

Syria: The Uprising against President Al-Assad was Engineered in Washington

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

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A terrific news report by Jonathan Marshall at Consortium News provides the first-ever presentation in the West of the event that sparked the demonstrations that sparked the Syrian civil war, and of the entire origin of that war.

Unlike so many online ‘news’ reports that are merely authoritarian trash because they don’t link to any of their sources (they rely instead upon dumb readers’ faith or trust in the ‘reporter’ or in the publisher, such as The New York Times or Fox News), this one from Marshall is top-notch: not only does it provide intelligently skeptical readers with instantaneous access to documentation for each one of its key points, but those sources are credible ones. Taken all together, the sources, and Marshall’s presentation of them, constitute a solid historical account of how the war to bring down Syria’s leader, Bashar al-Assad, actually started. It didn’t start by Assad’s dumping (as U.S. President Barack Obama loves to claim) “barrel bombs,” upon merely peaceful protesters in Syria. It started actually in Washington, years before that.

The Obama Administration itself was taking advantage of not only the “Arab Spring” protests throughout much of the Arab world, but, specifically, of an ongoing economic catastrophe in Syria that had started five years before the anti-Assad demonstrations did: an extended drought. Here is how [the source that Marshall linked to](#) describes it, two years before the “Arab Spring” even began:

In the past three years, 160 Syrian farming villages have been abandoned near Aleppo as crop failures have forced over 200,000 rural Syrians to leave for the cities. This news is distressing enough, but when put into a long-term perspective, its implications are staggering: many of these villages have been continuously farmed for 8000 years.

That source had been published on 16 January 2010. The drought continued on; the situation only [got even worse right into 2011 and up through the public demonstrations in Aleppo that started the war. There were no “barrel bombs” then. There was instead surging economic dislocation.](#) Obama merely took advantage of it. He knew that it was coming, and he planned so as to exploit it.

In fact, [a wikileaks confidential 26 November 2008 cable from the U.S. Embassy in Damascus to the CIA and other associated agencies](#) referred to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization by saying:

UNFAO Syria Representative Abdullah bin Yehia briefed econoff and USDA Regional Minister-Counselor for Agriculture on what he terms the “perfect storm,” a confluence of drought conditions with other economic and social pressures that Yehia believes could undermine stability in Syria. Because he is working with such limited resources, Yehia plans to target FAO assistance to small-holding farmers in the hardest-hit province of northeast Syria, Al Hasakah. (Note: This province shares a northern border with Turkey and a southern border with Iraq. Mosul is approximately 100km from Al Hasakah province.) Because the UN appeal has, thus far, not been entirely successful, Yehia has had to prioritize aid recipients.

That was institutional U.S. federal government knowledge three months prior to Obama’s becoming President. Obama as the President-elect at the time was privy to such information. Once he got into the White House, he needed to understand what was going on in Syria. Was it dumb of Yehia to trust the U.S. government with this information? Was he naive about the type of people who sit in America’s Oval Office nowadays? Is a deer in the forest naive to move when a hunter is stalking it? Is the deer supposed to just stand still, instead? Barack Obama during his electoral campaign had provided the public with no reason to suspect that he might have been harboring aggressive designs against the Syrian government, nor even against the Russian government that has been supporting it. Yehia was just seeking help, like the deer in fear.

Obama knew what was going on. He knew that the Syrian situation wasn’t just “barrel bombs” showing up suddenly out of nowhere, from no cause, and for no reason. He knew more than was published to the public in the American press. His repeated references to “barrel bombs” after the situation in Syria blew up, suggests that he takes advantage of the fact that the American public isn’t aware of such facts. It suggests that he’s playing the American public as trusting gulls, rather than as citizens.

In fact, America’s own National Academy of Sciences recently published a study (17 March 2015), [“Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought,”](#) which opens (though propagandistically blaming Assad as having contributed to the drought):

“Before the Syrian uprising that began in 2011, the greater Fertile Crescent experienced the most severe drought in the instrumental record. For Syria, a country marked by poor governance and unsustainable agricultural and environmental policies, the drought had a catalytic effect, contributing to political unrest.”

(Of course, Obama doesn’t claim to be bombing Assad’s forces because Assad had ‘unsustainable agricultural and environmental policies.’) In the section of that report “Significance,” the investigators-propagandists close:

“We conclude that human influences on the climate system are implicated in the current Syrian conflict.”

So, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, in this recent study, is arguing, in effect, that Syria should have a different government. Perhaps the failed state that Obama insists upon producing there would be the ‘solution’? To what extent is the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (its *PNAS*) now *itself* politicized, nationalistic, propagandistic — that they are

retrospectively publishing something like this, which fails to criticize the U.S. Government itself for having turned down the Syrian Government's years-long pleadings for assistance on the matter? The *PNAS* study ignores this. Instead, it argues only that, "The rapidly growing urban peripheries of Syria, marked by illegal settlements, overcrowding, poor infrastructure, unemployment, and crime, were neglected by the Assad government and became the heart of the developing unrest."

Wow, the NAS argues that Assad should have been more dictatorial! That would have helped prevent the effects of the drought? Does nothing that comes from the U.S. Establishment possess credibility anymore — publishing garbage like this in *PNAS*? Is Assad more of a dictator than Obama? Does the U.S. National Academy of Sciences really think he should have been? How absurd does the propaganda need to be in order for the U.S. to become a laughingstock to the entire world for its 'democratic' pretensions? After all: it's [not a democracy](#). And [the one scientific study that has been done of that has confirmed that it's not](#). So: the U.S. now insists upon installing 'democracy' in Syria, where all polls show that [Assad would win any free election](#) (and the latest polled finding is that he'd win [at least 55% of the votes](#)) but Obama insists that he must be ousted, so that there can be 'democracy' there?

Marshall's news report about the origin of the Syrian war was published at Consortium News on 20 July 2015, but was picked up and reported to a broader audience only at a very few news-sites, each no larger (or even smaller) in audience-size than is the publisher (Consortium News) itself. Only RINF, CommonDreams and Truthout republished it. Reddit posted that story's headline, "Hidden Origins of Syria's Civil War," linking to the Consortium News report, but no one up-marked it there, and [still no reader-comments have been posted to it there](#). It was just another voice of real news unheard in the wilderness of propaganda that causes an individual tree to be ignored among the forest.

Thus: This blockbuster three-month-old news-report still remains news in the U.S., even today.

Marshall's news report was one of the most important of all news reports on the Syrian war, and it certainly deserves larger public distribution than that. So:

[Here](#) is his historical account of the origin of the Syrian war.

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).

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