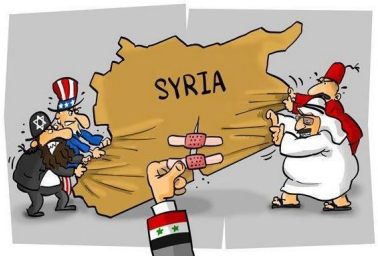
Hussain Akram |



The year 2011 saw the beginning of what Western media immediately described as a revolution against a 'mad dictator inflicting suffering upon protestors' in Syria. Be it by successfully engineered 'revolutions' or by using proxy insurgents and terrorist groups on the ground, the West has successfully manufactured, manipulated and enhanced movements against governments in the Middle East and Arab world whose policies it found to be against the interests of financial and political elites based mainly in the US.

Perhaps, the propaganda machine for NATO, now with media groups such as Al Jazeera firmly on board given the Gulf Arab states' newfound openness regarding its deep ties with the West in terms of strategic objectives, realized the potential for a vast and thorough vilification campaign against Assad which could be given the face and appearance of Muslims rising against an oppressor with several Muslim governments naively respected around the Muslim world now assisting it.

While the sectarian aspect of the war cannot be doubted for neighboring Iraq, which itself saw a plunge in sectarian civil war after the successful military operations by Iraq in 2007

Indeed, it is what we would witness throughout the on-going war on Syria – which is anything but a civil war – for the years to come. This writing intends on highlighting some of the major

aspects of the vilification campaign against the Assad government, designed quite obviously to raise support for an 'intervention' in Syria by NATO as was done in Iraq and Libya, and why it is dangerous for people in countries such as Pakistan to naively believe in the propaganda simply because it portrays the terrorists in Syria as 'Mujahideen'; a noble word that would never be used by any sane person on them.

On the topic of fake and manufactured revolutions (sometimes described as 'Arab Springs' by their proponents and advocates), one can consult the work of Ahmed Bensaada, Algerian investigative journalist, who outlines the methods used by the US State Department and CIA in fomenting instability in countries with governments the West is strongly displeased with.

Such methods involve cultivating 'journalists' from the countries, taking them abroad and funding their media coverage, using NGOs and organizations working in the development and social sector as channels for funding and espionage, training them in information warfare and obtaining endorsement for them from well known pro-war lobbyists within the West, especially the US.

The majority of his ministers, his country's Grand Mufti, most of the country's parliament and most importantly of all, the national army as well as most of its senior generals are also Sunni

It will not, then, come as a surprise that the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) – which formed the main source of information for viewers of Western media and its partners regarding Syria for years – revealed to have been comprised of a Syrian man named Rami Abdul Malik who, by his own admission to the New York Times, had not set foot in Syria in years owing to his personal enmity for the Assad government.

Moving beyond the obvious fact that such a partisan source should not be relied upon for news on Syria, Rami, the 'one man observatory' operating whilst living in the UK – another country lobbying for intervention against Assad – uses sources only from terrorist-held areas in Syria (this will bring us to the next aspect of Western propaganda, which is the myth of the 'moderate rebel') and has been known to provide information exaggerating the successes of the terrorists against the Syrian Arab Army and fabricate news of atrocities committed by the latter.

A clear Western propaganda tool, his usefulness would run out soon as the New York Times

would report in 2013 the reality behind this so-called 'observatory' of human rights:

They would execute hundreds of non-Sunni residents of the areas they held sway in and also Sunnis who they suspected of allegiance to the Assad government – who they branded as traitors

'Yet, despite its central role in the savage civil war, the grandly named Syrian Observatory for Human Rights is virtually a one-man band. Its founder, Rami Abdul Rahman, 42, who fled Syria 13 years ago, operates out of a semidetached red-brick house on an ordinary residential street in this drab industrial city of Coventry, England.' This did not, however, prevent a small news update on Syria in the Dawn newspaper in Pakistan sourcing the false information of ISIS having ousted the Syrian army from al Madayeen, dated 9th October 2017; Syrian and Russian state media would soon report a victory in that very same place mere days later.

The propaganda about the 'people's revolution' would also be debunked soon. Sarah Abed, a prominent Arab journalist who works in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and a few other countries, reported in an article dated 8 February 2017 the infiltration of Libyan terrorists into Syria to begin violent rioting. The group had certain local collaborators, notably Muslim Brotherhood members and followers of the same brand of warped religious interpretation of their own.

The Omari mosque in Daraa had been used to hide stashes of weapons which would soon be utilized against Syrian police and military. Throughout this event, which would propel things very quickly toward a war situation, Western media reported these events, in March of 2011, as having gone out of control due to the Syrian government – dubbed the 'Syrian regime' – firing upon protestors.

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Given how the violence of the events would be impossible to hide, an overall narrative was soon adopted by mainstream Western news channels and reporters; that 'violent terrorists had hijacked the revolution'. Outlets such as the BBC and CNN would soon attempt to overcome this setback by attempting to force a distinction between moderate rebels and the extreme

ones.

An almost childish venture and a highly foolish one, given the inevitability of the 'moderate' terrorists such as the FSA (created by Turkey and marketed aggressively by the West) and Jabhat al Nusra, comprising of the Libyan terrorists and eventually various nationalities' worth of mercenaries hired by intelligence agencies of countries complicit in the attempt to force regime change in Syria.

The group that would eventually be highlighted by Western media and indeed labelled as an enemy by Western governments, insincerely so, would be ISIS (Islamic State of Syria and Iraq) whose formation had been announced by Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi – himself based in Iraq and a known CIA asset raised in the famous Camp Bucca – including Syria as part of its prize since it had taken Mosul in Iraq and thus proved its power for all the world to see.

Formerly, it had been a part of the transitional 'Al Nusra' franchise announced by Al Qaeda's head Ayman al Zawahiri for both Iraq and Syria with differences between the leadership resulting in the splitting into two groups. It was simply an impossible task to portray as moderate those who took to Twitter and Facebook posting videos of beheadings.

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Perhaps the handlers in Washington, Riyadh, Ankara and other places overlooked the fact that pushing photographs of the deadly ISIS all over the media and press would allow people to notice the high class American and Israeli produced weapons and complete army-like prowess of the terrorists whose possession of tanks could never be explained by anyone seeing as one cannot simply steal a steady supply of such expensive things.

The FSA, with their secular sounding name, had themselves been guilty of crimes perpetrated throughout the time they were active before ISIS entered the fray. As an FSA executioner confessed to the German magazine Der Spiegel in March 2012, they would execute hundreds of non-Sunni residents of the areas they held sway in and also Sunnis who they suspected of allegiance to the Assad government – who they branded as traitors.

What led to many Muslims, including Pakistanis, unwittingly falling for the propaganda against the Syrian government was the propaganda that the Assad government – the secular head of a secular and highly diverse as well as educated Syrian nation – was a sectarian-minded Shia despot who sought to murder the country's Sunnis.

This myth can be put to bed at once given that Assad, who belongs to the Alawite group, whose beliefs while mysterious to many and scandalized enough to not warrant a discussion (indeed, Syrians do not care about it either), is not a Shia by any stretch himself and is married to a Sunni woman, Asma al Assad. The majority of his ministers, his country's Grand Mufti, most of the country's parliament and most importantly of all, the national army as well as most of its senior generals are also Sunni.

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He receives help from several Shia groups known as Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) of mixed nationalities, including Pakistanis, recruited by Iran to fight in mostly Iraq with the objective of protecting sites important to Shia Muslims and the famous Hezbollah which holds the distinction of being the first Arab fighting force to inflict a defeat upon Israel in the battlefield (Lebanon War, 2006). While the sectarian aspect of the war cannot be doubted for neighboring Iraq, which itself saw a plunge in sectarian civil war after the successful military operations by Iraq in 2007.

We must be capable of drawing lessons from all this as this allows us to appreciate the fact that most of the widespread media networks on earth are controlled by political interests and that unconventional information sources provide everyone with a chance to combat propaganda designed to start wars.

The writer is a University of London graduate and writes for various local & international forums. He has a keen interest in world affairs, politics, and war. The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Global Village Space's editorial policy.

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