

The 'New Middle East' Wars

SDPCW-10, Class notes by Dr. Tim Anderson

Overview

1. The 'Great Game' and Washington's 'New Middle East'
2. Invasions and Dirty Wars
3. An Axis of Resistance



Nothing abuses the right of a people to self determination more than a war of aggression - and **all** of the eight New Middle East wars have been wars of aggression: 'the mother of all great crimes'.

Q: What led Washington, in the 21st century, to drive so many 'New Middle East' wars (Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Iran)?

The ' New Middle East' and Eurasia

- The 21st Century Middle East - better called West Asia - has been the site of 8 Washington-led wars;
- Strong links between US plans to dominate a 'New Middle East' and its fears of emerging Eurasian power blocs;
- Eurasia is a contiguous land mass home to 5.5bn (most in Asia), 70% of the 7.8bn global human population;
- Since WW2 a non-Eurasian power (the USA) has tried to dominate this supercontinent.



Set readings:

Anderson, Tim (2019) *Axis of Resistance: towards an independent Middle East*, Clarity Press, Atlanta, pp.11-18

Cook, Steven A. (2020) 'Why the Middle East still matters to America', *Foreign Affairs*, Nov/Dec, online:

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-10-13/no-exit>

Whitney, Mike (2016) 'The Broken Chessboard: Brzezinski Gives Up on Empire', *Counter Punch*, 25 August, online:

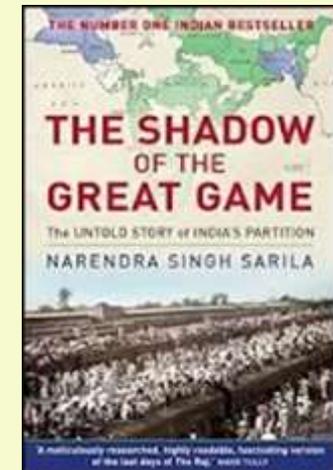
<https://www.counterpunch.org/2016/08/25/the-broken-chessboard-brzezinski-gives-up-on-empire/>

1. The 'Great Game' and Washington's 'New Middle East'

Seen in historical perspective, Washington as a self-styled 'hegemon' in decline faces a new 'great game', like that of the cold war (1945-1989) and the earlier rivalry of the British and Russian empires (1830-1895). In each case these 'great games' overshadowed many regional wars.

	'Great Game'	Regional wars
19th C	British v Russian Empires	Central Asia, Persia, India
20th C	USA v USSR (Cold War)	Korea, Vietnam, Africa, LatAm
21st C	USA v threat of Eurasian blocs (linked to China and Russia)	Middle East, Central Asia, Eastern Europe

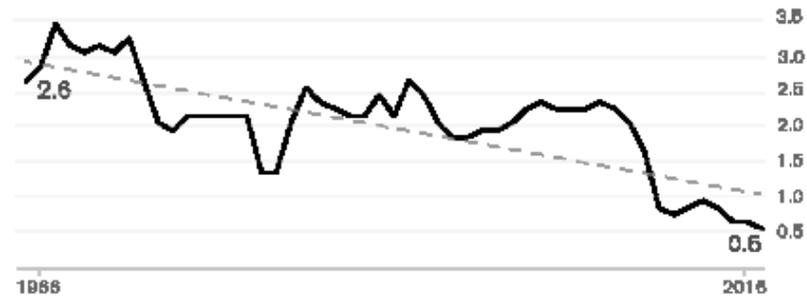
Britain's long fomented partition of India, at her independence, was said to be a hedge against Soviet influence.
Narendra Singh Sarila (2009) The Shadow of the Great Game



US relative economic decline, and the consequences

The Growth Slowdown

% Annual growth rate in real GDP per capita over 10-year periods



Source: The GDP per capita growth rate of Economic Analysis. Growth intervals and reported in annual

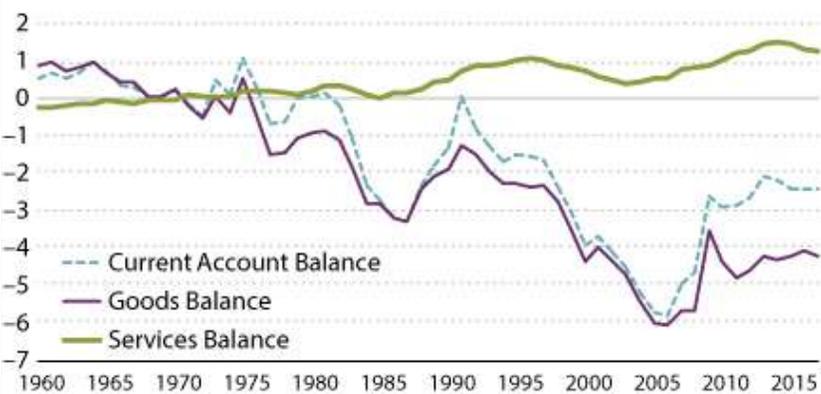
Long term US productivity and trade decline (reducing the US share of global GDP) since the late 1960s has led Washington to:

- Attempt to contain geopolitical rivals;
- Enforce US monopoly privileges and IPRs;
- With failing globalism, attempt regional blocs;
- Seek division and capture of 'peripheral' states.

Figure 1

U.S. Trade Balance

Percent of GDP

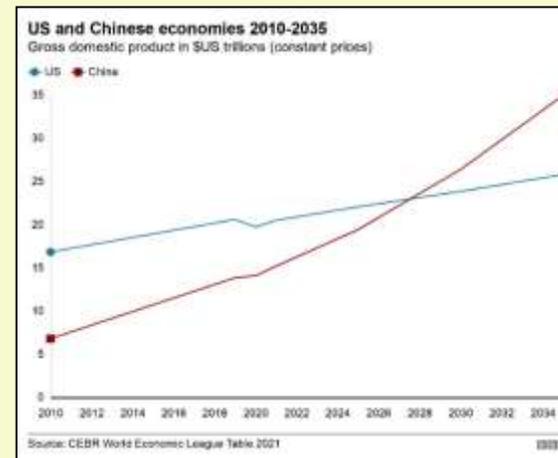
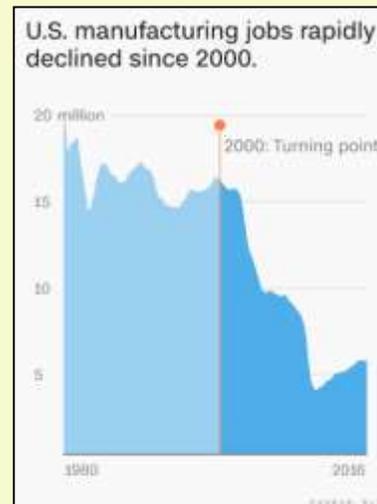
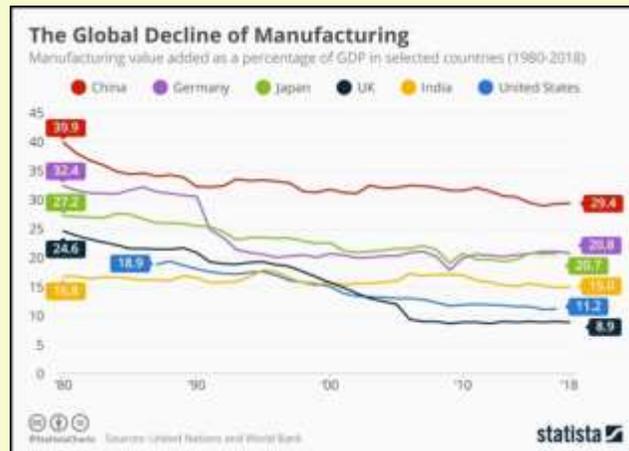


SOURCE: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Haver Analytics, and authors' calculations.

Gallup (2016) No Recovery: An Analysis of Long-Term U.S. Productivity Decline, online: <https://news.gallup.com/reports/198776/no-recovery-analysis-long-term-productivity-decline.aspx>

Hegemonic neoliberalism, at a time of US decline:

- ❑ Anglo-American liberalism has used **economic** (technical) slogans but always resorted to classical imperial or neo-colonial strategies;
- ❑ US decline in recent decades has helped enhance these **new colonial** elements, to renew the possibilities of expansion and domination;
- ❑ This can be seen in attempts to legitimise imperial double standards through **globalist integration** using extra-legal **hegemonic stability** ideas, with pretexts of a '**responsibility to protect**' and '**humanitarian intervention**'
- ❑ What are the geopolitical implications of US decline?



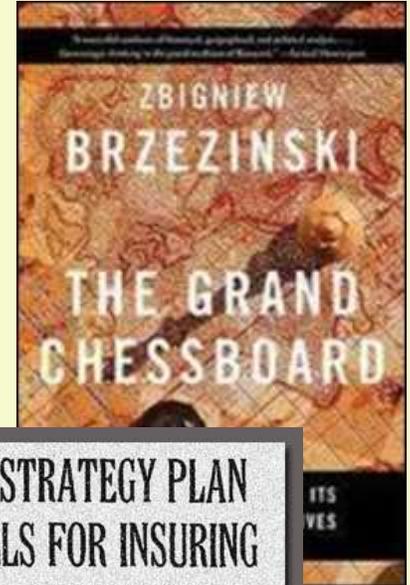
While employment in manufacturing is in global decline (Statista 2019), decline in the USA has been precipitous (CNN 2016), due to both tech. change and offshoring. Fairly soon China's GDP will surpass that of the USA (CEBR 2021).

At the same time, the USA seemed to face a new moment of dominance, after the 1989-1991 collapse of the USSR and the east European socialist bloc. How will they face this challenge?

Zbigniew Brzezinski's *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (1997) is the most clearly elaborated US game-plan of 'hegemonic stability theory' since the collapse of the USSR.

Brzezinski (National Security Adviser to US President Carter 1977-1981) argued for a post-cold war extension of NATO into Eastern Europe and Central Asia:

- US 'benevolent' hegemony had to prevent the formation of any other Eurasian power blocs, which would create a 'dangerous' multi-polar world;
- This reinforced a **1992 Pentagon paper** which called for planning to ensure that "no rivals develop", and that included 'allies' like Germany and Japan;
- Islamic fundamentalism engaged in 'diffuse violence' but was generally not a problem so long as no 'geopolitical core' developed;
- The bigger threats were from expansion of the Russian, Chinese and Iranian spheres of influence, especially in Central and West Asia (Middle East).



U.S. STRATEGY PLAN CALLS FOR INSURING NO RIVALS DEVELOP

A ONE-SUPERPOWER WORLD

Pentagon's Document Outlines
Ways to Thwart Challenges
to Primacy of America

By **PATRICK E. TYLER**
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 7 — In a broad new policy statement that is in its final drafting stage, the Defense Department asserts that America's political and military mission in the post-cold-war era will be to insure that no rival superpower is allowed to emerge in Western Europe, Asia or the territory of the former Soviet Union.



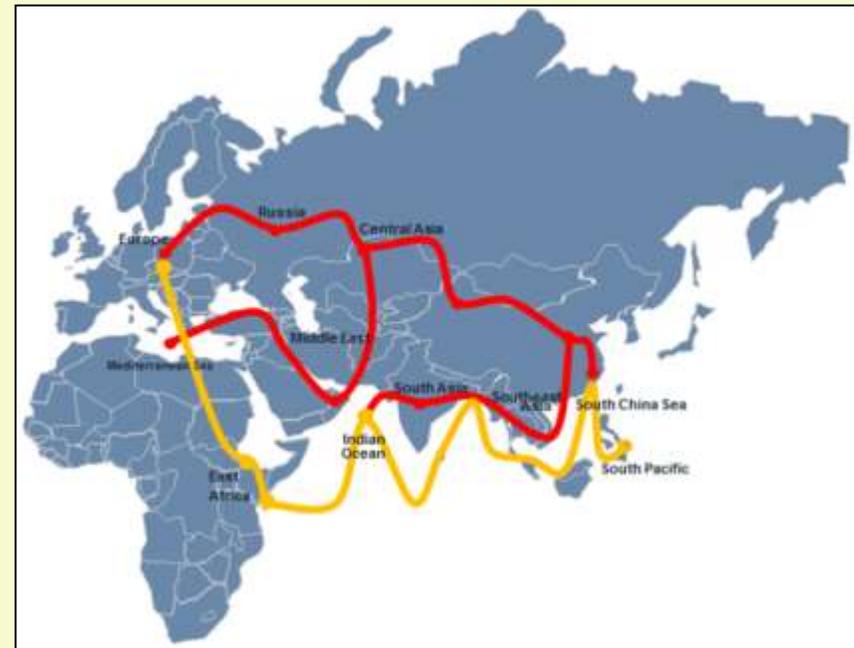
Zbigniew Brzezinski with Henry Kissinger

The 'threat' of Eurasia and a 'New Middle East'

- Traditional imperial aims: control an entire region and dictate the terms of access to others, especially in light of:
- Russian influence in eastern Europe and Central Asia
- China's expansion, esp. the 'belt and road' mega infrastructure network
- The likelihood of strong links between formed between Europe, Russia and China, which would weaken US position in both Europe and Asia

Proposed by China's President Xi Jinping in 2013, the **Belt and Road Initiative** (BRI) is the world's largest project of connectivity in modern times. The "Belt" links China with South East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Russia and Europe by land, and the "Road" is a sea route connecting China with South East and South Asia, East Africa and the Middle East.

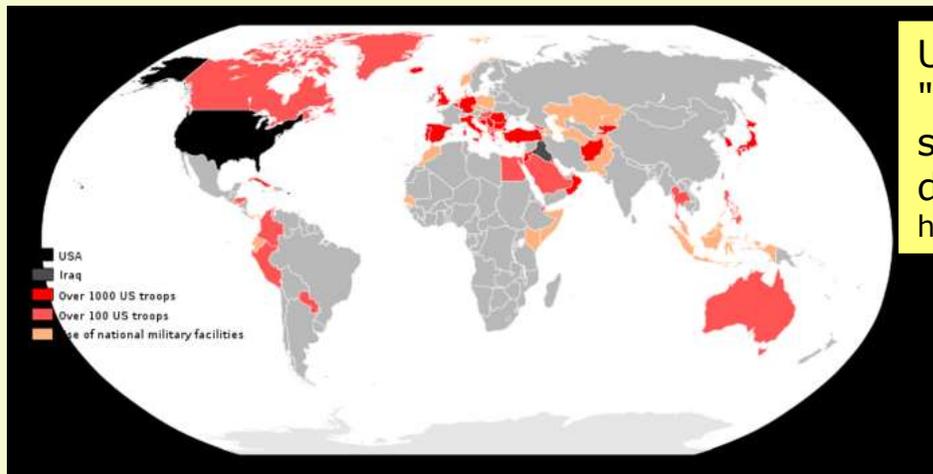
U.S.-China Tech Battle:
Huawei and the Fight for
Dominance in Wireless Technology



Washington's network of control

- 800 military bases around the world, esp. in Europe and the Middle East
- Deeply networked with European companies, esp. through T&Ms in the 1990s;
- Dominant player (so far) in global media, communications and IT;
- Controlling stake in the UNSC, WTO, World Bank/IMF and other globalist orgs.

David Vine (2015) Where in the World Is the U.S. Military?, Politico, July/August, online:
<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/06/us-military-bases-around-the-world-119321>



US Defence: **full spectrum dominance** means:
"the creation of a force that is dominant across the full spectrum of military operations – persuasive in peace, decisive in war, preeminent in any form of conflict"
<https://counter-hegemonic-studies.net/jv2020/>



Video (1'30"): The Great Game and Eurasia, by KJ reports
Full video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-2cCI-yg5s>

Pretexts for war are invented to suit grand strategy

Only the naïve accept these pretexts at face value

In the post-colonial era, all interventions into sovereign states are presumed illegal. Only self-defence or UNSC 'collective security' resolutions are exceptions. International law is simply not compatible with hegemonic ambitions.

Yet we should expect great skill from the USA when it comes to the false pretexts for wars of aggression. The north American Republic conquered territory after territory in the 19thC but never regarded itself as an imperial power. Most of the 'founding fathers' who wrote of liberty, 'all men are equal' were themselves slave-owners: George Washington and Thomas Jefferson owned slaves to the day they died. But they certainly had a way with words.



Washington and Jefferson

The 'New Middle East' wars have used three pretexts:
self-defence, protection and humanitarian intervention

Method note: in examining the various false pretexts for each US-led 'New Middle East' war of aggression, as in any controversy, all sides must be considered; but we should pay particular attention to the evidence of 'admissions against interest', (as they help resolve polemics) and less to 'self serving statements'.

For reference - Video: The Pretexts for War:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCUzRyo7ydU>

2. Invasions and Dirty Wars

The 8 (or 9) 'New Middle East' wars

Palestine	1948+	Siege and ethnic cleansing
Afghanistan	2001+	Invasion and occupation
Iraq	2003+	Invasion and occupation
Lebanon	2006	Failed invasion
Libya	2011	Proxy war and NATO bombing
Syria	2011+	Proxy wars and occupations
Bahrain *	2011	Uprising crushed
Yemen	2015+	Direct and proxy war
Iran	1979+	Economic siege and proxy wars

The catalyst for the NME wars was the infamous terrorist attack in New York, September 2001.

On the official story, most of the plane hijackers were Saudis

However the US decided to invade Afghanistan, on the basis that the Taliban government provided sanctuary to al Qaeda leaders.

Yet the basis for all these wars had been prepared well in advance.

Preparation for the NME wars

- Principles: destruction of 'disconnected' states and peoples, use of client states - Israel and the Saudis
- The slow **ethnic cleansing of Palestine** - to clear the base for **Israel**, Washington's key lieutenant in the region;
- **Saudis** and other GCC monarchies also central tools;
- Destruction of **Arab Nationalism**, Iraq and Syria, which had been a key factor of resistance;
- **Previous attempts** to control Iran (1953-1979), to contain Iraq (1990), to organise coups in Syria (1949+)
- Even though the US had used Afghanistan's Taliban and al Qaeda against the USSR; and Saddam's Iraq against Iran - not enough;
- Bush II: 'Seven countries in five years' - Gen Wesley Clark
- Declaration of a 'New Middle East' by Sec of State Condoleezza Rice

Video (1'48"): Gen Wesley Clark
(2007) 'Seven countries in five years'

Invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq

- Both open aggressions on false pretexts, no UN mandate;
- Afghanistan - delays in handing over suspects for attacks on New York ('9/11'); destruction of the state;
- Iraq - falsely claimed 'Weapons of Mass Destruction'; destruction of the state;
- Both invasions had strong support from media oligarchs, like Murdoch and his paper *The Times* (see below)



US SoS Colin Powell presents 'proof' of Iraq's WMDs to the UNSC



"The invasion and occupation of Iraq is illegal", Kofi Annan



Afghanistan and Iraq's sins against US hegemony:

- Both exercised too great an autonomy, when Washington's ambitions were riding high;
- Afghanistan hesitated to surrender Osama bin Laden;
- Iraq (Nov 2002) was the first OPEC state to move oil sales into Euros, away from dollars;

Cóilín Nunan (2003) 'Oil, Currency and the War on Iraq', online:
<https://www.resilience.org/stories/2004-11-15/oil-currency-and-war-iraq/>

A 'New Middle East'

- ❑ The 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and 2003 invasion of Iraq smashed the states of those countries;
- ❑ Israel was forced to withdraw from Gaza in 2005;
- ❑ Israel's 2006 invasion of Lebanon (aimed to disarm Hezbollah) failed to achieve any of its objectives;
- ❑ Nevertheless, that third invasion was used to announce the aim of a 'New Middle East', where 'liberty' would trump 'stability' and 'creative chaos' would be a tool.

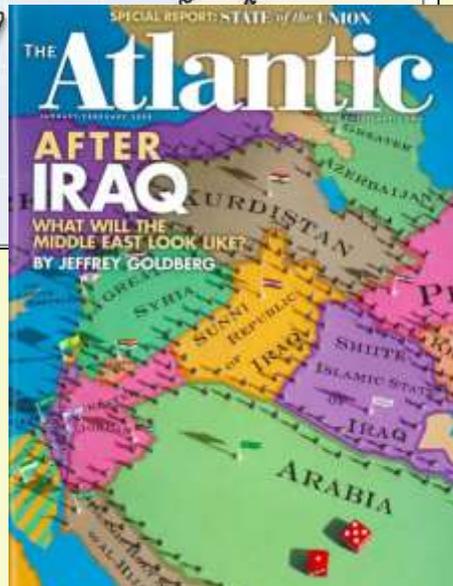
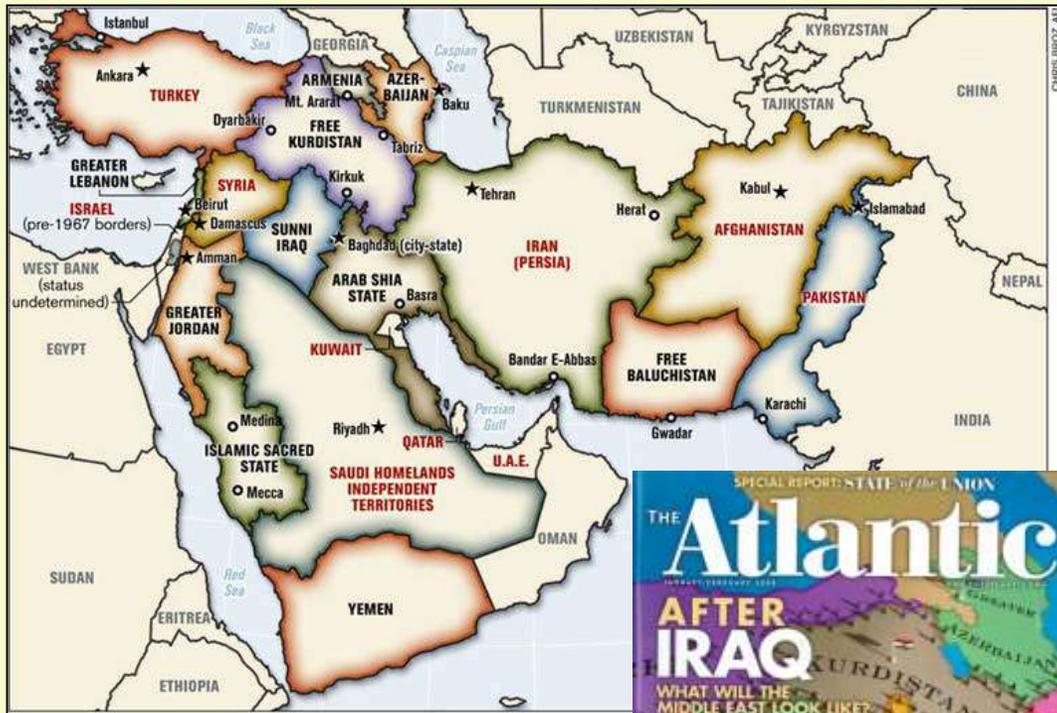


Notice that Rice downplays the 'stability', assumed by north American 'hegemonic stability' traditions, in favour of 'liberty' and the implicit violence of 'constructive chaos', aimed at widespread regime change.

VIDEO (51"): Condoleezza Rice: the US will create a 'New Middle East'

Condoleezza Rice (2003) Transforming the Middle East, Washington Post, 7 August, online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2003/08/07/transforming-the-middle-east/2a267aac-4136-45ad-972f-106ac91e5acd/>
Jeremy Bransten (2006) Middle East: Rice Calls For A 'New Middle East', RFERL, 25 July, online: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1070088.html>

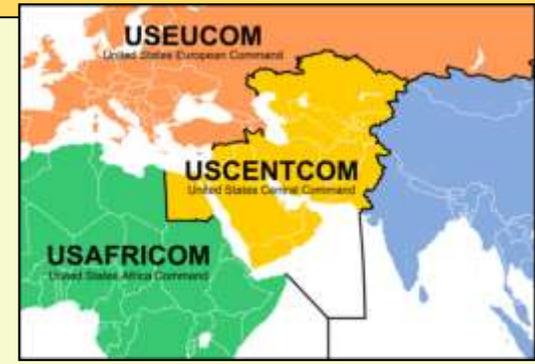




A Pentagon re-partition?
 Many western analysts saw the 2003 destruction of the Iraqi Baathist state by the US invasion as a chance to redraw Middle Eastern states, as the British-French (Sykes-Picot) agreement had sought to do a century earlier. There were several such proposals, mostly from the USA and Israel. The Pentagon's 'CentCom' already arrogated to itself control of the region.

Apart from its crude imperialism, such plans were criticised for assuming that people would forget the achievements of modern states and revert to some sort of 'natural' tribal identities. Patel spoke of "the flawed narrative of ethnic and sectarian partition as a natural solution to regional conflicts".
 Sharmine Narwani (2011) Pentagon game to divide Iranians and Arabs', online: https://www.salon.com/2011/10/26/pentagon_game_to_divide_iranians_and_arabs/
 David Patel (2016) Repartitioning the Sykes-Picot Middle East?', online: <https://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/middle-east-briefs/pdfs/101-200/meb103.pdf>

Pentagon game to divide Iranians and Arabs
 A military planning exercise illuminates the story driving Washington's response to the Arab Spring

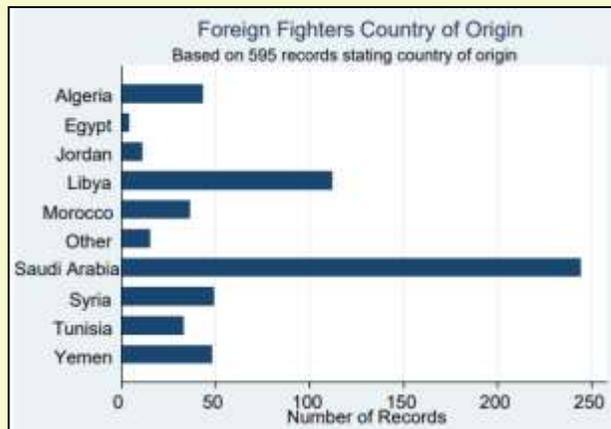


The sectarian card, and the roots of ISI/ISIS/ISIL/DAESH in Iraq

The New York Times
Blast Destroys Shrine in Iraq, Setting Off Sectarian Fury

AL-QA'IDA'S FOREIGN FIGHTERS IN IRAQ
A FIRST LOOK AT THE SINJAR RECORDS

Washington developed its divide and rule strategy soon after the 2003 invasion of Iraq



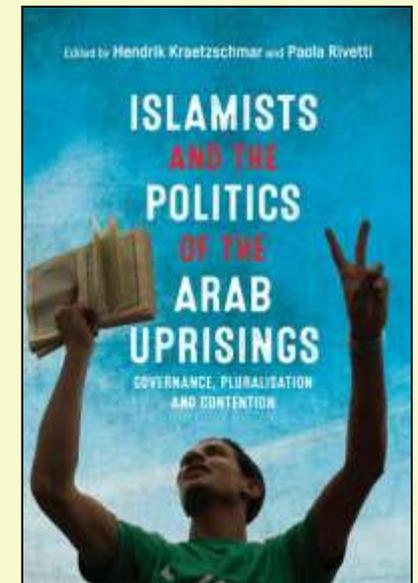
Hersh 2007: "to the distress of the White House, Iran has forged a close relationship with the Shiite-dominated government of [Iraqi PM] Nuri al-Maliki." Condoleezza Rice claimed the Sunni states were centres of moderation, while Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah were "on the other side of that divide." Key players behind the redirection were VP Dick Cheney, Elliott Abrams ... and Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi national-security adviser; said to be "a victory for the Saudi line".
Sinjar papers: Masses of foreign fighters were recruited to Iraq in 2006-2007, and the biggest group was from Saudi Arabia. Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) reached its apex over 2006-2007 (Lewis 2013); in 2012 it resumed as ISIS in Syria+Iraq.

Seymour Hersh (2007) The Redirection, online:
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/03/05/the-redirection>
Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman (2007) 'Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq a First Look at the Sinjar Records', online: <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA474986.pdf>
Jessica Lewis (2013) Al-Qaeda in Iraq Resurgent, ISW, online:
http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/AQI-Resurgent-10Sept_0.pdf

2011: An 'Arab Spring'?

Overview:

- The second phase of the NME wars took the opportunity of the 'Arab Spring' of 2010-2011, where political reform upheavals and rallies shook up Tunisia and Egypt;
- Tunisia saw some reforms, Egypt reverted to a status quo;
- There was a brief uprising in Bahrain, but the least democratic Arab regimes, the Persian Gulf monarchies, were untouched;
- Yet from 2011 Washington (backed by the Arab league) pursued proxy wars against the two most progressive Arab countries, Libya and Syria;
- Key to both interventions was the use of sectarian Islamists, backed by NATO and its propaganda wars;
- Libya was crushed by a NATO invasion, but Syria fought on, eventually supported by Iran and Russia;
- The one successful revolution, in Yemen, led to a brutal US-backed & Saudi Arabia led war, which began to fail in 2018.



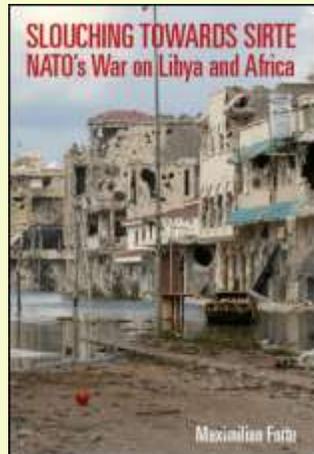
The destruction of Libya, 2011

Key developments:

- Qatar/Al Jazeera backed al Qaeda style insurgency in eastern Libya, Islamist sectarianism, not 'political reform';
- Fake (later retracted) claims of 'civilian massacres';
- NATO bombing destroys the state, murders Gaddafi;
- Oil wealth carved up but no effective state a decade later.



NATO nations set to reap spoils of Libya war



Libya/Gaddafi's counter-hegemonic 'sins' and the smokescreen for war:

- Libya backed the Palestinian cause, was not integrated into the US Africom and was pushing for an African Union gold currency (Brown 2016)
- Gaddafi's crackdown on the insurrection was 'much less lethal' than suggested - he had "refrained from indiscriminate violence"; of the almost one thousand casualties in the first seven weeks, only about 3% were women and children (Kuperman 2015)
- Gaddafi pledged no reprisals in Benghazi and 'no evidence or reason' supported the claim that he planned mass killings (Kuperman 2015)
- When government forces were about to regain the east of the country, NATO intervened and another ten thousand died (Kuperman 2015)

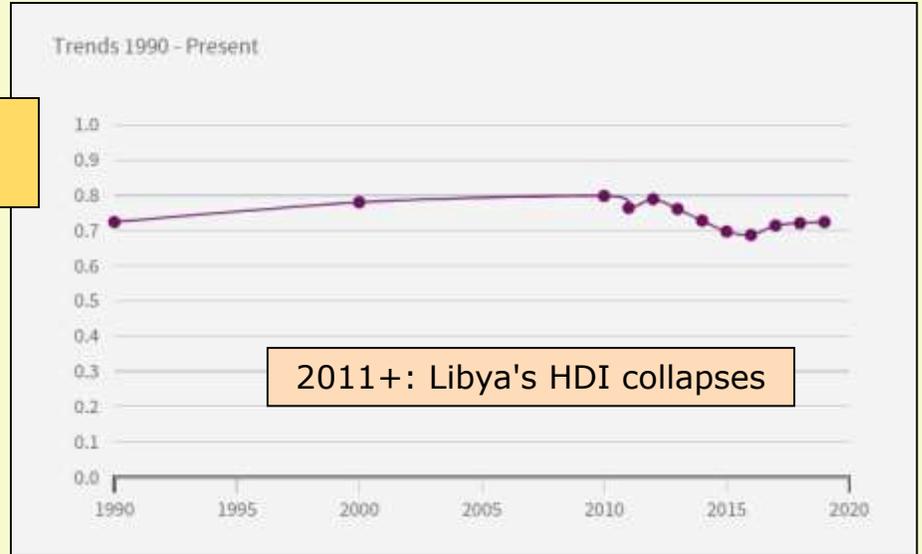
Ellen Brown (2016) 'Why Qaddafi had to go: African gold, oil and the challenge to monetary imperialism', *The Ecologist*, online: <https://theecologist.org/2016/mar/14/why-qaddafi-had-go-african-gold-oil-and-challenge-monetary-imperialism>
Doug Bandow (2020) 'The Obama Administration Wrecked Libya for a Generation', *Cato*, 10 Jan, online: <https://www.cato.org/commentary/obama-administration-wrecked-libya-generation>

Libya in ruins: the consequences

20 years progress in human development wiped out (UNDP), open air slave markets begin

Sub-imperial ambitions: France/Sarkozy's aims

to gain a greater share of Libya oil production, increase French influence in North Africa, improve Sarkozy's internal political situation in France, provide the French military with an opportunity to reassert its position, address the concern Qaddafi's plans to supplant France as the dominant power in Francophone Africa (in Brown 2016)



The Libyan Slave Trade Has Shocked the World.
Here's What You Should Know



Amnesty backtracks on 'human rights' claims, Obama admits 'mistake'

President Obama: Libya aftermath 'worst mistake' of presidency

Video (2'56"): Humanitarian intervention in Libya
Fuller version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yh4Oozz1sXU>

Maximilian Forte (2012) *Slouching Towards Sirte: NATO's War on Libya and Africa*, Baraka Books
Alan J. Kuperman (2015) 'Obama's Libya Debacle: How a Well-Meaning Intervention Ended in Failure', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 2, online: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/libya/2019-02-18/obamas-libya-debacle>
Doug Bandow (2020) 'The Obama Administration Wrecked Libya for a Generation', *Cato*, 10 Jan, online: <https://www.cato.org/commentary/obama-administration-wrecked-libya-generation>

UNSC resolution 1973: 'R2P' in practice:

- The 'R2P' was developed to help big powers intervene, using Chapter VII of the UN Charter
- UNSC 1973 allowed such intervention, 'to protect civilians', with a 'no fly zone', but it became regime change, an obvious abuse;
- Implications:
 - the US, UK and France could not do it again with Syria, China and Russia rejected it;
 - the UNSC remained split, unable to prevent NME wars, driven by the NATO powers.

New hegemonic doctrine: a 'responsibility to protect'

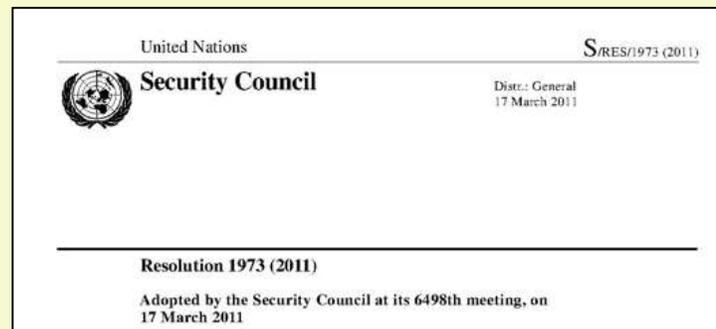
The 'responsibility to protect' – a new western doctrine

- ❑ International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) 2001, promotes 'sovereignty as responsibility', ref. Cambodia, Rwanda.
- ❑ 2005 World Summit (follow up to Millennium Summit) includes par.s 138-139: **Each individual State has the responsibility** to protect its populations from "genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity" ... The international community should ... encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility ... The **international community**, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other **peaceful means**, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help protect populations from ["*"] .. [and] through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including **Chapter VII**, on a case-by-case basis'

see: <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/>



UNSC resolution 1973 (2011) invokes Chapter VII (armed intervention) on 'civilian protection' grounds



Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Demands* the immediate establishment of a cease-fire and a complete end to violence and all attacks against, and abuses of, civilians;

Protection of civilians

4. *Authorizes* Member States that have notified the Secretary-General, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, and acting in cooperation with the Secretary-General, to take all necessary measures, notwithstanding paragraph 9 of resolution 1970 (2011), to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya,

No Fly Zone

6. *Decides* to establish a ban on all flights in the airspace of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in order to help protect civilians;

The Dirty War on Syria 2011-2021

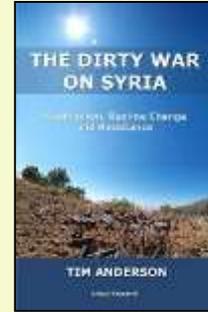
Protest, 'revolution' and reality

- 'Arab Spring' myth says 'peaceful protesters' were repressed by Syrian 'regime';
- There were indeed political reform demonstrations;
- But that movement was rapidly hijacked by a violent, NATO-backed Islamist (al Qaeda) insurrection;
- Seeing this, the reform movement reverted to backing the state and the Syrian Arab Army.

Gowans (2017) writes that the USA: 'had waged a long war against Syria from the very moment the country's fiercely independent Arab nationalist movement ... came to power in 1963 ... Washington sought to purge Arab nationalist influence from ... the Arab world more broadly.'
Stephen Gowans (2017) Washington's Long War on Syria



Three dissident western books



Anderson (2016) documents 'dirty wars' from Latin America to the 'New Middle East'. In Syria the cover story was that NATO and the Gulf monarchies 'were supporting a secular and democratic revolution'; the actual process was the US and allies taking cover of a political reform movement to launch a sectarian insurrection.
Tim Anderson (2016) The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, regime change and resistance

Abrams (2021: 82-86) suggests five converging imperial rationales:

- Eliminate 'the final vestige' of Arab nationalism in the Middle East
- "Isolate Iran and cripple Hezbollah", to protect Israel;
- Remove Iran-Syria links, providing alternative gas supplies for Europe;
- Further partitioning to strategically isolate China and Russia and Iran;
- Create a new launch-pad for 'jihadist' mercenaries to be used against other NATO adversaries.

A. B. Abrams (2021) World War in Syria, Clarity Press

Persistent 'Syrian Revolution' myths

- There were indeed 'peaceful protesters' but sectarian violence began in March 2011, driving the reform movement off the streets;
- While there were secular dissidents, extremist salafists quickly came to dominate this 'revolution' - genocidal "Christians to Beirut, Alawites to the grave" slogans came from Homs in April-May 2011;
- The atrocities of sectarian Islamists (well before ISIS came across from Iraq) revolted the Syrian people;
- Only a very small part of the nationalist Syrian Arab Army defected;
- After the insurrection was crushed in Daraa and Homs, the 'revolution' addressed itself more to western audiences;
- False flag massacres and fake chemical weapons claims were aimed at western audiences, to incite greater western intervention.

Anderson (2016) The Dirty War on Syria, Chapters 8 and 9

"Christians to Beirut; Alawites to *tabout* (the coffin)."



Much of the 'Syrian Revolution' propoganda was aimed at an English speaking audience, aiming to incite Libyan-style NATO intervention

The Young Men Who Started Syria's Revolution Speak About Daraa, Where It All Began



Many western left-liberals joined the 'Syrian Revolution' bandwagon

How the decade long dirty war on Syria actually began

The myth begins with arrests of some teenagers in Daraa. However media reports from early 2011 show that: (i) weapons were being transported to Syria from the Saudis, via Iraq, before the violence; (ii) many weapons were captured at Daraa's al Omari Mosque; (iii) more police than protesters were initially killed in Daraa; (iv) regardless, western media began their endless 'peaceful protester v. regime' stories.

Reuters, 12 March 2011: "SANA said the shipment, intercepted at the Tanaf border crossing Monday, was intended "for use in actions that affect Syria's internal security and spread unrest and chaos" ... published pictures [showed] dozens of grenades and pistols as well as rifles and ammunition belts ... the driver of the truck [said] the weapons had been loaded in Baghdad, and that he had been told he would be paid \$5,000 to deliver them in Syria."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-iraq-idUSTRE72A3MI20110311>
<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/143026>
<http://yalibnan.com/2011/03/21/7-syrian-policemen-killed-in-sunday-clashes-report/>



Al-Jazeera Host Incites Genocidal Hatred Towards Syrian Alawites

The Houla massacre and other false flags

- May 2012: as the armed groups were being driven out of Homs city, they committed a massacre at the village of Houla, then blamed it on un-named 'thugs' (Shabiha) working for the Syrian government;
- Western media and a UN group, co-chaired by a US diplomat, adopted and repeated the armed groups' false story;
- However eyewitnesses told Syrian, Russian, Dutch and German media that the Farouq Brigade (FSA) and local collaborators were responsible, they gave names of the killers and why certain families were targeted;
- The massacre was used to impose western 'sanctions' on Syria;
- Other similar false flag massacres were committed and used to blame the Syrian government, in attempts to gain western intervention;
- Some in 2012 were exposed by western journalists - the Daraya massacre (Robert Fisk) and the Aqrab massacre (Alex Thompson);
- All shared the same pattern: slaughter civilians and blame the Syrian Army or 'Assad'; a loyal western media would repeat it.

Musin, Marat (2012) 'The Houla Massacre: Opposition Terrorists "Killed Families Loyal to the Government', Global Research, 1 June
Fisk, Robert (2012) 'Inside Daraya - how a failed prisoner swap turned into a massacre', 29 August
Thompson, Alex (2012) 'Was there a massacre in the Syrian town of Aqrab?' 14 December
Anderson, Tim (2015) 'The Houla Massacre Revisited: "Official Truth" in the Dirty War on Syria', Global Research, 24 March

Houla video, excerpt (2'03"), full compilation here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3i6F2pM8Ms>

The Dirty War On Syria. The Houla Massacre Revisited
By Prof. Tim Anderson
Global Research, December 07, 2015

UN of this article:
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-dirty-war-on-syria-the-houla-massacre-revisited/4161832>



This article examines and documents the Houla massacre of May 2012, a terrible incident in the Syrian Crisis which came closest to attracting UN intervention. The analysis here seeks to include all relevant evidence, both from witnesses and on the UN processes. A series of appalling civilian massacres during the conflict helped set the tone for another round of 'humanitarian intervention' or 'responsibility to protect' debates.

The killings at Houla deserve close attention. However, because of NATO's abuse of the 'no fly zone' authorization for Libya and the wider geo-politics of Syria, Russia and China would not allow a similar UN Security Council authorization of force. As the US did not want another prolonged ground war, big power intervention remained indirect, through proxy militias. While the Syrian army attacked these armed groups, these groups carried out public executions and constantly tried to blame the Syrian Army for attacks on civilians.

I explained in Chapter Four the context to the Islamist insurrection in Daraa, and that the centre of the insurrection spread up into the Homs area. Many Homs residents became terrified by the sectarian-geocidal slogan of 'Christians to Beirut, Alawites to the tomb'. Reports of these slogans appeared in the US media from May 2011 onwards (Blanford 2011, Erelz Zan 2012, Adams 2012, Wakefield 2012). These FSA groups, with their al-Nusra partners, did indeed drive Christians to Beirut and slaughtered Alawites and many other pro-government people. The Orthodox and Catholic churches blamed Farouq for the large scale ethnic cleansing of more than 50,000 Christians from Homs (CNA 2012). They began to impose an Islamic tax (Spencer 2012). A local analyst concluded most of Farouq were sectarian Salafis, armed and funded by Saudi Arabia, while Khalid bin al-Walid remained loyal to and supported by the Muslim Brotherhood (Mortada 2012). Geocidal slogans and actual ethnic cleansing would never have come from 'moderate' religious people, let alone a secular revolution.



Syrian public opinion during the war

One important way to cut through the claims of 'failed democracies' and 'enemy dictators' who are 'killing their own people' is by polls and estimates from independent or hostile sources. In the first years of the war these polls showed majority support for Assad, more or less coinciding with the 70%+ support suggested by Syrian polls.

Tim Anderson (2016) *The Dirty War on Syria*, Chapter 5

TESEV (2012) 'The perception of Turkey in the Middle East 2011', Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfi

Emirates Voice (2013) NATO data: Assad winning war for Syrians' hearts and mind

Doha Debates (2011) 'This House believes President Assad must resign', 27 November

Poll Q	Date	%	Poll Host
Revolution in Syria "unlikely due to Assad's popularity"	Feb 2011	Na	Wikstrom, Al Jazeera (Qatar)
Support violent protest in Syria?	Late 2011	5%	TESEV 2012 (Turkey)
Should Assad stay?	Dec 2011	51%	Doha debates (Qatar)
Assad support in Aleppo?	Mid 2012	70%+	Three 'rebel' leaders in Aleppo
National support for Assad?	Mid 2014	70%	NATO consultant

Abu Sadek of Liwa Suqooral-Sha'ba:

"The Aleppans here, all of them, are loyal to the criminal Bashar, they inform on us, they tell the regime where we are ... If God wasn't with us, we would have been wiped out a long time ago." Time magazine, 14 Nov 2012

SYRIA

Aleppo's Deadly Stalemate: A Visit to Syria's Divided Metropolis

The rebels know they are not loved by Aleppo's urbane population but they are increasingly inspired by a higher power

Most Syrians back President Assad, but you'd never know from western media

Jonathan Steele



NATO data: Assad winning war for Syrians' hearts and minds

As the US re-entered Iraq in 2014, Washington blames its allies for mass terrorism

When the Syrian salafists failed in Homs, in 2012 tens of thousands of international 'jihadists' were sent into Syria, mainly through Turkey. Then came ISIS. The role of US allies was hard to hide.

One degree of separation



US DIA, August 2012

- 'major forces' of the insurgency are extremists;
- 'the west' and Gulf regimes support them;
- 'Salafist principality' (Islamic state) in eastern Syria is "exactly" what the western powers want.

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

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

C. THE WEST, GULF COUNTRIES, AND TURKEY SUPPORT THE OPPOSITION; WHILE RUSSIA, CHINA, AND IRAN SUPPORT THE REGIME.

b(1) Sec. 1.4 (c), (b)(1) Sec. 1.4 (d)

May 16, 2013 7:09 pm

Qatar bankrolls Syrian revolt with cash and arms

By Roula Khalaf and Abigail Fielding Smith

THE SAUDI CONNECTION

Wahhabism and Global Jihad

VP Joe Biden, Oct. 2014: "Our allies in the region ... the Turks ... the Saudis, the Emiratis ... they were so determined to take down Assad ... they poured hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of tons of weapons into anyone who would fight against Assad ... [i.e.] al Nusra and al Qaeda and the extremist elements of jihadis coming from other parts of the world ... [including] this outfit called ISIL."

B. THE OPPOSITION FORCES WILL TRY TO USE THE IRAQI TERRITORY AS A SAFE HAVEN FOR ITS FORCES TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SYMPATHY OF THE IRAQI BORDER POPULATION, MEANWHILE TRYING TO RECRUIT FIGHTERS AND TRAIN THEM ON THE IRAQI SIDE, IN ADDITION TO HARBORING REFUGEES (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).

Video (2'19"): Syria by admissions

Full version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjtdJX2gVmI>

Normalising mass terrorism - the key to 21stC 'smart power'

Syria's Democracy Jihad

Why ISIS Fighters Support the Vote

By Vera Mironova, Loubna Mrie, Richard Nielsen, and Sam Whitt January 13, 2015



Now the truth emerges: how the US fuelled the rise of Isis in Syria and Iraq
Seumas Milne



The Saudi styled ISIS/ISIL/DAESH came to Syria from Iraq and Turkey, assisted by the USA

Syria: some 300 civilians taken hostage by al-Nusra rebels

US media tries to rebrand Jabhat al Nusra aka HTS (al Qaeda in western Syria) as 'moderate rebels'



Al-Qaeda video shows public execution of woman accused of adultery



Mironova et al (2015) 'Syria's Democracy Jihad', Foreign Affairs, 13 Jan, online: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2015-01-13/syrias-democracy-jihad>
Choksy and Choksy (2015) The Saudi Connection: Wahhabism and Global Jihad, World Affairs, Vol 178, No 1
Anderson, Tim (2016) The Dirty War on Syria, Chapter 12
Taddonio, Patrice (2021) 'The Designated Terrorist and the Fight Over the Future of Syria's Last Opposition Stronghold', PBS, 1 June, online: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/designated-terrorist-syria-opposition-abu-mohammad-al-jolani-documentary-idlib-province/>

Propaganda team: the UK-US funded 'White Helmets'

So long as the al Qaeda dominated groups (Nusra, HTS) occupied parts of Syria, they had 'media activists' with them, paid by western governments to enact scenes to show alleged Syrian government atrocities. Foremost amongst these were the UK-US funded 'White Helmets', actually the same armed group members with new costumes. The UK+USA funded group had strong support from British and USA media and 'media activists'. When the armed groups were forced out of south Syria in April 2018, the White Helmets were evacuated by Israel.



versus



VIDEO (1'07"): Who are the White Helmets?

Fuller compilation of videos showing links between the White Helmets and al Qaeda groups in Syria here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSeHbaK9chw>

Vanessa Beeley (2017) The White Helmets, fact or fiction, online: <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/71/910>
Jan Oberg (2018) Just how grey are the White Helmets and their backers?, online: <https://transnational.live/2018/08/08/just-how-grey-are-the-white-helmets-and-their-backers/>
Maxim Grigoriev and S. Maiziel (2018) White Helmets: fact checking by eyewitnesses and former volunteers, online: <http://democracysciencefund.ru/userfiles/THE%20%20WHITE%20HELMETS%20.pdf>

WMDs take two: chemical weapons claims collapse

Sarin gas (banned under UN convention) was first used by Jabhat al Nusra against Syrian soldiers and civilians at Khan al Asal (Aleppo), in early 2013. Nusra members were arrested in possession of sarin at Adana, Turkey (Reuters 2013).

However from 2013 to 2018 this same terror group blamed the Syrian Government for using chemical weapons against civilians, and western governments and media repeated that story. **Independent evidence** always discredited the claims, and there was never a **credible military objective** for it. But the same governments engaged in war against Syria persisted with these false claims.

The issue led to a scandal at the UN's OPCW agency, where whistleblowers accused managers of fabricating evidence (Maté 2021)

MSM silence on OPCW Douma scandal 'ridiculous', says journalist gagged by Newsweek after scandalous leak

**FOUR WHISTLEBLOWERS CLAIM OPCW IS
SILENCING THE TRUTH**



VIDEO (1'15"): Lord West: why would Assad use chemical weapons?

Reuters (2013) 'Turkey arrests 12 in raids on 'terrorist' organization', 31 May
Seymour Hersh (2013) 'Whose Sarin?' London Review of Books
Theodore Postol (2017) 'A Critique of 'False and Misleading' White House Claims About Syria's Use of Lethal Gas', TruthDig
Anderson, Tim (2019) Axis of Resistance, Chapter 8
Maté, Aaron (2021) 'At UN, Aaron Maté debunks OPCW's Syria lies and confronts US, UK on cover-up', 18 April

The tide turns: Syrian allies Russia and Iran engage, Sept 2015

Syria's battle against mass terrorism

- ❑ 2011-2015: Syrian Army assisted by Lebanon's Hezbollah liberate most of western Syria;
- ❑ However 2015 offensives from the NW and East overrun Idlib (al Nusra/HTS) and Palmyra (ISIS);
- ❑ Sept 2015: invited Russian air power and Iranian ground support enter in support of Syria;
- ❑ Russian media exposes Turkey-ISIS oil theft;
- ❑ Palmyra and Aleppo liberated in 2016;
- ❑ Deir Ezzor liberated late 2017, Iranian General Soleimani declares the region free of ISIS/DAESH;
- ❑ East Ghouta and Daraa are liberated, early 2018;
- ❑ All 'non reconciled' groups are sent to Idlib, 'White Helmets' in the south are evacuated by Israel.



Kerry Admits They Watched ISIS Grow, Hoped ISIS Would Weaken Assad

2012 Defense Intelligence Agency document: West will facilitate rise of Islamic State "in order to isolate the Syrian regime"



Rojava, a Syrian Kurdistan? more divide and rule

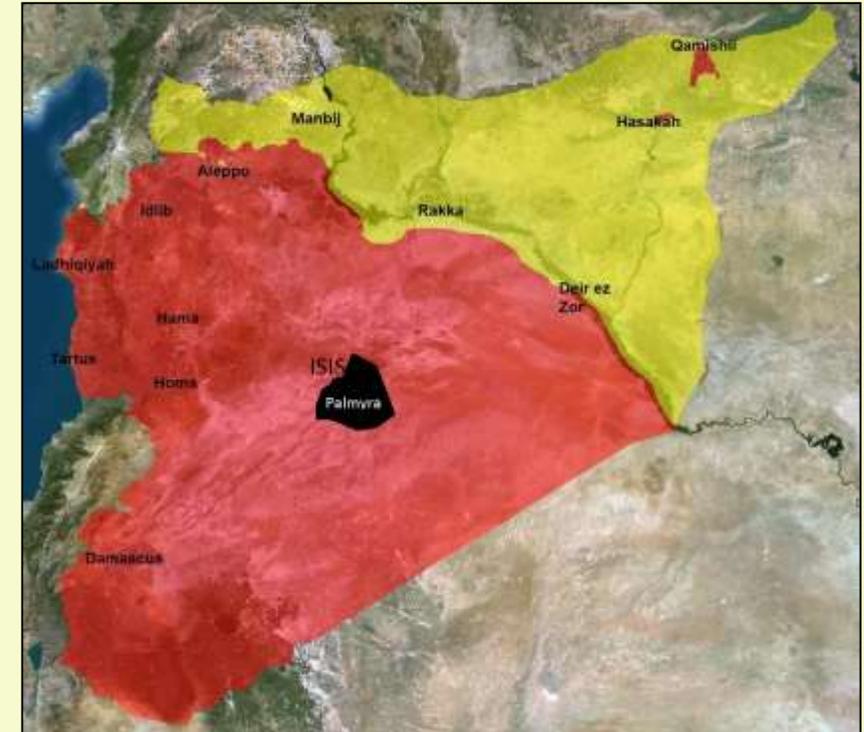
Washington's divide and rule plan for Syria added a separatist Kurd force, in late 2015;

Having directly invaded east and north Syria, from Iraq, the US created the 'Syrian Democratic Forces' (SDF/QSD) from the existing YPG, itself a subset of the much larger Turkish PKK;

Kurdish separatism in Syria was never an indigenous self-determination movement; historically they were always a minority;

The idea of 'Rojava' Kurd homeland in Syria was exploited cynically by the US and had no support in the region other than from Israel;

Kurds remain a tiny minority in the major NE cities of Manbij, Raqqa and Deir Ezzor, where there are popular uprisings (2021), as their US patrons help the SDF/QSD conscript young men and steal Syrian oil and grain.



Anderson, Tim (2019) Syria, Washington and the Kurds, American Herald Tribune, online: <https://counter-hegemonic-studies.net/swk1/>

Anti-Kurdish protests in east Syria could endanger US plans

By BASSEM MROUE May 9, 2019

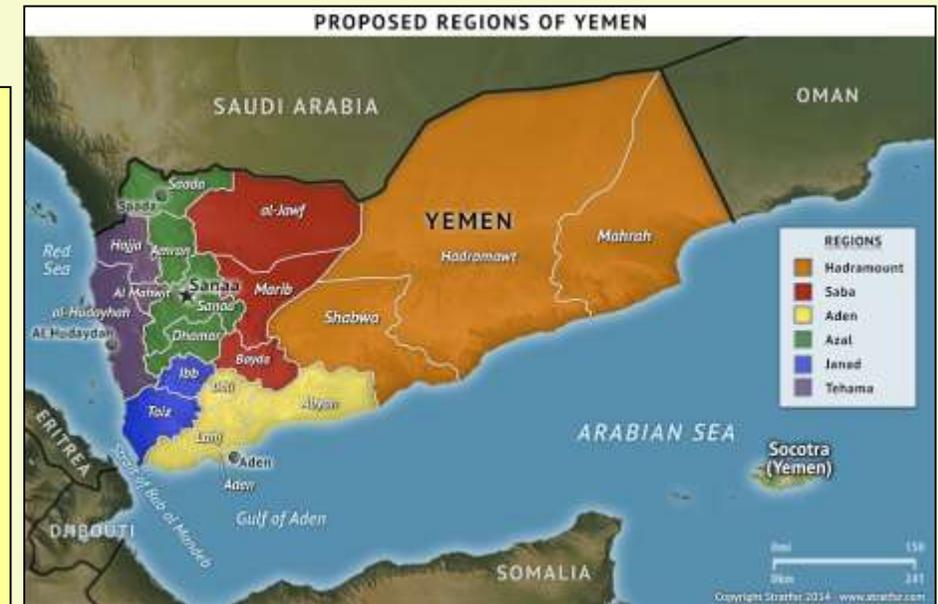
The war on Yemen/1

Recent chronology

1990: Yemen (north & south) unified under President Ali Abdullah Saleh;
2011: Arab Spring protests lead to Saleh crackdown and splits in the army;
2012: Vice President A.M. Hadi becomes interim president, after a plebiscite, and tries to re-partition the country in a federal system;
2014: Ansarallah ('Houthis') led coalition takes control of the capital Sanaa;
2015 (Jan): Hadi resigns and flees the country to Saudi Arabia;
2015 (March): Saudis, backed by other Persian Gulf states and the USA, declare war on the Ansarallah led revolutionary government;
2015-2021: Saudi group imposes naval and air blockade on most of populated areas of Yemen, leading to a huge humanitarian crisis;
2018: UAE backed South Transitional Council (STC) seize control of Aden;
2021: Saudis call for a ceasefire, after suffering major military defeats.

Obama administration offered \$115bn in weapons to Saudi Arabia: report

American Cluster Bombs Are Being Used To Kill And Maim Civilians In Yemen



In the only successful revolution of the Arab Spring, an Ansarallah ('Houthis') led coalition forms government in the capital, in 2014;

The USA and Saudis press the fiction of a 'Hadi government', western powers help enforce the naval blockade;

NB. Strategic importance of Yemen, at entrance to the Red Sea; Ansarallah (Zaydis) are religiously distinct but strategically backed by Iran and Resistance bloc (Almahfali and Root 2020)

Past and current attempts to divide Yemen (see map) aim to weaken it as an independent country;

The war on Yemen/2

Yemen joins the Axis of Resistance, seeing common cause in opposing the USA and Israel in the region;
The Ansarallah 'scream' emblem (top right) calls for 'death to America, death to Israel';

The air and sea siege led the UN to call Yemen "the world's worst humanitarian crisis";

The USA, UK & France tried to disown this war but kept selling billions in weapons to the Saudis and UAE, and backed the naval siege;

Israelis establishes a spy base and tourist industry on Yemen's Socotra island;

Despite asymmetries, in 2021 the Saudis called for a truce, but with terms are distorted by UNSC 2216.



Yemen's Houthis seek regional role as part of Axis of Resistance

'UAE, Saudi Arabia allowed Israel onto Yemen's Socotra'

Tribal chief of Socotra accuses UAE, Saudi Arabia of allowing Israel to establish presence on Yemeni island

Mubarak Mohamed | 01.09.2020

UNSC resolution 2216 (2015): "defines the Houthis as the primary belligerent .. [and] justifies the ongoing involvement of foreign actors in Yemen" (Sheline 2021)

Saudi Arabia's scramble for an exit strategy in Yemen

Mohammed Almahfali & James Root (2020) 'How Iran's Islamic Revolution Does, and Does Not, Influence Houthi Rule in Northern Yemen', Sana'a Center For Strategic Studies, online: <https://sanaacenter.org/publications/analysis/9050>
Annelle Sheline (2021) 'Washington Has Yemen Policy Backward', Foreign Policy, 3 June, online: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/06/03/houthis-saudi-arabia-biden-yemen-policy-backward/>
Tehran Times (2021) 'Investigating disasters caused by Yemen War and Role of Intl. Law on Armed Conflicts', 14 May, online: <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/460901/Investigating-disasters-caused-by-Yemen-War-and-Role-of-Intl>

Central role of Israel in the 'New Middle East'

The UK and USA have repeated their support for Israel, as the forward base for their 'interests' in the region;

These sponsors have not imposed limits on Israel's expansion, supporting invasions of Lebanon, attacks on Syria and Iran and accepting Israel's annexation of Syrian territory;

A 'Greater Israel', spoken of by many Israeli leaders (in Biblical terms), could stretch from the Nile to the Euphrates;

Yet the Palestinian Resistance has long relied on Iran, Hezbollah and Syria, for planning, finance and arms;

Obsessive Israeli attacks on Iran, Hezbollah and Syria confirm the importance of this regional resistance network;

Yet a strong Israel (with the Saudis and others) is relied on by Washington for a future policing role in its 'New Middle East'.



Eretz Yisrael (Genesis 15:18–21) the land supposedly given to the children of Abraham: "from the brook of Egypt to the Euphrates".

The British objective with Israel was "to establish in a strategic corner in the Near East a body of people in close coalition with the British" (Jefferies 2014).

Joe Biden (1986; 2013): "If there were not an Israel, we would have to invent one to make sure our [USA] interests were preserved".

As an Occupier, Israel Has No Right to "Self-Defense"

Bashir Abu Manneh (2021) As an Occupier, Israel Has No Right to "Self-Defense", Jacobin, May
ICJ (2004): Israel as an occupying power could not rely on a 'right of self-defence' to construct its Wall or otherwise undermine the rights of the Palestinian people. online: <https://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/131>

Western responses to Israel and the NME wars

Liberal 'support' for Palestine, oppose Regional Resistance

- Oppose openly fascist Israeli faction but indulge liberal Zionists;
- Recognise Palestinians as victims of Israeli brutality but oppose and attack the Palestinian + Regional resistance (Hezb., Syria, Iran);
- Accepts the 'right' of occupation forces to 'self defence';

Anti-colonial solidarity with Palestine and Regional Resistance

- Opposes wars of aggression, colonialism and recognises the right to resistance and self-determination;
- Rejects the claimed 'right' of occupation forces to 'self defence';
- Rejects NME attacks on Regional Resistance states and peoples (Hezb., Syria, Iran, Yemen).

Danny Haiphong (2021) 'Palestine is a Mirror into the Contemporary World Struggle Against Imperialism, and its Contradictions', Black Agenda report, 27 May, online: <https://blackagenda.com/palestine-mirror-contemporary-world-struggle-against-imperialism-and-its-contradictions>



The openly fascist Israeli faction has become dominant and this poses a dilemma for liberal Zionists

Casualties of the US-led NME wars?

(a) lower estimate (left) 800,000 plus 3.1m 'indirect deaths'; (b) higher estimate, 'about 6 million' deaths

Human costs of the post 9/11 wars

Mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, and Yemen - conservative estimates from Vine et al 2020

<input type="checkbox"/> Direct deaths	800,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Indirect deaths	3.1 million
<input type="checkbox"/> Displaced	37 - 59 million

Since 2001 "U.S. forces have fought in wars or participated in other combat operations in at least 24 countries ... deaths and injuries number in the millions ... "At least 37 million people have fled their homes in the eight most violent wars the U.S. military has launched or participated in since 2001 ... displacing 37 million - and perhaps as many as 59 million While "indirect deaths" are still being calculated by researchers, the total may exceed 3.1 million."

Vine et al (2020) Displacement Caused by the United States' Post-9/11 Wars, Brown University, September 21, online:

https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2020/Displacement_Vine%20et%20al_Costs%20of%20War%202020%2009%2008.pdf

'How many millions have been killed in America's Post 9/11 wars?' The true cost is "about 6 million" lives - Davies 2018

Iraq	2.4 million
Pakistan	325,000
Syria	1.5 million
Yemen	175,000

The NME economic wars: 'unilateral coercive measures'

Unlike the UN backed sanctions which were used against Apartheid South Africa in the 1980s, Washington's 'unilateral coercive measures' (UCM or 'sanctions') are generally illegal for these reasons:

- international law prohibits economic coercion, by the principle of non-intervention and an implied ban in the UN Charter, supplemented by customary and treaty law in areas such as in trade, shipping and telecommunications,
- The illegality is more obvious when there is an 'unlawful intent', such as damaging the economy of another nation or retaliation for political coercion,
- Measures which damage the rights of third parties are also illegal.

These UCM proliferated so much that in 2014 the UN Human Rights Council adopted resolution 27/21 on human rights and unilateral coercive measures and have appointed experts to investigate UCMs used against several countries.

Tim Anderson (2019) Sanctions as Siege Warfare, Chapter 3 in Axis of Resistance, also online here: <https://counter-hegemonic-studies.site/sanctions-3/>

UNHRC (2021) Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, online: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/ucm/pages/srcoercivemeasures.aspx>



UN Representatives Declare Crippling Sanctions Have Caused Human Rights Violations Amid Pandemic

UN rights expert urges United States to remove sanctions hindering rebuilding in Syria

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1081032>

Crimes of the collaborators: Australian military atrocities in Washington's 'New Middle East' wars



Iraq 2003-04: RAAF cluster bombs attacks on civilians and massacres in Fallujah city

Chris Doran and Tim Anderson (2011) Iraq and the case for Australian War Crimes Trials, <https://counter-hegemonic-studies.site/doran-anderson-2011/>

Afghanistan 2006-2015: Australian soldiers murder at least 39 Afghan civilians and prisoners

Paul Brereton (2020) Afghanistan Inquiry Report, <https://afghanistandinquiry.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/IGADF-Afghanistan-Inquiry-Public-Release-Version.pdf>



Syria 2016: RAAF slaughter of 120 Syrian soldiers to assist ISIS terrorists at Deir Ezzor

Tim Anderson (2017) Implausible Denials: The Crime at Jabal al Tharda, <https://counter-hegemonic-studies.site/jat-1/>

3. An Axis of Resistance

Every NME war has been a war of aggression (the mother of all great crimes), and a violation of the right to self determination; In the target countries the debate is over methods of resistance; A counter-hegemonic military alliance, has grown since 2015; The NME wars have catalysed an 'Axis of Resistance', raised new Levant and West Asian federation options, while expanding regional strategic and economic roles for China and Russia.



Russian military cooperation with Iran and Syria has expanded since 2015

THE TREES MUST FORM RANKS TO KEEP THE GIANT WITH SEVEN-LEAGUE BOOTS FROM PASSING! IT IS THE TIME OF MOBILIZATION, OF MARCHING TOGETHER, AND WE MUST GO FORWARD IN CLOSE RANKS, LIKE SILVER IN THE VEINS OF THE ANDES.

- JOSÉ MARTÍ -



The 19thC Cuban hero Jose Marti observed that little countries cannot fight big powers on their own, a strong union is necessary

The growth of a Resistance 'Axis'

Amongst the independent states and peoples of the Middle East (West Asia) the main question has been how to survive, organise and resist;

Axis of Resistance: organised by those facing the US ('American') and Zionist threats - **allies** have been Russia, China and others.

Key members: Iran, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Hezbollah/Lebanon & Yemen

Resistance Commander **Qassem Soleimani** was seen particularly dangerous to the NME plan, as he represented a unified 'Axis';

Assassination of Soleimani, Jan 2020: all Palestinian factions mourned him, Iraqi Parliament demanded expulsion of US forces; western social media banned sympathy for Soleimani ('dangerous person');

Nevertheless, military, strategic and economic links were built between the dozens of states targeted by 'unilateral coercive measures'.

The term 'Axis of Resistance' was a response to President G.W. Bush's term: 'Axis of Evil'



Qasem Soleimani: Trump says US killed 'a monster'

Facebook admits censoring posts supporting slain Iranian General Qassem Soleimani

The Iran led resistance coalition grew



- The defensive resistance bloc, even when referred to as 'proxies' of Iran's 'intervention' in its own region, is widely recognised as a growing phenomenon.
- Since at least 2017, US commentators have observed that the 'New Middle East' is more likely to be "a power bloc that includes Iran, Iraq, Syria, Hezbollah and ... Palestine", rather than a US supervised Israeli-Saudi bloc (Mohseni and Kalout 2017);
- This "Axis of Resistance today operates less like a patron-proxy relationship and more as an Iranian-led alliance, centred on collective security" (Katz 2018);
- Indian commentators, noting the rising Russia-Iran-Turkey links and the dictates of geography, expect a future "lower profile" for the US in the region (Hiro 2017).

Payam Mohseni and Hussein Kalout (2017) Iran's Axis of Resistance Rises ... Forging a New Middle East' Foreign Affairs, 24 January, online: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iran/2017-01-24/irans-axis-resistance-rises>

Brian Katz (2018) 'Axis Rising: Iran's Evolving Regional Strategy ...', 11 October, online: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/axis-rising-irans-evolving-regional-strategy-and-non-state-partnerships-middle-east>

Dilip Hiro (2017) As the Russia-Iran-Turkey alliance expands, the US is reconciled to a lower profile, 9 December, online: <https://scroll.in/article/860744/as-the-russia-iran-turkey-alliance-expands-the-us-is-reconciled-to-a-lower-profile>

Strategic Resistance responses 1: a Levant Federation

In face of forced fragmentation there is renewed advocacy of building a federation in the Levant - between Palestine, Lebanon and Syria.

There had been earlier attempts at federations of Arab states, notably the UAR in 1958-1961 (see graphic, below right);

Hafez al Assad worked towards a federation of Syria and Lebanon;

The notion of a Levant Federation emphasises the permanent neighbourly strategic relations between the Levant peoples;

Anis al Naqqash: "The main goals [of this Levant federation] should be: removing Israel [from existence]; liberating the region from Western and American hegemony; networking/integrating the economic, social and intellectual capabilities of the region; opening the borders between the [states of the Levant] for investment and cooperation; and reviving the Levantine confederation not through national or sectarian hegemony, but through voluntary decisions.

Anis al Naqqash (2021) Proposal for a Levantine Confederation, online: <https://counter-hegemonic-studies.site/naqqash-1/>



Strategic Resistance responses 2: a West Asian Alliance

'Axis of Resistance': Iran led alliance, feared by Israeli and US leaders, its basis is opposition to Israel and US domination;

There are important allies who share only some of these objectives: Russia, China, Venezuela, Cuba and others;

The likelihood of a West Asian Alliance will have implications in these areas: military, infrastructure, finance, commerce, education and training;

Washington sees this alliance as a threat to the idea of an 'Arab NATO', centred on the Saudis and other Persian Gulf monarchies;

Of course, what is seen as a threat by Washington is seen as an opportunity for the besieged Resistance countries.

Anderson, Tim (2020) 'Iran's resistance economy and regional integration', *Journal of World Sociopolitical Studies*, Volume 3, Issue 4, Autumn 2019, Pages 649-877, online: https://wsps.ut.ac.ir/article_77940.html

A highway linking Iraq and Syria becomes an opportunity for Tehran

Iran's 'resistance economy' can help build "an economically integrated regional bloc" (Anderson 2019)

Iran's entrenchment of strategic infrastructure in Syria threatens balance of deterrence in the Middle East

Bringing in Russia and China

Overarching: (1) Russian (Venezuelan etc.) commitment to multipolarity (2) Russia and China increase massively trade and strategic cooperation with Iran (2) the US dollar will soon be undermined by the digital Yuan.

Namdar 2021: "It is over-simplistic to call [China-Iran] a \$400 billion deal, for its strategic significance will determine the future of the Middle East ... the most conspicuous [rationale] for the U.S.-Sunni Arab-Israeli alliance is curtailing Iranian hegemony and Chinese involvement in the region."

Goble 2021: Russia-Iran will expand "sectoral economic ties", mega infrastructure, weaponry, "upgrading Iranian ports ... [and] modernising the Iranian navy".



Moscow and Tehran Dramatically Expanding Economic and Security Cooperation

Publication: Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 18 Issue: 88

By: Paul Goble

How the China-Iran Deal Could Reshape the Middle East

Farhang Faraydoon Namdar (2021) 'How the China-Iran Deal Could Reshape the Middle East', 6 May, online: <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/how-china-iran-deal-could-reshape-middle-east-184581>
Vatanka, Alex (2020) 'Russia, Iran, and economic integration on the Caspian', 17 August, online: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/russia-iran-and-economic-integration-caspian>
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Contradictions of the New Middle East plan

- Washington has not given up its attempts to obstruct the formation of new Eurasian blocs, and fears 'multi-polar' power blocs;
- Yet failures in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan Lebanon and Yemen have helped build an expanded Middle East and Eurasian role for Russia and China.

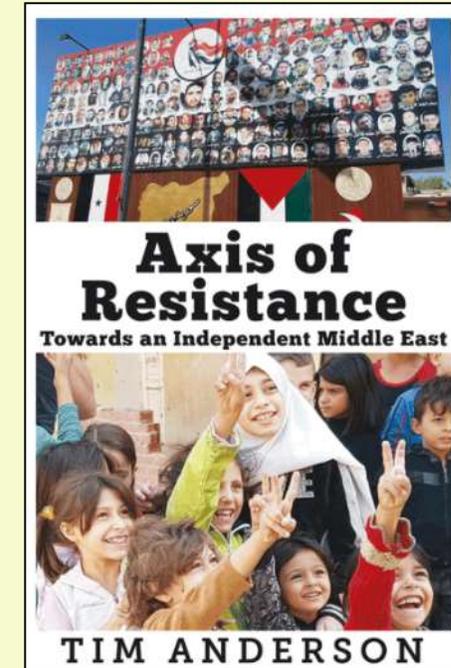
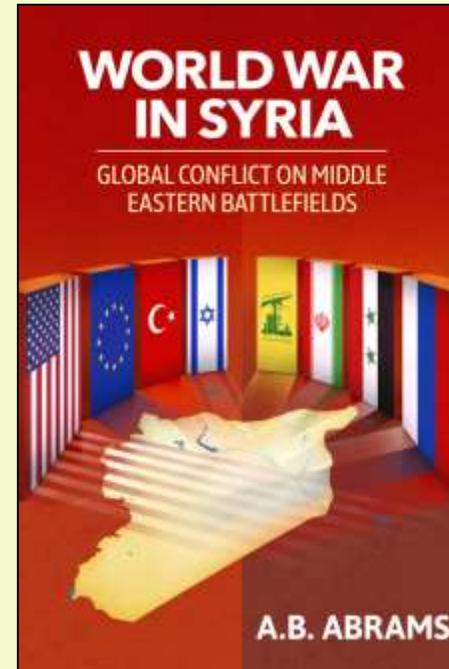
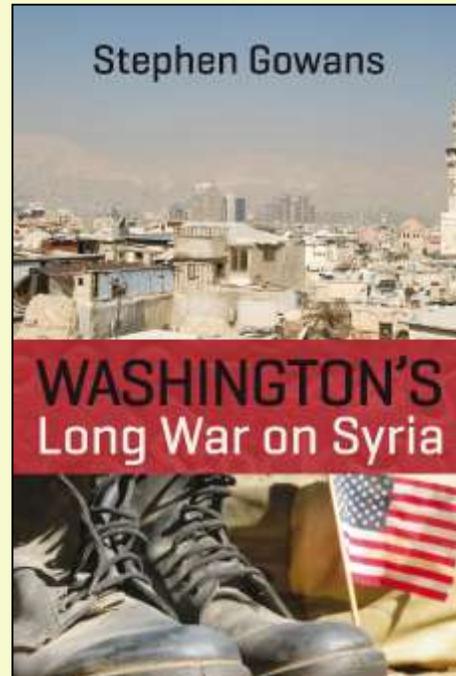
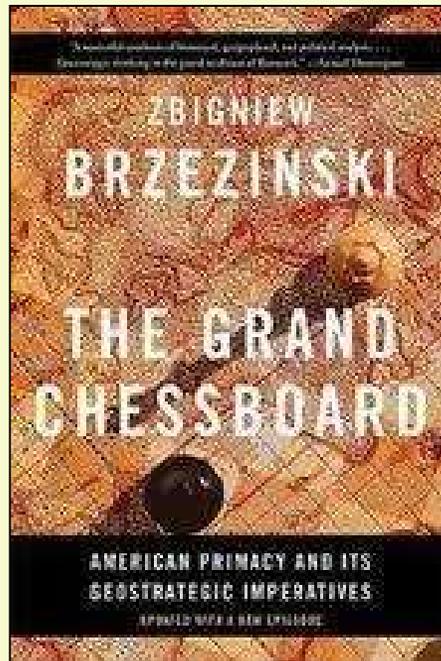
Russia has opened discussions about including Iran as a member in the Eurasian Economic Community and Iran is applying to join the Shanghai Cooperation organisation.
Lawrence Wilkerson: ongoing US occupation of Afghanistan is mainly to undermine Iran and contain the rise of China.

"Shared vision, ideology drive Axis expansion ... the wars of Syria, Iraq and Yemen have expanded the Axis of Resistance ... [including] commitment to resist common enemies Israel, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Gulf allies and [their] salafi-jihadi groups" (Katz 2018)
Brian Katz (2018) 'Axis Rising: Iran's Evolving Regional Strategy ...', 11 October, online:
<https://www.csis.org/analysis/axis-rising-irans-evolving-regional-strategy-and-non-state-partnerships-middle-east>



Main points:

- Washington's 'New Middle East' wars must be understood within the perspective of the new 'Great Game': Washington fears of new multipolar and Eurasian blocs;
- All the NME wars, interventions and blockades are contrary to post-colonial law and norms, all deployed false pretexts;
- The new 'humanitarian intervention' R2P doctrine was used against Libya, but abuse of that pretext led to a permanent fracture in the UNSC, with Russia and China opposing new 'humanitarian intervention' wars;
- The most convoluted and sustained pretexts were used against Syria but, when these failed, multiple foreign occupations (Israel, US, Turkey) and siege followed;
- Mass terrorism was employed by Washington, as a central element of 'smart power', then this terrorism was blamed on US allies;
- The Arab Spring barely touched the least democratic Arab states (the Persian Gulf monarchies), or the US client states; the one successful revolution of that period, in Yemen, was mercilessly attacked and besieged by a US-led bloc;
- US aggression led to the rise of regional military alliances headed by Iran and with the support of Russia and, to a lesser extent, China;
- The effect of several losing NME wars has therefore been to catalyse new strategic and economic Eurasian links, especially between East and West Asia, contrary to the very aims of Washington's plan.
- While Washington is unlikely to admit defeat, we will likely see a strategic retreat in the region, with the US delegating or sub-contracting some of its failing wars.



Zbigniew Brzezinski (1997) *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books

Stephen Gowans (2017) *Washington's Long War on Syria*, Baraka Books

A.B Abrams (2021) *World War in Syria*, Clarity Press

Tim Anderson (2019) *Axis of Resistance: towards an Independent Middle East*, Clarity

NME Video

<i>Slide</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Duration</i>
8	Great game	1.30
11	Wesley Clark	1.48
13	Condoleezza	0.51
18	Libya	2.56
23	Houla	2.03
25	Admissions, terrorism	2.19
27	White Helmets	1.07
28	Lord West	1.15