

THE WAR IN LEBANON AND THE WAR IN SYRIA REPRESENT ONE IMPERIALIST FRONT.

No sooner had a ceasefire been declared in Lebanon ending one invasion, then another invasion broke out in Syria. It is now clear what the Zionist intention was behind their invasion of Lebanon. Not so much to conquer Southern Lebanon, which was beyond the capacity of the Israeli forces, and recognised to be so, as much as it was to draw Hezbollah fighters back into Lebanon from Syria.

It is often thought that the external backbone supporting the Sadat regime was Iran and Russia. In fact it was Hezbollah. This is why the Israeli Airforce bombed the border crossings between Lebanon and Syria as soon as the ceasefire came into existence to prevent Hezbollah fighter crossing back over into Syria. Both the ceasefire and the invasion of Syria, which are connected, could not have been carried out without the backing of Arab regimes in the region indebted to or seeking to curry favour with US imperialism. This is particularly true of the war criminal and traitor Erdogan.

The brutal bombing of Lebanon by the IAF was designed to inflict a heavy toll on its population and infrastructure in order to heap internal pressure on Hezbollah which forms only part of the population of Lebanon, and which has many political opponents in the Lebanese government. This pressure became intolerable when governments in surrounding states added to this pressure boxing in Hezbollah. The outcome was the ceasefire which saved Israel from a military defeat.

Treachery is one of the oldest strategies as well as one of the most effective methods of waging war. It is something which the US has excelled at and refined over decades. This treachery or street politics was decisive in isolating Hezbollah then Assad. It also showed that the diplomatic advances China had made in the region were insufficient to block US machinations. China has learnt a salutary lesson, that passive politics or Jeremy Corbyn style nice guy politics, is never a match for active skullduggery.

Once the ceasefire came into effect the go signal was given to invade Syria by Erdogan. Within days the 250,000 strong Syrian army gave way to 35,000 advancing jihadi fighters armed with lighter weaponry. And the insurgency was allowed to advance because the Syrian High Command had ordered the army to stand down, which the underpaid and undermotivated conscripts were only willing to comply with.

There are as many reasons as the number of days it took for the Asad Regime to fall, as to why Syria succumbed so quickly to these uncontested advances, which even surprised the backers of the insurgency. What is likely true is the following. This invasion was being planned for years both within and without Syria. Firstly, the economic embargoes, the theft of its oil, the systemic bombing by Israel, all had impoverished the country. Since 2011 Syria has suffered half a million dead and seven to eight million displaced. Electricity was being rationed, food was expensive and scarce, salaries pitiful and life a constant struggle. Such a society is forced to live for the moment with the future torn from it.

In such a demoralising environment, corruption becomes endemic. But there is a special form of corruption which proves even more decisive under these circumstances. It is the corruption from without, the reaching out to senior military and political figures, most probably via the Turkish Intelligence Service, to buy their acquiescence. And most probably some figures accepted such advances, not simply for personal gain, but for a future free of sanctions and with oil revenues restored, because they realised Syria had become unviable and dysfunctional.

The second aspect was years of arming, training and preparing for the insurgency, primarily in Turkey which has always been opposed to the Assad regime. So the trap was sprung. Turkey had been collecting

Sunni jihadis from all over the world, training them and equipping them with the aid of Qatari money, preparing them for just such a day. A day which was not a closed secret. Iranian briefings to Assad covering this threat were largely ignored by Assad and his regime, which raises another question mark, as to why no pre-emptive strike ever took place.

The imminence of the trap being sprung was further evidenced by the more frequent planning meetings between Shin Beth (the Israeli Secret Service) and the Turkish Intelligence Service over the last few months. Now it must be noted the invasion came from Turkey not Idlib Province. Within Syria HTS had proven to be too unstable. Its organisation has been wracked by division, dissent and outright infighting involving arrests and assassinations, as [these two](#) separate [articles attest](#). And in March and May this year, there had been [large scale protests in Idlib Province](#) against the abuses and corruption of the HTS led government, which was even documented by the anti-Assad Human Rights Watch as well as the [main stream media](#). No, the tip of the spear was forged in Turkey itself under the tight control of Turkey's Intelligence Service.

And it was not only Erdogan who was cultivating the Jihadis especially HTS. So too was Israel. There are many accounts of fraternal salutations between them. Israel helped arm those fighting the Assad regime [admitting as much in 2019](#) while it [treated hundreds of injured Jihadis](#) in its hospitals in Safed and the Golan Heights. In any case Netanyahu welcomed the insurgency in Syria claiming credit for its success by asserting that this was made possible by the Israeli defeat of Hezbollah and Iran.

Why did Israel, the USAF and Turkey use the opportunity to bomb Syria?

The US has learnt a number of salutary lessons when dealing with clerico-fascist organisations after setting them up and nurturing them. This was the case of the Taliban which they and the Pakistan Secret Service set up to fight the Soviet Army in Afghanistan. As expected the US then went on to betray them once the Soviet Union was thrown out of Afghanistan only for the Taliban to turn on them and ultimately squeeze the US Army out of Afghanistan under humiliating circumstances with the USA having wasted [\\$2.26 trillion](#) on its occupation, when a couple of hundred million spent in the 1980s in the right place could have kept the Taliban sweet. The same for Al-Qaida which offered to fight alongside the USA to evict the Iraqis from Kuwait, only to be betrayed by the USA once more. The same goes for ISIS set up in Amman by the USA, Britain, France and Sunni Arab states to create a Sunni antidote to the Shia Hezbollah. Once ISIS was set up and let off the leash it went its own way ignoring the calls from Washington to come back, proceeding to carve a temporary Crusader free Caliphate in Western Asia which then had to be suppressed.

It is in this context that we can now understand the bombing of Syria by the Israeli Airforce, the US Airforce and the Turkish Airforce. In 48 hours the Israelis mounted 350 sorties, what it claims was its heaviest air bombardment ever, to degrade Syrian arms depots and military bases. The US conducted 75 but with heavier bombers including B52s. When the B52s first arrived in the UK and Europe it was assumed they were there to intimidate the Russians in the Ukraine. Now we know better, it was part of the forward planning for the incursion into Syria from Turkey.

With the exception of the Turks, the main purpose of the bombing was to demilitarise Syria to ensure that if the US and its Zionists lost control of HTS or other Jihadi sects, at least they would be unarmed. So here was the West boosting the Jihadis to overthrow the Assad dictatorship, then cutting them down so that the replacement government is unable to offend never mind defend itself. And not a [word of protest](#) about these bombings and attacks on the sovereignty of Syria from the leader of HTS Ahmed al-Sharaa, also

known as Abu Mohammed al-Jolani. When he made his first public address all he condemned were Hezbollah and Iran, neither of which had attacked Syria since he took power, while not a word about the actual attacks on his country passed his lips. There have been many comments about how he has changed his appearance and trimmed his beard, but really he should be walking around with a big 'SOLD' sticker on his forehead with the inscription *property of the USA*. But then HTS is used to graft. Some of the ructions within HTS earlier this year in Idlib was sparked by the struggle to control the funds flowing in from Turkey and from some of the Gulf States.

Defending the Jewish occupation in the heart of the Arab world.

Zionism is a colonial project endorsed and supported by the West to domesticate and contain the Arab world. It has cost millions of lives. The historical paradox of a state born out of the taking of lives in Europe whose existence is then dependant on the taking of further lives, escapes many. To arrive at this millions strong figure, we need to go beyond the cruel taking of Palestinian lives in an around the Zionist Colony. We need to include those countries attacked by US imperialism pursuing the goal of entrenching Zionist rule in Western Asia.

In 2001, Wesley Clarke, a presidential hopeful and ex-chief of NATO's forces in Europe claimed he had been told by the deep state that the [US had a target list of 7 countries](#) which could either threaten the US or Israel. They were Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Iran, Somalia and Sudan. It is interesting that Afghanistan was omitted. All were Muslim states whose leaders had expressed opposition to the State of Israel. Of the seven, only Iran has not been invaded.

We can thus see in this decades old declaration how the US has always been intent on overthrowing the Baathist regime in Damascus just as it successfully overthrew the Baathist regime in Baghdad. In these six countries, by means of invasion, the sponsoring of civil war and embargoes, US imperialism has killed millions of soldiers and civilians, many of them children through starvation, deprivation and lack of medical supplies. Thus while the world stares with wide-eyed horror at the genocide unfolding in Gaza, this is not exceptional in the annals of Western Imperialism in the region.

Nor is it exceptional for Zionist and Western powers to fraternise and collaborate with fascistic movements in the wider region. The US, Britain and France has never had an aversion to setting up, husbanding and deploying these clerico-fascist movements infused with Wahabi certainty. And they have been doing so for two centuries. They were first cultivated and sponsored by the British in the early 19th Century in order to disrupt the Ottoman Empire from within. Britain's initial success was its establishment of the House of Saud. The reason is clear to see. The West fears democratic popular uprisings, because no democrat would tolerate the colonialism represented by Zionism, but Sunni fundamentalism presents no such problem.

The infantile British Socialist Worker's take on events in Syria.

The SWP has always been optimists rather than realists when reading situations. This over-optimism could be seen during the outbreak of the Syrian Uprising in March 2011 and would endure for a number of years. But within a year, at the [Istanbul Conference in March 2012](#), the influence of imperialism executed through Turkey on the movement had already become clear. By the time of the Conference to which all parties forming the Syrian National Council were invited, this Council was already fragmenting, and it was doing so because the Council was being increasingly dominated by its Islamist wing, the Muslim Brotherhood. This was confirmed during the Conference itself resulting in the departure of the Kurdish Contingent.

This animosity and factionalism not only split the movement weakening it, but more ominously it provided the opening for imperialism to co-opt much of the movement. Via Turkey most of the funding for the opposition would be limited to the Islamist elements. In a short period of time the movement lost its roots drowned by religious dogmatism paid for by the West. Jihadis replaced demonstrators. *“Liberal activists associated with a rival opposition camp, the National Coordinating Committee, protested that the SNC had pandered to the [United States and Europe](#) while abandoning the fighters on the ground. At the same time, dissident members of the Free Officers Movement pulled away from the SNC-affiliated Free Syrian Army (FSA), pointing to the inordinate influence that the Muslim Brotherhood exerts over SNC policy.”* *“Nevertheless, the Turkish government welcomed the SNC’s platform and pushed for the SNC to be recognized by the international community as the only legitimate representative of the Syrian people.”* *“When the collection of Western and Arab Gulf states known as the Friends of Syria convened in Istanbul on April 1, it endorsed Turkey’s position...”*

From then on the fight against the Assad government had largely morphed into an imperialist intrigue aimed at regime change, as against transforming society. It became the arena for big and regional power struggles in which the original democratic goals of the movement had been drowned. The left in the west failed to take note of this fundamental change in the movement, continuing to cast it as an independent revolutionary movement when it essentially had become a vehicle to replace the Sadat loyal Baathist government with a government led by an Imperialist brute loyal to the West and Israel.

Such a duped group was the Socialist Workers’ Party in Britain. It is important to contextualise this group mistakenly called a party. On the plus side the SWP has been the backbone, over a number of decades, of the anti-racist, pro-asylum and anti-war movement in Britain, having set up a number of fronts to lead this work. On the negative side has been their abject and persistent failure on the strategic front, their misreading of world altering events, meaning they often found themselves on the wrong side of history.

These failures began in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Based on their incorrect designation of the USSR as being a form of capitalism they hailed the overthrow of the regimes forming the USSR and Comecon as a [revolutionary moment](#). Instead, it really represented the polar opposite, a generational defeat of the working class which opened up new markets and consolidated the rule of capital. Which is why, when the effects of capitalism began to be felt, every poll in Eastern Europe bar that of Poland and the Czech Republic, reported that the populations now regretted what had been lost.

Then came 2003 and their anti-war popular front, where in order to maintain unity with the Shires, the SWP turned its face against militant working class tactics needed to frustrate the war effort, fearing it would split the movement by frightening and driving away the Shires. Then came the debacle of LEXIT when the SWP supported Britain leaving the EU in the expectation it would rebalance class relations and revive class struggles in Britain. The leaders of BREXIT contemptuously and correctly ridiculed the lefties in their movement as the ‘fools of the movement’. Then came the Ukraine war which the SWP claimed was jointly blamed on Russian Imperialist ambitions, instead of simply portraying it as a war planned by the US via NATO designed to provoke regime change in Moscow in order to complete the encirclement of China forcing its submission.

Finally, the events in Syria which again have been misread by the SWP as something other than regime change organised by the CIA, The Turkish Intelligence Services and Shin Beth over many years. The only surprise being how quickly the regime fell. This miscalculation by the SWP follows on from their misreading of the events post 2011 in Syria. In their current writings on the subject the confusion remains. It is not

enough to simply have been against the Sadat Regime at the time. [*And we were unequivocally against Assad and the gang of thieves and mass murderers who launched a sectarian civil war to save their dictatorship.*](#) It required an understanding of all the forces in play in order to formulate correct tactics.

To this day the confusion over the events in Syria over a decade ago remains. Here are two opposed views on the events post 2011 based on their current coverage of the Syrian insurgency. *“But, in response, Assad launched a brutal, [sectarian civil war](#) in a bid to drown the revolution in blood. His war was designed to make mass struggle impossible. Rival imperial powers used it as a pretext to intervene”. [“Armed Islamist groups](#) grew out of the counter-revolution crushing a mass-based, popular and democratic revolutionary mobilisation in Syrian society. And, in some cases, they contributed directly to its defeat.”* While it is entirely correct to see the uprising as a popular uprising, it is incorrect to see it as being defeated purely by external factors, namely the brutal oppression of the Assad army and police force. Assad did not create the sectarian divide in the movement, that was fostered from within. The second quote is closer to the truth but still disingenuous because the armed Islamist groups did not simply grow out of the counter-revolution, they were the product of imperialist intrigue together with military and financial assistance, without which the Islamist organisation could not have dominated the movement turning it into a vehicle for imperialist ambitions in the region. On all occasions, the SWP underestimates the role and influence of imperialism in the shaping of world events, especially in what was then, a uni-polar world, in favour of blind optimism over the potential of spontaneity. This is usually called infantile politics.

That is why today they once again misread the situation in Syria. In their infantile and over-optimistic view of events in Syria they are of the opinion that revolutionary latency exists in Syria now. That like LEXIT the handover of power will somehow create the instability forming opportunity. Instead it is much more likely that the orchestrated collapse of the previous regime, the smooth handover of power, and the drawing in of fighters under the umbrella of HTS, will smother any popular uprisings. The incursion and its purpose was counter-revolutionary from the outset.

So why does the SWP continuously make the same mistakes. Because it has the same ossified leadership, which means there is no accounting for mistakes and if there is no accounting for mistakes there are no lessons learnt, and if there are no lessons learnt there is no growth, no maturing. The organisation continues to stumble in the old way, led by the same inadequate leadership.

As to the future, that is less clear. It all depends on whether the new government can tackle graft, whether the US lifts sanctions immediately and returns the oil revenue, if there is an infusion of funds from the Gulf States, which collectively is sufficient to improve economic and job prospects or the appearance of them. And it depends on whether Syria holds together.

Syria is an artificial construct.

The origin of the country we know as Syria today did not exist before 1916. It was the product of the defeat of the Ottoman Empire by England and France, something which Erdogan and Turkey have not forgotten nor forgiven. In May 1916 the ‘Sykes Picot’ accords were drawn up whereby the Levant was to be divided and parcelled out between Britain and France once the War ended.

Syria was to become part of the French Empire carved out of the Levant comprising what had been four distinct states or provinces under the Ottoman Empire. One of the four was to be elevated above the others, the Alawite Kingdom (to which the Assad family belongs) and charged with ruling the country on

behalf of the French. The Alawite minority became the lynchpin enabling the usual imperial strategy of divide and rule.

Which is why today Syria could be returned to its pre-1916 status. Turkey could reclaim what was lost all the way to Aleppo. The Kurdish region could declare its own independence though this would invite Turkish retaliation because the one thing Erdogan fears and feared more than the Alawite domination of Syria is the emergence of a legitimate Kurdish state which would lead to the reshaping of Turkey itself (as well as Iraq, Iran and Azerbaijan). As this [analysis shows](#) the Kurdish nation was dismembered by the Treaty of Lausanne and handed over to these countries to form their new boundaries and borders. This is a historical injustice which has yet to be corrected.

The only actor which has no legitimate claim on Syria is the illegitimate Zionist regime in Israel. Setting aside the messianic claims in pursuit of a 'Greater Israel', the Israeli incursion into Syria has achieved three long sought after military goals; firstly an enlarged buffer zone taking in all the high ground in southern Syria, secondly the encirclement of Southern Lebanon and finally proximity to Damascus. It is unlikely Israel will give up these territorial gains short of a military defeat.

Conclusion.

The students of history always wonder why the states drawn up by imperialism were done so negligently storing up problems for the future. This was done deliberately to foster local antagonisms which could be exploited by imperialism to deflect anger away from the masters of the region. This arc of instability nicknamed the axis of evil by the US endures to this day, something which Russia and China have been working to overcome. One notable success has been defusing the Shia Sunni divide amplified by the US which has served to weaken the region. This can be seen by rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran fostered by China.

The real test of Syria will be whether these positive developments can be maintained, or will a now more assertive and emboldened US and Israel disrupt these rapprochements in the region. Within eleven days the balance of forces has been altered in the region. Israel has been able to get off its knees and is now standing tall. Already there are signs that relations with the Gulf States are thawing out. While the *Abraham Accords* are yet to be dusted off, there is revived talk once more of implementing the much vaunted [India to Israel transportation corridor](#) which will rival the one through Iran proposed by China. Whatever the case, the Palestinian question will once again be trampled on because of the change in realpolitik's in the region.

It is clear that Western Imperialism will now focus on Iran. Israel acting as the mouthpiece for the US has always designated Iran to be its chief foe, not because it is capable of producing nuclear weapons, but because Iran is key to the region. The arc of instability the West has cultivated has always been countered by Iran. Should Iran fall, this arc would be reactivated by the US exposing the underbelly of Russia. The loss of Iran will be equivalent to losing in the Ukraine.

No doubt the events in Damascus, the touchy feely politics there, the aura of forgiveness and comradery, was carefully choreographed by the CIA with an audience in Tehran in mind. See, if we can achieve this in Syria you can make a similar colour revolution in Iran. This will clearly pressurise Teheran where many Iranians are tired of the rule of the Ayatollahs and their associated cultural restrictions.

Of course this Syrian charade will be short lived. If it succeeds it will be discarded and if it does not succeed it will also be discarded. Already behind the scenes there are an increasing number of reports of sectarian violence being meted out to non-Shia Syrians and ex-members of the army. HTS cannot rule without repression. The honeymoon will be swift, and the question arises whether Turkey can stitch HTS and previous governmental functionaries together creating a viable and effective state in time. It is likely that much preparatory work has already gone into making this a possibility with the work commencing even before the insurgency. Whatever the case it will be touch and go because Ankara did not envisage such a rapid collapse of the Assad regime.

Many commentators have seen the fall of the Assad regime as a defeat for Russia and Iran. It was a setback not a defeat because between them Russia and Iran had sufficient capacity to crush the insurgency at birth. But Russia and Iran could not substitute for a Syrian regime not willing to fight and maintain itself. Putin most probably came to this determination when Assad met him in Moscow a few weeks back as evidenced by Assad's family remaining behind in Moscow rather than returning to Damascus after the talks.

In the meantime Netanyahu will crown himself as the hero of the hour. He will claim to be indispensable. The Airforce will return to bombing Gaza. A greater effort will be made to crush the Palestinian Resistance there. It is likely that after 60 days Israel will again attack Hezbollah this time from the Syrian direction as well. And with Trump in office before that, he will be emboldened to take on Iran.

The fall of Syria does not de-escalate tensions in the region, instead it will escalate tensions and bring them to the boil. Trump may claim to want to seek peace with Russia, but as with HTS, it is a charade. Trump knows full well that Russia and China will not stand by when he and the Israelis target Iran and Yemen to secure the Gulf of Hormuz. In this sense, the Gulf is a bigger and more immediate flashpoint than Taiwan.

Whether it is Taiwan, South Korea, Georgia, Iran, Lebanon, Sudan, Venezuela or the Ukraine, this is all one front in the war being waged by the US against Russia and China in defence of its hegemony. And the increase in the number of hotspots shows this front is expanding and becoming more unpredictable, which means more problematic. They are the vents in a volcano about to explode.

We cannot let this happen. While climate change accelerates NATO countries are engaging in an arms race. This means that all we are being offered by capitalism, is a choice between scorching summers or nuclear winters. This cannot continue, workers need to rise from being the victims of history to being its saviours through ending this deranged economic system which threatens everything and everyone. The new must be born otherwise the old will kill us all.

Brian Green, 13th December 2024.