

ADDRESS TO SARE CONFERENCE

Please Campaign To End U.S. Neo-Colonialism in the Middle East!

by Vanessa Beeley

Ms. Beeley is an independent investigative journalist who lives in Syria, who spoke to the morning session of the National Presidents' Day Conference, Feb. 18, 2024, of LaRouche independent Senate candidate Diane Sare. These are her remarks as prepared. They have been slightly edited, and sub-heads have been added.

Today I will address the bi-partisan U.S. foreign policy since before 2011, to collectively punish the Syrian people for their refusal to capitulate to the nefarious agenda of the U.S. and its global alliance, which includes the UK, Israel, Persian Gulf States, Türkiye, and European Union states. This agenda includes regime change, and the partitioning of Syrian territory along sectarian lines that are beneficial to the Israeli and U.S. destabilization project.

To put my arguments in perspective, we must bear in mind that the U.S. has used its veto at the UNSC [United Nations Security Council—ed.] to enable Israeli genocide of the Palestinian people in Gaza and all occupied territories including the West Bank, while providing the bombs to massacre Palestinians contained in what is little more than an open-air extermination camp. Also, increasing funding to the far-right, [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin—ed.] Netanyahu-led extremist coalition regime responsible for *de facto* genocide.

I will address the unilateral coercive measures (known as sanctions), the recent spate of Israeli assassinations on Syrian territory, the U.S. illegal occupation of Syrian territory directly and by proxy, the U.S.



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Sare for Senate

theft of Syrian oil and agricultural resources, the recent U.S. aggression against Syria and Iraq, U.S. backing of terrorist groups in Syria including ISIS—and I will ask the question: Is the Biden Administration working for U.S. national interests and security, or for the interests of Israel in the region?

Firstly, it would take too much time for me to cover the extensive history of CIA/MI6 regime change operations against Syria that span more than 75 years. However, I would draw your attention to a *Time* magazine [article](#) in December 2006—“Syria In [George W.] Bush’s Crosshairs.”

I quote:

The Bush Administration has been quietly nurturing individuals and parties opposed to the Syrian government in an effort to undermine the regime of [Syria’s] President Bashar al-Assad.

Unilateral Coercive Measures

Sanctions are very often described, by those enforcing them, as “non-lethal” measures. I would argue that sanctions, when used as a brutal and vindictive component of a neo-colonialist hybrid-war strategy, are arguably more devastating than a military war.

When they are imposed by global super-force nations against target nations like Syria, in conjunction with a proxy war that has been fomented and sustained by the same nations, it becomes as much a weapon of mass destruction as the terrorist/mercenary armies these U.S.-aligned nations have unleashed upon the Syrian people.

Thus, it is almost impossible to speak about the economic sanctions against Syria in isolation and without referring to the parallel measures that ensure they hit the poorest people in Syria the hardest.

Terrorism can be defined as the “unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property in order to coerce or intimidate a government or the civilian population into furtherance of political or ideological objectives.”

The act of withholding means of sustaining life to innocent civilians, in order to coerce an entire nation into submission to foreign agendas in the region, must surely qualify as economic terrorism. The destruction of essential civilian infrastructure is a war crime; the withholding of essential resources or occupation of those resources is also a war crime.

The correlation between economic and military coercion was made clear by previous Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s point-man on Syria, [Ambassador James Jeffrey](#), who not only described Al Qaeda as a “[U.S. asset](#)” in Syria, but also bragged openly about the misery that sanctions had brought to the Syrian people:

And of course, we’ve ratcheted up the isolation and sanctions pressure on Assad; we’ve held the line on no reconstruction assistance, and the country’s desperate for it. You see what’s happened to the Syrian pound, you see what’s happened to the entire economy. So, it’s been a very effective strategy....

In 2022, [the] UN Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures and human rights, [Alena Douhan](#), urged sanctioning States to lift unilateral sanctions against Syria, warning that they were perpetuating and exacerbating the destruction and trauma suffered by the Syrian people since 2011. I quote from the report:

I call on sanctioning states and regional organizations to lift or suspend all unilateral sanctions applied to Syria, Syrian nationals and companies without authorization of the UN Security Council, and the use of which cannot be justified as countermeasures in accordance with international law.

I urge the U.S. Government to cease the state of national emergency regarding Syria, as being contrary to Article 4 of the ICCPR [International

Convention on Civil and Political Rights—ed.], and to bring national legislation into accordance with international law.

I urge the immediate lifting of all unilateral sanctions that prevent early recovery, rebuilding and reconstruction of critical infrastructure and services, including water and electricity, bank transactions, access to fuel, electricity, sewage treatment, shelter and housing, transportation, education, health care, agricultural and industrial machinery—to give hope to the Syrian people and establish conditions for the return of refugees.

What has been the response of U.S. lawmakers to the UN recommendations? To pass the Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act in the House in a 389–32 vote. The bill expands on the criminal Caesar Act which was introduced under President Donald Trump, in order to extend sanctions to punish any nation that came to the assistance of the Syrian people and a society already crippled by 12 years of war and devastation of essential infrastructure.

The bipartisan bill was spearheaded by Republican Chairman of the Middle East foreign affairs subcommittee Joe Wilson, who, perhaps coincidentally, [received \\$40,000](#) in sponsorship from AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee—ed.] (Israel lobby) in late 2023. Since 2011, Israel has actively participated in the regime-change war—[arming](#) and providing [medical treatment](#) for extremist fighters in Syria, including Al Qaeda and ISIS.

Another sponsor of the Bill was Republican French Hill who has been active in visiting and expressing support for “the opposition” in Northwest Syria in 2023, an area controlled by Al Qaeda and affiliates—Iдлиb was described by Brett McGurk, [an American diplomat and academic who has served in senior national security positions—ed.] as the largest Al Qaeda haven since 9/11. Also read: “[Are Al Qaeda affiliates fighting alongside U.S. ‘rebels’ in Syria’s south?](#)”

U.S. Occupation: Its Real Objective

Many in the U.S. are not aware that U.S. forces occupy one-third of Syrian territory illegally. The justification, of being in Syria to fight ISIS, is dishonest. In 2016, in a closed UN session with Obama’s Secretary of State, [John Kerry](#), and Syrian so-called opposi-

tion, that was recorded and published by the *New York Times*, the recording confirmed three things:

1. Obama policy in Syria was the removal of the Syrian government and President Bashar al-Assad.

2. In order to accomplish this primary goal, the White House was willing to watch the rise of ISIS in the hope that ISIS would advance on Damascus and pressure President al-Assad into stepping down.

3. Weapons that were for the “rebels” under the Obama [Train and Equip](#) program, mysteriously ended up in the hands of ISIS.

The territory that is occupied by the U.S.—comprising 22 military bases and an estimated 3,000 military personnel—is in the Northeast, bordering Iraq, and the Southeast, on the border with Jordan.

In the Northeast, the U.S. manages holding camps for ISIS; these terrorists are regularly transported by [U.S. helicopters and vehicles](#) to carry out attacks against Syrian Arab Army positions [or] the PMU [People’s Mobilization Units of Iraq—ed.], anti-ISIS Iraqi military, on the border with Iraq; and are taken into Iraq from Syria. [The terrorists’] operations have included attacks on Iraq’s [electricity infrastructure](#).

[Also] in the Northeast, the U.S. occupies Syrian oil and agricultural resources with the collaboration of the Kurdish separatists known as the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces).

Approximately 85% of Syrian oil is stolen and traded or taken to U.S. bases in Iraq. This has resulted in severe energy deprivation for the Syrian people—no heating fuel, no fuel for transport, no fuel for hospital generators, electricity rationing (in some areas as little as one hour per day), and food/wheat shortages, as much of this production is in the Northeast.

[In] 2019, [Dana Stroul](#), Joe Biden’s Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense—then co-chair of the Syria Study Group—boasted of the U.S. “owning one-third of Syria territory,” describing it as “the economic powerhouse of Syria, where the hydrocarbons are ... as well as the agricultural powerhouse.”

Stroul described this as only one area of leverage against the Syrian government, the second is the political and diplomatic isolation of the “Assad government,” preventing the return of embassies to Damascus; and [the] third is the economic sanctions architec-

ture and maximum pressure campaign.

How is the occupation of Syrian essential resources in the interests of U.S. national security? It isn’t. It is, again, about punishing the Syrian people for their victory in a 12-year war waged by the U.S. to effect regime change, a war that has failed.

In the Southeast, at the largest U.S.-coalition illegal military base inside Syria, on the border with Jordan at Al Tanf, the U.S. has established a 55 kilometer exclusion zone around the camp, where they train and recruit extremist groups including ISIS. Adjacent to Al Tanf is the Rukban Refugee Camp, which holds Syrian civilians hostage while preventing Russian or Syrian humanitarian aid deliveries—also used as a recruitment and training hub for illegal militant groups.

Attacks on Syrian Arab Army (SAA) positions and civilians have been carried out by ISIS from Al Tanf, on a more regular basis since early 2023. Israel has also used the air space over Al Tanf to carry out attacks against Syrian territory. Israel has also carried out a spate of assassinations on Syrian territory since Oct. 7—targeting senior Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corp advisors in Damascus and throughout Syria, bombing central Damascus in January, destroying a four-story apartment block.

U.S. Aggression and Israel

There were reports of an attack by the Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI) at the end of January against a U.S. outpost, reportedly in Northeast Jordan—killing three U.S. military and injuring a significant number of others. However, sources inside Syria have informed me that the strike was in an area between Al Tanf and Rukban, on Syrian territory.

If true, that must raise the question why the U.S. claims it was in Jordan. The answer appears to be quite simple—the U.S. is illegally in Syria; therefore there would be no justification for a “self-defense” retaliation such as the one conducted in the early hours of 3rd February.

The reality is that the U.S. “[shock and awe](#)” aggression did not target the IRI positions; rather, it targeted Syrian infrastructure, including the electrical power station of Al Mayadin east of Deir Ezzor. It also targeted Syrian Arab Army personnel, particularly in areas where they are fighting ISIS. It targeted PMU forces that are integrated into the Iraqi military—also

responsible for fighting ISIS on the border with Syria. It targeted civilians and ammunition/supplies depots belonging to the SAA and PMU—in other words, it degraded the ability of these official national military forces to fight ISIS.

Again, coincidentally: Immediately after the U.S. attacks, ISIS [conducted four attacks](#) against PMU positions in Iraq and over the next few days increased attacks against [the] SAA in the central desert areas east of Homs City—an area targeted early on in the regime-change war for its natural gas resources.

Whom do these attacks benefit? Israel. The destabilization of Syria and Iraq should be seen through the lens of the 1996 policy document commissioned by Israeli then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and produced by Dick Cheney and Richard Perle—*Clean Break Doctrine: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm*. Its agenda was a Western-backed list of regime changes and sectarian partitioning projects in the Mideast to comply with the regional agenda of Israel, the U.S. and UK.

Recommendations included direct attacks on Syrian territory and against Syrian targets in Lebanon, a move to contain Syria; and plans to remove Saddam Hussein in Iraq, to weaken Syria's position in the region and to strengthen Jordan as Israel's ally.

When I ask, whom does U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East benefit most?—I should quote from a recent interview given by Democrat presidential candidate [Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.](#):

Israel is critical and the reason it's critical is because it is a bulwark for us in the Middle East. It is almost like having an aircraft carrier in the Middle East. It is our oldest ally; it's been our ally for 75 years. It has been an incredible ally for us in terms of the technology exchange and building the Iron Dome, which we have paid a lot for. It has taught us enormously about how to defend ourselves against missile attack. That military expenditure—75% goes to U.S. companies under the agreement, under the MoU.

If you look at what's happening in the Middle East now, the closest allies to Iran are Russia and China. Iran also controls all of Venezuela's oil; Hezbollah is in Venezuela, they have propped up the Maduro regime and so they control that oil supply. BRICS—Saudi Arabia is now joining

BRICS, so those countries will control 90% of the oil in our world.

If Israel disappears, it leaves a vacuum in the Middle East. Israel is our Ambassador, our beachhead in the Middle East. It gives us ears and eyes in the Middle East. It gives us intelligence, the capacity to influence affairs in the Middle East. If Israel disappeared, Russia and China would be controlling the Middle East and would control 90% of the world's oil supply, and that would be cataclysmic for U.S. national security.

What is clear from this statement is that Israel is little more than a policy instrument for the U.S. The Israeli population is irrelevant and the Palestinians are to be made extinct. For most in power in the U.S., “national security” translates into the control of world resources that will only benefit a tiny percentage of the U.S. population.

Cataclysmic Change

What is cataclysmic, for U.S. military personnel deployed illegally to countries where they are not invited, is the legitimate and increased resistance against U.S. policy in the region that has grown exponentially since the 7th of October. There were already 160 attacks on illegal U.S. bases in Syria and Iraq prior to the alleged Tower 22 attack, which had also resulted in casualties.

Why are U.S. troops in Syria, uninvited—enabling ISIS to maintain maximum pressure on an already exhausted population, stealing resources and facilitating the starvation of the Syrian people? Why is anyone surprised that there is now significant pushback?

Why are U.S. troops still in Iraq after they have been asked to leave? It is not for the benefit of the American people. It is for the benefit of Israel and the prevention of a “Global South” recovery from decades of U.S.-allied military adventurism and neo-colonialist ravages.

The world is transforming rapidly, however, since October 7, and U.S. unipolar hegemony is no longer a viable foreign policy. What is the solution? For the Biden Administration and the bipartisan war hawks it seems to be more war instead of peace and negotiation.

I can only ask you to campaign for an end to U.S. interference and military presence in the region, and

force an end to the support and arming of the Zionist settler-colonialism project. The consequences of not doing so, are too terrible to contemplate for global security.

For Further Study

More information on U.S. support for ISIS in Syria is available in the following sources.

William Van Wagenen, “For 18 months, as ISIS advanced, the US did nothing to stop them,” *The Cradle*, Sept. 2, 2022. [Link](#)

Tim Anderson, Centre for Counter Hegemonic Studies, “Syria: Washington Supports the Islamic State (ISIS), the Evidence,” *ResearchGate*, Dec. 2015. [Link](#)

Seumas Milne, “Now the truth emerges: how the US fuelled the rise of Isis in Syria and Iraq,” *The Guardian*, June 3, 2015. [Link](#)

Josh Rogin, “America’s Allies Are Funding ISIS,” *The Daily Beast*, June 14, 2014; updated Apr. 14, 2017. [Link](#)

Brian Castner, “Exclusive: Tracing ISIS’ Weapons Supply Chain—Back to the US,” *Wired*, Dec. 12, 2017. [Link](#)

The Cradle’s Iraq Correspondent, “Reviving ISIS: A US Weapon Against the Resistance Axis.” *The Cradle*, Jan. 16, 2024. [Link](#)

Bharath Rk, “Obama funded ISIS and American media defended it: Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard explains,” *TFIPost*, Jan. 30, 2017. [Link](#)

Nick Turse, “Missiles and Drones Among Weapons Stolen from U.S. in Iraq and Syria,” *The Intercept*, Nov. 25, 2023. [Link](#)

Local Sources

Hazem Sabbagh, “Local sources: US occupation transporting imprisoned Daesh terrorists from Syria to Iraq,” Syrian Arab News Agency, May 4, 2020. [Link](#)

Hazem Sabbagh, “US occupation transport another patch of Daesh terrorists from Hasaka to Iraq,” Syrian Arab News Agency, April 27, 2020. [Link](#)

Hazem Sabbagh, “Daesh member says he was recruited by British intelligence to spy on military sites in Syria,” Syrian Arab News Agency, June 8, 2020. [Link](#)

Ibrahim Mohammad Wahdi, “From Ghweran to Al-Tanf the ISIS play is directed by the CIA,” *OffGuardian*, Feb. 9, 2022. [Link](#)

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