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# Investigating War Propaganda in the Syrian Crisis 2011

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to all my family members for their enormous support, love, and encouragement, throughout my whole academic career.

To all my friends and colleagues whom I spent this five years journey with,

Thank you for everything.

## **Acknowledgment**

Profound gratitude goes to my supervisor **Ms. Taalah Asma**

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## **Abstract**

Western governments, led by the American government, played a major role in interfering in Syria's internal affairs over the course of time after independence, whether in the political situation or in times of war, exploiting many factors, including the tensions occurring in the region and the terrorist presence, and ignoring the rejection of many Middle Eastern countries its presence in the region. The propaganda presented showed that this American intervention was of a positive nature and had repercussions for maintaining peace, but behind it there was a policy of the American government, which was present in the Syrian crisis not only through statements, but even through military support, the presence of soldiers, and their alliance with some parties. With a systematic propaganda, the United States has proven with numerous proofs its intention to direct Syrian and international public opinion to beliefs whose main goal is to harm the reputation of the Syrian government, starting from the events of the pre-war Syrian demonstrations to the issues of explosive barrels, all the way to the Houla massacre and chemical weapons, by publishing inaccurate information from organizations belonging to the Syrian opposition. And exploiting the situation to expand American influence in the region and benefit from it to achieve its interests.

**Key words:** Syria, Propaganda, violations, United Nations, International law, USA, Bashar Al-Assad.

## **List of Acronyms**

<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>CIA</b>	Central Intelligence Agency
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>RT</b>	Russia Today
<b>ISIS</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
<b>ISIL</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>CNN</b>	Cable News Network
<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>ABC</b>	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
<b>SANA</b>	Syrian Arab News Agency

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# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

One of the most important ways to control people and their ideas is propaganda, including mass media propaganda, like what happened in Syria. The war in Syria isn't just a fight with bombs and guns, but also with words and media. Throughout its history, Syria has known many American interventions, starting from independence until the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011 and then until today. American newspapers and television channels also played a major role in the Syrian war and its management by mining many lies and rumors that serve specific interests and a precised agenda.

The Syrian crisis was and still is one of the most important points that is addressed periodically by the international political community and human rights organizations. The Syrian crisis remains stuck between many parties in confusion and ambiguity. The American role is the most important for its effectiveness on the ground in Syria, as well as for the American leadership role in the world. The impact of U.S.A interventions on Syria is an important matter, and studying the methods of spreading rumors and managing the current Syrian crisis and the goals of all of this is more important matter that must be studied and researched. During the Syrian crisis, the American mainstream media played a very large role in spreading lies and false news, Which led to a terrible path for the Syrians and the Syrian war as a whole.



This work is undertaken to investigate the following questions:

1. What is the history of American intervention in Syria?
2. What exactly happened in Syria because of America's decisions?
3. What is propaganda and what are its types and methods?
4. What are the motives of American propaganda in Syria?
5. What aspect has the American media contributed to the Syrian crisis?
6. Was the media defending America only, or did it contribute to spreading false news?
7. Did the United States achieve its goals in Syria?

The importance of the research lies in studying the influence of the United States on Syria since independence, especially the current crisis that broke out in 2011. By studying the latter, the information obtained can be applied in other cases and wars in other countries and develop our knowledge about media propaganda and state propaganda in political statements and their prominent role in changing the paths and history of entire countries.

In his book *The Dirty War in Syria*, Tim Anderson and many writers and journalists who delve deeply into the Syrian issue highlight the numerous violations and observations hidden from the eyes of the majority of Mainstream Media followers, as this was discussed in more depth in the last chapter.

Our research requires studying the topic from a historical perspective, starting from a specific time period until now using a mixed methods approach. With an analytical study of events and linking them to each other. In this way, we will be able to answer our research questions and study the American decisions and manipulations in Syria in a chronological manner from ancient times and apply them to what is currently happening in the Syrian crisis to draw the results that we hope for.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is entitled "Brief History of the U.S. Intervention in Syria". This chapter presents the historical timeline of the U.S. interventions in the Syrian affairs since the independence all the way to the Syrian crisis in Daraa 2011. The second chapter is entitled "Exploring the Notion Of Propaganda In Wars". This chapter deals with the concept of propaganda and its uses in wars, and reviews some examples of propaganda and its historical results. The third chapter which is "The Use of Propaganda In Syrian War" talks about the main topic of the research and delves into the secrets of the modern Syrian crisis and the role of the American propaganda machine in shaping opinions and fabrications in the most prominent stages of the Syrian war



## **Chapter One**

# Brief History of the U.S. Intervention in Syria

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## **Introduction**

Since Syria's independence from France on April 17, 1946, the ambitions of many countries of the world have emerged to build relations with the first Syrian Republic, including countries that wanted an alliance and strengthening its power, and including other countries that wanted to penetrate into Syrian affairs and play the role of colonizer and soft control over this young state at that time.

Since its early years, the Syrian Republic has highlighted its political personality and its prominent positions in several situations, including the issue of foreign interference in the affairs of the region in general and in the affairs of Syria in particular. The leaders of the Syrian Baath party were well known for opposing the use colonial tactics during this period, particularly those who came from the Western nations where Syria first experienced the bitterness of War.

The US has had a long history of policy towards Syria. Even when the country was still part of the Ottoman Empire, the US dispatched a diplomatic representative to Damascus, and Washington has influenced regional affairs since World War II until the Syrian conflict, and then again until now, Going through many events in the region, such as the Suez Crisis, the Lebanese Civil War, the Iraq War, and all the way to the Syrian Crisis.

### **1.1 The History of the U.S. Intervention in Syria After the Independence**

A former colony themselves, the United States quickly got involved in Syria's push for independence. President Harry S. Truman opposed French endeavors to regain the League of Nations mandate for Syria after World War II. With support from the US, Syria managed to advance its own sovereignty and became one of the original signatories of the UN Charter in 1945.

In April 1946, Syria formally gained independence from France, marking the end of a French mandate that began after World War I. Just a few months later, in September 1946, the

United States recognized Syria's sovereignty by establishing diplomatic relations with the newly independent nation (Melki, 1997).

In the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli War spanning 1948-1949, the United States' support for Israel played a pivotal role in shaping regional dynamics, notably solidifying Syria's anti-US stance. As tensions escalated in the Middle East, the US's backing of Israel fueled resentment among Arab nations, including Syria, which viewed the support as a betrayal of Arab interests. This stance further entrenched Syria's antagonistic stance towards the US, contributing to the broader geopolitical rifts that defined the region during that era. The repercussions of this historical episode continue to reverberate in the complex relationships between the US, Israel, and Arab states in the contemporary Middle Eastern landscape (Ben-Meir, 1977).

In 1949, the CIA supported a military coup that toppled Syria's democratically elected leader. However, the leader, Shukri al-Quwatli, returned to power in 1955 and aligned Syria with Egypt, which leaned towards the Soviet Union. The US tried again to remove him but failed, leading to a freeze in diplomatic relations between the US and Syria. In an attempt to counter US influence, Syria briefly united with Egypt to form the United Arab Republic (Moubayed, 2009).

In 1956, tensions flared during the Suez Crisis as the US condemned Syria's support for Egyptian President Nasser. Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal, previously under British and French control, ignited the conflict. The US disapproval likely stemmed from a desire to avoid disruption to oil flow through the canal and maintain a more neutral position compared to its European allies, Britain and France (Crowcroft, 2016).

In 1967, a war between Israel and its neighbors Egypt, Jordan, and Syria lasted only six days but had lasting effects. It was the third time these countries had fought since Israel was created. After the war, Israel became closer to the United States because the US

supported them. On the other hand, Egypt and Syria got support from the Soviet Union. The Arab League, a group of Arab countries, refused to recognize Israel and would not talk peace with them after the war. This made the situation in the Middle East even more complicated (Bowen, 2017).

## **1.2 The era of Hafiz Al-Assad**

In 1973, the Yom Kippur War unfolded as a pivotal moment in the ongoing conflict between Israel and its neighboring Arab nations, particularly Syria and Egypt. This war, named after the Jewish holy day when it began, marked a significant escalation in hostilities in the region. As the fighting intensified, Israel found itself in a precarious position, facing coordinated attacks from both the Syrian and Egyptian armies.

In response to the escalating crisis, the United States, a staunch ally of Israel, opted to provide crucial aid and support to the Israeli military. This assistance included the provision of weapons, ammunition, and financial aid, as well as diplomatic backing on the international stage. The decision by the US to support Israel during the Yom Kippur War underscored the deepening alliance between the two nations and highlighted America's strategic interests in the Middle East (HISTORY, 2009).

However, while the US support bolstered Israel's defense capabilities and contributed to its eventual victory in the conflict, it also fueled resentment and animosity among other countries in the region. Many Arab nations viewed the US intervention as evidence of biased foreign policy in favor of Israel, exacerbating long-standing grievances and deepening anti-American sentiment.

The perception of American favoritism towards Israel not only strained diplomatic relations with Arab nations but also contributed to broader tensions and instability in the



Middle East. The Yom Kippur War, with its involvement of external powers like the United States, underscored the complex dynamics at play in the region in the political changes taking place (HISTORY, 2009).

In 1976, a significant event unfolded when the United States made the decision to withdraw funding for the Aswan High Dam project in Egypt. This move had far-reaching implications, not only for Egypt but also indirectly for Syria. The Aswan Dam, a monumental engineering project on the Nile River, was crucial for Egypt's economic development and water management efforts. However, the US decision to withdraw funding stemmed from concerns about Egypt's foreign policy alignment and human rights record at the time. The US decision to withdraw funding for the Aswan Dam in 1976 had broader implications for regional politics and development efforts, indirectly affecting countries like Syria and highlighting the complex interplay of interests in the Middle East (Abu-Zeid & El-Shibini, 1997).

In 1982, the United States strongly criticized Syria for getting involved in the Lebanon Civil War. This war had been going on for years and involved different groups fighting in Lebanon. The US didn't like Syria joining in because it made things worse and dragged out the fighting. They thought it was important for Lebanon to solve its own problems without outside interference. The US speaking out against Syria showed that they wanted Lebanon to be able to govern itself without outside interference. It also showed that the US and Syria did not get along well, and it highlighted how complicated things were in the Middle East, with different countries vying for power and influence. Overall, the US condemning Syria's involvement in the Lebanon Civil War in 1982 was a big deal because it showed where the US stood on the issue and how they saw the situation in the region (Wight, 2013).

In 1986, a significant development occurred in the relationship between the United States and Syria, as the US government decided to impose sanctions on Syria due to allegations of its support for terrorist activities. This decision represented a notable departure from previous approaches and marked a shift towards a more confrontational stance. The US had grown increasingly concerned about Syria's alleged backing of various terrorist groups operating both within the Middle East and beyond its borders. The imposition of sanctions was seen as a direct response to what the US perceived as Syria's role in providing financial support, training, and safe havens to these groups. These sanctions targeted specific sectors of Syria's economy, aiming to restrict its ability to engage in international trade and financial transactions. The goal was to make it economically difficult for Syria to continue supporting terrorist groups According to the American narrative. The decision to impose sanctions on Syria in 1986 signaled a significant escalation in tensions between the two nations. The imposition of sanctions had broader implications for the relationship between the United States and Syria, signaling a more confrontational posture and potentially complicating diplomatic efforts between the two countries (Hufbauer, 2008).

In 1990, the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East was dramatically altered when Iraq launched a full-scale invasion of Kuwait. This aggressive move by Iraq sent shockwaves throughout the region and prompted an urgent response from the international community, led by the United States. Recognizing the need to swiftly address this act of aggression and uphold the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, the United States spearheaded a coalition of nations, which notably included Syria, rallying under the banner of the United Nations (Chardell, 2023).

The coalition's primary objective was clear: to come to the aid of Kuwait and repel Iraqi forces from its territory. The ensuing military campaign, which commenced in January 1991, was characterized by extensive air strikes and ground troop deployments aimed at liberating Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. The involvement of Syria in this multinational effort underscored the broad international consensus against Iraq's aggression and demonstrated solidarity with Kuwait in its time of need. The Gulf War 1991, as it would come to be known, was a defining moment in the history of the region, showcasing the resolve of the international community to confront some of the region's issues. The successful outcome of the military campaign, culminating in Iraq's surrender in March 1991 (MOFAJP).

### **1.3 The era of Bashar Al-Assad**

During Bill Clinton's presidency in 2000, efforts to foster cooperation between Washington and Damascus faltered once again. Clinton, in his pursuit of a Middle East peace agreement via the Oslo accords, extended invitations to Syria, Egypt, and Lebanon to participate in the negotiations. Despite these overtures and numerous attempts throughout his two terms in office, the prospects of reaching a compromise remained elusive. One of the key stumbling blocks was the opposition from Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, who had been in power since 1971 until his passing in 2000. After him, Bashar al-Assad also hesitated for many reasons (Gruen, 2001).

In 2002, the United States assumed a more direct role in Middle Eastern affairs following the devastating 9/11 terror attacks. Initially, Syria was not targeted by President George W. Bush's "rogue state" rhetoric. In a gesture of cooperation, Damascus provided Washington with valuable information regarding extremist networks. In return, Syria sought US support for its desire to regain influence over Lebanon. However, instead of aligning with Syria, the US plunged into the Iraq War. Syria opposed the US-led invasion of Iraq and used its position on the UN Security Council to voice its dissent. Under the leadership of Bashar al-Assad, the son of Hafez al-Assad, Syria even flouted international sanctions against Iraq, significantly expanding its trade volume with the country to approximately \$3 million (Le Monde, 2023).

This divergence in interests left the US uncertain about how to approach Syria. While the State Department advocated for engaging Damascus as a potential ally in the war on terror, the Pentagon opposed this approach due to Assad's alleged ties with local terrorist groups.

The relationship between the US and Syria further deteriorated following the assassination of

the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005. Washington responded by recalling its ambassador from Damascus and accusing Syria of involvement in the attack. This event marked a significant escalation in tensions between the two countries and underscored the challenges faced in navigating their complex relationship amidst the tumultuous landscape of the Middle East (Voa News, 2009).

In 2008, a notable shift occurred in the relationship between the United States and Syria as President Obama took office. In an effort to pursue diplomatic engagement and foster dialogue, President Obama made the decision to lift some sanctions imposed on Syria by the previous administration. This move marked a departure from the more confrontational approach of the past and signaled a willingness to explore avenues for cooperation and diplomacy with Syria. By initiating diplomatic engagement, President Obama aimed to address shared concerns and seek common ground on various regional and international issues. (BBC News, 2011).

In August 2011, President Barack Obama made a public statement calling for the resignation of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Additionally, he issued an order to freeze the assets of the Syrian government. This action reflected the stance of the Obama administration regarding the Syrian government's handling of the ongoing civil unrest and protests within Syria at that time. The call for Assad's resignation and the asset freeze were part of broader international efforts to address the situation in Syria, which was marked by escalating violence and human rights concerns as they announced (The White House, 2011).

In June 2013, the United States officials made a significant announcement alleging that forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad had employed chemical weapons against opposition groups within Syria. In response to these allegations and as a measure of support for the opposition, President Barack Obama authorized direct assistance to rebel factions operating within Syria. This decision represented a notable escalation in the U.S. involvement in the Syrian conflict, signaling a shift towards more overt support for rebel forces seeking to overthrow the Assad regime. The authorization of direct support reflected the Obama administration's position on the use of chemical weapons and its strategic objectives in the Syrian conflict, although it also sparked debates regarding the potential implications and complexities of further intervention in the region (Blanchard ; Sharp, 2013).

The statement made by President Obama on August 20, 2012, regarding the use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime in Syria, set a significant precedent. This declaration characterized such actions as crossing a "red line" that could prompt a response from the United States. Fast towards August 21, 2013, a tragic incident unfolded in rebel-held suburbs of Damascus, the Syrian capital, where hundreds of individuals experienced suffocation. United Nations investigators, tasked with examining the scene, concluded that ground-to-ground missiles loaded with sarin gas had been launched into civilian areas while residents were asleep. In the aftermath, the United States and other nations attributed responsibility for this devastating act to the Syrian government (UN, 2013).

During the summer of 2014, the U.S. administration disclosed that a contingent of several dozen special operations troops had been deployed on the ground in Syria for a brief period. Their mission aimed to rescue foreign hostages who had been captured by the Islamic State group. However, the troops were unable to locate the hostages.

President Obama initiated a U.S. air campaign targeting the Islamic State in Syria, following a month after commencing airstrikes in neighboring Iraq on September 22, 2014. This marked the beginning of a concerted effort by the U.S.-led coalition, which has since conducted airstrikes at over 17,000 locations in Syria as part of the operation (AP News, 2019).

In late 2015, the deployment of American ground troops into Syria commenced, initially numbering 50 personnel but subsequently increasing to the current official total of approximately 2,000 troops. Their primary role involves the recruitment, organization, and advisory support for thousands of Syrian Kurdish and Arab fighters, collectively known as the Syrian Democratic Forces. (AP News, 2019).

On April 4, 2017, a devastating incident unfolded as more than 90 individuals lost their lives in a suspected nerve gas attack targeted at the town of Khan Sheikhoun, situated in the rebel-held Idlib province of Syria. This tragic event sparked widespread condemnation and raised urgent concerns about the use of chemical weapons in the conflict. Both Moscow and Damascus vehemently denied any involvement (SAMS, 2022).

Following the attack, on April 5, 2017, President Trump made a statement expressing strong condemnation, asserting that Assad's regime had "crossed a lot of lines" with the suspected chemical assault. Subsequently, the United States took decisive action, launching 59 cruise missiles into Syria in a retaliatory strike. This marked a significant escalation in the conflict, representing the first direct military intervention by the United States against the Syrian government. The swift and forceful response underscored the gravity of the situation and signaled a shift in the international community's approach to addressing the ongoing crisis in Syria.

President Trump's characterization of Bashar al-Assad as an "animal" on April 8, 2018, accompanied by a warning of severe repercussions for the use of banned weapons of mass destruction. As a logical result, on April 15, 2018, the United States, Britain, and France coordinated missile strikes targeting the Syrian capital Damascus and the central province of Homs. These strikes were carried out in response to the alleged chemical attack in Douma. Syria asserted that its air defenses successfully intercepted a significant portion of the missiles launched (DW, 2018).

“The protest movement in Syria was overwhelmingly peaceful until September 2011”  
- Human Rights Watch, 2012.

“I have seen from the beginning armed protesters in those demonstrations ... they were the first to fire on the police. Very often the violence of the security forces comes in response to the brutal violence of the armed insurgents” – the late Father Frans Van der Lugt, January



2012, Homs Syria.

“The claim that armed opposition to the government has begun only recently is a complete lie. The killings of soldiers, police and civilians, often in the most brutal circumstances, have been going on virtually since the beginning.” - Professor Jeremy Salt, October 2011, Ankara Turkey.

The dual story of the Syrian conflict began with the beginning of armed violence in 2011 in the southern border city of Daraa, and the story comes from independent Syrian witnesses, such as the late father Francis Van Der Lugt in Homs, who says that armed men infiltrated the demonstrations in order to spread violence, knowing that these gunmen are from Sectarian Islamists, and this contradicts the Western narrative that claims that the rebels are secularists who have received random violence from the Syrian security forces. It is also important to know that before the Daraa events began, many weapons had entered through Saudi Arabia to the US-backed rebels in Syria, which reveals previous intentions to violently change the regime.

These events take us back to the events of the city of Hama in 1988, when the Muslim Brotherhood began killing regime security personnel during that period, so the regime responded in the same way to extremist fighters. The Islamists have had foreign funds pumped into their favor, highlighting the West's role in supporting rebellions against the Syrian government since the era of Hafez al-Assad (Seale, 1988).

The Hama rebellion in the last century helps us understand what happened in Daraa in 2011 as the matter is similar. The Brotherhood was on the rooftops shooting down Syrian security personnel with snipers, and when responding to them, they shouted phrases that showed attacks by the regime and massacres against them (Nassar, 2014).

For the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria, the revolution was a purely Islamic revolution against the secular Syrian Alawite ruler. Terrorist religious organizations also

supported this revolution from the beginning, whether with thought or resources (Al-Shaqfa, 2011).

When the opposition demonstrations began, supporters also went out in counter-demonstrations after noticing the devastation that occurred in other Arab countries as a result of the alleged Arab Spring. However, the Islamic rebellion continued and took refuge under the street demonstrations. On the other hand, the government announced the existence of unjustified violent attacks on the security forces, which It resulted in the killing of policemen and civilians, in addition to the burning of government offices (YaLibnan, 2011). However, foreign media stated that the killing of civilians was carried out by the government, in addition to the discovery of the entry of trucks from Iraq carrying weapons and military equipment (Reuters, 2011).

Until this moment, the government was trying to control itself and move toward peaceful political reform. President Assad's advisor said that the president ordered not to throw live ammunition and suggested addressing the political demands and registering new political parties, but this did not receive the interest of the Islamists (al-Khalidi, 2011).

Western media continued to classify the victims of the crisis as demonstrators and civilians, despite previous confirmations of security and soldier casualties, claiming that the soldiers who were martyred were dissidents who were killed by the regime itself (al-Khalidi, 2011).

The violence spread to northern Syria, where it reached the city of Homs, which received Lebanese Islamist fighters, causing many other soldiers to fall victim as well. Al Jazeera, which supports the Brotherhood, blacked out news like this, as journalists resigned, such as Ali Hashem, who wanted to broadcast footage of Lebanese fighters entering Syrian territory, but The channel's executive director refused (RT, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

The American presence in the Middle East had a profound impact on the countries of the region, especially Syria, which was exposed to friction with America during its crises and its roles in preserving its security and interests. The United States, in turn, has sought, in many situations, to take precedence in order to achieve benefits for itself, even if this comes at the expense of potential risks to the Syrian entity.

The United States of America laid the foundation stone in the first years of Syria's independence and deceived opponents of American interventions with diplomatic and security arguments, including the American role in preserving the region as well as facing terrorism, taking advantage of every crisis or political problem that occurred.

## **Chapter Two**

# Exploring the Notion of Propaganda In Wars

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## **Introduction**

Propaganda has been an influential force in shaping the course of wars throughout history. It serves as a strategic tool for influencing public opinion, maintaining morale, and undermining adversaries. By disseminating selective information, governments and organizations can control narratives, justify their actions, and sway both domestic and international audiences. War propaganda is the most prominent field of its use, as it focuses on many intuitive and psychological aspects of people in order to direct them with a prescribed methodology and through many means for established goals. This chapter will highlight the definition of propaganda, its types, tools, and motives.

### **2.1. Definition of Propaganda**

#### **2.1.1 Propaganda in general**

Propaganda serves as a potent instrument for shaping people's beliefs and actions. It's crucial to grasp its definition and fundamental components to discern its impact. Propaganda intentionally spreads information or concepts to shape public sentiment and sway individuals toward specific beliefs or actions.

The manipulation of information with the intent to sway public opinion is known as propaganda. The term originates from the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, a missionary group founded by the Pope in 1622. Propagandists highlight information that aligns with their agenda while downplaying or omitting conflicting details. This can involve the use of misleading statements or falsehoods to achieve the desired effect on the audience. Various activities such as lobbying, advertising, and missionary work fall under the umbrella of propaganda, though it is most commonly associated with politics (Casey, 1944).

In earlier times, propaganda relied on images and written media, but with the advent of radio, television, movies, and the internet, new platforms emerged. Authoritarian and totalitarian regimes often employ propaganda to gain and retain public support. During wartime, propaganda serves to boost morale among a country's civilians and military personnel, while also being used as a tool of psychological warfare against the enemy (Casey, 1944).

In 1928, Edward Bernays, a prominent American figure in the field of propaganda, provided a seminal definition, describing propaganda as "a consistent, enduring effort to create or shape events to influence the relations of the public to an enterprise, idea, or group." Furthermore, Bernays elaborated extensively on the positive aspects of propaganda, highlighting its potential for societal advancement, educational purposes, and the empowerment of women (Aumercier, 2007).

Edward Bernays, known as the Father of Modern Public Relations, devised the "Torches of Freedom" campaign in 1928, aimed at expanding the female market for cigarettes and consequently boosting profits for the American Tobacco Company. This campaign stands out as one of the earliest and most notable examples of propaganda (Aumercier, 2007).

Initially, there existed misconceptions that women, especially those considered "nice" or "good girls," did not smoke. While tobacco consumption had been prevalent in late nineteenth-century America, it wasn't until around 1929 that women began to be expected or allowed to smoke openly. However, even then, smoking among women was heavily stigmatized by American society as unfeminine. Smoking by women was historically associated with notions of loose morals and questionable sexual behavior (Christensen, 2012).

Women who smoked were often disparagingly labeled as prostitutes or associated with Victorian erotic imagery. Only a minority of rebellious women were willing to defy these social norms in the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, tobacco companies did feature women in their advertisements, typically portraying them as young, attractive, and used for promotional purposes (Christensen, 2012).

### **2.1.2 Propaganda in the Context of War**

While war propaganda, as evidenced by historical precedent, serves as a tool for preparing for aggressive warfare and is therefore considered a criminal act. The International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, which prosecuted major war criminals of the Hitler regime, determined that war propaganda contributes to the promotion of war, thus confirming its criminal nature. This perspective was underscored in a resolution by the United Nations General Assembly on November 3, 1947, condemning all forms of propaganda, regardless of origin, that are intended or likely to incite threats to peace, breaches of peace, or acts of aggression (Casey, 1944).

During wartime, propaganda aims to undermine enemy morale, with a primary goal of diminishing their will to continue fighting. This is achieved through various means, such as highlighting military triumphs on the propagandist's side, showcasing the formidable military and economic resources the enemy must confront, and portraying the moral righteousness of the cause being fought against. Propaganda is integrated into a nation's strategic agenda to intimidate enemy leadership, isolate them from their populace, and weaken resistance by presenting evidence that the majority of the enemy population has been manipulated and misled (Casey, 1944).

During World War II, Britain and its allies faced off against Germany and the Axis powers across multiple theaters of war. Propaganda played a pivotal role for both sides as



they sought to rally support from other nations. Britain, eager to enlist the aid of its colonies within the Empire, including those in West Africa, utilized propaganda leaflets to appeal for their backing. In West Africa, Britain held sway over territories such as the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast (now Ghana), and Nigeria, while France exercised control over regions like Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and Niger (Casey, 1944).

After the war, a wave of independence movements swept across Africa, motivated by years of exploitation under colonial rule. Many of these nations, having endured various forms of exploitation, embarked on the journey to independence, seeking to liberate themselves from the grip of colonialism and assert their autonomy (Casey, 1944).

## **2.2. Types of Propaganda in Wars**

### **2.2.1 Nationalism Propaganda**

Nationalism Propaganda exploits people's love for their country and their attachment to their history in order to push them towards leaning towards their government when judging events, and supporting wars even if it is at the expense of the victims of other countries. It sometimes even portrays the enemy as evil and threatening the nation's prosperity and development (Mattingly; Yao, 2020).

One of the most famous examples of this type occurred in World War I when the Americans knocked on Uncle Sam's "I want you" poster. This poster containing Uncle Sam pointing his finger directly at the viewer. It was directed to American soldiers and reserve soldiers to ignite the spirit of war and defense of the homeland in them and push them towards fighting in World War I (Knauer, 2017).

Patriotic music, organized slogans, and presidential speeches that contain some myths and rumors also played an important role in the military history of the United States, like other countries as well, especially colonial ones (Knauer, 2017).

### **2.2.2 Fear Propaganda**

This type of propaganda plays on people's anxieties and insecurities to generate support for the war. It focuses on the potential danger of the enemy and the negative consequences of losing the war. Although current means of communication may spread many facts about the enemy and the war as a whole, they may unite fears among many countries and peoples, collect their feelings of hatred, and empty them into a promising side, which is the alleged enemy being fought (Waśko-Owsiejczuk, 2021).

This happened with the United States of America in its war on Iraq. Everyone was convinced that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and hidden, unauthorized nuclear weapons, which is what made the United States of America invade Iraq and try to overthrow Saddam Hussein, in order to protect the region and the world as a whole, especially to protect America from the danger of possible destruction that might harm America and its people. As days passed and the investigations continued, it became clear that all of these allegations were fabricated. The case was an organized game to overthrow the Iraqi regime, which is not in line with the interests of many Western countries (Waśko-Owsiejczuk, 2021).

### **2.2.3 Dehumanization Propaganda**

Dehumanization Propaganda depicts the enemy with the least human feelings and isolates him from the rest of the human spectrum by portraying him as evil and merciless, and this is what encourages the general public to automatically justify violence against it and not sympathize with it. This most famous pattern is still in use today. It can be seen in all recent wars, starting from the Ukraine-Russia war, all the way to the Israel-Palestine war (Luft, 2019).

The Palestinian-Israeli war resulting from the events of October 7 began with rumors that Hamas fighters were inhuman because they had beheaded children without mercy. It later became clear that there was no evidence for this news, and the American channel announced that it was responsible for its mistake (Le Monde, 2024).

### **2.2.4 Fake News Propaganda**

It is a highly effective propaganda that began since ancient times and before the emergence of the means of communication. It makes it possible for the ruling authority to

spread fallacies as well as false news, either in order to falsify facts about the other party or to support the ideas and beliefs of the local party (coe, 2019).

In the American intervention in Syria, the United States published many information and events about the Syrian regime, which in turn confirmed their invalidity. In addition to many reports about false victories for the American army in the fields of the Middle East in order to raise the morale of American soldiers and the American people as a whole (Anderson, 2016).

### **2.3 Tools of propaganda in wars**

Propaganda in wars has historically relied on various methods and means, with the specific techniques employed differing based on the objectives sought. These strategies could include the dissemination of leaflets, radio broadcasts, films, and posters, each tailored to influence public opinion, morale, and enemy perceptions. The content and delivery of propaganda were meticulously designed to either bolster the resolve of the home front, demoralize enemy troops, or sway neutral parties. The evolution of technology further diversified these methods, introducing new media such as television and the internet, which allowed for more sophisticated and far-reaching campaigns. Thus, the implementation of propaganda in warfare was highly adaptive, continuously evolving to meet the strategic needs of different conflict scenarios (Casey, 1944).

Slogans were the most popular in the past, as they were published in the form of posters or in newspapers, and their goal was to tickle people's feelings to sympathize with the idea of fighting or an expected military attack. Slogans were particularly popular in the past, often disseminated through posters or newspapers. Their primary objective was to evoke emotional responses and rally public support for causes such as warfare or impending military actions (Casey, 1944).

Symbols that carry deep national and religious meanings are often utilized in

propaganda to evoke strong emotional responses and foster a sense of identity and unity. For instance, the Nazi swastika is a symbol that, despite its ancient origins, became infamously associated with the ideologies of the Nazi regime, evoking notions of Aryan supremacy and nationalistic fervor. Similarly, the American bald eagle serves as a potent symbol of freedom, strength, and patriotism, deeply ingrained in the national consciousness of the United States. These symbols are powerful tools in propaganda, as they can encapsulate complex ideas and sentiments in a single, recognizable image, thereby reinforcing the intended message and influencing public perception and behavior (Smith, 2019).

The listening party is also important because it focuses on repetition and indoctrination, which is what directs the unconscious part of the person towards what the higher parties want from wars, starting from controlling your allies to courting the peoples of your enemies. Through resonant speeches and enthusiastic songs that stick in the mind of the listener, officials justify their actions and instill a feeling of unity among those present (Smith, 2019).

The most prominent modern means are social media and news channels, when a country like the United States has the most famous television channels, web search engines, as well as social networking sites. When you control the media, you control the movement of capital and advertisements, and therefore, in any movement that contradicts your point of view, you can simply eliminate its owner, and an existing monopoly will be formed (Smith, 2019).

The arrival of international Western channels in most countries of the world puts them in a comfortable position to publish what they like, as well as hide flaws and facts about themselves that they do not want, in addition to the most important thing, which is restricting communication sites in line with their interests. As an example of this, we can note the Al Jazeera documentary “ “The Hidden Is More Immense” The “Closed Space” episode, which dealt with an unprofessional and unjustified case on the part of Meta Facebook, accusing it of

leaning toward the Israeli side at the expense of the Palestinian side by deleting Palestinian posts about news of the ongoing conflict and keeping Israeli posts (AL Jazeera, 2023).

## **2.4 Motives of propaganda in wars**

### **2.4.1 Mobilization and Morale**

Propaganda is often used to build national sentiment and unite ranks toward one goal, regardless of whether the cause is just. It encourages citizens to support the war, donate to it, conserve resources, and even join the front lines. Maintaining morale is also a prominent feature. Propaganda bolsters the spirits of soldiers and civilians alike. It highlights victories, minimizes defeats, and portrays the issue as an important humanitarian and national duty (Casey, 1944).

The United States leveraged the film industry to rally public support for the war effort. Movies portrayed American soldiers as heroic and their adversaries as ruthless. Each week, 60 to 100 million people went to the cinema, where they watched superheroes fight on World War Two battlefields. Hollywood also depicted the London detective Sherlock Holmes uncovering schemes by Nazi spies. These Nazi conspiracies were also a theme in weekly radio shows like Dick Tracy (BBC, 2022).

### **2.4.2 Weakening the Enemy**

Weakening the enemy is as important as strengthening oneself. Propaganda aimed at the enemy population aims to sow doubt in their leadership, by exaggerating in highlighting their mistakes and defeats and building an atmosphere of despair and weakness around them. Some methods may resort to creating differences in important opinions and spreading strife around races and sects to spread tension among the enemy's people and spread discord in order to weaken them (Scriver, 2015).

### **2.4.3 Influencing Neutrals**

Countries in the midst of war direct a large proportion of their propaganda to neutral peoples and governments. It aims to convince them of the righteousness of their cause. Hoping to find allies to help it, or at least gain the sympathy of the global population.

Historians have long struggled to comprehend British wartime propaganda due to the intricate structure of its organizations and the often subtle and indirect approaches employed. Many individuals involved in efforts to persuade neutral America to join the war did not view themselves as propagandists but rather as British or even American patriots supporting their country's war efforts. Besides official propaganda efforts, there were numerous British and pro-British propagandists who operated independently of government, which the British authorities did not actively discourage. Additionally, many individuals collaborated with official propaganda organizations without holding formal positions (Badsey, 2023).

## **2.5 Countering war propaganda**

Alex P. Schmid and Jenny de Graaf asserted more than a decade ago that "Without communication, there can be no terrorism", This highlights the power of information and its impact on shaping the human mind and arousing its emotions and goals. To confront war propaganda the E.U as an example took some preventive and remedial measures against propaganda.

### **2.5.1 The diagnosis**

In Europe, propaganda is a significant concern, with various actors spreading misleading information and biased narratives to influence public opinion and undermine democratic values. According to the Council of Europe, a majority of Europeans report encountering fake news regularly, and a substantial number see it as a threat to their countries and to democracy itself (Robin, 2023).

The European Parliament has highlighted that citizens are increasingly exposed to disinformation and misleading information campaigns from both state and non-state actors. These include transnational terrorist or criminal organizations, which aim to distort objective information and ethical journalism to serve political agendas and undermine democratic interests (Robin, 2023).

In response to the propagandathreats, the EU has been actively working to counter propaganda and disinformation. Efforts include monitoring and analyzing narrative distribution channels, such as social networks, the dark web, and encrypted messaging apps, to disrupt recruitment and operational activities. Additionally, initiatives like the Radicalization Awareness Network focus on combating hate speech and extremist propaganda to safeguard democratic values and cohesion within the EU (Robin, 2023).



## **2.5.2 Countermeasure policies**

### **2.5.2.1 Identifying and knowing**

To combat propaganda effectively, the European Union has established itself as a coordination forum among Member States, facilitating the sharing of information and best practices. At the supranational level, the EU has developed research and intelligence initiatives aimed at understanding and analyzing such content. For instance, Europol created the EU Internet Referral Unit in 2015 to combat terrorist propaganda online by detecting and monitoring content promoting terrorism and violent extremism. The unit issues annual reports, such as the "Online Jihadist Propaganda - Year in Review", to analyze narratives and networks involved in disseminating jihadist propaganda. Additionally, the European Parliament encourages Member States and EU institutions to support research by think-tanks and academics on these issues. In a 2016 Resolution, the Parliament called on Member States to address socio-demographic causes of vulnerability to radicalization effectively (Robin, 2023).

### **2.5.2.2 Removing**

To prevent the use and dissemination of terrorist propaganda on the internet, the European Union has implemented several measures. First, it focuses on the swift removal of harmful content, with platforms required to delete terrorist material within one hour of receiving a removal order from Member State authorities. This regulation applies to all internet providers operating within the EU, regardless of where they are headquartered. The content covered includes that which incites or contributes to terrorist acts, provides instructions on how to commit such acts, or solicits participation in terrorist groups (Robin, 2023).

For propaganda content that does not promote terrorism, the EU has also taken action. In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, European institutions decided to suspend the broadcast of certain Russian media outlets like RT and Sputnik in Member States, aiming to prevent the dissemination of propaganda and disinformation. This decision was upheld by the General Court of the European Union, which recognized the threat that propaganda and disinformation pose to democratic societies. The European Parliament has recommended further measures to prevent the dissemination of propaganda, including rapid content deletion to prevent virality, bans on media outlets that disseminate propaganda, and measures to prevent the recruitment of influential individuals who can amplify such narratives within the EU (Robin, 2023).

### **2.5.2.3 Countering**

To effectively counter the influence of propaganda once it is seen, the European Union employs a dual approach. Firstly, it refuses to engage in counter-propaganda, preferring instead to debunk misinformation and expose the falsehoods promoted by propaganda narratives. Secondly, the EU seeks to promote moderate voices and alternative narratives that present the European Union positively. This includes developing communication products and campaigns to better explain EU values and policies in regions like the Eastern Partnership countries. Furthermore, the EU emphasizes the importance of training citizens, journalists, and policymakers in fact-checking and media literacy. Initiatives such as the Radicalisation Awareness Network focus on producing alternative communications to counter extremist propaganda and involve over 6,000 professionals across Europe (Robin, 2023).

## **Conclusion**

Propaganda is a deep concept, and diving into its examples makes the meaning deeper. The development of propaganda and the danger of its use in the war field draws attention to its pivotal role in how it affects peoples and changes many political variables that highlight the power of information and the way it is narrated. This has appeared in many past global events, such as the Deployment process of Uncle Sam posters, to Nazi propaganda in World War II, to Cold War manipulations, and to the current conflicts and wars.



## **Chapter Three**

# **The Use of Propaganda in the Syrian Crisis 2011**

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## **Introduction**

Since propaganda permeates every war, this had to happen in Syria as well, since the actual beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, and also in the events that preceded it, Syria witnessed many fallacies and unclear news and details, especially with the media and technological backwardness at that time. The Syrian crisis was fertile ground for political, ethnic and religious conflicts between many parties, including states and groups, some of which were fighting and some of which were in alliance in order to pass certain agendas and win one party over another, through the Syrian people themselves and directing their ideas, as well as highlighting fake news. And directing global public opinion to turn a blind eye to parties and incite the public against other parties. The West in general and the United States in particular had the largest share in the media coverage of the American political and military interventions in Syria, especially after the emergence of ISIS, beginning a new era in the history of the directed media conflict and its implications.

### **3.1 The partisan sources and Barrel Bombs**

War propaganda frequently twists logic and values, and the situation in Syria shows this clearly. Western media bombards us with tales of terrible acts—such as barrel bombs, chemical weapons, and mass killings—blaming them on the Syrian President and Army. Yet, these stories come from sources with strong biases. Ethical standards, like staying independent and avoiding conflicts of interest, have been ignored in the discussion. Repeated claims of atrocities are meant to demonize the opponent and gather public backing for the war.

Throughout the Syrian conflict, assertions from Islamist armed factions and their allies, accusing the Syrian Arab Army of massacring civilians, lacked believability, incorrect narratives of government atrocities spread right from the beginning. Mother Agnes-Mariam, a nun in Homs, revealed instances of 'false flag' offenses by 'Free Syrian Army' factions in 2011,

where pictures of murder victims were altered by sectarian Islamists (SANA, 2011). The American journalist Nir Rosen also pointed out cases where opposition fighters were depicted as innocent civilians killed by security forces (Rosen, 2012).

Many of the published photos of dead people lying on the ground were published by parties opposed to the Syrian regime without any evidence or even confirmation that the photos are on Syrian territory. It was published a short period before the Geneva Conference, which makes us wonder whether there is a deliberate plan by Qatar to exploit this event and attack the regime of Bashar al-Assad (O'Toole, 2014; Jalabi, 2015). Qatar, which supports many extremist parties, is entering into a maze in which the pictures may be the product of one of the extremist parties cooperating with it (Cartalucci, 2014; Murphy, 2014).

The American regime and its prominent politicians continued to demonstrate their illegal determination to overthrow the Syrian regime by throwing accusations at issues such as nuclear weapons in Eastern Ghouta and asserting from afar allegations that were later denied with independent evidence (Gladstone and Chivers, 2013; HRW, 2013).

The relationship between the Syrian president and his people is not what the globalist media portrays. The Syrian president is accepted in many, if not most, regions of Syria. In 2012, three Free Syrian Army fighters admitted that the residents of the city of Aleppo, which they control, were loyal to the Syrian president (Bayoumy, 2013).

Many NATO leaders claim that the Syrian president has lost his legitimacy, even though the majority of Syrians are still united in supporting him, as he received 65 percent of voters in the 2014 presidential elections (Idea International, 2015).

Western media exploits the reports of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights that condemn Bashar al-Assad, ignoring that the operation of this observatory is oppositional



partisan and subject to Western publishing censorship, given that its headquarters are in Britain. This observatory states that it collects information from informants in Syria, but there is no evidence to prove their impartiality in reporting. They may be from the opposition (BBC, 2011).

These manipulations maintain the position of those watching the news that the Syrian regime's militants are nothing but a device for killing civilians and innocent people. This appears in the explosive barrels incident, where it was said that many Syrians were killed due to attacks by the regime with explosives and even uranium. The barrel bombs found in areas controlled by terrorist militias that committed atrocities are shocking to everyone, as the Syrian army should have done something to confront them. In addition to all Syrian efforts to clear the area of innocents, note that most of them had already left there much before the time of the bombing (Reuters, 2015).

The Syrian army continued to bomb illegal militants, especially senior leaders of the most dangerous groups such as the Al-Nusra Front and ISIS Masi(,2015 ). These leaders who pin charges of indiscriminate killing on the Syrian regime despite the brutal massacres they committed against Muslims and non-Muslims, according to the testimony of the Americans, who in turn oppose Assad.

Amnesty International also adopted slogans that the regime kills civilians with barrel bombs, even though it relies only on partisan sources hostile to the regime, noting that the remaining civilians in the bombed areas are all sympathetic to terrorist groups, their strategy is to hide behind the spirits of civilians.

The ORBInternational group, which is supported by hostile countries, also published a report on Syria stating that the majority of Syrians support foreign military intervention,

although in fact even the Syrian opposition has declared that it rejects this intervention (ORB, 2014).

Many fabricated allegations and bias from such organizations supported by Washington leave information in Syria in an atmosphere of ambiguity and lack of clarity, especially since the network of correspondents relied upon is not subject to real standards. This recklessness and repeated allegations make us realize that we are not facing a random plan, but rather a detailed propaganda machine.

### **3.2 Embedded Media**

Controlling minds in wars goes hand in hand with the behavior of the media. This was evident in the Iraq War, where journalists were combined with soldiers to portray their daily lives and their patriotic and humanitarian spirit to viewers, with restrictions on what was allowed to be broadcast, as negative scenes such as torture and rape did not appear until later in leaks.

The diverse Internet space was filled with American propaganda about the war and inspiring slogans, making Americans more confident in themselves and pushing more towards arrogance and indifference. Media coverage also took place from non-governmental organizations, many of which were funded by the American side, according to a educated plan by American intelligence, which controls the media.

The issue of demonizing the Syrian regime is what made the American media shed light on terrorist groups in Syria. Many channels in the Middle East were against the invasion of Iraq, but they supported the invasion of Syria and the bloody war with the Syrian army and its overthrow under the pretext of human rights (Wells, 2003).

Non-governmental organizations such as Human Rights Watch actually contributed to the malicious propaganda, as the head of this organization, Kenneth Roth, expressed an unjustified obsession with the Syrian president and described him as a killer of innocents. He defended the American aggression against Syria, as well as supporting militias against Assad, which is illegal against a recognized and sovereign state.

Armed Islamic groups created fictional stories about massacres committed by the Syrian regime without any significant evidence, sending this news to organizations and media outlets whose goal is to overthrow Bashar al-Assad and his government. Amnesty also relies on reports from the Syrian Civil Defense Organization, which was established by the United States and which provides aid to those affected fighters of the internationally banned Al-Nusra Front (Beeley, 2015).

Amnesty International relies on support from pro-Israeli parties that are hostile to the Syrian regime to finance itself, which raises doubts about the impartiality of the statements made by this organization. Human Rights Watch also aligns with this context, as it attacks regimes that rebel against American policy and ignores the violations that occur in countries subject to the Pentagon's proposals, such as Colombia.

In 2010, Human Rights Watch received \$100 million from billionaire George Soros, a staunch supporter of Israel, and this level of care always results in a return service. This organization says that it is good to support organizations fighting the evil AL-Assad with weapons, even though this is illegal. All of these interventions have made this organization a means used by U.S.A to justify its military operations (HRW, 2010).

Like many countries, such as Libya, Afghanistan, and Iraq, America continued to encourage foreign intervention with the cooperation of NATO. Media outlets such as Al

Jazeera, funded by the Qatari government, were used to spread anti-Syrian ideology, and Qatar also financially supported armed rebel organizations, which is consistent with the American vision (Kirkpatrick 2014).

With the continuation of conflicts in Syria and Egypt, Al Jazeera journalists began to resign in large numbers, citing the administration's interference in journalistic work. Administrators such as Ghassan Bin Jiddo, Hassan Shaaban, and Ali Hashem resigned with statements showing that they were subjected to pressure from the administration to be biased towards publishing information that supports the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and NATO in Syria (RT, 2012).

The Western media and Aljazeera English tried to hide the fact that the Al-Nusra Front is the representative of Al-Qaeda in Syria, and this is to polish its image and justify its opposition to the Syrian regime. Financial inducements were offered to private media outlets, convincing them to support the rebels in Syria and portraying them as freedom fighters.

In the first months of the crisis, the Syrian regime was accused of being the first to attack civilian demonstrators in Daraa. One of the videos was filmed by a British-Syrian person named Danny Abdul Dayem. This documentary was covered by CNN and Sky News. Danny's Farewell stated that civilians were subjected to slaughter and bombing in an immoral manner. It later became clear that the video was fabricated and all the information was wrong. This video was produced in the studios of extremist armed groups (Syrians Worldwide, 2012; Emassian, Kelanee, Kardous and al Kadri, 2012).

The BBC also published many lies, like the news about the Syrian bombing of a children's school in Syria and fabricating videos about this news, as well as many other news, most notably that the Syrian regime is bombing civilians in areas controlled by armed groups

and blinding the eyes to the evacuation process carried out by the Syrian regime (Stuart, 2015).

Other channels continued the propaganda path with clips and fabricated news, such as the ABC channel owned by the Australian government. This Western channel contributed greatly to supporting the idea of Western intervention and that it is the only solution to confront the expansion of ISIS. As is the case for other Australian organizations that adopted the White House's allegations that Bashar al-Assad's army uses gas to kill children, despite other difficult-to-reach reports that prove that Jabhat al-Nusra created its own sarin gas and used it (Lloyd and Postol, 2014).

In 2014, two representatives from the Turkish opposition demanded the opening of an investigation into the fact that the Turkish state had purchased sarin gas for armed groups in Syria. This is the same case for its ally, Qatar, but opposition is not allowed in a monarchy like Qatar (Today's Zaman 2015).

A year before that, in 2013, the most famous Qur'anic scholar in Syria, Ramadan al-Bouti, was killed by a bomb in a mosque, along with 40 others who were listening to his sermon (Mourtada and Gladstone, 2013). After that, four terrorists arrested by the Syrian army appeared and confessed that they had committed this shameful act based on fatwas from the Al-Nusra Front Council for his loyalty to Bashar al-Assad (Syrian Alikhbaria, 2013). These confessions did not make the BBC admit its mistake after it said that this bombing occurred by the regime's army, although it is unreasonable for the regime to eliminate the most famous mufti it supports.

The media's treatment of foreign terrorists was strange. They were broadcasting documentaries about them with poignant music and a humane character, even though they

were aggressors and killed dozens of innocent Syrians, as well as Syrian army fighters who were working to feed their children and defend their homeland in the only army they had known in their country since childhood.

The Western media portrayed the suicide bombers from Western countries as human beings in their final moments. As for the innocent Syrians who were bombed, the reporters did not really care. This was their strategy for systematic journalistic work. The western reports show that the rebels refute the lack of democracy in the Assad regime, even though these militants themselves do not believe in voting, and if power was in their hands, they would not give it up except with weapons.

Britain also financially supports many armed militias in Syria, as well as medially through its British newspaper, The Guardian. After that, an “off guardian” initiative appeared, focusing on the false information published by this British newspaper regarding wars in many countries around the world, such as Libya and Syria, as well as the crisis in Ukraine, and revealing the fabricated stories that were presented, such as the story of explosive barrels, and concealing the nature of the armed Syrian opposition groups, as well as biased reports that fault Russian initiatives against terrorism in Syria and Iraq (Off Guardian, 2015).

Many humanitarian organizations have appeared around Syria. They were established in the United States, most of them via the Internet, such as the Avaaz organization, which receives support from Zionist parties and criticizes every operation carried out by Syria, but does not mention any of the humanitarian violations carried out by Israel (ESB, 2012). Rather, the media of these organizations continue to Spreading the same false news published by terrorist groups’ media. This cooperation between radical Islamists and Zionist extremists is in the interest of destroying nationalist Arab Syria.

Bashar al-Assad's electoral campaign was successful and a gateway of hope for many Syrians, which made the relief organizations operating in Syria intensify their work and intensify their propaganda about the Syrian army and its demonization in front of everyone. The Avaaz organization and the Syrian Civil Defense claimed that the Syrian army placed women in front of tanks as human shields before assaulting and raping them, while what was happening was done by armed terrorist groups opposed to the army, which were kidnapping women, selling them openly, and raping them, supported by fatwas from their imams Avaaz(, 2013).

Some pictures published by Human Rights Watch that the Syrian army had bombed schools for children in the Eastern Ghouta attacks. The same pictures were used to illustrate crimes committed by ISIS in a tribe in Deir ez-Zor (Getty Images, 2014). It is clear that many images have been recycled to help build this propaganda, and that those who are affiliated with armed Islamic groups have no respect for this country.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which is the basis for news agencies in Britain and the West in general, had published about many violations committed by Russia in Syria, including striking hospitals in Syria in 2015 with air strikes. After investigations and dialogues with workers at the International Red Cross, they did not report anything (RT, 2015). Information about these supposed raids and their results, as well as for the American government, which did not provide any details after Russian pressure on it. Pictures emerged of one of the hospitals mentioned that it had been bombed, showing that the hospital is still in a completely healthy condition, which refute the allegations mentioned in the media reports (Emma Aiden, 2015).

A leaked video that appeared in 2015 showed volunteers from the White Chaos group removing a body just seconds after Al-Nusra Front executed it, which raises doubts about the

fact that this organization is working on the ground with Al-Nusra's members and in the media with Western media (Live Leak, 2015).

The problem is not in the British media's support for the regime change campaign against the Syrian regime, the problem lies in a deeper way than this, in the fabrication of news, pictures and scenes that claim to be taken from the battlefields.

### **3.3 The Houla Massacre Reviewed**

The Houla massacre was an attack that took place on May 25, 2012, amid the Syrian Civil War, in the town of Taldou, located in the Houla region of Syria, a series of towns northwest of Homs. According to the United Nations, 108 people were killed, including 34 women and 49 children (VOA News, 2012).

Long before this incident, armed terrorist groups continued to carry out killings and public executions, and while the Syrian army continued to attack those groups, they continued to hold the Syrian army responsible for all these attacks on civilians. With the United States aware of everything that has been happening since the beginning of the Islamic rebellion in Daraa, which spread to Homs, where sectarian slogans such as "Christians to Beirut, Alawites to the grave," were chanted, slogans like these have instilled terror in the souls of those who belong to these two sects (Blanford, 2011; Eretz Zen, 2012; Adams, 2012; Wakefield, 2012). Groups such as the Free Syrian Army and the Al-Nusra Front carried out massacres of minorities in Syria under the pretext that the president is among them and sympathizes with them. All of these actions made the alleged protests and revolution go beyond their innocent scope.

The Catholic and Orthodox Church complained about the ethnic cleansing that took place of more than 50,000 Syrian Christians by Islamic terrorist groups, which also began



imposing a tax on the rest of them (CNA, 2012). It is not possible for such criminal acts to be committed by secular revolutionaries or moderate religious people.

The Houla massacre facilitated the mission for the United Nations to intervene in Syria with the slogan of protecting civilians from the tyranny of the Russian regime, despite the lack of evidence against it. Western countries such as France, Britain, and the United States also pointed the finger at the Syrian regime, which in turn accused terrorist instigators, as the Syrian Foreign Ministry stated to the United Nations that the army had clashed with hundreds of militants who were expelled from the region and then returned again and carried out their operation with knives on innocent people (Correggia, Embid, Hauben and Larson, 2013).

Mother Agnes Maryam de Lacroix stated that the number of Christians in Homs had decreased significantly, and that Syrian Christians were subjected to great pressure to join the Free Syrian Army, which used them as human shields and seized their homes to give them to the Sunnis who were helping them in matters of combat. Mother Agnes indicated that the Christian Media Center has a list of the names of hundreds of victims whose photos were used by the opposition media as evidence that the crimes were committed by the regime's militias.

Despite all the justifications provided by Syrian officials, many governments began to move in a clear plan towards isolating Bashar al-Assad through obstacles and expelling Syrian diplomats while insisting on the accusations that the Syrian army bombed civilian neighborhoods. All of these accusations were premature and reveal bias in the government, with weak evidence that the Houla operation was carried out by the Syrian regime's enforcers, because it is natural for them to fight and defend their sect and not the opposite.

On June 1, 2012 the Human Rights Council blamed the Syrian regime for the Houla massacres and called for independent special investigations to look into the case. This was a clear contradiction and an unprofessional prejudgment, this council was then dissolved.

After the expulsion of Al-Farouq forces from Homs, they called for a boycott of the 2012 elections, even if by threat, and despite the small percentage of participation, the Baath Party won by 60 percent (Zarzar and al-Wahed, 2012). On the other hand, the Security Council insisted on investigation by the Human Rights Council, which is headed by an American delegate. Until the results of the investigation arrived, the United States had explicitly accused the Syrian regime of killing its citizens, as well as the responsibility of the Syrian regime for all crimes that occur on Syrian territory, regardless of their perpetrator.

The committee's report accused both the opposition and the government of crimes, but attributed the Houla attack to regime loyalists, even though they heard evidence that the families of Al-Sayyid and Abdel Razzaq (the two main groups of civilians killed) were government supporters. Without clear evidence of the identity of the perpetrators, she said they were likely regime loyalists.

The most prominent piece of evidence presented by the anti-government side was the year-old boy, Ali Al-Sayed, who said that his family members were killed while he was-11 hiding. There were tanks in the street and they opened fire on their house and arrested his brother, his uncle, and then killed his mother. Some of these assailants were wearing military clothing and some were not wearing military clothing, and without a beard or hair (Marchfifteen, 2012). He pretended to be dead and thus escaped being killed. Later, he watched on state television about the killing of his uncles and many other details in his story, which is inconsistent in many aspects.

It is wrong to say that only two witnesses whose statements agree with the government's statements. Later, public evidence emerged from no less than people whose 15 accounts largely agree with the Syrian government's account, as well as Russian journalists who submitted material to the committee, but it did not receive sufficient attention (Janssen, 2012).

German Arabic-speaking journalist Rainer Herrmann conducted interviews with witnesses from Houla days after the massacre. His sources included members of the Syrian opposition who rejected the violence and whose names were withheld. These witnesses added that Islamic rebels attacked three army checkpoints, and his sources told him that the massacre occurred after Friday prayers. Dozens of soldiers rebelling from the armed groups were killed, and the fighting continued until many families of Alawite and Shiite minorities were killed, as well as the family of a Sunni member of parliament because he was considered to be cooperating with the government. After the massacre, the perpetrators photographed their victims and presented them as Sunni victims, and their clips were published.

Herrmann stated, according to what his sources said, that more than 700 armed men, led by Abd al-Razzaq Talas and Yahya Yusuf, from the Al-Farouq Commanders' Battalion, came in three groups from Al-Rustam, Kafr Laha, and Aqrabah, and attacked three army checkpoints around Taldo. The rebels were numerically superior and the soldiers fought bloody battles, and the rebels were supported by the residents of Taldo. By expelling families who refused to join the opposition.

Dutch Arabic-speaking writer Martin Janssen drew his point of view from three sources: the Catholic Fides news agency, information from refugees in Deir Qara, and accounts by Russian journalists Musin and Kuligina. He cast doubt on the "shabbiha" (term for state sponsored militias of the Syrian government loyal to Assad family) story because

many of the victims were Alawites loyal to the government. Fides reported that large groups of Alawites and Syrian Christians in the region fled to Lebanon to escape the violence of armed gangs. After the events of Al-Houla, eyewitnesses reported that the army was absent in the area and that the area was under the complete control of the Free Syrian Army. The armed groups attacked the National Hospital and killed its guards, then invaded the hospital and set it on fire. Near Al-Houla, the armed groups killed all the families Alawite. Reports described the region as being in a state of sectarian unrest.

Mosin and Kulgina later interviewed two wounded soldiers and a wounded policeman from the incident and provided more details about the insurgent attacks and killings. They went on to identify the attackers and the victims. A group from the Al-Aksh clan was firing mortars and RPGs at government checkpoints. All the trapped prisoners at the checkpoints were executed. The police officers said that the attackers were from Houla, where the rebels took control of Taldo, and burned houses and killed people and families because they were loyal to the government (Maramus, 2012). The second investigation conducted by the United Nations ignored all of these witnesses who spoke of specific perpetrators who had clear political motives for the rebellion and killing. The Syrian government complained about the resulting UN resolution, stating that the perpetrators were local militants and their comrades, and their motive was to punish villagers loyal to the government and then set the stage to falsely blame crimes on the government (Maramus, 2012).

When the August 2012 massacre emerged, in which 245 people were killed in Daraya, Damascus, the Western media was quick to point out that Assad's army had committed another massacre, but this story contradicted the British narrative, as journalist Robert Fisk stated that the Free Syrian Army had slaughtered civilians and off-duty soldiers after the failure of the prisoner exchange operation (Oweis, 2012). Activists also blamed the 2012

massacre in which between 120 and 150 villagers were killed in the village of Aqrab, 15 km from Al-Houla, which was also at that time under rebel control. The New York Times indicated that members of the Assad sect were responsible for the incident, then stated the British journalist Alex Thompson, through documented evidence from survivors, said that the Free Syrian Army detained Alawites and killed many of them as the army approached the area. In this case, followers of the Assad sect were the victims, as most of the victims in Houla were government supporters.

### **3.4 Chemical Fabrications in light of East Ghouta incident**

The chemical attack on Ghouta was a massacre that occurred in the eastern Ghouta region of Damascus, Syria, on Wednesday, August 21, 2013. Hundreds of residents of the area were killed as a result of inhaling toxic gases from a nerve gas attack (HRW, 2013).

The Syrian issue is a very complicated, as it contains falsifications and scandals, often from foreign governments against the Syrian government to justify its interventions inside Syria. The Ghouta incident was one of the incidents in which the Syrian regime was accused of involvement in the process of killing innocent people using internationally banned chemical weapons in Eastern Ghouta, which is controlled by Islamists, and even photographed drugged and innocent child victims for exploitative propaganda reasons.

After the incident, the Syrian government agreed to dispose of its entire stock of chemicals while confirming that it had never used them. Despite repeated statements accusing the Syrian regime of these chemical violations, it has been confirmed that terrorist armed forces control chemical laboratories, and such control will not have intentions other than using this deadly weapon against the Syrian regime and its loyalists (Fisk 2012; Thompson 2012).

Chemical weapons are crude remnants from a previous era, such as trench warfare that broke out a century ago, and they are of no use in urban warfare, where the army pursues armed groups in urban areas. There is no need to use them except by a party that wants to exterminate in a merciless way, to spread terror and false allegations. Likewise, in the case of the Syrian army, whose conventional weapons in the field are much better than crude chemical weapons, and its maintenance of weapons stocks was only a deterrent to Israel, which in turn possesses more dangerous weapons, which are nuclear (Esfandiary, 2014).

With the year 2013, the tide of the war began to tilt in favor of the Syrian government, although a large part of eastern Syria was under the control of various Islamist groups. Only the army secured the Syrian borders, especially with the countries that support the Islamists in Turkey and Israel, and in cooperation with the Lebanese Hezbollah, the Syrian army regained the city of Qusayr, Southwest of Homs from the Al-Farouq Battalion and the Al-Nusra Front (Mortada, 2013).

The Syrian government complained to the United Nations about the use of sarin gas in a major battle with the Islamists in Khan al-Assal, west of Aleppo. SANA reported that the terrorists had fired a missile containing chemical materials, which led to human losses among the ranks of the Syrian army. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights confirmed that the reported casualties occurred, but he hinted that it might have been a mistake by the Syrian army, which might have hit itself. The news of the victims who fell as a result of the chemical missile launched by terrorist groups was confirmed by the Syrian ambassador to the United Nations on March 19, 2013 (NTI, 2013).

Immediately after that, governments such as the United States of America, France, and Britain, all of which support the Islamic Group, directly or indirectly, began to shift the blame into Syria, alleging that it used chemical weapons, despite Syria's repeated claims that it was

innocent and that all evidence was in the hands of the rebels. However, United Nations investigator Carla del Ponte said in Statement that it had witnesses from the victims that the rebels used sarin gas (BBC, 2013). Russia also announced that it had evidence that the Syrian rebels were making their own gas (Al Jazeera, 2013).

Despite the Syrian government's dissatisfaction with the investigation that took place in Houla in the previous case, the Syrian government invited the United Nations inspector to visit the attack sites and conduct investigations into the Syrian government's use of chemical weapons. The investigations produced results that were planned from the beginning, despite the illogicality of the regime launching chemical attacks until then. The new allegations were reported with interest in the Western media, pictures of dozens of dead and wounded children were always brought out due to the allegations put forward by the rebels and the West in general, and the American government and Human Rights Watch blamed the Syrian government on the pretext that it had analyzed the accounts of eyewitnesses and material remains of weapons. The United States supported everything that was said (HRW, 2013).

While the Western announcement continued to retell the narrative of Washington and the United Nations, other independent reports continued to contradict this opinion. Studies conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology indicated that it is not possible that the Syrian government is responsible because the missiles cannot be launched towards Eastern Ghouta from the nearest area controlled by the Syrian government, as shown on the White House intelligence map (Lloyd and Postol, 2014).

Many stories say that the Islamic rebels obtained chemical weapons through the head of Saudi intelligence, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, and were responsible for carrying out the gas attack with weapons provided by a Saudi militant known as Abu Aisha, with instructions on

how to use chemical weapons. The rebel secretary said the same thing, as many of those interviewed stated that their wages come from Saudi Arabia (Gavlak and Ababneh, 2013).

A Syrian group, led by mother Agnes Maryam, examined the videos and photos, finding that they had been manipulated in order to make many of the children appear sick and drugged. She wondered about the absence of the victims' parents on the field, because after verification, eight bodies were seen buried, while hundreds of others were unknown. Questions remained about where the children were, with the rebel spokesman claiming that the burial had been done quickly for fear of the bodies decomposing. The ISTEAMS Group report indicated the possibility of a comprehensive kidnapping operation two weeks before the incident in Eastern Ghouta.

It is also worth noting a list of victims of the invasion of 11 Alawite villages in Latakia on August 4, where the Al-Nusra Front kidnapped 150 women and children. A report said that the families of some of the kidnapped women and children identified their relatives in video clips and photos and called for an independent investigation to determine the identity of the children and the place of their detention, which reinforced allegations that armed groups drugged children in order to create video clips, despite the children being far away from Eastern Ghouta (ISTEAMS, 2013).

At the end of 2013, a group of Turkish lawyers and writers issued a report focusing on the responsibility of the Turkish government, which supports the rebels in northern Syria, in crimes committed against Syrian civilians. The report concluded that the Saudi-backed Liwa al-Islam group was the main organization behind the chemical attack that took place (Peace Association and Lawyers for Justice, 2013).



The journalist Seymour Hersh challenged the opinions of American intelligence and the story of the United States and concluded that Washington's allegations were fabricated and that the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic groups should have been suspected, but the American administration responded to its selfishness and stood in the face of President Bashar al-Assad forcefully. The journalist concluded that the White House ignored reliable intelligence information about the possibility of the Al-Nusra urn reaching Al-Sarami gas, in order not to surrender about the narrative that the Syrian government is the only one that has access to chemical weapons (Hersh, 2013).

In late September 2013, the special United Nations mission concerned with investigating chemical weapons in Syria returned to the field and decided to investigate in order to determine the use of chemical weapons and their results. In the report, it was stated that chemical weapons were used five times in 2013, three of them against soldiers, so logical that these attacks came from Groups fighting soldiers, not government forces (UNMIAUCWSAA, 2013). The media continued to cover up this report in order not to acquit the Syrian government of the charges imposed previously.

Islamic groups supported by countries opposed to Syria maintained the previous chemical accusations, and the Al-Nusra Front claimed that the chemical materials seized by Turkey were not designed to make Sarin military gas (Today's Zaman, 2013). Yet video evidence in southern Syria showed Al-Nusra Front using chemical weapons against Syrian soldiers (Turbeville, 2014). It was also reported that Barrels containing sarin gas in parts of Syria controlled by rebels and other reports from Kurdish fighters who seized chlorine materials after a suicide attack that injured and affected them (Solomon, 2015; Ariel, 2015).

Anti-Syrian activists, as well as non-governmental organizations based in the United States, such as Avaaz and White Helmets, continued to make accusations that clearly aimed to

overthrow the government in Damascus (NFZ Syria, 2015; White Helmets, 2015). Media channels such as Al Jazeera, for example, and articles published in the British newspaper The Guardian, claimed that the Syrian government used chemical weapons and killed up to 1,400 people in August 2013, and this was the misinformation in itself (Black, 2015).

Another crime related to chemical weapons and kidnapped children in Ballouta. Even Human Rights Watch reported on this crime, as this mass kidnapping was just one of many kidnappings carried out by an armed group of families believed to be loyal to the regime, where the victims are detained in order to obtain compensation or an exchange prisoners, to be disposed of in the end when no solutions remain. Several sources link the children of Balouta to photos of the dead, which were said to be the bodies found in Eastern Ghouta. Perhaps the photos that were uploaded from Eastern Ghouta were not taken there in the first place (ISTEAMS, 2013; Martin, 2014; Mesler, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

Propaganda and demonization of the enemy are an inevitable part of every war, but what happened in Syria is a process of demonization that has never been paralleled in all of history. Syria has become apparent to everyone as absolute evil and responsible for everything that happens. even if it is caused by other parties, The contradiction is accepted and Syria is criticized. What is happening in Syria is similar to many previous American interventions, including Libya, and the violations that occurred there. It is generally obvious now that U.S. policy in general is to control the capabilities of countries far from it on various continents, whether through disarmament or under the excuse of reform. Which led to intervention in Syria, which was the target of many major countries that wanted to divide it and control it to subjugate it.

# General Conclusion

American interventions have become a natural thing by virtue of their occurrence since ancient times in the international arena, whether in direct ways or other circumvented methods. However, it is known that with the beginning of the Arab Spring revolutions of 2011, the major powers actually took advantage of the political uproar through the dissatisfaction of some political parties within the Arab countries, to penetrate into these revolutions and accomplish what must be accomplished according to what they want. They took advantage of the lies about the massacres and violations that occurred, the most powerful entities of the United States and Western countries, namely the United Nations Security Council and NATO, intervened with the propaganda of protecting civilians, whom the majority of rejected foreign interventions. The matter is similar to what happened in Libya.

The Syrian war began as a conflict between the Syrian legal system in Syria and armed groups after several repercussions with the Syrian regime's suppression of demonstrations by supporters of these groups, but these groups' resort to weapons highlights the desire of these parties from the beginning to resort to violence. The United States blamed the secular Syrian government for seeking to implement its promised plan to create a "new Middle East" consisting of subjugated states, whether through reform, disarmament, or direct war and overthrow.

Although the Syrian rebel groups declare that the reason for their coup against Bashar al-Assad is his dictatorship and monopolization of rule, they themselves are fighting among themselves for power to create a state without elections ruled by one man who carries their beliefs. The terrorists in Syria faced a single army that did not disintegrate on religious or sectarian grounds, as some opponents claim that the Syrian regime supports the Alawites and the United States seeks to support the oppressed Sunnis, knowing that the Syrian army contains Sunnis and does not fight Sunnis unless they rebel and direct their weapons toward the state army. Syria also had strong allies, such as Russia, Iran, and China, who sought to calm the situation and deny the chaos created by some opponents, and which America supported when the protests broke out in Daraa in 2011.

Western culture in general lost its ideal splendor in wars and showed its true nature in various Arab countries, especially Syria. It abandoned reason, judgment, and reverence for peace and relied on immoral strategies to establish control, including brutal Western propaganda for the sake of demonization and suppressing other opinions without trying. Searching for independent evidence that could calm the situation, bring out the truth, or even cause bloodshe.

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## ملخص

لعبت الحكومات الغرب و على رأسهم الحكومة الامريكية دورا كبيرا في التدخل في أمور سوريا الداخلية على مدار الوقت بعد الاستقلال سواء في الحالة السياسية أو في أوقات الحروب ، مستغلة بذلك العديد من العوامل و من بينها التوترات الحاصلة في المنطقة و الوجود الارهابي و ضاربة عرض الحائط رفض العديد من دول الشرق الأوسط وجودها في المنطقة ، هذا التدخل الامريكي كان بطابع إيجابي و تداعيات لحفظ السلام لكن من وراءه كانت هنالك سياسة للحكومة الامريكية التي تواجدت في الأزمة السورية ليس بالتصريحات فقط بل حتى بالدعم العسكري و تواجد الجنود و تحالفهم مع بعض الأطراف ، ببروباغاندا ممنهجة أثبتت الولايات المتحدة ببراھين عديدة نيتها في توجيه الرأي العام السوري و الدولي لاعتقادات هدفها الرئيسي إلحاق الضرر بسمعة الحكومة السورية بداية من أحداث مظاهرات ما قبل الحرب السورية إلى قضايا البراميل المتفجرة وصولا إلى مجزرة الحولة و الاسلحة الكيماوية بنشر معلومات غير دقيقة من منظمات تنتمي للمعارضة السورية و استغلال الوضع لتوسيع النفوذ الامريكي في المنطقة و الإستفادة منه بتحقيق مصالحها.