

# No, Assad Didn't "Win" the War, He Was Compelled by Putin to "Compromise"

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*It's misleading to assert that Assad "won" the war even though he still remains in office as the country's democratically elected and legitimate leader since Putin compelled him to "compromise" on several important issues after the Liberation of Aleppo and accept a political reality completely at odds with what one would otherwise expect from a "victor".*

## The Superficial "Victory"

One of the most fashionable things to say in [Alt-Media](#) is that Assad "won" the war just because he still remains in office as the Arab Republic's democratically elected and legitimate leader, which is in and of itself a major accomplishment when considering that dozens of countries were conspiring for years to violently overthrow him through the [Hybrid War of Terror on Syria](#) but deliberately downplays the contemporary political reality that's completely at odds with what one would otherwise expect from a "victor". Putin compelled Assad to "compromise" on several important issues after the Liberation of Aleppo in exchange for remaining in office, which would have been much more difficult for the Syrian leader to do had his main foreign foes not cut deals with Russia to have this happen, though of course in exchange for something that suits their interests at the Mideast country's partial expense. For better or for worse, and whether out of "pragmatic necessity" or "needless concessions", this is the current situation as it objective exists in Syria today.

## Everything Changed After Aleppo

The Liberation of Aleppo was a monumental moment in the country's conflict that was largely made possible through the game-changing support of the Russian Aerospace Forces, freeing what had been Syria's most populous city up until the start of the war and symbolically returning one of the cradles of the so-called "revolution" to government control. It was after this milestone that the world expected the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and its Russian, Iranian, and Hezbollah allies to sweep through the rest of the country and put a swift end to the war, though that wasn't what happened at all. In fact, almost immediately after the Liberation of Aleppo, Russia convened the first-ever round of the Astana peace talks together with Turkey and Iran and sought to freeze the battle lines, even presenting a so-called "[draft constitution](#)" that it wrote for Syria in order to facilitate peace talks instead of continuing the conflict. As proof of its intent to end the war right then and there, Russia implemented so-called "[de-escalation zones](#)" across the country that put an end to most hostilities.

## "Balancing" And Bartering In The Syrian Bazaar

All of this was surprising for the Syrian leadership, which believed (whether naively or not) that Russia would broaden its original anti-terrorist mandate in order to help it liberate the rest of the country from other armed “opposition” forces that Moscow didn’t officially recognize as terrorists, but there’s no doubt now that Damascus couldn’t have been more wrong. Far from helping Assad regain control over the rest of the country after Aleppo, Putin put a quick end to the kinetic phase of the conflict by brokering a variety of deals with all regional powers as part of Russia’s [21st-century grand strategy](#) to become the supreme “balancing” force in Afro-Eurasia and especially the tri-continental pivot space of the Mideast. The details of what was agreed upon behind the scenes could only have been speculated at that time, but are obvious in hindsight given all that’s happened in the country over nearly the past two and a half years since Aleppo was freed. There’s no question that Assad was compelled to “compromise”, whether willingly or against his will, with the following actors as will now be explained.

#### “Putinyahu’s Rusrael”

The Russian Defense Ministry [acknowledged](#) in September 2018 after the spy plane tragedy that it allowed “[Israel](#)” to bomb Iranian and Hezbollah targets in Syria over 200 times in the preceding 18 months alone, with the attacks still continuing to this day and as recently as just last week. Putin also [announced](#) the creation of a so-called “[working party](#)” with “Israel” to seek the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Syria after his second-most recent meeting with Netanyahu, with the Russian Ambassador to the UN even [telling Saudi media](#) the other week that even Iran “should leave when Syria is stabilized”. Relatedly, Russia also carved out a 140-kilometer anti-Iranian buffer zone beyond the occupied Golan Heights at Tel Aviv’s behest last summer and Putin just helped Netanyahu win reelection through the last-minute photo-op of returning [20 “IDF” remains](#) a few days before the vote. Since then, [rumors have been swirling](#) that Russia also recently delivered [notorious Mossad spy](#) Eli Cohen’s remains too. Altogether, it’s now impossible for anyone to credibly deny the existence of “[Putinyahu’s Rusrael](#)”.

#### America & The Kurds

US-backed Kurdish-led forces currently occupy the northeastern agriculturally and energy-rich one-third of Syria beyond the Euphrates and there are no indications that they’re going to surrender their self-professed autonomy to the centralized Syrian state anytime soon, not least because of the continued presence of US troops there in spite of [Trump’s promised “withdrawal”](#). The American forces act as a “tripwire” preventing the SAA from crossing the river and reasserting its sovereignty over this strategic space, and the [Disaster at Deir ez-Zor](#) in February of last year proved that the US will use overwhelming force to crush any hostile elements that dare to cross the so-called “deconfliction line” that it agreed to create with Russia. Contrary to [what’s regularly implied](#) by Alt-Media, Russia has absolutely no political will to militarily confront the US and risk World War III, hence why it agreed to this informal “partition” of Syria in the first place that it hopes to codify into law through the “draft constitution” that it wrote for its “ally”. Therefore, Russia’s deal-making ensured that Syria lost not only the Golan, but probably also the Northeast as well.

#### Turkey’s “Sphere Of Influence”

That’s not all that Damascus lost as a result of the “balancing” that Russia has done in Syria since the start of its anti-terrorist intervention there because it seems increasingly

impossible that it'll reclaim control over Idlib and the other Turkish-occupied areas of the country too. To be clear, it would probably be just as impossible for the SAA to do so had Russia not intervened in the first place, but the fact remains that Turkey's conventional operations there and ongoing presence in several borderland regions were tacitly approved by Russia, not out of some "devious plot" to slice up Syria but — just like with the American case — because it lacked the political will to enter into World War III-style brinkmanship with a NATO country and thought it much more pragmatic to strike a series of unofficial deals instead. Russia understands Turkey's national security interests in countering Kurdish militants and securing its own "Israeli"-like buffer zone in Syria, hence why it's helped expand its "sphere of influence" and actually formalize part of it through the "de-escalation zones".

### "Rebels" & "Decentralization"

Damascus was already experimenting with amnesty programs prior to the Russian intervention but these picked up pace after Moscow's anti-terrorist campaign began, with Syria's top military partner offering all armed groups in the country the possibility of being recognized as "rebels" who could theoretically participate in the fledgling peace process so long as they disowned internationally recognized terrorist groups like Daesh, with many of them did. This led to several of the most notorious non-"terrorist" groups being invited to the Astana peace process, which eventually led to the decision to create a so-called "[constitutional committee](#)" of 150 total members, with only 1/3 (50) of them being from the government while the remaining 2/3 (50 & 50) will be from the "opposition" and "civil society". Damascus is therefore being treated far from the diplomatic "victor" and is actually equal to the civil society forces that didn't even fight in the war at all. The end result, as Russia envisages it, is the approval of most of the clauses in its "draft constitution", specifically "decentralization" in order to legitimize the "spheres of influence" that it's brokered for others in Syria.

### "With Friends Like These..."

The aforementioned deal-making details are entirely factual but extremely unpopular to talk about in Alt-Media, especially among the most zealous "wishful thinking" "[Putinists](#)" who remain bizarrely convinced that this is all part of some "5D chess" "master plan" that will ultimately see the Russian leader unleash a hail of fire and brimstone on all of Syria's enemies as he "gloriously" liberates the country and deals a "deathblow" to the "New World Order". Many of these voices seriously think that they're "helping" Syria by "covering" for the deals that Putin brokered with the exact same "New World Order" that he's supposed to be "fighting", but they're actually the worst sort of "friends" that Damascus could ever ask for because they've prevented the world from seeing the objective reality of the country's current political situation. While there are undoubtedly those who will argue that Russia is the "friend" that Syria should be most worried about, Damascus has yet to criticize Moscow for "overstepping", suggesting that Assad (begrudgingly?) agrees with what Putin is doing as the "most pragmatic solution" possible.

### Concluding Thoughts

Bearing in mind what was revealed and reviewed in this analysis, it's inaccurate for anyone to assert that Assad "won" the war because, apart from remaining in office as his people's democratically elected and legitimate leader (which is a remarkable feat in and of itself), he was actually compelled by Putin to "compromise" on many fronts and with each of his

country's sworn enemies. Russia's "balancing" role provides Syria the "diplomatic distance" to claim "plausible deniability" and maintain a degree of "strategic ambiguity" that its media surrogates spin according to the situation to suggest whether it truly supports what its "ally" is supposedly doing on its "behalf" or not depending on whichever narrative is thought to be most beneficial for it at any given time. That said, this is probably due more to "pragmatic necessity" on Syria's part because it's technically powerless to oppose Russia even if it think that its "ally" is brokering "needless concessions" at its expense in order to bolster its own regional diplomatic standing, which reinforces the argument that Assad definitely didn't "win" the war like his Alt-Media "friends" swear he did.

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