

# Syrian conflict exposes America's "Axis of Evil"

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*The people of the world should be very thankful to Syria. For in this agonizing time, the conflict-torn country is revealing an important truth. From the bloodshed, ravages and mayhem that the Syrian people are enduring, the world is empowered to see with crystal clarity a crucial fact – the fact of who, and what, is the real cause of violence.*

*And this real cause of violence is not just afflicting Syria, but right across the globe.*

Forget about oft-repeated Western admonishments against Islamic extremists, rogue states, corrupt regimes, authoritarian superpowers as being "the enemy" of freedom-loving people. It is the American government and its allies who are the real "axis of evil" confronting the world.

It is the system of capitalist corruption, elite exploitation and enrichment, and its corollary of imperialist warmongering that the US and its allies uphold – that is what is driving Syria and the rest of the world into poverty, conflict and the brink of catastrophe.

Ironically, it was 10 years ago when then President George W Bush coined, or rather his speechwriter coined, the phrase "axis of evil". During his 2002 State of the Union address to the American nation, Bush warned against three countries that "aggressively pursue weapons of mass destruction" that "export terrorism" and are ruled by "an unelected few". He named Iraq, Iran and North Korea as the "axis of evil".

Later, the Bush administration would expand the "forces of evil" bearing down on the world to include Cuba, Libya and Syria.

Of course, being an arrogant superpower intoxicated by its own vanity, the American president offered no evidence to support such outrageous slander – a slander that is still a plank of US foreign policy because it has never been officially retracted.

If the Western corporate controlled media was truly independent, as it claims, instead of being a servile mouthpiece for elite power, then it could have provided some historical corrective to the preposterous axis of evil slur. The media might have noted that Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein had actually been installed by the US after a murderous CIA coup against Abdul Karim Qassim. When Bush Jnr made his infamous speech, the people of Iraq had been subjected to a devastating war inflicted by his father, Bush Snr in 1991; and they had borne 10 years of crippling US-instigated economic sanctions that claimed the lives of over one million Iraqi children, which former US secretary of state Madeleine Albright once described as "a price worth paying" in the bid to oust the former American client.

Turning to Iran, the presumed Western organs of truth could have informed the public that

Iran's government had attained political and economic independence from American tyranny in 1979 after the people of Iran threw out the Washington-backed dictator, Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi. The Shah, along with his brutal SAVAK secret police, was installed by the US in 1953 as an absolute monarch after the CIA and British MI6 overthrow the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh because the latter dared to harness Persian oil wealth for the benefit of the people rather than the pockets of Western capitalists.

As for North Korea and its reclusive communist regime, whatever its internal problems, the Western media could have put Bush's axis of evil label into perspective by pointing out that the Asian country has not waged war on any neighbour and has no substantiated links to international terrorism. Indeed, North Korea's obscurity and underdevelopment can in large measure be attributed to America's war of aggression on the Korean Peninsula during the early 1950s in which the people of northern Korea were forced to live in caves to escape from the carpet-bombing inferno that the US unleashed. Officially, the people of North Korea still live under the threat of annihilation by the US because Washington never signed an armistice in mid-1953 when hostilities ended.

The supine Western media would never acknowledge the obvious: that the real reason for Washington creating an "axis of evil" was to bolster its fraudulent narrative of the newly minted "war on terror". The ruling class of the US and its allies need some kind of external enemy in order to justify their militarism and foreign aggression. For over four decades, the convenient enemy was the "evil Soviet empire". That allowed the US and its allies to invade and subjugate countries all around the world in the name of "fighting communism" and "defending the free world" when the real, hidden agenda was gaining control of natural resources for Western corporations. From 1945 to the 1990s, the US and its European allies conducted overt and covert military interventions in more than 50 countries around the world, from Latin America to the Caribbean, from Africa to the Middle East and Asia. That is an average of one military intervention for every year. It is estimated that the death toll from these US-led coups, subversions, proxy wars and all-out wars, such as in Vietnam, amount to well over 10 million people. A Western holocaust in the service of capital.

With the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990-91, the Western powers needed to come up with a new enemy to justify imperialist business as usual.

This was the beginning of the "war of terror" narrative and variations of that, such as "axis of evil" and "weapons of mass destruction". Rather than a peace dividend manifesting from the ending of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, the American national security doctrine that dominates Western governance was permitted to continue because the US and its allies now had a "new enemy". Trillion-dollar military budgets would therefore continue to be sustained at the expense of social development, and, crucially, military interference in the affairs of sovereign nations would again be invoked in the name of "defending the free world". The US spends more on military than all nations of the world combined even as its own society goes into social meltdown from poverty.

What the official nomination of the axis of evil did not disclose was that the designated culprits had certain other more important attributes. They are, or were in the case of Libya, independent of Western foreign policy, and, in particular, trenchantly critical of US and European support for the decades-long criminal aggression of Israel towards Palestinian people and other Middle Eastern states. Moreover, Iraq, Iran and Libya possess some of the

world's largest known reserves of oil and gas.

The “axis of evil” epithet was therefore not only a way of maintaining the otherwise obsolete national security doctrine of the US and its allies, it also served to isolate, demonise and target the said countries for “regime change” – that is change to regimes that are pliable to the economic and political dictates of Washington and global capital.

Of the original six members of the axis of evil, as designated by the Bush administration, Cuba and North Korea are effectively quarantined by Western-imposed embargoes, isolated from balanced international relations and development. Of the other four, Iraq and Libya have been invaded by US-led forces, destroyed and realigned to serve Western interests. The remaining two are Syria and Iran, both of which are being assailed by economic sanctions and Western covert aggression.

This week, Russia, China and Iran reiterated the reasonable proposition that the people of Syria must be allowed to determine their political future without foreign interference. Even Kofi Annan, the Arab League special envoy, who has in the past been keenly accommodating to Western governments, appears to have backed this proposition. Indeed, during his visit to Tehran this week, Annan agreed with Iran's foreign minister Ali Akhbar Salehi that Western interference in Syrian affairs and supply of weapons must stop.

What is the position of the US and its allies? Rejecting any internal Syrian solution, Washington, London, Paris and their allies Turkey and the Persian Gulf Arab monarchies have vowed to increase financial and material support for the armed groups that are waging a campaign of terrorist subversion over the past 16 months. The US-led axis insists that Syrian President Bashar Al Assad must go immediately at their say-so. Speaking like a Mafia moll, US secretary of state Hillary Clinton said that Russia and China will be made to “pay a price” for their (reasonable) position. Clinton then made the sinister warning that Assad's “days are numbered” and that if a political transition does not occur on American terms then the Syrian people face “a catastrophic assault that would be very dangerous not only to Syria, but to the region”.

That is the mindset and language of a fascist rogue state.

What is happening in Syria is a heart-rending tragedy. But one positive thing to emerge from the suffering is the glaring truth for the world to see on who exactly constitutes the “axis of evil”. An American president's words are coming back to haunt in a way that he never imagined. For what the world is witnessing in Syria is the American axis of evil. This truth is obliging us to look back at past decades and to recognise the ultimate source of violence, conflict and wars down through modern history. This truth is compelling us to look at the present with eyes opened as to why poverty, social decay and misery sit alongside unaccountable elite wealth, power and warmongering. The axis of US-led powers that serve a global elite are ransacking their own societies and any other that stands in their way of dominance. And this truth can set us free.

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