

“This is not a Civil War, it is a War of Plunder by NATO, Israel, Turkey, and the Gulf Monarchies”

In Conversation with Arnaldo Perez Guerra of Cuban News 'Prensa Latina' – Translated by Joshua Tartakovsky

Source: [Off-Guardian](#)

Syria lives in an inferno, as the crisis will continue as long as there are countries that support and finance terrorism. The West is intent on destroying the Syrian government in order to create small weak states and finally to guarantee the security of Israel.

We are not only fighting against terrorist groups inside Syria, but also against terrorist groups that proceed from all parts of the world with the support of the most rich and most powerful countries.”

Turkey, that has close relations with the West, supplies arms, money and volunteers, to groups such as the Al Nusra Front and the Islamic State (IS). “The West perceives terrorism as a wildcard that it can pull off periodically”, said the Syrian President Bashar al Assad to the Russian channel RT, adding that the alliance between Syria, Iran, Iraq and the Lebanese movement Hezbollah, which he termed the axis of resistance, “will achieve a defeat of terrorism which is the new tool used to subjugate the region”. Russia has joined the axis decisively.

The United States has been bombing Syria since September 2014 without the consent of Damascus and violated international law. Attacks had no impact on terrorist groups such as the Islamic State but only strengthened it... until now. The Russian

President, Vladimir Putin, caused a stir when he sent military help to Syria. For the past several weeks, joint forces of military warplanes of Russia and Syria attacked command posts of terrorists in Palmyra, Aleppo and Homs.

Miguel Fernández Martínez, a Cuban journalist of the Latin American News Agency Prensa Latina is now in Syria as a correspondent:

“Before I was in Central America, covering the elections in El Salvador. I have also traveled to the USA, Puerto Rico, and other parts of Latin America”, he told Punto Final magazine. About the presence in Syria of Russian military advisers, he said that it is provoking a stir among the Western strategists, who are betting on the destruction of this Arab country: “The Western press spares no headlines that run from announcing an “armed invasion” to “territorial annexation”, intended to create a hostile atmosphere and tension. He says that air incursions by Israel against the Syrian territory in August hardly received a mention by the Western Press: “drones attacked the village of al-Koum, located in the province of Quneitra, 67 kilometers southwest of Damascus. A day earlier, an Israeli helicopter fired various rockets at buildings in Quneitra, causing serious material damage”.

The Pentagon and NATO see the presence of Russia in Syria as a failure of their efforts in over for years to topple President Bashar al Assad.

AN AGGRESSION FINANCED BY THE WEST

According to UNICEF, 5.6 million Syrian children suffer from extreme poverty and are forced to move constantly to escape the war zones. Two million refugees live in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey and in other countries in North Africa, while 3.6 million children remain in vulnerable communities. Twenty thousand children have died in this imposed war. “The picture of the Syrian child Aylan Kurdi, lying lifeless on the

sand of a Turkish beach, crackles like a whip on the conscience of a hypocritical and silent Europe, that negated to provide protection to its own victims. Europe, the United States, Israel and their armies encouraged this fratricidal war that claimed the boy's life. Aylan is a reflection of other Syrian children who are dying right now in Damascus, exposed to the terrorist fire of rockets, suffocating from toxic gas in al Foa and Kafraya, or having their heads brutally decapitated in Raqaa, or defeated by the heat and the thirst in the desert, trying to escape the canon fire", said Fernández.

How does the blockade of the United States affect the Cuban people in communications, Internet and broadcasting? Is it a little bit similar to Syria?

"All of the blockades are harmful because the victims have many needs. Cuba knows this very well, after facing the physical blockade imposed by the USA for over 50 years, which until today caused a loss and damages of more than 833,755 million dollars. In regard to Syria too, the Western powers led by US, France and the United Kingdom, also showed no mercy. They seized their exports, blocked all their contracts, froze their bank accounts. They interrupted their satellite signals, so that the truth does not float to the surface, and then finally, a media campaign intended to destabilize, fragment and destroy the unity of the Syrian people and to undermine its resistance against the terrorist aggression sponsored by the West".

Tell us about the Government of Bashar al Assad. What was life in Syria like before the intervention by the US and EU?

"The President Bashar al Assad was converted into a scapegoat by those great circles of international powers who seek to repeat in Syria the same they did in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya and in other countries in the region. Since long before the beginning of the crisis in 2011, al Assad was under the scope of Washington and its intelligence agencies, destined to

become a victim of imperial greed for not bowing to the edicts of the White House.

Since President al Assad came to power following the death of his father, Hafez al Assad, he continued the same pan-Arab policies for regional unity, which have been given much prominence in Syria within the Non-Aligned Movement. Assad did not compromise on the national economy for the sake of the designs of the IMF and followed the example of his father, the most important defender of the PAlestinian cause for the return of the occupied territories by Israel and for the return of million of Palestinian refugees to their place of origin. Syria has always been one of the worse enemies of Israel, who condemned it for its expansionist policies and called for the return of the Golan Heights, occupied illegally since 1967. To that, we must add the solid relationship that exists between Damascus and the Islamic Republic of Iran. They are united by historical ties of friendship and collaboration.

Bashar al-Assad drove the modernization of Syrian society, initiated by his father in the 1970s, defended the concept of the secular state, imposed the law of the state on all religions and the right of coexistence of a multiethnic population, which forms the core of the Syrian people. He also did not allow for the privatization of the oil industry nor of the most important industries of the country. For all these reasons, it was an objective to destroy on the part of the neo-colonial administrations of the U.S. and its European allies”.

What’s actually taking place in Syria: is it a civil war?

“I refuse to accept the thesis that there is a civil war here. It is as false as the sun coming out at night. What is happening here is an international aggression, maintained by NATO, the US State Department and the Israeli intelligence services, who managed to unite the monarchies of the Persian Gulf – Saudi Arabia and Qatar- along with the governments of Jordan and Turkey, to initiate a siege on Syria. The

strategies for starting the crisis were clear. They tried to transfer to Syria the effects tested on other countries in what became known as the Arab Spring, a form of destabilization which caused pain in all countries where it was imposed. For this they utilized various methods, one of which was the manipulation of the well-known Muslim Brotherhood, which has already which had already been used in Egypt, Libya, Tunis and in other countries, trying to give religious overtones to protests and on the other hand, using the well-known destabilizing political organizations organized by the US embassy.

It is no secret that prior to the supposed popular demonstrations that took place in March 2011 that initiated the beginning of the conflict, the former north American ambassador in Damascus, Robert Ford, travelled constantly to various provinces, met with leaders of the opposition and financed the protests. In these "popular" demonstrations, there were armed men who fired at the police. Generating chaos and violence, because it was all a well designed plan to generate destabilization and give way for jihadist groups, organized, armed and trained by the West, who were waiting at the borders with Jordan in the south, Turkey in the north, and Iraq in the east. It is also not a secret that the self-proclaimed Free Syrian Army- of which there is now barely a trace- composed in its majority by defectors from the Syrian Army, was financed by Paris, and that in its process of disintegration, a majority of members joined the terrorist gangs of the Islamic State or the Al Nusra Front, which is the armed wing of Al Qaeda in Syria.

One of the other forms employed to attack Syria was through the attraction or recruitment of mercenaries from more than sixty countries, who came instigated by extremist religious leaders who insisted on making a call for jihad or holy war against the legitimate government in Syria. At the end, four years after the initiation of this war of prey, the forces

have been concentrated in two large groups. On the one hand, the forces of the Syrian army, with an army of nearly 350 thousand men with arms, in cooperation with the popular militias known as Units of National Defense, and on the other hand, terrorist gangs that continue to generate chaos and terror”.

TERRORISM OF THE ISLAMIC STATE

How did the Islamic State surge and how was it introduced in Syria? Who controls it? It is said that they sell oil to finance themselves and that they have millions of resources...

“The terrorist group the Islamic State, also known in Arabic as Daesh, emerged a little more than a year ago and is a dismemberment of the group Al Qaeda that operated in the territory of Iraq. Since then they began their expansion in the Syrian territory, proclaimed the establishment of a caliphate, whose capital is the city of Raqqa, located a little more than 500 kilometers to the east of Damascus, occupied by armed extremists.

The atrocities of the Islamic State are spoken of every day. They manipulate the religious faith of their members and followers, and form a perverse interpretation of the Koran, dictating the laws of Sharia, and with them, a type of a tyrannical government that includes the imposition of cruel punishments that can range from throat-cutting to stoning, crucifixion and other barbaric forms used to impose the law. Behind them there is an entire network of drug dealers, loan sharks and criminals, most of whom are from the same countries seeking to overthrow Bashar al Assad – and who are trafficking with oil from the oil wells in the occupied zones and with archeological and historical relics that they vandalized from the different villages that they passed.

There is a detail that I do not want to neglect to mention, and that is the manipulation that is being done by the Western mainstream media regarding the occupied territories by the

Islamic State in Syria. Many media insist on affirming that over 50% of the territory of Syria is occupied, something that does not correspond with the strict reality. A majority of the population of Syria lives in areas under the control of the government in the center and to the west of the country, along the mediterranean coast. The great part of the areas under the control of the terrorists are desert areas with a low population density; they only have under their control the city of Raqqa, part of the city of Idlib, and a little less than half of Aleppo. Where they are strong in reality is in the control of roads to the east, where they impede the movement of the troops to the battle areas and weaken the domestic economy of the Syrians”.

Whom does it interest if Syria disintegrates?

“I remember that many years ago someone told me that the US and the great powers wish to turn the Middle East into a “large lake of oil”. The West has never looked with respect at this part of the world. Here there are the traces of the colonial time, leftovers of the ancient culture of these people and the bleeding of important reserves of fuel.

In the case of Syria, after it refused to be a lackey of the great Western powers, it was “condemned” for invasion. What they did not take into account was the resistance of the Syrian people, who had the capacity to defend themselves for more than four years of this campaign of terrorist aggression. One of the formulas they tried to apply to destabilize the national unity was sectarianism and trying to create divisions between Sunnis, Shiites, Alawites, Kurds, Armenians, Druze, Christians, Yazidis who form one historical and indestructible amalgam, which is called the Syrian people”.

What kind of difficulties do you have to realize your work as a correspondent of Prensa Latina?

“The same ones encountered by any ordinary Syrian. I lived with them, I suffered the same needs and shared their hopes. I was able to visit battle areas, schools destroyed by the war,

refugee camps, and at the end, I tried to feel it all. I have even been able to speak to foreign mercenaries captured by the army and heard from their own lips until where were their external forces committed in this war. I have had the opportunity to interview ministers all the way down to common people. Anyone who can give me his version of the war, and will let me have new arguments to explain the readers, will always be on my agenda”.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

What is the humanitarian situation in Syria?

“According to the UN, Syria is suffering the worst humanitarian crisis known in the past 70 years. As a consequence of this war, more than four million Syrians had to seek refuge in other countries and the host countries are Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Around 11 million are displaced inside the same national territory, and the number of the dead is shocking. Until now, and some say that these are conservative calculations, more than 240 thousand people, of them 50,000 members of the army. In some areas there is famine and the most basic items such as water and electricity, are lacking. It is a very difficult and sad situation”.

How has the government faced the war against terrorism?

“Syria is being defended in a war of international aggression. The Syrian army and the popular militias have borne the weight of this war at a high cost, material and human. On the international coalition led by the US, there is little to say. They have been for over a year “bombing” suspected positions of terrorist groups, and doing what they can to strengthen them. There is evidence that in some locations in the east of Syria and Iraq, aircraft dropped weapons and munitions that are going into the hands of extremist groups. For its party, the Syrian-Kurdish militias known as YPG, also accomplished the hard task in defending its territories in northern Syria, especially in the areas north of Aleppo and in the eastern province of Hasaka, achieving even the expulsion of terrorists

from their territories”.

What can you tell us about the crimes against women, children and the elderly and the destruction of cultural properties?

“They have scandalized the international public opinion. They use methods that are truly sadistic, like cutting off the heads of their enemies, or crucifying people in public squares or stoning women until their death. They throw homosexuals from roof tops of building and inflict blows on women who do not wear a veil or go out on their own in the streets. The kids is what hurts most. They closed many schools in the occupied areas and opened colleges where small kids are taught the importance of suicide in order to achieve a purpose, or turn into helpers of the butchers who execute people. The psychological and social done against the children is impressive”.

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