that “the Russians provided the biggest humanitarian aid by supporting the Syrian Armed Forces against Western backed barbarian terrorism,” and that Russian aid—including food and medical supplies—was distributed directly to needy people.

Lilly Martin stated that Russia had “saved the Syrian Coast”—along with Syrian towns like Kesab that were on the verge of destruction by the CIA-backed terrorists.

Cruel Economic War

The cruelty of Western policy is exemplified by its economic war on Syria, about which Achcar and his associates have been silent.

The goal of the economic war has been to weaken Syria and demoralize its people so as to pave the way for Syria’s conquest.

Militias affiliated with both the U.S. and Turkey blocked the sale by Syrian peasants of wheat and barley east of the Euphrates, thus exacerbating the food shortage in the country.

They have sold oil illegally in northern Iraq and set fires in an attempt to decimate Syria’s yield of strategic crops. Many of the fires have targeted olive trees, which are used to produce olive oil—a source of livelihood for many Syrians.

The economic sanctions have further prevented needed medical supplies and equipment from getting into Syria and caused milk shortages resulting in the deaths of children.

Fraudulent Pretexts

These sanctions have been legitimated by false propaganda.

The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, which was signed into law in December 2019 by President Donald Trump, was named after a government defector, Caesar, who leaked thousands of photographs alleging torture of civilians by Assad's security forces.



CNN show discussing Caesar's "torture" report that was a basis for extending sanctions. [Source: mondialisation.ca]

Nearly half the photos [actually showed government soldiers who had been killed and victims of car bombs and other war-related violence, and many others showed soldiers who had died in combat—not government torture centers.](#)

Caesar's identity was also unclear and he was suspected of being in the employ of the CIA.

More Bright Shining Lies

American-educated opinion about the Syria conflict has been forged by numerous other deceptions.

These include allegations of chemical weapons attacks by Assad—which most Syrians believe were "staged by the terrorists helped by the USA and UK."

Image below: James Le Mesurier, who led the White Helmets, was a suspected British MI6 agent who died under suspicious circumstances in November 2019. [Source: rt.com]



Another deception surrounds the White Helmets—a group of Western-funded humanitarian aid workers that received endorsement from A-list celebrities like George Clooney.

Financed in part by the United States Agency of International Development (USAID), the White Helmets were [led by a suspected British MI6 agent, James Le Mesurier, who died under suspicious circumstances in November 2019.](#)

They staged scenes for public relations purposes, [assisted in public executions](#), and functioned as an Al Qaeda affiliate, according to Taliano and Qaddour, which occupied and destroyed more than 7,000 schools.

The War on Terror Is a Fraud

The Syrian War exemplifies that the War on Terror is a fraud.

The U.S. government has claimed for the last two decades to be fighting the scourge of terrorism, but has armed, trained, and supported Islamic terrorists in Syria as part of an imperial strategy designed to control the country's oil wealth and dominate the entire region.

Another motive is to provoke destabilization so as to justify endless war—which brings [huge profits to war industries that fund both major political parties.](#)

U.S. policy in Syria is no anomaly as the U.S. has supported Islamic fundamentalists in Libya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Chechnya, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Gulf Arab states like Qatar, which allows terrorist financiers to operate in its borders.

Only a very limited number of Americans have recognized the dangers of this strategy—owing in large part to the sophisticated propaganda that has effectively brainwashed many of those who would traditionally identify themselves as antiwar.

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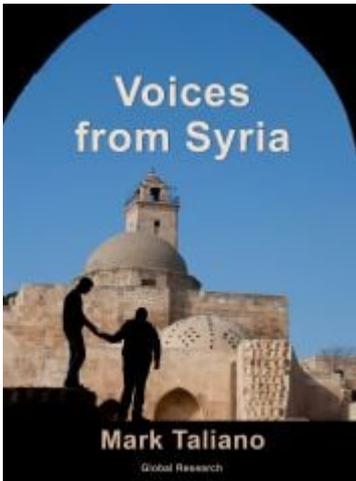
Notes

[1] Declassified British documents obtained by *The Grayzone Project* showed that Achcar trained British Cultural Defense Units who played a key role in the British war in Afghanistan. The Units have also advised the military on how to operate in other countries, including those that were at one time colonized by Great Britain. See Ben Norton, "Elite UK military unit secretly trained by leftist regime-change advocate Gibert Achcar and other academics," *The Grayzone Project*, October 3, 2019, <https://thegrayzone.com/2019/10/03/leftist-regime-change-activist-gilbert-achcar-academics-train-uk-military/>

Featured image is from The Greanville Post

Order Mark Taliano's Book ["Voices from Syria"](#) directly from Global Research.

Mark Taliano combines years of research with on-the-ground observations to present an informed and well-documented analysis that refutes the mainstream media narratives on Syria.



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