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<http://roguenationblog.com/2015/09/23/defining-imperialism-down-yes-the-us-has-waged-war-on-syria/>

## Defining Imperialism Down: Yes, the US Has Waged War on Syria

by DaMizner

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Forget what you know: the US hasn't waged war on Syria. That's hardened into conventional wisdom, and leftist anti-anti-imperialists have dutifully joined the chorus, never mind that the claim disintegrates in the face of a one-second Google search. Anti-anti-imperialists profess to oppose American imperialism; why would they go to absurd lengths to argue that the US hasn't sought to impose its will on Syria? (Because they don't, in fact, oppose American imperialism, you say. To which I say, well, yeah, but you'd think they'd be better at pretending.) Actually, I know why: because they want to depict Assad as an ally of Empire, unlike those "independent" and "indigenous" groups like the FSA and the Syrian National Coalition, which are allying with Team USA but only, you see, out of necessity.

No need to take much time debunking the claim. A few facts suffice: the destabilization of Syria has been a longstanding US goal. The CIA's spent real money training anti-government forces. US client states have sent untold amounts of money, arms, and fighters themselves into Syria with the approval of the United States. (Washington, for example, signed off on the Turkish-GCC plan to boost the Army of Conquest, which includes Al Qaeda.)

Anti-anti-imperialists tend simply to ignore the war-making of US allies, as if they operate in total isolation from the United States. As for the CIA effort, Louis Proyect—the unrepentant pro-Saudi Marxist—tells us that a billion dollars a year is peanuts because American proxies have complained about their weapons. Imperialists in Washington would find this comforting: they can train 10,000 anti-government fighters and still not be accused of aggression. What would Louis say if they tried this in Venezuela? (Actually, he'd likely approve because Maduro is supporting the Syrian government.)

This claim of anti-anti-imperialists is, among other things, a crude form of American exceptionalism. For both Dick Cheney and Louis Proyect, anything less than Shock and Awe ain't war if you're America. Imagine that there were a country much more powerful than the United States and it spent a billion dollars a year training 10,000 reactionary anti-government fighters. Now imagine that this country's client states contributed billions of dollars and thousands of Nazis to the cause. Now imagine a leftist citing proxies' complaints about weapons to argue that this isn't aggression.

To try to support their claim, anti-anti-imperialists point out that the US is bombing ISIS, not the government, as if "Syria" consisted only of the government. The US war on IS is, of course, part of its war on the Syrian state. Remember, the US is teaming up with Turkey to break off a piece of Syria to be controlled by their proxies. According to the loony worldview of anti-imperialists, that's not a war on Syria because the ostensible target is ISIS.

There are different ways to skin a noncompliant state. The singular goal in Washington is to remove impediments to American power, and the shrinking and impoverishing of a state accomplishes this quite nicely even if the Bad Man remains in office. "Regime change" is a means to an end, not the end itself.

I'm not among those who believe that the US government remains committed to the immediate removal of the Syrian government. Best evidence for this: the US government hasn't removed the Syrian government. A powerful ISIS serves the interests of the United States but only up to a point. All along there've been members of the American security and political establishment who've questioned the wisdom of removing Assad. They seemed to have gained the upper hand around the time that ISIS attacked the Baiji oil refinery in Kurdistan, Iraq's largest. At that point, containing (no, not defeating) ISIS became a priority.

But as I said above: the war on ISIS is a war on Syria and those bombs killing Syrians and destroying the country's infrastructure are just one of the ways—along with sanctions and the empowerment of reactionary proxies—that the US is doing damage to Syria and removing it as a geopolitical obstacle. Even if the US isn't moving to replace the Assad government at this time, "regime change" is still a US goal, as it was in Iraq in the nineties when the US was killing hundreds of thousands of people "not waging war."