

## A Critical Review of 'War Propaganda' in the Academic Book "The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change and Resistance" by Dr. Tim Anderson

مراجعة نقدية "للدعاية للحرب" في الكتاب الأكاديمي " الحرب القذرة على سوريا: واشنطن، تغيير النظام  
والمقاومة" للدكتور تيم أندرسون

Asma Taalah <sup>1\*</sup>  
Batna-2 University  
asma.taalah@univ-biskra.dz

Radia Guerza <sup>2</sup>  
Batna-2University  
r.guerza@univ-batna2.dz

Date of send:07/08/2023

Date of acceptance:16/05/2024

Date of publication :30/06/2024

### Abstract

This paper endeavors to gain deeper insight of 'war propaganda' in the 2016 academic book "The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change, and Resistance" by Dr. Tim Anderson. It attempts to shed light on the contributors to the war in Syria, and those who are the source of massive disinformation campaign. This study is a critical review undertaken to discern the author's thoughts on the topic of 'war propaganda' in Syria using analysis rather than a summary. The results obtained showcased that according to Anderson, the U.S. has actively supported the homicide of innocent civilian Syrians. Also, the book juxtapositions American/ Western embedded media stories of alleged atrocities and war crimes supposedly committed by Assad and the Syrian Army against the strong forensic evidence provided by reliable eye witnesses and credible independent journalists.

**Keywords:** War Propaganda, the Dirty War on Syria, the U.S / Western Embedded Media, Eye Witnesses/ Independent Journalists.

\*Corresponding author

## Introduction

The fusion of intellectual cunning and the vast reach of mass media create a formidable weapon of persuasion. In the wrong hands, it can be wielded to manipulate and deceive, particularly those lacking the critical thinking skills to discern fact from fiction. Throughout history, propaganda has served as a potent tool in both wartime and peacetime, influencing public opinion and shaping political agendas on a global scale.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Tim Anderson in his book "The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change and Resistance" (2016) claims that the Syrian conflict has used a degree of mass misinformation unseen in recent memory, including barrel bombs, chemical weapons, 'industrial scale' killings, and dead newborns that are frequently reported in American and western news. Dr. Anderson adds that the basis of war propaganda is the belligerent party's abandonment of reason and principle in an effort to dehumanize the opponent through the use of atrocity claims to rally the public's support for the war. He goes on to say that it is often assumed that information from partisan sources is biased since it suits the belligerent party's objective to delegitimize and discredit the opponent. Independent evidence, however, refutes and discredits the claims made by American and Western media based on rules of civil and criminal law.

This article addresses the problem of reporting and reading the Syrian crisis in the book "The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change and Resistance" by the academician Tim Anderson. The news media have demonstrated an extreme dependence on partisan sources that are dedicated to the conflict and disparage the Syrian Army. Understanding the debate around chemical weapons, killings of civilians, and the degree of support or opposition to President Assad is hampered by one major issue. It, also, identifies the propaganda techniques of American/Western embedded media channels and the network of 'human rights' bodies (Human Rights Watch, Avaaz, etc) which serve Washington's foreign policy agenda. Many now fervently support "humanitarian war." A number of more recent western NGOs have been established by financial institutions on Wall Street specifically for the dirty war on Syria (examples include The Syria Campaign and The White Helmets).

Here is documentation of some of their fabrications. Examples and illustrations of 'false flag' operations by the U.S. later blamed on the Syrian Army will be disproved by multiple sources of independent evidence.

### **Firstly : A Brief Overview of the Academic Book "The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change and Resistance" by Dr. Tim Anderson**

Dr. Tim Anderson, a prominent Australian scholar and activist (born 1953), served as a senior lecturer at the University of Sydney until 2019. Combining expertise in economics, international politics, and the political economy of Australian liberalization (as evidenced by his doctorate), Dr. Anderson has authored numerous books addressing the criminal justice system, prisons, civil rights, and self-advocacy. His prolific contributions extend to esteemed academic journals, including Health and

Human Rights, the Pan-American Health Journal, and the Australian Journal of Human Rights. Notably, his scholarship has graced diverse publications like Latin American Perspectives and the Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies, demonstrating his multifaceted engagement with global issues.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Anderson has authored many dozens of academic articles on aid, regional integration and development in small island states. Recently, Dr. Anderson is a consultant to the UNDP on south-south cooperation and development strategy and has written extensively on Cuban medical cooperation in Timor-Leste and the South Pacific.<sup>3</sup> In his 2016 book, "The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change, and Resistance," Dr. Anderson adopts a forthright approach in his critical examination of the Syrian crisis, aiming to unveil the realities of the situation for a Western readership. He meticulously peels back the layers of misinformation and geopolitical maneuvering to reveal the true nature of the war, which he argues has been waged against the Syrian people since 2011 under the guise of counter-terrorism. While firmly grounded in rigorous research and scholarly analysis, Dr. Anderson's book transcends the academic sphere. It serves as a passionate defense of the Syrian people's right to self-determination, a right that he believes has been shamelessly trampled upon by external forces.

The book explores also the Syrian conflict, focusing on the role of foreign powers, particularly the United States, in supporting regime change efforts and various armed groups during the Syrian civil war. Dr. Anderson's work is known to present a viewpoint that challenges the mainstream narrative regarding the conflict in Syria. He criticizes what he considers "war propaganda" and questions the motives and actions of Western powers and their allies in the region. In his book, Dr. Anderson argues that the media portrayal of the Syrian conflict has been biased and that various factions, including the Western-supported opposition groups, have been involved in violence and atrocities. He contends that the conflict is not a genuine popular uprising but rather a proxy war fueled by external intervention.

He further explains that all wars are predicated on false pretenses, and the dirty attack on Syria was no exception. The first justification was that NATO member nations and Gulf monarchies were backing this democratic uprising because the Syrian people were rebelling against their despotic president, Bashar Al Assad. The second narrative argued that the majority Sunni Muslims were being persecuted by the minority governing Alawites, and that as a result, Western intervention was necessary to save them. This looked pointless in comparison to Assad's widely acclaimed reforms in Syria. Nevertheless, because of the public outcry over the sectarian killings, a new pretext—the "shadow war"—filled the void. This time, moderate rebels were engaged in combat with extremists, and yet another round of Western involvement was required to protect the world from this new danger. According to whatever Western myth is built on, the book "the Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change, and Resistance" (2016) starts with "A" scenario that

Islamist proxy groups were sought to overthrow the Assad family and were armed by U.S. regional allies, principally Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey.

Dr. Anderson further points out in his academic book that the Syrian Army was sufficiently powerful to stand up against Washington's Islamists in spite of many attempts to divide it along sectarian and religious lines. In contrast to what the Western and American media were portraying, the Syrian Army was severe towards terrorists while protecting civilians; as a result, many displaced individuals sought sanctuary with them or had fled the country. Strong relations between the Syrian government and Russia and Iran also prevented Syria from turning into another Libya. Among the primary objectives of the big powers were to weaken Syria and dismantle the axis of autonomous regional governments (Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and the Palestinian resistance), thereby accomplishing two goals at once. Success of the Syrian resistance against Washington's evil "New Middle East" plan heralds the start of a new age that will act as a counterbalance to superpowers.<sup>4</sup>

The book tackles many themes such as the U.S. plans for a "New Middle East" which is one of multiple attempts to dominate the region. Also, the favored reforms made by President Bashar Al Assad in his country since 2000 to the beginning of the crisis in 2011; thus, proving his popularity among his fellow Syrians and reversing the Western demonization of him as a leader. Another theme deals with the illustrations of massacres designed by big powers mainly the U.S. to influence the U.N. Security Council consideration of military intervention. Moreover, evidence' documents that link between the big powers and the terrorists groups have been presented to help develop informed opinion on this matter. War propaganda is the focus of this article because this serves as a public address system for Washington's agenda. 'Health and Sanctions' chapter details the great damage to Syrian public health caused by the NATO-backed Islamist attacks on Syria's health system. furthermore, the 'Western Interventions and the Colonial Mind' section discusses the western cultural mindset of violating other people's rights. The book concludes with a praise of the Syrian resistance which –according to the author- demonstrates the independence of the Middle East region against powerful enemies at the expense of the sacrifices of the Syrian Army and the Syrian people.

All in all, "The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change and Resistance" (2016) draws the big picture of the war in Syria from the point of view of its author Dr. Anderson using the best western traditions of reason, maintenance of ethical principle and the search for independent evidence in case of conflict. The book has relied on Western sources rather than pro-Syrian sources to avoid any prejudice against Russian, Iranian and Latin American sources. English language is used in this book not only because the author is an English speaker but to make English speakers able to access relevant sources when American/ Western media was imbedded.

## **Secondly: Tools of War Propaganda in "The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change and Resistance"**

According to Linebarger (1954), propaganda "consists of the planned use of any form of public or mass-produced communication designed to affect the minds and emotions of a given group for specific purpose whether military, economic or political."<sup>5</sup> The context where propaganda flourish is war as human nature is against aggression even if the war seems inevitable, so in order to gain people's support, propaganda is the working force that masks negative feelings and transform them into sentiments of backing and brace. To achieve this end, propaganda makes people forget that the other group is human.<sup>6</sup>

Depending on the transparency of the source, there are different types of propaganda: white, gray and black. The white sort is considered credible for governments have the right to bolster the morale of its people and armed forces that serve it by aweing the aggressor with natural will. Gray propaganda is of doubtful origin; its information is not accurate. The last type, black propaganda, is the most evil kind as it distorts reality, its source is camouflaged and made to seem from a friendly source but in fact it is from a hostile source.<sup>7</sup>

Author Dr. Anderson believes that during the Syrian crisis, war propaganda has mostly cited sources from 'civilian' rights organizations and co-opted news organizations. Later allegations have been added to these ones to portray the Syrian president and the Syrian Army as monsters who murder civilians, especially children. All of this is done in an attempt to influence the UN Security Council's decision to contemplate a military intervention, as was done in Libya. The American and western media, however, consistently and frequently make the mistake of relying on partisan voices in their reporting, which damages their credibility. Other times, partisan sources' evidence serves as a flag; more frequently, they function as a diversion from actual events.

### **1. Human Rights NGO's Disinformation Campaign**

Human rights NGO's are non-governmental organizations which, in particular, have played a leading role in focusing the global community on human rights issues. They monitor governments' actions and urge them to act in line with human rights standards.<sup>8</sup> According to Dr. Anderson, in the Syrian crisis, most American and western media receive information from the Islamist groups themselves or 'activists' such as the British-based 'Syrian Observatory on Human Rights' (SOHR)<sup>9</sup>, the British-based Syrian Network for Human Rights (SN4HR) or the Istanbul-based Violation Documentation Center in Syria (VDC).<sup>10</sup>

These human rights NGO's were responsible for the adoption of many atrocities stories like barrel bombs, 'industrial scale killing', the Houla Massacre and the chemical weapons (the Ghouta incident). Despite the fact that all the previous accusations were proven to be fake by independent journalists, still they keep repeating the same story to discredit the opponent President Bashar al Assad and the Syrian Army. The SOHR is in fact a man named Rami Abdul Rahman based in

Britain and calls himself SOHR. He claims to collect his information from a network of collaborators in and around Syria.<sup>11</sup> According to Pollard, Western media often present the SOHR stories with outstanding-sounding casualty numbers as if they were facts with a 'regime' denial in paragraph 7 or 8 to give the readers a balanced journalism.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, the director of the U.S.-based Human Rights Watch, Kenneth Roth, used photos from Gaza and Kobane to frame President Bashar. Dr. Anderson also compared the Syrian President's supposed acts of killing civilians with devastated Hiroshima.<sup>13</sup> The United States' funding and training of rebels with the aim of toppling a sovereign state like Syria is a violation of the UN Charter and Article One of the International Bill of Rights. Human Rights Watch appears to be limited to finding or fabricating stories that will implicate Bashar al Assad.

Founded in the United Kingdom in 1961, Amnesty International (AI), a prominent non-governmental organization (NGO) widely known by its initialisms, has actively engaged with the Syrian crisis. Primarily established to advocate for the rights of prisoners of conscience, AI has ostensibly expanded its mandate in recent years, embracing a more comprehensive approach to humanitarian intervention. However, this shift has generated debate regarding the organization's core mission and potential alignment with specific geopolitical agendas. Consequently, Amnesty received much criticism for 'carrying out a rigorous human rights risk assessment and establish a robust monitoring process' which is opposed to assessing impacts on human rights. By way of explanation, the risk assessment evaluators make hastened notes about potential issues without in-depth evidence gathering. Within brief periods of investigations, major problems concerning human rights abuse are likely identified whether real or imagined. In this regard Rick Sterling argued that "international law does not allow arms supply to any non-state group, let alone to attack a recognized state."<sup>14</sup>

This is not all about Amnesty; back to the First Gulf War, AI made an abhorrent mistake in the media campaign when it promoted the theatrical testimony of a teenage Kuwaiti girl who claimed in front of the Congressional Human Rights to be an eye witness when Iraqi troops stole incubators from a Kuwaiti hospital to leave them die on the floor. This testimony made the world in fury and influenced seriously public opinion. To their astonishment, the whole story was a fabrication and it appeared later that the girl was the Kuwaiti Ambassador's daughter. The same thing has been repeated in Libya. Amnesty was responsible for spreading lies about human rights violations in Libya which led to the 'No Fly Zone' which NATO slowly reshaped into regime change. The truth was corroborated by the Amnesty President in France that "there was no evidence to back those stories."<sup>15</sup>

Yet another source of inadequate claims is the non-governmental agency Opinion Research Business (ORB) which directs an opinion poll in Britain. According to its poll, "three in five Syrians support international military involvement".<sup>16</sup> In other words, 60% of Syrians want more of foreign involvement

than what they have terribly experienced by terrorist groups; however, according to the Damascus Declaration, the majority of Syrians oppose both violent assassinations of the government and outside involvement. Because it is unknown how ORB international selects its agents or how those individuals select the interviewers they utilize throughout Syria, this glaring inconsistency casts doubt on the methodology used to collect its data. The sole assertion made by ORB is that the survey was representative.<sup>17</sup>

In order to explain ORB poll, one has to trace back ORB's poll on the Iraqi war. In an academic paper, Spagat and Dougherty presented three anomalies with ORB survey. First, there is bias of 'representativeness' of selection for ORB surveys. Second, there is an opaque and 'incomplete disclosure' of methods. Third, important 'irregularities' in ORB estimates of deaths.<sup>18</sup> From the aforementioned points, it follows logically that the ORB survey is predisposed to the Syrian crisis. For instance, the 2015 survey revealed that Present Assad is well-liked in Syria, while the ORB poll only shows 47%, a lower percentage than the other polls. The British corporation ORB then appears to strengthen the anti-Syrian government and offers no assistance in providing an explanation.

Aside from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, a new array of online NGO's were created in the U.S. most importantly are Avaaz, the Syria Campaign and the White Helmets. All are being financed by George Soros who shares strong links to the Zionist organization. They pose themselves as human rights organizations and focus on internet campaigns on global issues. In 2014, these humanitarian NGO's tried to block Facebook due to the increasing number of likes received for the Bashar al Assad's election campaign.<sup>19</sup> Also, these so called human rights organizations have little concern for human rights all what they do is demonizing President Assad and the Syrian Army without evidence. For example, Avaaz (2013) claimed without evidence that 'the Syrian women are being forced to stand in front of tanks and act as human shields before they're stripped and raped by soldiers.' However, this statement is a replica of the rebels' acts who keep boasting about their kidnapping and raping of Syrian women and girls based on false fatwas (a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority) given by their counterfeit religious scholars.<sup>20</sup>

A further example of online NGO's partisan disinformation lies in the photos of dead children's bodies ran by Avaaz and Syria Campaign. They alleged that the Syrian government attacked civilians in East Ghouta in 2015. Those same photos had been used a year earlier to expose ISIS massacres at Deir Ezzor.<sup>21</sup> the same photos were also claimed by another source Getty News which consecutively attribute to earlier 'barrel bombing' in Aleppo.<sup>22</sup> The images are clearly a display of implanted Human Rights Watch, which supports the geostrategic objectives of the major countries to overthrow the government of Syria under the guise of human rights abuses.

## 2. Embedded Media's Disinformation Campaign

War propaganda is aimed to persuade the public mass particularly the lowest of intellects. This can be achieved through a simple language, with disregard to people's background, using word games, false connections and special appeal.<sup>23</sup> The first is about stereotyping which is to give a person or a group a bad label using names that are easy to memorize in order to condemn the person or a certain idea without a sound judgment. The second is the use of wrong associations which incorporate transfer, positive symbols, testimonial and claims by inadequate people. Lastly, the utilization of special appeal which includes the use of plain folks, images of "ordinary" leaders, band wagon, and exploitation of fear.<sup>24</sup>

Embedded media or more precisely 'embedded journalists' could be a term used to describe western reporters coordinated with U.S. invasion troops of Iraq in 2003 as a sort to humanize the war and ease the suffering of the imperial forces. It is essential nowadays to rely on such associates to run a proxy war.<sup>25</sup> Recent research has showed significant differences between embedded and non imbedded U.S. reports as the former showed a little portion of the conflict. This study has pointed out to the fact that embeddedness is a powerful tool of power and influence of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The BBC, the Guardian, the New York Times and also the Al Jazeera have all signed allegiance to American/Western anti-Syria approach. Almost all western media state owned or corporate seemed to favor a humanitarian war in Syria. They use different techniques of persuasion. First, the repetition of false stories. Second, they became partisan which means they humanize one side and demonize the other side. Third, they became also directly engaged in or promote fabrication.

Al Jazeera; for example, received cash from Gulf Monarchies to become 'a vehicle for spreading Qatari political influence... as Qatar became the headquarters of US military operations in the Middle East.'<sup>26</sup> Al Jazeera managers interfered in reports on the Syrian crisis as a result many journalists resigned because the station allowed critique from anti-Syria regime and supported NATO intervention. Also, the managers ordered the staff to not consider Jabhat al Nusra (the terrorist group in Syria) as al Qaeda. Kelly Jarrett, Executive Producer of News in Al Jazeera English channel, told her staff:

Please don't introduce al Nusra as al Qaeda affiliated.' Syria's war is complex...the reality is al Qaeda isn't the organization it used to be and it's irrelevant in this context. al Nusra front is part of Syria's rebel coalition which is made up of multiple armed groups...our viewers need to understand that these armed groups form the main opposition to the government led by President Assad.<sup>27</sup>

After receiving such directives, the majority of Al Jazeera sincere employees quit. The channel's editorial stance means little to the remaining staff. Originally, numerous journalists quit, even before the Syrian crisis started, due to management-directed bias. For example, Managing Director Hassan Shaaban resigned claiming that Al Jazeera station refused to display pictures of a clash between the Syrian Army



and the opposition fighters. The station, in return, accused him of being a pro-Assad asset calling him 'Shabiha' which is a label used to describe a regime thug. Another journalist, Ali Hashem, resigned as the station became one sided.<sup>28</sup>

The BBC, also, uses the technique of persuasion based on ad-nauseam repetition of many lies about the Syrian crisis. One of those stories was about the cause of the Syrian crisis; it was said that the Syrian Army killed weaponless protesters; consequently, the opposition picked up arms and the clash began.<sup>29</sup> Thus far, Saudi Arabia admitted the fact that they funded the Islamists in Daraa. Even the U.S. armed forces General Martin Dempsey revealed that the U.S. allies in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey were those financing all the terrorist groups including ISIS. Still, the BBC keeps associating al Qaeda with moderate Sunni rebels which signify deliberate misinformation.

The BBC went so far into staging footage. The BBC panorama documentary entitled 'Saving Syria's Children' showed the aftermath of an incendiary bomb attack on a playground of Syrian school. It was first aired on BBC's News at 10 on August 29, 2013, just as the UK parliament debating possible military intervention in Syria. As it happens, the motion for intervention was unexpectedly defeated by a narrow majority. If this had not happened, the BBC's footage would unquestionably have served as very timely and useful PR in support of the coming war against Assad. Robert Stuart (2013) presented evidence which is diligently compiled and casts serious doubts over claims made by BBC panorama documentary. The evidence suggests that events depicted in the documentary have been at best highly exaggerated or at worst a complete fabrication. It turned to be the BBC staff filmed a video at a nearby hospital and the audio of comments by Dr. Hallam (who wore a surgical mask) was edited and changed between different versions of the video.<sup>30</sup>

Misinformation from the British Guardian newspaper was faced by an initiative named 'Off Guardian'. It is an independent news and comment web-site. It was launched in February 2015 and takes its name from the fact its founders had all been censored on and/or banned from the Guardian's 'Comment is Free' sections. Off Guardian is dedicated to open discourse and free expression, and will often host articles on both sides of any particular issue. Off Guardian revealed the Guardian's Syrian stories under scrutiny including: false stories about 'barrel bombs', hiding the nature of the Syrian 'opposition' groups, biased reporting about the Russian initiative against terrorism in Syria and Iraq, pro-Israeli spin on Palestinian reporting, and the constant drive of 'humanitarian intervention' in Syria.<sup>31</sup>

### **Thirdly: Separating Propaganda from Fact: A Critical Examination of Western Media Coverage of the Syrian Crisis**

In "The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change and Resistance" (2016), abandoning reason is used in abundance. Its main objective, according to Philip Knightley (2001), is to involve 'a depressingly predictable pattern' of demonizing the enemy leader, then demonizing the enemy people through atrocity stories, real or imagined.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, President Bashar al Assad became the new

evil in the world and the Syrian Army's role is restricted to kill innocent civilians for more than four years. This has been demonstrated through atrocity stories as barrel bombs, chemical weapons, 'industrial scale' killings and dead children. However, when tracing back all these stories; it is found that they came from partisan sources which raise doubtfulness.

The essential purpose of the combatant in a conflict is to discredit and delegitimize its adversary; hence it is important to adhere to some fundamental rules if recognizing the truth is important. Accordingly, the belligerent party's evidence must be regarded with dignified distrust and also bias should be assumed. The civil and criminal law rejects evidence from the belligerent party because it is self-serving. In case it goes against the warring party's interests, then, it is accepted. For example, the Syrian army has been accused by the Islamists armed groups of slaughtering civilians.<sup>33</sup> This claim is absurd for the reason that both parties attack each other with weapons as well as with words. In this regard, Michael Parenti a political scientist claims:

The most effective propaganda relies on framing rather than falsehood. By bending the truth rather than breaking it, using emphasis and other auxiliary embellishments, communicators can create a desired impression without resorting to explicit advocacy and without departing too far from the appearance of objectivity.<sup>34</sup>

Partisan party stories are, in reality, only a distorted version of the truth that exposes the hypocrisy and double standards of belligerent tactics.

This suggests that propaganda often uses selective information, emphasizing certain aspects while downplaying others, to create a biased narrative. It might use partial truths or even technically accurate information, but the way it's presented creates a misleading impression.

Also, the use of rhetorical tools like emphasis, word choice, and emotional appeals serves to amplify certain aspects of the information. These embellishments may not be strictly false, but they serve to sway emotions and perceptions in favor of the desired message.

By using subtle framing techniques, the communicator can avoid presenting themselves as overtly pushing an agenda. This can make the message appear more objective and increase its believability. An effective propaganda maintains a facade of objectivity, even as it presents a biased perspective. This allows the message to appear more credible and bypass critical scrutiny.

Only in few instants where belligerent parties' evidence goes against their interests like in the case of the three Free Syrian Army (FSA) commanders in Aleppo who were interviewed by Western media about the popularity of president Bashar al Assad. All of them have confessed that they were hated by the local inhabitants of Aleppo and that President Assad had about '70 percent' support<sup>35</sup> while NATO heads of governments claimed that president Bashar al Assad lost all of his legitimacy.<sup>36</sup> Here, according to Dr. Anderson, the partisan source awkwardly presented an

evidence that went against their interests; instead of demonizing President Bashar Al Assad, they demonstrated his popularity.

### **1.The 'Barrel Bombs' Accusations**

The use of 'barrel bomb' claims in Western/American reportage of the Syrian crisis is the first area where reality has to be checked. It is allegedly a sort of Syrian Air Force bomb that is responsible for killings of civilians; however, American investigative journalist Robert Parry highlighted the indiscriminate character of the bombs being dropped from the air, which is the same as missile attacks. According to a map showing the locations of those barrel bombs displayed by the American organization Human Rights Watch, all of them were really in terrorist-controlled areas of Aleppo, shocking the audience.<sup>37</sup> It is quite normal and not surprising that the Syrian Army bomb these terrorist sites, what is strange is that the Western media use photos of devastated Gaza as being Aleppo attacked by Assad's barrel bombs.<sup>38</sup> Photos of combat casualties being reused appear to be commonplace now.

The Syrian Army has always undertaken well-publicized attempts to evacuate people before striking terrorist-held regions, but it makes no apologies to anybody for doing so. To prove this, Reuters showed a video of a large evacuation of Douma (near Damascus) by the Syrian Army.<sup>39</sup> Even the families who have been ravaged by the terrorists' attacks demand from the government to bombard the areas filled with terrorists in Douma, Aleppo and Raqqa because the civilians remaining there are supporters of the terrorists, but such an action – according to one of the members of the Syrian government – need an investigation (if a civilian dies) and even a court martial. Assad did not permit the carpet-bomb of areas held by terrorists as his objective is to reunite the shattered country.<sup>40</sup> Despite the Syrian government's concern for its residents, the United States has not stopped accusing the Syrian army of perpetrating more crimes against civilians and children than al-Qaeda and ISIS put together.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, as Dr. Anderson claims, the constant dependence on partisan sources is the basis of western war propaganda. The "barrel bomb" campaign is obviously intended to delegitimize the Syrian Government and the Syrian Army, as well as maybe to prevent or delay assaults on Islamist organizations.

### **2.The Chemical Weapons Accusations: East Ghouta Incident**

The East Ghouta incident happened in August 2013. It is a photo series of dead or drugged children transmitted by Islamist held area east of Damascus with the assertion that the Assad regime was behind the incident using chemical weapons. Subsequently, the U.S. was on the verge of a direct military attack on Syria which only was deterred by Russia. In due course, the Syrian government agreed to get rid of all of its chemical stockpiles that had never been used in any conflict and were kept in case of Israel's nuclear attacks.<sup>42</sup>

The Human Rights Watch presented its arguments concerning the gassing of Syrian children such as the remnants of the weapons used in the air strike which cannot be in the possession of 'rebels' but in the possession of the Syrian armed

forces.<sup>43</sup> New York Times also defended the 'rebels' siding with the United States. Western and U.S. media kept repeating Washington's accusations while independent journalists contradicted those stories, like the studies from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) suggests that the rockets' range seemed shorter than suggested which means it is not possible to be fired from the centre or from the eastern part of the Syrian government controlled area in the intelligence map published by the White House in August 2013.<sup>44</sup> After the video was displayed, a group of Syrians named ISTEAMS made a thorough investigation and raised important questions just as: who are the children and where are their parents? The video showed eight corpses had been buried, the remaining bodies were missing.<sup>45</sup>

ISTEAMS' investigation resulted in a report that blows the mind. Jobhat al Nusra abducted 150 women and children in Ballouta, Northern Latakia just two weeks before the Ghouta incident. To confirm this, the families of some of the abducted women and children 'recognized them in the videos and requested unbiased investigation to determine the identity and the whereabouts of the abducted children.'<sup>46</sup> John Mesler ascertained in his article 'Combating the Propaganda Machine in Syria' that the abducted children were held in Selma town by armed groups and drugged them to create the video; the abducted children were never in East Ghouta.<sup>47</sup>

In order to determine if chemical weapons were deployed and what the results were, the UN special mission on chemical weapons went to Syria to investigate the sites including East Ghouta. According to a UN investigation, Syrian chemical weapons were used against people, including children, in five distinct locations. The largest-scale deployment of chemical weapons was in East Ghouta. Along with military and citizens, they are also present in Khan al Asal. When the attack took place in Jobar, both military and civilians were targeted and on a small-scale attack on residents in Saraqueb. Finally, Ashrafiyah, it was against troops.<sup>48</sup> The UN report highlighted that in the three sites, the attacks were on soldiers which means they are not from the government; they are from groups fighting the government. The chemical weapons used in the Khan-Al-Assal incident "bore the same distinct hallmarks as those used in al Ghouta," according to a subsequent study for the Human Rights Council (f February 2014).<sup>49</sup>

Another setback for the American narrative came from within the country. Veteran North American journalist Seymour Hersh spoke with American intelligence agents and came to the conclusion that Washington had forged the evidence to support its assertions. Al Nusra ought to have been a suspect, he claimed, but the U.S. government "cherry picked intelligence" to support an attack against Assad.<sup>50</sup> Hersh draws the conclusion that the White House "disregarded the available intelligence about al-Nusra's potential access to sarin and continued to [erroneously] claim that the Assad government was in sole possession of chemical weapons."<sup>51</sup>

In this regard Dr. Anderson asserts that the claims against the Syrian Army were false, despite the reams of independent evidence that proved chemical weapons had been deployed in East Ghouta.

### **3.The Scale Killings Accusations: The Houla Massacre**

This atrocious incident of Houla happened on May 25, 2012 in a string of towns northwest of Homs, Syria. It is claimed by western and American Media that the pro-Syrian government named 'Shabiha' were responsible for this mass killing of civilians that drew the attention of UN Security Council authorization for intervention to protect civilians. Russia and China refused Syria to be another Libya, so their intervention was via proxy armies. The rebel groups carried counter attacks on the Syrian army and later blamed them for ethnic cleansing. Evidence and counter evidence of the incident will be examined in this section.

The U.S., British and French governments accused the Syrian regime without clear evidence for committing the Houla massacre using artillery as their weapon.<sup>52</sup> Many governments fired the Syrian diplomats in order to isolate the Syrian government. The UN Security Council declared that:

They condemn the killings in the strongest possible terms... in attacks that involved a series of Government artillery and tank shellings on a residential neighborhood... and also condemn the killings of civilians by shooting at close range...this constitutes a violation of applicable international law and of the commitments of the Syrian governments.<sup>53</sup>

The Syrian government accused the Islamist rebels exactly those expelled from Homs for the scale killing in Houla. Syria's Foreign Ministry stated that on Friday, 25 May 2012, the Syrian Army clashed with hundreds of armed men carrying knives which are a sign of Islamist rebels. Moreover, Mother Agnes-Mariam de la Croix accused FSA groups and their slogans 'Christians to Beirut, Alawites to the tomb' of their 'false flag' operation in Houla claiming that the Catholic Media Centre had a list of names of hundreds of victims.<sup>54</sup>

Investigation by a UN Special Mission Head was needed as both sides keep blame each other for committing atrocities against civilians. Norwegian General Robert Mood and his group visited the massacre site and were bewildered when hearing two different stories. He sent his report to the UN headquarters but was not received. The report contains the following: 'the circumstances and the facts related to the incident itself remain unclear to us.'<sup>55</sup> After this, Syrian National Assembly elections took place and the opposition threatened to enforce boycott to such elections because they provide legitimacy to the current Syrian regime.

A second UN envoy to the Houla area was a U.S. diplomat Karen Koning AbuZayd who was considered by many as a U.S. asset and who conducted his investigation at a distance from Syria.<sup>56</sup> The report Koning gave was a direct blame to the Syrian government for the Houla incident and demanded from President Assad to resign.<sup>57</sup> According to Tim Anderson, the Human Rights Council should not have

appointed a U.S. representative to look into the Houla massacre in accordance with the values of independence and avoiding conflicts of interests.<sup>58</sup>

Anti-Syrian regime presented a little boy named Ali al Sayed as their sole witness. He said:

There were tanks in the street, they shot at us with machine guns...soldiers came out...they fired 5 bullets on the door lock...arrested my brother... [and] my uncle ... then my mum screamed at them ... then they shot her 5 times, they shot her on the head ... some were dressed as military, some had regular clothes, had shaved heads and beards, shabiha.<sup>59</sup>

The boy's account was riddled with flaws and gave off the impression that it was being delivered as a lecture by FSA groups, particularly when he responded to the final leading question regarding international military action. The boy's words do not suffice to be regarded as convincing evidence, notwithstanding their merits and limitations. A lack of interest on the part of the UN commission and also from major nations was shown when the Syrian government presented their fifteen witnesses.

Days after the massacre, Arabic-speaking German journalist Rainer Hermann interviewed Houla witnesses. The writer withheld the identity of his informants, who were members of the non-violent Syrian Opposition. They made the following claims:

The massacre took place after Friday prayers...dozens of soldiers and rebels were killed ... [in fighting of] about 90 minutes ... those killed were almost exclusively families of the Alawite or Shia minorities ... [including] several dozen members of a family which had converted to Shia Islam in recent years ... and the family of a Sunni member of parliament because he was considered a collaborator ... after the massacre, the perpetrators filmed their victims, presented them as Sunni victims and spread their videos.<sup>60</sup>

The gang leaders were identified by Herman by name:

More than 700 gunmen under the leadership of Abdurrazzaq Tlass and Yahya Yusuf [Farooq leaders] came in three groups from Rastan, Kafr Laha and Akra and attacked three army checkpoints around Taldou. The numerically superior rebels and the soldiers fought bloody battles ... the rebels, supported by the residents of Taldou, snuffed out the families ... [who] had refused to join the opposition.<sup>61</sup>

Additionally, on May 25, a video team from the Abkhazian Network News Agency (ANNA-News) with Russian journalists Marat Musin and Olga Kulygina interviewed a number of witnesses in Houla. It is very evident from their sources that the assassins were Islamist "rebels." The grandmother of Al-Hula, an elderly woman, said:

'Checkpoint positions were attacked ... All the soldiers were killed, then they attacked our villages, touched a hospital ... Bandits killed our pharmacist ... [because] he had treated a wounded soldier Nobody but the army will help us ... They say there have been airstrikes! Lies, lies, lies. Liars, all of them from Ar-Rastan'<sup>62</sup>

According to Dr. Anderson the Houla Massacre serves as a stark warning about the serious risks associated with applying the "Responsibility to Protect" paradigm in situations when major countries are present and have proxy forces. Islamist armed organizations must have been greatly influenced by the notion that nearly any atrocity could be attributed to the Syrian Government with no concern for disagreement in the western media. Furthermore Farouq was particularly media savvy, routinely making videos for the Saudi Arabian and Qatari television networks Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera. In any case, the Houla massacre was only an Islamist rebel group's way of punishing pro-Assad people. They subsequently staged a cover-up to attribute the atrocity to the Syrian Army. A string of similar false flag atrocities in Syria followed the Houla massacre. The UN's attempt to find the truth failed, and instead it increased the conflict in Syria. Syria thankfully avoided becoming a "no fly zone" as Libya did. In actuality, despite several provocations from the west, it was the Syrian Army that stood resolutely against American proxy militia and prevented breaking apart along sectarian lines.

#### **Fourthly: Discussion**

Choosing the academic book "The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change and Resistance" instead of other books, enabled the researcher to cast light on the Syrian conflict's darkest sides from the very beginning for the book offers a critical perspective on the dominant Western narrative of the Syrian conflict, which primarily focuses on Assad's brutality and the rise of ISIS. Anderson delves into the role of external actors, particularly the US and its allies, in fueling the conflict and supporting non-state armed groups. This has provided valuable insights often overlooked in mainstream discourse.

The book also draws on various sources, including interviews with Syrian activists, journalists, and academics, to paint a detailed picture of the conflict's complexities. This has offered a deeper understanding of the various factions involved and their motivations. Furthermore, by centering the experiences of ordinary Syrians and marginalized groups, the book amplifies voices often excluded from mainstream narratives. This can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the human cost of the conflict.

Throughout the analysis of the 'war propaganda' in the academic book 'The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change and Resistance' (2016) by Dr. Anderson, one can determine the most thorough assessment of American/Western fabrications used to support the war against Bashar al Assad President of Syria. According to James Petras, Professor Emeritus of sociology at Binghamton University and Research Associate at the Centre of Research on Globalization, 'The Dirty War on Syria' combines all the salient charges and their persuasive denials that no other book had ever done before.' ISIS serves as the justification for a merciless, never-ending war on Syria, with President Assad as the target and pro-western puppet government as the desired U.S. alternative.<sup>63</sup>

The book also demonstrates how loaded language is employed to promote and advance the Western/American fake narrative. Moderate rebels, opposition, freedom fighters and activists are just examples of terms and phrases that need to be dissected and scrutinized for the role they play in the subtle and insidious distortion of the reader's thinking. In his book, Doctor Anderson, contrasts at length western news media reports on alleged atrocities and war crimes are to blame for Assad and the Syrian Army with the compelling forensic evidence presented by credible eyewitnesses and their testimony, as well as the reporting of independent journalists with a strong track record of objectivity.

According to Garikai Chengu (2014), the U.S. is supplying ISIS and al Qaeda members with cash, weapons and even training. When the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) interventionist ideology of misguided messianic neo-liberalism and force of weapons are combined, a deadly beast is created. The U.S. in particular and the West in general must admit the suffering, devastation and anarchy that these endeavors have brought to the Syrian people and must also give up their obscene, fanatical, compulsive addiction to 'regime change' and 'color revolutions'.<sup>64</sup>

But in spite of that, Brian Slocock had another view about the book 'The Dirty War on Syria' and its author Dr. Anderson. This latter is considered by Brian as an authority on the Syrian conflict with academic credentials. Dr. Anderson asserts that Doctor Anderson is quick to reject 'partisan sources' that are critical of the viewpoint he is elaborating, yet he seems blissfully oblivious that such an argument is only tenable logically if it is consistent. If it applies to 'partisans' opposing Assad, then it must equally apply to the partisans of the other side. Slocock continues his criticism by pointing out that Anderson's universe is based on dichotomous division: either you support him in regards to Syria or you are a hired hack who is following the directives of an unknown force. Brian Slocock claims that there is no space for intellectual independence and professional standards since any journalist, human rights activist, researcher, or academic expert who disagrees with him is just a "partisan" whose opinions may be ignored or disregarded.<sup>65</sup>

Brian Slocock accuse Tim Anderson of being one sided; when faced with contradicting media reports, a serious researcher would examine the information more carefully in an effort to verify its veracity. But at the Global Research news (where Tim Anderson published his book), they just pick the tales that suit their pre-determined narrative and embrace them without further investigation. The journalist Slocock has examined one of Anderson's sources in details which is Arutz Sheva. This latter does not cite any sources or indicate that this is first-hand account; it is highly probable that they are the source of the information.

According to Dr. Anderson, who stated unequivocally that this is assumed to be untrue based on the principle that any information originating from the side of the belligerent party—whether the Syrian government or the Islamist rebels—must not be taken as fact because armed opponents frequently engage in verbal and physical combat with one another. In addition, most of the time atrocity claims in the Syrian



crisis almost always has served as a flag and pretext for persuading foreign intervention and this was illustrated by evidence from eyewitnesses and independent journalists. For instance, Syrians such as Samer al Akhras, a young man from a Sunni family, who used to watch Al Jazeera because he preferred it to state TV, became convinced to back the Syrian government. He saw first-hand the fabrication of reports on Al Jazeera and wrote in late June 2011:

'I am a Syrian citizen and I am a human. After 4 months of your fake freedom... You say peaceful demonstration and you shoot our citizen. From today...I am now a Sergeant in the Reserve Army. If I catch anyone ... in any terrorist organization working on the field in Syria I am gonna shoot you as you are shooting us. This is our land not yours, the slaves of American fake freedom' (al Akhras 2011).<sup>66</sup>

Dr. Anderson, as an academician, visited Syria personally during the crisis to get insights into the nature of the conflict, hence it is deceptive that Doctor Anderson disregarded the origin source of the information he references to support his statements. The observant reader of the book 'The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change and Resistance' (2016) will notice that Tim Anderson has used a variety of mostly English language sources and also western to avoid being too reliant on pro-Syrian sources.

While valuable insights can be gleaned from Dr. Anderson's analysis, a fully comprehensive understanding of the Syrian crisis necessitates acknowledging the book's limitations. One such area is the proposed connection between the Syrian crisis and the Orange Revolutions. Linking them might overlook crucial contextual factors that shaped the Syrian conflict's unique trajectory. While vastly different in outcome and escalation, the Syrian conflict and the Orange Revolution share some intriguing similarities when viewed through an academic lens. Here, these shared characteristics will be explored, acknowledging the significant differences for context.

Both events began with widespread public dissatisfaction with the existing government. In Syria, as claimed a complex mix of economic grievances, political repression, and sectarian tensions fueled protests against President Bashar al-Assad. In Ukraine, anger stemmed from perceived electoral fraud and authoritarian tendencies under President Viktor Yanukovich. Also, movements initially embraced peaceful demonstrations. Syrians utilized marches, civil disobedience, and online activism. Ukrainians organized mass rallies and occupied central Kyiv, showcasing their demands for change.

Yet another similarity is that both situations attracted significant external interest. In Syria, regional powers like Iran and Russia backed the Syrian sovereign government, while Western nations and Gulf States supported rebels, leading to internationalization of the conflict. In Ukraine, Western powers offered support to the opposition, while Russia viewed the movement with suspicion, contributing to tensions.

Leveraging the affordances of the digital age, both the Syrian conflict and the Orange Revolution demonstrably harnessed the power of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Social media platforms functioned as multifaceted tools, facilitating mobilization, raising awareness, and enabling widespread documentation of events. However, this very ubiquity presented a double-edged sword. The ease of disseminating information online also fostered the proliferation of misinformation and propaganda, exacerbating pre-existing social cleavages and contributing to the radicalization of certain segments of both populations.

Despite their contrasting outcomes, the Syrian conflict and the Orange Revolution share interesting similarities in their origins, dynamics, and external influences. Recognizing these shared narratives can offer valuable insights into the complex interplay of domestic grievances, governmental responses, and external interventions in popular crisis. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the significant differences in scale, violence, and regional impact to avoid oversimplification or misinterpretation.

In his seminal work, "Blueprint for Revolution", Srđa Popović posits that the most potent form of propaganda resides not in crafted messaging, but in the lived experience of the individual. He emphasizes the paramount importance of personal integrity, advocating for a life that embodies the values espoused by a revolutionary movement. This transcends mere rhetoric, becoming a powerful form of non-verbal communication that resonates far deeper than spoken words. By aligning actions with ideals, individuals become living testaments to the cause, fostering trust and inspiring wider engagement.

Popović offers the compelling example of leaders within a non-violent movement steadfastly refusing to resort to violence, even in the face of provocation. This unwavering commitment to peaceful principles transcends empty pronouncements, serving as a potent symbolic act that speaks volumes about the movement's core values and dedication to its stated goals. It simultaneously undermines the legitimacy of the opposing force, exposing their reliance on violence as a tool of suppression, further bolstering the non-violent movement's moral authority.

Through such embodied practices of integrity, individuals within a movement elevate themselves beyond mere agents of dissent, transitioning into powerful symbols of hope and transformation. Their lives become living manifestos, demonstrating the possibility of a different way of being, one rooted in the very ideals they champion. This, argues Popović, holds the potential to be far more persuasive and influential than any external messaging campaign, as it speaks directly to the hearts and minds of individuals, fostering solidarity and inspiring others to join the cause.

Ultimately, Popović's proposition transcends the realm of revolution alone. It speaks to the broader human condition, reminding us that the most impactful

messages we convey are not those we speak, but those we live. By aligning our actions with our values, we become powerful agents of change, inspiring others and contributing to the creation of a more just and equitable world.

### Conclusion

Echoing Churchill's grim assertion that 'truth is the first casualty of war,' "The Dirty War on Syria" emerges as a searingly necessary read. His writing significantly contributes to assisting the reader/ academicians in emerging from the deluge of propaganda, falsehoods and misinformation that is supplied to common people particularly Americans to convince them of their wars abroad. There are several references and citations throughout the book. It is a very vital and significant contribution to the effort to shed light on and expose the reality of the current dirty war on Syria. The book depicts in details the struggle or world war that the western powers, Gulf state financiers, and their proxies terrorists wrongfully started in the most stunning, secular, wonderful historically and thriving country in the Arab world; a country that wants to be free of American military bases or financial cartels.

The author provides some wise counsel to the media, notably that the established media must adapt. They must cease promoting false information about the conflict and start reporting facts supported by evidence. His book offers a persuasive account of the bravery and tenacity of the Syrian people, who have fought for more than six years against a coalition of Western aggressors and Islamic terrorists. The ongoing conflict in Syria, fueled by external actors and internal strife, has inflicted a deep wound on one of the world's oldest and richest cultures. As bombs rain down on historic sites and communities are scattered, the world witnesses a tragedy that transcends mere political conflict. This immense tragedy, marked by the loss of countless lives and the displacement of millions, underscores the devastating human cost of war.

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