

“Democracy Now” Runs Interference for Imperialism in Syria

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One of the most peculiar features of the United States is the presence of a rabidly pro-war leftism that poses as “independent” politics. Ever since the Obama Administration made it fashionable for so-called liberals to strike a “Grand Bargain” with the GOP, anti-war politics have been non-existent in public life. The non-profit industrial complex hasn’t helped the situation. Democracy Now, as the best known non-profit “independent news” organ, is the perfect example of pro-war leftism in motion. The organization’s recent coverage of Syria has only encouraged imperialism’s war narrative despite the presence of a GOP-led Administration, House, and Senate.



On May 3rd, *Democracy Now* [interviewed Anand Gopal](#), former fellow at the New America Foundation from 2012-2014. That *Democracy Now* describes itself as “independent media” yet associates with figures such as Gopal raises question marks about the source’s credibility on the issue of war and peace. The New America Foundation can hardly be considered an impartial source. As is the case for most think-tanks in the US and West, the foundation receives [patronage from sources](#) directly invested in war. Such sources include the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Foundation, and a consortium of corporate-backed foundations associated with the Wall Street firms CitiGroup and JP Morgan Chase.

Gopal received his political training from the primary benefactors of war, that being the

profiteers of finance and monopoly capital. He spent a number of years in Afghanistan embedded in the Taliban and now specializes as the journalistic mouthpiece for terrorists in Syria. His efforts have won him a Pulitzer prize and numerous work opportunities in the NGO industry. According to a [recent report in the Moon of Alabama](#), Gopal has been caught on social media distributing ISIS documents on how to join the organization. His interview with Amy Goodman and Nermeen Shaikh verifies his allegiance to US imperialism's proxies currently wreaking havoc in Syria and the region at large.

Gopal's claims paint Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad as the cause of all suffering in Syria. He cites "conversations" had with ISIS fighters who reported that they turned to terrorism in response to Bashar Al-Assad's brutality. Syria and Russia are not only failing to fight terrorism, he claims, but the US also possesses no plan for regime change in the region. The YPG is the only force fighting ISIS. Of course, none of Gopal's assertions were supported with concrete evidence beyond talking points.

Yet facts on the ground suggest otherwise. The "Assad brutality" narrative has been disproven countless times by independent journalists, especially in relation to allegations of the Syrian government's use of chemical agents. Journalist Seymour Hersh traced the chemical weapons used to attack Ghouta, Syria in 2013 back to [Turkish and Saudi rebel stations](#) and supply chains. The 2017 chemical weapons attack occurred when the UN had already confirmed [three years earlier](#) that the Syrian government had given up all of its chemical weapons in the deal brokered by the US and Russia. If Gopal and his think-tank employers lie about allegations as serious as those involved in chemical weapons disputes, what makes them reliable sources of information about Syria at large?



A bigger question is why *Democracy Now* would host Gopal on its program at all. Why would *Democracy Now* allow Gopal to run interference by painting Russia and Syria as mass murdering nations and the US as an arbiter of peace? It has been well-documented since 2011 that US involvement in Syria has always been about overthrowing the Syrian government. Defense Intelligence Agency documents confirm that the [US willingly aided ISIS](#) in Syria and created the conditions for its rise during the occupation of Iraq beginning in 2003. It is public record that the US and its allies [funded and armed the original "revolutionaries"](#) in Syria with the explicit aim to rid of Assad. These foreign, sectarian fighters number in the tens of thousands and have come from places as close as Turkey and as far as the European mainland. All of them are guilty of committing head-chopping crimes in the name of "democracy."

Gopal and *Democracy Now* do not mention the numerous examples that show the Syrian government's broad support among the people. In 2012, amidst the proxy invasion, the Syrian government amended the national constitution. It was approved by nearly [ninety percent of the Syrian population](#). In 2014, Bashar Al-Assad was reelected as President with [88.7 percent of the vote](#). Reputable polls show that the Syrian government is the

most [popular force in the country](#). Meanwhile, the likes of Gopal and *Democracy Now* continuously fail to mention the atrocities committed by the invading terrorist forces and the aid that they have received from imperialist countries.

Democracy Now runs interference for imperialism because it is beholden to funding sources, as are all non-profits and non-governmental organizations. Just as Gopal is a product of the New America Foundation, so too is *Democracy Now* a product of the Pacifica Foundation's benefactors. An analysis conducted in [Critical Sociology](#) found that the Pacifica Foundation received upwards of 148,000 USD between the years of 1996-1998 from the Ford, Carnegie, and other foundations to launch *Democracy Now*. The Lannan Foundation gave *Democracy Now* an additional 375,000 USD packaged in a number of grants, according to the [foundation's IRS 990 forms since 2008](#). Patrick Lannan, the capitalist mogul who founded the organization, sat on the board of [ITT corporation in the late 70s and early 80s](#). The ITT corporation was instrumental in the CIA-backed fascist coup that overthrew the democratically elected socialist Salvador Allende in 1973.

So-called international non-profits such as the Ford Foundation have a long history of receiving enormous donations from the wealthiest individuals and corporations to achieve imperialism's objectives around the world. Foundations wield a form of "soft power" on behalf of US imperialism. Their main purpose is to provide a "civil society" infrastructure in targeted nations capable of fomenting conditions of regime change. This has been a general condition throughout Latin America. Foundations such as the National Endowment for Democracy and the Ford Foundation have been caught supporting right-wing opposition groups waging destabilization campaigns against Left governments in [Venezuela](#), [Ecuador](#), and [Bolivia](#).

So it should come as no surprise that *Democracy Now* lends legitimacy to the imperialist narrative in Syria. *Democracy Now* is "independent" in name only. *Democracy Now's* staff is beholden to funding sources that hold a large stake in the creation of a humanitarian face to imperialism. So while the outlet may present news and facts on US domestic issues largely left out of the corporate press, it remains a dangerous source of misinformation on the international front. Only a distorted worldview can arise from the lies presented by Amy Goodman's coverage of Syria.

Real independent journalists based in the US exist, but have little financial or political support. Journalism and media must be placed in the context of the generalized struggle against US imperialism. Independent media thrives in periods where peoples' movements are vibrant and strong. When movements are weak, so too is independent journalism. The corporate media landscape in the US will remain dominant as long as the alternative is conceived within the bowels of corporate foundations. These are radical times, and they require a radical break from the levers of control wielded by both "hard power" and "soft power" mechanisms of imperialism. That includes challenging the narratives put forward by *Democracy Now*.

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