

Canada: NDP Supporting “Terrorist-Linked” White Helmets for Nobel Prize is a Serious Mistake!

Open Letter by John Ryan

By [Prof. John Ryan](#)

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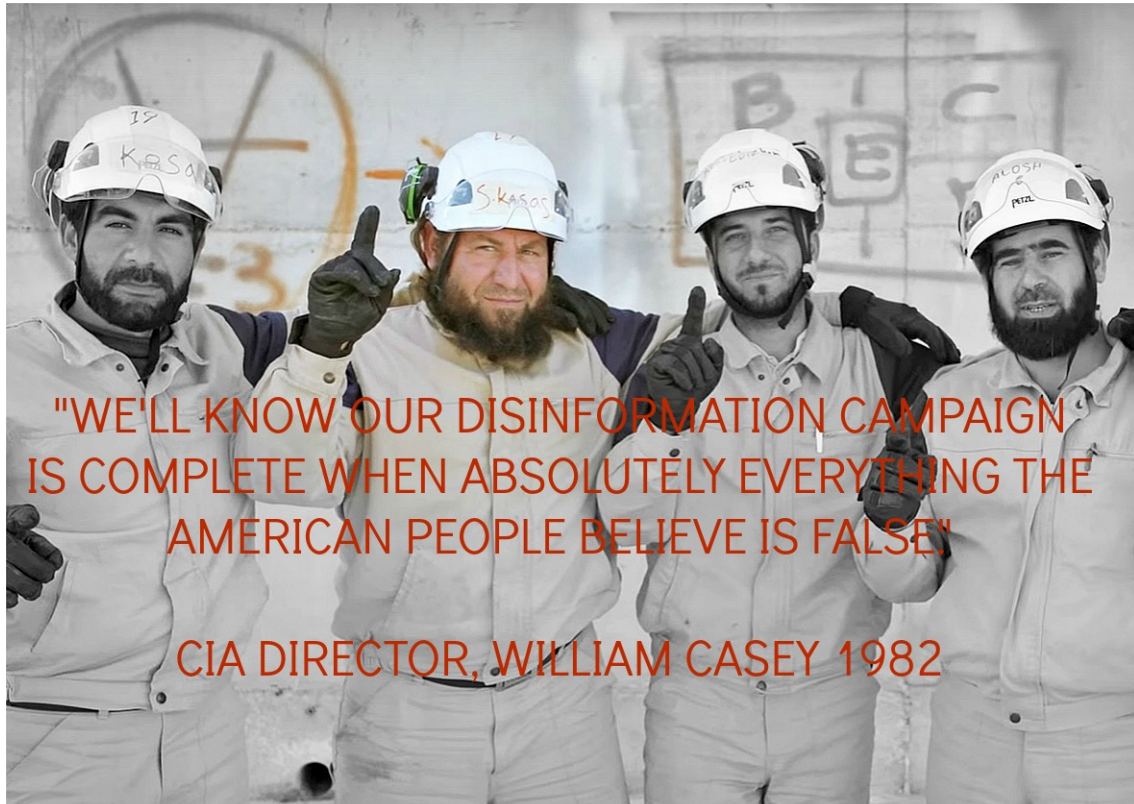
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In an extraordinary display of betrayal of principles and adherence to the US and NATO state objectives in Syria, Canada’s NDP (New Democratic Party) put its weight behind the nomination of the NATO funded, terrorist-linked, White Helmets for the Nobel Peace Prize.

In a letter to Canada’s Foreign Affairs Minister, Stephane Dion, NDP MP [Nathan Cullen](#) wrote:

“Canada has a proud and long-standing commitment to human rights, humanitarianism and international peacekeeping. It is surely our place to recognize the selflessness, bravery, and fundamental commitment to human dignity of these brave women and men,”



The backlash against this move by the New Democratic Party has caused a few tidal waves. The following is an open letter written by John Ryan, Ph.D., Retired Professor of Geography and Senior Scholar at the University of Winnipeg.

Dear Mr. Cullen,

Since it was you who made the public presentation regarding the NDP's position on this matter, I am writing directly to you but please forward this letter to all NDP MPs since they have unanimously endorsed this highly questionable proposition.

I am writing to alert you that the NDP has made a very serious mistake in recommending to the federal government that Canada should nominate the White Helmets for the Nobel Peace Prize. To some extent your error may be understandable in light of the fact that a commentator has recently said, "Coverage of the Syrian war will be remembered as one of the most shameful episodes in the history of the American press."

Nevertheless, instead of simply relying on the mainstream media for information on this issue, you should have assigned someone to do in depth research on what the White Helmets entity really is. This is a complicated matter, and my research on this has resulted in a rather lengthy letter, but it's critically important for you to know what is involved.

My research shows that the White Helmets do not operate in all of Syria but solely in Al Qaeda and other terrorist occupied parts of Syria. The question arises that if the White Helmets are supposedly not affiliated with any political party and that they are devoted to saving the lives of Syrian people wherever they are, how is it that they are found only in Al Qaeda and Al Nusra occupied parts of Syria, especially in the terrorist-occupied sections of Aleppo?

When these terrorist groups shell and bomb Syrian government controlled areas, how is it that there are no White Helmets to help the people in these areas? After all, it is the terrorists who are responsible for the bulk of the casualties.

For years the Syrian army has been trying to defeat and oust the Al Qaeda and Al Nusra forces from areas they had conquered since 2011. By being in these zones the White Helmets probably do save lives in the course of these battles. However, a case can be made that they are there primarily to be of propagandistic assistance to the terrorist groups that are trying to overthrow the legally elected secular Syrian government and replace it with a tyrannical Wahhabi religious regime. As such, this is a group that is hardly worthy of being nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

The reasons for the devastating war in Syria are well presented in an article [by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.](#) - a personage who could hardly be accused of being an Assad apologist. The following are several excerpts:

"While the compliant American press parrots the narrative that our military support for the Syrian insurgency is purely humanitarian, many Arabs see the present crisis as just another proxy war over pipelines and geopolitics. Before rushing deeper into the conflagration, it would be wise for us to consider the abundant facts supporting that perspective.

In their view, our war against Bashar Assad did not begin with the peaceful civil protests of the Arab Spring in 2011. Instead it began in 2000, when Qatar proposed to construct a \$10 billion, 1,500 kilometer pipeline through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Turkey. . . . Secret cables and reports by the U.S., Saudi and Israeli intelligence agencies indicate that the moment Assad rejected the Qatari pipeline, military and intelligence planners quickly arrived

at the consensus that fomenting a Sunni uprising in Syria to overthrow the uncooperative Bashar Assad was a feasible path to achieving the shared objective of completing the Qatar/Turkey gas link.

In 2009, according to WikiLeaks, soon after Bashar Assad rejected the Qatar pipeline, the CIA began funding opposition groups in Syria. It is important to note that this was well before the Arab Spring-engendered uprising against Assad. . . . Not coincidentally, the regions of Syria occupied by the Islamic State exactly encompass the proposed route of the Qatari pipeline. . . . And only when we see this conflict as a proxy war over a pipeline do events become comprehensible..... Qatar, which had the most to gain, invested \$3 billion in building the insurgency and invited the Pentagon to train insurgents at U.S. bases in Qatar..... As predicted, Assad's overreaction to the foreign-made crisis polarized Syria's Shiite/Sunni divide and allowed U.S. policymakers to sell Americans the idea that the pipeline struggle was a humanitarian war."

Obviously, it is the USA that fomented and engineered the war in Syria. Doing this had nothing to do with "human rights and freedom"... it had everything to do with oil and natural gas policies that Syria had the audacity to oppose.

The Syrian war has been raging since 2011, leading to the deaths of an estimated 400,000 people, according to UN estimates. As Kennedy pointed out in his article, the conflict began when the US-backed opposition started an armed rebellion against President Assad's government. Although this is regularly portrayed as a "civil war," it is nothing of the kind. The US State Department has recently admitted that "an excess of [40,000 total foreign fighters](#) have gone to the conflict [in Syria] from over 100 countries. The war has been funded by billions of dollars, primarily by Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and indirectly by the USA through its on-going CIA operations that provide military training and the latest weapons, including artillery and anti-tank guns.

A new report citing former CIA officers has revealed that the CIA was knowingly providing weapons, including tow missiles to fighters that were effectively part of al-Qaeda's Nusra Front, continuing to arm "moderates" so long as they at least nominally kept their moderate names. As the war continued, these so-called "moderates" were defecting en masse to al-Nusra and other al-Qaeda forces. But so long as they retained their "Free Syrian Army" name the CIA could feign arming "moderates" - they didn't care so long as they were arming a group that was fighting against the Syrian government. A Green Beret associated with the CIA programs has recently stated, "No one on the ground believes in this mission or this effort, and they know we are just training the next generation of jihadis, so they are sabotaging it by saying, 'Fuck it, who cares?'"

Contrary to the myth of the 'moderate rebel', they all operate basically as terrorists and these groups most often work together. For example, a top US-backed leader of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), Abdel Jabbar al-Okaidi, is quite open about the fact that he works closely with ISIL-Daesh. The FSA has worked closely with the other main Al Qaeda group, Jabhat al Nusra, right from the very beginning.

So where do the White Helmets fit into this scenario? Our media portrays them as a group of Syrians volunteering as emergency first responders who scour through rubble in Syria after bombings to find survivors. They claim to be not affiliated with any political party and describe themselves as "neutral, impartial and humanitarian." But if that is so, how is it that they do not operate anywhere in Syria except in areas held by Al Qaida forces, primarily in

the Al Nusra occupied areas?

The media openly admits that they “respond in the aftermath of Syrian government aerial bombings.” So where would this be other than in rebel/terrorist-occupied parts of Syria that the Syrian army is trying to recapture? If that is the case, how can they claim to be “neutral, impartial and humanitarian” when they operate only in their so-called “liberated areas”?

It is a myth, and actually a lie, that somehow all on their own Syrian civilians such as construction workers, blacksmiths, bakers, tailors, painters, students, teachers, voluntarily came together, in the thousands, to form the White Helmet brigades. They are portrayed as a “non-governmental” organization, i.e., an NGO, but it is on record that so far they have received \$23 million from the US Government, \$29 million (£19.7 million) from the UK Government, and \$4.5 million (€4 million) from the Dutch Government.

In addition, they receive material assistance and training, funded and run by a variety of other EU nations. This totals at least \$60 million, so the White Helmets are not some poor unorganized locally based charity group. And are we to believe that all this money is used to just “scour through rubble” to try to rescue civilians in shelled and bombed war zones? How could all this money be used just for this purpose? There has to be something more to this.

Given this, how can the White Helmets be called an ‘independent relief organization’ when it is being funded by the US and other countries that directly and indirectly are involved in the military over-throw of Syria’s government?

Since the USA, the UK and their allies have had a long-standing objective to overthrow the Syrian government, with the cry “Assad must go!”, all this money that has been poured into White Helmets isn’t just to save the lives of “innocent civilians” in war zones – it appears that its primary purpose has been to further undermine Syria’s government and to create propaganda that supports military intervention by the U.S. and its allies.

In line with this, the White Helmets systematically ignore the atrocities carried out by Al Nusra and other Al Qaeda groups, but instead proceed to create media-friendly images of victims of the Syrian Army’s bombing of rebel-held areas. Considering the beheadings, torture and multiple other atrocities committed by these groups, it is hardly surprising that the Syrian Army, in the course of its campaign to defeat them, regularly bombs them.

The White Helmets, originally called “Syrian Civil Defence”, is an organization that was not created in Syria and nor has it been designed for the Syrian public at large – they operate solely in rebel/terrorist occupied parts of Syria. It was created by the UK and USA in March of 2013. Civilians from rebel/terrorist controlled territory were paid to go to Turkey to receive some training in rescue operations. The program was headed by James Le Mesurier, a former British military officer and private contractor whose company is based in Dubai. The source of the \$300,000 original seed funding is uncertain, but, as cited above, millions came in afterwards with open acknowledgements from the USA, UK and Holland.

In the first source cited above, a senior US State Department official has stated that their funding of this project “enables Syrian civilians to do something tangible in the face of the regime’s atrocities . . . in liberated areas of Syria.” Note that the reference is to “the regime’s atrocities . . . in liberated areas of Syria.” Hence, in line with US foreign policy, there is no mention of terrorist atrocities committed against the Syrian population and why

the Syrian army is trying to recapture these so-called “liberated areas.” Moreover, what this reveals is that the USA’s sizeable funding of the White Helmets in “liberated areas” is somehow connected to its campaign that “Assad must go.”

If the White Helmets devoted their activities solely to save the lives of people caught up in war zones, that would be commendable and beyond reproach, but that is not the case. A major part of their activities are devoted to media reports and public relations, and it seems that this is what accounts for a major part of their funding – and it appears that this is the primary reason for their creation.

Central to their media campaign is the demonization of the Assad government – they paint the Syrian President and the Syrian Army as monsters slaughtering civilians, especially children; yet, when tracked back, all the stories come from utterly partisan sources. Combined with this is their appeal for a No Fly Zone and direct foreign intervention – just recall how well this turned out in Libya. Almost immediately after the White Helmets were formed they became very active on social media with presence on Twitter, Facebook, and editorials in high profile newspapers. For example, in March of 2015 a White Helmet leader wrote a Washington Post editorial, concluding with the request for “a no-fly zone, if necessary.”

This highly questionable barrage of consistently defamatory material is nothing more than outright propaganda.

The White Helmets is clearly a public relations project which has received glowing publicity from HuffPo to Nicholas Kristof at the NYT. White Helmets have been heavily promoted by the U.S. Institute of Peace (U.S.I.P) whose leader began a press conference by declaring “U.S.I.P has been working for the Syrian Revolution from the beginning”.

To be blunt about this, it appears that the White Helmets use search and rescue activities as a cover-up to demonize Syrian President Assad and help terrorists overthrow the Syrian government.

The claims regarding the number of people trained by the White Helmets (3,000) and the number of people rescued (60,000) are questionable. The numbers are probably highly exaggerated especially since rebel-controlled territories have few civilians. For example, almost 90% of Aleppo’s population is in government controlled area, whereas eastern Aleppo, occupied by Al Nusra, used to have a million people but now it’s reported to have only about 200,000 or even much less as estimated by others. To escape Al Nusra’s mercenary fighters, the bulk of the population has been driven into safe pockets within Aleppo away from terrorist strongholds. So how is it possible for the White Helmets to have rescued 60,000 civilians when the most populous area occupied by al Nusra has only 200,000 or less?

It is the White Helmets themselves who have claimed that they have rescued 60,000 civilians; this has not been verified by any other source. Despite such a classic conflict of interest, searching for independent evidence and disqualifying self-serving claims from belligerent parties in Syria has been ignored in much of the western media. As such, this claim by the White Helmets without any verification is next to meaningless.

There are other troubling aspects regarding the White Helmets. Although it was the US and

the UK that were behind the creation of this organization (apparently primarily for propaganda purposes), it is revealing that on April 19, 2016, the US State Department had blocked entrance into the United States by Raed Saleh, the head of the White Helmets, and refused to say why, although it's apparently because the FBI had placed him onto its no-fly list as a known terrorist. There was considerable consternation about this in the US media, but there is no denying that this happened.

A further disturbing aspect is the revelation of an Al Nusra video in which one of their members in Aleppo executes a civilian on May 5, 2015. Moments after the execution, several White Helmets appear on the scene to remove the body in a body bag. Afterwards the White Helmets had to respond to valid accusations of collusion, which they denied but it does show some type of symbiosis between the White Helmets and the "rebel" terrorist operatives. Shortly afterwards the video was deleted by YouTube. However, it was somehow saved and can be viewed on [this site](#): An account of this has been presented by British journalist [Vanessa Beeley](#) in which she included four photos from the Al Nusra video, showing the execution and members of the White Helmets picking up the body.

In addition to this, Vanessa Beeley has provided further information on the White Helmets and includes several other informative videos. See: [Who are Syria's White Helmets](#)

On their official website the White Helmets claim that they "have risked sniper fire to rescue SAA [Syrian Arab Army] bodies to give them a proper burial." Contrary to this, however, one of the videos shows a senior member of the White Helmets describing the "throwing of Shabiha bodies in the trash". Shabiha is a derogatory term used by the "rebel alliance" of Al Nusra/Al Qaeda forces for any member of the Syrian military, irrespective of whether they are Alawite, Sunni, or Shia. It is revealing how a supposed "neutral" White Helmet would use this derogatory term for dead Syrian soldiers. Another video shows several White Helmet members standing on a heap of discarded dead bodies of Syrian soldiers and giving the victory sign. And still another video shows "neutral" White Helmets once again flash the victory sign as they cart off dead Syrian Army corpses, perhaps be thrown in the trash. This display of support for the Al Nusra extremist terrorists who have just massacred these soldiers demonstrates where their true allegiances lie.

A final video shows a White Helmet referring to Al Nusra saying, "They are our role models, the best of people and we have the honour to serve them." Surely this is a curious turn of phrase for a supposed neutral, impartial humanitarian "moderate" organization - one that is being put forward for the Nobel Peace Prize.

One could try to dismiss these comments by members of the White Helmets as not being truly indicative of the nature of this organization as such, but the fact that they have been funded by more than \$60 million by the USA, other NATO countries and the Gulf states - all determined to overthrow the Syrian government - is something that cannot be dismissed. For all this money to be poured into this project shows that the White Helmets are being viewed as an important asset in the attempt to depose the secular government of the Syrian state.

The tens of thousands of Wahhabi-inspired fanatics and mercenaries from over a hundred countries who have been funded, armed, trained and directed by the USA and its allies for the purpose of destroying a secular state is not an easy sell for the general public, despite the efforts of a compliant mainstream media. Many people can see that this is a clear violation of customary international law and the UN Charter.

It was a stroke of genius, at relatively low cost, to create a seemingly innocuous NGO front group that would do “altruistic good works” but at the same time actively encourage direct foreign intervention in Syria. Hence, it appears that the primary function of the White Helmets is propaganda that encourages direct foreign intervention to depose the secular Syrian government that is actually supported by the majority of its people, as shown in the election held in June of 2014. Although the terrorists attempted to disrupt the election and it was dismissed in the USA as “fraud,” turnout was 73% of registered voters, with 88% voting for Assad. [Representatives from 30 countries](#) reported that the election was “free, fair and transparent”.

The White Helmets venture, promoted by the entire mainstream media, has been amazingly effective. The most recent effort has been the Netflix “White Helmet” documentary that premiered on September 16 at the Toronto International Film Festival. It appears to be essentially a promotion video with the “Kid rescued from rubble” as the standard shtick. After the hideous murder of British MP, Jo Cox, a special fund was established to raise money for three of her causes, one being the White Helmets. Seeing that this was done within hours of her death it seems to be a cynical and obscene exploitation of her murder to try to maintain the credibility of the White Helmets. Smart as Jo Cox was, it appears that she had been taken in by the media promotion of the White Helmets.

To show the effectiveness of the media campaign in its promotion of the White Helmets and the unjustified demonization of the Syrian government, on September 22 it was announced that the Right Livelihood Award, the so called “Alternative Nobel Prize”, is being given to the US/UK created White Helmets “for their outstanding bravery, compassion and humanitarian engagement in rescuing civilians from the destruction of the Syrian civil war.” The judges were obviously oblivious to the fact that the White Helmets only work in areas controlled by the armed opposition. They may have come to a different conclusion if they had seen this video which portrays their collaboration with Syria’s terrorists. A further comment on this matter was presented on September 23 by [Rick Sterling](#):

“The Rights Livelihood press release says the White Helmets “remain outspoken in calling for an end to hostilities in the country.” That is false. The White Helmets actively call for US/NATO intervention through a “No Fly Zone” which would begin with attacks and destruction of anti-aircraft positions. Taking over the skies above another country is an act of war as confirmed by US General Dempsey. The White Helmets have never criticized or called for the end of funding to extremist organizations including Nusra/Al Qaeda. On the contrary, White Helmets is generally embedded with this organization which is defined as “terrorist” by even the USA. That is likely why the head of the White Helmets, Raed Saleh, was denied entry to the USA.”

With all the evidence I have presented showing the propaganda nature of the White Helmets phenomenon, how could the NDP have decided to ask the federal government to have Canada support the nomination of the White Helmets for the Nobel Peace Prize? For the NDP to promote an organization that is supportive of terrorists in Syria and which is a creation of the CIA and American foreign policy for such an honour is scandalous.

How is it that in the past, both the NDP and the Canadian government, opposed the American war on Vietnam and the war on Iraq? Also we opposed US intervention in Cuba and the US-initiated coup in Chile. But more recently, both Canada and the NDP supported the US-NATO “no fly zone” in Libya (with disastrous consequences) and the US-inspired coup

in Ukraine. And now the NDP, by backing the White Helmets for the Nobel Peace Prize, is supportive of the USA's long-standing intervention in Syria, which is not based on humanitarian issues but on pipelines and geopolitics as pointed out in the article by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

If the documentation that I have presented was to be taken seriously, how would the NDP now proceed to extricate itself from this self-inflicted White Helmets debacle? It would seem to me that the honourable and principled thing to do would be to retract its request to support the nomination of the White Helmets for the Nobel Peace Prize, and to honestly explain the reason for the retraction.

Because this is such an important matter and something that the Canadian public should be made aware of, I am taking the liberty of having this published as an "open letter to the NDP." Moreover, I am forwarding this letter to Stéphane Dion, our Minister of Foreign Affairs, to alert him to the folly of acting on the NDP's request regarding the White Helmets.

I write this with sadness and dismay, as I had done last fall with regard to the NDP's election strategy.

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