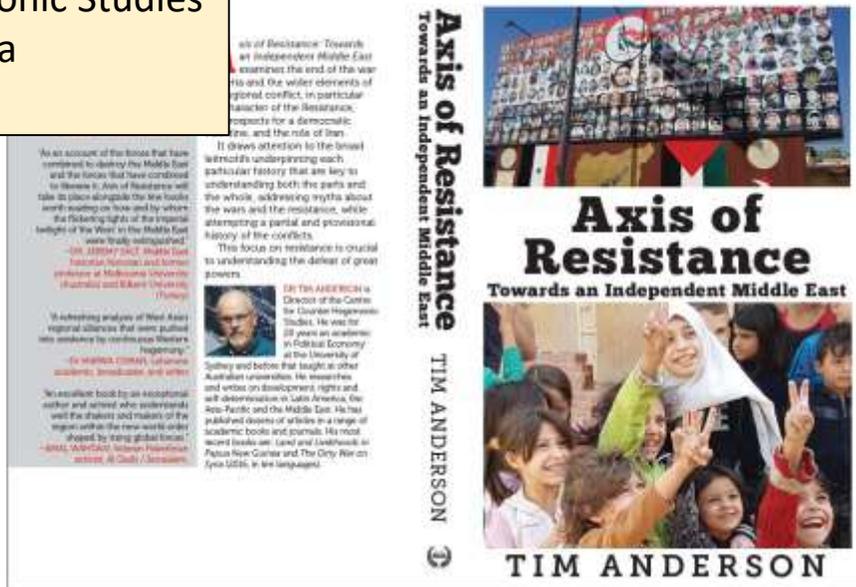
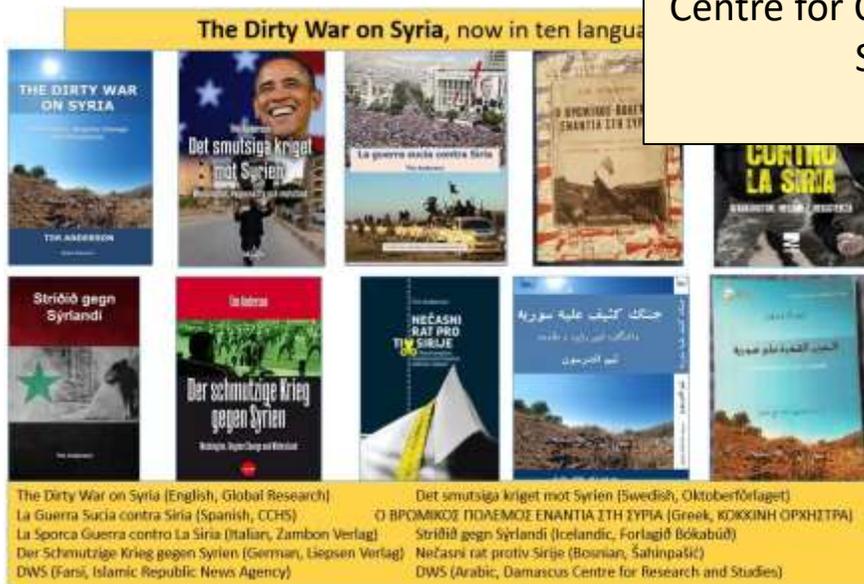


# Wider implications of NATO's failure to overthrow the Syrian Government

Dr Tim Anderson  
 Centre for Counter Hegemonic Studies  
 Sydney, Australia  
 March 2020



## **Overview: Wider implications of NATO's failure to overthrow the Syrian Government**

We have to move past the various pretexts for the war on Syria to appreciate the wider implication of this failed war. So let's first put to one side claims that this was a 'civil war' and that there was humanitarian or protective intervention. The assault on the most secular and pluralist of all Arab nations was to advance the Washington vision of a New Middle East (NME), where there would be no effective opposition to a US-Israel-Saudi axis. NATO followed the US into war after war in the region, with disastrous consequences. Yet while the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq might have appeared to have 'succeeded', it is clear that war on Syria did not. However, as the war on Syria fails, we can see several wider developments.

### **The false pretexts**

1. Political Reform?
2. Humanitarian War?
3. 'Protection' from terrorism?

### **The wider implications of failure**

1. Blowback
2. Regional realignment
3. Illegal economic war
4. Rojava?
5. Palestine / Israel
6. Democracy at home

## NATO's involvement in eight (8) 'New Middle East' wars

Palestine / Israel (occupation and ethnic cleansing)

NATO leaders USA and UK regard Israel as 'major non-NATO ally'. Both provide massive subsidies to and military coordination with Israel.

Afghanistan 2001 (invasion)

'The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was led by NATO from August 2003 to December 2014. 'Operation Resolute Support' was launched in 2015. It includes approximately 17,000 personnel from both NATO and partner countries.'

Lebanon 2006 (invasion)

See Palestine / Israel

Iraq 2003 (US-led invasion and occupation)

'From 2004 to 2011, NATO conducted a relatively small but important support operation in Iraq. "NATO Mission Iraq" was launched in July 2018.'

Libya 2011 (NATO destruction)

'NATO enforced the no-fly zone and then, on 31 March 2011, NATO took over sole command and control of all military operations for Libya.'

Syria 2011-2020 (war)

NATO members Turkey and the USA, and their proxies, occupy large parts of Syria.

Bahrain 2011+ (repression)

US drags NATO to support Saudis and other client monarchies in the Persian Gulf

Yemen 2014+ (war)

US client state Saudi Arabia leads the war on Yemen. NATO states sell weapons.

Quotes from: NATO (2020) 'Operations and missions: past and present' [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_52060.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52060.htm)

## False Pretexts for the war on Syria: political reform?

Despite strenuous efforts to paint a picture of 'moderate' democratic opposition, the US Government knew from early days the insurgency was led by extremists and it welcomed the idea of a 'Salafist principality' in eastern Syria, as that would 'isolate the Syrian regime'.



**US DIA report August 2012:** (a) extremists were 'the major forces' of the insurgency in Syria, and (b) a 'salafist principality' (Islamic State) in Eastern Syria was 'exactly' what those supporting 'the opposition' wanted.

A. INTERNALLY, EVENTS ARE TAKING A CLEAR SECTARIAN DIRECTION.

B. THE SALAFIST [sic], THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD, AND AQI ARE THE MAJOR FORCES DRIVING THE INSURGENCY IN SYRIA.

C. IF THE SITUATION UNRAVELS THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A DECLARED OR UNDECLARED SALAFIST PRINCIPALITY IN EASTERN SYRIA (HASAKA AND DER ZOR), AND THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT THE SUPPORTING POWERS TO THE OPPOSITION WANT, IN ORDER TO ISOLATE THE SYRIAN REGIME, WHICH IS CONSIDERED THE STRATEGIC DEPTH OF THE SHIA EXPANSION (IRAQ AND IRAN).

## False Pretexts for the war on Syria: humanitarian intervention?

**"Assad's" massacre of Syrian civilians was rebel false-flag operation**

Published 27 Jun 2012 at 17:17

The initial civilian massacres were mostly 'false fags', carried out by openly brutal 'jihadists', then blamed on the Syrian Army

The Houla massacre of May 2012 formed the foundation for western sanctions on Syria. Yet 15 independent witnesses said it was carried out by the Farouq Brigade (FSA) and local collaborators. Dirty War on Syria, Ch. 8

*Robert Fisk: Inside Daraya - how a failed prisoner swap turned into a massacre*

The Daraya massacre of August 2012 was exposed by British journalist Robert Fisk as an FSA massacre of civilian hostages.

**Staged Chemical Weapons 'attacks' - WMD Take Two** - despite strenuous propaganda efforts, every CW accusation against Syria has been rejected by the independent experts - Prof Ted Postol, Seymour Hersh, Scott Ritter, Lord Alan West, General Jonathan Shaw, 12 Douma hospital health workers, three OPCW whistleblowers. Axis of Resistance: Chapter 8

*The evidence we were never meant to see about the Douma 'gas' attack*

**Lord Alan West (2018)** "What benefit is there for [Assad's] military? ... Whereas we know that some of the Islamic groups have used chemicals and there would be a huge benefit for them in labelling an attack as coming from Assad."



## False pretexts for the war on Syria: protection from terrorism?

### VP Biden blames US allies for creating ISIS



"The idea of identifying a 'moderate middle' has been a chase ... our allies in the region were our largest problem in Syria. The Turks ... the Saudis, the Emiratis ... They were so determined to take down Assad and essentially have a proxy Sunni-Shia war ... They poured hundreds of millions of dollars and tens, thousands of tons of weapons into anyone who would fight against Assad except that the people who were being supplied were Al Nusra and Al Qaeda and the extremist elements of jihadis coming from other parts of the world. Now you think I'm exaggerating – take a look ... this outfit called ISIL." – US VP Joe Biden, October 2014

Joe Biden's admissions were separately reinforced by statements from General Martin Dempsey and Senator Lindsay Graham:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCDj22T4DNI>

Senior US officials admit that their 'major allies' funded and armed **all** the key ME terrorist groups, in attempts to overthrow the Syrian Government.

Of the 69 'terrorist' groups on the US 'foreign terrorist organizations' list (2020):

- 43 (62%) are extremist Sunni (Salafi, Deobandi) 'caliphate' groups, almost all sponsored by US client state Saudi Arabia; and
- 12 (17%) are Palestinian (6) and other Resistance groups (6 from Lebanon, Iran, Iraq and Bahrain), all supported by Iran.

<https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>

Foreign Terrorist Organizations

BUREAU OF COUNTERTERRORISM

The Dirty War on Syria, Chapter 12  
Axis of Resistance, Chapters 5 & 7

**1. Blowback:** large scale terrorism fomented as a tool against independent states of the Middle East is blowing back on its sponsors

1. Multiple attacks on Britain, France, Germany and Turkey, from groups sponsored by NATO in the ME
2. More ME 'failures' may prolong attacks
3. Refugees to Europe from Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria **decrease** with greater stability in those countries

Refugees 'weaponised' to advance the war: Axis of Resistance, Chapter 11

Manchester attack: Who was Salman Abedi?

Turkey Is Sending Syria's Mercenary Fighters Back To Europe

1 MARCH 2020



The actual poll in Germany:

- Does not mention Assad,
- Responsible for fighting? Syrian Army 70%, anti-govt. groups 74%,
- Who do you fear? Syrian Army 77%, anti-govt. groups 82%,
- Sample: 68% young men, 74% from jihadist-held areas.



**2. Regional Realignment:** failures in Syria compound with those in Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen, and help forge a stronger Iran-led regional alliance, determined to expel US/NATO

1. Self-fulfilling prophecy: the fear of Iranian ME influence

2. Iraq regained its political will, after the US murder of Generals Muhandis and Soleimani



**How Iran's Land Bridge Threatens the Entire Middle East**  
BY TYLER KOTLER - AUGUST 1, 2019

**After 40 years of promoting bloody war, Washington and Tel Aviv have finally brought Iran, Iraq and Syria together**



**Axis of Resistance, Chapters 1 & 14**

**3. Economic War:** the intense economic war waged on the region helps drive new global financial mechanisms, magnifying the west-east shift

<b>Economic war on the independent ME countries</b>	
Palestine	Blockade by Israel
Lebanon	Partial 'sanctions', worsening
Syria	Comprehensive 'sanctions'
Iraq	Partial 'sanctions', worsening
Iran	Comprehensive 'sanctions', despite JCPOA
Yemen	Blockade by Saudis

Unilateral US sanctions, joined at times by the EU, are mostly acts of warfare, in breach of international law, because:

- They aim at political coercion
- They often aim to harm whole populations
- They act to damage the rights of third parties

**INSTEX: An Instrument Only on Paper**



Business And Markets | September 17, 2019 10:21

**Banks in Iran, Russia Connected via Non-SWIFT Financial Messaging Service**



Axis of Resistance, Chapter 3

#### 4. Rojava? direct US intervention in Syria gave false hope to the hopeless cause of 'Rojava' - Syrian Kurdistan

1. None of northern Syria was ever uniquely Kurdish territory (also Arab, Armenian, Assyrian, Circassian) - in many areas (e.g. Manbij) Kurds are a small minority.
2. Kurdish separatism in Syria has always been driven by Kurdish separatism in Turkey.
3. The US cynically manipulated the 'Rojava' project, as with ISIS, to weaken Damascus.

Syria, Washington and the Kurds  
<https://ahtribune.com/world/north-africa-south-west-asia/syria-crisis/3771-syria-washington-kurds.html>

DECEMBER 31, 2019 BY TIM ANDERSON f t

### Syria, Washington and the Kurds

*With the defeat of ISIS and Nusra, the exposure of the 'White Helmets' and the various Chemical Weapons attacks, and with the collapse of 'Rojava', Washington is fast running out of options in Syria. Syria is winning, but the big power has not yet given up. Knowing that it is losing, it still acts to prolong the endgame and punish the Syrian people.*



153 SHARES

- f 151
- t
- 2
- 0
- 
- 
-

**5. Palestine:** The NME wars emboldened Zionists, whose expanding colonisation has damaged Israel's failing legitimacy, exposing an openly apartheid state

1. More colonisation, the annexation of Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan - will only help end the 72 year illusion of 'two states'
2. A single apartheid state, with half the population disenfranchised, will destroy Israel's legitimacy
3. Palestinian Arabs have not gone away and now outnumber Israeli Jews.

Axis of Resistance, Chapter 12

**Israel risks apartheid-like struggle if two-state solution fails, says Olmert**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/nov/30/israel>

### The Future of Palestine, by Tim Anderson

5 Comments / Debate / By CCHS

Abstract: 'The claim that Israel has a "right to exist" is a contrived myth. In fact, apartheid states are crimes against humanity and end what are the future prospects for a democratic Palestine? The paper begins by reviewing the foundations of the Israeli state, including "moral equivalence" and false reformist arguments of "left Zionism"; and then the prospects for a democratic Palestine. The analysis is powerful western allies, a fanatical Zionist mission and disunity amongst Palestinian factions and their allies. On the other hand the state of Palestine, the commitment of regional allies and the vulnerability of Israel's allies to exposure of Zionist crimes. In sum the future remains far from hopeless.'



**6. Democracy at home?** The NME wars have undermined democracy and citizenship in the NATO-linked states, by constant deceptions and a militarised economy

**How imperial interventions in the ME destroy citizenship**

1. The primary damage done by foreign intervention, as with historical imperialism: the destruction of human agency for self-determination and self-governance - the destruction of lives, of human capital, of indigenous social structures and accountability processes as well as physical and psychological damage
2. Invading states also damage their own citizenry, by the destruction of soldiers, the privileging of war economies and the consequent drain on domestic social support, the undermining of social capital or trust through the sustained deceptions of imperial war, and the destruction of human solidarity in their own societies.



Ref. 'How the New Middle East wars destroy democracy at home and abroad' - Tim Anderson, paper at Potsdam University, July 2019 - forthcoming book chapter

**Main Points:**

- Terrorist blowback - 'comes back to sting'
- Regional realignment, enhanced roles for Iran and Russia
- New financial architecture, Eurasia focus
- Tremendous damage to entire populations
- Israeli over-reach leads to open apartheid, a fatal path
- Democracy at home undermined by the 'New Middle East' wars

thank you!