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Media and Terrorism: A Case Study of Western Media Coverage of the Syrian Conflict and Terrorism-Related Events in Syria from 2011 to 2018

Ali Rabea

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**Media and Terrorism: A Case Study of Western Media Coverage of the Syrian Conflict
and Terrorism-Related Events in Syria from 2011 to 2018**

Ali Rabea

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Principal Supervisor: Dr. Anthony Ashbolt

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on mainstream western media distortion and propaganda in relation to reporting of the Syrian conflict, the motives and actions of its protagonists, and the conflict's major events and outcomes. It does this by examining coverage of key events by the widely respected *New York Times* from March 15th, 2011 to December 31st, 2018. This thesis also compares aspects of this coverage with reporting by *The Independent* on the 2016 military operations in East Aleppo and the 2017 military operations in Al-Raqqa. By utilizing the Propaganda Model in relation to Framing Theory, this thesis highlights the uneven reporting of the humanitarian crisis in Syria by the mainstream Western media. Two thousand one hundred two newspaper articles were analysed to answer the two research questions: (1) to what extent have Western mainstream media been influenced by war propaganda in their coverage of the Syrian conflict, and why, and what techniques reflect the propagandised coverage? And (2) how has media coverage of the Syrian conflict and the "war on terror" advanced the terrorism industry? The thesis argues that *The New York Times* and *The Independent* (to a lesser extent) espoused a pro-US narrative of the Syrian conflict and the "war on terror". The biased coverage of the two newspapers was constructed out of several elements: (1) the dominance of US sources and selective use of UN and NGO sources; (2) the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the use of visual content to advance a pro-US narrative; (3) the use of graphic and emotive terms to advance the same narrative; (4) focus on the humanitarian crisis allegedly caused by the Syrian-Russian forces and overlooking the humanitarian crisis allegedly caused by the US and the allies forces. Finally, this thesis questions the role of Syrian citizen journalists, particularly their relationship to political elites and intelligence agencies. It also contextualises the concept of the "terrorism industry" to help explain the way that propaganda has been used in relation to reporting on terrorism related-events.

Keywords

Syria, Aleppo, terrorism, The New York Times, The Independent, Russia

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I would also like to thank Dr. Eric Loo, Dr. Dennis Whitfield, Dr. David Blackall, Dr. Jane Carey, and Emily Purser for their support during the course of this study.

Addendum

A few days after this thesis was submitted, I received a very sad email about the passing of Dr. Anthony Ashbolt. It is very difficult to put into words what I have been feeling about Anthony's passing. Thus, I will keep my feelings to myself. To you Anthony...THANK YOU and Rest in Peace.

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Acknowledgements (Arabic)

بسم خالق القلم و العلم والعلماء

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على من أیده ربه بالوحي و بعثه مولاه و ولیه بإقرأ وبنون والقلم وما یسطرون وعلى آله الطیبین الطاهرین سرج الظلم و أولیاء النعم و سادات العلم و مفاتیح الکرّم. فکما الخیال کانت هذه الرحلة بدياة و نهاية، فکذلك یبدوا لي تحبیر هذه الأسطر. بتوفیق من الله وبرعاية من رسوله وأهل بيته صلوات الله وسلامه عليهم، ثم بدعاء الوالدين ودعمهم، ودعم إخوتي وزوجتي وبقية أهلي وأصدقائي، یرج هذا المشروع المتواضع الذي أتمنى أن یرتك أثره في مسيرة العلم، و ما ذلك إلا من فضل الله ورسوله وأهل بيته صلوات الله عليهم.

إلى أمي... و ماذا أوفیک وماذا أقول وأنت تنکرین نفسك وتکرميني بفائق عطفك و وارف حنانك.. وإلى أبي.. و كيف أوفیک حقاً! فما عشت و حبيت لا أنسى تعبک وسهرک علينا کيما نصل إلى ما وصلنا إليه. فقد أخذت منك الجم العظيم، وكان مما أخذت : أنه للعلم و أهله عندک المنزلة العظيمة، و الشأن رفيع. و إلى إخواني.. أرفع کلمات الشکر و العرفان و الدعاء اللاتي لا تفي بحقکم عليّ، وجميل دعمکم لي لسنوات طويلة. و إلى حبيبتي وزوجتي: شکراً لك على تفهمک وتحملک لي طوال الشهور الماضية.

و إلى أبناء وبنات إخواني وزوجات إخواني: شکراً لدعائکم وعطفکم ومشاعرکم الطيبة.. و إلى أصدقائي.. لا أحتاج أن أذكر أسماءکم، ولكنکم تعرفون أنفسکم.. أتم دائماً في قلبي. شکر خاص أيضاً لكل من ساهم في هذا العمل الذي ما قمت به إلا نصرة ما أضيع من حق. إلى ف، إلى ل، إلى س، إلى ط، إلى ي، إلى ن.. إليها وحق الله عائدة من أولها إلى آخرها.

Certification

I, Ali Rabea, declare that this thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the conferral of the degree Doctor of Philosophy, from the University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Ali Rabea
9th May 2021

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	The Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ACA	Arms Control Association
BBC	The British Broadcasting Corporation
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNN	Cable News Network
DIA	US Defense Intelligence Agency
DWB	Doctors Without Borders
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IS	Islamic State
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
SNHR	The Syrian Network for Human Rights
SOHR	The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights
The NYT	The New York Times
The PM	The Propaganda Model
USIP	The United States Institute of Peace
YPG	People's Protection Units

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Map 1: Major cities of the Syrian Arab Republic (Courtesy of WorldAtlas)

Introduction

On one summer night of 2007, near the Sayeda Zaynab Shrine in the countryside outside of the Syrian capital Damascus, I exchanged a long and interesting conversation with local young men playing Backgammon. It was about 09:30 at night; not very late for a city that used to be safe and peaceful. I do not remember how the conversation began but I still recall a young man looking at me, saying: "look around, you can see people from different countries and from different religious backgrounds". He said it proudly and continued: "not one of my friends or bystanders care about their beliefs or where they came from". Six years later, I found myself working in Australia with Syrian refugee families and listening to their tragic stories. A man was burnt alive in front of his family by the so-called "Islamic State" (IS) just because he was a public servant. A two-year-old child said he would kill me because I asked him nicely to be quiet in the bus as we were heading to the family's medical appointment. Another three-year-old child imitated a machine gun. Why do children so young know about killing and guns? The answer was provided by the mother of the child: "because he used to hear the sound of machine guns before going to bed".

About one year after the Syrian protests commenced, I received a sarcastic message on my mobile from a close friend in Bahrain saying "you said Al-Assad will not be toppled. Your friend's days are counted". The Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad became my "friend" only because I believed he would not be overthrown. The message was sent following the 2012 major blast in the heart of Damascus that claimed the lives of four Syrian government key figures during a meeting of "خلية الأزمة" (translated as the crisis cell) that dealt with the growing armed opposition movement. Defence Minister Dawoud Rajha, his Deputy Assef Shawkat (the Syrian President's brother-in-law), Interior Minister Mohammad Shaar, and Assistant Vice President Hassan Turkmani were all killed in the blast (Macfarquhar, 2012).

I remember writing back confidently saying: "he will not be toppled because Iran and Hezbollah will not allow it". I purposely did not mention Russia for two reasons. Firstly, because the Russians were hesitant at the beginning before they threw their weight behind the Syrian government. Secondly, because the Russians' involvement was mainly motivated by protecting their political and economic interests in Syria counter to Iran and Hezbollah that believed they shared the same fate with Syria and the Syrian President. International and regional politicians and observers believed then that the Syrian government would not stand for long and armed

opposition groups would occupy Damascus and assassinate the Syrian President (Van Dam, 2017, pp. 79-80) presumably similar to the Libyan scenario when the "rebels", supported by NATO, abused and later murdered the former President Muammar Al-Gaddafi (Shelton, 2011; Beaumont and Stephen, 2011). The US, that early on ran a secret program to arm the opposition forces, was planning for the "new" Syria without Al-Assad (Cooper, 2012; Sofer, 2012; Schmitt, 2012; McElory, 2012) and then the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan vowed to pray "soon" in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus (Hürriyet Daily News, 2012). More than 10 years later, the "new" Syria turned out to be another American dream and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan did not pray in Damascus but rather he prayed in Hagia Sophia in July 2020.

These events and others have encouraged me to embark on this thesis. Much of Western and Arabic mainstream media did not properly report what was going on in Syria. There were hopes more than facts broadcast by anti-Syrian government media outlets, politicians, and "experts". The political atmosphere, particularly the plans to topple the Syrian government, was very similar to the atmosphere that preceded the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. There was one main difference though; the former Iraqi regime had fewer loyal friends than the Syrian government had. When reporting on Syria, the majority of Western mainstream media outlets adopted a military intervention agenda. There was a competition between media outlets to build international public opinion to legitimise the West's intervention and delegitimise the Russian, Iranian, and Hezbollah's presence in Syria.

Thus, this thesis examines Western mainstream media coverage by analysing how the events of the Syrian conflict were reported. It analyses the coverage of *The New York Times* (*The NYT*) from the US and *The Independent* from Britain, two well-known and relatively independent newspapers. These two outlets were selected because the US and the UK governments were those that led the international coalition to fight terrorism in Syria and because both are highly regarded international newspapers. *The NYT* has been in circulation since 1851 and has won the Pulitzer Prize on 130 occasions (The New York Times, 2020a). It is considered one of the most influential newspapers in the US and one of the world's most followed mainstream media outlets on its social media platforms (Glader, 2017; #Socialscene, 2017, p. 2). As for the British newspaper, *The Independent* recorded more than 24.5 million readers in one month to become "the UK's largest quality digital news brand" (The Independent, 2019a). It also has two of the longest serving Western reporters covering the Middle East: Patrick Cockburn and

Robert Fisk (passed away on October 30th, 2020). More of the reasons why the two newspapers were selected for this study are stated in Chapter 3. Building on and employing the Propaganda Model by Herman and Chomsky (2002) and Framing Theory, this thesis uncovers the techniques used in the coverage of the Syrian conflict including the "war on terror". It also analyses the influence of official sources and Syrian citizen journalists on the narrative of the coverage to serve the West's political and economic interests. This thesis inspects the main elements of the coverage of the Syrian conflict. *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* coverage of the conflict, for instance, focused on the military operations of the opposing forces, praised the opposition armed forces and demonised the Syrian forces, and focused on warmaking measures over peacemaking measures.

In addition, the thesis inspects the relationship between citizen journalism in Syria and political elites and intelligence agencies that has been overlooked by scholars. It also contextualises the concept of the "terrorism industry" that was first introduced by Edward Herman and Gerry O'Sullivan about 40 years ago. Herman (1982) and Herman and O'Sullivan (1991; 1989) argued that terrorism was turned to an "industry" to serve political ends of the West with the help of a network of institutions, think tanks, experts, and media outlets. However, this concept has not yet been contextualised. Thus, this thesis inspects the four main pillars this concept is based on. These pillars are the concentration on religious motives and overlooking or downplaying political motives, paying more attention to terrorist attacks on the West than attacks carried out elsewhere, disregarding or downplaying atrocities committed by Western countries, and overlooking or downplaying Western state-sponsored terrorism.

This study answers two main research questions:

RQ1: To what extent have Western mainstream media been influenced by war propaganda in their coverage of the Syrian conflict, and why, and what techniques reflect the propagandised coverage?

RQ2: How has media coverage of the Syrian conflict and the "war on terror" advanced the terrorism industry?

These questions are answered by analysing *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* coverage to examine whether the media was in favour of a pro-war agenda with the consequence that the truth about the Syrian conflict and the "war on terror" has not been fully disclosed to the Western public. It is argued that terrorism in the Middle East has been widely used as a pretext to gain legitimacy for political and economic aspirations.

This thesis primarily focuses on *The NYT* by analysing its coverage of the Syrian conflict from 2011 to 2018. It is followed by a case study of *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* coverage of the military operations in Aleppo 2016 and Al-Raqqa 2017.

Methodology

The events of the Syrian conflict were selected and categorised into two types: "important" events and "more important" events based on the researcher's evaluation of how the events changed the strategic or the military situation on the ground either in favour of the Syrian government or the opposition armed forces and based on how many times in total an event was included in the timelines of the Syrian conflict developed by two international organisations and six mainstream media outlets that are not associated with the Syrian government. "More important" events were reported by four or more media outlets and organisations, while "important" events were reported by three media outlets and organisations or less.

For instance, according to media reports, reclaiming East Aleppo after four years of war was considered a major victory for the Syrian government and a big blow for the opposition (this is explained in detail later in this thesis). Reclaiming East Aleppo, therefore, was considered a "more important" event because it ended the opposition's control over the remaining part of Aleppo and because it was mentioned across four media outlets' timelines. It has to be stressed, however, that one event was considered more important even though it was reported by only one organisation: the first alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria on December 23rd, 2012 (Yacoubian, 2019). Considering that the analysis in Chapter 4 extensively examines the coverage of the alleged chemical attacks, this event could not be ruled out.

For each day of the first three months of the conflict (from March 15th, 2011 to June 15th, 2011) and for the last month of 2018 (from December 1st, 2018 to December 31st, 2018), two major newspaper articles were selected from *The NYT's* website. A taxonomy of important and more important events until the end of 2011 was developed. For the important event, one week of newspaper coverage before and after the event was collected. For the more important event, two weeks of newspaper coverage before and after the event were collected. A similar methodology was employed starting from 2012. For periods when there were no important or more important events reported, one week of newspaper coverage from that month was collected. These weeks were selected randomly. For instance, two articles were selected for each day from the second week of

January 2012 because there were no important or more important events in this month. In addition, as there were also no important or more important events in May 2012, newspaper coverage of the third week of this month was collected and newspaper coverage of the fourth week of June 2012 was also collected (Appendix 1).

To ensure the research was conducted within a framework of objectivity, the timelines of the Syrian conflict as chronicled by two international organisations and six media outlets (other than *The NYT* and *The Independent*) from Arab and Western countries were selected. One of the two selected organisations was: Arms Control Association (ACA); a non-government association that chronicled alleged chemical attacks in Syria (Sanders-Zakre, 2018). ACA claims to promote and support policies to control arms and has been doing so since the 1970s. The other organisation was the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) that was founded in 1984 by the Congress to counter "violent extremism" (USIP, 2020; Yacoubian, 2019). While the ACA and the USIP might have their agenda, the two organisations were chosen to help fill in potential gaps in the media outlets' timelines. Their perspective is important because it is to some degree independent of both mainstream media and the Syrian government.

Media outlets known not to have ties with the Syrian government were: *Al Jazeera* English from Qatar, *the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)* and *Reuters* from Britain, *Cable News Network (CNN)* and *Associated Press (AP)* from the US, and *Deutsche Welle (DW)* from Germany. While some media outlets listed events of the Syrian conflict in their timelines until the end of 2014, others listed events until the end of 2018. Each of the selected organisations and media outlets stated what they believed to be the main events in the conflict. Overall, the media outlets agreed on what qualified as main events. It has to be noted that this method only concerned *The NYT's* coverage of the Syrian conflict from 2011 to 2018 because the thesis primarily focuses on the coverage of the American newspaper. One thousand eight hundred thirty-two newspaper articles were collected from *The NYT* (1120 news articles, 534 editorials, 70 opinions, and 108 op-eds). For the case study, two articles were selected from *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* websites from each day of the military operations in East Aleppo and Al-Raqqa. As for East Aleppo, the military operations lasted from July 11th, 2016 to the end of December 2016. For Al-Raqqa, the military operations lasted from June 6th, 2017 to the end of October of 2017. One hundred and eighty-five articles from *The Independent* and 184 articles from *The NYT* were analysed. In total, 2102 newspaper articles were analysed. The data collected covered more than 39 events over

more than 1848 days out of 2849 days in total (or about 65 per cent). This study is the first scholarly work that I know of to examine the media coverage of the military operations in Al-Raqqa. It is hoped that this study will challenge mainstream scholarly work on terrorism and provide new interpretations and findings to the field of media and terrorism. It has to be stressed that the main investigations and findings of this study and reported in this thesis mainly concern *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* coverage of the Syrian conflict and therefore they cannot be extended to other media outlets unless a further serious study and investigation is carried out.

Events leading to the conflict

A number of significant events took place before the Syrian conflict that began on March 15th, 2011. While the Middle East has long been an active region militarily and geopolitically, only the major events directly related to the Syrian conflict will be highlighted in this section. The aim of this section then is to provide an overview of the political and military situation and significant events that preceded the conflict. Syria has fought three major wars with Israel in 1948, 1967, and 1973. It also has been supporting the Palestinian and Lebanese resistances that carried out military operations against Israel particularly during the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and through the new millennium. For example, headquarters of Hezbollah and the Palestinian resistance (Hamas, Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command, and others) have had a public presence in Damascus for decades (Norton, 2018, p. 183). This directly influenced the Syrian-US relationship particularly during the presidency of Hafez Al-Assad (1971-2000) and his son Bashar Al-Assad (Saouli, 2019, p. 40; Lesch, 2005, p. 102). Supporting the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance has been a popular choice in Syria because (as viewed by the Syrian people) Israel occupies Palestine and because Israel since 1967 has occupied a large swathe of the Syrian Golan Heights (Scheller, 2014, pp. 71-72).

After about 20 years of guerrilla warfare, the Lebanese resistance Hezbollah forced the Israeli army to withdraw from South Lebanon on May 25th, 2000 (Norton, 2018, p. 78; El-Husseini, 2008, p. 412). Less than three weeks later (on June 10th, 2000) the death of the former Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad was announced and on the next day, the Syrian parliament held an emergency session to elect his young son Bashar who was about 34 years old as the new President of Syria (Scheller, 2014, p. 22; Lesch, 2012, pp. 3-4; Lesch, 2005, p. 63; MacFarquhar, 2000). Syria has been subjected to

heavy US pressure for its role in defeating Israel and this pressure increased after the September 11 attacks. The country was added to the George W. Bush administration's "Axis of Evil" and then-Undersecretary of State John Bolton expanded the axis to what he called "Beyond the Axis of Evil" (Bolton, 2002). Then US President George W. Bush threatened Syria and demanded that it cut ties with "terrorist" organisations. He called on Syria to "choose the right side in the war on terror by closing terrorist camps and expelling terrorist organizations" (Congress, 2003). The US was driven by strong international support following the September 11 attacks. Seeking to apply more pressure, then Secretary of State Colin Powell met in 2003 with the Syrian President in Damascus to renew the US old demands including cutting ties with the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance (Saouli, 2019, p. 161; Strategic Comments, 2003). The Syrian President Al-Assad, however, did not comply with these demands. Rather Syria developed its relationships with Hezbollah, Hamas, and other Palestinian organisations such as the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Syria vehemently opposed the 2003 US invasion of Iraq (Saouli, 2019, p. 161; Scheller, 2014, pp. 25-26). During what was early thought to be a successful military campaign on Iraq, it was understood that Washington was considering a military campaign against Syria. Then Undersecretary of State John Bolton said that the US hoped that "the elimination of the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein ... would (provide) important lessons to other countries in the region, particularly Syria, Libya, and Iran" (Abrahms, 2003). Following these threats, the Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Act was passed by the Congress and signed by President Bush in 2003 to apply more political and economic sanctions on Syria (Phillips, 2016, p. 14; Scheller, 2014, pp. 136; Congress, 2003). In 2005, a blast in Beirut claimed the life of Rafik Al-Hariri, former Prime Minister and one of the most influential political figures in Lebanon (Saouli, 2019, pp. 162-163; BBC, 2005).

Syria was accused of assassinating Al-Hariri which subjected the country to more regional and international pressure (Special Tribunal for Lebanon reached a verdict in August 2020 and found no evidence to support this accusation). As a result, the Syrian troops were forced to leave Lebanon after 30 years of military presence in the country (Scheller, 2014; p. 139; The New York Times, 2005). In the midst of this tension, Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers near the border on July 12th, 2006 to exchange them for its prisoners but Israel decided it was the time to eliminate the threat

of Hezbollah forever (Alagha, 2008; BBC, 2006). What Israel thought was going to be easy ended with a shock. Hezbollah resisted and Israel acknowledged its failure (another term that often means military defeat) after a struggle of 33 days (Gabrielsen, 2013; Kober, 2008; Alagha, 2008). As a result, the alliance between Syria, Hezbollah, and Iran strengthened following what was widely viewed as Israel's first military defeat against an Arab armed force (Risseuw, 2018, p. 13; Phillips, 2016, p. 31; Scheller, 2014, p. 162). Israel did not bear the war humiliation well and it continued to operate abroad. Two very important events should be mentioned in this context. The first event was bombing a suspected Syrian "nuclear reactor" in 2007 only to officially admit to it after 11 years (Farrell, 2018). The second event was believed to be a joint Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Mossad operation in Damascus in 2008 that killed Imad Mughniyeh, Chief of Staff of Hezbollah (Goldman and Nakashima, 2015). During the presidency of Al-Assad junior, Syria managed to overcome the political and economic challenges including the US sanctions and military threats but the protests that began in March 2011 and developed into an armed movement were much more complicated.

The US sought to the extent possible to control the political, and military, situation in Syria and to channel the anti-Syrian government protests towards achieving outcomes that were favourable to the US and its Western and regional allies including Israel. For instance, the former US President Donald Trump stated in 2019 that the US had "secured the oil (...) we want to keep the oil. And we'll work out something with the Kurds so they have some money, they have some cash flow" (Humud and Blanchard, 2020, p. 8; p. 33). The US considers the current Syrian government a threat to Israel. It has long been hoped that establishing a pro-Western Syrian government would minimise Iran's and Hezbollah's influence in the region and prevent them from "consolidating Syria as a 'resistance front'" (Hof, 2019; Brandenburg, 2013). In addition, following the involvement of Iranian-backed groups, particularly Shiite Iraqi military groups in the Syrian conflict, the US aimed to separate Syria from Iraq by controlling and regulating movement through Qa'im-Bukamal, the main border crossing between the two countries. It also believed that if Iranian-backed groups controlled this area "the border will remain a flashpoint for conflict between Iran and its adversaries, particularly the United States and Israel" (Hasan and Khaddour, 2020). Therefore, by establishing a pro-West government, the US aimed to weaken the Syria-Iran-Hezbollah-Iraqi Shiite military groups alliance so that it was less inimical to its and, more broadly, Western and Israeli interests.

The unprecedented protests in the Arab World

The story of the so-called "Arab Spring" began in North Africa particularly Tunisia. A young street vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in mid-December 2010 to pass away later after he was slapped on his face by a policewoman (Lageman, 2016). This tragic event was followed by large protests against the rule of the Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (Phillips, 2016, p. 40). Protests were uncommon in the country that was tightly controlled by Ben Ali. Within weeks, Ben Ali surprisingly stepped down and fled to Saudi Arabia (BBC, 2011) where he died in exile eight years later at age of 83 (Hubbard and Gladstone, 2019).

The success of the Tunisian protests inspired the protesters in Syria, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Yemen, and other Arab countries. The protests in Syria started in Daraa on March 15th, 2011, and soon moved to major cities such as Damascus, Aleppo, and Hama. To show his country's support, the last US ambassador to Syria, Robert Ford, visited the protesters in Hama and encouraged them to stay in the streets. The State Department commented on the visit saying that the US stood "with those Syrians who are expressing their right to speak for change, who want a democratic future" (Quinn, 2011; Bakri, 2011). With the fast spread of the protests, the Syrian government started to lose control of the country, particularly in northern and southern areas.

There were two main different narratives about how the Syrian conflict began: the official narrative that acknowledged that the protests started peacefully then turned violent and the opposition narrative that indicated that the Syrian government brutally cracked down on the demonstrations as soon as they started (Taylor, 2014, p. 85). For those who watched pro-Syrian government media, the protests were a conspiracy against the government that stood up against the US and Israel, and for those who watched anti-Syrian government media, the demonstrators were innocent citizens who were protesting against the brutal rule of Al-Assad's government.

These two sharply different accounts were broadcast on Arab and international media. The difference in media reporting of the events in Syria was a reflection of the divergent views (regionally and internationally) about the Syrian government and the president (Van Dam, 2017, p. 48; Phillips, 2016, p. 59; Taylor, 2014; p. 95). The pro-Syrian government camp mainly included Iran, Hezbollah, Russia, and China (Beijing was politically active particularly in the Security Council). The anti-Syrian government camp mainly included the US, UK, France, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. Both sides claimed to be "pro-Syria". The second camp, for instance, formed a group called

"Friends of Syria" that provided military and diplomatic support to the armed opposition groups (Humud and Blanchard, 2020, p. 1; Phillips, 2016, p. 125; Maqbool, 2013; Schanzer, 2012; Al Jazeera English, 2012) and established a global coalition to fight IS in Syria and the Middle East (Global Coalition, 2014; Cooper and Schmitt, 2014). Furthermore, to increase political pressure on the Syrian government, the Arab League decided to suspend Syria's membership in the league and several Arab countries including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar cut diplomatic ties with Syria (MacFarquhar, 2011a; Perry, 2013).

The resignation of the Syrian President and the collapse of his government were at the top of the West's, Arab allies', and opposition's list of demands. The anti-Syrian government camp believed, for instance, that "a fresh government in Damascus will almost certainly be less friendly toward Iran and Hezbollah and more friendly toward Lebanon" (Totten, 2012, p. 16). Syria, Iran, and Hezbollah were amongst the shortlist of countries and organisations that challenged the US presence in the Middle East (Abdolmohammadi and Cama, 2020, p. 1; Totten, 2013). While they were explicitly supporting the Syrian government, Iran and Hezbollah preferred to solve the conflict peacefully as they realised early that a torn Syria would weaken their political and military stances in the Middle East. For example, news reports indicated that Hezbollah's Secretary General Sayed Hassan Nasrallah had met with the Syrian oppositions (Kleib, 2013) before officially announcing Hezbollah's military involvement in the conflict (in April 2013) to fight terrorist organisations such as Al-Nusra Front (Al-Qaeda's affiliate) that was allied with the opposition armed groups (Norton, 2018, p. 183; Hashem, 2016).

As for Russia and China, both countries provided political support to Syria in the Security Council by using the veto against resolutions they believed to target the Syrian government (MacFarquhar, 2011b; Harris et al., 2012). Russia also supported the Syrian government militarily by selling Damascus weapons worth millions of dollars (Grove and Solomon, 2012). Addressing criticisms following the development of the military relationship between Syria and Russia, Russian defence analyst Ruslan Pukhov said that his country "doesn't see any problems selling weapons to Syria if the CIA and French and British secret services are shipping military hardware via Turkey to the rebels" (Rosenberg, 2012). After years of political and logistical assistance, Russia announced the launch of airstrikes on IS on September 30th, 2015; a move that helped to change the future course and outcome of the conflict (Phillips, 2016, p. 213; BBC, 2015).

A different perspective of the conflict that was not widely broadcast by mainstream media was adopted by a number of prominent journalists including Seymour Hersh, Patrick Cockburn, and Robert Fisk. These journalists were not with or against Syria but they had a different view about important issues such as the alleged chemical attacks and the West's military activities in Syria. As will be discussed later, Patrick Cockburn who writes for *The Independent* addressed the West's propaganda in Syria and criticised the opposition armed groups by pointing to their relationship with terrorism (Cockburn, 2016a). Moreover, the US investigative journalist Seymour Hersh believed, for instance, that the Khan Al-Assal chemical attack that occurred in 2013 was perpetrated by Al-Nusra Front rather than the Syrian forces (Hersh, 2014).

During the last 10 years of the conflict, a number of alleged chemical attacks against civilian and military targets were reported. The Syrian government was accused of carrying out many of these alleged attacks (ACA, 2020) while IS and opposition armed groups were accused of carrying out others (Deutsch, 2015; Reuters, 2013a). Major chemical incidents included events such as the Khan Al-Assal alleged attack on March 19th, 2013 and the Ghouta alleged attack on August 21st, 2013 that was followed by US airstrikes on Syria. After reaching an international agreement with different parties including Russia and the US, Syria announced the destruction of all its stockpiles of chemical weapons in 2015. However, alleged chemical attacks against civilians were reported in the following years including an event that took place in Douma on April 7th, 2018. This event was also followed by US, UK, and French missile strikes on a number of military targets in Syria (ACA, 2020; Cooper et al., 2018). There is no independent or official estimate of the death toll in Syria from 2011 to 2020; however, anti-government organisations estimate the casualties at between 380,000 and 590,000 deaths (SOHR, 2020; Daily Sabah with Agencies, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2019). These statistics include civilian casualties as well as those who were killed in combat between the opposition armed groups and the government forces, conflicts between armed groups themselves, and casualties of the "war on terror".

Syria is considered, according to the international aid organisation World Vision, as "the largest refugee and displacement crisis" in modern times (World Vision, 2020). This had a significant impact on Europe when refugees began arriving. As reported by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, by the end of 2016, more than 5 million refugees and migrants, many of whom were Syrians, reached European shores (UN Refugee Agency, 2020b) and drew more attention to the humanitarian crisis in

Syria. As counted in 2020, while thousands of Syrian migrants are currently living in Europe, there are about 6.6 million Syrian refugees living mainly in countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey. There are also about 6.7 million displaced Syrians (UN Refugee Agency, 2020a). According to statistics released by the UN in 2018 and 2019, the Syrian conflict has cost the country more than 388 billion US dollars and it is believed that at least 30 per cent of homes have been damaged or destroyed (OCHA, 2019; Associated Press, 2018a).

The Syrian conflict and the "war on terror"

The second phase of the "war on terror" was launched on September 20th, 2001 when the former US President George W. Bush addressed the congress days after the September 11 attacks stating that his "war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated" (The White House, 2001). The first phase of this war was declared about 20 years before Bush's speech. In the presidential debate with Walter F. Mondale, the US President Ronald Reagan said in 1984 that "'we are not going to hit people to say, 'Oh, look - we got even,'"."We want to know, when we retaliate, that we're retaliating with those who are responsible for the terrorist acts" he added. Predicting the path of the "war on terror", the former Secretary of State, George P. Shultz said about 40 years ago that "we can expect more terrorism directed at our strategic interests around the world in the years ahead (...) to combat it we must be willing to use military force" (The New York Times, 1984).

Terrorism was one of the central issues of the Reagan administration's foreign policy. In a speech on June 30th, 1985 following the release of 39 Americans kidnapped in Beirut, Reagan warned that his country "gives terrorists no rewards and no guarantees (...) we make no concessions. We make no deals (...) we will fight back against your cowardly attacks on American citizens and property" (De Lama and Atlas, 1985). Referring to the Reagan administration, Rémi Brulin (2018, p. 1), a former adjunct and research fellow at the New York and George Washington universities, pointed out that:

Ronald Reagan was the first American president to put the fight against 'international terrorism' at the center of his foreign policy discourse. Whenever he addressed himself to the American people, that is to say in a context where he was fully in control of his own discourse, Reagan used the

term 'terrorism' to refer to an extremely broad array of acts (attacks against civilian but also against military targets) and of actors (non-state and state actors).

At that time, organisations that represented terrorism, according to the US designation, included Hezbollah or Palestinian secular groups such as the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The Reagan administration targeted these organisations following accusations of their involvement in attacking US interests in Lebanon and Libya including the attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in October 1983 that killed over 240 US marines (Toaldo, 2012; Arguilla, 2012; Wills, 2003). Al-Qaeda, which first emerged in the mid-1980s during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, was not crossing the American radar. This changed a few years later when Al-Qaeda was accused or claimed a number of attacks on US targets including the 1993 World Trade Center bombing that killed 6 people and injured more than 2000 others (CNN Editorial Research, 2020a), and the 1998 bombings of the embassies in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Nairobi in Kenya that killed and injured thousands of people (CNN Editorial Research, 2020b). Following these incidents, the US "war on terror" shifted its major focus to the so-called "Islamic" terrorist organisations including Al-Qaeda.

Similar to the 1980s war in Afghanistan that introduced Al-Qaeda to the world (Pokalova, 2019, p. 799), the 2003 invasion of Iraq was another milestone for terrorism in the region when Al-Qaeda established territories in the country to plan for its attacks domestically and internationally (Warrick, 2015, p. 115; Katzman, 2008, p. 11). The rise of Al-Qaeda activities attracted tens of thousands of foreign fighters to travel to Iraq and from there to Syria after 2011 (Cook and Vale, 2018). About one year after the Syrian demonstrations started, Ayman al-Zawahiri who was then not only the leader of Al-Qaeda but also one of the most respected figures amongst terrorist groups, urged "Muslims" in a voice message uploaded on *YouTube* (was removed later) to support the armed groups in Syria (Burke, 2012). According to US official statistics, more than 38,000 foreign fighters including about 7000 fighters from Western countries have travelled to Syria from more than 100 countries (Browne, 2016).

However, other sources estimated the number of foreign fighters to be much higher. For instance, the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR) in the Department of War Studies at King's College London estimated the number to be at about 42,000 foreign fighters including about 8,000 women and minors (Cook and Vale, 2018). On the other side, about 10 thousand of pro-Syrian government fighters from

other Arabic countries, Pakistan, and Afghanistan have joined the Syrian forces to fight the terrorist organisations (Juneau, 2020, pp. 31-32). In the beginning, mainstream media framed the conflict as being a struggle to establish democracy between amateur armed groups labelled as "rebels" supported by the "majority" of the Syrian people and a "brutal regime". There was little about foreign fighters sneaking across the border from Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan to fight in Syria. Mainstream media often quoted Syrian opposition groups denying the existence of terrorism. For instance, Anthony Shadid reported to *The NYT* from Beirut on January 1st, 2012 that:

Meanwhile, bombing attacks in Damascus, the capital, have killed scores of people over the past month. The government has said that foreign-backed terrorists were responsible; the opposition claims the government carried out the bombings itself in a cynical effort to sully the protesters' image (Shadid, 2012).

Moreover, reporting on two car bombs in Damascus on December 23rd, 2011, that the Syrian government accused Al-Qaeda of placing and detonating, *The Guardian* (2011) quoted what it described as a Syrian blogger claiming that:

Rather than New York, London or Paris, al Qaeda has decided to pick - of all the metropolitan centres of human civilization - to carry out attacks in Assad's Damascus, on the first Friday after Arab League observers come to the country. This is according to the Syrian regime, which made this claim forty minutes after Damascus residents heard the explosions. I think that's nonsense.

In addition, searching keywords such as "terrorism in Syria" or "Al-Qaeda in Syria" on *Google*, there was almost no mention of terrorism from March 15th, 2011 to December 31st, 2011 other than quotes of Syrian officials warning of terrorism. Nonetheless, mainstream media slowly changed its line and tone as more foreign fighters arrived in Syria. After IS declared its caliphate in June 2014 (Martin and Solomon, 2017) there was no doubt that terrorism in Syria and the region had reached an unprecedented level.

With the growth of terrorism, Syria has become a serious threat to Europe (Samaan, 2018). However, as with the protests, terrorism in Syria was viewed differently by the conflicting parties. For instance, while all sides agreed on designating IS as a terrorist organisation, US allies, in particular, disputed over the designation of other organisations as terrorists. To show how this dispute had complicated the conflict,

in 2018 Turkey launched an operation called "Olive Branch" to push the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) from its borders with Syria (Cavusoglu, 2018). Ironically, the YPG was backed by the US in the first place to fight terrorism. Expressing his anger at the US, the Turkish President Erdoğan said in 2018 that "a country (the US) we call an ally is insisting on forming a terror army on our borders" (Osborne and Stevenson, 2018). As for mainstream media, despite acknowledging that it used to be an Al-Qaeda affiliate, *The Washington Post* framed Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham in Syria (a coalition of armed groups led by Al-Nusra Front) as "Syrian rebels" and a member of the "rebel alliance" (Cunningham and Louisa, 2018) while *The NYT* framed it as "rebels" or "Islamist rebels" (Barnard, 2017).

The two camps involved in the Syrian conflict launched military operations to counter terrorism. These operations included two major events, the battle of East Aleppo in 2016 and the battle of Al-Raqqa 2017. As for East Aleppo, the military operations were launched by Syria, Russia, Hezbollah, and pro-Syrian government fighters to recapture the remaining part of the city. There were between 270,000 and 300,000 civilians in East Aleppo and about 8000 fighters including 1000 from Al-Nusra Front (Cumming-Bruce and Gladstone, 2016). It has to be noted, however, that according to then the US Operation Inherent Resolve Spokesman Colonel Steve Warren (U.S. Department of Defense, 2016), Al-Nusra front was actually in control of the Eastern part of Aleppo. According to human rights organisations including anti-Syrian government groups such as the Syrian Network for Human Rights, there were between 1300 and 1600 civilian casualties in Aleppo (Airwars, 2018a; Human Rights Watch, 2017b; The Syrian Network for Human Rights, 2016).

The military operations in Aleppo resulted in the Syrian government reclaiming the economic capital of Syria and the second most important city in the country. Restoring control of the city was the beginning of the end of the opposition's military presence and their allies in Syria. Patrick Cockburn, *The Independent's* veteran correspondent pointed to this particular issue in an opinion piece published on December 12th, 2016 titled *If Assad Takes Eastern Aleppo He'll Think He's Won the War*. Cockburn pointed out that "many Syrians have always said that the struggle for Aleppo would decide the war. They may well be right" (Cockburn, 2016b). For Al-Raqqa, then the self-proclaimed capital of the IS caliphate, the US, UK, and France launched an airstrike campaign and were supported by Kurdish militias on the ground against IS. The military operations in Al-Raqqa were described by *Al Jazeera* English as

a "high point" of the former US President Trump administration's strategy to defeat IS (Petkova, 2017).

The military operations resulted in driving IS fighters out of the city. There were between 160,000 and 200,000 civilians in Al-Raqqa (United Nations, 2016) and between 3000 and 4000 IS fighters when the battle began (Said and Perry, 2017). The battle of Al-Raqqa resulted in more than 1600 civilian casualties (Amnesty International UK, 2019; Airwars, 2018b). Aleppo attracted extensive media coverage and human rights organisations were vocal condemning the military operations and calling out the Syrian and Russian forces. Regional and international media coverage featured graphic images of corpses and injured civilians including children. For Al-Raqqa, however, civilian victims (other than some of those killed by IS) were not identified. The victims of the US military operations were just numbers and ironically even these numbers were barely reported on by mainstream media. The differences in reporting on the two military operations suggest problems the audience face when relying upon mainstream media outlets, even those with solid reputations.

The thesis map

This thesis comprises an introduction, seven chapters, a conclusion, and 4 supporting appendices. This introduction has presented a number of key aspects of the thesis including the main questions to be answered, the hypothesis to be investigated and tested, methodology to be employed, the scope of the thesis, the historical background of the Syrian conflict, and limitations of the thesis. Chapter 1 comprises a literature review that addresses a number of themes including the definition of terrorism, media reporting on terrorism, the inception and early history of so-called "Islamic" terrorism and the "war on terror". It addresses how the dispute over the definition of terrorism has influenced media coverage of terrorism-related events. It also identifies gaps within the existing literature particularly that related to motives for carrying out terrorist attacks on the West.

Chapter 2 introduces the Propaganda Model (PM) by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky and Framing Theory that together will serve as a theoretical framework for this study. The PM is based on five filters: "ownership", "funding", "sourcing", "flak", and "ideology". The chapter briefly introduces these filters with an emphasis on "sourcing" and "ideology" filters because they are directly related to the data collected for this study. The chapter also establishes a relationship between the PM and Framing

theory. Moreover, it inspects the terrorism industry concept and how it served the US foreign policy. Chapter 3 explains the rationale for the selection of print journalism as a medium and the rationale for selecting *The NYT* and *The Independent* for this study. It also explains in detail how the data were collected and how they were analysed. It also includes the first part of the data analysis particularly an examination of *The NYT's* coverage of the Syrian conflict. Chapter 4 continues to analyse *The NYT's* data by focusing on the coverage of the alleged chemical attacks that took place in Syria and the "war on terror". Moreover, the chapter analyses how *The NYT's* framed the US, Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah presence in Syria. Chapter 5 analyses *The Independent's* coverage of the military operations in Aleppo and Al-Raqqa by inspecting a number of issues including use of sources, word choices, and the visual content attached to the articles. The analysis identifies the differences in reports of the humanitarian crises in the two cities. Similarly, Chapter 6 examines *The NYT's* coverage of these two military operations. The end of Chapter 6 compares *The Independent's* and *The NYT's* coverage of the two battles to identify the similarities and differences. Taking into account what has been developed from a review of the literature, a theoretical framework, and the findings of this study, Chapter 7 inspects the citizen journalism phenomenon in Syria and its impacts on the narrative of the coverage of the conflict. It also contextualises the terrorism industry by addressing the four pillars of this concept. The thesis' conclusion discusses the achievements of the study and introduces paths for future studies.

Important notes before moving forward

It has to be stressed that whenever this thesis refers to the "West" or "Western" countries, it specifically focuses on the US, Britain, and France because of their military role during the Syrian conflict and whenever it refers to the Middle East, it focuses on the Arab countries, Iran, Turkey, and Israel. In addition, the events in Syria will be called a "conflict" rather than civil war because these events involve regional and international countries. Thus, the civil war term overlooks the heavy involvement of other regional and international powers. As for "داعش" or Daesh, the organisation will be called IS according to its well-known acronym. Nevertheless, this organisation is neither based on true "Islamic" rules nor a "State". While Leon Panetta, the former US Secretary of Defense predicted in 2014 that the war against IS would last for 30 years (Barbash, 2014), it could have been predicted that serious military efforts would end the IS "caliphate" in Syria and Iraq in a few years and this is already happening. As for the

use of the term "Islamic" terrorism in this thesis, this term is problematic and it has been loosely used to refer to Al-Qaeda-like terrorism that represents a specific interpretation of Islam while there are hundreds of other schools within this religion that adopt very different interpretations. This issue will not be examined because it is beyond the scope of this study.

The anti-Syrian government armed groups will be called opposition armed groups despite them being part of bigger groups that included foreign fighters. Furthermore, whenever an anti-Syrian government or agenda is mentioned in this thesis, it mainly refers to a media outlet or a government that calls for or applies political and economic sanctions on Syria, calls for an attack on Syria, arms the opposition groups, or supports plans to topple the Syrian government.

The Syrian government's human rights record before the 2011 demonstrations including strict limits on freedom of expression, imprisonment and torture of opponents, and state control of the press had long been highlighted by its critics (Black, 2010). Following the protests, the Syrian government has been accused of committing crimes against humanity including use of chemical weapons and indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas (McKernan and Hamdo, 2021; Reuters, 2019; Blunt and Mercer, 2017).

Furthermore, it has to be stressed that this study does not deny the Syrian people the right to oppose their government or to establish a democratic system in their country. The people of Syria, as any other people, have the right to run their own country the way they believe it is suitable. Nonetheless, such a mission should be accomplished without foreign military interventions. Moreover, this study acknowledges that thousands of innocent people have been killed or injured and millions more have been displaced during the conflict including the military operations in Aleppo.

Conclusion

While there is a large body of scholarly studies about the role of Western governments in combating terrorism, this study focuses on the relationship between these governments and terrorism in Syria. The story of the "war on terror" in the Middle East has not been fully told. This study will bring a deeper understanding of how mainstream media outlets are covering terrorism. It is essential to closely explore what and how Western media outlets have been reporting on terrorism and to assess how much of this reporting is influenced by their respective governments. It is also hoped that

the findings of this thesis will provide scholars and journalists with a deeper understanding of the political influence of governments on relatively independent Western media. The "war on terror" has been used to justify military actions against enemies or to further political and economic interests. This thesis will question the official narrative of the "war on terror" and challenge the intense propaganda that has accompanied the conflict in Syria.

I come from Bahrain and I speak Arabic and English. I have a detailed understanding of the Syrian culture and society, religious beliefs, customs, and traditions. I previously visited Syria once, and Lebanon and Jordan twice. Syria and other Arab countries were the focus of my work and interests as a journalist for more than 18 years. Living in Australia for the past 11 years has helped me to closely monitor and understand how Western mainstream media outlets operate. I have worked for the past eight years with hundreds of refugee families and individuals from Syria, Iraq, and other Asian and African countries. I have worked with little children, teenagers, young, and elderly women and men. I have seen children who came to Australia with no English graduate from high school and enrol at universities. I have not lived the horror they lived but I have seen it in their eyes and heard about it from their lips and I pray that no other child, woman, or man witness this horror again.

Chapter 1: Literature review

This chapter reviews the literature that informs examination of terrorism and related issues. It considers the dispute over the definition of terrorism, media reporting on terrorism, the inception of so-called "Islamic" terrorism, and the "war on terror" and its implications for the Middle East. The review includes scholarly publications, conference papers, legislation, and media reports. This chapter focuses on four main themes that have a bearing on terrorism: terrorism studies and the definition of terrorism, media coverage of terrorism-related events, political or religious motives of terrorism, and state-sponsored terrorism. It is argued in this chapter that the US and its allies were partly responsible for creating or at least indirectly helping the phenomenon of so-called "Islamic terrorism" to grow in the Middle East.

1.1 Terrorism studies and definition of terrorism

According to Chomsky (1991, p. 12), there are two different approaches to studying terrorism: a literal approach that adopts serious methods to conduct an objective study and a propagandistic approach that serves state powers. Chomsky's insights are still valid 30 years later. There are some scholars, for instance, who argue that Critical Terrorism Studies are influenced by government agendas (Toros, 2017; Jarvis, 2016). Generally, terrorism scholarly work faces several challenges including the difficulties in collecting data and evidence (Kraus, 2016), conducting independent research that is not compromised by conforming to a government's political agenda (Youngman, 2018, p. 5; Dolnik, 2011, p. 6; Ranstorp, 2007, p. 6), or research being done under the cloak of secrecy because of security reasons and therefore not reaching the broader public (Schuurman, 2018, p. 39; Rix 2011, p. 3; Sageman, 2004, p. 9). This secrecy is often abused by state powers to impose their own agenda (Jenkins and Daddario, 2019; Rupka and Baggiarini, 2018, pp. 343-344).

In this respect, Jackson (2010, pp. 92-93) points out that a large number of scholars rely on official sources when studying terrorism without questioning the reliability of these sources. He argues that rather than challenging the official narrative of terrorism, mainstream scholars end up advocating or implicitly endorsing that narrative. The relationship between mainstream terrorism scholars and political elites, particularly in the US, is evident (Marusek, 2018; Toivane, 2010; Collins, 2002; Elliott et al., 1983). Miller's and Mills' (2009) quantitative study explains an important aspect of this relationship that influences the nature of scholarly work on terrorism. Their study

shows that the majority of mainstream terrorism "experts" between 1970 and 2007 had previous working relationships with state, intelligence, policing, or military service institutions. The study indicates that scholars who adopt or tend not to question the official narrative of the "war on terror" are often featured in mainstream media. In this manner, these scholars ensure broad publicity and reproduce themselves repeatedly in two ways: by producing the terrorism literature and by propagandising their own narrative through mainstream media. This particular issue is discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter 7. One of the objectives of this present study is to examine whether media reporting on the "war on terror" in Syria has been influenced by official Western sources or those who have connections with political and military elites.

Another major dilemma that faces terrorism studies is the definition of terrorism which distinctly impacts how terrorist attacks are viewed and covered by media outlets. Reaching a consensus definition of terrorism has been a controversy amongst scholars and experts for decades (Okoye, 2017, pp. 36-37; Satterley, 2015, p. 2; Herschinger, 2013, pp. 183-184; Hodgson and Tadros, 2013, p. 494; Lizardo, 2008, pp. 91-92; Schmid, 2004, pp. 376-377; Dugard, 1974, p. 67). The broad agreement has been the basic definition of terrorism as the use of violence or intimidation against civilians for political or ideological objectives (Shor 2011, p. 51; Weinberg et al., 2004, pp. 781-783; Crenshaw, 1992, pp. 1-2). However, the fundamental disagreements, particularly among governments, are whether the definition should include or exclude the use of armed force by states against civilians and military resistance against occupiers (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino, 2019, p. 565; Aksan and Bailes, 2013a; Chomsky, 2009, pp. 32-33; Maogoto, 2003, pp. 5-6). The United Nations (UN) (2004, p. 52) defines terrorism as:

Any action, in addition to actions already specified by the existing conventions on aspects of terrorism, the Geneva Conventions and Security Council resolution 1566 (2004), that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

Because of the dispute over the definition, the concept of terrorism has been manipulated for the benefit of political regimes that, for example, use terrorism as a pretext to morally justify their foreign interventions (Salt, 2018; Bruce, 2013, p. 29; Reese and Lewis, 2011, p. 140). Chomsky (2007, pp. 32-33) recapitulates this dilemma

pointing out that mainstream literature has been looking for a definition "that will include their terror against us, but exclude our terror against them". In other words, mainstream literature seeks to define terrorism in accordance with the West's interests. Because terrorism is not a homogeneous phenomenon, what is seen as terrorism by one side is seen differently by the other side and what is considered as unjustified violence by some is justified by others (Ó hAdhmaill and Ritchie, 2020, p. 150; Männik, 2009; Tupman, 2009, p. 190). Thereby, the two main issues concerning terrorism studies, so far, are the relationship between mainstream terrorism scholars and official authorities, and the lack of a universally agreed definition of terrorism. The contention amongst scholars and states in relation to the definition of terrorism has led to another problem that can be seen through the inconsistency of media coverage of terrorism.

1.2 Media coverage of terrorism-related events

Criticising the mainstream media approach of reporting on terrorism, Yin (2012) and Greenwald (2010) argue that mainstream media do not focus on terrorism-related events themselves, rather they focus on the perpetrator's racial or religious background then categorise an event based on these factors. To support this argument, Greenwald refers to Joseph Stack who intentionally crashed his small plane into a building of the US Internal Revenue Service (tax office) in 2010 in Austin/Texas to kill himself and another officer and injure a few others. Stack's act was politically motivated by his views on the tax system and the status quo. Nevertheless, neither the perpetrator nor the event was portrayed as a terrorist as noted from the media coverage (e.g. Brick, 2010; Kennedy, 2010; Heining, 2010; Adams, 2010; Simon and Castillo, 2010).

In his comment, Greenwald (2010) points to the main factor to frame an event as terrorism: the background of those who carry out terrorism-related acts. Therefore, because the Austin attack was carried out by a white American, the event was not framed as terrorism even though it was politically motivated. Media avoidance of framing an event as terrorism can also be applied to Alexandre Bissonnette who murdered six Muslims and injured another nineteen outside a Quebec mosque in 2017. Despite the fact it was described as a "terrorist attack" by the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (2017), the incident was referred to by media as, for instance, a "deadly shooting" (BBC, 2017a) and a "fatal shooting" (BBC, 2017b), while the perpetrator was framed as a "killer" (Mindock, 2018a), a "Canadian man" (BBC, 2018), and a "gunman" (Bilefsky, 2018). It can be argued that Bissonnette was legally charged with murder and

therefore the event was not considered a terrorist attack. Nonetheless, although he denied being Islamophobic, Bissonnette confessed that he was motivated by his rejection of accepting refugees in Canada. He told the interrogators "I saw that and I like lost my mind. I don't want us to become like Europe I don't want them to kill my parents, my family (...) I had to do something, I couldn't do nothing" (Mindock, 2018a).

In direct contrast, the Manhattan attack that occurred on October 31st, 2017 was framed by *The NYT* on the same day as a "terror attack" (Mueller et al., 2017). In that event, a man originally from Uzbekistan drove a rental truck into pedestrians killing eight people and injuring eleven others. Because the perpetrator appeared to "have been inspired by violent Isis", the incident was also framed as a terrorist attack by *The Guardian* (2017) and other media outlets including *CNN*, *Time*, *The Washington Post*, *NBC News*, *USA Today*, *The Independent*, and the *BBC* (Vera and Ly, 2018; Reilly and Abramson, 2017; Merle et al., 2017; Winter et al., 2017; McCoy and James, 2017; Osborne, 2017; BBC, 2017c). When it comes to the identity of the perpetrators, adopting a double standard policy in the coverage of terrorism seems to be a common practice of mainstream media (Ben Lazreg, 2019; Arva et al., 2017). As discussed earlier, there are several factors that impact media coverage of terrorism-related events including the religious factor, the legal factor (whether the perpetrator has been formally charged with terrorism), and the relationship with international terrorist groups.

Kearns et al. (2018) considered the religious factor as the most important element in media coverage of terrorism-related events. Their study examined the focus of media coverage on terrorist attacks when they are carried out by perpetrators of an Islamic background compared with other perpetrators. The study examined news coverage of 136 terrorism-related attacks in the US between 2006 and 2015 and showed that attacks carried out by perpetrators with an Islamic background receive on average about four times more coverage compared with others. While 12.5 per cent of the attacks were carried out by perpetrators from a Muslim background, these attacks received 50.4 per cent of the news coverage. Furthermore, a report released by *The Nation Institute* and *The Center for Investigative Reporting* showed that right-wing extremists were behind about twice as many terrorist incidents as "Islamic" domestic terrorists in the US but media outlets focused more on "Islamic" terrorism (Neiwart, 2017). The report examined terrorist attacks in the US from January 2008 to the end of 2016 and showed that "Islamic" domestic terrorism was responsible for 63 incidents motivated by a "theocratic political ideology" and 76 per cent of the incidents were

foiled plots. In contrast, right-wing extremists were responsible for 115 incidents, 35 per cent of which were foiled plots. The casualties, however, were 90 deaths to 79 in favour of "Islamic" terrorism attacks. One of the manifest consequences of the September 11 attacks was the focus on Islam and Muslims by authorities, terrorism literature, legislation, and mainstream media coverage. Because of the September 11 attacks and similar events, Muslims who live in the West are seen as a potential threat (Ahmed, 2018, pp. 428- 430; Cherney and Murphy, 2016, p. 159; Alrefai, 2015, p. 136; Murphy et al., 2015, p. 3; Aly, 2007, pp. 29-30; Shadid and Koningsveld, 2002, pp. 174-175). Islam is put at the heart of counter-terrorism strategies (Appleby, 2010) and media coverage of atrocities carried out by "Islamic" terrorist groups influences how the public view Muslims living in Western countries (Hatton and Nielsen, 2016). Even in relation to a humanitarian crisis, Muslim refugees, for instance, are less welcomed than are Christian refugees (Nassar, 2020).

In their analysis of the way terrorism is perceived by the US public, D'Orazio and Salehyan (2018) indicate that violence is more likely to be attributed to religion when it is perpetrated by Arabs or Muslims while violence is more likely to be seen as a mental illness when it is perpetrated by white perpetrators. This corresponds to Powell's (2011) argument that points to the emphasis on religious background in media coverage. In this regard, Jackson (2010) highlights the negative social consequences of repeating the official narrative of terrorism when it comes to Muslims, pointing out that conducting terrorism research on Muslims communities emphasises the notion that Muslims are always "suspects". Moreover, framing Muslims as terrorists enhances the public support to harm Muslims domestically and to gain consent for military action abroad against Muslim countries (Saleem et al., 2017). In addition, by focusing on Muslims, authorities risk overlooking terrorism activities carried out by others (Koehler, 2019; Corbin, 2017, p. 456; Yin, 2012, p. 36; Simi, 2010). This argument was discussed in the mainstream media after the Christchurch attack on Muslim worshipers that was carried out by a white supremacist extremist in March 2019 (e.g. Harris, 2019; Burton, 2019; Financial Times, 2019; TVNZ, 2019).

The findings of Kearns et al. (2018), Neiwart (2017), and Powell (2011) take us back to Greenwald's argument that media coverage of terrorism is influenced by the perpetrators' identity and religious background instead of the acts themselves. Sultan (2016) criticises this manipulative approach indicating that emphasis on framing a perpetrator as "Islamic" rather than a "violent extremist" has helped extremists to

achieve their intended goals taking into consideration that they promote the ideology of war between Islam and the West to recruit new members. To summarise, sections one and two of this chapter have identified three main problems in terrorism studies and mainstream media coverage of terrorism-related events. These are the influence of the official narrative on terrorism studies, the dispute over the definition of terrorism, and the emphasis on the religious or racial background of perpetrators, specifically of individuals who are defined as Muslims. Therefore, the next section discusses so-called "Islamic" terrorism to understand whether those who committed terrorist attacks have been motivated by a combination of factors including religious beliefs.

1.3 Terrorism between political and religious motives

Inspecting the role of religion in terrorism, Badey (2002) argued that the religious factor was exaggerated. In a similar vein, Gunning and Jackson (2011) in assessing the validity of the term "religious terrorism" indicate that the term is misleading because it does not distinguish between motives, causes, and behaviours of the groups classified under this term including political motives. While religion as a motive cannot be entirely ruled out, political motives are regularly underestimated (Fraser, 2015). This section of the literature review argues that there is a potent correlation between foreign interventions and the escalation of terrorist attacks, particularly against the West. It is important to point out first that, prior to 1979, the scholarly literature that examined international and modern terrorism did not specifically refer to "Islamic" terrorism or even point to the Islamic beliefs as being the primary motives for terrorism.

Principally, scholarly work on terrorism refers to the inception of "Islamic" terrorism as following the Iranian revolution in 1979 or the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets at the end of the same year (Esposito, 2015; Chang, 2010; Khosrokhavar, 2008; Shughart II, 2006; Robison et al., 2006; Victoroff, 2005; Morgan, 2004; Ousman, 2004; Rapoport, 2002; Miller, 1994). For example, Al-Qaeda affiliates and other "Islamic" terrorist groups in Africa were only founded in the 1980s or the 1990s (Antwi-Boateng, 2017; Rabasa, 2009; Lyman and Morrison, 2004) and the origin of the Nigerian terrorist group Boko Haram can only be traced back to 2002 (Adelaja et al., 2018, p. 36). Furthermore, on inspection of the literature that examined terrorism before 1979, it was found that organisations accused of being "terrorist" were leftist, Marxist, or other secular and nationalist groups such as the PLO and the Italian Red Brigades

(Chaliand and Blin, 2016a; Chaliand and Blin, 2016b; Occhipinti, 2016; Gregg, 2014; Simon, 1990; Crenshaw, 1982; Bassiouni, 1981; Wilkinson, 1981; Poorooshasb, 1979; Jenkins, 1978; Arblaster, 1977). In addition, countries that at present are considered targets of "Islamic" terrorism did not face this threat about 40 years ago. The US homeland, for example, was not attacked until the mid-1990s (Beutel, 2007) and later in the September 11 events (Brooks, 2011). As concluded by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the threats Europe faced in the 1980s generally emanated from the Soviet Union or terrorism (Kampelman, 1982). Terrorism in this context, however, referenced leftist, liberation, or secessionist violence, not "Islamic" terrorism.

It should be pointed out, however, that there were several "Islamic" groups that were born in the 1970s that developed further through the 1980s. These include Al-Gamaaa Al-Islamiyya and Al-Jihad Al-Islami that took part in the former Egyptian President Anwar Al-Sadat's assassination in 1981 (Gunaratna and Bin Ali, 2009; Ansari, 1984). However, despite the fact that these organisations were religiously motivated, their activities usually focused on the destruction or weakening of what they believed to be a repressive regime. Thus, Esposito (2015, p. 1072) considers the years following the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets as a turning point after which "jihad" was transformed from a phenomenon comprising local activities against oppressive regimes that were often supported by Western powers to one with a global agenda. Notably, even when referring to attacks involving religious groups such as was the case with the Islamic Jihad Organisation in the beginning of the 1980s, Islam was not emphasised as a motive (Jenkins, 1986; Friedlander, 1985; Wilkinson, 1984). Back then, scholars believed that terrorism in the Middle East was being revived in a new form or was even seen as a new phenomenon (Rapoport, 1984, p. 674; O'Neill, 1978, p. 17). In detail, several military operations carried out by the Islamic Jihad Organisation had targeted the US and French forces in Lebanon. These operations included the attack on the US embassy in Beirut on April 18th, 1983 that killed 63 people some of whom were CIA agents (CIA, 2014), and the Beirut 1983 dual attack on the US and French forces on October 23rd, 1983 that claimed the lives of 299 US Marines and French soldiers (Britannica, 2018; CNN, 2017).

Friedlander (1985, p. 4) differentiated between the attacks on the US embassy and the Marine barracks. He considered the first attack as an "act of terror" and the second one as a "guerrilla action". In spite of Friedlander's view, neither attack was framed as "Islamic" terrorism nor was religion considered the main motive for these

attacks (Jenkins, 1986; Friedlander, 1985; Oakley, 1985; Wilkinson, 1985; Boustany, 1984; Southerland, 1984; Friedman, 1983; Heller, 1983). The organisation accused of carrying out the attacks was referred to as "pro-Iranian" forces (Quandt, 1984, p. 248), "a secretive pro-Iranian Moslem group" (Friedman, 1983), or "Shiite Moslem Fundamentalists" (Kirolos, 1983). Remarkably, the report of the Department of Defense commission on the Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act that investigated the Marine bombing noted that the attack was not arbitrary concluding that it was "sponsored by sovereign states or organized political entities for the purpose of defeating U.S. objectives in Lebanon" (Secretary of Defense, 1983, p. 123). This indicates a patriotic motive rather than a religious one.

With regard to the role of politics in carrying out terrorist attacks, it is very important to examine the speeches of Osama Bin Laden, the former leader of Al-Qaeda and one of the most respected figures amongst "Islamic" terrorist groups. Bin Laden had spoken about the Western intervention in the Islamic world in almost all of his interviews, speeches or statements. According to Ahmed (2002), Bin Laden's terrorist activities were motivated by political beliefs including repelling the US presence in the Islamic countries (Scheuer, 2011, p. 113). McAuley (2005) also indicates that Bin Laden did not only speak about religion. McAuley asserts that Bin Laden's speeches addressed the world economic situation and points out that when these speeches are analysed carefully and dispassionately, Bin Laden appears to be much more than just a terrorist organisation leader who was only influenced by religious motives.

In Bin Laden's speeches including the *Wind of Faith*, the first speech following the US attacks on Afghanistan on October 7th, 2001, he points out that Muslims had been targeted for decades in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq. Bin Laden considered the September 11 attacks as a defensive war or retaliation against the US (CNN, 2001). Inspecting the *Wind of Faith*, Mugit (2012) reached a similar conclusion arguing that politics was a core argument in Bin Laden's ideology. Bin Laden believed that the US and its allies were the true terrorists that had to be countered violently if necessary. Bin Laden also puts this argument in another speech saying that "we fight because we are free men who don't sleep under oppression. We want to restore freedom to our nation (Ummah), just as you lay waste to our nation. So shall we lay waste to yours" (Al Jazeera English, 2004). In later speeches, Bin Laden continued to remind the public why he waged a war against the US and its allies. In a videotape aired on *Al Jazeera Arabic* on October 29th, 2004, he began his speech with verse 194 of *Surat Al-Baqarah* of the

Quran "if then any one transgresses the prohibition against you, transgress ye likewise against him. But fear Allah, and know that Allah is with those who restrain themselves". This particular verse of the Quran addresses retaliation rather than assaulting others without provocation. Bin Laden added that "security is an indispensable pillar of human life and that free men do not forfeit their security contrary to Bush's claim that we hate freedom. If so, then let him explain to us why we didn't strike-for example-Sweden" (ABC News, 2004). The founder of Al-Qaeda mentioned Sweden as an example of a Western country that had not been targeted because it did not intervene in what he called *Dar Al-Islam* or the Islamic land despite it being a liberal country. Describing his feelings, Bin Laden (Al Jazeera English, 2004) said that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 had deeply "affected" his soul:

I couldn't forget those moving scenes, blood and severed limbs, women and children sprawled everywhere (...). The situation was like a crocodile meeting a helpless child, powerless except for his screams. Does the crocodile understand a conversation that doesn't include a weapon? And the whole world saw and heard but it didn't respond. In those difficult moments many hard-to-describe ideas bubbled in my soul, but in the end they produced an intense feeling of rejection of tyranny, and gave birth to a strong resolve to punish the oppressors.

Bin Laden launched his "holy war" and urged Muslims to fight the US and all countries involved in the war against Muslims countries. In this light, Bin Laden issued alongside his successor who led Al-Qaeda Ayman Al-Zawahiri and other "Islamic scholars" two famous *Fatwas* in 1996 (Kean and Hamilton, 2004, p. 48; Scheuer, 2011, pp. 110-111) and 1998 (Federation of American Scientists, 2018a; Scheuer, 2011, p. 115). Porter (2003) examined the two *Fatwas* particularly their religious component but he failed to address the political factors particularly the referencing of the US intervention in the Middle East. Bin Laden addressed invaders, their occupations and the resulting humanitarian situation in Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon and other Islamic countries in several other speeches and interviews including an interview in 1996 with *Nida ul Islam* magazine (Federation of American Scientists, 2018b). He also addressed these issues in a famous letter to the US in 2001 (Associated Press, 2001), a letter to the American people (The Guardian, 2002) in response to an article published by several American academics titled *What We're Fighting for: A Letter from America* (The Washington

Post, 2002), and in an interview with *Al Jazeera Arabic* (CNN, 2002). Therefore, Spencer (2006, pp. 14-15) believes that Bin Laden's religious motivation cannot simply be segregated from his nationalistic motivation.

Pape's and Feldman's (2010) book *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop it* addresses the relationship between attacks on US interests and its foreign policy. They argue that the number of anti-US inspired attacks, suicide terrorism in particular, was far greater between 2001 and 2009 than it was before the September 11 attacks and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Statistics provided by Pape and Feldman (2010, p. 2) show that between 1980 and 2003 there were fewer than 350 suicide "terrorist" attacks around the world and 95 per cent of these were in response to foreign occupations. Of 350 suicide attacks carried over this period, only 15 per cent targeted US citizens or interests directly. In contrast, between 2004 and 2009 there were 1833 attacks and 92 per cent of these targeted US citizens or interests. Another study by Eland (1998), who served as Principal Defence Analyst at the Congressional Budget Office, also established the link between US foreign military activities and attacks on US interests.

Similarly, Shillinger (2006) argues that there is a relationship between foreign military operations in Africa and the spread of terrorism in that continent. African terrorist groups use the argument of retaliation or resisting an occupier to justify carrying out their atrocities abroad (Allawi and Aliyev, 2018, p. 19). Siddique's (2009) study that investigated the Islamic militancy in Pakistan found that not all the so-called "Islamic" groups considered the West and its interests as major targets. The study suggests that some groups targeted the local government and security forces while others crossed the border to fight in Afghanistan or India-occupied Kashmir. Political motives have played a significant role in motivating terrorist attacks against invaders. This issue, nonetheless, has been widely overlooked particularly by mainstream terrorism scholars. As argued above, the roots of "Islamic" terrorism should be traced back to Afghanistan in the 1980s; particularly to when Al-Qaeda was founded (Mohamedou, 2018, p. 31). The following section sheds light on the period during which Al-Qaeda, mother of the most current active "Islamic" terrorist groups, was born.

1.3.1 "Islamic" terrorism and the Western powers

There has been a significant increase in terrorism-related scholarly work since the September 11 attacks (Maskaliūnaitė, 2018, p. 52; Toros, 2017, p. 203; Dolnik,

2011, p. 3; Jackson, 2010, p. 92; Miller and Mills, 2009, p. 414; Smyth et al., 2008, p. 1). The result of a *Google Scholar* search (patents and citations were excluded) showed that until 2000 there were 102,000 entries that included "terrorism" in their titles compared with 882,000 entries between 2001 and 2021. Western scholarly work has focused, after the September 11 attacks, on "Islamic" terrorism including the roots of the threat, how it developed, how it could be countered, and efforts by Western countries to combat it (Stuart, 2017; Fakude, 2017; Seib, 2017; Khatib, 2015; Shamieh and Zoltan, 2015; Byman, 2008). This is largely because of Al-Qaeda global terrorist attacks and more recently because of the emergence of Al-Nusra Front and IS. It can be argued that much of the research that examines the history of "Islamic" terrorism since the September attacks largely overlooks military and other forms of assistance provided to terrorists by Western intelligence agencies and their allies that facilitate the spread of this type of terrorism (Jenkins, 2012; Farrall, 2011; Rabasa et al., 2006; Pillar, 2004). This includes Sageman's (2004) influential study *Understanding Terror Networks* that was described by Andrew Silke (2008, p. 36), a scholar and terrorism expert, as a "key work" and one of the most "significant and influential books" that had a considerable "impact both in the research communities and (even more importantly) among policymakers and other practitioners".

Mainstream scholars tend to deny any link between Al-Qaeda and the "mujahideen" (Sageman, 2016, p. 7) because acknowledging such a relationship implicates the US and holds it responsible for the establishment of Al-Qaeda. In his analysis, Sageman (2004, pp. 57-58), a former CIA Operations Officer who was based in Islamabad in the late 1980s, points out "no U.S official ever came in contact with the foreign volunteers (in Afghanistan). They simply travelled in different circles and never crossed U.S radar screens". Instead, Sageman argues that foreign fighters (such as Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants who later founded Al-Qaeda) did not contribute heavily to defeating the Soviets and therefore did not have a close relationship with the US. Scheuer (2011, pp. 48-49) believes that non-Afghan fighters barely played a part in the victory over the Soviets. In addition, while the official 9/11 Commission report acknowledged the "billions of dollars worth of secret assistance" given to groups that fought against the Soviets, it effectively denied that Bin Laden had received any assistance from the US (Kean and Hamilton, 2004, p. 56). Jenkins (2012) suggested that the relationship between the US and Al-Qaeda was just a result of a shared fate. In a report prepared for Members and Committees of Congress, John Rollins (2011, p. 5) the

former chief of staff of the Office of Intelligence for the Department of Homeland Security, examined the establishment of Al-Qaeda. He demonstrated that in 1984, Abdullah Azzam (who is considered to be Bin Laden's godfather) and bin Laden established a network of recruiting and fund-raising offices in the Arab world, Europe, and the US. He pointed out that the network named "Maktab al Khidamat (Services Office)" was considered by experts to be the organisational forerunner of Al Qaeda.

While Rollins indicates that US officials denied giving any direct support to non-Afghan volunteers, he argues that "U.S. officials made no apparent effort to stop the recruitment of the non-Afghan volunteers for the war". Defeating the Soviet Union back then was the priority of the US. Therefore, if we were (for the sake of argument) to agree with the US official narrative of the founding of Al-Qaeda, the logistic support including allowing Al-Qaeda to establish offices in the US and Europe to recruit "mujahideen" cannot be ignored. Bin Laden was not an enemy of the US back in the 1980s and was not well known in the West (Macleod and Fischer, 1996) but he sometimes used to be framed honourably even in Western media. For instance, in the first interview to be given to a Western journalist, Bin Laden was described by the prominent British journalist Robert Fisk (1993) as an "anti-Soviet warrior". Miller (1994, p. 130) saw Bin Laden as a "fanatical young member of a wealthy Saudi family known for his support of the Afghan rebels and Islamic militants".

On the other hand, many scholars and experts have openly disagreed with the official narrative about the establishment of Al-Qaeda. These scholars believe that there was evidence of cooperation between "jihadists" and the US to fight the Soviet Union (Lea-Henry, 2018, p. 65) including meetings held between top figures (Scheuer, 2011, p. 51). Similarly, Bearman (1996, p. 249) addressed the assistance provided by Saudi Intelligence to Bin Laden and other Saudi fighters in Afghanistan including training and tactics that were later used against the US. Moreover, in its introduction to Al-Qaeda, *BBC* (2004) underscored that Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda fighters received financial support from the US and Saudi Arabia and indicated that some analysts then "believe(d that) Bin Laden himself had security training from the CIA". In his analysis of the relationship between Bin Laden and his lieutenants, the US, and Saudi Arabia, Roy (1996, p. 38) stated that these two countries realised late that "Sunni Islamic networks they had supported against the Soviets were turning against them". Thus, Watkins (1997, p. 11) found that the US policy to confront the Soviets was responsible for the spread of "Islamic" terrorism. Furthermore, Al-Qaeda until the 2000s was still receiving

financial support from the US allies according to a report by the Council for Foreign Relations, a very powerful US think tank. The report highlighted the Saudi's role in supporting Al-Qaeda and stated that "for years, individuals and charities based in Saudi Arabia have been the most important source of funds for al-Qaeda. And for years, Saudi officials have turned a blind eye to this problem" (Greenberg et al., 2002, p. 1). However, in his interview with *The Independent*, Bin Laden himself denied receiving any US assistance (Fisk, 1993). This, nevertheless, contradicted what the former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated in an interview with *Fox News* in July 2010 that "we (the US) had helped to create the problem (Al-Qaeda) we're now fighting" (U.S. Department of State, 2010). The US at some point in the 1980s spent about USD600 million on its program in Afghanistan. This program was considered then the "largest U.S. covert operation since the Vietnam war era" (Woodward et al., 1985). Robin Cook (2005), a veteran British politician who served as Foreign Secretary from 1997 until 2001, wrote that Bin Laden was:

A product of a monumental miscalculation by Western security agencies. Throughout the 80s he was armed by the CIA and funded by the Saudis to wage jihad against the Russian occupation of Afghanistan. Al-Qaida, literally "the database", was originally the computer file of the thousands of mujahideen who were recruited and trained with help from the CIA to defeat the Russians. Inexplicably, and with disastrous consequences, it never appears to have occurred to Washington that once Russia was out of the way, Bin Laden's organisation would turn its attention to the west.

Mainstream terrorism scholars often strive to change history. There is an "unwritten chapter" of Cold War history as Dreyfuss (2005, p. 1) points out in his book *Devil's Game*. Dreyfuss argues that it is beyond doubt that US assistance to Al-Qaeda enhanced the terrorists' capability and helped the Arab Afghans. Dreyfuss (p. 288) explains that this assistance created:

A worldwide network of highly trained Islamist fighters from a score of countries linked together and roughly affiliated to Osama bin Laden's soon-to-be established Al Qaeda organization. It left behind a shattered nation that played host to Al Qaeda and other assorted terrorist formations.

The US and its allies' roles in Afghanistan in relation to founding Al-Qaeda must not be

ignored. Countries that were part of the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan should be questioned about their years of training and support to the men who would later become major targets in the American and the West's "war on terror". Mainstream scholars should not underestimate this argument by suggesting that the support was only directed to the Afghans. For one thing, the Afghan fighters subsequently fostered Bin Laden and the war in 2001 was launched on Afghanistan because the "mujahideen" refused to extradite any member of Al-Qaeda to the US. Al-Qaeda found a safe haven in Afghanistan where its leaders planned for the September 11 attacks. Consequently, the following section of this literature review discusses state-sponsored terrorism and its relationship with the "war on terror".

1.4 State-sponsored terrorism and the terrorism industry

The concept of terrorism in the 18th century was applied, according to Chomsky (1987, p. 137), to governments that imposed their political agenda on a population by spreading terror and later was changed to be applied to individuals and non-state groups. Scholars and experts have long argued over the disputed notion of state-sponsored terrorism (Kraus, 2016; Blakeley, 2009). Generally, Western terrorism literature is biased towards the West. Terrorism-related activities carried out by Western countries are not framed in the same way as similar activities perpetrated by non-Western states (Jackson, 2008, p. 26). Countries such as North Korea, Iran, Libya, Syria, Cuba, Sudan, and Iraq were referred to in different periods as sponsors of terrorism (U.S. Department of State, 2018a; Rose, 2018; Shear and Sanger, 2017; Ong, 2016; Totten, 2015a; Manyin et al., 2015; Totten, 2012; Schwartz, 2007; Collins, 2004; Jenkins, 1986; Oakley, 1986). State sponsors have in the past provided terrorists with training assistance including camps, diplomatic assistance, financial and intelligence support (Carter, 2012; Collins, 2004; Cohan, 2002). State-sponsored terrorism is often used to bolster a country's political and economic bargaining power regionally and internationally or simply as a diplomatic tool (Bapat, 2012, p. 27; Gal-Or, 1993, p. 7). Collins (2004, p. 136) clarifies that:

State sponsors often view terrorist clients as a force multiplier that can be used to weaken and destabilize neighboring states, to project power into areas beyond the feasible reach of the state's military forces, to topple rival regimes, and/or to control the opposition in target states.

Examining state-sponsored terrorism is not an easy task because countries do not publicly discuss their ties and activities with terrorist groups (Carter and Pant, 2017, p. 3). However, this ceased being the case in the Middle East where terrorist groups are often employed or a blind eye is turned to them for political reasons. For example, a published investigative report written by Michael et al. (2018) reveals that the Saudi-Emirate coalition that is waging war on Yemen and supported by the US since 2015, had made deals with, and fought in some battles alongside Al-Qaeda terrorists. The investigative report reveals that the coalition "cut secret deals with al-Qaida fighters, paying some to leave key cities and towns and letting others retreat with weapons, equipment and wads of looted cash". The investigation that was based on interviews with officials including tribal mediators, Yemeni security officials, and members of Al-Qaeda, showed that the US was aware of the deals and it "held off any drone strikes" when Al-Qaeda was redeploying its members. Despite a denial by US and Saudi officials, the investigation stated that:

Coalition-backed militias actively recruit Al-Qaida militants, or those who were recently members, because they're considered exceptional fighters, the *AP* found. The coalition forces are comprised of a dizzying mix of militias, factions, tribal warlords and tribes with very local interests. And AQAP (Al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula, a regional Al-Qaeda 'franchise') militants are intertwined with many of them (Michael et al., 2018).

Moreover, Efraim Halevy the former head of Israel's national intelligence agency (Mossad) and the former head of the Israeli National Security Council acknowledged in an interview with *Al Jazeera* English (2016) treating the wounded of Al-Nusra Front. He claimed that:

In a different context, it's always useful also to deal with your enemies in humane way and I think that when you have people who are wounded and you can deal with them in humane way the considerations as to whether to take them in are not simply whether it's politically useful or whether it's politically (the host interrupting). I didn't say there's no tactical I said the main consideration the immediate consideration is humane.

When he was asked whether there would be blowback against Israel, Halevy answered: "no I don't think so. I don't think there's going to be blowback because I think the..."

unfortunately the rules of the game in Syria such that you can do anything that is not able is not possible to be done anywhere else". Halevy firmly said no to treating captured Hezbollah fighters humanely because his country has a "different account" with them. Israel also seemed to have a good relationship with Al-Nusra Front and other armed groups in Syria. It provided more than medical aid to several armed groups in Syria as indicated by a UN official report and media reports (United Nations, 2015; Trofimov, 2015; Shwayder, 2014; Varghese, 2014). The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UN observer forces in the Syrian-Israeli borders) documented armed groups on different occasions crossing the line between Israel and Syria to interact with the Israeli army:

On at least four occasions in February, United Nations personnel at observation post 54 saw vehicles, including small trucks, crossing the ceasefire line from the Bravo side (separating the occupied portion of the Syrian Golan Heights) and approaching the technical fence. On one such occasion, several vehicles, including some with anti-aircraft guns mounted on the back, were seen parked next to the technical fence (United Nations, 2015, pp. 2-3).

According to *Foreign Policy*, Israel has funded and armed 12 different Syrian "rebel" groups with "assault rifles, machine guns, mortar launchers and transport vehicles" to keep Iranian-backed forces away from the Israeli borders (Tsukrove, 2018; Haaretz, 2018). Furthermore, Israeli scholars have openly called for employing IS to face Iran in Syria and the Middle East (Zimmt, 2017). Efraim Inbar (2016) a professor at Bar-Ilan University called for weakening IS rather than eliminating it because the group can "hamper Iran's quest for regional hegemony" and can also be used in the fight against Hezbollah. Inbar is the founding Director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, an Israeli think tank that cooperates with the Israeli ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs, and the embassies of the US, Australia, Canada and the NATO Mediterranean Initiative. Terrorism in Syria would not have grown and spread the way it did without the help of foreign countries. Addressing the reason why IS has not existed in Kashmir yet, Siyech (2018, p. 12) points to the Indian forces heavily monitor the borders; which is in contrast to the previous situation in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan in the 1980s when foreign fighters were encouraged to join the conflicts or at least turned a blind eye to them. In light of this, a report titled *Bordering on Terrorism: Turkey's Syria Policy and the Rise of the Islamic State* by Jonathan Schanzer, a former

terrorism finance analyst at the US Department of the Treasury and Merve Tahiroglu, a researcher, accused Turkey of granting terrorists financial and military pipelines in an attempt to topple the Syrian government (Schanzer and Tahiroglu, 2014). Similarly, Totten (2015b, p. 10) argued that "if Erdogan (the Turkish president) can stop Kurds from crossing that border, he can stop ISIS from crossing that border. Refusing to do so was a choice".

The Turkish borders were a pass point for thousands of terrorist fighters on their way to Syria (Yayla and Clarke, 2018; Greenwood, 2017, p. 88; Gunaratna, 2016, p. 4; Gunaratna, 2014, p. 3; Soliyev, 2013, p. 23). Turkey had granted IS fighters free movement and Turkey used to be seen as an ally by IS fighters (Guiton, 2014). As reported by *The Guardian* based on documents found with a captured IS leader, Turkey also helped IS to smuggle oil through the borders (Chulov, 2015). Moreover, in 2015 Russia published what was believed to be satellite images showing more than 30 oil trucks at IS-controlled areas in Iraq and Syria (Tsvetkova and Kelly, 2015; Brooks-Pollock, 2015). Experts confirmed that IS smuggled oil through Turkey (Daiss, 2016; Halpern, 2016). This included the former Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon who said in 2016 that IS enjoyed "Turkish money for oil" (Cohen and Kambas, 2016). In addition, according to *The NYT*, unidentified Western intelligence officials revealed that IS oil shipments were traced moving from the Iraqi and Syrian borders and were later sold in Turkey but Washington "could not" apply enough pressure to stop the smuggling (Sanger and Davis, 2014).

The US needs its allies in the "war on terror" (Posen, 2004, p. 39). However, instead of countering terrorism, the US and its allies armed several organisations in Syria (Al-Tamimi, 2017, p. 132; Kilcullen, 2016, p. 72; Uludag, 2015, p. 80; Choksy and Choksy, 2015, p. 24). One of the major programs that was run by the CIA and shut down in 2017 cost, based on an official estimation, about USD1 billion (Mazzetti et al., 2017; Miller and DeYoung, 2015). It can be argued that such programs were directed to so-called "moderate" groups. Nevertheless, the CIA sponsored groups such as Nour Al-Din Al-Zenki that was involved in carrying out terrorist including as beheading a teenager in 2016. The US Department of State condemned the incident saying that "(we) do not support groups that condone this sort of barbarity, period. We note that al-Zenki has said they will investigate this incident, and we hope they do so thoroughly and transparently" (Reuters, 2016; Chulov, 2016a). In 2018, this particular group unified with Ahrar Al-Sham (Al-Nusra Front) to form a body named the Syrian Liberation

Front to fight the Syria government (Osman, 2018; Daily Sabah, 2018). The CIA program was also responsible for funding and training "rebel" fighters abroad some of whom handed over their weapons or joined Al-Nusra Front as soon as they arrived in Syria (Bulos, 2015; The Guardian, 2015). The US considers countries that provide terrorists safe havens as sponsors of terrorism. A safe haven, as officially defined, is providing aid to terrorists including "ungoverned, under-governed, or ill-governed physical areas where terrorists can organize, plan, raise funds, communicate, recruit, train, transit, and operate in relative security because of inadequate governance capacity, political will, or both" (United States Department of State, 2017, p. 313). For instance, according to the Country Reports on Terrorism in 2016, Iran was "the world's leading state sponsor of terror" because it:

Remained unwilling to bring to justice senior al-Qa'ida (AQ) members it continued to detain and has refused to publicly identify the members in its custody. Since at least 2009, Iran has allowed AQ facilitators to operate a core facilitation pipeline through the country, enabling AQ to move funds and fighters to South Asia and Syria" (United States Department of State, 2017, p. 304).

However, these standards seem not to apply to the US and its allies. In their work *Terrorism as Ideology and Cultural Industry*, Herman and O'Sullivan (1991; 1989) argue that the concept of terrorism was turned to an "industry" to serve political objectives of the West. They point out that terrorism was defined and developed in accordance with the West's interests through a network of institutions, think tanks and experts, and media outlets. This terrorism industry, for instance, has been trying to present the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who was, alongside the former US President George W. Bush, behind the 2003 invasion of Iraq that caused the death of hundreds of thousands of civilians, as an expert in countering terrorism. Thus, Herman and O'Sullivan (1989, pp. 142-143) argue that this network promotes the official narrative of terrorism and introduces it as facts. Said (2005) notes that mainstream experts often protect or advance the elites' interests particularly in controversial issues such as terrorism and Islam. In this circle, independent scholars and experts are barely heard by governments or given platforms in the way mainstream scholars are being heard. In response to criticism of their book *Terror and Taboo: The Follies, Fables, and Faces of Terrorism* that described the construction of terrorism as commodity used to spread fear (Zulaika and Douglass, 1996), Douglass and Zulaika (1998, p. 265) argue

that:

Some of the world's most powerful vested interests drive terrorism discourse for their own purposes including the media in search of stories, academics enhancing career paths, filmmakers and novelists in search of plots, a multibillion-dollar security industry selling its services, and, above all, a plethora of government agencies defending turf and budget.

Western countries' military and political roles in the Middle East have long been framed by pro-West scholars as part of a noble and Christian civilising mission (Smith, 2014, pp. X and 4; Gordon, 2000; Lynn-Jones, 1998). Nonetheless, the West's interventions in the region including the "war on terror" have been used as a pretext to reconstruct countries' economic and political systems and include them in the West's sphere of influence such was the case with Iraq after the 2003 invasion (Whyte, 2010; Evans, 2003). Thus, it can be said with confidence that the US and its Western and regional allies including but not only Israel were through their actions and military and diplomatic interventions hoping to suppress and weaken forces regarded as being inimical to their interests in the Middle East.

Terrorism-related activities carried out by Western states against largely defenceless countries are overlooked (Chomsky, 1988, p. 29). Therefore, Herring (2008, p. 2) strongly argues that "northern state terrorism" should certainly be on the agenda. He suggests that the concept of terrorism should not be deployed in "a way that delegitimises opposition to the power of the global North while legitimising the global North's own political violence". Civilian casualties in the wars waged by the US and its allies are also largely neglected (Herring, 2008; Arnaldi, 2011a). This includes but is not limited to Syria and Iraq where thousands of civilian casualties have been treated merely as statistics (Amnesty International, 2018a; Amnesty International, 2018b; Hagopian et al., 2013; Leigh, 2010). The era of the "war on terror" was launched after the September 11 attacks. These attacks were used as a pretext for the invasion of Iraq and the whole narrative of the "war on terror" was constructed to serve specific goals:

The war on terror created a supportive political climate for what has been called the biggest U.S. foreign policy blunder in modern times: the invasion of Iraq. Thus, in the scope and consequences of its policy-shaping impact, the War on Terror maybe the most important frame in recent memory (Reese and

Lewis, 2011, pp. 139-140).

Arnaldi (2011b, p. 2) argues that another approach would have been applied if a different narrative of the September attacks had been used. He illustrated that if the attacks had been labeled as an offense carried out by a small group of violent extremists, a narrative of law enforcement would have been more appropriate to respond to these attacks. Arnaldi clarifies that the "narrative would have explained that terrorism is an old problem, not limited to Muslim extremists, that is presenting a new ideological face, which might be fought effectively with methods that protect civil and human rights". Mueller (2006, p. 193) advances a similar argument in his book *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why we Believe Them*. He argues that terrorism should be considered a crime and be dealt with this way; not justified or excused. He believes that terrorism "cannot be crushed" but its "impacts can be reduced and some of its perpetrators can be put out of business".

1.5 Conclusion

This review of literature has addressed several issues concerning the terrorism phenomenon including the dispute over the definition of terrorism, media reporting of terrorism-related events and manipulation of the "war on terror". In this light, scholarly work on terrorism has long been influenced by governments' agenda and the concept of terrorism was turned into an industry to serve political elites. This can be seen through the US use of the "war on terror" to expand its influence and to interfere in conflicts such as the Syrian conflict. This literature review has also addressed the scholarly debate about so-called "Islamic" terrorism starting from the establishment of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Scholars who adopt the official narrative of the founding of Al-Qaeda underestimated military, logistic, and financial assistance provided by the US and its allies to this terrorist organisation. On the contrary, other scholars argue that the aid supplied to Al-Qaeda had facilitated the spread of this type of terrorism. As was the case with the "mujahideen" in Afghanistan, terrorists or "rebels" were also used for political ends in Syria. The review provides evidence that the US, Israel and Turkey cooperated with and sponsored terrorist groups in the Middle East including in the fight against Iran and Hezbollah. Much evidence outlined in this chapter points to the creation and development of a terrorism industry dedicated to serving Western interests. Thus, there is a need to examine the "war on terror" coverage in Syria to understand the role of mainstream media as part of the terrorism industry.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

Chapter 2 examines the Propaganda Model (PM) proposed by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky that serves alongside Framing Theory as the theoretical framework for this study. The PM five filters provide an appropriate framework to understand the relationship between political and economic elites and mainstream media. Two of the five filters of the PM will be focused on because they fall within the scope of this thesis. After discussing the PM and its limitations, Framing Theory will be introduced to enhance the analytical capability of the model. This chapter then examines the "war on terror" and use of propaganda by elites to manipulate public opinion and manufacture consent to go to war.

2.1 The Propaganda Model

Herman's and Chomsky's Propaganda Model (2002) was introduced for the first time in 1988 and it has been reviewed and used as a method of media analysis since (Alford, 2018; Hearn-Branaman, 2018; Moon, 2018; Maweu, 2017; McChesney, 2010; Klaehn, 2009; Salmon, 1989). The model sought to elucidate how US mainstream media outlets operate with respect to their institutional structure and the connection with political and financial elites. Herman and Chomsky noted the growth of media conglomerates that run different formats of media including film, conventional and cable television stations, and magazine and book publishing (Herman and Chomsky, 2002, pp. xii- xiii). Thus, by introducing the PM, the two authors sought to trace the influence of the elites and their role in filtering news to maintain political and economic interests. The PM is based on five filters: "ownership", "funding", "sourcing", "flak", and "ideology". The chapter briefly introduces the five filters with an emphasis on "sourcing" and "ideology" because these are relevant to the data of this study.

2.1.1 Ownership

"Ownership" of media is the first filter of the PM. Herman and Chomsky (2002, p. 3) argue that media firms are large businesses and are owned by elites that have some common interests with banks and the government. Because they are guided by profit, media outlets will only report -with some exceptions- on what does not threaten the interests of their controlling political and financial elites (Arnaldi, 2011a, pp. 156-157). Overall, the ownership of media influences the nature and underlying messages carried on news content (Benson et al., 2018). In an interview conducted in 2009, Herman and

Chomsky indicated that ownership of media was more concentrated in 2008 than it had been in 1988 because of cross-ownership rights such as ownership of cable stations, newspapers, and websites by one corporate entity (Mullen, 2009, p. 14). It has to be stressed that even in the case of media outlets that are government-owned or held in trust, this filter may not work but still reflect propaganda. This can be seen in some of the stories that the *BBC*, for instance, had published in its coverage of the Syrian conflict. This issue is discussed in Chapter 7.

To explain how this filter works, Herman and Chomsky argue that US mainstream media outlets are controlled by giant corporations and these are owned by wealthy people. To maintain profit and to protect themselves, these owners need to have strong relationships with political lobby groups and financial elites. In this light, Herman and Chomsky indicate that:

Many of the large media companies are fully integrated into the market, and for the others, too, the pressures of stockholders, directors, and bankers to focus on the bottom line are powerful. These pressures have intensified in recent years as media stocks have become market favorites, and actual or prospective owners of newspapers and television properties have found it possible to capitalize increased audience size and advertising revenues into multiplied values of the media franchises- and great wealth. This has encouraged the entry of speculators and increased the pressure and temptation to focus more intensively on profitability (Herman and Chomsky, 2002, pp. 5-7).

The concentration of ownership of media and entertainment conglomerates is even more evident nowadays (Lidberg, 2019). In the US, for instance, 90 per cent of the media in its different platforms is controlled by six corporates (Louise, 2020). In the UK, three companies account for about 83 per cent of the local newspaper market in 2019 (up from 71 per cent in 2015) and when including online readers, the statistics show that five companies (News UK, Daily Mail Group, Reach, Guardian and Telegraph) control 80 per cent of the market. According to the report released by the Media Reform Coalition, a group that focuses on media regulation and ownership in the UK, two companies own more than 45 per cent of all commercial analogue radio stations and two-thirds of all commercial digital stations (Media Reform Coalition, 2019).

Globally, five companies acquired 34 per cent of US media revenue totalling

USD88 billion in 2016 (Zenith, 2016) and seven digital platforms generated USD132 billion in 2016. This represents 73 per cent of all Internet advertising revenue and 24 per cent of global advertising revenue across all media (Zenith, 2017). Thus, Herman and Chomsky believe that through their control of mainstream media outlets, corporations are granted the power to shape the public agenda.

As for the two newspapers being investigated, since founded, *The NYT* Company has been owned by Sulzberger family members. They own a share of 19 per cent and have a "special class of voting shares" (Dash, 2009). Investors who own shares in the company included the Mexican billionaire Carols Slim (16 per cent) and the Vanguard Group and BlackRock Inc. (investment management companies) that own about 13 percent each (Fintel, 2021). *The Independent* had been owned by a number of parties. In 2010, Alexander Lebedev, a Russian-British businessman, acquired a big share of the newspaper. Lebedev owns a 41 per cent stake and Sultan Muhammad Abuljadayel, a Saudi businessman, owns a 30 per cent stake (Ruddick, 2017). It should be stressed that it is not argued that the ownership filter has played an especially significant role in the two newspapers' coverage of the Syrian conflict because the collected data does not reveal whether this filter was a critical factor in the framing of this coverage.

2.1.2 Funding

Funding, the second filter of the PM is drawn from media reliance on advertising. To cover the high cost of news production, generation of a profit and shareholder value, and to effectively compete with their competitors, media outlets rely mainly on advertising. Because of the need for advertising revenue, advertisers can directly or indirectly influence media content by, for instance, selecting which media outlet they advertise with or which program they fund (Herman and Chomsky, 2002, pp. 14-16). Herman and Chomsky argue that advertising in the previous decade was more significant than it was in 1998 and reflects the competition between media platforms on the one side, and the competition between these media platforms and the Internet (including social media platforms) on the other (Mullen, 2009, p. 14).

Many researchers and commentators have highlighted the impacts of advertising on news content and editorial decisions (Porlezza, 2017; Pannicke, 2016; Axhami et al., 2015; Di Tella and Franceschelli, 2011; Pedro, 2011b; Rinallo and Basuroy, 2009; An and Bergen, 2007; Hackett and Uzelman, 2003). These impacts include favouring

advertisers' views and preferences to keep them as paying sponsors, and the relative absence of critical reports of activities of corporations and governments even if this comes at the expense of the public's interest. In this light, media outlets and advertisers establish an interdependent relationship that keeps the audience locked into their sphere of influence.

2.1.3 Sourcing

Because of the demanding news schedules of conventional media outlets, news bulletins often meet these demands by using readily accessible official sources or sources funded by them such as so-called "experts" which inevitably leads to the mainstream media relying heavily on them. Another reason for this dependency is the shared interests of the two sides. Herman and Chomsky (2002, p. 18) argue that media outlets are dragged "into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest". Thus, official sources have become a necessity in news. Moreover, mainstream media rely on official sources to avoid libel suits or to maintain their image of objectivity. This objectivity, however, can be considered biased towards those in power because officials' views on critical issues are often more known to the public than their opponents who barely receive fair media coverage (Brasted, 2005).

Another aspect of this filter is how official sources are presented in media coverage. Herman and Chomsky generally argue that these sources are introduced as reliable and trustworthy and when quoting non-official sources to refute the official account, officials are often given the upper voice in coverage. This argument is discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. In this context, a study conducted in a number of democratic countries including the UK, Australia, Canada, Japan, and Italy concerning the use of sources in news showed that the ratio of use of government sources to opposition sources was relatively high. The analysis showed that the average was two sources to one and sometimes increased to four sources to one source (Tiffen et al., 2014, p. 9). The Kleemans et al. (2017) study notes the change in the presence of alternative sources in news coverage where mainstream media began to quote and provide a platform to non-official sources. Nevertheless, Kleemans et al. underscore that elite voices are still considered a major source of news.

Resisting the control of the flow of information by officials, whistle-blowers risk their lives and careers to inform the public about issues concerning their rights to know.

For instance, Rampton (2007) noted the increasing number of unofficial sources in the Internet era. He presented two events: firstly, the photographs taken by a cargo worker of several flag-draped coffins of US soldiers who were killed in Iraq in 2004. These photographs were later considered by *Time* magazine as one of the most influential group of images of all time (Bernton, 2016).

Secondly, the photographs of Iraqi prisoners of "Abu Ghraib" being abused that were leaked by the offenders themselves. Considering these two events, Rampton pointed out that the PM third filter "sourcing" had to be reconsidered because officials were no longer the only or main source of information in the Internet era. This, however, can be refuted by pointing out (and Rampton acknowledged) that the female cargo worker, Tami Silicio, was sacked from her job as a punishment for leaking the coffin photographs. In the case of "Abu Ghraib", the government refused to release the rest of the photos and videos (Arnaldi, 2011a, p.158). This returns us to the same dilemma that official authorities still have the upper hand over information.

WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, is another example. After having sought refuge in the Ecuadorian embassy in London for more than six years, Assange was dragged out of the embassy in 2019. Assange, who is accused of disclosing highly classified information that "harmed (the US) national security and diplomatic relations" (BBC, 2019a; Goldman, 2017), is currently fighting extradition to the US. The former US Attorney General Jeff Sessions said previously that arresting Julian Assange was a "priority" for his country (Perez et al., 2017). Classified information published by *WikiLeaks* included documents of war crimes committed by US forces during the 2003 invasion of Iraq (BBC, 2019b).

Assange who has been charged with 18 counts in the US (Buncombe, 2020) was firstly a subject of a smear campaign as he fought against earlier extradition to Sweden for rape allegations that were later dropped. Swedish prosecutors said that the evidence was "not strong enough to form the basis for filing an indictment" (BBC, 2020). Not only Assange but also *WikiLeaks* has been targeted by the US authorities by denying donors access to credit cards and other funding channels to support the organisation (Glass, 2020). If convicted, Assange could face a sentence of between 20 years to 170 years in prison (Lawless, 2020). This case shows that officials may not be in control of information as they were prior to the Internet era but they are still fighting to maintain their control by intimidation and threat.

In another interesting example, the Australian national broadcaster *ABC* had its

main office raided by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) seeking to identify the source of leaked documents about unlawful military activities against civilians by the Australian Special Forces in Afghanistan (Al Jazeera English, 2019a; ABC, 2019). The official authorities considered the information about the abuses confidential and sought to prevent the public from knowing what had happened in Afghanistan to protect individuals instead of protecting the interests of the Afghani and Australian people. Notably, when *ABC* legally challenged the validity of the raid, the Federal Court of Australia dismissed the case (Meade, 2020). This decision was described by Gaven Morris, the *ABC*'s Director News, as a "blow to the way Australians have access to information in their society".

It can be argued that the Internet has provided platforms for alternative sources including individuals. However, statistics showed that established media outlets are still considered a major source of news for the public. In detail, a national survey published in 2018 showed that 60 per cent of Australians use their smartphones to access news. However, while there is between 42 per cent and 50 per cent who trust news in general, trust in news on social media was only 24 per cent. The survey found that Australians have more trust in established media such as television news channels and print newspapers more than they have in other mediums (Park et al., 2018, p. 9).

The case is similar in the US, the UK, and France. Despite the growing number of US citizens who read news online, 50 per cent of them get their news from television (Bialik and Masta, 2017). In the UK and France, television is a main source of news and while young people are more likely to prefer online media, television is still the first source of news (Nielsen et al., 2016, pp. 8-9). It has to be noticed that online media also include mainstream media that broadcast news on their social media platforms. Thus, Pedro (2011b) argues that the "Internet surfers usually turn to established, rather than alternative sources". New statistics of online US readers support Pedro's argument. The statistics by Pew Research Center (2019) showed that 93 per cent of US readers read at least some news online where they normally turn to established media. In addition, a study by Splendore (2020) has found that online journalism in Italy maintains a strong relationship with official sources. Zollmann (2018, p. 227) explains this issue pointing out that:

Digital technology allows for the establishment of novel online offerings. This technically enables the production and distribution of news and could foster diversity in sources and

opinions. Yet, at this point in time, a myriad of novel information websites and blogs are confined to niche spaces on the web - virtually invisible to larger publics.

Thus, despite the fact that the Internet era provided different types of sources, the evidence demonstrates that the public generally turns to established media to get the news. Moreover, even in the case of alternative media such as social media, the evidence shows that Internet users tend to view established media on its social media platforms. Regarding *WikiLeaks*, while it mainly published information that revealed misconduct of politicians or military forces, the discussion in this section showed that official authorities intimidate and target those who reveal information that they do not want the public to access.

2.1.4 Flak

Flak, the fourth filter of the PM comprises negative or critical responses to media reports such as lawsuits and threats. Although flak existed when the PM was developed, governments, according to Herman and Chomsky, have become "more aggressive in favouring and punishing media deviations from the official line" (Mullen, 2009, p. 14). Reports published by human rights organisations in 2018 counted many violations against journalists in the US including seizing metadata of journalists, arrests, and intimidation (Mindock, 2018b; Reporters Without Borders, 2018a; Reporters Without Borders, 2018b; Reporters Without Borders, 2018c; Article19, 2018).

For example, Elise Labott, former *CNN* Global Affairs correspondent, was suspended for two weeks in November 2015 for "expressing a (different) political point of view". Labott criticised a congressional bill that would limit or prevent the entry of Iraqi and Syrian refugees to the US. She tweeted: "house passes bill that could limit Syrian refugees. Statue of Liberty bows head in anguish". Hours later, Labott apologised for her tweet saying: "everyone, it was wrong of me to editorialize. My tweet was inappropriate and disrespectful. I sincerely apologize" (Stelter and Byers, 2015). Labott only expressed her opinion about legislation but she had to apologise because her opinion was considered "inappropriate". Proving the flak's role in censoring news content is complicated. While physical flak, such as insulting journalists or removing them from press conferences for asking the "wrong" question can be measured, the psychological effects that impact press freedom cannot be measured quantitatively.

2.1.5 Ideology

The fifth filter of the PM "anticommunism" was revised by Herman and Chomsky after the fall of the Soviet Union to the broader term "ideology". Anticommunism was a control mechanism employed by US political elites to confront the Soviet Union. Herman and Chomsky argue that the dominant elites, through their control of mainstream media outlets, mobilise a sense of fear towards "enemies" or those that threaten their interests. This is achieved by propaganda media campaigns and by putting these "enemies" in a bad light. Explaining the logic behind the "ideology" filter, Chomsky et al. (1998, p. 42) clarify that it is:

The idea that grave enemies are about to attack us and we need to huddle under the protection of domestic power. You need something to frighten people with, to prevent them from paying attention to what's really happening to them. You have to somehow engender fear and hatred, to channel the kind of fear and rage – or even just discontent – that's being aroused by social and economic conditions.

It can be argued that the "ideology" filter is a concept to differentiate between "us" the good guys and "them" the bad guys (Zulaika and Douglass, 1996, p. 13). According to Said (2005, p. 70 and p. 77), this division fuels conflicts rather than solving them. "US" and "them" ideology was embraced by the former US President George W. Bush during his "war on terror" campaign (Kellner, 2004). In his remark nine days after the September 11 attacks, Bush called on the rest of the world to decide whether they would join his war on "terrorism" or instead become one of the targets of this war. He asserted that "every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (Bush, 2001). Political and economic elites took advantage of the September 11 attacks to expand their influence (Skoll, 2010, p. 35) and the war on Afghanistan and Iraq was one of the aspects of this expansion. US political elites replaced the Soviet Union's threat with another enemy which was terrorism (Schmidt, 2018, p. 23; Mullen, 2009, p. 15; Glover, 2002). Chomsky's long-time co-writer Herman (1996a, p. 45) noted that:

In the case of terrorism, where mainly distant and hazy foreign enemies are claimed to be posing a threat, the public's interest is more remote, its knowledge is slight, and it is therefore more easily caught up in and manipulated by a web of symbols. For

example, political leaders in the United States, with the help of the mass media, have easily mobilised a consensus on the dire threat posed by a demonised foreign enemy.

Using terrorism as a mechanism to mobilise the public is discussed in Chapter 7. The discussion shows that, while terrorism poses threats to society, these threats have been exaggerated by authorities to achieve political and economic goals. Building on Herman's argument, the West in general and the US, in particular, are framed as the legitimate party while their enemies are framed as the illegitimate party. Despite the fact that the West's "enemies" have different political identities and regardless of their reasons to challenge the West, these enemies are either framed as terrorists or sponsors of terrorism. Enemies of the West may also be framed as oppressors and the PM ideology filter can be expanded to include countries that refuse to comply with US orders; such is the case with Venezuela (Caballero, 2018) and Cuba (Winter, 2018). The West justifies its "humanitarian" intervention to save the "oppressed" people ruled by these "rogue regimes" (Anderson, 2016, p. 90; Badsey, 2012; pp. 318-319). In this context, Zollmann (2018, p. 229) argues that:

'Humanitarianism' played a major role in policy and news media discussions about potential or actual intervention in Somalia (1992), Rwanda (1994), Bosnia (1995), Kosovo (1999), Darfur (2003–2017), Libya (2011), and Syria (2012–2018). 'Humanitarianism' was also evoked, in conjunction with other ideological devices, to legitimise the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and the 2003 Iraq War.

Edward S. Herman considers "humanitarian" intervention and the "war on terror" as two different terms (Aksan and Bailes, 2013b, p. 100). Nonetheless, in Syria, the two terms overlapped because the US activities were firstly framed as a "humanitarian" intervention to protect the people from the Syrian government and this was later changed to a frame that stressed counter-terrorism.

2.1.6 Limitations of the PM

The PM has several limitations that will now be highlighted with a view to developing a more nuanced and evidence-based analytical framework for investigating and accounting for the Western media's coverage of the Syrian conflict. Jensen (2010), for instance, suggests that the PM does not account for individual decisions made by

journalists; rather, it presents a method to predict patterns of behaviour. Klaehn (2002) discussed this point, indicating that the PM does not presume that editors in newsrooms often take attentive decisions in favour of the interest of the dominant elite. In this light, it has to be pointed out that the overall insight of the PM goes beyond individual choices. Herman and Chomsky (2002, p. xi) believed that the model is reflected by "the selection of right-thinking personnel and by the editors' and working journalists' internalization of priorities and definitions of news worthiness that conform to the institution's policy".

Herman and Chomsky (2002, p. xii) do not claim that the model analyses the effects of propaganda on the public. The model provides a broad understanding of the modus operandi of mass media. Jackson and Stanfield (2004, p. 477) argue that the PM can be used to analyse the pro-war media coverage of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 "where the media functioned as fine-tuned government propaganda". Similarly, the model can, with some modification and theoretical development, provide an understanding of the propaganda that was employed to justify the intervention in the Syrian conflict. Moreover, Corner (2003) questions the applicability of the PM in other contexts, pointing to its failure to address the self-censorship of journalists and media workers when making the news. This, however, can be refuted by pointing out that while threats can be physical, self-censorship cannot be measured all the time because self-censorship could be psychological. Moreover, some journalists self-censor because they know the limits of enquiry established by owners of the media outlets they work for. They accept, for example, their employer's views on issues such as terrorism and war.

On another issue, Lukin (2018, pp. 10-11; 2012, p. 100) strongly criticises Chomsky for overlooking the relationship between ideology and language. This argument is addressed when discussing the relationship between propaganda and framing. Furthermore, while he finds the model useful for identifying the relationship between mainstream media and elites' propaganda objectives, Boyd-Barrett (2004, p. 436) suggests a sixth filter that he called "buying out" of journalists and their publications by the authorities and intelligence agencies. He refers to the publication of articles in the 1970s by the CIA that aimed to sabotage the Soviet Union and communism (Davies, 2008, pp. 225-226; Bernstein, 1977). Bernstein, a co-winner of the 1973 Pulitzer Prize, published an investigation in the *Rolling Stone* on October 20th, 1977, pointing out that:

Among the executives who lent their cooperation to the Agency

were William Paley of the *Columbia Broadcasting System*, Henry Luce of *Tirne Inc.*(sic), Arthur Hays Sulzberger of the *New York Times*, Barry Bingham Sr. of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, and James Copley of the *Copley News Service*. Other organizations which cooperated with the CIA include the *American Broadcasting Company*, the *National Broadcasting Company*, the *Associated Press*, *United Press International*, *Reuters*, *Hearst Newspapers*, *Scripps-Howard*, *Newsweek* magazine, the *Mutual Broadcasting System*, the *Miami Herald* and the old *Saturday Evening Post* and *New York Herald-Tribune* (Bernstein, 1977).

The relationship between journalists and intelligence agencies was also examined by Keeble (2010) who indicated that UK intelligence agencies recruited a large number of journalists to influence public opinion. This particular point is inspected in Chapter 7 when analysing citizen journalism and its role in reporting on the Syrian conflict.

The PM has been systematically marginalised by academics and specialists in the US and Europe (Bergman, 2014; Jensen, 2010; Robertson, 2010; Mullen, 2010; Herring and Robinson, 2003). According to a survey conducted on its 20th anniversary, Mullen (2010, pp. 679-680) found that of a sample of 3053 articles collected from ten media and communication journals published in North America and Europe from 1988 to 2007, only 79 articles (representing 2.6 per cent) engaged with the PM and only three academic conferences were dedicated to the model, two of which were not "well attended". In his commentary *The Propaganda Model Revisited* which was published about ten years after the PM was introduced, Herman (1996b, p. 127) pointed out that "nothing we could have done would have prevented our being labelled conspiracy theorists, rigid determinists, and deniers of the possibility that people can resist (even as we called for resistance)".

Since it was introduced, the PM has offered an interesting insight into the performance of the US media and to the media in those countries, such as the UK, that have similar media structures. In his assessment, Sparks (2007) reviewed the PM's filters and questioned, for example, its "assumption" that elites are a "homogenous body". Commenting on the critics of the model, Herman (1996, p. 103) pointed to "the fact that there are often differences within the elite that open up space for some debate and even occasional (but very rare) attacks on the intent as well as the tactical means of achieving elite ends".

The PM cannot be entirely ruled out as a methodology to analyse Western mainstream media. The model's filters help to identify and understand the influences on the media's reporting of issues that directly impact the interests of the political and economic elites. To overcome its shortcomings, the model can be reinforced by Framing Theory. The PM was tested by making a comparison between media coverage of events that took place in "enemy states" of the US against events that took place in countries allied with the US. Herman and Chomsky studied the disparities in media coverage examining what they framed as "worthy" and "unworthy" victims. Before examining one of the PM's case studies, the relationship between framing and propaganda should be established.

2.2 Framing Theory

Vliegthart and van Zoonen (2011, p. 103) attribute Framing Theory to Gregory Bateson's essay *A Theory of Play and Fantasy: A Report on Theoretical Aspects of the Project of Study of the Role of Paradoxes of Abstraction in Communication* that was published in 1955. The development of the theory of framing in social research, nonetheless, was attributed to Erving Goffman (Lorino et al., 2017; Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015; Mercurio and Filak, 2010; Jha, 2008; Nisbet and Scheufele, 2007; Rettie, 2004; Benford, 1997; Glenn and Knapp, 1987; Snow et al., 1986; Davids and Abelman, 1983). Framing as a research methodology has been applied to a number of disciplines (Benford and Snow, 2000), including sociology (Martine, 2017; Lindstedt, 2017; Boykoff and Laschever, 2011; Baylor, 1996; Snow et al., 1986), political science (Wu, 2018; Hameleers et al., 2018; Burgman et al., 2017; Wagner and Gruszczynski, 2016; Bondes and Heep, 2012; Iyengar, 1990), linguistics and discourse analysis (Lopez, 2018; Adekola and Lamond, 2017; Barnhizer, 2013), economic psychology (Schultz et al., 2018; Schilirò, 2016; Sonnemann et al., 2013), media and communication studies (Wagner and Payne, 2017; Brüggemann, 2014; Mahfouz, 2013; Cisse, 2012; Liang, 2010; Fong, 2009; Wojcieszak, 2007; Billings, 2004), and sports media (Rabea, 2018; Seate et al., 2010; Parker and Fink, 2008).

Early studies of framing in media inspected how media outlets imposed their own agenda on the public by prioritising specific events and giving them extensive coverage while overlooking other events (Shapiro and Williams, 1983; Williams et al., 1982; Gitlin, 1980). Media outlets tend to highlight specific details within a particular event as being more important than those that are neglected or rendered marginal.

Making some ideas salient and others inconspicuous (Entman, 1991), news is framed in a particular way to convey a specific message by exploiting the message for the benefit of the sender (Boyle and Mower, 2018, p. 207; Lee and Maslog, 2005; Entman, 1993). In this context, framing refers to the selection of certain terms and ideas and structuring them in a certain way before broadcasting them to the audience (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007; Nisbet and Scheufele, 2007).

In his study of the impact of the use of framing on an audience, Iyengar (1990) argued that people tend to view an issue based on how it was framed by media. He argued (p. 36) that the way in which political issues are framed in the media is effectively a "powerful form of social control". Iyengar showed that audiences' perception of poverty and whether it was a society or an individual problem was influenced by how poverty was framed by the media. Nevertheless, more recent framing studies argue that the effectiveness of the framing process on peoples' beliefs is limited (Wagner and Gruszczynski, 2016; Gonzalez et al., 2005; Brewer et al., 2003). While Stark et al.'s (2017) study finds that emotions contribute to the way in which a group responds to a framed issue, Borah's (2018) study shows that framing occasionally challenges the audience and motivates them to search for additional information about the framed issue.

Based on what has been reviewed so far, it can be argued that framing is a two-sided relationship where journalists use their thoughts and experience to deliver a message; while audiences use their experience, educational and cultural background to interpret this message (Pu et al., 2017; Van Gorp and Vercruyse, 2012; Lecheler and De Vreese, 2012; Baresch et al., 2010). Cacciatore et al. (2016), however, present a different view of framing as they discuss the future of this theory. Because it overlaps with other media effect models such as agenda-setting and because it has been applied widely to examine media effects, Cacciatore et al. (2016, p. 20) called on scholars to reconsider the whole concept of framing:

At the very minimum, this means that media effects research should abandon the general term "framing" as a catch-all phrase for a number of distinct media effects models and replace it with the more precise terminological distinction between equivalence and emphasis framing.

The present study, however, examines the way media outlets are framing events rather than the reception by an audience which may be varied. An old Arabic maxim says: "the

camel's dung points to the camel". Thus, analysing how *The NYT* and *The Independent* reported on the Syrian conflict and the techniques used in the coverage will help to highlight the relationship between these outlets and their respective governments. There is a notable relationship between framing and propaganda. The following section examines the power of this relationship.

2.2.1 Framing and war propaganda

Fellows (1959, p. 182) examined the shift of the meaning of propaganda from religious to a military concept to eventually becoming a largely political term which reflected the shift of institutional power from Church to State. Hadley Cantril (1938, p. 217), a US scholar and public opinion analyst, defines propaganda as an "expression of opinion or action by individual or groups with reference to predetermined ends". To be specific, propaganda is an attempt to manipulate opinions towards the propagandist's ends by influencing people's thoughts to obtain the compliance of a mass audience (Ingram, 2016, p. 15; Soules, 2015, p. 6; Black, 1977, p. 92).

Propaganda associates ideas with attitudes, symbols, and emotions (Faris et al., 2017; Briant, 2015; Walton, 1997; Hendrson, 1943; Jewett, 1940; Cantril, 1938). This attempts to develop a new attitude towards the idea or the object by using subtle and concealed suggestions (Stanley, 2015; Lakoff, 2004; Jewett, 1940; Cantril, 1938). Stanley (2015, pp. 48-49) asserts that propaganda is not necessarily based on emotions because emotions are often "rational and track reasons". He argues that propaganda aims to gain collective approval without challenging the rational will of people because it "bypasses any sense of autonomous decision". In other words, propaganda does not necessarily aim to spread lies because it is a combination of truth and lies (Reilly, 2018; Stanley, 2015; Bricmont and Franck, 2010, p. 96). Walton (1997, pp. 397-398) considers propaganda the "indifference to logical reasoning" where propagandists endeavour to achieve their goals by employing logical and non-rational methods. Therefore, the propagandist's messages have to be framed in a way that achieves the proposed goals.

Consequently, the framing process can influence the audience's perspective about an issue because their minds do not focus on the facts only but also on "the way these facts are framed" (Hiebert, 2003, p. 242). To give an example, in their analysis of the use of framing during the so-called "Arab Spring", Baresch et al. (2010, p. 637) point to how the protests were framed in a "favourable and democratic light". They

pointed out:

That is the sort of thing news frames do: They highlight some aspects of the events behind a story and downplay others, often with the effect of supporting a certain way of looking at the world. This is accomplished by word choice (e.g. using language of "awakening" rather than "chaos" to describe the Middle East uprisings) and by source selection (e.g. quoting more democracy activists than state security officers).

Examining the relationship between framing and propaganda, Lakoff characterises propaganda as the manipulative use of framing because of the way it attempts "to get the public to adopt a frame that is not true and is known not to be true" to obtain political dominance (Lakoff, 2004, p. 100). Propagandists exploit words and terminologies to sell ideas and objects and to shape public opinion at the same time as seeking to distract the public from not noticing their propaganda (Cozma, 2014, p. 435; Hickman, 2013, p. 11). It can be argued, therefore, that use of frames reflect the framers' ideology and their perspectives of an event (Saleem, 2007; Ross, 2003). It also indicates how a political event is viewed and what solutions should be adopted to deal with it. In this context, elites frame themselves as the good guys while they sabotage their opponents' stance and present them as the bad guys (Rabea, 2018; Bondes and Heep, 2012). Consequently, Parrott (2009, p. 419) argues that framing and propaganda play a role of instilling a "politically relevant disposition into an audience".

There is a correlation between framing, propaganda, and language choices. Cantril (1938, p. 291) pointed early to this interdependent relationship. He indicated that languages are freighted with emotions and people react to the feelings or thoughts attached to the words and how they are used rather their dictionary meanings. As Fillmore (1982) signified, every word in every language is structured by a frame. Thereby, Lakoff argued in an interview with Powell (2003) that framing and language are inseparable:

Language always comes with what is called "framing". Every word is defined relative to a conceptual framework. If you have something like "revolt," that implies a population that is being ruled unfairly, or assumes it is being ruled unfairly, and that they are throwing off their rulers, which

would be considered a good thing. That's a frame.

To give an example in the context of war propaganda, in his analysis of the media coverage of the 2003 war on Iraq, Hiebert (2003, p. 245) examined use of the frame device "Saddam's Fedayeen" that was given to the Iraqi resistance. "Fedayeen" that has a positive notion in Arabic was later replaced by "paramilitaries" and then to "terror-like death squads". Another example is the "mujahideen" frame that can be replaced by a negative frame such as "terrorists" and vice versa according to the propagandist's goals.

To illustrate the relationship between framing, propaganda, and language choices, if we imagine a portrait, framing would be the way the paint is organised, structured, or put together and propaganda would be the message the painter intends to send to the audience; the paint colours are the words chosen for the propaganda. Word choices and phrases play a crucial role in propaganda. They present a "propagandistic function of symbolizing" that aims to encourage particular "interpretations" and "inferences" (Matlock, 2010; Satfy, 1991). Audiences think and receive messages in metaphors that corral with their frame of reference. These metaphors awaken ideas, beliefs, or principles that people value and in which they view the world (Supovitz and Reinkordt, 2017). While convincing all people of the benefits of wars seems to be nearly impossible, political elites would still want to win the consent of some of these people.

As discussed earlier, the way an event is introduced in media could influence how the event is perceived by the audience (Smith and Pegoraro, 2020). For instance, has it been framed as a one-time event or a systematic event, caused by an individual or a group, intentional or unintentional, and domestic or international? As for framing visual content, an interesting essay by Bock (2020) points out that social science studies tend to overlook "the unique properties of visual communication and tend to emphasise literal depictions and description". Bock argues that scholars should carefully examine the role of visual framing alongside the literal depiction and description of a frame. An experimental study conducted by Powell et al. (2019, p. 593) emphasised the importance of the text and visual content in news. Their study found that:

Viewing conditions can have a meaningful influence on the effects of media visuals and text: Those who foresee debating an issue can be more influenced by a story's text, and those who are distracted can be more influenced by news images.

With regard to cartoons, Abraham (2009) argues that political cartoons offer "deep reflection" and play an important role in highlighting the editorial content of a newspaper. He suggests there are two fundamental issues when analysing cartoons: first, what they seem to represent and second, what the hidden meaning of that representation is. Hecke (2017, p. 131) agrees and points out that political cartoons are "part of a mediated filtering system that helps the construction and framing of social reality". He explains that cartoons drew attention to issues that "have already been established in the mainstream media as being worthy of public attention". While this study focuses on textual analysis, it also inspects hundreds of images video clips (including three cartoons) attached to the selected newspaper articles to understand how this visual content helped to emphasise the dominant frame of the coverage of the Syrian conflict.

2.3 Testing the PM

To test the Propaganda Model, Herman and Chomsky (2002, p. 37) compared the coverage of Jerzy Popieluszko, a Polish priest murdered by the Polish police in October 1984, and the media coverage of priests and other religious figures murdered within countries in the US sphere of influence. The coverage of Popieluszko's case in Poland - then part of the Soviet bloc- by *The NYT*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *CBS News* was far greater than the coverage of scores of religious figures murdered in Guatemala and El Salvador that were US allies. The comparison demonstrated the significant difference in the quality and quantity of the media's coverage of the two cases. The qualitative treatment of the data showed that worthy victims' coverage was extensive and included quoted expression of discontent and demand for justice. On the other hand, the unworthy victims' coverage was "low-keyed designed to keep the lid on emotions and evoking regretful and philosophical generalities on the omnipresence of violence and the inherent tragedy of human life" (Herman and Chomsky, 2002, p. 39). Herman and Chomsky demonstrated that the death of Popieluszko was valued many times more than victims in states within the US sphere of influence.

A similar approach of worthy and unworthy victims was adopted by Entman (1991) in his frame analysis of the US media coverage of two incidents: the shooting-down of a Korean civil aircraft by a Soviet fighter in 1983 and the shooting-down of an Iranian civil aircraft by a US warship in 1988. After analysing and comparing two weeks of the coverage of each event in the *Newsweek*, *Times*, *The NYT*, *The Washington*

Post, and *CBS Evening News*, Entman found that the victims of the KAL were treated as more important than the Iran Air victims. The KAL incident was given far more coverage in newspapers and the television news shows.

Through detailed analysis of the publication of the victims' names and pictures, words, images and graphics, Entman argued that while news coverage framed the Iranian flight as an accident, the Korean civil aircraft shoot-down was framed as a premeditated incident. Entman's study of news framing is useful to grasp how media outlets prioritise news events and selected features of them over other events (Van Gorp, 2007, p. 66). The study draws attention to the use of specific word choices to describe a news event and what messages a media outlet intends to send to its audience. It also shows that framing of news messages can be analysed by examining metaphors, keywords, visual images and symbols. Entman (1991, p. 7) underscored that "frames work to make some ideas more salient in the text, others less so and others entirely inevitable". Chomsky explains this technique in a wider context, indicating that media outlets:

Do this in all sorts of ways: by selection of topics, by distribution of concerns, by emphasis and framing issues, by filtering of information, by bounding of debate within certain limits. They determine, they select, they shape, they control, they restrict - in order to serve the interests of dominant, elite groups in the society (Chomsky quoted in Wintonick and Achbar, 1994, p. 55).

Herring and Robinson (2003) argue that the PM presents a useful methodology to understand why framing US foreign policy news is often consistent with the agenda of political elites and the US corporations. However, the PM does not analyse how news content is exactly framed. Thus, Framing Theory will be employed to expand the analytical capability of the PM. Use of the PM and framing provides a holistic framework for studies that aim to examine propaganda (Mullen and Klaehn, 2010; Klaehn, 2002). This study highlights the techniques employed in media coverage which helps to grasp the purpose of use of propaganda in the coverage of the Syrian conflict. For example, were the techniques used to maintain peace or to push for a war agenda and in whose favour?

Taking the literature review into consideration, the September 11 attacks were a turning point in the "war on terror". These attacks were used by the Bush administration

to justify a self-defence narrative and to enhance the US political and economic influence around the world (Reese and Lewis, 2011, p. 140; Maogoto, 2003, p. 30). McGowan (2016, p. 26) argues that the suffering of victims of terrorism has been used by those in power to obtain political benefits. Thus, Bush's war on terror expanded from attacking specific areas or organisations to invading countries (McLaughlin, 2016, p. 191).

The coverage of terrorism after the September 11 attacks spawned a climate of fear that supported the US foreign wars (Powell, 2011, p. 108) particularly the war on Afghanistan and Iraq. While the war on Afghanistan was justified because the Taliban government refused to extradite Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda's members to the US, Saddam Hussein and his government, however, were not involved in the September attacks. To exaggerate its "threat", Iraq was accused of having relationships with Al-Qaeda and possession of weapons of mass destruction. The deceptive accusation against Iraq aimed, in fact, to obtain public support for the war (Robinson, 2017). Gaining consent for going to war is always a difficult task. To gain legitimacy, war was framed as a defensive response to an imminent threat (Hale, 2010, p. 51). As Webel and Arnaldi (2011, pp. 11-12) suggest "the language used to frame a problem also shapes the solution". Thus, the only solution to terrorist attacks was a military response because the problem was framed as a global war against "evils". Therefore, the perpetrators of the September attacks were framed as the incarnation of evil that sabotaged the world peace and security and had to be eliminated (Azpiroz, 2013, p. 189).

Furthermore, Toros (2017, p. 205) argues that the narrative of self-defence was not only used to legitimise actions towards external "enemies" but also to delegitimise dissenting voices within the state itself. To achieve their goals, elites use entities such as think tanks, NGOs, academia and media (Robinson, 2018, p. 59; Mattis, 2015). Media, for instance, play a crucial role in disseminating the self-defence narrative. To sustain mass consent to war, elites need a strong media coverage that lines up with the policies and practices of war (Knightley, 2012; Johnson, 2012; Hale, 2010, p. 52). Mhamdi's (2007) study supports this argument. His examination of the first two months of the *CNN* coverage of the 2003 war on Iraq showed that the US news channel echoed the government's war narrative.

Mainstream media cover, repeat, and associate coverage of an event with other coverage of previous similar events in what is referred to as network propaganda. Faris et al. (2017, p. 109 and p. 123) indicates that this technique of reinforcement seeks to

give a story credence, to make it familiar, and to make it easy to be recalled. In this light, Reese and Lewis (2009, p. 792) argue that the "war on terror" was not just a policy but also a "powerful organizing principle" adopted by journalists that favoured the war on Iraq. Earlier, Powlick and Katz (1998) argued that uninterrupted media coverage of foreign policy issues awakens the public. Explaining the significance of this misleading technique, Arnaldi (2011a, p. 152) points out that:

When a narrative dominates the news, the increased coverage adds legitimacy to it and confers power on the group promoting it. Increased coverage makes it worthy of more coverage, which yields more legitimacy and power.

As the cycle repeats, power accrues to the most powerful.

Examining the war-making propaganda in three wars (the Vietnam War and the first and the second wars on Iraq), Seagren and Henderson (2018, p. 85) indicate that US political and military elites believed that these wars were not going to be won without the support of the US people. Similarly, the intervention in Syria needed a strong propaganda campaign to win public consent. The war-making propaganda in Syria sometime focused on protecting the Syrian people from the dictatorship and sometime it focused on countering terrorism.

Despite the fact that a majority of the American people opposed intervention in Syria (Pew Research Center, 2012), mainstream scholars, experts, and media called on the US government to intervene to "protect" Syrian civilians and called for opposition forces to be supplied with weapons or the creation of a no fly zone area to help change the government (Anderson, 2018; Sainato, 2017; Cordesman, 2017; Cambanis, 2016; Kinzer, 2016; Pollack, 2014; Kagan, 2013; Tabler, 2013; Sorenson, 2013; Abramowitz and Edelman, 2013; Codevilla, 2013; Ghitis, 2013; Totten, 2012; Buckley, 2012; Sofer, 2012; Doran and Boot, 2012). To provide an example of the involvement of media outlets in the conflict, it has been disclosed that *Google* in cooperation with *Al Jazeera* offered to help bring down the Syrian government by using interactive tools to spread information of defections within the Syrian government and army in the first years of the protests (WikiLeaks, 2016; Bolton, 2016; Takala, 2016).

Media outlets played a significant role in the Syrian conflict. Adopting the US government's narrative about an event by relatively "independent" mainstream media lends credence to this narrative and makes it more believable. Earlier, the analytical study by Callahan et al. (2006) argued that there was no central narrative for the "war on

terror" at least in the minds of those who participated in their study. The participants' narrative of this war appeared to be based on their political beliefs; one group was concerned about protecting civil liberties and the other group urged to prevent future terrorist attacks. The Callahan study shows the need to justify going to war in the public's eyes. Reasons for going to war should be established and the more they are clearly explained to the audience the more a government can legitimise this war. Thus, the coverage of the Syrian conflict sought to create mass public opinion in the name of "humanitarian intervention" (Simons, 2016a, p. 13).

Some Western media outlets were keen to witness another Western war in the Middle East (Alitavoli, 2019; Godefroidt et al., 2016). A study of the Pew Research Center conducted in 2013 found that the coverage of *Al Jazeera* English and *Al Jazeera* Arabic aligned with the coverage of US mainstream media outlets such as *CNN*, *MSNBC*, and *Fox News* particularly on the subject of intervening in Syria in favour of the "rebels" (Abdul-Nabi, 2017; Jurkowitz et al., 2013). Moreover, while a large number of media outlets criticised the former President Donald Trump, a survey of the top US 100 newspapers by circulation found that all editorials supported the airstrikes on Syria on April 13th, 2018 (Johnson, 2018).

Cozma and Kozman (2014) present another view in their analysis of *The Washington Post's* and *The NYT's* coverage of the international reaction of "Syria's use of chemical weapons" in 2013. They suggest that the coverage changed after the alleged chemical attacks took place and argue that the whole coverage could have been presented differently if the US was militarily involved in the Syrian conflict then. Cozma and Kozman, nonetheless, overlooked the fact that US media narrative before 2013 was hostile toward Syria and encouraged military intervention (diplomatic and economic sanctions and training and arming opposition groups) (Cordesman, 2017; Cambanis, 2016; Pollack, 2014; Kagan, 2013; Abramowitz and Edelman, 2013; Buckley, 2012; Doran and Boot, 2012).

Western countries are well experienced in employing propaganda for their ends (Ingram, 2016, p. 34; Drèze, 2014, p. 166; Bricmont and Franck, 2010, p. 90). Thus, Zollmann (2017, p. 29) urges scholars to inspect use of propaganda by elites in these countries. Recently, disinformation and fake news have become the centre of attention of scholarly work particularly after the 2016 US presidential election (Humprecht, 2018; Martens et al., 2018; Fuchs, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2018; Fregoso, 2018; Fitzpatrick, 2018; Gu et al., 2017; Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017; Faris et al., 2017; Prier, 2017). This

study examines an issue just as important which is the role that framing and propaganda played in Syria to push for the intervention agenda under the guise of countering terrorism.

2.4 Conclusion

The PM introduced by Herman and Chomsky in the late 1980s sought to explain the institutional structure of US mainstream media outlets and the connection between these outlets and political and financial elites. The model was based on the five filters: "ownership", "funding", "sourcing", "flak", and "ideology". This chapter focused on "sourcing" and "ideology" because these two filters are more relevant to this study. The "sourcing" filter concerns use of official sources in news coverage and it promotes the government's agenda. As for the "ideology" filter, Herman and Chomsky argue that political and financial elites used the Soviet Union's "threats" and later terrorism to mobilise the public to gain or maintain political and economic interests.

The sourcing and ideology filters of the PM are the focus of this study. For the first filter, the study examines the sources used to report on the Syrian conflict. The analysis inspects news sourcing, their affiliations, and their influence on the coverage. As for the ideology filter, the war against terrorism has been widely used by the West, and particularly the US, to maintain political and economic interests. To overcome its shortcomings, the PM is reinforced by framing. Framing in media concerns selecting and emphasising certain details of an event. This chapter has explored the relationship between framing and propaganda and provided some examples of this relationship in the media coverage of US foreign wars. The chapters that follow will examine war propaganda (under the guise of news reporting) that has been employed, at least in part, to enhance a direct interventionist role for the US in Syria.

Chapter 3: Newspaper data analysis: methods and findings

This chapter explains the rationale behind the selection of print journalism as the medium for this study and provides the reasons for the selection of *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* coverage of the conflict in Syria that is investigated. This chapter also explains the methodology used to collect and analyse the data and discusses (alongside Chapter 4) the findings of the analysis of *The NYT's* coverage. It focuses on key issues including use of sources by *The NYT's* reporters and calls for US and Western intervention in the conflict. Because this chapter deals with a large dataset, the rest of the analysis, such as of the alleged chemical attacks in Syria, is covered in Chapter 4. Chapter 3 argues that *The NYT* promoted the US official narrative of the conflict and encouraged the US intervention agenda in Syria.

3.1 Rationale for selecting print journalism as a medium and for selecting the two newspapers

Journalism is still playing important social roles particularly in democratic societies where it is a key information source and acts as a watchdog by monitoring government officials and politicians (Hanusch and Hanitzsch, 2019; Hanitzsch et al., 2019; Gillers, 2018; Knobel, 2018; Gajda, 2015). Despite the strong competition between media outlets and between print and other media formats, newspapers have maintained their political role in society during the past decades and they are more likely to continue doing so in the future whether in the form of print or digital (Khalid and Ahmed, 2014). The role includes, but is not limited to, influencing political behaviours and public opinion (Gerber et al., 2009). Moreover, despite the fact that newspapers' share of political advertising (persuasive advertisements to reach voters) is less than that of television, the Cushion et al. (2018) analysis of the coverage of the 2015 UK general election found that the television coverage was influenced by the newspaper coverage of the dominant political topics that were discussed during the election. In addition, Meo's (2017) study of US voters during the 2016 presidential election showed that newspapers, their websites or smart phone applications reached as much as 64 per cent of voters. The study also found that political leaders tended to read newspapers to access information about the candidates and their campaign promises.

Chyi's and Tenenboim's (2017) analysis of readership data of 51 US newspapers in the years 2007, 2011, and 2015 has found that print product reached more readers than online product. This can be attributed to the elasticity of newspapers to adapt to

new methods to reach their audiences. For instance, newspapers have changed their approach to provide more in-depth analytical articles alongside their news coverage. They have also developed interactive applications and created social media platforms to stay connected with their audiences and gain new readership (Wilding et al., 2018, p. 12; Tanikawa, 2017), and encouraged contributions from citizen journalism as will be extensively discussed in Chapter 7 (Shields, 2008). Furthermore, in a report examining the scholarly use of newspapers, Meyer (2018, p. 4) points out that journalism is an important part of the academic publishing process by being sources of information or subjects for academic studies. In light of this, the following paragraphs highlight the rationale behind the selection of *The NYT* and *The Independent* for this present study.

The NYT has been in circulation since 1851 and has won the Pulitzer Prize on 130 occasions (The New York Times, 2020a). It is considered one of the most influential newspapers in the US and one of the world's most followed mainstream media outlets on its social media platforms (Glader, 2017; #Socialscene, 2017, p. 2). It has about 50 million followers on *Twitter* and more than 17.8 million likes or followers on *Facebook* compared with about 17 million followers on *Twitter* and about 7 million likes or followers on *Facebook* for *The Washington Post*. *The NYT* claims to be the "most cited news publisher by other media organizations, the most discussed on *Twitter* and the most searched on *Google*" (The New York Times, 2017). According to *Similarweb* that provides website traffic statistics, *The NYT's* website was ranked as the seventh top most-visited website in the US, overcoming *The Washington Post* website that was placed ninth (Bobrov, 2018). *The NYT* revealed that it recorded by the end of 2019 more than 5 million subscriptions including 3.5 million digital-only subscriptions with a revenue of more than USD800 million, 50 per cent of which came from subscribers (Tracy, 2020; Ember, 2018). The newspaper claims that it has 150 million monthly global readers (The New York Times, 2020b). Moreover, online viewers spend about 5 minutes on average on *The NYT's* website compared with an average of 4.5 minutes on *The Washington Post's* website (Bones, 2017). While a reader must have a paid subscription to view most of *The Washington Post's* online services, several of *The NYT's* online services including browsing the news are free of charge.

In addition, *The NYT* has a significant impact on the book market through its book review service (Berger et al., 2010). It also claims to produce "the world's best journalism", employ "the finest staff of journalists" (The New York Times, 2017; The New York Times, 2015, p. 1), and says it highly invests in its news stories that are well-

written, easy to read, worthy of being read and covers important subjects (The New York Times, 2017). *The NYT* claims to have 1600 journalists reporting on the ground in more than 150 countries (The New York Times, 2020c). As for the British newspaper, *The Independent* was established in 1986 and turned from print to an online edition on March 27th, 2016. Before turning to an online edition, the newspaper had a circulation of more than 400,000 (Slawosn, 2016). In 2019, the newspaper recorded more than 24.5 million readers in one month to become "the UK's largest quality digital news brand" (The Independent, 2019a). *The Independent* has 3.5 million followers on *Twitter* and more than 10.4 million likes or followers on *Facebook*. It won the 2018 Content Team of the Year at the British Media Awards (The Independent, 2018) for "highest reach and engagement of any of the (UK) main news publishers" with "seven of the 10 most shared stories on *Facebook*" including the top three stories (Campaign, 2018).

In addition, *The Independent's* website has been named the "best national news site" in the UK in 2017 (The Independent, 2017a). The newspaper claims that its reputation is "based on the editorial independence, integrity and high journalistic standards" (The Independent, 2019b). *The Independent* pays special attention to the Middle East. It points out that its coverage "of America and the Middle East has always been a particular focus, and remains so today" (The Independent, 2019c). It has two of the longest serving Western reporters covering the Middle East: Patrick Cockburn who has been working for *The Independent* since 1990 and has won a number of awards (The Independent, 2019d; The Orwell Foundation, 2019) and Robert Fisk (passed away on October 30th, 2020) a war correspondent who lived in the Arab World for more than 40 years (The Independent, 2019e). Fisk has won several awards including the British Press Awards International Journalist of the Year and Foreign Reporter of the Year (Tikkanen, 2019).

3.1.1 Newspaper data collection

Initially the focus was exclusively on *The NYT*. It was later decided, however, that it would be valuable to include *The Independent* for comparative purposes. Therefore, for the case study, two major articles were selected from *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* websites from each day of the 2016 military operations in East Aleppo and the 2017 military operations in Al-Raqqa. As for East Aleppo, the military operations lasted from July 11th, 2016 to the end of December 2016. For Al-Raqqa, the military operations lasted from June 6th, 2017 to the end of October of 2017. A total of

185 articles from *The Independent* and 184 articles from *The NYT* were analysed. The selected articles from *The Independent's* were reported by some of the newspaper's main journalists including Lizzie Dearde, Samuel Osborne, and Harry Cockburn. With regard to *The NYT's* coverage of the Syrian conflict from 2011 to 2018, as previously explained in the introduction of this study, the main events of the Syrian conflict were selected and categorised into two types: important events and more important events based on the researcher's evaluation of how the events changed the strategic or the military situation on the ground either in favour of the Syrian government or the opposition armed forces and based on how many times in total an event was included in the timelines of the Syrian conflict developed by the selected mainstream media outlets and organisations. Important events were reported by three media outlets and organisations or less, while more important events were reported by four or more media outlets and organisations.

An example of an important event chronicled across mainstream media outlets or the two organisations' timeline is IS's capturing Kobane in Northern Syria on October 14th, 2014 that displaced about 300,000 Kurdish civilians in the process. An example of a more important event is the airstrikes launched by the US and its allies after an alleged Syrian government chemical attack in Eastern Ghouta on April 7th, 2018. It should be noted that sometimes there was a one-day difference in the reporting of some events by media outlets depending on each media outlet's accessibility to their sources, the information publicly available at the time, or the time zone in which the outlet is located. For each day of the first three months of the crisis (from March 15th, 2011 to June 15th, 2011) and for the last month of 2018 (from December 1st, 2018 to December 31st, 2018), two major newspaper articles were selected from *The NYT's* website. A taxonomy of important and more important events until the end of 2011 was developed. For the important event, one week of newspaper coverage before and after the event was collected. For the more important event, two weeks of newspaper coverage before and after the event were collected. A similar methodology was employed starting from 2012. For periods when there were no important or more important events reported, one week of newspaper coverage from that month was collected (Appendix 1).

The selected articles were reported by a number of *The NYT's* experienced journalists and Pulitzer Prize winners including Anthony Shadid (passed away on February 16th, 2012), Mark Landler, C. J. Chivers, and Neill MacFarquhar. A total of 1832 newspaper articles were collected from *The NYT* (1120 news articles; 534 editorials; 70 opinions; and 108 op-eds) including 99 articles that were excluded from

the analysis because they covered issues related to the arts (Appendices 2 and 3). In total, 2102 newspaper articles were analysed (including the articles selected from the coverage of the military operations in Al-Raqqa and Aleppo). The analysis will focus on news articles. These are the main primary sources for the thesis. The analysis, however, will also be informed by editorials, opinion pieces, cartoons and visuals as they contribute to the overall frame introduced by the two newspapers. Moreover, on some days, *The NYT* or *The Independent* only published opinion pieces about the Syrian conflict and because some of them, particularly *The Independent's*, were accompanied by visual content (images or video clips). The selected articles answer two main questions: (1) to what extent have Western mainstream media been influenced by war propaganda in their coverage of the Syrian conflict, and why, and what techniques reflect the propagandised coverage? And (2) how has media coverage of the Syrian conflict and the "war on terror" advanced the terrorism industry? The data collected covered more than 39 events over more than 1848 days out of 2849 days in total (or about 65 per cent).

3.2 Notes about data analysis

The sources quoted in the coverage were divided based on their view on the conflict; pro-Syrian government sources, anti-Syrian government sources, and neutral sources. For instance, Syrian official sources and their allies (Iran, Hezbollah, Russia) were considered pro-Syrian government sources. Syrian opposition groups and their sources were considered anti-Syrian government sources. Similarly, US, British, or French sources were also considered anti-Syrian government sources. While there was a small problem with drawing rigid lines when there was merging or crossover, only the sources that called, for instance, to attack Syria, topple the government or arm the opposition forces were considered anti-Syrian government. These standards were set to understand what views were promoted and what agenda was pushed by each of the newspapers. Individuals cited as Syrian sources were considered to be locals even if they resided overseas. Moreover, statistics on the use of sources in the analysis only concern news articles rather than editorials and opinion pieces where use or types of sources are not particularly an issue because these do not necessarily have to include sources. A source was counted as a single source only, even if it was referred to or cited more than once in any particular news article. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were also divided or differentiated using the previous categorisation of sources. Local

NGOs such as the White Helmets were considered anti-Syrian government for several reasons that are addressed in Chapter 6. The White Helmets, for instance, is funded by a number of countries that sought to topple the Syrian government including the US and UK. The White Helmets has also maintained a good relationship with the opposition armed groups. The UN and international NGOs were categorised as neutral sources, even though their supposed neutrality in some cases could be questioned. Other types of sources included those who were introduced as "experts" in the Syrian conflict or the "war on terror". These were scholars and political commentators, and were categorised based on their views on the conflict. For example, experts who promoted a military intervention agenda were considered anti-Syrian government and those who defended the Syrian government's decisions or supported its military operations were considered pro-Syrian government. Other experts such as those who called for investigation of an alleged chemical attack were considered neutral. As for the visual content, it was categorised thematically. For instance, images of deaths and injuries amongst civilians were included in the civilian casualty theme while images of damaged buildings were included in the destruction theme.

3.3 Data analysis and findings

It was found that the majority of *The NYT's* news articles were dominated by an event being reported. For instance, when reporting on the refugee crisis, the main focus was about this issue and even if the article included another issue it only occupied a small space in the article. Therefore, based on the main theme being reported, the articles were divided into three main categories (1) "the Syrian struggle" that covered articles that reported on activities related to the Syrian protests and the struggle between the Syrian forces and the anti-government protesters or the opposition armed groups. (2) The "war on terror" that covered articles that reported on US and Russian activities in countering terrorism. It has to be noted that while there is a dispute over the term terrorism, only news articles that covered the war against Al-Qaeda, Al-Nusra Front, or IS were included in the "war on terror" category. (3) "The refugee crisis" included articles that reported on the refugee crisis and all related issues. Out of 1033 news articles, the first category included 629 news articles (60.8 per cent), the second category included 333 news articles (32.2 per cent), and the third category included 71 news articles (6.8 per cent). This shows that *The NYT's* coverage focused on the military conflict more than the refugee crisis.

3.3.1 Reporting on the Syrian conflict

This section analyses *The NYT's* coverage of the Syrian conflict including the location where news articles were reported from. The articles were categorised as: reported from Syria (*RfS*) or reported from outside Syria (*RfoS*) (this does not concern editorials and opinion articles because they can be written from anywhere). The articles that were reported from Syria encompassed all news articles reported from anywhere inside Syria. The articles that were reported from outside Syria included articles covering events that occurred in Syria but were reported from other countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, or Turkey. Of the 1033 news articles, there were 102 news articles (9.8 per cent) *RfS* and 931 news articles (90.1 per cent) *RfoS*. It has to be noted that because of instability in Syria in the first few months of the protests, media outlets had to leave the country or only worked in areas controlled by the Syrian government and later in opposition-held areas. *The NYT* was not an exception. Thus, in the first few weeks of the Syrian conflict, the newspaper was reporting from within Syria before it began reporting from Beirut or Cairo. This led *The NYT* to depend heavily on individuals and activists on the ground in Syria, the majority of whom were anti-government sources.

As for sources, those referred to as Syrian officials were representatives of the Syrian government or Syrian MPs, the national news agency *Syrian Arab News Agency* (*SANA*), national media outlets or pro-government satellite channels such as *Syria News Channel* and *Sama Channel*. In terms of the use of sources, Syrian officials were quoted (*Q*) in 214 news articles (20.7 per cent) and not quoted (*NQ*) in 819 news articles (79.2 per cent). It has to be pointed out that not all news articles focused on events that occurred inside Syria. News articles as noted in the introduction of this chapter reported on issues such as the refugee crisis in Turkey or Jordan. Overall, the Syrian official voice was missing in the coverage of *The NYT*. On fewer than 10 occasions, *The NYT* stated that it tried to contact a relevant Syrian official and failed or that the Syrian national agency did not publish any news related to the event being reported. In the news articles that quoted Syrian official sources, however, local or international opponents were often granted more space than the official Syrian account. The average use of these sources particularly in the articles that reported on the struggle between the government and the opposition armed forces was one to three sources in favour of anti-government's account. In the first few weeks of the conflict, the coverage was more neutral than it later became as official Syrian sources were quoted directly or from pro-

government media outlets. As the Syrian conflict unfolded, however, *The NYT* tended to take a strong position against the Syrian government; particularly the Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. This coincided with the Libyan protests reaching their peak and when the former Libyan President Muammar Al-Gathafi was heading towards his violent end.

For instance, a *NYT*'s editorial titled *President Assad's Bloody Hands* published on June 3rd, 2011, said that "arguments that Mr. Assad is the best guarantor of stability and the best way to avoid extremism have lost all credibility". Another editorial published on August 18th, 2011 pointed out that "it took too long, but President Obama has finally — and unequivocally — called for the Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad to step down and end his murderous war against the Syrian people". *The NYT*'s coverage developed to demand removing of the Syrian President as suggested by an editorial published on November 16th, 2011 that wrote "Mr. Assad has left no doubt that he is willing to destroy his country to maintain his hold on power. His neighbors and all civilized countries need to stand with the Syrian people, before it's too late". While *The NYT* seemed to promote a military intervention to topple the Syrian government, the newspaper was very cautious about going to war against Syria. In a news article published on August 28th, 2011, the newspaper argued that:

It would be premature to call the war in Libya a complete success for United States interests. But the arrival of victorious rebels on the shores of Tripoli last week gave President Obama's senior advisers a chance to claim a key victory for an Obama doctrine for the Middle East that had been roundly criticized in recent months as leading from behind.

The military intervention was promoted by giving voice to those, such as the late Senator John McCain, who encouraged it. In an article published on March 5th, 2012, *The NYT* reported that "Senator John McCain, a leader among Senate Republicans on military matters, called on Monday for the United States to lead airstrikes against Syria's armed forces to protect the rebels and civilians there, much as it did in Libya last year". Another news article published on the same day amended the first report stating that "Senator John McCain, a leader among Republicans on military matters, called on the United States on Monday to conduct an extensive air bombardment of Syrian targets, with Arab League permission, to protect anti-government fighters and civilians there". Nonetheless, an editorial published on April 28th, 2011 warned that a war with Syria "would be a disaster". The editorial explained why a direct military intervention was not an option: "Syria has one of the more capable armies in the region. And while there is

no love for Mr. Assad, he is no Qaddafi, and the backlash in the Arab world would be enormous". Therefore, the only remaining options were, as suggested by the editorial, political and economic sanctions, pressing the Arab League and the Security Council to take a stand, and calling on the International Criminal Court to investigate the Syrian government's violations. Notably, the newspaper reported on April 29th, 2011 that Senator McCain "opposed military action in Syria" a very different opinion than that published one year later. With the spread of protests, the Syrian forces continued to lose ground and the Syrian government therefore seemed not to be able to stand up to foreign intervention. Accordingly, *The NYT's* narrative shifted from favouring political and economic sanctions to slowly speaking about a humanitarian intervention to "protect" the Syrian people. By the end of 2013 *The NYT* began calling for intervention to "counter" terrorism. It should be stressed again that *The NYT* was not particularly in favour of a direct military intervention as was the case with the 2003 war on Iraq. Principally, the newspaper did not oppose interfering in Syria. While "boots on the ground" intervention was not promoted, other types of involvement in the Syrian conflict were either favoured by the newspaper or promoted by opinion articles. The next section of this analysis therefore provides more details about this issue.

3.3.2 Calls for intervention in Syria

In connection to the agenda being promoted by *The NYT*, opinion pieces were also examined to highlight whether the newspaper promoted opinions that encouraged attacking Syria and overthrowing the government. After examining 524 editorials to understand how *The NYT* viewed foreign intervention in its different forms, it was found that 326 editorials either discussed the Syrian conflict in a wider context (e.g. focusing on the role of Iran, Russia or Turkey in the Middle East) or only in an incidental way, such as mentioning Syria as one of the countries whose citizens were banned from entering the US. Another 53 editorials focused on Syria but did not take any stance in terms of the US intervention or presence. As for the remaining 145 editorials, it was found that 129 editorials favoured, promoted, or called for intervening in Syria. In detail, 27 editorials (the majority published in 2011 and 2012) encouraged the US and other governments to apply diplomatic and economic sanctions including stopping the purchase of oil from Syria. Moreover, 92 editorials called on governments, particularly the US government, to intervene militarily in Syria by training and arming opposition armed groups including Kurdish groups, attacking Syria, or urging that US forces to

remain in Syria. As for news articles and opinion pieces (other than editorials), 185 *NYT*'s articles were in favour of the intervention, nine articles were hesitant, and only three articles were explicitly against the intervention. The articles that explicitly encouraged the intervention agenda or favoured it were: 118 news articles, 31 opinion pieces, and 36 op-eds. Articles that promoted an intervention agenda focused on "humanitarian" reasons such as "protecting" the Syrian people from the government forces while the others focused on the fight against terrorism. Most articles that focused on "humanitarian" reasons were published between 2011 and 2013 while the rest were published after 2013 when the newspaper's coverage turned its focus on the "war on terror" in Syria (Table 1). The opinion articles that promoted military intervention were still being published by the newspaper as recently as 2018. For instance, following a visit to the part of the Syrian Golan Heights occupied by Israel, Bret Stephens, an op-ed columnist at *The NYT* since April 2017, suggested on April 12th, 2018 that:

A limited missile strike that slightly degrades Assad's military capabilities will change none of this, just as last year's U.S. strike changed nothing. What could work? In a column I wrote for *The Wall Street Journal* in 2013, I argued that the U.S. should target Assad and his senior lieutenants directly in a decapitation strike, just as the U.S. attempted in Iraq in 2003, and against Osama bin Laden in 2011. Nothing that has happened in the intervening five years has changed my view about this.

<i>The NYT's articles that promoted an intervention agenda in Syria</i>					
	Against or hesitant	With the intervention	H	T	H & T
News articles	1 hesitant	118	48H (40.6%)	69T (58.4%)	1HT (0.8%)
Opinions	1 against (1 hesitant)	31	14H (45.1%)	17T (54.8%)	-
Op-Eds	2 against (7 hesitant)	36	21H (58.3%)	13T (36.1%)	2HT (5.5%)
Total	3 against (9 hesitant)	185	83 H (44.8%)	99T (53.5%)	3TH (1.6%)

Table 1: Number of articles with, against, or hesitant about the intervention. H= humanitarian/ T= fighting terrorism/ H & T= humanitarian and fighting terrorism

In the first few weeks of the protests, the narrative urged the imposition of political and economic sanctions on the Syrian government. In public, the Obama administration seemed to be cautious about supporting the opposition forces militarily. This administration and its allies, nevertheless, were running a secret project to aid the opposition forces from the first weeks of the protests (Cooper, 2012; Sofer, 2012; Schmitt, 2012; McElory, 2012). *The NYT* encouraged training the opposition forces militarily by framing the move positively. Militarising the Syria protests mounted by opposition forces aimed, according to *The NYT's* narrative, to protect the Syrian people and help defeat the "regime".

The official Syrian narrative of the conflict was focused on fighting "terrorism" from the first few weeks of the protests. For the Syrian government, framing individuals as "terrorists" did not necessarily mean that they had links with local or international terrorist organisations rather it meant any armed opposition groups regardless of their affiliations. This definition was inconsistent with *The NYT's* narrative as the armed groups were framed in the newspaper's narrative as "opposition forces" or "rebels". As the conflict developed foreign fighters from Al-Qaeda and other groups were entering the country through the Turkish, Lebanese, Iraqi, and Jordanian borders. The Syrian government continued to warn against the rise of terrorism. *The NYT's* coverage, however, played down the terrorist threat. The coverage was in a state of denial accusing the Syrian government of exaggerating the presence of terrorism in the country.

As early as June 13th, 2011 (less than three months after the protests broke out), an article quoted Syrian officials warning that "militant Islamists have manipulated popular grievance". The article, nonetheless, tended to rebut the Syrian government's view by pointing out that "opposition activists have played down sectarian divisions, which they describe as a government ploy to sustain its four decades of rule". About eight months later, *The NYT's* coverage began acknowledging the existence of terrorism in Syria. In a news article published on February 10th, 2012 reporting on car bomb explosions outside two security force headquarters in Aleppo, the newspaper said that analysts in Washington were "looking seriously at the possibility that Al Qaeda's affiliate in Iraq was responsible for Friday's attack". *The NYT* added that "the government has always argued that it was fighting foreign terrorists, a charge dismissed as propaganda by the Syrian activists leading the uprising".

While in several articles after the explosions in Aleppo *The NYT* pointed to suspicious activities carried out by Al-Qaeda and other so-called "Islamist" fighters, the newspaper tended to underestimate the influence of Al-Qaeda members on the overall conflict. Commenting on a *YouTube* video of masked fighters "calling themselves the Free Syrian Army" who raised "two flags of Al Qaeda", a news article published on July 24th, 2012 said that "the video, posted on *YouTube*, is one more bit of evidence that Al Qaeda and other Islamic extremists are doing their best to hijack the Syrian revolution, with a growing although still limited success that has American intelligence officials publicly concerned".

Seven months following the car bombings in Aleppo (February 10th, 2012), the coverage was still playing down the threat of terrorism in Syria. For instance, a news article published on September 9th, 2012 pointed out that "activists and rebel fighters who have been interviewed over the Internet consistently describe far lower numbers of foreign fighters and Islamist militants". The article added that "the few reported interviews with Islamists have provided little agreement on what kind of government they envision— whether along the lines of Turkey, Saudi Arabia or Iran". Interestingly, Iran was listed in the example along with Turkey and Saudi Arabia despite the fact that Sunni "Islamists" referred to in this article do not consider Iran and the majority of Iranians (who are Shiite) as Muslims. This example either represented a lack of knowledge of the nature of the conflict between so-called "Islamists" and Iran or it was an attempt to link Iran with these "Islamists".

Another example of playing down the threat of terrorism in Syria was a news article published on March 19th, 2013 that stated that "the Syrian government seeks to portray its opponents as extremists who are a threat to regional stability". While the Syrian government warned from early on in the conflict about the threat of terrorism, it should be noted that the first editorial that explicitly acknowledged the existence of Al-Qaeda in Syria and its relationship with the opposition armed groups was only published on December 10th, 2012 or about two years after the protests began. In the editorial titled *Al Qaeda in Syria*, the newspaper wrote that:

The problem is that many Syrian rebel groups work closely with the Nusra Front precisely because its skilled fighters have been so effective at storming fortified Syrian positions and leading other battalions to capture military bases and oil fields.

Notably, *The NYT* was still considering those who worked "closely" with Al-Qaeda or who were allied with this terrorist organisation as "rebel groups". It is not known whether the downplaying of the existence of terrorism was an intentional strategy adopted by *The NYT*. Nevertheless, it can be argued that acknowledging the threat of terrorism and the alliance between the opposition armed groups and Al-Qaeda in the first year would have granted the Syrian President and the Syrian forces legitimacy to fight the opposition armed forces and delegitimised the opposition armed groups that were often framed positively in the coverage. As the threat of terrorism reached a point where it could not be underestimated, *The NYT's* coverage shifted to focus on terrorism in Syria and the role of the US to counter this threat. Overall, *The NYT* echoed the US official line, starting from promoting an interventionist agenda, favouring political and economic sanctions, calling for arming the opposition forces, and finally urging the US government to involve in the Syrian conflict under the pretext of fighting terrorism. Thus, the "war on terror" coverage needs to be examined to inspect how the deployment of the US forces in Syria was legitimised.

3.3.3 Use of sources in the "war on terror" coverage

The NYT cited 1408 individuals and organisations in the 333 news articles that reported on the "war on terror" (all of the articles were published after 2011). US official and non-official sources were quoted 538 times in total (38.2 per cent) and more than any other sources, while Syrian official sources were only quoted 17 times (1.2 per cent). The US sources included the White House, the Department of State, the Pentagon, intelligence agencies, senators or representatives, retired officials or military figures (Table 2). European sources (mainly from Britain and France) were quoted 164 times (11.6 per cent), and official sources from Syria, Russia, Iran, China, and the rest of the world excluding Europe (Turkish officials were included with Europe because they shared a similar point of view on Syria to the UK and France) were quoted 108 times (7.6 per cent). The UN, NGOs and "lay" terrorism experts were quoted 270 times (19.1 per cent), while other individuals such as anti-Syrian government activists, opposition forces, and residents were quoted 328 times (23.2 per cent).

Sources cited in the "war on terror" coverage		
Institution/official	Time	Percentage
The White House/State Department	193	13.7
The Pentagon/ intelligence	256	18.1
Senators/ Representatives	42	2.9
Retired officials/intelligence	47	3.3
Total U.S. sources	538	38.2
Syrian officials	17	1.2
European officials	164	11.6
Other officials	91	6.4
UN/NGOs/experts	270	19.1
Others	328	23.2
Total other	870	61.7
Total sources	1408	99.9

Table 2: Type of sources in *The NYT's* coverage of the "war on terror"

The NYT's "war on terror" coverage relied on US official sources from the Pentagon and intelligence agencies that were cited 256 times (18.1 per cent) and the White House/the Department of State that were cited 193 times (13.7 per cent). This coverage was influenced by a war agenda where the priority was for military options. In comparison, while US sources were cited 538 times (38.2 per cent) in the coverage, officials from Russia, Iran, China, and the rest of the world excluding Europe were cited only 91 times (a meagre 6.4 per cent). The influence of the intervention agenda on *The NYT's* coverage was even deeper considering the affiliations of the NGOs and terrorism "experts" that were quoted. These sources were cited 233 times. After excluding the recurrence of the same sources, terrorism experts, anti-Syrian government local NGOs and think tanks such the Brookings Institute were quoted 158 times.

By inspecting individual affiliations, it was found that at least 44 (27.8 per cent) "experts" had previously held positions in US government institutions such as the White House, the Pentagon, or intelligence agencies like the CIA. In addition, at least 19 experts quoted in the "war on terror" coverage had ties with other governments and intelligence services including eight experts linked to the French, British, Turkish governments or their intelligence agencies, two Israeli experts linked to the Israeli government or its intelligence agencies, another three experts who worked with the Iraqi or Egyptian governments, and a retired Tunisian general (Appendix 4). As for other "experts" or NGOs, it was found that most worked for think tanks partially funded by governments including the US, British, and the French governments.

For instance, A *NYT* investigative report found that the Brookings Institute received donations from foreign governments to push US officials to "adopt policies that often reflect the donors' priorities" (Lipton et al., 2014). Brookings officially acknowledged receiving funds from the US Central Command, the US Agency for International Development, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, the governments of the Netherlands, Denmark, France and others (Brookings Institute, 2014). In addition, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) was quoted 22 times, and was the most cited NGO in the coverage. The SOHR has relationships with European governments. In his comment on the reliability of SOHR as a source, the British author and journalist Peter Hitchens (2018) underscores that:

Many of you may have noticed frequent references in the media to a body called the 'Syrian Observatory for Human Rights', often quoted as if it is an impartial source of information about that complicated conflict, in which the British Government clearly takes sides. The 'Observatory' says on its website that it is 'not associated or linked to any political body'. To which I reply: Is Boris Johnson's Foreign Office not a political body? Because the FO has just confirmed to me that 'the UK funded a project worth £194,769.60 to provide the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights with communications equipment and cameras'.

Rami Abdul Rahman, the SOHR founder also acknowledged in an interview with *The NYT* receiving "small subsidies from the European Union and one European country" that he did not name (MacFarquhar, 2013). To promote the intervention agenda in Syria, *The NYT* provided the US official voice with extensive coverage enabling it to recount its own interpretation of the "war on terror" without being challenged. The official voice was supported by terrorism experts and think tanks who adopted similar views about the Syrian conflict. Relying on pro-intervention sources was a deep-rooted flaw in the coverage. The percentage of pro-intervention voices would increase if experts and think tanks that adopted similar views were to be added to become more than 55 per cent of the sources quoted in the coverage of the "war on terror". These, principally Americans, were key sources in the coverage and their narrative of "countering" terrorism was dominant. *The NYT* agreed with the White House over the main issues in Syria.

The first time the newspaper appeared to strongly oppose the White House was when the former President Donald Trump announced a plan to withdraw the US forces

from Syria. The newspaper claimed that the withdrawal plan would allow IS to revive and framed the decision as a reward for Russia and Iran. An editorial published on December 19th, 2018, described the decision as "abrupt and dangerous" because the US was giving up its "role" as a "global leader". Referring to the US "commitment" in the Middle East, the editorial quoted John Bolton, the former National Security Adviser, who proclaimed that the purpose of the deployment of the troops was not only to defeat IS but also to ensure that the Iranian forces would leave Syria. The editorial also stated that the withdrawal of US forces "worries" Israel, claiming that the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "would escalate the fight against Iranian-aligned forces in Syria once the Americans leave". *The NYT*, therefore, urged Trump to keep the troops in Syria until IS was entirely defeated and the Iranian forces and their allies had left Syria.

The NYT launched a campaign aiming to keep the US troops in Syria. The coverage concentrated on the Russian and Iranian presence as a pretext claiming that the decision was a "gift/win" for Russia and a loss for the US. Reflecting on this issue, a news article published on December 21st, 2018 indicated that "a note of glee crept into Russian commentary and news coverage on Friday about the current turmoil in Washington around national security, with President Vladimir Putin seemingly checking off one item after another that he might have written on his wish list for Santa". Another news article published on December 26th, 2018 titled *Syria Faces Brittle Future, Dominated by Russia and Iran*, stated that:

Turkey is threatening to invade Syria to eradicate Kurdish fighters. Syrian forces are rolling toward territory the Americans will soon abandon. Israel is bombing Iran-backed militias deep inside Syria. And Russia could soon move to crush the last vestige of the Syrian anti-government insurgency. The Syria that the United States military is vacating on President Trump's orders is a Balkanized version of the country that plunged into a calamitous civil war nearly eight years ago. Now, with the American troop withdrawal and the demise of the insurgency against President Bashar al-Assad, Iran and Russia will be even freer to flex their power in Syria.

Excluding Trump who took to *Twitter* to announce the decision and four White House officials who were quoted in the coverage, the ratio of anti-withdrawal sources to pro-withdrawal sources was 17 to 1 in the four days following Trump's announcement. As

shown in (Table 3), Trump's decision was considered "abrupt and chaotic", "abrupt and dangerous", "plunges the administration's Middle East strategy into disarray", and it "coincided with Russia's foreign policy goals". *The NYT* was obsessed with the Russian presence in Syria. In an editorial published on April 5th, 2018, the newspaper pointed out that:

Besides Iran, another notable American adversary is likely to benefit from the president's apparent desire to retreat from the Middle East: Russia. Already, Mr. Trump is letting Russia take the lead in Syria, ceding to Vladimir Putin the crucial diplomatic work of forging a political agreement between Mr. Assad and the Syrian rebels. Mr. Putin, an Assad ally, met Iranian and Turkish leaders in Istanbul on Wednesday to plan Syria's future. How does that serve American interests?

The sources quoted warned of the decision's disastrous consequences for the national security of the US and its allies. The large majority of the politicians, senators, and experts cited in the coverage strongly opposed the withdrawal of the troops for three main reasons: (1) not allowing IS to revive, (2) to protect the Kurdish militias, and (3) to counter Russia and Iran that had expanded their regional footprint. These three main reasons are not necessarily mutually exclusive as they can be regarded as part of an over-arching American narrative about the Syrian conflict and the role of the US in the conflict, in the wider Middle East and globally. Regardless of how it had been framed by Western media, the US presence in Syria could be considered an occupation in contrast to Russian and Iranian forces, Hezbollah and other Shiite groups because these were invited to Syria by a sovereign government that is recognised by the UN.

	Consequences for the US	Consequences for Russia or Iran
<i>The NYT</i>	Abrupt and chaotic/ Jolting but predictable/ plunges the administration's Middle East strategy into disarray/ Actions so closely coincided with Russia's foreign policy goals/ Rattling and forsaking allies/ Abrupt and dangerous/ Hampers morale and undermines allied forces/ Worries Israel/ impulsive decision/ Betrayal to allies/ Abrupt announcement.	Ceding a strategically vital country to Russia and Iran/ Gift to Vladimir Putin/ Beneficiary to Iran/ Glee in Russia.

Table 3: Examples of how *The NYT* framed Trump's decision to withdraw from Syria

In its coverage against Trump's decision, *The NYT* suggested three main roles for US forces deployed abroad. Firstly, the role of world leader that requires these forces or pro-US militias to be in conflict zones to maintain US dominance. Secondly, to counter the Russian and the Iranian influence in Syria particularly and in the Middle East generally. This was explicitly pointed to in a news article published on December 21st, 2018 titled *Glee in Russia over Trump's Foreign Policy Largess*:

President Trump blindsided his aides and the rest of the world by deciding to pull the full contingent of some 2,000 American troops out of Syria, helping the Kremlin to confirm Mr. Putin's gamble that intervening in Syria would revive Russian influence in the Middle East.

As indicated by *The NYT*, extending the Russian and Iranian influence over the Middle East would negatively impact the US interests and threaten its allies. The third role is protecting Israel from the Iranian forces and "Shiite militias" as well as preventing a possible war between Israel and Iran. *The NYT* reported that Israel had launched more than 200 airstrikes on Syria to "hamper" the Iranian influence and "prevent" advanced weapons from reaching Hezbollah. This justification of the Israeli aggression towards Syria was presented as an irrefutable fact; thus the newspaper warned that Israel would have no choice but to go to war with Iran in Syria if the US troops left.

Overall, *The NYT's* coverage normalised the US presence in Syria under the pretext of fighting terrorism, countering Russia's and Iran's influence, and ironically maintaining peace. The coverage encouraged the US presence and framed breaching an independent state's sovereignty as a noble mission. While Iran was condemned for supporting Shiite groups that were welcomed by the Syrian government, *The NYT* advocated US support for the Kurdish militias in north Syria. The involvement in Syria was presented as a war of necessity not a war of choice. Therefore, the demands were that US troops should not withdraw until this war was won. Nevertheless, two important questions were not addressed by the newspaper: how victory should be defined? And how it should be measured? Without answering these two questions, the US forces will potentially remain in Syria to fight in an endless war.

By the end of October 2019, former President Trump announced "new" plans to deploy forces to "protect" the oil fields in eastern Syria (Malsin and Nissenbaum, 2019; Shinkman, 2019). Commenting on the US announcement, Russia described the plans as "international state banditry" to protect oil smugglers. A statement issued by Russia's Ministry of Defence accused the US troops and private security companies of protecting

oil smugglers who make USD30 million per month stealing Syrian oil (Reuters, 2019b). The US realises that the oil fields belong to Syria and its people. It also realises that the Syrian forces are capable of protecting this area and other parts of Syria taking into consideration that by 2019 the forces had reclaimed most of the areas previously controlled by the opposition armed forces. Commenting on the US plans, Barry McCaffrey, a high profile army veteran took to *Twitter*, saying that:

Trump comment US intends to keep the oil in Syria. Guard with US armored forces. Bring in US oil companies to modernize the field. WHAT ARE WE BECOMING.... PIRATES? If ISIS is defeated we lack Congressional authority to stay. The oil belongs to Syria (McCaffreyr, 2019).

Paul R. Pillar (2019), another veteran who served in the CIA for about 30 years wrote in *The National Interest*:

Confusion has prevailed regarding the purposes of the U.S. troop presence in Syria, and whether the declared purposes are the actual ones. Originally the expedition was widely understood to be all about combating the Islamic State (ISIS) after the group had established a mini-state on a large portion of Syrian and Iraqi territory. Then hawks within the Trump administration and President Trump himself, in a classic case of mission creep, declared that the U.S. troops were also in Syria to "watch Iran". Later variations of the creeped-up mission included not only watching Iran but also, through some unexplained mechanism, getting Iran and maybe Russia to abandon their positions in Syria.

In August 2020, an agreement was signed by a US firm called Delta Crescent Energy and Kurdish groups to "develop and export" (in fact steal) the Syrian oil in Eastern Syria where the US main army base is. Delta Crescent Energy was founded, according to *CNN*, by a number of army veterans and former diplomats (Atwood and Browne, 2020). Protecting oil fields from IS was another pretext to stay in Syria as the US from the first days had chosen to build its main military base near the oil fields in Eastern Syria.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the coverage of *The NYT* of the Syrian conflict. The analysis shows that the majority of *The NYT*'s articles were reported from outside Syria. The coverage adopted a very biased, anti-Syrian government narrative. Syrian official

sources were quoted in 214 articles (20.7 per cent) and not quoted in 819 articles (79.2 per cent). In the articles that quoted Syrian official sources, the average use of sources particularly in relation to the Syrian struggle was one to three voices in favour of the anti-government sources.

The analysis also found that the overall *NYT*'s narrative encouraged foreign intervention by imposing sanctions on the Syrian government, supporting the opposition armed forces, or air strikes on Syria to topple the government and to "counter" terrorism. In the years 2011, 2012 and early 2013, the majority of the articles called for humanitarian intervention because *The NYT* coverage denied the existence of terrorism in Syria before strongly pushing for the fighting terrorism agenda in 2014. The intervention in Syria was framed as a war of necessity. Concerning its coverage of the "war on terror", *The NYT* depended heavily on US sources including officials and former officials from the White House, the Department of State, the Pentagon, and intelligence agencies. Overall, *The NYT* represented and promoted the US official narrative of the conflict and performed a propaganda role for the US interventionist.

Chapter 4: Analysis of *The NYT's* coverage of the Syrian conflict

Chapter 4 continues an analysis of the use of sources in *The NYT's* coverage of the Syrian conflict, particularly in the alleged chemical attacks coverage. It addresses the main problems including the dominance of US official sources. It also discusses how *The NYT* framed the presence and actions taken by the foreign forces in Syria, particularly of the armed forces of the US, Europe, Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah. This chapter shows how the US and their allies were framed positively as protectors of the Syrian people while Russia, Iran and Hezbollah were framed as abusers of human rights and murderers of the Syrian people. The analysis also highlights some of the rhetorical and other techniques used to frame the US and Russian contribution to the humanitarian crisis including "intention and focus", "sourcing", and "distraction" that were employed to accuse the Syrian-Russian forces of intentionally targeting civilians and underestimating or overlooking the targeting of civilians by US air strikes. Chapter 4 argues that *The NYT's* coverage sought to legitimise the US military presence in Syria and delegitimise the role of Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah during the conflict.

4.1 *The NYT's* coverage of the alleged chemical attacks

There were 73 news articles that reported on the alleged chemical attacks in Syria and issues related to the attacks. It is noted that the first allegation of use of chemical weapons in Homs on December 23rd, 2012 was only reported by *The NYT's* on January 16th, 2013. The newspaper relied on what it described as a classified cable sent by the US Consul General in Istanbul. Notably, neither the White House nor the State Department confirmed the occurrence of this event. The analysis reveals that *The NYT's* coverage was heavily based on sources associated with governments known to be hostile to the Syrian government such as the US, British, French, Turkish and Israeli governments. These governments all had an explicit and often shared agenda in the Syrian conflict and have aided opposition groups with a view to overthrowing the Syrian government (Table 4). Overall, of 382 individuals or NGOs quoted in the coverage, 245 sources (64.1 per cent) accused the Syrian government of carrying out chemical attacks before conducting an independent investigation.

Accusing the Syrian government		Defending/demanding an investigation		International organisations	
US officials	117 (30.6%)	Syrian officials	21 (5.4%)	UN	27 (7%)
US Congressional Reps.	14 (3.6%)	Russian /Iranian officials	36 (9.4%)	OPCW	18 (4.7%)
Retired US officials	22 (9.4%)	Chinese/ Arg officials	3 (0.7%)	HRW	1 (0.2%)
European officials	36 (9.4%)	US officials	14 (3.6%)	DWB	1 (0.2%)
Israeli officials	13 (3.4%)	European officials	2 (0.5%)		
Syrian anti-government	31 (8.1%)	Israeli officials	2 (0.5%)		
Experts	12 (3.1%)	Experts	12 (3.1%)		
Total	245 (64.1%)		90 (23.5%)		47 (12.3%)

Table 4: Use of sources in the coverage of the chemical attacks

In the chemical attack that took place in Khan Al-Assal (a town in northern Syria) on March 19th, 2013, the coverage did not rule out the involvement of the opposition forces (Barnard, 2013). As for the sources, 14 US officials were careful not to take any side in the first days following this attack and other alleged attacks in 2013. The possible reasons for the reluctance of US officials to attribute blame and therefore not directly accuse the Syrian government of carrying out a chemical attack are that they had not then reached a conclusion about who carried out the attack or were unable to confirm that such an attack had taken place.

However, the narrative changed in the following years. For instance, US official sources tended to quickly confirm their conclusions about the alleged attacks in Idlib on April 4th, 2017 and on April 7th, 2018. In the coverage, these sources were able to recount their narrative of the events without being challenged to provide evidence by *The NYT*. The newspaper relied on conclusions of US intelligence reports (often not specifying which agency or agencies in particular) to assert that the chemical attacks had taken place and on this basis to push for attacking Syrian targets with air strikes. With regard to use of UN and international NGOs sources, these including the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Human Rights Watch (HRW), and Doctors Without Borders (DWB) were quoted a combined total of 47 times (12.3 per cent) in the coverage. This included ten news articles that were not reporting on alleged chemical attacks but referred to news released by the OPCW about the process of disposing of Syrian chemical stockpiles under the agreement signed by the US and Russia in 2013.

Thus, if these OPCW news articles were to be excluded, the use of international organisation sources quoted in the alleged chemical attack coverage would drop to

about 9.9 per cent. *The NYT's* coverage, particularly within the first few days of the alleged chemical attacks, relied on official sources such as the White House, the Pentagon, intelligence agencies, US politicians, European or Israeli officials, Syrian anti-government activists and NGOs, or experts/retirees tied with the US government. In most of the coverage Syrian official sources were not given the opportunity to address the accusations. In numbers, *The NYT's* coverage quoted Syrian officials 21 times in 73 news articles. To put this number into perspective, Israeli officials and intelligence agencies, for instance, were quoted 15 times and provided the opportunity to accuse the Syrian government of using chemical weapons or to discuss the type of action against Syria that should have been taken. Except for two anonymous Israeli officials, other intelligence analysts and officials such as then Minister of Justice Tzipi Livni were certain that the Syrian government carried out chemical attacks.

Reporting on an alleged use of chemical weapons, *The NYT* stated in an article titled *Chemicals Would Be 'Game Changer' in Syria, Obama Says* published on March 20th, 2013 "Ms. Livni, the new Israeli justice minister, said in an interview with *CNN*, 'It's clear for us here in Israel that it's (chemical weaponry) being used,' adding, 'This, I believe, should be on the table in the discussions (with US officials)". In another article published on April 23rd, 2013 titled *Israel Says it has Proof that Syria has Used Chemical Weapons*, the newspaper stated that "the Israeli intelligence analyst, Brig. Gen. Itai Brun, told participants at a security conference in Tel Aviv that the Syrian government 'has increasingly used chemical weapons'".

The conclusions reached by the Israeli officials were based on anonymous intelligence reports. While *The NYT* stated that the Israeli officials did not present physical evidence to support their claims, these officials were quoted as if they were neutral observers or commentators on this issue. In addition, Israeli sources were given almost as much coverage as Syrian official sources. As shown in (Table 5), of 25 news articles citing one or both sides (the table shows 28 articles instead of 25 because sometimes both sources were cited in one article), Syrian official sources were allocated 1606 words in the whole coverage while Israeli official sources were allocated 1315 words.

	No. of articles	No. of sources cited	Words allocated
Syrian officials	20	21	1606 words
Israeli officials	8	15	1315 words

Table 5: Sources and words allocated for Syrian and Israeli sources in the coverage of the chemical attacks

In one case, *The NYT* tended to shift its conclusion in a matter of days from not fully confirming an occurrence of a chemical attack to encouraging the US President to act more decisively towards Syria. For example, an editorial published on April 24th, 2013 claimed that "it's not hard to imagine that President Bashar al-Assad, desperately clinging to power, might use chemical weapons against the Syrian people". However, the editorial then struck a more moderate tone stating that "while he may be capable of using weapons of mass destruction, there is no proof that he has done so". The following day, a similar view was published in a news article titled *U.S. Sees No Conclusive Evidence of Chemical Arms Use by Syria*:

The Obama administration shares the suspicions of several of its allies that the Syrian government has used chemical weapons, a senior official said Wednesday, but it lacks the conclusive evidence that President Obama has said would lead to American intervention.

Nonetheless, the newspaper later replaced this article with another one titled *White House Says it Believes Syria has Used Chemical Arms* that reported:

The White House said Thursday that it believes the Syrian government has used chemical weapons in its civil war, an assessment that could test President Obama's repeated warnings that such an attack could precipitate American intervention in Syria.

A note was left on the first article that was replaced and it stated: "Editor's Note: This article, which appeared in Thursday's print editions of *The Times*, has been republished for archiving purposes. The latest article on Syria and chemical weapons can be found here". Interestingly, *The NYT* in the first article (before it was replaced) quoted a US official saying that "even if that investigation proves the use of chemicals, this official said, the White House must determine who used them and whether they were used deliberately or accidentally. He did not offer a timetable for that process". However, the second article that replaced the first one was based on reports from intelligence agencies that "with varying degrees of confidence" concluded that "the government of President

Bashar al-Assad had used the chemical agent sarin on a small scale". Remarkably, the shifting from "no conclusive evidence" in the first article to "varying degrees of confidence" in the updated one occurred within less than two days. Consequently, *The NYT's* narrative changed from uncertainty to confirming the attack based on the conclusions of US intelligence reports. In an editorial published on April 29th, 2013 the newspaper moved one step further to urge the White House to punish Syria. The editorial warned that "failure to act now could be misread by Mr. Assad as well as leaders in Iran and North Korea".

However, the editorial suggested that "Mr. Obama should only act if he has compelling documentation that the sarin gas was used in an attack by Syrian forces and was not the result of an accident or fertilizer". *The NYT* was in line with the official storytelling and shifted as the official account shifted. Instead of questioning the "evidence" or "conclusions" reached by US intelligence, the newspaper provided a free platform for officials and intelligence. On the other hand, *The NYT* allocated relatively little coverage to officials or experts who variously defended the Syrian government by denying its involvement in carrying out chemical attacks, or called for unbiased investigations, or simply refused to back attacking Syria. This included officials from Syria, Russia, Iran, and China. These were quoted 90 times (23.5 per cent) or about one-third of the number of times the anti-Syrian government sources were quoted.

Overall, Syrian official sources were only quoted 21 times (5.4 per cent), Russian officials were quoted 34 times (8.9 per cent) while Iranian and Chinese sources were only quoted two times each (0.5 per cent). Also quoted were a German official, an unnamed European diplomat, an Argentinean diplomat, and two US senators who opposed attacking Syria by any means. Other sources, such as experts or doctors who spoke about symptoms of chemical exposure or questioned whether an attack was carried out at all, were quoted 12 times (3.1 per cent).

The NYT's coverage of the alleged chemical attack can be questioned not only for its reliance on US official and other Western or Israeli sources, but also for relying on accounts of witnesses interviewed by phone from abroad or on videos uploaded online by anti-Syrian government activists and NGOs such as the White Helmets to reach a questionable conclusion on such a critical issue.

For instance, a news article reporting on the aftermath of the alleged Douma attack published on April 18th, 2018 stated that:

A review by *The New York Times* of videos of the aftermath and interviews with residents of Douma, medics and rescue workers suggested that metal canisters containing a chemical were dropped from Syrian government helicopters during a wider offensive to rout the rebels.

A hyperlink attached to this text led to another news article published on April 11th, 2018 titled *In a Syrian Town, People Started Shouting: 'Chemicals! Chemicals!'* (the article referred to several other articles and so on). This article claimed that:

While much about the attack remains unclear, a *New York Times* review of more than 20 videos of its aftermath, an examination of flight records compiled by citizen observers, and interviews with a dozen residents, medics and rescue workers suggest that during a military push to break the will of Douma's rebels, pro-government forces dropped charges bearing some kind of chemical compound that suffocated at least 43 people and left many more struggling to breathe.

The NYT's did not have a reporter on the ground and its evaluation was based on video clips, images and phone interviews. Moreover, it is noted that a news article confirming that a chemical attack had taken place would usually refer the reader to another news article that was believed to provide corroborative evidence. Nevertheless, the article referred to cited different articles reporting on the incident none of which provided corroborating evidence. Furthermore, in a news article titled *Suspected Chemical Attack in Syria: What We Know and Don't Know*, *The NYT* reported on a UN statement in a way that suited its agenda. There was a paragraph that stated:

The United Nations has not determined responsibility for the attack. Rival resolutions from the United States and Russia on how to investigate the attack were defeated.

The sentence "the United Nations has not determined responsibility for the attack" seems to indicate that the UN confirmed the occurrence of the attack. Nevertheless, the UN's statement issued on April 8th, did not confirm a chemical attack took place. The statement said that "the Secretary-General is particularly alarmed by allegations that chemical weapons have been used against civilian populations in Douma. While the United Nations is not in a position to verify these reports, the Secretary-General notes

that any use of chemical weapons, if confirmed, is abhorrent, and requires a thorough investigation" (United Nations, 2018a).

There is a difference between determining responsibility as reported by *The NYT* and not confirming the allegations as stated by the UN. Determining responsibility means that the attack was confirmed and the next step was to find the perpetrator, while the UN's statement did not confirm the occurrence of the attack in the first place. It can be argued that *The NYT* was referring to another UN statement than the one that was published on April 8th, 2018. The UN record was inspected and it was found that there were only two other statements issued on April 10th and 11th, 2018 before *The NYT's* article titled *Suspected Chemical Attack in Syria: What We Know and Don't Know* was published.

These two statements, however, did not confirm the alleged attack. The first statement was published on April 10th, 2018 and stated that: "any confirmed use of chemical weapons, by any party to the conflict and under any circumstances, is abhorrent and a clear violation of international law. The seriousness of the recent allegations requires a thorough investigation using impartial, independent and professional expertise" (United Nations, 2018b). The second statement was published on April 11th, 2018 and stated that "yesterday, I expressed my outrage at the reports of continued use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. I have also been closely following developments in the Security Council and regret that the Council has so far been unable to reach agreement on this issue" (United Nations, 2018c).

There was also another news article from the WHO that was only published on April 11th, reporting on the number of casualties of the attack that demanded "'unhindered access' to site of suspected chemical attack in Syria" (Peace and Security, 2018). It is clear that the statements or the news article that were issued by the UN before April 11th, 2018 demanded an investigation of the "allegations". Strikingly, the report issued later that year by the OPCW team that visited Douma and investigated the allegations concluded that: "no organophosphorus nerve agents or their degradation products were detected, either in the environmental samples or in plasma samples from the alleged casualties" (OPCW, 2018). Earlier, Riam Dalati, a *BBC* Syria producer, tweeted on February 14th, 2018 that the hospital scene, one of the pieces of evidence used to confirm the Douma attack by *The NYT*, was staged (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Screenshot of Riam Dalati's tweet published on February 14th, 2019

As shown in (Figure 2), the *BBC* producer Dalati suggested, four days after the incident, that the Douma attack may had been staged. In a tweet posted on April 11th, 2018, Dalati accused "pro-rebel activists" of staging some of the scenes distributed to the international media.



Figure 2: Screenshot of Riam Dalati's tweet published on April 11th, 2018

Overall, the main theme in *The NYT's* coverage of the alleged chemical attacks was the need for a military response. The newspaper repeatedly cited the former US President Barack Obama's "red line" and "game changer" statements (referring to the need for military action in case chemical weapons were used) to encourage a military response against Syria even before an unbiased investigation took place. Much can be said about the use of chemical weapons in Syria. While this issue warrants much deeper investigation elsewhere, it is important to highlight here at least one incident that demonstrates how many parties and conflicting agendas were involved in this critical issue. For example, an investigation by Seymour Hersh, the prominent US investigative journalist, raised serious questions about the involvement of Turkey in supplying Al-Nusra Front with sarin gas. In an essay published in the *London Review of Books* about the use of sarin gas in Syria, Hersh who was analysing the chemical weapon attack in

Ghouta near Damascus on August 21st, 2013, pointed out that Al-Nusra Front had access to chemical weapons (Hersh, 2013). This followed another alleged attack in the same year in Khan Al-Assal. Earlier, specifically in May 2013, a statement by Carla del Ponte, a member of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria suggested that the "rebels" in Syria had used chemical weapons (Reuters, 2013a; The Washington Times, 2013).

However, the US had cast doubt over this statement while the UN said that it had not yet reached a conclusion about who was responsible for the use of chemical weapons (Harding et al., 2013). About the end of May 2013, 12 people suspected to be Al-Nusra Front members were arrested in Turkey. Local media reported that the suspects were in possession of two kilograms of sarin gas but the Turkish authorities denied these allegations (Reuters, 2013b). In July 2013, Russia handed over documents to the UN that claimed that Syrian "rebels" had used chemical weapons in an attack on the Syrian army (The Telegraph, 2013). About one year later, Hersh (2014) revealed with precise details that Al-Nusra Front had used chemical weapons on March 19th, 2013 in Khan Al-Assal to attack the Syrian Army. Answering the question of how Al-Nusra Front had obtained chemical weapons, Hersh suggested that the Turkish National Intelligence (MIT) was working on developing "a chemical warfare capability" (Hersh, 2014). Hersh insisted that his information was based on a briefing issued by the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) despite DIA sources denying that any such briefing had taken place:

The paper (Hersh referring to the DIA briefing) drew on classified intelligence from numerous agencies: 'Turkey and Saudi-based chemical facilitators,' it said, 'were attempting to obtain sarin precursors in bulk, tens of kilograms, likely for the anticipated large scale production effort in Syria. '(Asked about the DIA paper, a spokesperson for the director of national intelligence said: 'No such paper was ever requested or produced by intelligence community analysts.').

Moreover, Michael Maloof (2013), a former senior security policy analyst in the Office of the US Secretary of Defense, revealed based on a classified document that the US military had confiscated sarin gas found in possession of Al-Nusra Front members in Syria in 2013 that was transferred via Turkey. Furthermore, Eren Erdem, a former

Turkish MP, said in an interview with *Russia Today* (2015a) that he had presented solid evidence to the Turkish parliament that showed that Turkey transferred key ingredients of sarin to IS in Syria (IS split from Al-Nusra Front and announced itself as an independent organisation in 2013).

Eren Erdem said that "chemical weapon materials were brought to Turkey and put together in ISIS camps in Syria, which was known as the Iraqi Al-Qaeda at that time". He added that "as far as I understand, this file was closed just to place the guilt on the (Syrian) regime". Interestingly, two days after the interview, a "treason" investigation was launched by the Turkish authorities against Erdem (Russia Today, 2015b). Three years later, Erdem was arrested, held in detention for one year and charged with terrorism (Reuters, 2018b). It has to be stressed that Turkey only designated Al-Nusra Front as a terrorist organisation in 2014 (Hürriyet Daily News, 2014) along with Tahrir al-Sham (an alliance led by Al-Nusra Front) in 2018 (Reuters, 2018c). After IS split from Al-Nusra Front in 2013, there were several reports that accused IS and other armed groups of using chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq (Hubbard, 2018; Trapp, 2017; Schmitt, 2016; Deutsch, 2015; Reuters, 2013a).

Hersh's approach including use of "unnamed sources" and overlooking "Assad's butchery" was questioned by the former executive editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review* Michael Massing (2018). Nonetheless, this does not completely disprove the accuracy of Hersh's insight taking into consideration other evidence provided by Michael Maloof and Eren Erdem. In all cases, while the focus of the mainstream media was mostly on the Syrian government as perpetrator, the discussion above highlights significant complications and ample scope for different interpretations.

4.2 Framing of actions in the Syrian conflict

This section examines how the forces involved in the Syrian conflict were framed in *The NYT's* coverage. It focuses on the consequences for the government and the people of Syria of actions taken by the US, Britain, and France on the one hand, and Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah on the other. An action was often reported several times within one article. In such cases, an action was considered as a single act unless another type of action was reported as well. For instance, referring to the US plans to train and arm the Syrian opposition as an act to protect the Syrian people from the "brutal regime" is one action and referring to the US economic sanctions on Syria is another. The analysis focuses on news articles supported by editorials because they represent the

editorial line adopted by the newspaper. After excluding opinion pieces and articles that did not include actions taken by any side, 421 news articles were analysed. Overall, the US was framed 203 times; 171 times (84.2 per cent) positively, 30 times (14.7 per cent) negatively, and 2 times (0.9 per cent) in a neutral fashion.

To understand how the US intervention in Syria was framed, the US actions were divided into three main types: (1) fighting terrorism, (2) political, economic, and military assistance (to the opposition armed groups and their political wing), and (3) efforts of the US in the peace process (Table 6). Of these three, the US efforts to fight terrorism were framed 140 times (68.9 per cent), political, economic, and military support were framed 46 times (22.6 per cent), and efforts to support the peace process were framed 17 times (8.3 per cent). *The NYT's* coverage of the US intervention focused heavily on fighting terrorism (the first category). The US was framed 109 times (77.8 per cent) positively, 30 times (21.4 per cent) negatively, and 1 time (0.7 per cent) neutrally.

The deployment of the US troops was labelled as a noble goal because it was claimed as protection of the Syrian people and the region from terrorism. Efforts to fight terrorism, however, were framed 30 times negatively for three main reasons. Firstly, the low progress of the "war on terror" throughout the conflict. Secondly, for the civilian killed by US airstrikes during the fight against terrorism. Thirdly, for not providing sufficient assistance to the Syrian opposition forces including Kurdish militias during their fight against the Syrian government or the Turkish forces. For political, economic, and military actions, support such as imposing sanctions on Syria or arming the opposition forces was framed 46 times positively. Political, economic, and military actions were framed as indispensable steps to protect the Syrian people from their government. As a case in point, an editorial titled *Ill-Considered Advice on Syria* published on April 29th, 2013 praised the Obama administration for its work with the Syrian opposition. The editorial pointed out that the US was:

The largest donor of humanitarian aid to Syrians (\$400 million), and it just doubled its nonlethal aid to the opposition to \$250 million. With mixed success, Washington has also worked to organize fractious rebel groups into a more cohesive and effective whole, while delegitimizing Mr. Assad.

Another editorial published two years earlier on June 17th, 2011 titled *Syria's*

Nightmare, called on expanding the sanctions on Syria. The editorial stated that "American and European sanctions should be expanded to cover more Syrian officials as well as businesses allied with the regime. There is talk in Washington about pushing the top consumers of Syrian oil — Germany, Italy, France and the Netherlands — to stop buying it". Another example was an editorial published on August 18th, 2011 arguing "Washington has limited economic and diplomatic leverage with Damascus. But if there ever was a time to use it, it is surely now". *The NYT* also demanded that other countries such as Turkey impose more sanctions on Syria. An editorial titled *Syria and the Arab League* published on November 8th, 2011, stated that it was "extremely disappointing that Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey still has not backed up his tough anti-Assad talk — and his support for the Syrian opposition — with tough sanctions".

As for the military support to the Syrian opposition, an editorial titled *Crushing Homs* published on March 2nd, 2012 said that "the United States and its allies should consider providing the rebels with communications equipment, intelligence and nonlethal training". Another editorial titled *Syria's Horrors* published on April 24th, 2012 stated that "the United States this week opened the door to the possibility. At a minimum, Washington and its allies should consider providing communications equipment, intelligence and military training". Furthermore, an editorial titled *Help for Syrian Rebels* published on April 28th, 2013 said that "given the failure of efforts to forge a political solution to the conflict, a Western turn toward greater support for the rebel fighters may be inevitable".

Towards the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014, aiding opposition forces was labelled as a necessity to fight terrorism. This change in the coverage echoed the justification for changing the rationale for US government intervention from protecting civilians from the government to protecting civilians from terrorism. Not surprisingly, "protecting" civilians from the "regime" frame was used less often after 2014 because the narrative then predominantly focused on fighting terrorism. As for Britain, France or Europe more generally, their political and economic sanctions on the Syrian government were framed 18 times (100 per cent) positively and their efforts to fight terrorism were framed seven times (100 per cent) positively. An editorial published on August 31st, 2011 argued that:

The European Union, a major importer of Syrian oil, could have a far greater impact. The Europeans

announced last week that they would impose new sanctions, but members are still squabbling over details. An oil embargo is essential, but sanctions should also be imposed on Syrian banks and energy and telecommunications companies.

Urging the US and the European countries to impose sanctions on Syria had been the main demand in *The NYT's* coverage particularly in the first year of the Syrian conflict.

	Positive frame			Negative frame		
	F T	S M	P P	F T	S M	P P
The US	109	46	16	30	0	0
203 times (171 times= 84.2% P; 30 times= 14.7% N; 2 times= 0.9% Neu)						

Table 6: Framing the US actions (FT= fighting terrorism; S/M= sanction and military support; PP=protecting people)

On the other hand, the actions of Russia, Iran and Hezbollah were framed 286 times. In total, Russia was framed 190 times; 34 times (17.8 per cent) positively, 138 times (72.6 per cent) negatively, and 18 times (9.4 per cent) in a neutral manner. In relation to its political efforts, Russia was framed 23 times (12.1 per cent) positively for its role in the peace process particularly its political efforts including support for the 2013 agreement to dispose of the Syrian chemical stockpiles. Negative frames focused on Russia as being protector of a "brutal regime" or their interests in Syria. With regard to the military battles, the Russian forces were framed 60 times (31.5 per cent) negatively including accusing them of intentionally targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. The statistics reveal that *The NYT's* coverage largely overlooked Russia's efforts to fight terrorism. These efforts were only referred to 14 times including ten times (5.2 per cent) positively and four times (2.1 per cent) negatively. For example, an article published on October 17th, 2017 framed the Syrian forces' and their allies' efforts to fight terrorism positively:

But over the weekend, Syrian government forces, backed by their Russian and Iranian allies, took Mayadeen and continued their advance into the provincial capital, leaving the Islamic State with the border town as the only urban area entirely under its control in Syria.

Iran was framed 58 times inclusive of 5 times (8.6 per cent) positively, 51 times (87.9

per cent) negatively, and two times (3.4 per cent) in a neutral manner. An example of a neutral frame for Iran can be read from a news article published on October 15th, 2012 reporting that "Iran is the only regional ally of the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, and is believed to be supplying weapons and training, although Iran says it is providing only humanitarian aid". *The NYT's* coverage framed Hezbollah 38 times including three times (7.8 per cent) positively referring to its battles against IS, 31 times (81.5 per cent) negatively, and four times (10.5 per cent) neutrally (Table 7).

The Iranian presence in Syria was framed 36 times negatively as a protector of the government or their interests. Iran was accused of standing against the Syrian people by supporting the president. The Iranian forces were also framed 14 times negatively for "targeting" the people and two times in a neutral way. Iran's efforts to fight terrorism were framed five times positively more than they were framed negatively (one time or 1.7 per cent). Nonetheless, considering their major contribution, the coverage generally overlooked the Iranians' role in the war against terrorism. Moreover, when reporting on their military presence in Syria is included, the negative frame of Iran was dominant in the coverage.

The NYT's coverage framed Hezbollah 38 times including three times (7.8 per cent) positively referring to its battles against IS, four times (10.5 per cent) neutrally, and 31 times (81.5 per cent) negatively. Hezbollah was accused of "targeting" the Syrian people or fighting for its own interests. For example, Hezbollah was alleged to have targeted Syrian dissidents abroad. A news article published on April 6th, 2011 stated that:

In Beirut, Syrian dissidents are far from safe. The Lebanese capital was under Syrian military occupation from 1976 to 2005 and the Syrian security apparatus had plenty of time to build relationships. It is still suspected of operating in Lebanon and local armed political parties with strong ties to Damascus — such as Hezbollah and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party — can also be tapped to do the Syrian regime's bidding.

Other accusations included "blocking" humanitarian aid from starving people (Barnard, 2014; Barnard, 2016a), being a "killing machine" (Wood, 2012), "killing" women and children and "kidnapping" their bodies as quoted by sources cited in the coverage (Myers and Gladstone, 2013), and collaborating with the Syrian government in bombing

of civilians (Hubbard, 2016a; Barnard, 2015). Hezbollah's involvement in Syria was presented as a threat to Lebanon mainly because it was believed this would lead to a sectarian war between Sunnis and Shiite. For example, a news article published on October 20th, 2012 suggested that "Hezbollah, (is) the militant Shiite movement that dominates the government and supports Mr. Assad's brutal fight against a 19-month effort to oust him. The deaths of thousands of Sunnis in that crackdown have increasingly enraged Sunnis in Lebanon". Remarkably, while *The NYT* found the US intervention in Syria 10,662 km away from the US shores was justifiable (to counter terrorism), it denied Hezbollah the right to protect its people from IS and Al-Nusra front that used to have military bases right across the Lebanese-Syrian border.

	Positive frame			Negative frame			Neutral frame	
	FT	PC	PP	FT	PR/PO	TP/PP	PO	PP
Russia	10	1	23	4	74	60	5	13
Iran	5	0	0	1	36	14	0	2
Hezbollah	1	0	2	1	18	12	3	1

Russia: 190 times (34 times = 17.8% P; 138 times= 72.6% N; 18 times= 9.4 Neu)

Iran: 58 times (5 times= 8.6% P; 51 times= 87.9% N; 2 times= 3.4% Neu)

Hezbollah: 38 times (3 times= 7.8% P; 31 times= 81.5% N; 4 times= 10.5% Neu)

P= positive; N= negative; Neu= neutral

Table 7: Framing the Russians', Iranians', and Hezbollah's actions in the Syrian conflict. (FT= fighting terrorism; PC= peace process; PR= protecting government; PO= protecting own interests; TP= targeting people; PP= protecting people)

Overall, *The NYT* framed the US intervention in Syria positively. The US government and forces were labelled as protectors of the Syrian people for imposing political and economic sanctions on the Syrian government, training and arming the opposition forces, or for their efforts to fight terrorism. In this light, considering that Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah were framed as fighting to protect the government or to protect or further their own interests (Hubbard, 2016b; The New York Times, 2012; MacFarquhar and Schwartz, 2012), the US forces and their allies were framed as the main force for defeating IS in Syria. *The NYT's* coverage sought to legitimise the US intervention in Syria. At the beginning of the protests, arming the opposition forces was considered a moral necessity. With the growing threat of terrorism towards the end of 2013, there was a need to justify the US "boots on the ground". Thus, the coverage

shifted to the countering terrorism theme.

In contrast, there was a need to demonise Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah and their presence in Syria by overlooking the anti-US alliance's efforts in countering terrorism. These three parties were hardly framed at all in the coverage of the war against IS and other terrorist organisations. In total, the three were framed only 16 times; 10 times (3.4 per cent) positively and six times (2 per cent) negatively. The ten times in which the efforts of Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah were given positive frames were greatly outweighed by the 109 times the US and its efforts in the fight against terrorism were framed positively. Moreover, considering the overall frame, the actions of Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah in Syria were framed 42 times (14.6 per cent) positively, 24 times (8.3 per cent) neutrally, and 220 times (76.9 per cent) negatively. In comparison, the US actions were framed 30 times (14.7 per cent) negatively, often for not providing enough support for the opposition armed groups.

Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah were negatively framed in the coverage of the "war on terror" in Syria because they were accused of seeking to gain economic or political interests rather than fighting terrorism. For example, *The NYT* wrote on December 28th, 2018 that "Russia would like to see Mr. Assad regain control of Syria's oil reserves to help finance the country's reconstruction, while Iran wants to geographically connect forces it supports in Syria and Lebanon with those in Iraq". Moreover, Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah were accused of targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. For example, a news article published on February 12th, 2016 stated that "backed by the Russian airstrikes, Syrian government forces and Iran-backed militias are trying to besiege the rebel-held section of Aleppo to starve the rebels into submission".

It is noted that the use of negative frames to refer to Russia increased after 2015. This can be attributed to three main factors. Firstly, because Russia began its airstrike campaign in September 2015 about two years following the first US airstrike in Syria. Secondly, because the strategic situation on the ground was changing in favour of the Syrian government. For instance, by the end of 2016, Syrian forces and their allies had reclaimed the whole city of Aleppo (the second most important Syrian city after Damascus) and the Russian Air Force had played a pivotal role in supporting the forces that were allied to Syria. Thirdly, criticising Russia coincided with the coverage of the Mueller investigation that examined alleged Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential elections. Accusations against Russia about targeting people or protecting the Syrian President were more explicit in 2017 and 2018. In light of this, the following

section identifies techniques used in *The NYT's* coverage to frame the role of the US and Russia in causing civilian casualties in Syria.

4.3 Techniques used to frame the US and Russia contributions to the humanitarian crisis

This section examines articles that reported on attacks on civilians by the US and Russia. There were 19 articles that reported on civilian casualties as a result of the US airstrikes (one of which targeted US allied forces). Of these, 14 articles were dedicated to reporting on the humanitarian tragedy including seven articles in which civilian casualties were not the main theme. As for the Russian forces, civilian casualties were considered either as consequences of airstrikes or because of Russia's support of the Syrian government. Fifteen articles reporting on civilian casualties caused by the Russian airstrikes were analysed. It was found that the coverage employed three main techniques to report on the civilian casualties: (1) intention and focus, (2) sourcing, and (3) distraction (Table 8).

For the first technique, intention and focus, the US airstrikes targeting civilians were always assumed to be "unintentional", "wrong", "mistakes", "accidental", the result of "flawed intelligence" and attempted "self-defence" or official terminology was adopted to describe the targeting of civilians as "allegations". An editorial published on March 30th, 2017 suggested that "it is impossible to avoid all civilian casualties, especially in crowded cities" because IS fighters "use innocents as shields". The terms used to report on civilians killed by US airstrikes were generally mild and tolerant or understanding ones. The next paragraph is extracted from a news article published on January 6th, 2015 and shows just how tolerant *The NYT* was. While this quote is long, it is interesting to go over it carefully to understand the context in which the story was written:

The military has examined the credibility of 18 allegations that coalition airstrikes led to civilian casualties in Iraq and Syria from Aug. 8 to Dec. 30 last year, Sgt. Lawry said. Of those, 13 have been determined not to be credible. Of the 18 allegations, nine were said to have taken place in Syria, and nine in Iraq, she said, adding that no further details would be provided until the investigations were finished. Since the bombing campaign against the Islamic State began in August, American military officials

have maintained that they had no reports of civilian casualties. Lt. Gen. James L. Terry, the commander of the coalition of countries that is fighting the Islamic State, told reporters last month that the military had been going out of its way to avoid civilian casualties. "To date, we've got a very good record," General Terry said. "I am tracking no civilian casualties".

The US sources tended to underestimate the civilian casualties killed by their own forces. In eight articles, the Pentagon claimed to have conducted investigations to rebut reports of civilian casualties by framing the majority of the cases as "allegations" or "not credible". For example, a news article published on August 14th, 2015, quoted US Central Command as saying that they "had received reports of 31 such episodes since the air campaign began and had dismissed 17 of them as not credible. Six episodes are currently being investigated". However, on May 25th, 2016 the Pentagon claimed that it had "reviewed 25 allegations of civilian casualties in the bombing campaign that it deemed credible, and it acknowledged that airstrikes had killed 41 civilians and injured 28 others".

The technique "focus" was applied to the US military forces and its actions by overlooking civilian casualties or suffering. Civilian casualties (some news articles included casualties from other countries such as Iraq, Somalia, Yemen and Afghanistan) were referred to 19 times, in seven of which civilian casualties in the Syrian conflict were not the main theme in the article. There was also less focus on the human suffering and destruction of civilian infrastructure. For instance, little attention was given to civilian casualties in the coverage of Al-Raqqa, the operation that was described as a "victory" (this will be thoroughly investigated in Chapters 5 and 6). In two cases, destruction of civilian infrastructure was described as a tactic the US forces and their allies were forced to use to drive IS fighters out of a stronghold or to prevent them from advancing on the ground. For instance, the increase in US airstrikes was associated with the "successes" of the "war on terror". A news article published on October 17th, 2014 stated that:

Increased airstrikes over the besieged Syrian city of Kobani have allowed the American-led coalition to take out large numbers of Islamic State fighters, the top American commander for the Middle East said on Friday.

The NYT's coverage of Russia's role focused on civilian deaths and included details

suggesting that the majority of victims were "women" or "kids" and pointing to the destruction of civilian infrastructure such as houses, hospitals and markets. The coverage also highlighted the suffering of civilians because of lack of food and safe shelters. For instance, a news article published on December 16th, 2016 described the situation in Aleppo: "for months, the bodies have been piling up in eastern Aleppo as the buildings have come down, pulverised by Syrian and Russian jets, burying residents who could not flee in avalanches of bricks and mortar". The residents were described as "cold, hungry and scarred by the deaths of loved ones" as a direct result of the "butchery in Aleppo".

The Russian airstrikes were framed as "regular", "indiscriminate bombings", "war crime(s)", or "routine" (Specia and Bishara, 2016; Nechepurenko, 2016a; Gladstone and Sengupta, 2016; Barnard and Saad, 2018). The Russian forces' intention was framed, for instance, as an attempt to punish the armed opposition and anti-government civilians to force them into submission. A news article published on February 12th, 2016 accused the Russians of backing the Syrian government and pro-Syrian government groups that were "trying to besiege the rebel-held section of Aleppo to starve the rebels into submission (...) using starvation as a weapon is a war crime, but it has been widely used in the Syrian war". Another interesting point was that the total death toll in the Syrian conflict was not mentioned in any of the articles that reported on civilian casualties killed by US airstrikes. Nevertheless, the death toll was mentioned three times when reporting on Russian airstrikes including one particularly revealing news article published on February 11th, 2016 that directly associated Russian airstrikes with the increase in the death toll and a decrease in life expectancy in Syria:

As waves of heavy Russian airstrikes edged closer to the Turkish border on Thursday, a Syrian research group issued a report saying the impact of five years of war in Syria has been more devastating than already thought. The report from the Syrian Center for Policy Research said that at least 470,000 Syrians had died as a result of the war, almost twice the 250,000 counted a year and a half ago by the United Nations until it stopped counting because of a lack of confidence in the data. Life expectancy has dropped 14 years, to 56 from 70.

What *The NYT* did not clarify was that the 470,000 Syrian deaths included unknown numbers of civilians killed by the US and their allies, opposition armed groups, or

fighters from all sides killed in the battles. This suggests that Russia bore most of the responsibility for the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Furthermore, in a very rare confession, Robert S. Ford, the last American ambassador to Syria was quoted as saying in a news article published on April 4th, 2018 that attacking the Syrian forces was not about fighting terrorism or a mistake, implying that this was "about keeping the Syrians out of the oil fields held by our buddies". This was also implicitly pointed to in another news article published on February 8th, 2018:

The clash, on Wednesday night, occurred in an area of eastern Syria where government troops and their allies have competed with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, allied with the United States, to seize territory rich in oil and natural gas.

"Sourcing" was the second technique used to frame the US and Russian contribution to the humanitarian crisis. Pentagon officials were either the main source in the coverage or they were given more opportunity than were their Syrian or Russian counterparts to rebut accusations of negligence. Syrian and Russian officials were cited in two news articles to refute the US narrative of "mistakenly" bombing Syrian forces and civilians. Residents who criticised the US airstrikes were also quoted in two other news articles. Similarly, less consideration was given to the NGOs that criticised US operations in Syria. In 14 articles that were dedicated to civilian casualties of the US airstrikes, local and international NGOs such as HRW, Amnesty International, the Syrian Center for Policy Research, and the SOHR were only cited in seven articles (50 per cent). Nevertheless, except for two articles only, US officials were given more opportunity to refute the NGOs accusations.

To illustrate, a news article published on January 6th, 2015 titled *Reports of Civilian Deaths Prompt Inquiry into Strikes against ISIS* quoted only Pentagon officials. In another example, a news article published on March 21st, 2017 titled *U.S. Military Investigating Reports of Civilian Deaths in Syria Airstrike* consisted of 620 words, 463 words (74.6 per cent) of which were allocated to Pentagon officials to refute reports of hitting a mosque and killing 49 civilians. The other 157 words (25.3 per cent) comprised background information and one quotation from the SOHR. Reporting on the same incident, a news article published on June 7th, 2017 quoted the Pentagon claiming that the airstrike was "legal" and it "resulted in one possible civilian casualty, not dozens as human rights groups had asserted". This article consisted of 430 words, only

73 words (16.9 per cent) of which were allocated to HRW that represented the other point of view. The other 357 words (87.2 per cent) were allocated to Pentagon sources.

In contrast, Russian officials were only given limited opportunity in the coverage to defend themselves. Of 15 articles that referred to civilian casualties or Russian airstrikes, eight news articles (53.3 per cent) quoted Russian officials. These included one that cited three different Russian officials and one that only pointed out that "the Kremlin rejected the report (that accused Russian forces of targeting civilians)" without providing further details. US sources such as then President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry were quoted condemning the Russian forces and accusing them of committing "massacres" and "war crimes" (Gordon and Sengupta, 2016; Hubbard and Saad, 2016; Barnard, 2016c). In addition, the UN, international and local NGOs including DWB, anti-government NGOs such as the SOHR and the White Helmets were also given extensive coverage to criticise or accuse Russia of deliberately targeting civilians or committing "war crimes" (Zraick and Barnard, 2016; Nechepurenko, 2016b).

The third technique "distraction" was used four times in the examined articles. While some articles were reporting on civilian casualties caused by US airstrikes, they focused on Russia and Syria to blame them for the humanitarian crisis and served to distract the reader from US responsibility for civilian killings. As a case in point, a news article published on September 18th, 2016 titled *How a U.S. Airstrike Missed ISIS, but Damaged U.S. Policy in Syria*, started with "the United States' accidental bombing of Syrian troops over the weekend has put it on the defensive, undercutting American efforts to reduce violence in the civil war and open paths for humanitarian relief". The article, nonetheless, changed its focus to the Syrian Government and Russian forces. In numbers, the article consisted of 1328 words, 677 words (50.9 per cent) of which reported on the US "accidental bombing" and 651 words (49 per cent) were allocated to blaming Russia and Syria for the humanitarian crisis. Moreover, an article published on October, 17th, 2017 indicated that:

A victory in Raqqa has come at a heavy cost. Much of the city has been devastated by American-led airstrikes that killed more than 1,000 civilians, according to tallies by local activists and international monitors. In earlier years, many were killed by Russian and Syrian government strikes. About 270,000 residents have been displaced by the fighting, and thousands of homes

have been destroyed.

Despite the tolerant tone, this quotation was one of few where the US was blamed for civilian killings. While it specifically laid blame with the US, there was the "distraction" where Russia was blamed for much more killing and destruction of civilian infrastructure. Another example of the uneven coverage can be read in a news article published on February 8th, 2018 that reported on a US airstrike that killed more than 100 Syrian armed forces. The strike was framed by the Pentagon as "self-defence" and no questions about this framing were raised by *The NYT*. Notably, what seemed at first to be a news article reporting on the killing of 100 Syrian soldiers by US forces, turned out to be a claim that the Syrian forces killed more than 410 people including 100 children.

Technique	The US	Russia
Intention and focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wrongful deaths - Missed targets - Go awry - Go wrong - Accidental bombing - Mistaken bombing - Self-defence - Impossible to avoid - Flawed intelligence - Less reporting on civilian deaths and/or less emphasising on this issue. - Fewer details about the suffering of civilians (hunger, displaced people, refugees). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliberate - No restraint - War crimes - Indiscriminate bombings - Regularly - Routinely hitting hospitals and clinics, schools and markets - Details of civilian deaths. - Details of the suffering of civilians. - Focus on destruction of civilian infrastructure.
Sourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More coverage for US official source including the Pentagon. - Fewer NGO or anti-official narrative sources. - Under investigation/ outcome: the majority are allegations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less Russian official coverage. - Detailed quotes of NGO reports and anti-Syrian government NGOs.
Distraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pointing to casualties caused by US airstrikes before moving forward to speak about casualties caused by Russian Airstrikes. - Comparing the two countries' and speaking about how the US record is much better than Russia's record. 	

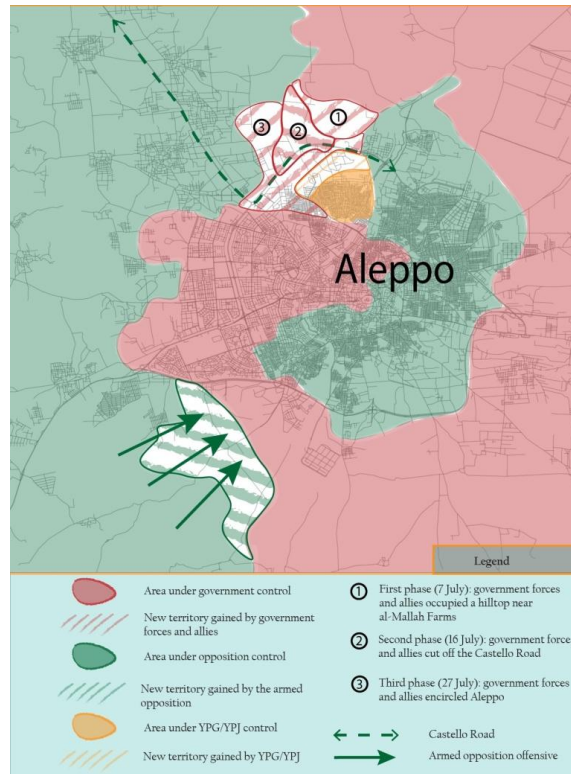
Table 8: Techniques used to frame the US and Russian contribution in the humanitarian crisis in Syria

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the coverage of the alleged chemical attacks that took place in Syria from 2012 to 2018. It also analysed framing actions of parties involved in the Syrian conflict and the techniques used to report on the humanitarian crisis. The analysis shows that the coverage of the alleged chemical attacks was biased towards the West. For instance, the majority of the sources (64.1 per cent) quoted in the coverage were associated with anti-Syria governments. In addition, there was a little coverage allocated to Syrian officials to address the accusations of using chemical weapons. This chapter demonstrates that *The NYT's* coverage of the alleged chemical attacks favoured military responses against Syria even before the perpetrator of these attacks was identified.

As for framing of actions, *The NYT's* coverage legitimised the US presence in Syria by framing it as a necessity to "protect" the Syrian people and "counter" terrorism. In contrast, the coverage delegitimised the presence of the Russians, Iranians, and Hezbollah by framing their roles as an aggression against the Syrian people or as fighting for their own political and economic interests. For contributions to the humanitarian crisis, *The NYT's* coverage employed three techniques: (1) intention and focus, (2) sourcing, and (3) distraction. The US airstrikes, for instance, were labelled as "mistakes" and "accidental". In contrast, Russian airstrikes were framed as "intentional", "deliberate", and "regular". *The NYT's* coverage reinforced the agenda adopted by US officials that the presence in Syria was for the benefit of the Syrian people, while the Russians, Iranians, and Hezbollah were playing a disruptive role in the country.

Chapter 5: Analysis of *The Independent's* coverage of the battles of Aleppo and Al-Raqqa



Map 2: The military situation in Aleppo in July 2016 (Courtesy of the Aleppo Project)

This chapter analyses *The Independent's* coverage of the battles of Aleppo and Al-Raqqa to highlight the very different reporting on the humanitarian crisis in the two cities. While the two crises were very similar, the coverage painted Aleppo as more of a humanitarian tragedy while Al-Raqqa was framed as liberation and this unbalanced reporting resulted, in part at least, from the very different use of sources and terminology. The military operation to recapture Aleppo was first launched by the Syrian army in 2012. The analysis, however, will examine the last stage of this operation that began in July 2016 until the entire city was claimed by the end of December. This operation involved Syrian and Russian forces and other pro-Syrian government armed groups such as Hezbollah. The military operation aimed first to control the Castello highway that linked East Aleppo (the last stronghold of the opposition armed forces in Aleppo) with the areas controlled by other opposition forces in the northern and western countryside outside the city. This highway was the only lifeline for the opposition forces before it was seized by the Syrian army.

The data cover the beginning of the last stage of the battle until the opposition armed forces were evacuated from East Aleppo. Two newspaper articles from *The Independent* were collected from each day from July 11th, 2016 to December 31st, 2016 (148 articles including 16 opinion pieces). As for the battle of Al-Raqqa that was launched by US coalition forces and Kurdish armed groups against IS, the data cover the beginning of the military operations from June 6th, 2017 to October 31st, 2017 (37 articles including one opinion piece). In total, 185 newspaper articles from *The Independent* were collected and analysed. The first section investigates the coverage of the battle of Aleppo, the second section examines the coverage of the battle of Al-Raqqa, and the third section compares the coverage of the two battles.

The analysis focuses on the use of sources, use of terminology, and use of visual content to report on the military operations. As for sources, each source used in the news articles was counted and categorised. For instance, statements by the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) or other state-controlled media were categorised as Syrian official sources because they represent the official voice. The White House, the State Department, or the Pentagon sources were considered official voices representing the US. As for images and video clips, these were counted and categorised based on their themes (such as civilian casualties or civil destruction) and what they say about the overall frame of the coverage will be analysed and discussed.

5.1 The battle of Aleppo: use of sources

Excluding 16 opinion pieces (because use of sources only concerns news articles), 501 individuals or NGOs were quoted in 132 news articles reporting on Aleppo (Table 9). Despite the central role that Syrian government forces obviously played in the battle of Aleppo, Syrian official sources were quoted in only 49 news articles. Amongst these articles, Syrian official sources were cited 54 times comprising only 10.7 per cent of the number of sources cited. *The Independent's* coverage relied on anti-government sources particularly the SOHR, the White Helmets, and "activists" who collectively were cited 141 times (28.1 per cent). The UN was the second most cited source in the coverage with 73 times (14.6 per cent) while NGOs such as DWB, HRW, or Amnesty International were quoted a total of 24 times (4.7 per cent). Russian sources were only cited 44 times (8.7 per cent), and the opposition armed forces were cited 31 times (6.1 per cent).

Unless an individual was identified by *The Independent* as a White Helmets member or an "activist", anti-government Syrian doctors and commentators overseas, and doctors and paramedics who served in Aleppo's hospitals and medical facilities, were categorised as "others" and these were cited a total of 27 times (5.3 per cent).

Sources cited in the coverage of Aleppo		
Type of source	Times	Percentage
SOHR /White Helmets/activists	141	28.1
The UN	73	14.5
Syrian officials	54	10.7
Russian	44	8.7
British/French	42	8.3
Opposition fighters	31	6.1
Others	27	5.3
The US	25	4.9
International NGOs	24	4.7
NATO/European /Turkish	21	4.1
Residents	11	2.1
Pro-Syria (non-Syrian)	8	1.5
Total	501	99

Table 9: Use of sources in *The Independent's* coverage of the battle of Aleppo

Examining local sources only, *The Independent* allocated extensive coverage to anti-government sources compared to pro-government sources (Table 10). Of the 226 sources, pro-government sources were cited 54 times (23.8 per cent) while anti-government sources were cited 172 times (76.1 per cent). The Syrian official voice was downgraded in the coverage of Aleppo in two ways. Firstly, by giving them less attention; they were only cited in about four of every ten news articles. Secondly, anti-Syrian government sources were given a louder voice as they were cited, on average, four times for each time a Syrian official was quoted.

Moreover, anti-government sources were considered trustworthy and their account of the events was sometimes published without being supported by solid evidence. For example, a news article titled *Aleppo: More than 100 Children Trapped in Building under Heavy Attack, Says Unicef*, published on December 13th, 2016 reported that "militia forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad are reported to have entered homes and killed at least 82 civilians during their advance on rebel-held territory". The article stated that the Syrian army denied the claims. However, *The Independent* did not clarify what exactly these "reports" were.

During the early years of the protests, stories framing the Syrian government and forces as "brutal and merciless" were published by mainstream media but these turned out to be staged or contrived. This included the stories of the "hero boy" (BBC, 2014) and the "Gay Girl in Damascus" (Addley, 2011). This is an issue that will be analysed in greater depth in Chapter 7 in the discussion of the part played by citizen journalism in the Syrian conflict.

Total use of local sources					
Pro-government sources			Anti-government sources		
	Times	Percentage		Times	Percentage
Syrian officials	54	23.8	Syrian Observatory/White Helmets	85	37.6
			Anti-government media and activists	56	24.7
			Opposition fighters	31	13.7
Total	54	23.8	Total	172	76

Table 10: Use of local sources in *The Independent's* coverage of the battle of Aleppo

5.2 The battle of Aleppo: use of visual content

This section includes opinion pieces because they were also accompanied by visual content ($N= 148$). One or more short clips were often attached to each article. Two types of images were also attached to each article: (1) images about the event being reported including the main image of the news article; (2) a photo album. This photo album is a group of images (often between 6 and 19 and sometimes 30 images) of previous events related to the story being reported or the Syrian conflict in general. A photo album was normally placed in the middle of the webpage and showed four images with the reader having to click on the album to view the rest of the images (Figure 3).

In total, 1584 images were attached to *The Independent's* articles; 174 images related to the event being reported and 1410 images were from the photo albums. On four occasions, albums that included images not related to the Syrian conflict that were attached to the coverage of Aleppo were excluded from the analysis. Of the 1584 images, 60 images were portraits of politicians, military figures, or Aleppo's map. While only eight were of anti-government fighters, the remaining images were of killed or injured civilians and the destruction of civilian infrastructure.



Figure 3: A photo album that appears in the middle of a news article published on August 2nd, 2016

As for the video clips, 8978 seconds or 149.6 minutes of short clips were attached to *The Independent's* articles. Some of these clips were produced by pro-opposition groups such as the White Helmets or other media groups. Similar to the images, over 133 minutes (or about 90 per cent) of these clips were about the humanitarian crisis in the city and contained graphic scenes of killed or injured civilians (babies, children, or women), destruction of civilian infrastructure including hospitals and houses, and the miserable conditions of the civilians trapped in Aleppo such as queuing to buy bread from a local bakery (e.g. Saul, 2016; The Independent, 2016; Koenders, 2016; Mortimer, 2016).

As for the news articles, 76 of 132 (57.5 per cent) reported on the civilian death toll or mentioned it at least one time within the article. Other news articles reported on injuries amongst civilians but not on the death toll, the peace process or the evacuation of opposition armed forces from Aleppo. The humanitarian tragedy including civilian deaths or injuries was comprehensively covered in almost all news articles. The main two themes of the coverage of Aleppo including the visual content were: the humanitarian tragedy (focusing in particular on children and women) and the destruction of hospitals and medical facilities. Considering it was a critical issue, the coverage focused on the children trapped in East Aleppo.

5.3 The battle of Al-Raqqa: use of sources

Excluding one opinion piece, 103 individuals or NGOs were quoted in 36 news articles of Al-Raqqa (Table 11). Kurdish militia sources alongside US officials were the two most cited sources in the coverage. Kurdish sources were quoted 28 times (27.1 per cent) and US sources were cited 21 times (20.3 per cent). Syrian official sources were

largely ignored in the coverage and were cited two times only (1.9 per cent) while Russian sources were cited four times (3.8 per cent).

Compared with the coverage of the battle for Aleppo, there was a lack of use of UN and NGO sources. The UN was only cited seven times (6.7 per cent) while the SOHR was cited ten times (9.7 per cent). International NGOs such as the monitoring group Airwars, HRW, and Amnesty International were only cited nine times in total (8.7 per cent). These organisations' websites, published at least 17 articles (reports, newspaper material, visual content) during the military operations and included visual content and interviews with witnesses recounting the killing of hundreds of civilians in attacks on non-military targets in the city (e.g. Human Rights Watch, 2017a).

Moreover, an active conflict monitoring group called "Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently" was cited two times only (1.9 per cent). This group that was formed by Syrian journalists defines itself as being comprised of "non-violent activists in Raqqa to expose the atrocities committed by The (sic) regime of Bashar Al-Assad and terrorist extremist group (IS)". It also claims to be independent and "not tied to any political or military group" (Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently, 2019). Despite the fact that this organisation published 22 articles on its website about different issues related to Al-Raqqa between June 2017 and September 2017, these articles were given far less attention by *The Independent*.

Sources cited in the coverage of Al-Raqqa		
Type of source	Times	Percentage
Kurdish sources or fighters	28	27.1
The US	21	20.3
The UN	7	6.7
Syrian	2	1.9
Local anti-government NGOs	10	9.7
International NGOs	9	8.7
Residents	7	6.7
Russians	4	3.8
British and French	3	2.9
Turkish	1	0.9
Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently	2	1.9
IS fighters	2	1.9
Others	7	6.7
Total	103	99.2

Table 11: Use of sources in *The Independent*'s coverage of the battle of Al-Raqqa

5.4 The battle of Al-Raqqa: use of visual content

Fifty-four images, 343 album images, and 1730 seconds or 28.8 minutes of video clips were attached with the 37 articles that reported on Al-Raqqa. As with Aleppo, some of the images or videos were repeatedly attached to different articles. Visual content was of Kurdish fighters, destruction of civilian infrastructure in Al-Raqqa, and on seven occasions, images or videos of civilians celebrating after they left areas controlled by IS. The main three themes in the coverage of Al-Raqqa were revenge and celebration. The theme of civilian casualties was covered to a lesser extent. The first theme covered Kurdish armed groups and their Yazidi female fighter allies who recounted their fight against IS. The second theme focused on civilian celebrations either for being freed from IS-held areas or for the "victory" over IS. Overall, while a death toll was included in 15 of 36 news articles (41.6 per cent), civilian casualties were the main theme in only seven articles. The other articles reported mainly on the military operations.

5.5 Comparison of the coverage of the battles of Aleppo and Al-Raqqa

In order to understand the context in which the two battles were reported, this section compares the number of civilian casualties of the military operations in Aleppo and Al-Raqqa, the number of civilians who lived in the two cities when the two military operations began, and the number of fighters on the ground. The casualty statistics were derived from different sources including Amnesty International, HRW and from opposition sources such as the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) and the SOHR (it is not assumed they are independent sources).

It has to be noted that not all organisations issued estimates for either the Aleppo or Al-Raqqa death toll. Several newspaper reports claimed that accurately documenting the death toll in Aleppo was very difficult because of the way the battle unfolded (Loveluck, 2016; Barnard, 2016b). For instance, *The Independent* reported in a news article published on December 4th, 2016, titled *So Many People are Dying in Aleppo the Graveyards are now Full* that:

Documentation is nearly impossible when the whole population is in flux. Since Saturday, 20 bodies have lain in his morgue unidentified after the shelling of people fleeing the ground advances. Another 70 bodies remain unidentified from the air strikes that preceded the ground

assault.

However, a report by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (set up by the UN Human Rights Council) has estimated the death toll in Aleppo between July and December 2016 at "hundreds of civilians" (Human Rights Council, 2017). After reviewing monthly statements of Airwars, HRW, and the SNHR, the number of civilians alleged to have been killed in Aleppo was estimated at between 1300 and 1500 (Airwars, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2017; Syrian Network for Human Rights, 2016).

According to an investigation by Amnesty International and Airwars, more than 1600 civilians were killed in Al-Raqqa allegedly as a "direct result of thousands of US, UK and French airstrikes and tens of thousands of US artillery strikes". According to Airwars (2018), the US forces were responsible for 95 per cent of the aerial bombardments in Al-Raqqa. The city was considered "the most-destroyed city of modern times" and "uninhabitable" after about 80 per cent of it was destroyed (Amnesty International UK, 2019).

As reported at the beginning of the two battles, there were about 300,000 civilians in Aleppo (United Nations, 2016b, p. 3) and between 160,000 and 200,000 civilians in Al-Raqqa (Said and Perry, 2017). As for the militants, the former UN envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura estimated the number of opposition armed forces in East Aleppo at about 8000 fighters including 1000 fighters from Al-Nusra (Cumming-Bruce and Gladstone, 2016). It has to be stressed, however, that according to then the US Operation Inherent Resolve Spokesman Colonel Steve Warren, Al-Nusra Front was actually in control of the Eastern part of Aleppo (U.S. Department of Defense, 2016).

In contrast, there were between 3000 and 4000 IS fighters in Al-Raqqa according to the US coalition sources (Said and Perry, 2017) (Table 12). Because it lasted longer than Al-Raqqa's battle, only the data for Aleppo collected for the period from December 5th to the end of December 2016 will be excluded from the quantitative comparison. This is to ensure that the quantitative comparison accounts for the same number of days (147) over which the two military operations were conducted. For the discourse analysis, however, all the collected news articles will be examined because this part of the analysis involves a comparison of the narrative used by *The Independent* and *The NYT* to report on the two battles (please see also Chapter 6).

Of the 184 days during which the battle of Aleppo unfolded, *The Independent* published articles about the battle on 103 days (55.9 per cent). In contrast, of the 147 days during which the battle of Al-Raqqa unfolded, *The Independent* published about the battle on only 31 days (21 per cent). Comparing the coverage of Aleppo (from July 11th to December 5th) with the coverage of Al-Raqqa (from June 6th to October 31st) over the same number of days, *The Independent* published about Aleppo on 85 days out of 147 days (57.8 per cent). There were 116 articles that reported on Aleppo compared with 37 articles for Al-Raqqa. This highlights the unbalanced coverage of the two battles. For every three articles about Aleppo, there was only one article about Al-Raqqa.

Moreover, these quantitative measures are not the only indicators of the lack of balance in the reporting of the two battles which also becomes obvious using qualitative methods. While the main two themes in the reporting on Aleppo were human tragedy (particularly deaths, injuries, and displacement of civilians) and destruction of civilian infrastructure (hospitals, schools, and houses), the main themes for Al-Raqqa were revenge, celebration of victory over IS, and to a lesser extent, civilian casualties. In detail, at least ten of the 36 stories (27.7 per cent) comprising the coverage of Al-Raqqa were not related to the humanitarian crisis in the city. These articles covered issues such as an airstrike on IS former leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi by Russia, the shooting down of a Syrian warplane by the US, personal stories of Kurdish and Yazidi female fighters during the battle, women and men celebrating freedom from IS, a British volunteer fighting IS, and the impact of IS's loss on UK security (Withnall, 2017; Wilford, 2017; Dearden, 2017; Worley, 2017).

The Independent cited 399 different sources in the coverage of Aleppo compared with 102 sources cited in the coverage of Al-Raqqa (Table 13). For Aleppo, the main two sources were anti-government groups such as the SOHR, the White Helmets and "activists", and the UN together being cited a total of 214 times (42.7 per cent). By contrast, Al-Raqqa coverage relied on Kurdish militias and US sources that were involved in the assault against civilians which were cited a total of 49 times (47.4 per cent).

The use of international anti-Syrian and anti-Russia sources is another indication of the biased coverage that promoted a Western especially a US viewpoint on the Syrian conflict. US and European including British, French, and NATO sources were cited a total of 88 times (17.5 per cent) in the coverage of Aleppo and they were given a platform to condemn the Syrian and Russian forces for committing "crimes against humanity".

This also helped to generate a strong international voice against Syria and Russia. To cite four telling examples: *The Independent* quoted David Miliband, former British Foreign Secretary, on August 1st, 2016 as saying that "there is unspeakable humanitarian abuse going on across Syria at the moment and there is very little accountability for people committing these crimes"; then British foreign secretary Boris Johnson was quoted on August 19th, 2016 and pointed out that "the whole world is horrified by the suffering of the people of Aleppo – the bombing of innocent civilians, the murder of defenceless children". The newspaper also cited Francois Delattre, then the French envoy to the UN on September 25th, 2016 who referred to the "war crimes (that) are being committed here in Aleppo" and quoted NATO on September 27th, 2016 as saying that the military operations in Aleppo were a "blatant violation of international law".

In contrast, a voice critical of the US military operations in Al-Raqqah was largely unheard. In total, Syrian and Russian sources were only quoted six times (5.7 per cent) in the coverage of Al-Raqqah and most of these sources did not refer to the human tragedy in the city but commented on the military operations against IS. For instance, Syrian and Russian officials were quoted in news articles about the targeting of the IS leader and the shooting down of a Syrian warplane by the US. Syrian state media outlets were also quoted reporting on civilian casualties but that made no direct reference to the US. The only direct criticism of the US came from Major-General Igor Konashenkov, Chief Spokesman for the Russian Defence Ministry, who on October 22nd, 2017 (after the battle ended) was quoted as saying that "Raqqah has inherited the fate of Dresden in 1945, wiped off the face of the Earth by Anglo-American bombardments". The largely unheard Syrian, Russian, and UN voices contributed to the absence of news about the civilian casualties in Al-Raqqah. While the disaster in Al-Raqqah has been overlooked, Aleppo will be remembered as one of the worst humanitarian crises this century.

	Aleppo	Al-Raqqa
No. of civilian casualties	Between 1300 and 1500	About 1600
No. of fighters	About 8000 including 1000 from Al-Nusra Front	Between 3000 and 4000
No. of civilians at the beginning of the battle	Between 250,000 and 300,000	Between 160,000 and 200,000
No. of articles	116	37
No. of sources	399	102
No. of images	146	54
No. of images in the albums	1007	343
Length of video content	7662 seconds (127.7 minutes)	1730 seconds (28.8 minutes)
Reporting on death toll	76 news articles (57.5%)	15 news articles (41.6%)
The main the mes	Human tragedy (children) and destruction of infrastructure	Revenge, celebration, and civilian casualties

Table 12: A general comparison of *The Independent's* coverage of the military operations in Aleppo and Al-Raqqa

Sources	Aleppo	Al-Raqqa
SOHR/White Helmets	16.9%	9.7%
The UN/ International NGOs	19.1%	15.4%
Anti-government activists	11.1%	1.9%
Syrian	10.7%	1.9%
The US	4.9%	20.3%
Russian	8.7%	3.8%
British/French/Europe	14.4%	3.8%
Fighters	6.1%	27.1%

Table 13: A comparison of the use of sources in *The Independent's* coverage of the military operations in Aleppo and Al-Raqqa

Aleppo was given far more attention and the battle was covered on a daily basis. Local NGO sources such as the SOHR and the White Helmets, or anti-Syrian government activists in Europe were very vocal and mainstream media relied on them to report on Aleppo (Cockburn, H, 2016; Dearden, 2016a). Details of the human tragedy were reported accompanied by visual content (often graphic scenes as shown in figure 4) and graphic descriptions. As a case in point, a news article titled *Syrian War: Dozens of Civilians Killed as almost 2 Million Left without Water by 'Relentless' Air Strikes in Aleppo*, published on September 24th, 2016 stated:

But scenes on the ground told a different story. Images that are too graphic to publish showed rescue volunteers pulling

the bodies of small children out of the rubble of their family homes, with a woman cradling her baby killed while sitting next to her young son on their sofa.



Figure 4: A video accompanied an article published on September 7th, 2016 (00:00:17)

The situation in East Aleppo was displayed using 174 images, 1410 album images, and 7776 seconds (127.7 minutes) of video content attached to the articles. The majority of the visual content showed the life of the civilians in the city, particularly the lives of children and women. For instance, one album included 13 images of children from different Syrian cities holding a sheet of paper with drawings of Pokemons asking to be saved (Figure 5). The images were supplied by an anti-government group called the *Revolutionary Forces of Syria Media Office* (RFS) as shown by the logo printed on the images and pointed to by *The Independent*. This album was attached to 14 news articles reporting on child casualties or other news related to the children in East Aleppo including one news article that reported on children killed by opposition armed forces shells.



Figure 5: A young girl carrying a paper saying: "I am from Syria... Save Me" (August 2nd, 2016)

A photo album like this, nevertheless, was not attached to any of the 36 articles of Al-Raqqa even articles that covered child casualties such as a news article published on June 21st, 2017 that reported on the killing of 52 children in one month and a news article published on August 24th, 2017 that reported on the killing of 200 children during eleven weeks of the military operations in Al-Raqqa. In Aleppo, personal information such as names and ages, images of some victims that included graphic content, corpses (Figures 6, 7, and 8), or faces of injured civilians in hospitals were published and made known to the readers.



Figure 6: A video accompanied a news article published on October 18th, 2016 (00:00:01)

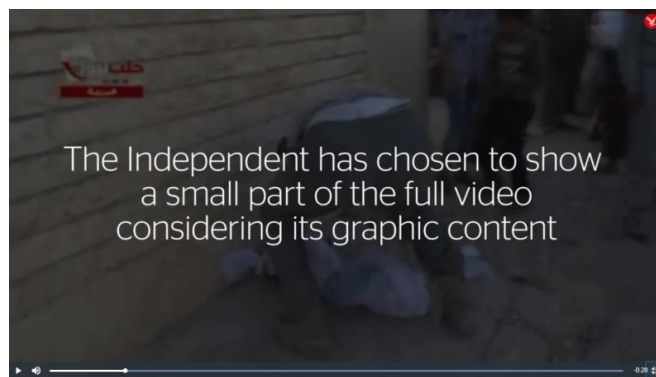


Figure 7: A video accompanied a news article published on October 18th, 2016 (00:00:04)



Figure 8: A video accompanied a news article published on October 18th, 2016 shows what it claimed to be dead children (00:00:11)

The coverage focused on the children trapped in East Aleppo and they were presented in a dramatic frame. For example, a news article titled *Syrian Children Burn Tyres in Besieged Aleppo 'To Create No-fly Zones'* was published on August 2nd, 2016 alongside a short clip (52 seconds) distributed by an anti-government group called *Halab News Network*. The clip showed nine children spinning a tyre before showing several tyres burning in the middle of the street.



Figure 9: Syrian children on their way to bum tyres to create no-fly zones (*The Independent*, August 2nd, 2016)

Using children in these articles raises questions such as did the children really know what a "no-fly zone" is? Did they want to create a "no-fly zone"? The reason for raising these questions is that "no-fly zone" can be code for regime change as highlighted by the situation in Libya. It also started there with a no-fly zone and ended with a military campaign that toppled Al-Gaddafi's regime and advanced the position of the armed opposition groups on the ground.

Continuing to emphasise the children theme, on August 16th, 2016 another article titled *Syrian War: Children Play Games in the Streets of Aleppo while Bombs Fall on Surrounding Neighbourhoods* was accompanied with a short clip (1 min and 5 sec) of children playing while a doctor from Aleppo addressed the psychological impacts of the airstrikes. The same short clip was attached to another news article published on August 22nd, 2016 titled *Syrian Civil War: Aleppo Doctor Calls on Barack Obama and Angela Merkel to Help End the Bombing of Civilian Targets*. A similar news article was published on September 30th, 2016 titled *Syria Conflict: As War Rages, Children in Aleppo Play in Pools Left by Bomb Craters*, accompanied by a short clip (44 seconds) of children swimming in a pool caused by an airstrike. The clip of children swimming was attached to another news article published on October 3rd, 2016 titled *Aleppo's Children Return to School despite Continued Shelling*.

For Al-Raqqa, however, there was less reporting on the violations against civilians including children. Only 54 images, 343 album images, and 1730 seconds (28.8 minutes) of video content were attached to the articles. The majority of the images did not depict civilian suffering. Forty of the 54 images were of fighters allied with the US moving in on a pickup vehicle, running towards or from bullets during the battle, inside a demolished house, or within an unnamed neighbourhood of the city. Other mostly random images were of: IS former leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the former US envoy to fight terrorism Brett McGurk, a fighter's family, and the former US President Donald Trump.

Interestingly, of 343 album images attached to the articles that reported on Al-Raqqa, 192 images (55.9 per cent) were about Aleppo (Figure 10) (mostly reporting on the humanitarian crisis and destruction during the 2016 military operations that the Syrian-Russian forces were accused of carrying out). Nonetheless, only 25 images (7.2 per cent) were about Al-Raqqa showing Kurdish fighters or civilians celebrating the victory over IS. The rest of the images comprised: 90 shots (26.2 per cent) from Idlib or a refugee camp in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, ten photos (2.9 per cent) of British Tornado jets and pilots, eight images (2.3 per cent) of children playing, 18 images (5.2 per cent) of civilians from Manbij (a city in northern Syria) celebrating freedom from IS.

The video clips attached to the articles in the coverage of Al-Raqqa showed small parts of the military operations and only documented one aspect of civilians' life, specifically, women burning their *Abayas* or *Burqas* and men shaving their beards following their arrival to areas controlled by the Kurdish militias (Wilford, 2017; Worley, 2017). While some scenes of destruction appeared in the background, there was very little information about the civilian casualties and destruction of civilian infrastructure caused by US forces. The victims of the US airstrikes in Al-Raqqa were counted by *The Independent's* coverage as being "42 killed" or "hundreds killed", with no images of the casualties (Osborne, 2017b; The Independent, 2017b).



Figure 10: An album image of civilians in Aleppo published in an article reporting on Al-Raqqa (August 10th, 2017)

Aleppo was put in a frame stressing humanitarian tragedy whereas Al Raqqa was placed in a frame stressing liberation. The world's conscience was haunted by the catastrophe of East Aleppo. Comments about the civilians in East Aleppo were made in the Security Council, the US Congress, the British parliament, and other government and non-government gatherings. Identities and faces of some of the civilians were made known to the public. To name two examples, Omran Daqneesh or "the boy in the ambulance" who became the "young face of Aleppo suffering" and the symbol of "the plight of civilians" (McKernan, 2017; Specia and Samaan, 2017; McKridy and Taqfeeq, 2017) and Bana Al-Abed who became an "icon" of the civilians' suffering.

Bana Al-Abed (then seven years old) was named by *Time* magazine as one of the 25 most influential people on the Internet in 2017 (Time Staff, 2017). Her story was well-documented by international media outlets including *The Independent* that reported several times that the young girl may have been targeted by Syrian forces (Figure 11). For example, a news article published by *The Independent* on December 5th, 2016 titled *The Seven-Year-Old Girl Tweeting from Aleppo has Gone Silent*, pointed out that:

A seven-year-old girl living in Aleppo who has been tweeting from the besieged Syrian city has disappeared from Twitter. Bana Alamed (sic), with the help of her mother a teacher, gained a wide following including by tweeting in English about life in the war-torn city. The last tweet from the @aledmedbana account written by Bana's mother Fatema said: "We are sure the army is capturing us now. We will see each other another day dear world".

However, Bana and her mum were evacuated from Aleppo and arrived safely in Turkey and less than six months later Bana was granted Turkish citizenship (Farand, 2017).

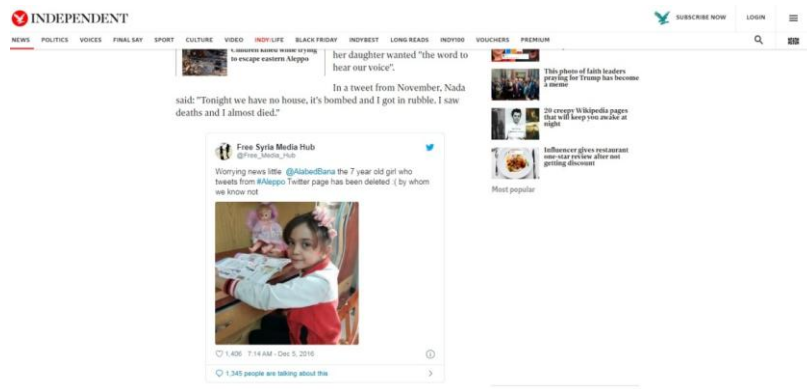


Figure 11: A story about Bana Al-Abed reported by *The Independent* on December 5th, 2016

The Independent also reported on the killing of a social worker who "dressed up as a clown to cheer up traumatised children in (East) Aleppo". In the news article *Clown of Aleppo 'Dies in Air Strike' as Syrian Government Closes in on Besieged City* that was published on December 1st, 2016, the social worker was identified as Anas Al-Basha and a big image of him dressed as a clown was attached to the news article. His age and marital status were also included in the article (Figure 12).



Figure 12: The caption used by *The Independent* read "Anas al-Basha was killed in an air strike on the besieged city. He was 24 and newly married" (December 1st, 2016)

In contrast, none of the 1600 civilian victims of Al-Raqqa were identified and no personal stories, images, or names were given. The victims of US military operations were just numbers and ironically even these numbers were barely reported on by mainstream media. The Amnesty International report titled *War of Annihilation* has documented some of the violations perpetrated principally by US forces. Some of the children, women, and families killed in the bombardment have been identified and documented (Amnesty International, 2018c). This report, however, was released about eight months after the end of military operations and predictably it did not receive anywhere near the same media attention as the military operations in Aleppo received.

5.5.1 Examples of terms used in *The Independent's* coverage of the two battles

The Independent's coverage of Aleppo was extensive, specific, and sharp, and the terms used in the coverage were dramatic. The coverage considered Syria and Russia as being fully responsible for the human tragedy in Aleppo and urged the world to act to save the civilians. For the coverage of Al-Raqqa, however, the terms were less dramatic and did not use the same damning language against the US forces.

To compare *The Independent's* coverage of the two battles, ten news articles for each battle that reported on similar issues were selected and compared. This comparison also included other examples derived from the coverage. As shown in (Table 14), headline 1, *Fears 300,000 People Could Starve to Death after President Assad Seizes Control of Road to Aleppo*, was very specific about what was going on in Aleppo by stating the number of civilians in the city and associating it with the strong wording "starve to death". This calamity was associated with one person "President Assad". To convince the reader of the gravity of the situation in Aleppo and the responsibility of the Syrian President for it, the headline suggested that the president rather than the Syrian army seized the road. "Assad" in this context, was framed as the person responsible for the assumed death of 300,000 people.

Headline 1 of Al-Raqqa, *Fears for Civilians Caught Up in US-led Air Strikes Grow as Raqqa Assault Begins*, was indirect and vague. *The Independent* referred to "fears for civilians" and also "caught up" to show that they were not being intentionally targeted. Moreover, the number of civilians was not specified as was the case with the first headline of Aleppo. Using an estimated number of civilian casualties in the title would have highlighted the scale of the human tragedy that was taking place in Al-Raqqa.

While the number of civilians of Aleppo was used in the third line of the article, the number of the civilians of Al-Raqqqa was used in the 28th line. Moreover, the "US-led airstrikes" were not accused of being responsible for the suffering of the civilians of Al-Raqqqa in the same way that "Assad" was held responsible for the civilians in Aleppo. The word "death" used in the headline of Aleppo is much stronger than the word "caught up" used in the first headline of Al-Raqqqa.

Similar to headline 1, Aleppo's second headline, *France Accuses Assad of War Crimes in Aleppo* held Al-Assad responsible for "war crimes" but not the Syrian army. Examining this article, François Delattre, then the French envoy to the UN (who was quoted in the headline) did not actually refer to the Syrian President in the official statement released by the Security Council. The text in *The Independent's* news article stated that "François Delattre said that the Syrian government is targeting civilians in the northern city, where 250,000 people live under siege conditions". It continued:

War crimes are being committed here in Aleppo,' Mr Delattre said in his speech to UN delegates in New York. 'They must not be unpunished and impunity is simply not an option in Syria'.

The same Security Council session was reported on by *The Guardian* (Borger and Shaheen, 2016) but it did not accuse the Syrian president of committing "war crimes" rather it accused Russia of doing so. Remarkably, examining the record of the Security Council session held on September 25th, 2016 Delattre did not refer to the Syrian President in his speech at all. In the part where he referred to "war crimes", Delattre stated:

As the Secretary-General recalled yesterday, the indiscriminate and systematic use of such weapons (chlorine gas, phosphorus and explosive barrels) in residential neighbourhoods constitutes a war crime — yes, a war crime — and (sic) such a crime cannot go unpunished. If we do nothing to prevent the total destruction of Aleppo, this week will be recalled as the moment when diplomacy failed and barbarity and brutality triumphed (United Nations, 2016b).

Delattre referred in his speech to "the regime" or "Al-Assad regime" but he did not accuse "Assad" himself or associate him with "war crimes" as reported by *The Independent*. The second headline of Al-Raqqa, *Raqqa Offensive: US-led Coalition Air Strikes Killing 'Staggering' Number of Civilians, Say UN War Crimes Investigators* seemed to be objective as it quoted the UN warning that a "staggering" number of civilians were being killed. Notably, while "war crimes" in the second Aleppo headline and "staggering" in the second Al-Raqqa headline were both direct quotes (of the French UN envoy in the first one and of the UN in the second), only "staggering" appeared in quotation marks in the Al-Raqqa headline.

Examining a number of examples of the use of quotation marks, *The Independent* used these when referring to the Syrian President's comments on recapturing Aleppo. For instance, quotation marks were used in the news article published on December 15th, 2016: *President Assad Claims 'History is Being Made in Liberated Aleppo' in Triumphant Address*. More quotation marks were used in the article, e.g. "Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has appeared on state television to address the people of Aleppo on the 'liberation' of the city". On December 16th, 2016 another news article referring to the Syrian President stated that:

President Assad has hailed the "liberation" of Aleppo, which is his biggest victory so far in the six-year-old civil war. In October, he said Aleppo would be "the springboard... to liberate other areas from terrorists" - a term the Syrian government uses to describe all rebels.

In contrast, capturing Al-Raqqa from IS was called a victory and liberation without using quotation marks. For instance, a news article published on October 18th, 2017 pointed out that "the militants' defeat in their de facto capital has been hailed as a major victory". Also, the caption under the main image attached to the article showed Kurdish fighters on a military vehicle and stated "victorious Kurdish fighters in Raqqa after driving out Isis fighters". Another news article published on October 22nd, 2017 stated that "US-backed militias in Syria declared victory over Isis in Raqqa, the group's de facto capital, last week, raising flags over the last jihadist footholds after a four-month battle".

Using the term "liberated", a news article published on October 28th, 2017 referring to a Kurdish fighter in Al-Raqqa pointed out that "he was afraid it was a new Isis car bomb deep inside supposedly liberated territory". The same news article stated in another paragraph that "the only people calling the city home at the moment are the fighters who have liberated it – which poses its own problems". This shows the unbalanced use of quotation marks. While they were less likely to be used when referring to the humanitarian situation in Aleppo or the outcome of the battle, it was a very different case in the coverage of Al-Raqqa.

The third headline for Aleppo, *'It Could Resonate in History': Experts Warn of 'Monstrous' Attack by Assad on Aleppo*, was another example of the use of emotive terms such as "resonate in history" and "monstrous". In addition, "monstrous attack" in this headline was associated directly with "Assad" instead of the Syrian army or government. Interestingly, the "experts" referred to in the headline were a "diplomat close to the peace process" who was not identified and Ammar Al-Selmo, head of Aleppo's White Helmets.

Al-Raqqa's third headline was *Record Number of Women Killed in US-led Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq in May*. The Airwars' statement that the news article was reporting on used strong words such as "deadliest" and a number between "348 and 521 civilians" killed (Airwars, 2017). However, "deadliest" was not used in the main headline of this news article. Noticeably, the number that indicated the heavy losses amongst civilians which would have had a stronger influence on the reader was also not used in the headline. In contrast, numbers were often referred to in the headlines of Aleppo such as: "at least 15 civilians" in an article published on August 27th, 2016; "'12 aid workers believed dead in air strike'" in an article published on September 19th, 2016; "kills five medical workers near Aleppo" in an article published on September 21st, 2016; and "96 children killed and hospitals bombed" in an article published on September 29th, 2016. These and other casualty numbers were used in articles reporting on Aleppo although the casualties were far fewer than the 348 civilians killed in the case of Al-Raqqa.

Aleppo's fourth headline, *Syrian Army Troops Advance on Aleppo as NATO Calls Air Strikes 'Blatant Violation of International Law'*, quoted NATO condemning the Russian airstrikes. For Al-Raqqa however, the fourth headline was *Isis: 2,000 Fighters Using Raqqa's Civilians as Human Shields as US-led Coalition Makes Significant Gains in Syria*. These two headlines were examples of a noticeable flaw in

the coverage in relation to the use of sources as discussed earlier. While NATO was given a platform to accuse its opponents of violating international law in Aleppo, a US official source was given a platform to justify the bombardment on Al-Raqqa using IS as an excuse for the increased number of civilian casualties.

Aleppo's fifth headline, *Violence in Aleppo is 'Evil' and 'Demonic', Says Archbishop of Canterbury*, was another example of direct and forceful use of terms. However, the fifth headline of Al-Raqqa, *Syria Air Strike: At least 42 Civilians Killed by US-led Bomb Attack in Raqqa, Report Activists*, reported on the death of 42 civilians without using condemning terms. Strikingly, the SOHR's statement that the news article was reporting on described the killing as a "massacre" in the headline and twice in the text (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, 2017). One paragraph of the statement stated that:

The SOHR documented the death of 42 civilians, including 19 children below the age of 18 and 12 women above the age of 18, as a result of the massacres perpetrated by the International Coalition warplanes in Al-Sakhani and Al-Badw alleys and Al-Hadiqa Al-Baydaa' area.

However, *The Independent* did not use the word "massacre" in either the headline or the text of the article. In direct contrast, the word "massacre" was used to report on Aleppo including an article published on November 29th, 2016, titled *Aleppo Could Witness One of the Worst Massacres since World War Two, France Warns*. In this article, the word "massacre" was used once in the headline and twice in the text.

This selective and unbalanced reporting of the two battles was repeated in the rest of the headlines. For Aleppo it was "Judgment Day" in the sixth headline, "one of the worst massacres since World War Two" in the seventh headline, "so many people are dying" and "the graveyards are now full" in the eighth headline, "completely destroyed" in the ninth headline, and "House-to-house murder of civilians" for the tenth headline. For Al-Raqqa, "civilian death toll mounts" in the sixth headline, "hundreds of civilians killed" in the seventh headline, "US air strikes kill 18 civilians" in the eighth headline.

Noticeably, months of bombardments and the death of hundreds of civilians in Al-Raqqa were only framed as "hardship" in the ninth headline that said "civilians face months of hardship" rather than "massacre" or "annihilation" as was the case with Aleppo. Of the news articles reporting on Al-Raqqa, the exception was the tenth

headline that quoted Russia as comparing the bombing Al-Raqqa to the "WWII destruction of Dresden". Furthermore, while it was never used in the main headlines of Al-Raqqa, the word "children" was used in 17 titles in the coverage of Aleppo.

	Date	Aleppo	Date	Al-Raqqa
Title 1	17/06/2016	Fears 300,000 people could starve to death after President Assad seizes control of road to Aleppo	06/06/2017	Fears for civilians caught up in US-led air strikes grow as Raqqa assault begins
Title 2	25/09/2016	France accuses Assad of war crimes in Aleppo	15/06/2017	Raqqa offensive: US-led coalition air strikes killing 'staggering' number of civilians, say UN war crimes investigators
Title 3	25/09/2016	'It could resonate in history': Experts warn of 'monstrous' attack by Assad on Aleppo	21/06/2017	Record number of women killed in US-led air strikes in Syria and Iraq in May
Title 4	27/09/2016	Syrian army troops advance on Aleppo as Nato calls air strikes 'blatant violation of international law'	05/08/2017	Isis: 2,000 fighters using Raqqa's civilians as human shields as US-led coalition makes significant gains in Syria
Title 5	07/10/2016	Violence in Aleppo is 'evil' and 'demonic', says Archbishop of Canterbury	22/08/2017	Syria air strike: At least 42 civilians killed by US-led bomb attack in Raqqa, report activists
Title 6	17/11/2016	'It is our Judgement Day': Assad and Russia pound rebel-held Syria with air strikes in renewed offensive	23/08/2017	Syrian civilian death toll mounts as Isis comes under increased pressure on all sides
Title 7	29/11/2016	Aleppo could witness one of the worst massacres since World War Two, France warns	24/08/2017	'Hundreds of civilians' killed in Raqqa as US steps up campaign to oust Isis from Syria, Amnesty says
Title 8	04/12/2016	So many people are dying in Aleppo the graveyards are now full	04/10/2017	US air strikes kill 18 civilians in Raqqa
Title 9	10/12/2016	Aleppo: World powers meet to stop Syrian city being 'completely destroyed' as Assad's forces advance	17/10/2017	Raqqa: Isis 'capital' liberated by US-backed forces - but civilians face months of hardship with city left devastated
Title 10	17/12/2016	Aleppo: 'House-to-house murder' of civilians under way as Syrian city falls to Assad, warns David Miliband	22/10/2017	Russia compares US-led bombing of Raqqa to WWII destruction of Dresden

Table 14: Examples of use of terms in the headlines of *The Independent's* coverage of the military operations in Aleppo and Al-Raqqa

There was a focus on Al-Assad as in Aleppo's headlines 1, 2, 6, 9, and 10 and in the text as if the Syrian conflict was a personal issue between the Syrian President and the residents of East Aleppo. As discussed earlier, Al-Assad seized the Castello highway in the first headline and he also committed "war crimes" in the second headline. Headline 6 was another interesting example of the personalising of the Syrian conflict and the focus on the Syrian President: *'It is Our Judgment Day': Assad and Russia Pound Rebel-Held Syria with Air Strikes in Renewed Offensive*. The headline referred to an individual's name "Assad" alongside a country's name "Russia" instead of using, for instance, "Assad and Putin" or "Syria and Russia".

Similarly, the tenth headline suggested that Aleppo "falls to Assad" not to the Syrian army, the government's army, or even the Syrian government. When the Syrian army was referred to, it was framed as "Assad's forces" not the Syrian forces or the Syrian government forces. For Al-Raqqah, the strikes were referred to as "US-led air strikes" or "US-led coalition air strikes" but the coalition was never called "Trump's forces", or "McGurk's forces". "Assad's forces" and similar frames seem to have been borrowed from anti-Syrian government Arabic media outlets. There has been a notable war of terminology between pro-Syrian government media and anti-Syrian government media. Pro-Syrian government media outlets have been using three main names: (1) الجيش العربي السوري, the official name and it is translated as the Syrian Arab Army, (2) الجيش السوري and it is translated as the Syrian Army, and (3) جيش سوريا and it is translated as Syria's Army.

On the other hand, anti-Syrian government media outlets have been using three main names: (1) جيش الأسد and it is translated as Al-Assad's Army, (2) ميليشيا الأسد and it is translated as Al-Assad's Militias, and (3) جيش النظام السوري and it is translated as the Syrian Regime's Army. Calling the Syrian Army "Al-Assad's Army" instead of the country's army sought to delegitimise it by framing it as if it was defending a person, not the nation. The dominant frame in *Al Jazeera* Arabic coverage, for example, has been "Al-Assad's Army" or "Assad's Regime Army" as in the news article titled هل بدأ جيش الأسد القتال ضد طهران؟ that can be translated as *Did Al-Assad's Army Start Fighting against Tehran?* (Al Jazeera, 2019). This also was what a Saudi scholar suggested in an article published on the *Al Jazeera* Arabic website in 2012 demanding media outlets refer to the Syrian army as "جيش النظام وليس الجيش النظامي السوري" that can be translated as: "(call it) the Regime's army not the Syrian army".

Alburaidi (2012) argues that framing the army as the Syrian army legitimised its military operations and delegitimised those who stood up against it. Use "the Regime's Army" sought to delegitimise the Syrian army. The Syrian President's name appeared in 21 headlines, 15 of which were associated with "death", "attack", "assault", "bombed", "offensive", "onslaught", "murder", and "destroyed". The Russian President Putin appeared three times, two of which were associated with "bombing" and "assault". In the coverage of Al-Raqqa, by contrast, only one name appeared in the headlines and it was in a positive frame: *Donald Trump Says 'End of Isis Caliphate is in Sight'*. The other headlines about Al-Raqqa referred to the "coalition" that has no face. The terms "US-led coalition" and the "coalition" were general. Furthermore, a "coalition" indicates a positive connotation considering that this term has been positively linked with countering terrorism in the coverage.

The "intentional" frame was another technique used in the coverage of *The Independent*. In other words, the intent of the Syrian and Russian forces was portrayed as killing civilians or targeting civilian infrastructure. The targets identified in the coverage were "hospitals", "children", "medical or aid workers", "schools", "houses", "funerals", "neighbourhoods", or even an "orphanage". In the majority of articles, there were reports about attacks on one or more of these targets.

There was very little about the armed groups and as the Syrian forces were close to winning the battle, *The Independent* provided a platform for these groups to ask for international intervention. For instance, in an article published on December 11th, 2016 titled *Syrian Rebels Facing 'Death or Surrender' in Aleppo after Heavy Bombing*, the newspaper referred to "an official" from the Jabha Shamiya group (the Levant Front) saying that:

The conflict in the war-torn city in northern Syria will end
"in a tragic way" without intervention from foreign nations,
and rebels imminently face a "death or surrender" situation.

Interestingly, this group was designated by the Dutch authorities as a terrorist group two years following the military operations in Aleppo (Dutchnews, 2018). This article was only published in the last days of military operations in East Aleppo. The newspaper's coverage continued to provide a platform to promote foreign intervention. On the other hand, civilian sites such as "buildings" or "water wells" were identified within the text of the news articles that reported on Al-Raqqa but not in the headlines.

The heavy bombardment was referred to within the text, for instance, by quoting one of Al-Raqqa's residents in an article published on June 15th, 2017 saying that "I don't know why they shot these areas. As far as I know there were only a few Daesh [Isis] snipers left there".

Furthermore, an article published on June 15th, 2017 titled *Raqqa Offensive: US-led Coalition Air Strikes Killing 'Staggering' Number of Civilians, Say UN War Crimes Investigators*, included stories about hitting three mosques and killing at least three teenagers or using white phosphorus in high-density areas. These two events were not considered critical enough to be identified in the headline or even in the introduction of the article. The use of white phosphorus in the battle of Al-Raqqa was not given the same attention as the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria was given. In a statement about the military operations in Al-Raqqa, HRW pointed out that "no matter how white phosphorus is used, it poses a high risk of horrific and long-lasting harm in crowded cities like Raqqa and Mosul and any other areas with concentrations of civilians" (Human Rights Watch, 2017b).

According to experts, use of white phosphorus is not completely prohibited under international law. Nevertheless, while Christensen (2016), a scholar and senior adviser in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, addresses in his research paper the dispute over whether the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCWC) can be applied to white phosphorus, he concludes that use of white phosphorus in a populated area is illegal. The US itself agrees with Christensen's conclusion. White phosphorus was categorised as a chemical weapon by US intelligence after the first war on Iraq 1990-1991 as revealed by an investigative Italian reporter in a documentary broadcast in 2005 (Popham, 2005).

Another example of the imbalance in the coverage was how *The Independent* reported on the trapped civilians in Aleppo and Al-Raqqa. For instance, on December 13th, 2016 a news article cited UNICEF (that was in turn quoting a report sent by a doctor in Aleppo), suggesting that more than 100 children were trapped in an orphanage under heavy attack. While there was no explanation of why an orphanage would be attacked, *The Independent* took the issue seriously as it should have.

The newspaper alarmed its readers with an emphatic and shocking title: *Aleppo: More than 100 Children Trapped in Building under Heavy Attack, Says Unicef*. This story was followed by another news article published on December 19th, 2016 that brought happy tidings. Forty-seven children (not 100 children) were rescued. In contrast, similar events where civilians were trapped in buildings were reported on in the coverage of Al-Raqqa but not given the same attention. *The Independent* quoted Rami Abdel Rahman, the director of SOHR warning on October 4th, 2017 that:

There are buildings full of civilians that are trying to get away from the front lines... coalition air strikes are targeting any building where any kind of [Isis] movements are being detected.

This story was not given priority in the coverage. This article also reported on civilians including four children who were getting water from wells when killed in a US airstrike. Nonetheless, the news article *US Air Strikes Kill 18 Civilians in Raqqa* did not emphasise "water wells", "children", or the trapped civilians in the headline. Without turning a blind eye to the human tragedy, the coverage of the Aleppo battle was employed to put the Syrian army and its allies in an unfavourable light. It was realised then that reclaiming the remaining part of Aleppo would technically mean the end of the war taking into consideration that the Syrian government was already in control of the capital Damascus and the coastline (Cockburn, 2016b). Also at that time, the Syrian army and its allies were about to defeat IS/Al-Nusra front and secure the borders with Lebanon.

The Independent coverage was partaking in pro-US war propaganda. There was a focus on the children theme in the coverage of Aleppo while at the same time overlooking the role of the armed groups including IS and Al-Nusra Front in the city. Addressing this issue, Cockburn wrote in an opinion piece published on December 16th, 2016 titled *There's more Propaganda than News Coming out of Aleppo this Week*:

There was no sign of the 8,000 to 10,000 armed fighters whom the UN estimated to have been in East Aleppo. In fact, I cannot recall seeing anybody with a gun or manning a fortified position in these heart-rending films. The only visible inhabitants of Aleppo are unarmed civilians.

In fact, *The Independent* briefly reported on the armed groups in Aleppo. Al-Nusra's fighters were sometimes referred to as "linked with Al-Qaeda", while Al-Nusra in the first place was established as an Al-Qaeda branch in Syria. In addition, visual content about the armed opposition groups was published and included eight images of fighters out of 1153 images or photo albums. Moreover, there were 247 seconds (4.1 minutes) out of 7662 seconds (127.7 minutes) of video scenes that showed armed fighters. Images and video of fighters made up 0.6 per cent and 3.2 per cent respectively of the whole visual content published in the coverage. The opposition armed forces in Aleppo were framed as "rebels" who protected the civilians in the city.

Overall, *The Independent's* coverage framed the operations in Aleppo as a brutal campaign against unarmed civilians. Much of the news and visual content published by the newspaper were supplied by media groups linked with the armed groups including Al-Nusra or were heavily influenced by them. Cockburn pointed to this issue saying that:

It has just become more dangerous to be a foreign correspondent reporting on the civil war in Syria. This is because the jihadis holding power in East Aleppo were able to exclude Western journalists, who would be abducted and very likely killed if they went there, and replace them as news sources with highly partisan "local activists" who cannot escape being under jihadi control (Cockburn, 2016a).

A report by Amnesty International documented incidents in Aleppo where activists were abducted and tortured for criticising armed groups. Recounting his experience, one activist said:

I could not turn a blind eye to the unjust rule of some (of) the armed groups [and issues] such as corruption. So I expressed my critical opinion on *Facebook* against two of them. As a result, I was kidnapped twice for a few days but held at different locations. I was not taken to their detention centres in the city but instead I was held in two houses. When I was held by the Nour al-Dine Zinki Movement, I could hear the sounds of men being tortured through the walls but I did not see them because I was blindfolded (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 17).

After public pressure, this activist was released and forced to pledge not to criticise the armed groups in Aleppo.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined *The Independent's* coverage of the military operations in Aleppo and Al-Raqqa. It highlights, in quantitative and qualitative terms, the uneven reporting of the two battles. It has to be stressed, however, that *The Independent* was sometimes critical of the US military operations in Al-Raqqa. News of civilian casualties was often published. Nevertheless, the coverage of Al-Raqqa was nowhere as critical of the conduct of the parties involved as was the coverage of Aleppo.

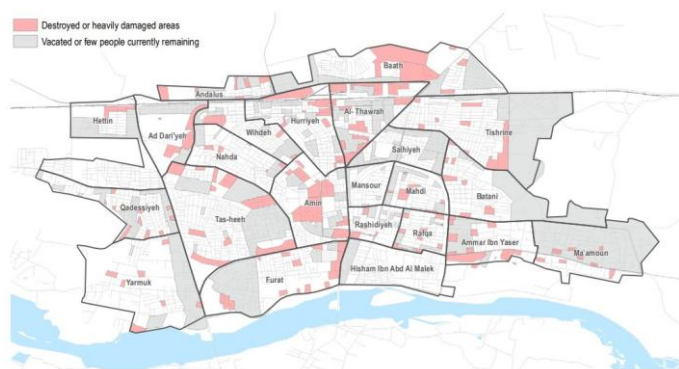
The unbalanced reporting was constructed through various elements including the disparity in the number of articles reporting on the two battles, the types of sources quoted in the two coverages, and the number and type of visual contents attached to the articles. As for the number of articles, for every three articles reporting on Aleppo, there was only one article reporting on Al-Raqqa. The humanitarian situation in Aleppo was given extensive coverage. More specific details of the battle were reported on an almost daily basis during the military operations compared with the details of operations reported on for Al-Raqqa.

To report on Aleppo, *The Independent* relied mainly on anti-Syrian government local and international sources that were given a platform to recount their narrative of the events. In contrast, the two parties responsible for the humanitarian crisis in Al-Raqqa, the US forces and Kurdish militias, were the most cited sources in the coverage of the military operations in the city. These two sides played a significant role in controlling the flow of information about the humanitarian crisis of Al-Raqqa.

The biased coverage of *The Independent* about Aleppo was enhanced by the use of strong and explicit terms to condemn and demonise the Syrian President, the Syrian forces, and Russia. This is different from the coverage of the battle of Al-Raqqa where *The Independent* often avoided using the same condemnatory terms to report on the abuses against civilians carried out by US forces and their allies. The armed groups' narrative of the conflict in Aleppo was widely supported through the use of images and videos that were produced and distributed by media groups affiliated with these armed groups.

The negative influence of this intertwined relationship on the type of news coming out of Aleppo was not addressed by *The Independent* except briefly by Patrick Cockburn in his opinion pieces. Considering the number of civilian casualties, the human tragedy in Al-Raqqa was at least as bad as the humanitarian tragedy in Aleppo, yet little was known about Al-Raqqa.

Chapter 6: Analysis of *The NYT's* coverage of the battles of Aleppo and Al-Raqqa



Map 3: Destroyed and vacated areas in Al-Raqqa on June 30th, 2017 (Courtesy of REACH)

As with *The Independent's* coverage of the battles of Aleppo and Al-Raqqa, *The NYT's* coverage of Aleppo was analysed, starting from the last stage of the military operations in Aleppo on July 11th, 2016, and finishing at the end of December 2016. For Al-Raqqa, the analysis was for the period from June 6th, 2017 to the end of October of 2017. Two articles from *The NYT* were collected for each day of the two battles. For Aleppo, 147 articles were collected including six editorials, six opinion pieces, ten op-eds, two cartoons, and seven video reports that were published as independent articles. For Al-Raqqa, 37 articles were collected including two editorials, and four op-eds, and one cartoon. In total, 184 articles from *The NYT* were analysed. The first section of this chapter investigates the coverage of the battle of Aleppo, the second section investigates the coverage of the battle of Al-Raqqa, the third section provides a comparative analysis of *The NYT's* coverage of the two battles, and the fourth section provides a comparative analysis of *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* coverage. This chapter argues that *The NYT's* coverage was biased towards the US. The biased coverage was constructed out of several elements including the reliance on US official sources and overlooking the civilians killed by US airstrikes in Al-Raqqa.

6.1 The battle of Aleppo: use of sources

Excluding 24 opinion articles and cartoons (because use of sources only concerns news articles), 625 individuals or NGOs were quoted in the 123 news articles that reported on the battle for Aleppo (Table 15). Despite the Syrian military being heavily involved in the battle, sources that voiced a pro-government agenda including official sources, pro-government journalists, and activists were only cited 44 times (7

per cent) and Russian sources were cited 59 times (9.4 per cent). In contrast, anti-government activists including local NGOs and current and former US officials that voiced an anti-government agenda were respectively the first and second most cited sources in the coverage of Aleppo with a total of 142 times (22.7 per cent) for anti-Syrian government local activist sources and 102 times (16.3 per cent) for US sources. The armed groups in Aleppo including members of Al-Nusra Front who adopted an anti-government agenda were cited 34 times (5.4 per cent). Doctors and medical staff in Aleppo were cited a total of 33 times (5.2 per cent). The UN was the third most cited source in the coverage with 75 times (12 per cent). International NGOs such as the Red Cross and Amnesty International were cited a total of 30 times (4.8 per cent).

Sources cited in the coverage of Aleppo		
Type of source	Times	Percentage
The UN	75	12
Anti-government activists	142	22.7
Doctors and nurses of Aleppo	28	4.4
Syrian officials	44	7
Russian	59	9.4
British/French	11	1.7
Opposition fighters	34	5.4
Experts and overseas doctors	49	7.8
The US	102	16.3
International NGOs and activists	30	4.8
NATO/European /Turkish	7	1.1
Residents	35	5.6
Others	9	1.4
Total	625	99.5

Table 15: Use of sources in *The NYT's* coverage of the battle of Aleppo

Overall, *The NYT's* coverage was biased because it was based heavily on anti-Syrian government sources. Local and international sources that voiced an anti-government agenda were cited three times more often (326 times or 52.1 per cent) than sources voicing a pro-government agenda (96 times or 15.3 per cent) (Table 16). Taking into consideration Syrian local sources that represented anti-government activists and military groups and excluding doctors and other medical staff working in Aleppo (who were considered neutral despite them adopting an anti-government narrative), local sources were quoted 220 times, of which anti-government sources were cited a total of 172 times (80 per cent) and pro-government sources were quoted a total of 44 times (20 per cent).

Use of local sources					
Pro-government sources			Anti-government sources		
	Times	Percentage		Times	Percentage
Syrian officials	44	7	SOHR/White Helmets	39	17.7
			Anti-government media and activists	103	46.8
			Opposition fighters	34	15.4
Total	44	20	Total	176	79.9

Table 16: Total use of the local sources in *The NYT's* coverage of the battle of Aleppo

Simply assuming without question that anti-government activists, particularly the White Helmets, were reliable sources was a major problem in *The NYT's* coverage of Aleppo (as it was with *The Independent's* coverage). While the White Helmets was only cited 27 times (4.3 per cent), the role it played during the battle of Aleppo was significant. The White Helmets was one of the most trusted sources in relation to news of casualties and visual content coming out of Syria in general and Aleppo in particular. International media praised the organisation and its members. For instance, White Helmets members (officially known as the Syria Civil Defence) were described by *Time* magazine as "ordinary Syrians (who) emerged from the dust that hangs over the rubble of cities like Aleppo" (Malsin, 2019). Because it is related to the issue of citizen journalism that is investigated in Chapter 7, the following paragraphs inspect the nature and background of the White Helmets.

There has been a UN White Helmets project since 1995. This, however, had no association whatsoever with the Syrian White Helmets. The UN's project was launched to work with activists in "humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development" (United Nations, 1995). There were a number of White Helmets groups in several areas around the world such as Gaza, Bolivia, and Equatorial Guinea (David, 1997). According to the Syrian White Helmets' official account, volunteers from different Syrian cities established the group in 2014 after receiving their first training in Turkey. The group, however, did not provide more detail about who organised and funded the first training course that it conducted (The White Helmets, 2019).

However, the founding of the White Helmets was not as simple as implied by the official self-account. The group was established by James Le Mesurier, the former lieutenant-colonel and commandant of the British Royal Marines (Safi, 2019a; Al

Jazeera English, 2019b). While the White Helmets acknowledged its relationship with Le Mesurier, it denied that he was the founder of the group (Demirören News Agency, 2019). Le Mesurier passed away in Istanbul in November 2019 and despite being found with fractures to his legs and skull, the Turkish authorities said there was "no evidence of foul play" in his death (Safi, 2019b).

Le Mesurier had been widely known as being the founder of the White Helmets. In an interview with *Al Jazeera* English in 2015 he claimed that the establishment of the group was unplanned:

I was working in Istanbul... and got together with a group of Turkish earthquake rescue volunteers. [Our conversation] went along the lines of: 'if you can rescue people from a building that has collapsed as the result of an earthquake, then you can rescue somebody from a building that has collapsed as the result of a bomb.' [The Turkish earthquake rescue volunteers had never worked in a war zone. I had, but didn't know much about search and rescue]. But, it all came together with an initial training course of 20 guys from northern Aleppo, then spawned from one team to 20 teams.

In another "unplanned" event, Mayday Rescue, responsible for financing and training the White Helmets was also established in 2014 by Le Mesurier in Turkey. Mayday Rescue funders were the governments of the US, UK, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, and other parties that were not named (Mayday Rescue, 2019). Le Mesurier was not an ordinary army officer. According to an article published by *The Guardian*, he had wide-ranging relationships with countries and individuals including high-profile Israeli and US officials. He also worked in Iraq during the 2003 invasion and had worked for security agencies in the United Arab Emirates and Oman (Chulov, 2019).

The White Helmets through Mayday Rescue has enjoyed generous financial assistance from the US that reached USD42 million over about five years according to the official record (USAID, 2019). This included USD5 million sent to the White Helmets in 2019 alone (U.S. Department of State, 2019). Moreover, an official document released by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office showed that the White Helmets received more than USD25 million from June 2013 to the end of March 2016 (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2017). In total, the White Helmets received

USD127 million from different "donors" between 2014 and 2018 according to Wendy Brusse, the Director of Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) in the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). The group has also enjoyed a wider recognition after a *Netflix* documentary *The White Helmets* won an Academy Award in 2017 (Larkin and Lewis, 2017).

The White Helmets is also linked with Syrian armed groups including Al-Nusra Front. Raed Al-Saleh, the leader of the White Helmets who was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016 was denied entry to the US for suspicious links with "terrorists" (Sengupta and Barnard, 2016). In another incident that has generally been overlooked by Western mainstream media, a propaganda video distributed in 2017 by Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (Al-Nusra Front was one of the major groups that formed this alliance) honoured the White Helmets in Idlib in the presence of Abdallah Muhammad Bin-Sulayman Al-Muhaysini who personally praised the group. Al-Muhaysini, a key figure of Al-Nusra, was designated as a terrorist by the US in 2016 (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2016). In the video clip that has been removed several times from the Internet, Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham called the White Helmets الجنود الأخفاء or "the hidden soldiers" while the background chant was praising Abu Mohammad Al-Julani, Al-Nusra Front leader in Syria (Al Mayadeen, 2017).

Furthermore, the evacuation of White Helmets members from Deraa after they were surrounded by the Syrian army is worthy of comment. Considerable political attention was devoted to nearly 442 members of the group and their family members in the evacuation from Syria to Jordan through Israel with the help of the US, the UK, and other European countries (BBC, 2019d). These individuals and their families were later granted urgent residency in Europe including the UK and Germany (U.S. Department of State, 2018a). During more than nine years of the Syrian conflict, no Syrian NGOs have enjoyed as much funding or support from countries such as the US and UK as the White Helmets enjoyed.

In addition, an examination of the group's *Twitter* account (its website is no longer active) reveals that the White Helmets has focused its attention almost exclusively on atrocities allegedly committed by Syria and Russia and has completely overlooked those allegedly committed by the US and its allies (The White Helmets, 2020). There are a lot of suspicious events that surround the White Helmets, particularly its special bond with governments that have tried to overthrow the Syrian government. Therefore, Piers Robinson (2018, pp. 60-61) argues that the White Helmets and other

groups funded by Western countries should not be considered reliable sources because they may potentially be "part of broader propaganda networks". Because they were funded and supported by anti-Syrian government countries, organisations like the White Helmets were given a voice of trusted authority by many Western media outlets.

6.2 The battle of Aleppo: use of visual content

This section includes seven video reports and opinion pieces because several of them were accompanied by visual content. In total, 225 images were included with the articles that reported on Aleppo. These images were of Aleppo and other Syrian cities, portraits of politicians such as Obama's Secretary of State John Kerry, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, and UN Special Envoy for Syria from 2014 to 2019 Staffan de Mistura. In total, 115 images (51.1 per cent) portrayed the humanitarian crisis in Aleppo (Figure 13) and 17 images (7.5 per cent) showed the suffering of civilians in other Syrian cities. *The NYT* also published nine images (4 per cent) of members of armed groups in Aleppo and 18 images (8 per cent) of Syrian soldiers during the fight in Aleppo. Notably, four images (1.7 per cent) reported on the civilian suffering in West Aleppo (these covered attacks of the armed groups in East Aleppo on civilians who were living in the government-held western side of the city).

As for the video content, 8562 seconds or 142.7 minutes of short clips were included with the articles. Similar to the images, most of the video content reported on the civilian suffering and included graphic scenes of corpses or injured children and destruction in the eastern side of Aleppo. Excluding opinion pieces and cartoons, besides reporting on the human suffering and destruction of the civilian infrastructure in every article, 55 news articles of the 123 news articles (44.7 per cent) mentioned at least one civilian casualty or allocated the whole article to report on this issue. The human tragedy overall (civilian deaths, injuries, lack of medical supplies and services, or hunger) was comprehensively covered in almost all of the Aleppo articles. The main three themes of the coverage including the visual content were: the human tragedy, destruction of hospitals and medical facilities, and the peace process.



Figure 13: An image of an injured child from Aleppo published in *The NYT* (August 21st, 2016)

6.3 The battle of Al-Raqqa: use of sources

After excluding one opinion piece and cartoons because use of sources only concerns news articles, 141 individuals or NGOs were quoted in the 30 articles that reported on the battle for Al-Raqqa (Table 17). Current and former US officials, most from the Pentagon, were the most cited source in the coverage with a total of 55 times (39 per cent). Residents of Al-Raqqa and other Syrian cities were cited a total of 16 times (11.3 per cent). These residents were the second most cited source; however, they only played a marginal role in the coverage. The majority of these civilians were not actually from Al-Raqqa and they were quoted to comment on issues related to other Syrian cities. Experts were cited a total of 14 times (9.9 per cent), while local NGOs and activists including the SOHR were quoted a total of 11 times (7.8 per cent) with the Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently group cited only once.

The UN and international NGOs were largely overlooked in the coverage of Al-Raqqa. For instance, the UN was only cited six times (4.2 per cent), while international NGOs such as the Red Cross, DWB, or Airwars were only quoted a total of eight times (5.6 per cent). Syrian official sources were also largely ignored being cited only once (0.7 per cent) and Russian sources were quoted just 5 times (3.5 per cent). In these articles, Syrian and Russian sources were not commenting on the military operations rather their opinions were sought on issues such as a Russian airstrike on then IS leader Abu Baker Al-Baghdadi or the shooting down of a Syrian warplane by the US. Notably, Kurdish fighters who were heavily involved in the battle were only cited seven times (5 per cent) and British, French and other European sources were cited three times (2.1 per cent). Iranian, Lebanese, and Iraqi sources who adopted an anti-US agenda were cited a

total of ten times (7 per cent). These sources commented on the battle against IS in Iraq or areas other than Al-Raqqa. IS sources were cited four times (2.8 per cent) including a report on the release of a new recording of the former leader of the group Abu Baker Al-Baghdadi.

Sources cited in the coverage of Al-Raqqa		
Type of source	Times	Percentage
US officials	55	39
Experts	14	9.9
Local anti-government NGOs	11	7.8
Residents	16	11.3
The UN	6	4.2
International NGOs	8	5.6
Syria	1	0.7
Russians	5	3.5
British, French and European	3	2.1
Kurdish sources or fighters	7	4.9
Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently	1	0.7
IS fighters	4	2.8
Iran, Iraq and Lebanon	10	7
Total	141	99.5

Table 17: Use of sources in *The NYT's* coverage of the battle of Al-Raqqa

6.4 The battle of Al-Raqqa: use of visual content

Seventy-seven images and only 233 seconds (3.8 minutes) of video content were included with the articles that reported on the battle of Al-Raqqa. Of these, only 12 images, including an image of one civilian who was identified as a victim of US airstrikes (the only victim of US airstrikes to be identified in all of the coverage of *The Independent* and *The NYT* combined) were of injured civilians or destruction of civilian infrastructure in the city. As for the video content of the coverage of Al-Raqqa, of the 233 seconds (3.8 minutes), there were only 83 seconds (35.6 per cent) that highlighted the humanitarian crisis in the city of which 63 seconds showed the use of white phosphorus in one Al-Raqqa neighbourhood and 20 seconds on the destruction of civilian infrastructure in the city. The remaining 150 seconds (64.3 per cent) showed Kurdish fighters celebrating capturing the city from IS and other short clips of the fight with this terrorist group in Iraq, the IS leader's Friday speech (Friday *Khutba* as called by Muslims), corpses of IS victims in Al-Raqqa, and short clips of destruction in other Syrian and Iraqi cities.

The three main themes in the coverage of Al-Raqqa were: the "victory" over IS,

the geopolitical and other implications of this victory, and the suffering of civilians under the rule of IS. Other issues covered by the coverage were hunting the IS leader, and the shooting down of a Syrian warplane. Despite reporting on the issue, civilian suffering and civilian casualties were not the main focus of the coverage. Of 30 articles, civilian casualties appeared in nine articles (30 per cent) and in only two of the articles did civilian casualties constitute the main theme. The suffering of the displaced civilians of Al-Raqqa was the main theme in another two articles only, however, IS was blamed for this suffering. The lack of reporting on civilian casualties and destruction of civilian infrastructure was due to the dominance of US official sources, particularly the Pentagon. This is in contrast to the battle of Aleppo where sources that adopted an anti-Syria and anti-Russia narrative were given a prominent platform.

6.5 Comparison of the coverage of the battles of Aleppo and Al-Raqqa

Because the battle of Aleppo lasted longer than the battle of Al-Raqqa but the quantitative comparison covered the same number of days over which the two battles unfolded, the data collected from December 5th to the end of December 2016 was excluded from the comparison. However, for the discourse analysis, all of the articles on the battles for Aleppo and Al-Raqqa were examined because the analysis concerns *The NYT's* narrative across the coverage. Out of the total of 174 days during which the battle of Aleppo took place, *The NYT* published articles about the battle on 103 days (59.1 per cent). In the coverage of the battle up to December 5th, 2016, the newspaper published about Aleppo on 85 days out of 147 days (57.8 per cent).

In contrast, during the same number of days that the battle of Al-Raqqa unfolded, *The NYT* published about Al-Raqqa on 26 days (17.5 per cent). Amongst the collected articles, there were 130 about Aleppo compared with 37 about Al-Raqqa. This highlights the unequal coverage of the two battles. For every 3.5 articles about Aleppo, there was only one article about Al-Raqqa. However, the unequal reporting of the two battles cannot only be measured in quantitative terms but has a qualitative dimension as well. While the main two themes in the reporting on Aleppo were civilian casualties and destruction of civilian infrastructure (e.g. hospitals and schools) that appeared in every article, the main two themes in the reporting of Al-Raqqa were the "victory" over IS and its implications, and the suffering of civilians under the rule of IS. The themes in at least 21 of 30 stories (70 per cent) that covered Al-Raqqa did not relate to the humanitarian crisis in the city.

The NYT cited 446 different sources in the coverage of Aleppo compared with 141 sources cited in the coverage of Al-Raqqa. The main two sources in the reporting of Aleppo were local NGOs and anti-government media groups and activists that together were cited a total of 148 times (33.1 per cent). In contrast, Al-Raqqa coverage relied on US official sources that were quoted a total of 55 times (39 per cent). Syrian official sources were not taken much into account as they were cited once only (0.7 per cent) in the coverage of Al-Raqqa while their representation was better in Aleppo with 32 times (7.1 per cent). However, this percentage is relatively low compared with the use of sources that voiced an anti-Syrian government agenda in the coverage of Aleppo (39 per cent).

Moreover, local NGOs and activists in the coverage of Al-Raqqa were not given the same attention as the local sources in the coverage of Aleppo received. The former included the SOHR and Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently that were together cited a total of 11 times (7.8 per cent) but, as was pointed out in section 6.3, Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently was itself cited only on one occasion. Reports released by these two sources, particularly by Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently criticised the US military campaign on Al-Raqqa and reported on the civilian casualties of the campaign. In contrast, activists, NGOs, and opposition fighters who adopted an anti-Syria and anti-Russia narrative were quoted 176 times (28.1 per cent) in the coverage of Aleppo. This means four times more coverage was given to sources opposed to the Syrian-Russian military operations in Aleppo than those that criticised the US military operations in Al-Raqqa.

In addition, officials voicing an anti-US agenda were not given an adequate platform to report or comment on the battle of Al-Raqqa. Syrian, Iranian, and Russian sources were cited a total of ten times (7 per cent) and rarely to comment on the actual military operations. As was the case with *The Independent*, *The NYT* allocated more coverage to UN, local and international NGOs sources in its reporting on Aleppo than it did in its reporting on the military operations in Al-Raqqa. These sources were vocal in relation to the humanitarian situation in Aleppo. To explain, 177 UN and local and international NGO sources (39.6 per cent) were quoted in the coverage of Aleppo and most of them focused on the humanitarian situation there.

In contrast, only 25 sources (17.7 per cent) from the UN, local or international NGOs, and activists were quoted in the coverage of Al-Raqqa. Quoting a UN official on August 22nd, 2016, *The NYT* described the situation in Aleppo as an "apex of horror".

The coverage focused on the aerial bombardments and sometimes provided specific details about the number and type of bombs used in the attacks. For example, in an article published on August 14th, 2016, the newspaper quoted an anti-government source pointing out that:

"We counted 150 air raids and 450 barrel bombs in the past two days," he said, speaking of the primitive bombs, filled with nails and other shrapnel that the Syrian government uses.

The NYT also used emotive terminology to draw attention to the situation in Aleppo as in the article published on July 31st, 2016 titled *Where CPR on a Boy is Time Wasted: U.S. Doctors Recall Aleppo's Horrors*:

In the Syrian city of Aleppo, children carrying groceries climb 15-foot mounds of rubble on their way home. Shoppers ignore vibrations from falling bombs. Buildings stand sliced in half, wires and beds and bathtubs exposed, with families still living inside. Most days, doctors have just seconds to decide which children to try to save and which to let die, as parents shriek and explosions shake the ground.

In contrast, the news articles that covered the battle of Al-Raqqa barely reported on civilian casualties. In the few articles that reported on casualties caused by US airstrikes on Al-Raqqa, no emotive terms were used to highlight the humanitarian crisis in the city. For instance, an article published on June 14th, 2017 highlighted the growing number of civilian casualties as a result of the US airstrikes on Al-Raqqa:

Airstrikes by the American-led coalition against Islamic State targets have killed hundreds of civilians around Raqqa, the militant group's last Syrian stronghold, and left 160,000 people displaced, a United Nations panel said.

While Syria and Russia were considered largely responsible for the crisis in Aleppo, the story was differently framed in the coverage of Al-Raqqa. The US was rarely criticised for the humanitarian crisis in the city while IS was considered responsible for the miserable conditions of the civilians during the battle. For example, an article titled *The Last Days of ISIS' Capital: Airstrikes if You Stay, Land Mines if You Flee* published on September 8th, 2017, stated that:

In a western Raqqa neighborhood where ISIS had recently been

routed, Fawza Hamedi lay on a mattress on the floor of her sister's house, wincing in pain. She had tried to get out of Raqqa weeks ago. But a woman ahead of her stepped on a mine and died instantly. Shrapnel punctured Ms. Hamedi's back and legs, an ISIS sniper shot at her, and then ISIS fighters dragged her away to a makeshift jail. Land mine victims are hastily buried there, she said. The smell is still in her nose.

This news article recounted in detail the suffering of civilians in Al-Raqqa including the type of injuries, the struggle to find medical treatment for the wounded, and the shortage of water during the battle. However, the focus of the article was more on the injuries caused by IS rather than by US airstrikes. Of 1590 words, only 192 words (12 per cent) were about US forces and as few as 92 words (5.7 per cent) reported on the US airstrikes on the city.

In another example, a news article titled *New Dangers Stalk Syrian Children still Haunted by Horrors under ISIS* published on July 31st, 2017 comprised 1617 words and as few as 25 words (1.4 per cent) reported on the role of US airstrikes in the humanitarian crisis in Al-Raqqa. Overall, the US role was framed positively. For instance, a news article titled *U.S. Sends Civilian Team to Syria to Help the Displaced Return Home* published on June 22nd, 2017 stated that "the Trump administration is sending a civilian team into Syria to try to bring stability to areas that American-backed forces have retaken from the Islamic State and to avert a humanitarian crisis". The article added that the US team was deployed to "help Syrians return home by organizing efforts to clear roadside bombs left behind by the Islamic State and to restore electricity and access to clean water".

As with *The Independent's* coverage, a large amount of visual content was used to show the humanitarian crisis in Aleppo. The figures showed that 90 images (53.7 per cent) reported on the human suffering in Aleppo including civilian deaths, injuries, displaced residents, and destruction of civilian infrastructure. The remaining images were: 18 images (10.2 per cent) of civilian suffering in other Syrian cities, seven images (4 per cent) of pro-opposition and Al-Nusra Front fighters, and random portraits and images of US, Russian, and Syrian politicians and military figures, and soldiers from the Syrian army. In the video content, the majority of the 6605 seconds (110 minutes) included in the articles were about the suffering of civilians in Aleppo including injured children inside hospitals, anti-government activists reporting on the situation in the city,

reports on the Russian intervention in Syria and its negative implications for civilians, a trailer of the *Netflix* documentary about the White Helmets, Russian airstrikes on other areas such as Idlib, and short clips of political gatherings about Syria held outside Syria. The humanitarian crisis in Aleppo was the main theme of all of these video clips.

With regard to Al-Raqqa, 77 images were attached to the articles. Forty-seven images (61 per cent) reported on the battle while 30 images (38.9 per cent) reported on other issues such as fighting IS in Iraq, destruction of civilian infrastructure in other Syrian cities, or the victims of IS attacks in Paris and London. Of the 77 images that reported on Al-Raqqa battle, only 21 images (27.2 per cent) reported on the human tragedy or destruction of civilian infrastructure. Notably, only one image (1.2 per cent) in the whole coverage of *The NYT* associated an injured civilian with US airstrikes on Al-Raqqa (Figure 14). In fact, it was not clear whether this civilian was actually injured because of a US airstrike but the caption under the image used in the article stated: "wounded Syrians on the front line in eastern Raqqa in July. Dangers have increased for civilians since the United States-led coalition began its assault on the city in June".



Figure 14: The only injured civilian image that seemed to be associated with US airstrikes on Al-Raqqa in *The NYT's* coverage (September 8th, 2017)

In contrast, the lives of the civilians in East Aleppo were put in a frame stressing humanitarian tragedy. The words used in the articles that explicitly reported on Aleppo were accompanied by graphic content (Figure 15) showing scenes of injured civilians. The voiceover accompanying the images below, for example, pointed out that:

Hospitals have been targeted by Syrian forces and their Russian allies as a strategy of war. Hundreds of medical professionals have been killed during the war and the vast majority of them have been killed by the government side, although all the sides have failed to respect the neutrality of medical and civilian facilities.



Figure 15: A screenshot of second 17 of the video clip titled *Hospitals in Syria Are Airstrike Target* published on September 29th, 2016 showing what *The NYT* referred to as a civilian injured in a Russian airstrike

In this video report, a scene from a children's hospital in West Aleppo (a government-held area) attacked by the armed groups in East Aleppo was put amongst scenes of civilian buildings reported to be attacked by the Syrian and Russian forces. The scene from minute 1:46 to minute 1:54 was of a nurse in Al Dabbit hospital filmed by the Syrian state television station *Al Ekhbariya* (Figure 16). This incident, however, was not identified by the newspaper.



Figure 16: A screenshot of minute 1:52 of the video clip. The logoed microphone and the Syrian channel's name circled with red (September 29th, 2016)

Despite reporting on the armed groups' hostilities against civilians in West Aleppo in 21 of 123 news articles (17 per cent), the issue was never the main theme in any article. Casualties in West Aleppo were not given the same media attention as were the civilians in East Aleppo. In all cases, news of civilian casualties in West Aleppo was placed in the middle or at the end of the articles. *The NYT's* coverage highlighted the relationship between the armed groups in Aleppo and Al-Qaeda. Referring to this relationship, a news article published on August 7th, 2016 and titled *Rebel Offensive in Syria Challenges Government Siege of Aleppo*, pointed out that:

A vital factor in the rebel advance over the weekend was cooperation between mainstream rebel groups, some of which have received covert arms support from the United States, and the jihadist organization formerly known as the Nusra Front, which was affiliated with Al Qaeda.

Other examples that highlighted the relationship between the armed groups in East Aleppo and Al-Qaeda include an article published on August 9th, 2016 titled *Fighting in Aleppo Leaves 2 Million Without Water, UN. Says*. This article pointed to the correlation between the "rebel forces and their jihadist allies".

However, despite the routine assaults on civilians in West Aleppo and the cooperation with Al-Qaeda, the armed groups in East Aleppo were framed favourably in the coverage as "rebels" or as victims of Syrian-Russian "aggression". As in *The Independent's* coverage, several victims of the fighting in Aleppo were identified and honoured. A short video clip lasting one minute and 35 seconds about the ambulance boy Omran Daqneesh, for example, was published in five different articles (more than any other video clip in the coverage). Moreover, reports on social media platforms by the young Syrian girl Bana Al-Abed were also given attention in the coverage of Aleppo (Figure 17). Despite giving her a platform, *The NYT*, nevertheless, was more careful than *The Independent* in dealing with news she reported. In an article published on December 7th, 2016 titled *Girl Posting to Twitter from Aleppo Gains Sympathy, but Doubts Follow*, Al-Abed was introduced as:

She is a 7-year-old with dimples, pink hair ribbons, a missing front tooth and halting English who first captured global attention three months ago with Twitter messages about bombs, death and despair in eastern Aleppo, the rebel-held section of the Syrian city.

Nonetheless, the article warned that the young girl's account might be a hoax, noting that:

But in an era of internet hoaxes, fabrications and the increased use of fake news around the world to further political agendas, Bana's *Twitter* account has also raised some questions of veracity and authenticity. Her messages are sophisticated for a 7-year-old, for example, particularly for one whose native language is not English.

In another article published on December 21st, 2016 titled *Erdogan Embraces Bana Al-Abed, Who Brought Child's View of Aleppo to Twitter*, *The NYT* quoted Jane E. Kirtley, a professor of media ethics and law at the University of Minnesota, who alerted that "it's always a question of whether a 7-year-old is being used as a propaganda tool, and if so, by whom. Sometimes we fall in love with a concept and basically ignore things that would undermine that concept, and ignore things that should be red flags". "For me, my antenna always goes up when the story is this compelling" professor Kirtley added.



Figure 17: The Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hugging Bana Al-Abed after she arrived in Turkey (December 21st, 2016)

Similar to the other visual content, the cartoons published by *The NYT* enhanced the overall frame of the two coverages. As can be seen in Cartoon 1 of Aleppo (Chappatte, 2016a), the cartoonist Patrick Chappatte criticises the former US President Barack Obama for not taking action to intervene in Aleppo. There is heavy black smoke, the entire city is destroyed, and Russian military aircraft (identified by the word Russia that is written on the main aircraft) drop bombs including what appear to be barrel bombs (referencing to the Syrian government). Cartoon 2 (Chappatte, 2016b) shows the Russian President Vladimir Putin giving bloodied Aleppo as a Christmas present to the Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad who seems to be framed as the character Gargamel from the Smurfs. Gargamel was evil, not loveable, and endeavoured to eat the Smurfs and destroy their little village.



Cartoon 1: Published on September 30th, 2016 titled *Chappatte on the Aleppo Nightmare*



Cartoon 2: Published on December 2nd, 2016 titled *Assad's Secret Santa*

Cartoon 3 of the battle of Al-Raqqah (Chappatte, 2017) shows a destroyed city, black smoke, three military helicopters, and two IS fighters leaving the city after the group was defeated. There is no indication of who owned or controlled these helicopters.



Cartoon 3: Published on October 20th, 2017 titled *On the Capture of Raqqah*

The cartoons of Aleppo focused on the civilian casualties (bleeding Aleppo as a present to the Syrian President) and heavy destruction of the city whereas Cartoon 3 focused on IS. Moreover, the attackers in Cartoon 1 and Cartoon 2 were blamed for the catastrophe of Aleppo whereas IS was blamed in Cartoon 3 for the destruction of Al-Raqqa. Moreover, the military operations in Cartoon 1 were still active and the military aircraft identified as "Russian" appeared to drop bombs on the city. In direct contrast, the three unidentified helicopters in Cartoon 3 were only flying over Al-Raqqa. In addition, Cartoon 1 criticised President Obama for only talking about Aleppo without taking action to "protect" the civilians while Cartoon 2 accused Vladimir Putin and Bashar Al-Assad of committing war crimes. As was the case with the main theme of the coverage of Al-Raqqa, Cartoon 3 failed to recognise the humanitarian crisis in Al-Raqqa. While Aleppo was a "nightmare" for its people, Al-Raqqa was a city that was "captured" from a terrorist organisation. Even though cartoons do not have precisely the same function as news, they reflected the dominant news of events in the two cities. Cartoons 1 and 2 framed the outcome of the military operations in Aleppo as a "bloody victory" over the people while Cartoon 3 framed the outcome of the military operations in Al-Raqqa as a "victory" over IS.

As for use of sources, *The NYT's* coverage paid considerable attention to what were described as "activists" or "citizen journalists" in Aleppo in contrast to its cursory treatment of activists in Al-Raqqa. Activists from Aleppo were quoted 130 times (20.8 per cent) and played a significant role in influencing *The NYT's* narrative of the military operations in Aleppo. Generally, these sources were considered reliable and trusted. However, anti-government activists had their agenda including calling for foreign intervention. A video clip of two minutes and 3 seconds accompanied by dramatic background music published on December 13th, 2016 titled *Aleppo Activists Say Final Goodbyes as Assad Closes in*, warned that "as Syrian government forces took control of eastern Aleppo this week, activists and civilians shared desperate messages on social media". Music plays an important role in drawing the audience's attention to particular scenes in a video clip (Cohen, 2011, p. 258) and in triggering emotional responses to the video being watched (Parke et al., 2007, p. 1).

Eight "activists" or "citizen journalists" who appeared in the video clip sent urgent messages to "save them from" the Syrian government. These included messages such as "this may be my last video" and "final message. People are dying since last night. I am very surprised I am tweeting right now & still alive", "U guess it's goodbye..

Thanks all who stand for us and pay (sic) for us. But it's almost over and they are just hours away of killing us", and "the last message. Thanks for everything. we (sic) shared many moments (...) Farewell, #Aleppo". This video clip was published several times. For example, it was included with an article published on December 14th, 2016 titled *Amid Rain of Shells, Aleppo's Civilians Offer 'Final Scream'* and an article published on December 16th, 2016 titled *Aleppo Evacuation Halted Amid Confusion and Concerns About Killings*. Notably, none of the eight individuals who appeared in the video clip was killed as they were all evacuated safely to Idlib or Turkey.

In another indication of the imbalance in the coverage of the two battles, *The NYT* selected in an article of memorable images from 2016, four images from Aleppo all of which were about the human suffering in the city. In the article published on December 22nd, 2016 titled *The Year in Pictures 2016*, two images reported on civilian casualties and destruction in the first half of the year and two images reported on the same issues in the second half of the year. In a direct contrast, *The Year in Pictures 2017* published on December 19th, 2017 only selected one image from Al-Raqqa and it was of a family and friends crying for a Kurdish fighter killed in the battle against IS rather than of civilian casualties or destruction in the city.

Overall, Aleppo has been symbolised through graphic images and video clips of civilians and particularly of children such as Omran Daqneesh and Bana Al-Abed. Empirical evidence shows that graphic images are likely to stick in people's memory (Newhagen and Reeves, 1992). Barnett and Reynolds (2009, p. 85) point out that "if producers want to draw attention to a story, they need to draw attention with images that cause anger and then introduce what they want viewers to remember right after those images". Emphasis on graphic images was intended to delegitimise the Syrian-Russian alliance and to legitimise a US-led military intervention. In contrast, the coverage of Al-Raqqa did not include images of children killed during the military operations in the city and the majority of Al-Raqqa victims were not reported on at all.

6.5.1 Examples of terms used in *The NYT's* coverage

Comparing *The NYT's* coverage of the two battles was a daunting task because of the lack of news articles reporting on the humanitarian crisis in Al-Raqqa. The coverage of Aleppo was direct, forceful and sympathetic to the civilians and the armed groups. While these armed groups and their atrocities against civilians who were living in the government-controlled area in West Aleppo were not given much attention, the

focus was on the situation in East Aleppo. As with *The Independent*, the terms used in *The NYT's* coverage of Aleppo were empathic and dramatic. For Al-Raqqa, however, the terms used in the coverage were less dramatic and empathic. The terms were not as forthright as they were in the coverage of Aleppo except for the articles that reported on casualties caused by IS.

For instance, a video article published on July 29th, 2016 in the first days of the military operations in Aleppo titled *Hospitals in Syria Are Airstrike Targets*, stated that "opposition and government forces are struggling for control of Aleppo. Hospitals on the front line have become targets". The video added "doctors sleep in the hospitals, but other people are afraid to stay near hospitals unless they really need to be there because they are sure that hospitals are being deliberately targeted". The words used in the video clip, such as "airstrike targets" and "hospitals are being deliberately targeted" were unambiguous. For Al-Raqqa in contrast, a similar news article published on June 10th, 2017 at the beginning of the military operations titled *U.S.-Led Forces Said to Have Used White Phosphorus in Syria*, pointed out that:

Images and reports from witnesses in the northern Syrian city of Raqqa suggest that the United States-led coalition battling the Islamic State there has used munitions loaded with white phosphorus, the use of which in populated areas is prohibited under international law.

Unlike the comparable headline about Aleppo, the headline of Al-Raqqa article was ambivalent when addressing the reports as in the sentence "said to have used". The text of the article was also ambivalent using the word "suggest" when referring to the use of white phosphorus. In these two examples, *The NYT* depended on what it described as eyewitnesses, images, or reports. Nonetheless, the reliability of the sources of Aleppo was unquestioned in contrast to the reliability of the sources of Al-Raqqa.

In another example of the use of explicit terms when referring to Russia or Syria, a news article titled *Russia's Brutal Bombing of Aleppo May Be Calculated, and it May Be Working*, published on September 28th, 2016 pointed out that:

The effects of Russia's bombing campaign in the Syrian city of Aleppo — destroying hospitals and schools, choking off basic supplies, and killing aid workers and hundreds of civilians over just days — raise a question: What could possibly motivate such brutality? Observers attribute Russia's bombing to recklessness,

cruelty or Moscow's desperate thrashing in what the White House has called a "quagmire." But many analysts take a different view: Russia and its Syrian government allies, they say, could be massacring Aleppo's civilians as part of a calculated strategy, aimed beyond this one city.

Similarly, an editorial published on September 29th, 2016 pointed out that "Russian and Syrian warplanes knocked out two hospitals in the rebel-held sector of Aleppo as part of an assault that threatens the lives of 250,000 more people". Moreover, the military operations reported on in the article titled *Assault on Aleppo Will Halt for 8 Hours, Russia Says* published on October 17th, 2016, were framed as intentionally targeting all the civilians in East Aleppo. The news article suggested that "roughly 275,000 people have been subjected to indiscriminate aerial bombing that has killed hundreds". In another example published on July 28th, 2016, titled *Syria Outlines Plans for Conquest of Aleppo, Backed by Russian Power*, Russia was accused of intentionally targeting markets:

Russia's military intervention has provided an edge to the forces of President Bashar al-Assad, allowing them to cut off access to the city's rebel-held areas, while also making life inside them worse through shelling and airstrikes against markets, bakeries and medical facilities — leaving entire neighborhoods in ruins.

As with *The Independent*, the "intentional" frame was used by *The NYT* to demonise Syria and Russia and to generate international opinion critical of the two governments. In an even stronger statement, *The NYT* accused the Syrian and Russian forces of adopting a "war strategy" by "targeting" civilian infrastructure as indicated in an article published on July 29th, 2016. By comparison, news articles that reported on Al-Raqqah lacked the emotional and condemnatory language used in the coverage of East Aleppo. The news article titled *U.S.-Led Airstrikes in Syria Killed Hundreds of Civilians, UN Panel Says* published on June 14th, 2017 was one of the few articles that reported on the civilian casualties in Al-Raqqah. Despite referring to a UN report that spoke about "deepening fears among humanitarian agencies over the toll in civilian lives exacted by American and coalition forces" and despite questioning Trump's policy and its implications for protecting civilians, the article did not accuse the US of committing "war crimes" or intentionally targeting civilians in the way as the newspaper strongly accused Russia or Syria of these crimes.

In the coverage of Aleppo, for instance, *The NYT* said in an article titled *Pro-Government Forces Advance in Syria Amid Talk of U.S.-Russia Cooperation* published on June 14th, 2016 that the Aleppo siege "would be longer and bloodier" than any previous siege in Syria. Other examples of the use of explicit and strong terms included "bloody summer", "kill zone" or as described by then Secretary of State John Kerry in an article titled *New Syria Talks End Quickly, Giving Little Hope to a Beleaguered Aleppo*, published on October 15th, 2016, a "humanitarian disaster that is the largest humanitarian disaster since world war two". Strong graphic descriptions were used to report on Aleppo. For instance, a news article published on August 18th, 2016 titled *How Omran Daqneesh, 5, Became a Symbol of Aleppo's Suffering*, pointed out that:

Pieces of children's bodies being pulled from rubble are photographed with appalling regularity in a war of indiscriminate attacks, most often from government airstrikes and shelling but also from rebel mortars.

Similarly, Samer Attar, a doctor who visited Aleppo, recounted his own experience in an opinion piece published on August 26th, 2016 titled *Why I Go to Aleppo*:

One night, we treated a child caught in an explosion who had the bone shards of obliterated bystanders embedded in his skin. An airstrike hit his school during a charity event to donate clothes to the poor. The last thing he remembered was seeing his best friend disintegrate in front of him.

The unbalanced coverage of the two battles can also be seen in the way the outcomes of the two battles were framed. The outcome of the battle of Al-Raqqqa was framed as "liberation" and "victory" over a terrorist organisation. Except for two news articles, the articles that reported on defeating IS were included with visual content of fighters celebrating the "victory".

In contrast, the end of the military operations in Aleppo was framed as a "humanitarian disaster". This frame was enhanced by emphasising the death toll, visual content of helpless civilians, and scenes of heavy destruction of civilian infrastructure (Figure 18). To cite a few examples, an article published on December 16th, 2016 titled *A Harrowing Evacuation from Aleppo, in Stops and Starts* was included with short clips distributed by *Aleppo Media Center* of injured civilians and destruction. Commenting on this "harrowing" evacuation, the article stated that:

The evacuation follows a long siege and bombardment of the area

by Syrian forces and their allies. Hundreds of people were killed and much of the city reduced to rubble. Salah al-Ashkar, an activist, filmed himself saying goodbye to the city of his birth as crowds waited to exit. "Just as you see, we will flee from our city, we will flee from our nation," he said.



Figure 18: One of the images published to report on the evacuation of the remaining civilians in Aleppo (December 16th, 2016)

Moreover, describing the situation in Aleppo after the surrender of the armed groups, an editorial published on December 14th, 2016 titled *Aleppo's Destroyers: Assad, Putin, Iran* stated:

Watching the fall of the ancient Syrian city of Aleppo has been excruciating. Civilians who survived weeks of intense shelling have reportedly been slaughtered by the forces of the Assad government as they have fled the battle zone, some shot in house-to-house searches. Thousands more are trapped with no food, water or shelter.

This editorial spoke about reports of "house-to-house" killing of the remaining civilians in Aleppo but no reliable sources were published to verify the report. By comparison, despite it being "the most-destroyed city of modern times" (Amnesty International UK, 2019), the newspaper did not express similar feelings about Al-Raqqa. In another indication of the unbalanced coverage of the two battles, no editorials were published to voice concerns over Al-Raqqa from mid-October to the end of October 2017 compared with three editorials published about Aleppo from mid-December to the end of December 2016 (The Editorial Board, 2016a; The Editorial Board, 2016b; The Editorial

Board, 2016c). The editorials about Aleppo included an editorial published on December 31st, 2016 titled *Can Russia Make Peace as Well as War?* that questioned whether the Russian President Vladimir Putin was "willing and able to take responsibility for Syria's future, including rebuilding the cities that Russia helped destroy" (The Editorial Board, 2016c). Not surprisingly, the American newspaper did not show the same concern about Al-Raqqa and a similar question was not directed to the US President but to the people who were asked to start rebuilding their destroyed cities. In this light, the destruction of Al-Raqqa was considered collateral damage and a reasonable outcome arising from the "victory" over IS. To give an example, in an article titled *This is What Victory over ISIS Looks Like* published on October 19th, 2017 days after Al-Raqqa was retaken, the newspaper said that:

The declarations of victory played out across Iraq and Syria: The long campaigns to retake city after city from Islamic State militants had come to an end. But the hard-won battles left vast destruction in their wake, and the celebrations from atop the rubble of once-grand buildings are ringing hollow for hundreds of thousands of displaced residents. Iraqis and Syrians return to cities that are ghosts of their former glory, lacking the infrastructure for normal life to begin again. Now they must grapple with how to rebuild.

The NYT's coverage, specifically the coverage of the military operations in Al-Raqqa, was influenced by pro-US propaganda. The following section compares the coverage of *The Independent* and *The NYT* of the military operations in Al-Raqqa and Aleppo.

6.6 Comparison of *The Independent's* and *The NYT's* coverage of the battles of Aleppo and Al-Raqqa

The foregoing analysis has shown that the similarities of the coverage of the two newspapers were more than the differences between them. Of the 184 days during which the battle of Aleppo took place, both newspapers reported on Aleppo for 103 days (55.9 per cent). For the battle of Al-Raqqa, however, of the 147 days during which the battle unfolded, *The Independent* reported on the military operations for 31 days (21 per cent) compared with 26 days (16.9 per cent) for *The NYT*. On average, for every three articles about Aleppo, there was only one article about Al-Raqqa.

As for the visual content, more images and video accompanied the articles that reported on the humanitarian crisis and destruction of civilian infrastructures in Aleppo

than accompanied those reporting on Al-Raqqa. On average 10.2 images (including photo albums) and 54.7 seconds of video clips accompanied each article of *The Independent's* coverage of Aleppo compared with only 0.3 images and 5 seconds of video clips for Al-Raqqa. For *The NYT*, the average number of images accompanying each article was 0.7 images and 44.9 seconds of video clips for the coverage of Aleppo and 0.5 images and 2.2 seconds of video clips for the coverage of Al-Raqqa (Table 18).

City	<i>The Independent</i>		<i>The NYT</i>	
	Aleppo	Al-Raqqa	Aleppo	Al-Raqqa
No. of reporting days	103 (55.9%)	31 (20.2%)	103 (55.9%)	26 (16.9%)
No. of articles	148	37	147	37
Av. of images used per article	10.2	0.3	0.7	0.5
Av. of video content used per article	54.7 sec	5 sec	44.9 sec	2.2 sec

Table 18: A comparison of use of sources and visual content in the coverage of *The Independent* and *The NYT* of Aleppo and Al-Raqqa

US sources were dominant in *The NYT's* coverages of Aleppo and Al-Raqqa (Table 19). Various sources were used in the coverage of Aleppo by the two newspapers that mostly voiced an anti-Syria and anti-Russia narrative compared with the sources used in the coverage of Al-Raqqa that voiced a pro-US narrative. In contrast, Syrian official sources were amongst the least used sources in the coverage by both newspapers of the two battles but particularly for the coverage of Al-Raqqa where Syrian sources were only used twice (1.9 per cent) in *The Independent* and only once (0.7 per cent) in *The NYT*. Moreover, both newspapers used more UN and international NGOs sources in the coverage of Aleppo than in their coverage of Al-Raqqa. This lent more credibility to the coverage of Aleppo because these sources were often considered reliable and trustworthy. Herman and Chomsky (2002, p. 34) addressed this particular issue in the PM. They argued that:

Using a propaganda model, we would not only anticipate definitions of worth based on utility and dichotomous attention based on the same criterion, we would also expect the news stories about worthy and unworthy victims (or enemy and friendly states) to differ in quality. That is, we would expect official sources of the United States and its client regimes to be used

heavily-and uncritically-in connection with one's own abuses and those of friendly governments, while refugees and other dissident sources will be used in dealing with enemies.

The use of European sources (mainly British and French officials) was another notable issue in the coverage of *The Independent*. While the representation of these sources was 14.4 per cent in the coverage of Aleppo, their representation was only 3.8 per cent in the coverage of Al-Raqqa. It can be argued that these officials were less concerned about the humanitarian crisis in Al-Raqqa because their countries were members of the coalition that caused the humanitarian crisis in Al-Raqqa.

Type of sources	<i>The Independent</i>		<i>The NYT</i>	
	Aleppo	Al-Raqqa	Aleppo	Al-Raqqa
US	4.9%	20.3%	16.3%	39%
Official Syrian	10.7%	1.9%	7%	0.7%
The UN and international NGOs	19.3%	15.5%	16.8%	9.9%
Anti-govt. local activists	34.3%	11.6%	28.1%	13.4%
British/French/Europe	14.4%	3.8%	1.1%	2.1%

Table 19: Use of the main sources in the coverage of *The Independent* and *The NYT* of Aleppo and Al-Raqqa

6.7 Conclusion

Chapters 5 and 6 have shown that the coverage by *The NYT* and *The Independent* tended to reflect and reinforce US propaganda. *The Independent*, however, was slightly more critical than *The NYT* of the US forces in Al-Raqqa by, for instance, allocating more coverage to civilian casualties in Al-Raqqa. The biased coverage of the two newspapers was constructed out of several elements: through the amount of media attention given to each city; through the use of visual content quantitatively (number of images and video clips attached) and qualitatively (type of images and video clips attached); through the use of dramatic terminology in the case of Aleppo and less dramatic language in the case of Al-Raqqa; via the focus on the humanitarian situation in the coverage of Aleppo and the military operations in the coverage of Al-Raqqa; through the use of sources, particularly US sources, that enhanced a pro-US narrative; and, by paying more attention to UN and anti-Syrian government NGO sources in Aleppo and giving them far less attention in Al-Raqqa. In addition, the outcome of the battle of Aleppo was framed as a "disaster" while capturing Al-Raqqa was framed

mainly as a "victory".

The prominent scholar Robert M. Entman (1991, p. 6) who extensively examined news framing argued that:

Unless narratives are compared, frames are difficult to detect fully and reliably, because many of the framing devices can appear as "natural" unremarkable choices of words or images. Comparison reveals that such choices are not inevitable or unproblematic but rather are central to the way the news frame helps establish the literally "common sense" (i.e., widespread) interpretation of events.

Similar to Entman's (1991) findings, the civilian casualties of the military operations in Al-Raqqa were generally framed by technical discourse and as an accident while the civilian casualties of the military operation in Aleppo were framed by a moral discourse and as deliberate and premeditated incidents. The victims of Aleppo were "worthy" of the attention of the world and were used to admonish the Syrian-Russian forces. In this context, anti-Syrian government media groups, US, and European sources played an important role in reporting on the "worthy" victims. The low-key coverage of the "unworthy" victims of Al-Raqqa relied on US and Kurdish militia sources that were responsible for the death of many of these victims. Entman's (1993) framing functions explain the way the two military operations were presented to the audience. In Aleppo the problem was framed as a struggle between outgunned armed opposition groups and the unarmed civilians they were seeking to defend against brutal, indiscriminate forces and as a desperate, moral plea for the world to stand with the people of Aleppo against the Syrian-Russian aggressors.

In Al-Raqqa, however, the problem was framed as a military campaign against a terrorist organisation. In this case, the only solution was to liberate the city and free the people from the threat of terrorism. By carrying on these military operations, the US and its allies were framed as playing a positive role in the Syrian conflict compared to the negative role Russia played when its forces targeted people instead of saving them. To complete the story, there was a need to overlook the victims and destruction in Al-Raqqa and to focus on the positive outcome of the campaign which was defeating IS.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the coverage of *The NYT* and *The Independent* of the Syrian conflict. It has three separate sections and each section addresses a different issue. The first section of this chapter discusses the main elements of the coverage and addresses how it, for instance, demonised Syria and Russia and praised the US. The second section inspects the phenomenon of citizen journalism in connection with *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* coverage of the conflict. It addresses the relationship between political elites, intelligence agencies, and Syrian citizen journalists and how this relationship helped to shape the two newspapers' narrative in their coverage of the conflict. It also shows how citizen journalism has been exploited to push for a war agenda in Syria. The third section contextualises the concept of the "terrorism industry" with reference to the two newspapers' coverage of the conflict. The third section shows how this industry served the US foreign policy and its war propaganda.

7.1 Elements of *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* coverage

This section discusses the recurring elements of *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* coverage of the Syrian conflict. These elements were: (1) concentration on the military operations of the opposing forces, (2) selective use of sources, (3) demonising one side and praising the other, and (4) focusing on warmaking measures over peacemaking measures.

7.1.1 Concentration on the military operations of the opposing forces

The media's coverage of the Syrian conflict largely concentrated on the military operations of the opposing forces. The humanitarian crisis, however, was also taken into account but only when it complemented or reinforced the two newspapers', particularly *The NYT's*, narrative of the conflict. For example, based on the main topic being reported, 962 news articles of 1033 (93.1 per cent) published by *The NYT* reported on the military conflict, the "war on terror", and issues related to these two topics, while the remainder reported on the refugee crisis. The humanitarian crisis was also sometimes covered by the articles that reported on the military operations but as a second or third-order theme. The coverage, however, tended to focus on the humanitarian crisis when tens of thousands of refugees began arriving in Europe in 2015. The crisis was also used to vilify the Syrian and the Russian governments or to promote the military intervention

agenda that was framed as a "humanitarian" mission to protect the Syrian people. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, the mainstream media coverage of the military operations in Aleppo differed markedly from its coverage of the operations in Al-Raqqa because these operations put the US and its war on terror in a bad light.

7.1.2 Selective use of sources

Often, news supplied by official sources is subject to bias in favour of these sources (Dimitrova and Strömbäck, 2008, p. 207; McLeod, 2007, p. 187; Dardis, 2006, p. 118). This was seen in the news coverage of the Syrian conflict that relied on official sources particularly in the coverage of Al-Raqqa. A noteworthy feature of the mainstream Western media's coverage of the Syrian conflict, and as seen in *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* reporting on the conflict, was the extensive and highly selective use of non-official sources to push an agenda that sought to overthrow the Syrian government. UN and international NGOs sources were used mostly when they corresponded to the narrative of the conflict as reported by the two newspapers. For instance, non-official sources were given more weight in the coverage of Aleppo than were official sources. Non-official sources particularly those that disclosed atrocities caused by the US military operations, however, were not given much weight in the coverage of Al-Raqqa, and when quoted their voice was toned down as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

There was a systematic, and calculated, use of official sources in the coverage of both Aleppo and Al-Raqqa and very selective use of unofficial sources in the coverage of the two battles. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, the US official narrative of the military operations in Al-Raqqa was hardly challenged. This study has already demonstrated that non-official sources were cited extensively but selectively in the coverage because they followed the same intervention agenda being pushed by *The NYT* and *The Independent*. This issue is discussed further later in the chapter when the phenomenon of citizen journalism and its role in the Syrian conflict will be investigated.

7.1.3 Demonising one side and praising the other

The third element of the coverage of the Syrian conflict is enhancing the good guys and bad guys frame similar to what was discussed in Chapter 2. Promoting foreign intervention can be achieved by, for instance, praising one side of the conflict and demonising the other. In this light, Macleod (2019) argues that "when official enemies

can be presented as evil and allies as sympathetic victims, corporate media will be very interested in a story". Thus, Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah as discussed in Chapter 5 were put in a bad light by accusing them of intentionally targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. To emphasise this frame, countering terrorism efforts such as fighting IS or Al-Nusra Front by these sides were mostly overlooked. Iran and Hezbollah combined were framed six times positively in relation to their efforts to fight terrorism, while they were framed 80 times negatively for "targeting" civilians or defending the Syrian President and government.

On the contrary, the opposition armed forces were often framed positively as fighters for freedom and as patrons of their own people. Attacks on civilians carried out by these forces received very little coverage. As addressed in Chapter 6, civilian casualties in Western Aleppo (government-held area) were covered by *The NYT* in only 21 of 123 news articles (17 per cent) and they were never the main theme in any article. As for the visual content from West Aleppo, only four images (1.7 per cent) were attached to the articles. The opposition armed forces were generally framed as "moderate" but this moderation was never defined despite the fact that the main body of these forces was explicitly seeking to establish what they believed to be an "Islamic" state through their alliance with Al-Nusra Front (Shaam Network, 2017).

As for the US, the American military activities in Syria were labelled as efforts to fight terrorism and to restore peace. The US troops were framed positively 84.2 per cent of the time and negatively 14.7 per cent of the time. Negative frames were allocated to the slow progress of the "war on terror" and for not providing enough assistance to the Kurdish militias or the anti-Syrian government armed opposition. Furthermore, US airstrikes that caused civilian casualties were mostly framed as "mistakes", "accidents", or "allegations". Wheeler (2004, p. 114) provides an explanation for the use of the "mistake" frame in reference to the war in Afghanistan:

By framing the deaths of innocents as mistakes, the US sought to avoid the deeper moral and legal questions as to whether it was attacking legitimate military targets; whether such actions satisfied the proportionality rule; and whether its air and ground forces were placing themselves at sufficient risk in order to mitigate the horrors of war for innocent Afghans.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the "distraction" technique was used by *The NYT* to report on US airstrikes. So, for example, when US airstrikes were referred to in the coverage the

focus would soon turn to another issue or reports on civilian casualties caused by Syrian or Russian airstrikes.

7.1.4 Focusing on warmaking measures over peacemaking measures

The NYT's and *The Independent's* coverage favoured military solutions over other peaceful solutions but only when it fitted its agenda. By focusing on children and civilian casualties, *The NYT* and *The Independent* intended to frame the Syrian conflict as a struggle between unarmed groups and an authoritarian regime. It was found that images and video clips of the armed groups in Aleppo made only 0.6 per cent and 3.2 per cent of the visual content published in *The Independent's* coverage. Moreover, there was almost no mention of Al-Nusra Front members who were fighting alongside these groups. On a few occasions, nevertheless, Al-Nusra Front members were referred to as having links with Al-Qaeda rather than as actual members of this organisation.

This can be attributed to the fact that acknowledging the existence of Al-Qaeda or terrorism in Aleppo would have justified the Syrian-Russian military operations in the city. Moreover, acknowledging the existence of terrorism in Aleppo would have put those who opposed the military operations in a bad light as they would be interested in saving the armed groups allied with Al-Qaeda. Thus, there was a need to focus on the civilians in East Aleppo in contrast to Al-Raqqa where the coverage overlooked the civilians who were in the city during the military operations and focused on IS.

The military intervention in Syria was favoured principally when the Syrian army seemed capable of defeat. *The NYT* did not encourage the US-led coalition to go to war with Syria, however, other options such as attacking Syria (or what was described as limited strikes) and training and arming the opposition forces were often framed as good moves. The reason for encouraging different types of military measures including "limited airstrikes" was perhaps because it was hoped that these strikes were not going to lead to all-out war. The military solutions appeared in the coverage between 2013 and 2014 but the situation changed when the Russians started their military campaign in 2015.

Following the Russian intervention, the coverage tended to call for peaceful solutions. This, however, was not always the case given *The NYT's* position of support for the Kurdish military groups and demands to keep the US troops in Syria. The coverage relied heavily on "activists" and local NGOs who were on the ground while many of *The NYT's* journalists were based in Cairo, Beirut, or Amman. Relying on

"activists" or local anti-Syrian government NGOs was a noticeable shortcoming of the coverage of the conflict. Thus, the following section discusses the citizen journalism phenomenon and its roles during the Syrian conflict.

7.2 The Syrian conflict and citizen journalism

The reliance on citizen journalism has significantly increased in the last two decades (Linder et al., 2015; Palmer, 2012, pp. 367-368). Having to adapt to rapid technological changes such as the introduction and rapid and widespread uptake of social media, mainstream media have allowed citizen journalists to be part of their news production (Wall, 2015, p. 798; Jurrat, 2011, p. 7; Hermida and Thurman, 2008; Shields, 2008). As a result, the professionalism of citizen journalism has grown in recent years to an extent where professional and citizen journalism sometimes overlap and become indistinguishable (Blaagaard, 2013; Kperogi, 2011).

Citizen journalism started to evolve at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s (Rosenberry and St. John III, 2009, p. 9; Nip, 2006, p. 213). Two major events helped this phenomenon to grow: the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami (Allan, 2010, p. 219; Allan, 2006, pp. 5-6) and the September 11 attacks (Gillmor, 2004, p. 58). For the 2004 tsunami, those who took video clips and photographs of the event and posted them online helped mainstream media and the world to make sense of what had happened particularly in the first days of the catastrophe. This visual content received wide recognition from media outlets around the world (Allan, 2010, pp. 219-220). For the September 11 attacks, thousands of people who witnessed the World Trade Center on fire were prepared to capture the moment. These citizens who provided their videos, photos, and personal accounts of the events to media outlets became a major source in the coverage of one of the biggest events the US has ever witnessed.

During the past two decades, citizen journalism has faced challenges, including legal and security challenges, which varied from one country to another (Johnston and Wallace, 2017; Johnston, 2016). Moreover, citizen journalism has been criticised for its lack of credibility and professionalism (Balaraman et al., 2019; Krajewski and Ekdale, 2017; Noor, 2017; Wall, 2015, p. 800; Çela, 2015, p. 167; Gillespie et al., 2015, p. 81; Chadha and Steiner, 2015). Similarly, citizen journalism has been criticised for its lack of understanding of social responsibility. For instance, some citizen journalists were criticised for their "irresponsible" coverage following social unrest or for spreading fear following coverage of terrorist attacks (Mpfu and Barnabas, 2016; Watson, 2012).

Other challenges that face citizen journalism include technical and censorship obstacles (Banda, 2010, pp. 49-50) and limited effect (Zeng et al., 2019; Luo and Harrison, 2019).

The term citizen journalism is problematic (Tilley and Cokley, 2008). Scholars have not agreed upon a definition for this phenomenon (Johnston and Wallace, 2017, pp. 850-851; Wall, 2015, pp. 797-798; Allan, 2010, p. 219). Citizen journalism takes different forms including public or engaged journalism (Min, 2020) and user-generated content (Barredo-Ibáñez, 2020) that encourages audiences to submit their stories and visual content collected by them to media outlets. Albarado (2020) defines citizen journalism as "journalism that is conducted by people who are not professional journalists but who disseminate information using web sites, blogs, and social media". While this citizen journalism does not always involve activities that are conducted online (Goode, 2009, pp. 1288-1289), for this discussion, Albarado's definition will be used to inspect citizen journalism within the Syrian context because the discussion will focus on the content supplied or quoted from online "activists" and local Syrian NGOs. Moreover, citizen journalism in Syria was mostly practiced by activists who had no professional background, yet their production of news and visual content found its way to mainstream media and international news agencies.

International NGOs have become an important source of news (Leuven and Joye, 2014). While NGOs and online activists can be considered two different types of sources, the distinction between these two can hardly be seen in the Syrian case. To explain, the coverage of the Syrian conflict relied on non-governmental sources of several types including anti-Syrian government local NGOs and media groups (Saleh, 2018; Wessels, 2017; Johnston, 2016; Aslan, 2015; Alsaleh, 2015; Carnegie, 2012). Most of the anti-Syrian government NGOs and media groups were established following the 2011 demonstrations and only existed in areas controlled by opposition armed forces or areas not controlled by the Syrian government. In addition, as was discussed in Chapter 6, some local NGOs and media groups that were affiliated with the opposition such as the White Helmets have only focused on casualties alleged to have been killed by Syrian and Russian forces and did not report on casualties alleged to have been killed by US military activities.

While researchers were in broad agreement that social media platforms played some important roles in the demonstrations during the so-called "Arab Spring", they differed in their assessments of the extent to which these platforms influenced the mood of the general public on the Arab street (Breuer et al., 2015; Faris, 2012; Khondker,

2011). In the Syrian conflict, however, "activists" or "citizen journalists" have been a major source of news for regional and international media (Wall and El Zahed, 2015a; Wall and El Zahed, 2015b; Mast and Hanegreefs, 2015; Anden-Papadopoulos and Pantti, 2013). For instance, Khasib's and Ersoy's (2016) content analysis of media coverage of five main events of the Syrian conflict between 2011 and 2013 found that out of ten newscasts about a half of the visual content broadcast on *Al Jazeera Arabic* (46.3 per cent) came from anti-Syrian government activists. Similarly, Mast and Hanegreefs (2015) found that out of a total of 450 images over a period of more than 20 months of the conflict (but not including related diplomatic conferences and the like) 279 or 62 per cent of the images that were published in two popular Belgian newspapers came from "citizen journalists".

Mainstream media outlets relied heavily on so-called "activists" because they either were not able to report from inside Syria or were unwilling or unable to quote Syrian officials as part of the coverage. The findings reported in Chapter 4 show that out of 1033 news articles of *The NYT's* coverage, only 102 (9.8 per cent) were reported from anywhere inside Syria while 931 (90.1 per cent) were reported from outside Syria. Moreover, the statistics also reveal that pro-Syrian voices were cited in 214 articles (20.7 per cent) and not cited in 819 articles (79.2 per cent). On average, for every pro-Syrian government source cited in the coverage, there were three anti-Syrian government sources quoted. As for the 2016 military operations in Aleppo, anti-government "activists" were given extensive coverage with a representation of 34 per cent in the coverage by *The Independent* and a representation of 22.7 per cent in the coverage by *The NYT*. This is about twice the coverage UN and international NGO sources received.

As discussed in this thesis, the use of "citizen journalists" in coverage of the Syrian conflict reveals that they were predominantly used in reports on issues such as military operations and civilian casualties (e.g. the coverage of Aleppo) which made their contribution very influential in shaping the overall narrative of the coverage. Meyer et al. (2018) examined the influence of NGOs and their sources in the Syrian conflict through two events: the escalation of the protests in 2011 and the alleged chemical attacks in 2013. They argue that NGOs (particularly locals) have influenced the narrative of the conflict and supported a punitive foreign policy against the Syrian government.

However, the relationship between "citizen journalists" and officials who represented states that sought to topple the Syrian government was not taken into account by most scholars who examined the Syrian conflict (Meyer et al., 2018; Wessels, 2017; Khasib and Ersoy, 2016; Johnston, 2016; Mast and Hanegreefs, 2015). The study conducted by Lynch et al. (2014, p. 6) is one of the few that warned about the risk of relying on citizen journalists in the Syrian conflict, arguing that the dependency on them "creates the real risk of the same partial, misleading, and motivated narrative in mass media as in social media".

Lynch et al. pointed out that mainstream media should be more cautious in dealing with the flow of information in social media. While they did not point to the role of political elites and intelligence agencies, they argue that:

Social media create a dangerous illusion of unmediated information flows. Those who follow *YouTube* videos, Syrian *Twitter* accounts, or *Facebook* postings may believe that they are receiving an accurate and comprehensive account of the conflict. But these flows are carefully curated by networks of activists and designed to craft particular narratives (Lynch et al., 2014, p. 5).

While the citizen journalism phenomenon helped to report on issues that are generally overlooked by mainstream media, reduced the monopoly of news, and competed with mainstream media in playing the role of the fourth estate (Tsai and Lo, 2016, pp. 162-163; Simons, 2016b), citizen journalism has also fallen into the trap of being used as a political tool in promoting a war agenda, particularly in Syria. Political elites realised the importance of being represented by what were promoted as independent voices.

To give an example of the relationship between US officials and Syrian "activists", Robinson (2018, pp. 60-61) pointed to "training" Syrian "activists" that was part of the Syrian regime change strategy pursued by the US. Robinson was referencing the former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton's memoir. In *Hard Choices*, Clinton (2014, p. 393) said that she:

Pledged increased support for civilian opposition groups, including satellite-linked computers, telephones, cameras, and training for more than a thousand activists, students, and independent journalists.

The PM identified "sourcing" as a main filter of news but because it was developed before the golden era of social media, the "sourcing" filter did not include official voices that were knowingly or unwittingly represented by citizen journalists. This issue is far more problematic than recruitment of journalists by intelligence agencies to help them shape public opinion (Keeble, 2010; Boyd-Barrett, 2004; Bernstein, 1977) because activists as citizen journalists are framed as mere victims or just random members of society with no clear agenda.

To give a few more examples of the relationship between "citizen journalists" and political and intelligence agencies in Syria, previously undisclosed US diplomatic cables revealed that the State Department financed an anti-Syrian government satellite television channel starting from 2009. The London-based channel *Barada* was active during the conflict and cooperated with "activists" inside Syria and abroad to promote an anti-government agenda (Whitlock, 2011). In addition, official documents revealed that the British Ministry of Defence (MoD) hired contractors who in cooperation with Syrian "citizen journalists", produced propaganda materials in favour of the opposition armed forces.

Middle East Eye, a London-based online news website, viewed the documents revealing that "UK government contractors set up offices in Istanbul and Amman, where they hired members of the Syrian diaspora, who in turn recruited citizen journalists inside Syria" and the main requirement was "the selection, training, support and mentoring of Syrian oppositionist media activists who share the UK's vision for a future Syria (toppling the Syrian government and establishing a pro-West government)" (Cobain and Ross, 2020). Similarly, Cobain et al. (2016) indicated that MoD contractors had produced:

Videos, photos, military reports, radio broadcasts, print products and social media posts branded with the logos of fighting groups, and effectively run a press office for opposition fighters. Materials are circulated in the Arabic broadcast media and posted online with no indication of British government involvement.

Not surprisingly, some of these "contractors" were former personnel of the MoD or British intelligence agencies. The questions that should be asked here are how much of the propaganda content introduced by the anti-government "citizen journalists" was based on lies and what was the effect on the targeted audience. A group called

Anonymous that for about ten years published official documents that exposed the UK intelligence's involvement in the Syrian conflict, provided similar findings. Documents published in September 2020 showed that hundreds of journalists and "citizen journalists" were trained and funded to be part of a propaganda campaign to promote the Syrian opposition including organisations that had links with Al-Qaeda. The documents showed that reports created by media groups such as InCoStrat and ARK (they claim to provide innovative communication and strategies as well as media services for their clients) were employed by the UK intelligence and were widely published in international media outlets such as *BBC* and *Al Jazeera* (Doer, 2020).

Citizen journalism plays an important role, particularly during protests or conflicts. This can be attributed to several reasons. Firstly, citizen journalism appears to be more credible than the mainstream media does (Holton et al., 2013; Towner and Dulio, 2011, p. 639) because it represents and speaks for "real" individuals. Activists reporting on the ground (often live) do not wear formal attire, speak directly to their audience, and use a simple language that can be understood by any member of the society. Secondly, citizen journalists sometimes operate in areas where journalists do not dare to report from or do not have access to as was the case during the 2016 military operations in Aleppo. Thirdly, the content supplied by activists appears to be more credible (even if it is not) because it is not professionally edited (Browning et al., 2020) and because citizen journalists engage the audience with the event as it is occurring and thereby compete with mainstream journalists. Fourthly, because it is relatively a new phenomenon, citizen journalism has not been criticised or studied as much as traditional media have been.

Text and visual content produced by Syrian "citizen journalists" gained more publicity when they were distributed by international news agencies (Murrell, 2018). In this manner, such news was shared and published on two large platforms, mainstream media outlets and social media. However, some of this content lacked credibility. For example, several media outlets including *The Washington Post* had come to a conclusion that some of the visual content produced or distributed by Syrian "citizen journalists" was modified to elicit international attention (Flock, 2012; Chivers, 2012). The "hero boy" video is another telling example. This video clip was widely published by mainstream media and shared on social media platforms (BBC, 2014). People denounced the Syrian forces for shooting at a boy who was only trying to save his sister's life in a war zone. The video clip, nonetheless, turned out to be a scene from a

movie that was being filmed in Malta as later revealed by the director (Mackey, 2014; Chandler, 2014).

The video clip has been watched by millions and it is believed to be real. For instance, this video clip is still uploaded on a *YouTube* platform of *Shaam News Network*, one of the most popular and quoted anti-Syrian government media groups, under the title *SYRIA! SYRIAN HERO BOY rescue girl in shootout* *الطفل السوري البطل* (ShaamNetwork S.N.N, 2014). Speaking about the *Shaam News Network*, *CNN* wrote in 2012:

You've heard of *CNN*, but unless you pay close attention to photo and video credits on news sites, you've probably never heard of the Syrian group *SNN*. *The Shaam News Network* is one of several groups that aggregates photos and videos taken by citizen journalists in Syria and tries to show them to the world (Sutter, 2012).

The video clip has been viewed more than 4.6 million times but there is no indication in the attached description that the story is of questionable authenticity. Notably, there are still new comments (the beginning of 2020) being added by users condemning the Syrian government for showing no mercy to the boy and his sister.

A similar incident is the story of "Gay Girl in Damascus" (Addley, 2011) which is about Amina Arraf who claimed to live in Damascus. Her blogs spoke about discrimination based on sexual orientation and lack of political freedom more generally before claiming that she had been arrested by Syrian intelligence. Western newspapers hailed the young woman's bravery publishing articles under headlines such as *Syrian Activists Go into Hiding to Avoid Arrest* (Marsh, 2011a), *A Gay Girl in Damascus becomes a Heroine of the Syrian Revolt* (Marsh, 2011b), *'Gay Girl in Damascus' Blogger Detained* (Sly, 2011), and *Gay Syrian-American Blogger Disappears in Syria* (CBS, 2011). A few days following her "arrest", it turned out that a male US university student living in Scotland, named Tom MacMaster was actually behind the blog (The Telegraph, 2011). Even after he was caught lying, MacMaster insisted that "while the narrative voice may have been fictional, the facts on this blog are true and not misleading as to the situation on the ground" (Mackey, 2011).

There are other examples of the publication of misleading or modified photographs to gain sympathy or attention from an unsuspecting public. For instance, a photograph of "dozens of white body bags containing skeletons" in Iraq was published

by the *BBC* as a photograph of an alleged "massacre" in the Syrian village Houla. Marco di Lauro, the professional photographer who took the photograph commented saying that "what I am really astonished by is that a news organization like the *BBC* doesn't check the sources and it's willing to publish any picture sent it by anyone: activist, citizen journalist or whatever" (Furness, 2012). According to the *BBC*, this photograph was "first spotted as it circulated on *Twitter*, the social networking site, on Sunday (May 27th, 2012), apparently sourced from activists in Syria" (Hamilton, 2012). Similarly, an image of a family fleeing Aleppo published by an Austrian newspaper turned out to be photo-shopped (Wolf, 2012) and a photograph of an orphan sleeping between his parents' graves turned out to be staged (Hooton, 2014).

Citizen journalism was one of the most crucial factors if not the most crucial factor in media reporting on the Syrian conflict. A large section of the international audience did not trust the Syrian and Russian officials or the media outlets funded by them. The large majority of "independent" media outlets did not report from Syria except for a very limited time during the first few months of the conflict before many of them left the country and started reporting from Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan. Therefore, the only trusted sources left were the UN and international NGOs. Irrespective of their credibility, these organisations were not on the ground in Syria for very often.

The audience, particularly the Western public, has therefore largely seen the Syrian conflict through opposition eyes. Generally, the news and visual content of the Syrian conflict produced by Syrian "citizen journalists" have been filtered through the interplay of three main factors. Firstly, through the establishment of local NGOs and media networks such as the White Helmets to influence the narrative of the coverage. The White Helmets, widely received as a trustworthy NGO, did not report on casualties killed by US airstrikes. The group's *Twitter* account and website focused on the Syrian-Russian military operations. This was not a surprise considering that the White Helmets has been receiving generous support from Western countries. As discussed earlier, this organisation received, according to US, UK, and Netherlands official documents, about USD127 million between 2014 and 2018 (USAID, 2019; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018; Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2017). This is a significant amount of money in such a short time.

The second filter that influenced the news produced by "citizen journalists" was the systematic propaganda campaigns against the Syrian government and its allies (Cobain and Ross, 2020; Cobain et al., 2016; Whitlock, 2011). These propaganda

campaigns principally focused on promoting the West's vision for a future Syria without its president and his government. In other words, the main agenda was to establish a pro-West Syrian government that was meant to have a tense relationship (or no relationship) with Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah (Totten, 2012, p. 16). Thirdly, the information coming out of Syria was sometimes controlled by the opposition armed groups on the ground through threatening individuals who were reporting independently from these groups, as referenced in Chapter 5 (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 17; Cockburn, 2016). As previously discussed, most of the anti-government media groups were either allied with or influenced by opposition groups while individuals who sought to report on the conflict independently were targeted by the armed groups.

Overall, anti-government "citizen journalism" in Syria has not only helped mainstream media outlets push and propagandise their military intervention agenda, but it also sought to influence unwitting social media users by publishing some news and visual content that has turned out to be false or fabricated. "Sourcing" is a problematic issue for citizen journalism and the PM. Scholars who inspect citizen journalism should pay careful attention to the relationship between political elites or intelligence agencies and citizen journalists. News content created by citizen journalists, principally where Western states have been pushing for intervention needs to be carefully examined. It was hoped by its advocates that citizen journalism would give a voice to voiceless people (Gillmor, 2004, p. 63) and play the role of the fifth estate (Antony and Thomas, 2010). However, this noble purpose has been compromised by political and intelligence agencies manipulating the so-called independent voices.

7.3 Contextualising the terrorism industry concept

In the US, there is a strong relationship between mainstream terrorism "experts", political elites, and the mainstream media (Marusek, 2018; Toivane, 2010; Miller and Mills, 2009; Collins, 2002; Herman and O'Sullivan, 1989; Elliott et al., 1983). Highlighting this relationship, Miller's and Mills' (2009, p. 431) study found that:

The terror experts that are most prominent in the media are disproportionately linked to corporate and state institutions (as opposed to just being academic experts) and are overwhelmingly signed up to the 'orthodox' view on terrorism.

In this context, the orthodox view on terrorism concerns issues such as the focus on a certain type of terrorism (so-called Islamist) and that terrorism poses a high risk and

should be dealt with forcefully and militarily. To guarantee broad publicity, mainstream terrorism "experts" dominate two effective platforms. Firstly, they produce terrorism literature and gain widespread recognition in their field. Secondly, they are hosted by mainstream media and guaranteed to reach a wide audience. As shown in Chapter 4, the majority of US terrorism "experts" (those quoted in *The NYT's* "war on terror" coverage) hold or have previously held positions in the White House, the Pentagon, the CIA, the FBI while others have worked, or are currently working in think tanks that are partially funded by official agencies. For example, William McCants, then a fellow at the Brookings Institution, had previously served as a US State Department senior adviser for countering terrorism (Brookings Institute, 2020a) and Bruce Riedel, a senior fellow and director of the Brookings Intelligence Project, served in many different roles over 30 years with the CIA (Brookings Institute, 2020b).

"Experts" quoted in the coverage of the Syrian conflict tended to adopt military solutions such as bombing, attacking, or keeping troops in Syria. For instance, Andrew J. Tabler introduced by *The NYT* as an expert on Syria was quoted ten times in the coverage of the "war on terror" more than any other so-called experts (Appendix 4). Tabler is a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy that was founded by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), an influential pro-Israel lobby group (Rosenberg, 2011). Tabler, alongside Dennis B. Ross a former US diplomat and fellow at The Washington Institute, published an opinion piece in *The NYT* titled *The Case for (Finally) Bombing Assad* calling on US officials to "speak the language that Mr. Assad and Mr. Putin understand" (Ross and Tabler, 2016).

Herman (1982) noted earlier how terrorism was turned into an industry that served US propaganda. He pointed out that countering terrorism was used as a foreign policy instrument to undermine the states that opposed US foreign policy and to justify military threats and political and economic sanctions against them. This is still the case about 40 years following Herman's insight. For instance, Sudan's Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok revealed on August 25th, 2020 that the US had promised to remove his country from its list of state sponsors of terrorism if Sudan agreed to normalise its diplomatic relationship with Israel (Abdelaziz, 2020). The terrorism industry as discussed in Chapter 2 has been constructed to serve Western political and economic interests through a network of experts, think tanks, and media outlets (Reese and Lewis, 2011; Herman and O'Sullivan, 1991; Chomsky, 1991; Chomsky, 1987). Employing the power of the media, mainstream "experts" who have strong connections to government

and intelligence agencies are presented to the audience as trustworthy and unbiased while they often represent and defend the official narrative of the "war on terrorism". Commenting on this issue, Herman (1996, p. 48) points out that:

One would think that such relationships would rule out most of these experts from use by the media on grounds of conflict of interests. It works just the opposite in the West: conflict of interest accredits the expert because it demonstrates contacts, knowledge, and credentials. Bias is irrelevant if it is consistent with dominant mainstream opinion or reflects the opinion of very powerful people.

The terrorism industry concept, nevertheless, has not been contextualised even 40 years after it was introduced by Edward S. Herman and Gerry O'Sullivan. The following section, therefore, seeks to develop this concept and inspect the four pillars that the concept appears to be based on: (1) the concentration on religious motives and overlooking or downplaying political motives, (2) paying more attention to terrorist attacks on the West than attacks carried out elsewhere, (3) disregarding or downplaying atrocities committed by Western countries, and (4) overlooking or downplaying Western state-sponsored terrorism. Taking these pillars into account will help to address the phenomenon of terrorism and increase our understanding of it.

7.3.1 The concentration on religious motives and overlooking or downplaying political motives

Some scholars have argued that religious radicalism is a loose concept (Rautio, 2016; Gunning and Jackson, 2011). A major research report compiled by MI5 (the UK's domestic intelligence agency) and published in 2008 indicated that those arrested for terrorism in the UK are "mostly British nationals, not illegal immigrants and, far from being Islamist fundamentalists, most are religious novices" (Travis, 2008). Media reports also support MI5's findings pointing out that many individuals involved in terrorism in Europe have had a long history of partying and drug use. In other words, many individuals who carried out terrorist-related acts were new converts rather than people with deep religious backgrounds (Agence France-Presse, 2017; Addley et al., 2017; Willsher, 2016; Turner and Holehouse, 2015).

Terrorism-related events and random attacks that in some way involved Muslims tend to receive more attention (Elmasry and El-Nawawy, 2020; Kearns et al., 2018; Corbin, 2017; Neiwart, 2017; Dixon and Williams, 2015). Focusing on a perpetrator's

religious background even when it does not play any part in an attack and neglecting other factors such as political beliefs have exaggerated the threat of "Islamic" terrorism. It also encourages public support for military intervention in the Middle East and Islamic countries elsewhere (Saleem et al., 2017).

As addressed in Chapter 2, mainstream terrorism studies and the media, commonly pay little attention to political motives for attacks on the West even when they target military bases of occupying forces. Such attacks are often framed as "terrorist". In relation to the invasion of Iraq, for instance, Tanguay (2013, p. 184) points out that the "resistance to the American global enterprise became by this logic a form of 'terror' in itself, with Iraqi insurgents branded as "terrorists" even when their targets were military rather than civilian". To provide another example, despite the fact that he acknowledged it targeted a military base and killed 75 Israeli soldiers, Lynn (2019, p. 272) considered the attack on the Israeli headquarters in November 1982 in Tyre (Lebanon) as one of Hezbollah's "terrorist" operations. Highlighting the role of politics and nationalism in perpetrating attacks on foreign powers, Pape (2007, p. 4) argued in his book *Dying to Win: the Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* that:

What nearly all suicide terrorist attacks have in common is a specific secular and strategic goal: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland. Religion is rarely the root cause, although it is often used as a tool by terrorist organizations in recruiting and in other efforts in service of the broader strategic objective.

As previously discussed in the literature review chapter, while religious motives cannot be ruled out, political motives for carrying out terrorist attacks are often underestimated. Political motives have been largely overlooked by mainstream studies on so-called "Islamic" terrorism because they contradict the overall narrative of the terrorism industry. A number of scholars have addressed the relationship between the rise of attacks on US interests and its foreign military activities. They found that there is a strong link between attacks on US interests by so-called "extremists" and America's foreign military activities including the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan (Glaser, 2017; Choi et al., 2016; Johnson, 2004; Eland, 1998). Moreover, evidence including interviews with local people in conflict areas showed that drone attacks have helped to fuel anger against the US and helped organisations such as Al-Qaeda to recruit new

members (Zulaika, 2020, pp. 86-87; Marchand, 2017; Scahill, 2013, p. 518). In addition, an unpublished FBI study found that anger over the US foreign military activities was the main factor in encouraging individuals to become involved in what is known as home-grown terrorism in the US (Hussain and Currier, 2016).

Pape and Feldman (2010, pp. 329-330) point out that suicide attacks have risen considerably from about 300 attacks (from 1980 to 2003) to 1800 attacks (from 2004 to 2009). They report that over 95 per cent of suicide attacks were in response to foreign occupation and that the majority (90 per cent) were against the US. Therefore, Pape and Feldman argue that by ending occupation, withdrawing US military forces from Afghanistan and Iraq, and reducing civilian casualties, suicide attacks can be minimised.

To recall the discussion in Chapter 2, Bin Laden rationalised his terrorist attacks on the West by addressing US and Western military interventions in Islamic countries including Palestine and Lebanon. To cite a telling example, in a speech in 2004, Bin Laden said that "we are free men who don't sleep under oppression. We want to restore freedom to our nation (Islamic countries or *Ummah*), just as you lay waste to our nation. So shall we lay waste to yours" (Al Jazeera English, 2004). About 12 years later, IS used a similar argument in an article titled *Why we Hate you & Why we Fight you* published in *Dabiq* (2016), the group's main English online magazine (Ingram, 2018). This article was widely considered by media outlets as one of the most important propaganda pieces produced by the group (Wood, 2017; Dean and Evans, 2017; Raza, 2016).

So-called "Islamic State" leaders employed "religious" arguments in their propaganda messages more frequently than had Bin Laden. Nevertheless, IS stated two political reasons out of six why the group has been attacking the West. Focusing on the political factors because they are related to the issue being examined in this pillar, the article stated that the group waged a war against the West because of the crimes committed against Muslims, underscoring that Western drones and fighter jets "bomb, kill, and maim our people around the world, and your puppets in the usurped lands of the Muslims oppress, torture, and wage war against anyone who calls to the truth" (Dabiq, 2016, p. 32). As for the second political reason, IS claimed to be fighting Western countries to drive their armies out of the Islamic countries.

Continuing on Bin Laden's argument about the relationship between terrorist attacks and Western military interventions, statistics revealed that the number of people

travelling to conflict zones has increased in the past two decades despite counter-terrorism strategies. For instance, despite the 2015 Australian Counter-Terrorism Strategy that sought to prevent Australians from making their way to war zones, official statistics showed that the number of the Australians who travelled to the conflict zones from 2011 to 2015 was four times more than the period from 1990 to 2010 with 120 Australians travelling to Iraq and Syria compared with 30 Australians travelling to Afghanistan and Pakistan (Council of Australian Governments, 2015, p. 3). The number of those who travelled to Iraq and Syria rose to 230 including some Australians who joined groups, such as Kurdish militias in Syria and Iraq, fighting IS (Farrall, 2020).

About 22 years ago, Ivan Eland, a scholar who also served as a Principal Defense Analysis at the Congressional Budget Office, published a study that associated the US foreign military presence with attacks on US interests (Eland, 1998). However, this study was generally overlooked by mainstream scholars. Richard Jackson, a terrorism scholar, questioned why "leading terrorism scholars have never cited this research or followed it up with further research" (Aksan and Bailes, 2013c, p. 122). It can be argued that one of the main reasons why Eland's study was not popular amongst mainstream scholars was because its findings did not serve the terrorism industry and its war propaganda.

7.3.2 Paying more attention to terrorist attacks on the West than attacks carried out elsewhere

The second pillar of the terrorism industry concept is the focus on terrorism-related events in the West and downplaying of attacks that take place elsewhere. This emphasises the notion that Western countries are victims of foreign terrorist groups. Terrorism is framed as a phenomenon travelling from the East to the West or Islam against the West (Powell, 2018; Powell, 2011). However, Western countries are not at the top of the list of the countries affected by terrorism. The number of victims of terrorism in the Middle East, for example, is much higher than the number of victims in the Western countries combined. To put this argument into perspective, according to a report by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (2017, p. 4), there were 11072 terrorist attacks around the world in 2016 (a year when IS and other terrorist groups were highly active). These attacks resulted in more than 25600 deaths and more than 33800 injuries. The report showed that 55 per cent of all attacks took place in Iraq, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and the Philippines

while about 70 per cent of all deaths occurred in predominantly Muslim countries: Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

In addition, terrorist attacks that take place in the Middle East are generally underreported compared with attacks on America and, particularly, Western European countries (Segalla, 2017). IS was considered the biggest terrorist threat to the US, the UK, Australia, and France according to a report by the US Homeland Security Committee (2016, p. 5). The report tracked more than 100 IS-linked plots against the West and showed that about 875 people were killed or injured in 2016 compared with 750 people in 2014 and 2015 combined. In comparison, an attack claimed by IS in July 2016 had killed 292 Iraqi civilians and wounded more than 200 others (Rasheed, 2016; Sims, 2016). Two other similar attacks took place in the same year and claimed the lives of at least 93 and 100 Iraqis respectively (Chulov, 2016b; Dehghan, 2016). Considering the July 2016 attack only, the number of casualties from this single terrorist attack was more than half of the total number of casualties from terrorist attacks in Europe over a whole year.

Needless to say that terrorism cannot be addressed based on statistics only. There is no doubt, for instance, that IS would have carried out attacks on major civilian targets such as concerts, festivals, or sports gatherings in Europe (similar to the Manchester Arena bombing on May 22nd, 2017) if it had been capable of the attacks or not prevented from carrying them out. However, often mainstream scholars on terrorism and mainstream media outlets focus on terrorism activities that target the West because it helps to shape this phenomenon in a way the terrorism industry desires. If terrorist attacks on Arab or Islamic countries were given the same amount of political and media attention as attacks on the West attract, then it would be made clear that both are victims of the same enemies. It can be argued that Western countries have closer relationships with each other than they do with countries like Iraq, Syria, or Afghanistan. Moreover, based on the geographical proximity factor, attacks that take place in London, for instance, would attract more coverage than attacks that take place in Kabul. Nonetheless, it remains the case that terrorism is a bigger problem in the East than it is in the West.

As discussed by Edward Said (2005) in his book *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How we See the Rest of the World*, Islam, particularly from the 1970s with the increase in the need for oil, was presented in the West as the "other". Consequently, the followers of this religion were presented as strangers who

were not part of the Western culture. This old vision has not faded away. For instance, official statistics showed that 67 percent of those accused of terrorism from the September 11 attacks to the end of 2017 were British nationals (Allen and Dempsey, 2018, p. 16). However, individuals involved in terrorism-related acts are often framed as "them" not "us" (Rahman and Emadi, 2018; Aydin, 2017).

On the other side, mainstream media, as discussed in Chapter 2, face a dilemma when reporting on an attack carried out by white supremacists. For instance, the 2017 Las Vegas event, the most deadly single shooting in the US history with about 58 people were killed and 527 wounded was not labelled by mainstream media as terrorism (e.g. Shane, 2017; Criss, 2017; Weaver and Lartey, 2017). Moreover, Alexandre Bissonnette who carried out his attack on Muslims for political reasons was initially not framed as terrorists (Mindock, 2018a; BBC, 2018).

As discussed in the literature review chapter, ties with international terrorist organisations and religious factors are emphasised in the case of "Islamic" terrorism. They are also the reasons why an attack is framed as "terrorism". Nevertheless, these two factors are often ignored when it comes to terrorist attacks carried out by Alt-right white terrorists. For example, the manifesto written by Brenton Tarrant, the terrorist who killed 51 and people injured tens of others in the attacks on the two mosques in Christchurch on March 15th, 2019, was based on a "holy war" between Christians and Muslims (Tarrant, 2019). He dedicated a section of his manifesto to what he described as "Christians: The people worthy of glory, the people blessed by God Our Lord" (p. 26). Yet, not all media outlets referred to the perpetrator as a terrorist or Christian terrorist.

7.3.3 Disregarding or downplaying atrocities committed by Western countries

The analysis in Chapters 5 and 6 showed that despite the similarities in the number of civilian casualties and the circumstances in which the military operations in Aleppo and Al-Raqqa took place, Aleppo received about three times more coverage than Al-Raqqa. Victims of the West's wars, and of the US in particular, are regularly overlooked or considered collateral damage (Lukin, 2018, pp. 136-137; Chomsky, 1988, p. 29). From time to time, however, stories of victims of the "war on terror" are published or broadcast but media outlets turn their focus the following day or week to other issues.

The US drone program, a lethal weapon that caused thousands of casualties is

another example of the way victims of US warfare are ignored. The drone program is considered fundamental for the US "counterterrorism" strategy (Stohl, 2018, p. 5; Keene, 2015). An official report of the US National Intelligence Director estimated that there had been about 3100 "enemy combatant" casualties of American military operations in the period from January 2009 to December 2016. These numbers concerned casualties in countries such as Somalia and Pakistan but they did not include the "active combat zones" in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The report added that between 64 and 116 civilians were killed in US drone attacks worldwide in addition to between 2372 and 2581 "terrorist" casualties (McKernan, 2017; Los Angeles Daily News, 2016).

These statistics were "widely criticised as a 'gross undercount' of civilian casualties" (McKernan, 2017). Unofficial statistics suggest that about fifty thousand bombs were dropped by US forces in 2015 and 2016, around twenty-four thousand of which were dropped on Syria and Iraq (Angerholm, 2017). Covering the same period, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, an investigative news organisation that has won a number of awards for its drone attacks coverage (the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2020), estimated the civilian fatalities at being between 380 and 801 victims (Stone, 2017).

However, these victims have been largely overlooked by most mainstream media outlets. In his study of *The NYT's and The Washington Post's* coverage of US drone strikes between 2009 and 2014, Bachman (2017) found that the two newspapers "underemphasised the civilian impact" of the drone program and ignored the consequence of this wholesale breach of international law. Speaking about disregarding international law, Zulaika (2013, p. 4) pointed out that:

Under the guise of combating terrorism, U.S. counterterrorism considers itself legitimized to overrule national sovereignties and flaunt international law; in short, to establish a state of exception by which actions that ordinarily are illegal and immoral are suddenly tolerable because the fight against the Terrorist demands it.

For years, human rights organisations have been demanding an investigation into the drone attacks (Human Rights Watch, 2018a; Amnesty International, 2018b; Amnesty International, 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2017a; United Nations, 2015b; Human Rights Watch, 2015; Tayler, 2014; Charbonneau, 2013). While not usually apologising

to the victims of drone attacks, the former US President, Barack Obama, offered in 2015 his "deepest apologies" after a drone attack that killed an American and an Italian who, according to US official accounts, were abducted by Al-Qaeda. Obama expressed his "grief and condolences" and promised to investigate the incident and disclose the results publicly because the two victims' families "deserve to know the truth" (Baker, 2015; Diamond et al., 2015). Commenting on this incident, Human Rights Watch (2015) said that:

The United Nations, local and international human rights organizations, and journalists have investigated and reported numerous cases in which there is credible evidence of harm to Yemeni, Pakistani, and other civilians from U.S. strikes carried out in secret, often using drones. The families of those individuals are still seeking redress and accountability, and the continued refusal of your administration even to officially acknowledge their losses compounds their suffering.

Faheem Qureshi, one of the first victims of Obama's drone program, was only 14 years old when he lost his left eye and three of his family members. According to Spencer Ackerman (2016) who interviewed Qureshi, the strike took place on the third day of Obama's presidency. Qureshi questioned why he and his family were not given any explanation or compensation. "Are we not the same human beings as these two westerners who were killed" he asked. Qureshi viewed the attack as "an act of tyranny" and he said: "if there is a list of tyrants in the world, to me, Obama will be put on that list by his drone program". Furthermore, leaked Pentagon files revealed that one hundred thousand people were killed following the US invasion of Iraq (Leigh, 2010). However, a study by the University of Washington suggested that the number was far higher. It asserts that about 500 thousand Iraqis were killed between 2003 and 2011 as a result of the invasion and in its aftermath (Hagopian et al., 2013).

In an article published by *The NYT*, Taub (2016) wondered *Why Some Wars (Like Syria's) Get More Attention Than Others (Like Yemen's)*. Is it about the number of civilian casualties? She believes not, as the conflict in eastern Congo was more devastating than the war in Syria. Taub, who introduces herself as a former human rights lawyer, argues that to get media and political attention, the conflict itself should provide a "compelling storyline that appeals" to the US public and politicians. Also, the conflict has to be relevant to US interests, reflect in some ways US political and cultural

issues, and above all provide "an emotionally engaging frame of clearly identifiable good guys and bad guys".

While Taub's analysis appears to be rational, her main argument echoes the overall narrative of the "war on terror" principally with its reference to the good and the bad guys where the US is always considered as the leader of the good guys. Ironically, the US has been supporting its allies Saudi Arabia and the UAE in their war on Yemen since March 2015 (Emmons; 2019; Elbagir et al., 2018). Highlighting what is happening in Yemen, statistics released by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) showed that about 4,800 civilians, including about 1000 children, were killed or injured in 2018. The agency reported an average of 93 civilian casualties every week, the majority of whom were killed by the Saudi-led coalition airstrikes. The statistics showed that 30 per cent of the civilians were killed or injured inside their homes. Moreover, the war has left 14 million people at risk of death or starvation and more than three million homeless people (UN Refugee Agency, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2018b).

Despite the growing number of civilian casualties, the US and Britain continued their support of the Saudi coalition's war on Yemen. According to official statistics, the UK sold more than seven billion US dollars' worth of weapons to Saudi Arabia and UAE since the start of the war in March 2015 (Dearden, 2019). Some of these weapons were transferred to terrorists in Yemen according to an investigation by *CNN* (Elbagir et al., 2019a). This particular issue will be discussed in the following section.

The fact that hundreds of thousands of people have been killed as a result of the US and Western wars raises legal and ethical questions about the morality of the "war on terror" and the motives of those who participate in or support this war. The terrorism industry turns a blind eye to this significant issue. Despite the availability of compelling evidence, the terrorism industry does not take US foreign military intervention into account when addressing terrorism.

7.3.4 Overlooking or downplaying Western state-sponsored terrorism

The fourth pillar supporting the terrorism industry is an almost complete disregard of how the US and its allies have sponsored terrorism and terrorist organisations over many years in various conflict zones. As discussed in Chapter 2, this important factor has not been taken into much consideration by the terrorism industry scholars because it exposes the hypocrisy beneath the "war on terror". For instance, no serious action has been taken two years after the broadcast of the *CNN* investigation

about how US weapons were transferred to Al-Qaeda in Yemen (Elbagir et al., 2019a). *CNN* underscored in 2019 that:

Following *CNN*'s initial reporting, the Pentagon said it had launched its own investigation into the unauthorized transfer of US weapons in Yemen. But more than half a year on and the situation on the ground only seems to have got worse (Elbagir et al., 2019b).

In another event, *BBC* and *Reuters* revealed that the US concluded a deal with IS to allow about 300 heavily armed fighters including some of the most notorious members of the group escape Al-Raqqa. This deal was confirmed by the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 2017). According to the "dirty secret" investigation (Sommerville and Dalati, 2017), the IS convoy that travelled for three days, carried tons of weapons and ammunition and comprised "almost 50 trucks, 13 buses and more than 100 of the Islamic State group's own vehicles". "IS fighters, their faces covered, sat defiantly on top of some of the vehicles" the investigation added.

Pentagon spokesman Major Adrian Rankine-Galloway commented on the *BBC* investigation that out of 3500 individuals who were allowed to escape, only 300 of them were identified as potential IS fighters. According to Major Rankine-Galloway, the deal was secured to "prevent any further civilian casualties as a result of the conflict" (Rankine-Galloway, 2017). At the press conference, Major Rankine-Galloway did not provide an explanation as to why the deal was not disclosed earlier and why some of the most notorious members of IS were allowed to leave with their weapons. Weeks following the publication of the *BBC* investigation, a commander who had defected from the US ally the Syrian Democratic Forces told *Reuters* that the number of IS fighters who were allowed to escape was in the thousands (Evans and Coskun, 2017).

Charges of sponsoring terrorism do not apply to the US, the UK, or their allies Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Qatar even when they are known to do so (Cockburn, 2018; Qatar Television, 2017; Pamuk and Tattersall, 2015; Blair and Spencer, 2014; Spencer and Sanchez, 2014; Roberts, 2013; ABC, 2013; Gamboa, 2013). One other example is contained in the Milne (2015) newspaper report:

The trial in London of a Swedish man, Bherlin Gildo, accused of terrorism in Syria, collapsed after it became clear British intelligence had been arming the same rebel groups the defendant was charged with supporting. The prosecution abandoned the case, apparently to

avoid embarrassing the intelligence services. The defence argued that going ahead with the trial would have been an "affront to justice" when there was plenty of evidence the British state was itself providing "extensive support" to the armed Syrian opposition.

Moreover, an email leaked by *WikiLeaks* showed that Hilary Clinton received an email from her senior adviser Jake Sullivan (who has been appointed as the National Security Advisor in the current US President Joe Biden administration), urging her to "see last item - AQ is on our side in Syria. Otherwise, things have basically turned out as expected" (WikiLeaks, 2012). AQ referred to Al-Qaeda. However, "our side" is an open statement that can be interpreted in different ways, one of which is that Al-Qaeda was being used to fight the other enemy (the Syrian government).

Furthermore, the US and its allies were also involved in helping the terrorism phenomenon grow in Iraq and Libya. As a result of toppling the former Iraqi and Libyan regimes, new bases for Al-Qaeda and its affiliates were established in these two countries. As acknowledged in an official US statement, there were no links between Saddam Hussein's regime and Al-Qaeda before the 2003 occupation of Iraq (CNN, 2008; Hinnebusch, 2007, p. 220). Bruce Riedel (2007, p. 28), a scholar and retired CIA agent, asserted that the invasion "played a directly into the hands of Al Qaeda and helped it reinforce local alliances". The invasion also helped new terrorist groups to emerging (Law, 2016, p. 341) and encouraged terrorist attacks on Europe (Sengupta, 2017).

While the US claims that it had no hand in founding Al-Qaeda in the 1980s and that terrorism in Iraq grew "unintentionally" after the 2003 invasion as claimed by President Obama (Vice News, 2015), the NATO military campaign in Libya and the removing of the government in 2011 was intentional. Libya was considered a state sponsor of "terrorism" (Crook, 2005) because it supported Palestinian organisations. However, the so-called "Islamic" terrorism did not have a public presence in Libya prior to 2011. The NATO's operation in Libya created a fertile environment for the rise of IS and other "Islamic" terrorism (Pack et al., 2017, p. 34; Morajea and Faucon, 2017; Saal, 2017; McKay, 2017) and several terrorist attacks in recent years on Europe including the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing were associated with IS in Libya (Zelin, 2018, p. 1; Estelle, 2017, p. 5; Saal, 2017; pp. 19-21).

Libya became a black hole that welcomed foreign fighters from Africa and Asia (Zelin, 2018; Schmidt, 2018, p. 273; Pack et al., 2017; Sheik, 2017) and a bridge to

convey weapons to terrorist groups in Syria (Chivers et al., 2013). A report by Pax for Peace, an organisation based in Utrecht (the Netherlands), pointed out that the UAE transferred dozens of tons of weapons to armed groups in Libya (Slijper, 2017). In 2018, a Swiss newspaper called *SonntagsBlick* published an article that showed that IS members in Syria used Swiss-made grenades sold previously to the UAE. According to the Swiss newspaper report (Eberhard, 2018a) that was published in German and translated into Arabic by *Al Mayadeen* (Eberhard, 2018b), the grenades were believed to be shipped to Syria through Libya.

Mainstream terrorism scholars and media outlets overlook the role of Western countries in helping terrorism grow in Iraq, Libya and Syria. Despite Al-Qaeda, Al-Nusra, and IS sharing similar provenance, the terrorism industry deliberately underestimates the role that destabilising countries plays in fuelling terrorism. The terrorism industry does not hold the US or its allies accountable for sponsoring terrorism. For the terrorism industry, there are two standards: one that is applied to anti-US states and the other that is applied to the US and its allies.

7.4 The terrorism industry and war propaganda

Without propaganda, the terrorism industry loses the most effective instrument to influence the public and manufacture their consent to wage wars. The propaganda starts with the term itself. The "war on terror" is problematic because it favours military actions over peaceful or non-military solutions (Heng, 2004, p. 79). The term confines and focuses the efforts on "fighting" rather than understanding and addressing the problem. The other issue is that it is not known when this war will end or how it will be won. Heng (2004, p. 69) provides an interesting argument, indicating that the success of this war will be "defined by what does not happen rather than by what does". In other words, this war will be claimed successful whatever the outcomes may be. This was the case in Al-Raqqa where 1600 people lost their lives. This is also the case with more than 37 million people who have been displaced as a result of the "war on terror" since the September 11 attacks as estimated by a new study by Brown University (Vine et al., 2020). Criticising the terrorism industry propaganda, Skoll (2016, p. 135) argues that:

Terrorism in the twenty-first century is an ideological vehicle for the production of fear as a commodity. The ideological apparatuses of the empire manufacture the terrorism mythology by creating terror events. The terrorism

industry uses reversal and decontextualisation to make its product. It employs techniques of repetition, imagery, and condensation.

Fear of terrorism has been used by political elites as an instrument to exploit people (Mueller and Stewart, 2012; Mueller, 2005) through creating a mythological society and welcoming those who believe their lives are being threatened by terrorism to be part of this society. Political and intelligence elites play two significant roles in this society: they sell terrorism to the public and buy it back by claiming that they are protecting them. Media plays a significant role in enhancing this fear (Zulaika, 2020, pp. 94-96; Barkun, 2011, pp. 105-106; Kellner, 2004, pp. 43-44). Answering a question about the role of media outlets in this process, Herman indicated that:

In a number of cases the evidence of the plot was stale or the plot was clearly encouraged by paid government informers, but the plots and threats are invariably treated seriously and intensively by the mainstream media. The media cooperate because this is cheap and easy 'news' that feeds into already conventional and institutionalised fears, and the media do not want to be charged with excessive liberalism or lack of patriotic ardour (cited in Aksan and Bailes, 2013b, p. 97).

A report by HRW released in 2014 backs Herman's claim. The report pointed out that:

The FBI often targeted particularly vulnerable people, including those with intellectual and mental disabilities and the indigent. The government, often acting through informants, then actively developed the plot, persuading and sometimes pressuring the targets to participate, and provided the resources to carry it out (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

As an example, an investigation by Aaronson (2015) about a convicted "terrorist" who was actually a man with a "troubled mind" called Sami Osmakac showed that he was "the target of an elaborately orchestrated FBI sting that involved a paid informant, as well as FBI agents and support staff working on the setup for more than three months". It is not argued that this has always been the case, as terrorism poses a real threat to individuals and societies. Nevertheless, this threat is often exaggerated to achieve political or economic interests (Altheide, 2009; Tupman, 2009, p. 196) or created as is in the case of Sami Osmakac. To go to war, the enemy must be identified and promoted

as being an imminent threat to the nation. The more the enemy is framed as a threat the more acceptable going to war will be. This enemy is replaceable and can be the Soviet Union, leftist "terrorism", Hezbollah and the Palestinian resistance, Al-Qaeda, IS, and other enemies that will be identified in the future.

Political negotiations are not an option with these enemies. Nonetheless, this can be reviewed when there is a need to. For instance, US officials tried to frame the Taliban positively during the peace talks held in Doha at the beginning of 2020 as if this group had suddenly given up their ideology (Graham-Harrison et al., 2020; Landay, 2020). Some Western politicians, scholars, and journalists believe or want the public to believe that terrorists are only driven by hate and envy of Western democracy (Trump, 2017; Pemberton and Sandeman, 2017; Turnbull, 2015; Stevenson, 2004, p. 181). Addressing a joint session of the Congress after the September 11 attacks, the former US President George W. Bush pointed out that:

Americans are asking "why do they hate us?" They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other (The Washington Post, 2001).

However, Sage man (2016, p. 59) explains the issue in a different way, pointing out that "there is nothing medieval in their ideology: it is simply a rejection of some of the unattractive elements of Western culture". To paraphrase it in a better way, it can be said that their ideology is mainly driven by a rejection of Western domination over their homelands.

The first chapter of the "war on terror" was written by the Reagan administration. The second chapter of this war written by George W. Bush considered the September 11 attacks as events of revenge instead of events of revision and assessment of the US foreign military activities. Pedrini (2017, p. 13) argues that decisions taken by authorities appear to be more convincing if they are framed as solutions to disasters or dangerous situations. Therefore, the US authorities sought to convince the public that war was the only solution to the phenomenon of terrorism. Moreover, they sought to frame the war positively by claiming that the price that was going to be paid if they acted early would be less than the price that would be paid if they acted later. Thus, the war on Afghanistan was launched about one month after the

September 11 attacks and in four years, the US invaded two countries and divided the world into two camps.

The second phase of the "war on terror" has been going on since 2001. It takes place in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Iraq, and Syria and is continuing in other places around the globe. In recent years, hundreds of video clips have been circulating on social media platforms of US army personnel arriving home in surprise visits to their families where wives, children, and pets appear surprised and happy. These clips are watched and well-received by tens of millions of people (Tigers, 2018; Didway, 2014; Itsanorejellife, 2012). Examining the intersection of race theory and propaganda, Corbin (2017) inspected what she called pre-existing propaganda that influences alt-right white extremists, for instance, to believe that Muslims are terrorists but white people are not. "Terrorist", states and individuals, are always framed as being bad and irrational, and there is no justification whatsoever for their acts.

During the past eight years of the Syrian conflict, it is noted that Western officials have kept accusing the Syrian government of preparing to conduct chemical attacks based on what they called intelligence reports. These accusations are regularly followed by media coverage that tries to make the accusations believable (Browne, 2019; Pickrell, 2018; Stewart and Dolan, 2017; Warrick, 2012). This seeks to achieve two goals. Firstly, it prepares the public for similar false news that will be published later. Secondly, it enhances the ongoing frames that the Syrian President (the enemy in this case) is "gassing his own people". The propaganda, in this light, will achieve its goals by smearing the enemy even if no chemical attacks took place. Similarly, the Russian President Vladimir Putin is also framed by mainstream Western media as "evil" to help unite the society to stand up against Russia (McLaughlin, 2020, p. 7; McLaughlin, 2016, pp. 205-206).

In the terrorism industry propaganda, one side is always presented as a human rights abuser while the other side is presented as a human rights protector. The propaganda frames the US and Western countries as the solutions and the coalition that makes every effort to protect the repressed people. In his book *Hijacking History: American Culture and the War on Terror*, Tanguay (2013, p. 148) argues in relation to Iraq that:

The failure to find any arsenal of WMDs simply shifted the focus onto the admittedly brutal nature of his dictatorship as sufficient justification for the war. The "liberation" of the

Iraqi people took precedence over the threat allegedly posed to the West as Iraqis queued up to take part in their first "free and fair" elections.

In fact, the US and its allies did not "fail" to find weapons of mass destruction because US officials knew from the beginning that Saddam Hussein's regime had no WMDs (Usborne, 2003). Shifting the focus from WMDs to democracy was just another card US officials played to maintain public support. The fact that US officials lied about Iraq shows that the "war on terror" could be exploited to further the political and economic interests of the US and its allies.

7.5 Conclusion

When Madeleine Albright, then the US Ambassador to the UN, was asked on the *60 Minutes* programme in 1996 whether the US-led economic sanctions were worth causing the death of 500,000 Iraqi children, she answered: "I think that is a very hard choice, but the price, we think, the price is worth it". Albright retreated and apologised for her statement in her memoir years later but her apology did not include a retraction of her original statement. She blamed herself for not providing a better answer but she did not deny that the sanctions caused the death of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children (Richman, 2003). Criticising the silence of media, the late Edward Herman wrote:

The mainstream media and intellectuals have not found Albright's rationalization of this mass killing of any interest whatsoever. The phrase has been only rarely cited in the mainstream, and there has been no indignation or suggestion that the mass killing of children in order to satisfy some policy end was immoral and outrageous (Herman, 2020).

As described by the respected Australian investigative journalist John Pilger, the sanctions on Iraq were "the most comprehensive embargo in modern history against a country" (Pilger, 2020). For about one decade, the Iraqi people were punished for the regime's misdeeds. After suffocating Iraq for years, the US used its military power to bring down the former regime and destabilise the country that is still suffering from the invasion today.

Terrorism cannot be reduced or eliminated without addressing its actual causes. Counter-terrorism strategies will not work without firstly ending the West's aggression

against others. This is the issue that the terrorism industry's "experts" ignore. Speaking about "experts" and their prestige, Martin (1996, p. 175) pointed out that:

Establishment experts are in a powerful position.

Typically, they have superior numbers, prestigious positions, high credibility with the media and the public, control over professional and academic journals, and links with powerful groups.

More work is needed to "confront the experts" and to expose the terrorism industry. What the terrorism industry frames as facts should be questioned. If the "war on terror" is actually a war to counter terrorism, then all parties must be held to the same standards. Sponsoring terrorism, for example, should be called sponsoring terrorism rather than "honest mistakes" or "unintentional". The US did not accidentally invade Iraq. The war was based on lies but no US or UK official who caused the death and injury of tens of thousands of innocent people was held accountable.

Conclusion

This study analysed the way the Syrian conflict was reported by Western media outlets. It inspected the phenomenon of terrorism and investigated how Western mainstream media were used as a vehicle for disseminating US and Western propaganda in and about the Middle East especially with regard to the "war on terror". In this light, the thesis engaged in an extensive literature review of topics such as so-called "Islamic" terrorism and Western state-sponsored terrorism, and highlighted the role of the media in reporting on political and geopolitical issues by employing Herman's and Chomsky's Propaganda Model supplemented with Framing Theory as appropriate.

This study then used case studies to examine media reporting of the Syrian conflict. It analysed *The NYT* and *The Independent*, two international, well-known, and relatively independent Western newspapers in their respective countries. It firstly inspected *The NYT's* coverage of the conflict from March 15th, 2011 the day the Syrian protests began to December 31st, 2018. It then conducted a comparative analysis of *The NYT's* and *The Independent's* coverage of the 2016 military operations in Aleppo and the 2017 military operations in Al-Raqqa. This study answers two main research questions: (1) to what extent have Western mainstream media been influenced by war propaganda in their coverage of the Syrian conflict, and why, and what techniques reflect the propagandised coverage? And (2) how has media coverage of the Syrian conflict and the "war on terror" advanced the terrorism industry?

The unprecedented protests in Syria were part of bigger political demonstrations that swept the Arab world starting in Tunisia by the end of 2010. What began as peaceful protests soon were militarised to try to bring the Syrian government down with the aid of the US and its allies the UK, France, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. The Syrian government was principally supported by Iran, Hezbollah, Russia, and China, which turned the conflict into an international struggle. As the armed conflict continued, hundreds of thousands of Syrians were killed or injured and over six million civilians were forced to flee Syria to Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Europe.

Through the engagement of regional and international media outlets and social media platforms, the conflict in Syria has received considerable attention, particularly after Syrian and Russian forces launched their military campaign in 2016 to recapture East Aleppo from the opposition armed forces and foreign fighter allies. The coverage of the conflict was influenced by propaganda that promoted an intervention agenda

under the pretext of protecting the Syrian people and shifted later to countering terrorism. Terrorism in the region reached a turning point when IS announced its self-proclaimed caliphate in Syria and Iraq in 2014. The political atmosphere, particularly the plan to topple the Syrian government, was very similar to the atmosphere that preceded the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. However, this plan was crushed when a significant proportion of the Syrian people, Iran, Hezbollah, and Russia threw their weight behind the government of Bashar Al-Assad.

To understand the role of mainstream media in promoting war propaganda, this study examined the techniques employed to report on a number of main events including the alleged chemical attacks that took place in Syria. The analysis was informed by Herman's and Chomsky's Propaganda Model with a focus on "sourcing" and "ideology" filters and was enhanced by Framing Theory. In total, 2102 newspaper articles were analysed to answer the study's two questions. The data collected covered more than 39 events over more than 1848 days out of 2849 days in total (or about 65 per cent).

The findings show that *The NYT* and *The Independent* were involved in propaganda to justify the Western military presence in Syria, particularly the presence of the US, and to delegitimise the anti-US alliance. The analysis demonstrates a systematic coverage paradigm that was used by the two newspapers to report on the Syrian conflict. *The NYT* and *The Independent* relied heavily on Western official and Syrian opposition sources that principally espoused a regime change strategy. *The NYT*, for instance, reported about the conflict from outside Syria with an average of eight articles to two articles reported from inside Syria. Moreover, eight of every ten articles failed to quote a single Syrian official source and in those articles that quoted Syrian official sources, the average was about one source to three sources that voiced an anti-Syrian government agenda.

As for the "war on terror" coverage, of 1408 sources used in the coverage, US official and non-official sources were quoted 538 times (38.2 per cent) compared with 17 times (1.2 per cent) for Syrian official sources. *The NYT* supported military actions against Syria and launched a campaign to keep the US troops in Syria. For example, in the first four days following the former President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from Syria in 2018, the newspaper quoted 17 anti-withdrawal sources compared with only one source that supported the decision. Moreover, the coverage framed the decision as "dangerous" and "chaotic" for the US and as a "win" for Russia and Iran.

The coverage of the two newspapers of the 2016 military operations in Aleppo and the 2017 military operations in Al-Raqqa echoed the findings of *The NYT's* coverage of the conflict from 2011 to 2018. This coverage was deeply influenced by Western propaganda including framing the outcome of the military operations in Aleppo as a humanitarian disaster and the outcome of the military operations in Al-Raqqa as a liberation struggle.

The Independent and *The NYT* to a lesser extent had timidly criticised the US military operations in Al-Raqqa. To be specific, *The Independent* was more vocal in the coverage of Al-Raqqa than *The NYT*. Nevertheless, the dominant frame of the coverage was in favour of the US. The biased coverage of the two newspapers was constructed on several elements. Firstly, through the amount of media attention given to each battle. Secondly, through the use of visual content quantitatively (number of images and video clips attached) and qualitatively (type of images and video clips attached). Thirdly, through the use of dramatic terminology in the case of Aleppo and less dramatic ones in Al-Raqqa. Fourthly, via the focus on the humanitarian situation in the coverage of Aleppo and the military operations in the coverage of Al-Raqqa. The humanitarian frame in Aleppo was emphasised by overlooking the role played by the opposition armed forces to portray the conflict as a struggle between unarmed civilians and heavily armed armies. In addition, framing the outcome of the battle of Aleppo as a "disaster" and framing capturing Al-Raqqa mainly as a "victory". Fifthly, through the use of sources particularly US sources that enhanced a pro-US narrative and by paying UN and anti-government NGOs sources more attention in Aleppo and giving them far less attention in Al-Raqqa.

This study is hoped to be the longest sustained analysis of media coverage in relation to the Syrian conflict. Many of the studies that inspected the conflict were limited to a specific period or event. Moreover, some of these studies focused on content analysis while others focused on visual analysis. This study, however, conducted content and visual analyses. In addition, scholars have examined the biases and preferences in reporting of paired events influenced by pro-US propaganda such as the military operations in Mosul and Aleppo (Scherling, 2019), testing the Propaganda Model in countries within and outside the US sphere of influence (Herman and Chomsky, 2002), and the shooting down of a Korean civil aircraft by a Soviet fighter in 1983 and the shooting-down of Iranian civil aircraft by a US warship in 1988 (Entman, 1991). While these studies examined events that took place in two different countries,

this study examined a near-identical paired example within one country and less than one year apart.

This study also inspected the PM and highlighted its relationship with Framing Theory to enhance the analytical capacity of these theories. The methodology used in this study presents a useful model that other researchers can adopt to analyse propaganda coverage. While the applicability of the PM to the current mainstream media modus operandi will always be subject to debate, the findings of this study show that the PM's two filters, sourcing and ideology, are still playing important roles in shaping media coverage. The methodology adopted provides a path to examine the impartiality of media reporting. From buying out journalists to buying out activists to achieve political and economic interests, political and intelligence elites have been striving to keep the audience locked in their sphere of influence.

Moreover, based on an in-depth examination of the Syrian conflict and a comprehensive literature review, the study has addressed serious problems in the coverage in relation to the citizen journalism phenomenon and contextualised the concept of the terrorism industry. The coverage is found to be based on four main elements. Firstly, focusing on the news of the conflict and less on the humanitarian crisis but only when it complemented or reinforced the two newspapers' agenda. For instance, while it relatively ignored the humanitarian crisis in Al-Raqqa, *The NYT's* coverage sullied the Syrian and the Russian forces during the military operations in Aleppo. The second element is the selective use of sources. Non-governmental organisation sources were used when they suited the two newspapers' narrative of the conflict. For example, the coverage paid more attention to UN and NGO sources in Aleppo and overlooked them in Al-Raqqa. Thirdly, demonising one side (Syria or Russia) and praising the other (particularly the US). Fourthly, focusing on warmaking measures over peacemaking measures.

As for the citizen journalism phenomenon, the Syrian conflict highlighted the relationship between official authorities/ intelligence agencies and "activists" and their role in promoting war propaganda. Political elites and intelligence agencies realised the importance of being represented by what were promoted as independent voices. Therefore, this study urges scholars to pay special attention to citizen journalists and their affiliations during such conflicts. In this light, the third filter of the PM "sourcing" can be expanded to include creating or funding NGOs and "activists" that are employed by political elites and intelligence agencies to propagandise their own agenda.

This study has also developed the terrorism industry concept. For more than 40 years, prominent scholars such as Edward Herman, Noam Chomsky, John Mueller, Gerry O'Sullivan, Richard Jackson, and others have examined the terrorism industry and its networks that are set to serve the West's (particularly the US) war propaganda. Nonetheless, this concept (which is not popular with mainstream terrorism scholars) has not been previously put into full context. The study finds that the terrorism industry is based on four main pillars. Firstly, focusing on the religious factor and overlooking the political factor. By doing so, Western countries distract the public from their political and economic ambitions in the Middle East. For instance, instead of discussing the legitimacy of the war on Iraq and how it helped to create Al-Qaeda there and later Al-Nusra Front and IS, the discussion focuses on the religious roots of these organisations and how they incite violence as if the 2003 invasion of Iraq and killing and injuring hundreds of thousands of people was not violence. While religious motives cannot be ruled out, political factors should be put on the table because they are, as extensively discussed in this study, the most important motive for carrying out terrorist attacks on the West.

The second pillar of the terrorism industry concept involves concentrating on terrorist attacks on the West more than the Middle East to frame the problem as if it is travelling from the Middle East to the West instead of understanding it as a worldwide threat. In this light, fighting terrorism is used as a pretext to justify launching wars and to deploy forces to the Middle East and elsewhere. Thirdly, overlooking atrocities committed by the West in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, Palestine, and other countries where victims of the West's wars are not given a platform to speak about the injustice they were subjected to. Fourthly, the terrorism industry does not pay attention to state-sponsored terrorism when it comes to Western countries and their allies. Sponsoring terrorism is either overlooked, framed as a "humanitarian" mission, underestimated, or claimed to be "miscalculation" and "unintentional". In contrast, false accusations of sponsoring terrorism are made against countries that adopt an anti-US agenda to take down governments as was the case with Iraq.

The terrorism industry needs a strong propaganda machine. Media outlets play a significant role in advancing the West's interests. For example, the "war on terror" continues to be labelled as a struggle between good and evil. In this struggle, the good people just want to be left alone to enjoy their freedom and democracy whereas the evil people are filled with hatred and jealousy of this freedom. This war has always been

framed positively and as being successful even when it results in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians. This is evident in the case of the 2017 military operations in Al-Raqqa where more than 1600 civilians lost their lives, the majority of whom were not known or reported on by media outlets.

This study can be placed alongside other serious studies directed at exposing the "war on terrorism" campaign in the Middle East and its propaganda. A "so what?" question can be asked here. The answer should be as straightforward as the question; because it is important to stay vigilant, to call out the terrorism industry and address its propaganda, and to warn of the risk of the absence of independent media. A number of scholars have inspected the West's ambitions in the Middle East. However, the US wars have not stopped, and nor should scholarly work that examines these wars. In an unforgettable Security Council session before the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Colin Powell, former US Secretary of State, lied in his famous speech about Iraq having weapons of mass destruction. Powell said that his country wanted to:

Share with you what the United States knows about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction as well as Iraq's involvement in terrorism, which is also the subject of resolution 1441 and other earlier resolutions (The Guardian, 2003).

As later revealed, there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and the former regime had no relationship with Al-Qaeda. Some media outlets were part of anti-Iraq propaganda that also targeted Syria (Edwards and Cromwell, 2018, p. 97).

This study shows that some well-known and relatively independent media outlets such as *The NYT* worked sometimes as a propaganda mouthpiece for its government. For instance, *The NYT's* coverage did not only justify the US presence in Syria but it also framed this presence positively as "maintaining peace" in the Middle East. Furthermore, the US is regularly offered free propaganda platforms by foreign media outlets. It is interesting to know, for example, that *Al Jazeera* Arabic published on its website on May 24th, 2020 a conclusion of a study by the RAND Corporation (a think tank that works for the US Armed Forces) that recommended against the withdrawal of all the US forces from Iraq because it would be "beneficial" for Iran (Al Jazeera, 2020). This is the same *Al Jazeera* that strongly opposed the war on Iraq and whose main office in Baghdad was bombed by US forces in 2003 (Al Jazeera English, 2005).

This study is not dedicated to defending the Syrian, Russian, or Iranian governments or to denying the Syrian people the right to protest against their government or to demand political and economic reforms. It is, however, dedicated to disclosing the war propaganda that has been spreading chaos in the Middle East for the benefit of Western political and economic elites. It is about addressing the regime change strategy that brought death and destruction to many countries in this region. The question will always be: who is next and under what pretext? It was Afghanistan 2001, Iraq 2003, Libya 2011, and Syria in 2011. While the strategy failed in Syria because the Syrian President and his government are still in control, rebuilding the country will take decades.

As for future studies, they can address many issues related to the Syrian conflict. Firstly, how much mainstream media relied on the so-called "activists" in their coverage of the conflict? This study shows that the percentage was very high. Nevertheless, the issue is far deeper considering that the UN and other international NGOs also relied on these "activists". Secondly, citizen journalism and its engagement in propaganda promoting western intervention need further examination. As indicated in the discussion chapter, a number of scholars have inspected the use of propaganda by mainstream media outlets but there has been little known about propaganda promoted by citizen journalists and their links with governments and intelligence agencies.

This study's findings concern the selected two newspapers only. Because the conflict in Syria has received considerable media attention regionally and internationally, more studies of media outlets from the US, the UK, and France are needed. In addition, a comparative study of the coverage of US media outlets and Russian media outlets such as *Russia Today* would be valuable. It would be worthwhile to examine the coverage of the military operations in Aleppo and Al-Raqqa to determine whether Russian media have also employed similar techniques to praise the Russian forces and to sully the US forces. Such a study could address the similarities and differences between the two countries' media.

As for terrorism studies, future scholarly work can examine the coverage in the period that preceded the rise of IS and the establishment of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan to address the role of mainstream media in fuelling terrorism and supporting of "freedom fighters" and "rebels". The circumstances in which Al-Qaeda and IS emerged are very similar. It is noted that there were no reports about foreign fighters travelling to Syria for more than one year after the start of the demonstrations. Terrorism studies can also

inspect how countries such as the US, the UK, and France have helped terrorism in Syria to grow in a similar to the way the "mujahideen" in Afghanistan in the 1980s were helped.

Another issue that should be stressed here is the type of Islam that mainstream studies conventionally link with terrorism. As indicated in the introduction and the literature review chapter, mainstream studies on terrorism use Islam as a label to examine Al-Qaeda-like terrorism. This assumes that Islam is one body while the reality is otherwise. Al-Qaeda, Al-Nusra Front, IS, Boko Haram and other similar organisations adopt one branch of Islam, and they loosely represent one school within Islam out of hundreds of schools. Therefore, more studies are needed to address this issue to make it known to the Western public. There are major flaws within mainstream terrorism and media coverage of terrorism-related events. Thus, future studies should seek to review and challenge both mainstream terrorism scholars and also independent scholars. Testing the terrorism industry concept that has been developed in this study can be a good start for those who intend to study terrorism seriously.

On December 20th, 2019, the former US President Donald Trump signed the Caesar Act to impose more political and economic sanctions on Syria. This Act was described as "an important step in promoting accountability for the large-scale atrocities Bashar al Assad and his regime have carried out in Syria" (U.S. Embassy in Syria, 2019). The Act was also labelled, as US officials have always been doing, as a move to "protect" civilians. Nonetheless, US sanctions first and foremost hurt civilians before political regimes. Syria will suffer but not the way Iraq suffered and the sanctions will not bring Syria to its knees. A lot of things have changed since 1990. However, two of the things that have not changed are how the US conducts its foreign policy and how the terrorism industry has served this policy loyally. The regime change policy adopted by Western powers has brought more terrorism and destruction to the Middle East. In Syria, the policy of regime change was enforced by using official and non-official sources including "citizen journalists". International media outlets such as *The Independent* and *The NYT* have played a role in regime change policy by contributing to the terrorism industry.

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Appendix 1

The selected events of the Syrian conflict			
2011			
No.	Date	Event	Importance of the event
1	March 15 th to June 15 th , 2011	The first three months of the Syrian conflict	-
2	August 18 th , 2011	US President Barack Obama calls on Assad to resign and orders Syrian government assets frozen.	Important CNN, 2019; Konviser, 2017
3	September 2 nd , 2011	The European Union bans the import of Syrian oil.	Important CNN, 2019
4	November 12 th , 2011	The Arab League suspends Syria's membership from November 16, 2011.	Important Al Jazeera English, 2014; BBC, 2019c; CNN, 2019
2012			
5	The second week of January 2012	-	-
6	February 6 th , 2012	The United States closes its embassy in Damascus and recalls its diplomats/ Russia and China veto a resolution in the UN Security Council that backs an Arab League plan calling for Assad to step down.	Important CNN, 2019, Al Jazeera English, 2014
7	March 7 th , 2012	Syrian troops take control of shattered Bab Amr in Homs and the main opposition group, the Syrian National Council, forms a military council to organise and unify all armed resistance.	Important Al Jazeera English, 2014
8	April 1 st , 2012	At a conference in Istanbul, the international group Friends of the Syrian People formally recognises the Syrian National Council as a legitimate representative of the Syrian people/ Syria promises to comply with a UN-brokered ceasefire but carves out an important condition.	Important CNN, 2019; Al Jazeera English, 2014
9	The third week of May 2012	-	-
10	The fourth week of June 2012	-	-
11	July 18 th , 2012	A bombing at the Syrian national security building in Damascus during	Important

		a high-level government crisis meeting kills four top officials, including Assad's brother-in-law and the defence minister.	Al Jazeera English, 2014; Associated Press, 2018b
12	The first week of August 2012	-	-
13	The Second week of September 2012	-	-
14	The third week of October 2012	-	-
15	The fourth week of November 2012	-	-
16	December 23 rd , 2012	The first allegation of use of chemical weapons. Seven people were killed in Homs by a "poisonous gas" allegedly to be used by the Syrian government.	More important Sanders-Zakre, 2018
2013			
17	January 6 th , 2013	The Syrian President announces he will not step down and that his vision of Syria's future includes a new constitution and an end to support for the opposition, which he calls terrorists.	Important Al Jazeera English, 2014; CNN, 2019; Yacoubian, 2019
18	The first week of February 2013	-	-
19	March 19 th , 2013	Alleged chemical weapons attacks were reported in Syria's two main cities, the Khan Al-Assal neighbourhood of Aleppo and the Damascus suburb of Al-Atebeh/ "Rebels" captured Raqqa	More important Associated Press, 2018b; Konviser, 2017; Sanders-Zakre, 2018; Yacoubian, 2019
20	April 13 th , 2013	Opponents of the Syrian government accused the army of using chemical weapons/ Lebanon's Hezbollah helps the Syrian forces to victory at Qusayr	Important Reuters, 2018a; Sanders-Zakre, 2018
21	April 29 th , 2013	The leader of the self-declared Jihadist group the Islamic State of Iraq, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, released a recorded audio message, in which he announces that Jabhat al-Nusra was an extension of al-Qaeda in Iraq and Syria/ A helicopter dropped canisters allegedly containing chemical weapons on the town of Saraqeb. Eight people claimed symptoms such as nausea and breathing problems, and one of them later died.	More important CNN, 2019; Sanders-Zakre, 2018; Al Jazeera English, 2014; BBC, 2019c
22	May 19 th , 2013	Lebanon's Hezbollah group officially joins the Syrian conflict with	Important

		government forces by attacking and later capturing the border town of Qusair on June 5.	Associated Press, 2018b
23	June 13 th , 2013	US President Barack Obama says that Syria has crossed a "red line" with its use of chemical weapons, including the nerve agent sarin gas, against "rebels".	Important Al Jazeera English, 2014; CNN, 2019; Yacoubian, 2019
24	The second week of July 2013	-	-
25	August 21 st , 2013	Syrian opposition activists claimed that a large-scale chemical weapons attack occurred in the suburbs of the Ghouta region. Reports said that thousands of victims of the attack have been counted in Damascus suburbs.	More important Al Jazeera English, 2014; Reuters, 2018a; CNN, 2019; Associated Press, 2018b; Konviser, 2017; Sanders-Zakre, 2018
26	The third week of October 2013	-	-
27	The fourth week of November 2013	-	-
28	December 2 nd , 2013	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay says that a UN fact-finding team has found "massive evidence" that the highest levels of the Syrian government are responsible for war crimes.	Important CNN, 2019; Sanders-Zakre, 2018
2014			
29	The first week of January 2014	-	-
30	The second week of February 2014	-	-
31	The third week of March 2014	-	-
32	The fourth week of April 2014	-	-
33	May 9 th , 2014	Opposition armed forces withdraw from the old quarter of the central city of Homs in a symbolic victory for the government.	Important Reuters, 2018a
34	June 3 rd , 2014	Al-Assad is re-elected, reportedly receiving 88.7% of the vote in the country's first election since civil war broke out in 2011	Important Al Jazeera English, 2014; CNN, 2019
35	June 30 th , 2014	So called Islamic State group, known then as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, seizes large parts of northern and western Iraq. In control	More important Al Jazeera English, 2014; BBC, 2019c;

		of around a third of Syria and Iraq, it declares a self-styled Islamic caliphate.	Associated Press, 2018b; Yacoubian, 2019
36	The first week of July 2014	-	-
37	August 24 th , 2014	IS fighters capture Tabqa military air base in northeastern Syria, eliminating the last government-held outpost in Raqqa province.	Important Yacoubian, 2019
38	September 23 rd , 2014	First US airstrike in Syria	Important BBC, 2019c; Reuters, 2018a; CNN, 2019
39	October 14 th , 2014	IS captures Kobane after a long battle and displacing about 300,000 Kurd people.	Important Yacoubian, 2019
40	The second week of November 2014	-	-
41	December 7 th , 2014	The battle against IS continues around Kobane and other areas.	Important Yacoubian, 2019
2015			
42	January 14 th , 2015	Senior US officials met with the Syrian opposition to discuss a train-and-equip program.	Important Yacoubian, 2019
43	The third week of February 2015	-	-
44	The fourth week of March 2015	-	-
45	The first week of April 2015	-	-
46	The second week of May 2015	-	-
47	The third week of June 2015	-	-
48	The fourth week of July 2015	-	-
49	August 7 th , 2015	The UN Security Council authorises the (OPCW) and UN investigators to probe reports of chemical weapons use in Syria, as reports circulate of repeated chlorine gas attacks by government forces against civilians in opposition-held areas.	Important Konviser, 2017; Sanders-Zakre, 2018
50	September 15 th , 2015	Russia announces its support for the Syrian government in its fight against IS (starting airstrikes).	More important BBC, 2019c; Reuters, 2018a; Associated Press, 2018b; Konviser, 2017

51	October 30 th , 2015	White House spokesman Josh Earnest says that the US will be deploying "less than 50" Special Operations forces, who will be sent to Kurdish-controlled territory in northern Syria.	Important CNN, 2019; Yacoubian, 2019
52	November 6 th , 2015	A press release from the OPCW fact-finding team claimed with "the utmost confidence" that the Islamic State used sulphur mustard in an attack on August 21, in Marea, in northern Syria.	Important Sanders-Zakre, 2018
53	December 3 rd , 2015	Syrian Army allows "rebels" to evacuate remaining area of Homs, returning Syria's third-largest city to government control after four years.	Important BBC, 2019c
2016			
54	The first week of January 2016	-	-
55	The second week of February 2016	-	-
56	March 15 th , 2016	Russia starts withdrawing its forces from Syria. A spokeswoman for the Syrian government tells <i>CNN</i> that the Russian campaign is winding down after achieving its goals of helping Syrian troops take back territory claimed by "terrorists".	Important CNN, 2019
57	The third week of April 2016	-	-
58	The fourth week of May 2016	-	-
59	The first week of June 2016	-	-
60	The second week of July 2016	-	-
61	August 10 th , 2016	Reports of use of chemical weapons in Aleppo.	Important Konviser, 2017; Sanders-Zakre, 2018
62	The third week of September 2016	-	-
63	The fourth week of October 2016	-	-
64	The first week of November 2016	-	-
65	December 22 nd , 2016	Syria's state-run media announces government forces have taken full control of Aleppo, ending more than four years of rebel rule there.	More important BBC, 2019c; Reuters, 2018a; CNN, 2019; Associated Press,

			2018b; Yacoubian, 2019
2017			
66	The second week of January 2017	-	-
67	The third week of February 2017	-	-
68	April 4 th , 2017	Chemical weapons were used in an attack that killed dozens of people in Syria's northern Idlib province.	More important BBC, 2019c; Reuters, 2018a; CNN, 2019; Associated Press, 2018b; Konviser, 2017; Sanders-Zakre, 2018; Yacoubian, 2019
69	The fourth week of May 2017	-	-
70	The first week of June 2017	-	-
71	July 9 th , 2017	A new round of peace talk in Astana and the US President Trump and Russian President Putin reach an agreement on curbing violence in southwest Syria during their meeting at the G20 in Hamburg, Germany.	Important CNN, 2019; Konviser, 2017; Yacoubian, 2019
72	The second week of August 2017	-	-
73	The third week of September 2017	-	-
74	October 17 th , 2017	ISIS loses control of its self-declared capital, the Syrian city of Raqqa. US-backed forces fighting in Raqqa say 'major military operations' have ended, though there are still pockets of resistance in the city.	More important BBC, 2019c; Reuters, 2018a; CNN, 2019; Yacoubian, 2019
75	The fourth week of November 2017	-	-
76	The first week of December 2017	-	-
2018			
77	The second week of January 2018	-	-
78	February 1 st , 2018	Reports about a chemical attack in Douma, Damascus.	Important Associated Press, 2018b; Sanders-Zakre, 2018
79	The third week of March 2018	-	-

80	April 7 th , 2018	An alleged chemical attack in Eastern Ghouta. The United States, France and the UK launch airstrikes on Syria in response to the chemical weapons attack in Eastern Ghouta a week earlier.	More important BBC, 2019c; Reuters, 2018a; CNN, 2019; Sanders-Zakre, 2018
81	The fourth week of May 2018	-	-
82	The first week of June 2018	-	-
83	The second week of July 2018	-	-
84	The third week of August 2018	-	-
85	The fourth week of September 2018	-	-
86	The first week of October 2018	-	-
87	The second week of November 2018	-	-
88	December 1 st , 2018	The last month of 2018	

Appendix 2

List of the collected newspaper articles including some of those excluded from the analysis

<i>The New York Times</i>		
2011		
March		
No.	Date	Article headline
1	16	In Syria, Demonstrations Are Few and Brief
2	17	The Balance of Charm and Reality
3	18	March 18 Updates on Libya and Arab Uprisings
4	18	In Syria, Crackdown After Protests
5	19	Syrian Police Attack Marchers at Funerals
6	20	Officers Fire on Crowd as Syrian Protests Grow
7	21	March 21 Updates on War in Libya and Mideast Protests
8	21	Hama Rules
9	22	March 22 Updates on War in Libya and Mideast Protests
10	22	Six Protesters Killed in Syria
11	23	Protesters Are Killed in Syrian Crackdown
12	23	March 23 Updates on War in Libya and Mideast Protests
13	24	Thousands March to Protest Syria Killings
14	24	March 24 Updates on Libyan War and Mideast Protests
15	25	Syrian Troops Open Fire on Protesters in Several Cities
16	26	Tension and Grief in Syria After Protests and Deadly Reprisals
17	26	Hoping for Arab Mandelas
18	27	Syria Tries to Ease Deep Political Crisis
19	27	A War by Any Name
20	28	Despite Promise of Reforms, Syrian Forces Try to Disperse Protesters With Gunfire
21	28	Arabs Will Be Free
22	29	Syria's Cabinet Resigns; Concessions Expected
23	29	The Syrian President I Know
24	30	Is Assad Capable of Reform?
25	30	Syrian Leader Blames 'Conspiracy' for Turmoil
26	31	Syria Offers Changes Before Renewed Protests
27	31	The Myth of Syrian Stability
April (2011)		
28	1	Syrian Protesters Clash With Security Forces
29	1	April 1 Updates on Libyan War and Mideast Protests
30	3	Tense Calm Prevails in Syria as Latest Crackdown Victims Are Buried
31	4	April 4 Updates on Mideast Protests and Libyan War
32	4	Follow the Turks
33	5	Syrian Rights Groups Raise Toll From Unrest
34	6	Dissidents From Syria Seek Haven in Lebanon
35	6	Syria Tries to Placate Sunnis and Kurds
36	7	Protesters in Syria Plan Large March Near Capital
37	8	Syrian Protests Are Said to Be Largest and Bloodiest to Date

38	8	Syrian Activists Distribute Video of Protests
39	9	Syrian Forces Open Fire on Demonstrators in Two Cities
40	10	Four Killed as Syria Cuts Off City
41	10	Prisoner of Damascus
42	11	Syrian University Protests Violently Suppressed
43	12	Video Shows Syria Clash From Two Angles
44	12	Syria Presses Crackdown in Two Cities on Coast
45	13	Syrian Women Demand Release of Detainees
46	13	New Grievances Broaden Syria's Protest Movement
47	14	Syrian Government Offers Mixed Message to Protesters
48	15	April 15 Updates on Mideast Protests and Libyan War
49	15	Syrians Renew Protests Despite Concessions
50	16	Syrian Leader Says He Will Lift Emergency Law
51	16	In Sometimes Deadly Clashes, Defiant Syrians Protest
52	18	Security Forces Fire on Protesters in Restive Syrian City
53	18	After Funerals for Protesters, Syrian Mourners Call for Revolution
54	19	Syria Steps Up Its Crackdown While Promising Reform
55	19	April 19: Updates and Video From Syria
56	20	Amid Crackdown, Big Protest Is Planned in Syria
57	20	April 20: Updates on the War in Libya and Protests in Syria
58	21	In Syria, Protesters and Government Mobilize for Friday
59	21	Increased Security Seen in Videos From Syria
60	22	Security Forces Kill Dozens in Uprisings Around Syria
61	22	TimesCast: Syrian Violence Continue
62	23	Syrian Forces Open Fire at Protesters' Funerals
63	23	Social Media Accounts of Protests in Syria
64	24	More Syrians Are Missing, Hinting at a Wider Crackdown
65	24	Syrian Crisis Tests the Mettle of Its Autocratic Ruler
66	25	Syria Escalates Crackdown as Tanks Go to Restive City
67	25	U.S. Faces a Challenge in Trying to Punish Syria
68	26	Syria Tries to Defend Its Record to United Nations
69	27	Long Repressed in Syria, an Internal Opposition Takes Shape
70	27	Religions Thrive in a Troubled Land
71	28	Syria: UN. Atomic Watchdog Director Says Bombed Syrian Site Was Reactor
72	28	President Assad's Crackdown
73	29	U.S. Moves Cautiously Against Syrian Leaders
74	30	Syrian Forces Seize Mosque That Was Uprising's Symbol
75	30	Syrian Businessman Becomes Magnet for Anger and Dissent
May (2011)		
76	2	Tensions Rise as Hamas Refuses to Take Sides in Syria
77	2	In Syria, Reports of Arrests Proliferate
78	3	Journalist Is Missing in Syria
79	3	Farewell to Geronimo
80	4	Syria's Unrest Seeps Into Lebanon
81	4	Unrest Around the Arab World Endangers Turkey's Newfound Influence
82	5	Syria Arrests Scores in House-to-House Roundup
83	6	Video of Syria's 'Friday of Defiance'
84	7	As Syria Steps Up Efforts to Crush Unrest, Dissidents Report Attack on a City

85	9	Syria Proclaims It Now Has Upper Hand Over Uprising
86	9	They Should Be Condemning Syria
87	10	Troops, Backed by Tanks, Move to Quell Dissent in Syrian Towns
88	10	Syrian Elite to Fight Protests to 'the End'
89	11	Syria Shells Major City as Crackdown Spreads
90	11	Syria Loses Spot For Rights Panel
91	12	Clinton Toughens Tone Toward Syria
92	12	More Protest Video From Syria
93	13	Defying Crackdown, Syria Protesters Return to Streets in Stale mated Contest of Wills
94	13	Video of Protests and Clashes in Syria
95	14	Assault in Border Town Sends Syrians Into Lebanon
96	14	'I Am a Man'
97	15	Syrian Border Violence May Hold Message for Israel
98	17	President Obama and the Arab Spring
99	17	As Uprisings Transform Mideast, Obama Aims to Reshape the Peace Debate
100	18	U.S. Imposes Sanctions on Syrian Leader and 6 Aides
101	19	Reporter Describes Captivity in Syria
102	19	Syria Condemns U.S. Sanctions on Assad
103	20	The President's Middle East Speech
104	20	Syrian Protesters Defy Crackdown and Gain Momentum
105	21	Syrians Are Fatally Shot at Funeral for Protesters
106	21	They Shoot Horses, Don't They?
107	22	Seeking to Disrupt Protesters, Syria Cracks Down on Social Media
108	23	Syrian Leader Hit With European Sanctions
109	24	Watchdog Finds Evidence That Iran Worked on Nuclear Triggers
110	24	Syrian Beaten on Camera Appears on State Television
111	25	Turkey Calls for Syrian Reforms on Order of 'Shock Therapy'
112	26	In New Tack, Syrians Protest at Night to Elude Forces
113	27	Security Forces Restrained as Syrian Protests Spread
114	28	Can Turkey Unify the Arabs?
115	29	Syrian Forces Struck Northern Villages, Activists Say
116	30	Video of Tortured Boy's Corpse Deepens Anger in Syria
117	31	The I.A.E.A. and Syria
118	31	To Much Skepticism, Syria Issues Amnesty
June (2011)		
119	1	Children Are Among Casualties of Syrian Military Raids After Demonstrations
120	2	Syria Continues Attacks on Protesters While Calling for Dialogue
121	2	The Depravity Factor
122	3	Mourning a Boy, Crowds in Syria Defy Crackdown
123	3	President Assad's Bloody Hands
124	4	Syrian Tanks Move in on City as Thousands Mourn Protesters' Deaths
125	4	Advice for China
126	5	Israeli Soldiers Shoot at Protesters on Syrian Border
127	5	Syrian Army Kills 38 In North, Reports Say
128	6	Israel Disputes Toll of Border Clashes, Saying Syria Has an Ulterior Motive
129	6	Syria, Claiming Heavy Toll in Town, Hints at Retaliation
130	7	After Report of Disappearance, Questions About Syrian-American Blogger

131	7	Syrian Leader's Brother Seen as Enforcer of Crackdown
132	8	Syrian Envoy to France Denies Resignation
133	8	New Move to Condemn Syria in UN.
134	9	Fearing Assault, More Syrians Flee Into Turkey
135	9	UN. Nuclear Watchdog Presses Case Against Syria
136	10	Syrian Forces Storm Into Restive Town Near Turkey
137	11	Residents Flee as Syrian Forces Bombard Town
138	11	The Quiet Corner of the Mideast (Surprise)
139	12	Syrian Troops Retake Control of Rebellious Town in North
140	12	Gay Girl in Damascus Blogger Admits to Writing Fiction Disguised as Fact
141	13	Syrian Unrest Stirs New Fear of Deeper Sectarian Divide
142	13	In Lebanon, New Cabinet Is Influenced by Hezbollah
143	14	Fleeing Syrians Take Refuge Along Border With Turkey
144	14	Syria's Ruling Alawite Sect
August (2011)		
145	12	Security Forces Kill at Least 15 People in Cities Around Syria
146	12	Iraqi Leader Backs Syria, With a Nudge From Iran
147	14	Syrian Navy Joins Attack on Key Rebellious Port City
148	15	Turkey Warns Syria to Stop Crackdown
149	16	Syrian Enclave of Palestinians Nearly Deserted After Assault
150	17	Notes From Homs: A Reporter's Trip to One of Syria's Most Rebellious Cities
151	17	Resistance Transforms a Once Mute Syrian City
152	18	U.S. and Allies Say Syria Leader Must Step Down
153	18	Truth About Syria
154	19	Syria Said to Fire on Protest in Defiance of Global Rebuke
155	19	Gunshots Ring Out in Videos From Syria
156	21	Assad Says He Rejects West's Calls to Resign
157	22	Dissent in Syria Emerges as Front Line of Arab Uprisings
158	23	5 Deaths Reported in Syria as UN. Investigates Violence
159	24	Cheney Says He Urged Bush to Bomb Syria in '07
160	24	Europe Accuses Iranian Force of Aiding Syrian Crackdown
161	26	Defiant Syrians to Assad: Qaddafi's Fate Is Warning
162	27	Iran Calls on Syria to Recognize Citizens' Demands
163	27	If the Arab Spring Turns Ugly
164	28	Turkish Leader Says He Has Lost Confidence in Assad
165	28	U.S. Tactics in Libya May Be a Model for Other Efforts
166	29	Amid Syrian Raids, Reports of Desertions
167	30	Syrian Security Forces Fire on Worshipers as Ramadan Ends
168	31	Syria Hunts for Leaders of Protests in Hama
169	31	Isolating Assad
November (2011)		
170	7	NATO's Noble Words Go for Naught
171	7	Syria Unleashes Assault to Take an Unbowed City
172	8	As Syria Hits City, UN. Says Toll Climbs
173	8	Syria and the Arab League
174	9	Lebanese Fear Syria's Violence May Spill Over
175	9	Security Forces Kill at Least 26 in Syria
176	11	Arab League Support Sought in Pressuring Syria

177	11	Protesters Urge Arab League to Suspend Syria as Deaths Mount
178	12	Arab League Votes to Suspend Syria Over Crackdown
179	13	Mobs Strike Embassies After Group Bans Syria
180	14	King of Jordan Becomes First Arab Leader to Tell Syria's Assad to Quit
181	14	For Refugees From Syria, a Visit With No Expiration Date
182	15	Syria Faces New Threats as Opposition Seeks Allies
183	16	The Killing in Syria Goes On
184	16	Arab League Offers Reprieve for Syria as Toll Rises
185	17	Armed Groups Are on Rise in Syria, as Are Civil War Fears
186	18	The Devil We Knew
187	18	Do Not Attack Syria
188	19	Sectarian Strife in City Bodes Ill for All of Syria
2012		
January		
189	8	Observers Appeal Again to Syria
190	9	Violence Continues in Syria
191	10	Syrian Leader Vows 'Iron Fist' to Crush 'Conspiracy'
192	10	Outsiders Feed Unrest in Syria, Assad Says
193	11	In Rare Public Appearance, Assad Addresses Rally in Syria
194	11	French Journalist Killed in Syria as Observer Mission Frays
195	12	Syria: Former Arab Observer Says Other Monitors Have Quit Mission
196	12	Turkish Official Says a Russian Ship, Perhaps With Munitions, Has Reached Syria
197	13	Syria: Pressure Mounts for Inquiry in Death of French Journalist
198	14	Fear of Civil War Mounts in Syria as Crisis Deepens
199	30	Russia's Syrian Power Play
200	30	Fighting Escalates in Syria as Opposition Rejects Russian Plan
201	31	Russia Supports Assad's Regime
202	31	Diplomats Jockey Over Assad's Future as Syrian Troops Press Attacks Near Capital
February (2012)		
203	1	Russian Diplomat Blocking UN. Action in Syria Facilitated It in Bosnia
204	1	Russia's Bad Bet on Syria
205	2	What's Behind Iranian Abductions in Syria?
206	2	UN. Tentatively Backs a Plan for Syria
207	3	Damascus Avoids Blood of Uprising, but Not Pain
208	3	Government Is Said to Kill 200 in Attack in Syrian City
209	4	Russia: Sort of, but Not Really
210	4	Russia and China Block UN. Action on Crisis in Syria
211	5	Syrian Unrest After a Failure of Diplomacy
212	5	Solution on Syria Remains Elusive for White House
213	6	In Syria, We Need to Bargain With the Devil
214	6	Killing in Syria
215	7	Stung by Criticism, Russia Sends Envoys to Syria to Defuse Crisis
216	7	Why Beijing Votes With Moscow
217	8	Freedom at 4 Below
218	8	Russia Defends Its Diplomacy in Syria Amid Accounts of Escalating Violence
219	9	Dozens More Die in Syrian Violence, Activists Say
220	9	Why Russia Supports Assad

221	10	2 Security Complex Car Bombings Kill Dozens, Syria Says
222	10	Tracing the Weapons of Bashar al-Assad
223	11	Syrian General Is Killed by Gunmen in Damascus Ambush
224	12	Arab League Steps Up Pressure on Syria and Calls for UN. Help
225	13	UN. Official Rebukes Syria Over Violence
March (2012)		
226	1	Syrian Forces Overwhelm Stronghold of Rebels in Homs
227	1	French Journalists Escape Syria for Lebanon
228	2	Syria Blocks Red Cross Aid to Rebel Enclave in Homs
229	2	Crushing Homs
230	3	Bearing Witness in Syria: A Correspondent's Last Days
231	3	Syrian Television's Underwhelming Evidence of Foreign Backing for Rebels
232	4	Lebanon Expects Influx of Refugees From Syria
233	5	McCain Calls for U.S.-Led Airstrikes Against Syria
234	5	Syria Permits UN. Visits, but Escalates Its Attacks
235	6	More Violence in Syria as Forces Scramble to Scrub Signs of Assault on Homs
236	6	Under Cover of the Night, Syrians Cross Into Safety
237	7	U.S. Defense Officials Say Obama Reviewing Military Options in Syria
238	7	Effects of Instability Spill Over to Syria's Neighbors
239	8	The Perils of Piecemeal Intervention
240	8	Syrian Kurds Flee Into Iraqi Refugee Limbo
241	9	UN. Relief Chief Tells of Horrific Destruction in Syria and Official Resistance to Aid Plan
242	9	How to End Mass Atrocities
243	10	No Talks With Syria Opposition, Leader Tells UN. Envoy
244	11	Military Points to Risks of a Syrian Intervention
245	11	French Surgeon, 71, Saves Lives in Syria
246	12	Massacre Is Reported in Homs, Raising Pressure for Intervention in Syria
247	13	Syria Expands Assault, Hitting Rebel Enclaves in City in North
248	13	UN. Leader Says Assad Must Shift Syria's Course
249	14	Syria Opposition Group Is Routed and Divided
250	14	Assad Couple Fiddles While Syria Burns
251	25	U.S. and Turkey to Step Up 'Nonlethal' Aid to Rebels in Syria
252	25	With Summit of Arab Leaders, Iraq Seeks to Shift Image
253	26	Turkey and Norway Shut Embassies in Syria; New Shelling Is Reported in Homs
254	26	Battling the Qaeda Hydra
255	28	Diplomatic Moves Increase Pressure on Assad
256	28	Will Annan Save Assad?
257	29	Sprawling, Digital Roots Behind a Syrian Uprising
258	30	Disagreements Among Syrian Rebels Over Foreign Arms Shipments
259	31	Syria Won't Pull Out of Rebel Centers
April (2012)		
260	1	Citizen Journalist in Syria Is Captured and Tortured, Activists Say
261	2	Syria Agrees to Troop Withdrawal, Annan Says
262	2	In Syria, Some Assad Loyalists Waver
263	3	Syrian Leader Accused of Escalating Attacks
264	3	Assad's Forces Record Brutal Crackdown as They Carry It Out
265	4	An Arab War-Crimes Court for Syria

266	4	Syria War Triggers Rifts in Palestinian Camps in Lebanon
267	5	New Clashes Fuel UN. Skepticism of Promises by Syria
268	5	Loyalty to Syrian President Could Isolate Hezbollah
269	6	Profit and Proliferation, Part 2: Will Belgian Arms End Up in Syria?
270	6	Turkey Raises Alarm to UN. Over Worsening Violence in Syria
271	7	Violence Intensifies in Syria as a Planned Truce Nears
272	7	The Other Arab Spring
273	8	Cease-Fire in Doubt as Syria Demands New Conditions
274	9	Syrian Troops Fire Across Turkish Border in Clash Near Refugee Camp
275	9	President Assad's Latest Bluff
May (2012)		
276	15	UN. Team Sees Clash Between Syrian Protesters and Soldiers
277	16	Syria Leader, in Rare TV Interview, Disparages Opponents
278	16	Syrian Activists Question UN. Observer Mission After Deadly Attack on Protesters
279	17	Lebanese City Drawn Into Syrian Conflict
280	17	Students Are Assailed at a Protest in Syria
281	18	Crackdown on Students Stokes Fury Within Syria
282	18	UN. Observers Dodge Bullets and Mockery in Syria
283	21	Conflict Rooted in Syria Spreads to Lebanon's Capital
284	21	Video of Street Fighting in Beirut
June (2012)		
285	22	Syria Shoots Down Turkish Warplane, Fraying Ties Further
286	24	Turkey to Consult NATO Over Downing of Jet by Syria
287	25	Latest Syrian Defectors Are From Higher Ranks
288	25	Turkish Border Is Crucial Link in Syrian Conflict
289	26	Assad Supporters Suspected in New Beirut Incidents
290	26	Backed by NATO, Turkey Steps Up Warning to Syria
291	27	Attack Destroys Pro-Government TV Station Near Damascus
292	27	Attack on Pro-Assad Television Studio Raises Questions on Rules of War
293	28	With Strikes, Syrian Rebels Showcase Their Reach
294	28	Syria's Threatened Christians
July (2012)		
295	11	Top Syrian General Fails to Surface After Defecting
296	11	Syria's Ambassador to Iraq Reported to Defect
297	12	Massacre Reported in Syria as Security Council Meets
298	12	Russian Ship With Syrian Helicopters Embarks on Renewed Voyage
299	13	Fresh From Syria, Rebel Commanders Unite in Frustration
300	13	Syria Moving Parts of Chemical Arsenal, U.S. Says
301	14	Details of a Battle Challenge Reports of a Syrian Massacre
302	14	In Fleeing Pilot, Hints of Trouble for Syria's Assad
303	15	Syria Denies Attack on Civilians, in Crisis Seen as Civil War
304	16	Fighting Spreads in Damascus; Russia Resists Pressuring Syria
305	17	Syria Hardens Its Response to Rebels in Damascus Clashes
306	17	Arming for the Syrian War: Do Soaring Prices Predict Escalating Conflict?
307	18	Syrian Rebels Land Deadly Blow to Assad's Inner Circle
308	18	Assassination in Damascus
309	19	Syrian Rebels Fight for Control of Border With Turkey
310	19	Border Posts Fall Into the Hands of Syrian Rebels

311	20	Syrians Fleeing Capital Leave Bodies and Bombs Behind
312	20	UN. Extends Syria Mission as Violence Rises to New Heights
313	21	Syria Presses to Regain Cities From Rebel Forces
314	21	Syrians Hold On to Optimism at a Tent City in Turkey
315	22	Stymied at UN., U.S. Refines Plan to Remove Assad
316	22	Both Sides Claim Progress as Violence Continues in Syria
317	23	Syria Threatens Chemical Attack on Foreign Force
318	24	A Syrian Stalemate?
319	24	Al Qaeda Taking Deadly New Role in Syria's Conflict
320	25	Showdown Looms in Aleppo as Syrian Army Closes In
321	25	Jordan Worries Turmoil Will Follow as Syria's Refugees Flood In
August (2012)		
322	1	Syrian Fighting Intensifies in Battle for Control of Aleppo
323	1	Video Said to Show Execution by Syrian Rebels Stirs Debate
324	2	Deadly Attack on Refugee Camp in Syria Could Shift Palestinian Allegiances to Rebels
325	2	Syrian Leader's Arms Under Strain as Conflict Continues
326	3	Syria's Crumbling Pluralism
327	3	For Rebel Fight in Syrian City, Baking Bread Is Urgent Task
328	4	State Department and Pentagon Plan for Post-Assad Syria
329	4	Intensified Syrian Fighting Reported in Battles for Damascus and Aleppo
330	5	Writer Defends His Handling of Interview With Assad
331	5	48 Captives Are Iran 'Thugs,' Say Rebels in Syria
332	6	Push by Syrian Rebels Opens Space for Foreign Journalists to Report on Conflict
333	6	If Assad Falls in Syria
334	7	In Syria, Potential Threat to Government Air Power Emerges
335	7	Lugar Urges U.S. and Russia to Team Up to Rid Syria of Chemical Weapons
September (2012)		
336	8	Clashes Worsen Misery in Syria's Biggest Cities
337	9	Syria Criticizes France for Supporting Rebels, as Fears Grow of Islamist Infiltration
338	10	UN. Official Warns Syrian Rebels About Atrocities
339	10	Vivid Portrait of Syrian Rebel Fighters Outside Homs
340	11	Relief Crisis Grows as Refugees Stream Out of Syria
341	12	Syrians Join Relief Efforts for Countrymen in Jordan
342	13	Facts, Arguments and Politics
343	13	Syria: Envoy Says Crisis Is Worsening
344	14	Under Syrian Shells
345	14	International Peace Envoy to Meet With Syrian Leader
October (2012)		
346	15	Heat-Seeking Missiles in Syria: The SA-7 in Action with Rebels
347	15	UN. Envoy Seeks Pause in Syria for Holiday
348	17	Hezbollah Offering Direct Help to Syrian Army, Rebels Say
349	17	Iran and Turkey Join Syria Peace Envoy in Call for Truce
350	18	Seized by Rebels, Town Is Crushed by Syrian Forces
351	18	Among the Snipers of Aleppo
352	19	Blast in Beirut Is Seen as an Extension of Syria's War
353	19	Syrians Place Booby-Trapped Ammunition in Rebels' Guns
354	20	The Debatable World

355	20	After Attack, Lebanese Opposition Calls for New Government
356	21	Explosion Rocks Damascus Neighborhood
November (2012)		
357	22	Syrian Government Attacks Rebels and Criticizes European Action
358	23	Syria: Blast Kills 4 in Camp
359	23	Branded a Betrayer for Embracing Syria's Rebels
360	24	Cold Ravages Syria Refugees as Aid Falters
361	27	Civilians Killed in Syrian Strike on Olive Press, Rebels Say
362	27	Downing of Copter May Show a New Syrian Rebel Capability
363	28	U.S. Weighs Bolder Effort to Intervene in Syria's Conflict
December (2012)		
364	9	For Iran, Unrest in Syria Is Noise, Not Brutal War
365	9	Sectarian Conflict Kills at Least 17 in Northern Lebanon in Spillover of Syrian Civil War
366	10	U.S. Places Militant Syrian Rebel Group on List of Terrorist Organizations
367	10	Al Qaeda in Syria
368	11	Armenians Fleeing Anew as Syria Erupts in Battle
369	11	Obama Says U.S. Will Recognize Syrian Rebels
370	12	Syria Uses Scud Missiles in New Effort to Push Back Rebels
371	12	Members of Assad's Sect Blamed in Syria Killings
372	13	Russia Offers a Dark View of Assad's Chances for Survival
373	13	U.S. to Send 2 Missile Units to Turkey to Deter Syrians
374	14	Syrian Rebels Claim to Shoot Down Warplane
375	14	Russia Steps Back From Envoy's Comments on Syria
376	15	A Bread Shortage Is the First Big Test of a Transitional Council in Aleppo
377	15	Foreign Minister Blames Sanctions for Syria's Troubles
378	17	Syria Warns Refugees Not to Aid Rebels
379	18	Russia Sends Warships Toward Syria for Possible Evacuation
380	18	Rubble and Despair of War Redefine Syria Jewel
381	19	UN. Seeks New Aid for Syria Crisis and Predicts 1 Million Refugees by Mid-2013
382	19	Lebanon's Shiites and Sunnis Battle in Syria, but Not at Home
383	20	Syria Fires More Scud Missiles at Rebels, U.S. Says
384	20	Syria Unleashes Cluster Bombs on Town, Punishing Civilians
385	21	To Save Syria, We Need Russia
386	21	Putin Puts More Distance Between Russia and Assad
387	22	Russia Says It Won't Play Role in Ousting Syria's Leader
388	24	Envoy Meets With Assad as Russia Seeks Distance
389	24	No Easy Route if Assad Opts to Go, or to Stay, in Syria
390	25	City in North Is Captured, Syrian Rebels Announce
391	27	Missing Syrian Official Discussed Defection in Twitter Dialogue, Activist Says
392	27	UN. Envoy Calls for a Transitional Government in Syria
393	28	Moscow Urges Peace Talks on Reluctant Syrians
394	28	In Russia, Exile in Comfort for Leaders Like Assad
395	30	Envoy to Syria Warns of Slide to Hellish Fiefs With Huge Toll
396	31	Syrian Military Mounts Offensive in Suburb of Damascus
2013		
January		
397	1	Syria: Government Pounds Damascus Suburbs

398	2	Syrians Killed in Gas Line; UN. Raises War's Casualty Figures
399	2	More Than 60,000 Have Died in Syrian Conflict, UN. Says
400	3	Hezbollah Chief Urges Lebanon to Help in Syrian Crisis
401	3	Japanese Man Vacations on Syrian Front Lines
402	4	Bomb Attack in Syria Kills at Least 10 as Reports of Executions Surface
403	4	Rebellion at Stalemate, Waiting for Undecided Syrians to Make a Move
404	6	Defiant Speech by Assad Is New Block to Peace in Syria
405	6	Israel Plans to Construct a Syrian Border Fence
406	7	Assad Speech Leaves UN. Leader Disappointed
407	9	Jihadi Group Says It Stands With Other Syrian Rebels
408	9	Surviving in Aleppo
409	10	Winter Brings Misery to Syria Refugees
410	12	A Desert Cold and Wet Multiplies the Misery of Syrian Refugees
411	12	Russia Says It Supports UN. Envoy for Syria
February (2013)		
412	1	Soldiers in Lebanon Die in Raid Near Syria
413	1	Memo to Washington: Foreign Policy Begins Abroad
414	2	Syrian Opposition Leader Confers With U.S. and Russia
415	3	After Assad, Chaos?
416	4	Intervene in Syria
417	4	Syrian Rebels Free 3 Hostages in Exchange for Captured Fighters
418	5	New Problems in Syria: Hepatitis, Closed Hospitals, Ambulance Shortages
419	6	Clashes Erupt in Damascus as Prospects for Syrian Talks Dim
420	6	Syria's Kurds Try to Balance Security and Alliances
421	7	Senate Hearing Draws Out a Rift in U.S. Policy on Syria
March (2013)		
422	5	One Million Syrian Refugees
423	5	Kerry Says U.S. Backs Mideast Efforts to Arm Syrian Rebels
424	6	Syrian Rebels in Golan Region Hold UN. Peacekeeping Team
425	6	Number of Syrian Refugees Hits 1 Million, UN. Says
426	7	UN. Starts Talks to Free Peacekeepers Held by Syria Rebels
427	7	Syria Opposition Leaders Delay Trip to Washington
428	8	Syrian Rebels Agree on Deal to Release Peacekeepers
429	8	Russians Bring Dashcam War Reporting to Syria
430	9	Rebels in Syria Release UN. Peacekeepers to Jordan, Easing Crisis in Border Zone
431	11	What's Going On in This Picture? March 11, 2013
432	11	Qaeda Group in Iraq Says It Killed Syrian Soldiers
433	12	Syria Military Shows Strain in a War It Wasn't Built to Fight
434	13	Britain and France Push for Arming Syrian Opposition
435	13	Video Shows Syrian Suicide Bomber's Last Day
436	14	Seeking to Aid Rebels in Syria, France Urges End to Arms Embargo
437	14	In Syrian Clash Over 'Death Highway,' a Bitterly Personal War
438	15	Other Europeans Balk at Bid by Britain and France to Arm Syria's Rebels
439	15	Remembering the Start of Syria's Uprising
440	16	Assad Issues a Worldwide Plea as a Top Syrian General Defects
441	18	Syrian Rebels Pick U.S. Citizen to Lead Interim Government
442	19	Syria and Activists Trade Charges on Chemical Weapons
443	20	Iran's Support Emboldens Assad, Envoy Says

444	20	Chemicals Would Be ‘Game Changer’ in Syria, Obama Says
445	21	UN. to Investigate Chemical Weapons Accusations in Syria
446	21	Pro-Assad Cleric Killed in Blast in Damascus
447	22	Lebanese Premier Resigns as Syrian War Fuels Sectarian Split
448	23	In Syria’s Civil War, Doctors Find Themselves in Cross Hairs
449	24	Arms Airlift to Syria Rebels Expands, With Aid From C.I.A.
450	24	Syrian Opposition Leader Quits His Post
451	25	Syrian Rebels Hit Central Damascus Square With Mortar Shells
452	26	Down to the Wire
453	26	Syrian Opposition Joins Meeting of Arab League
April (2013)		
454	13	Syrian Forces Kill 12 Rebels in an Ambush
455	13	Assad Foes Hire Former British Diplomat to Plead Their Cause
456	15	The Dangerous Price of Ignoring Syria
457	15	Assad’s Forces Break Through Rebel Blockade of Military Bases
458	16	Belgian Police Arrest 6 on Charges of Recruiting for Syrian Insurgency
459	17	Europeans Step Toward Easing Syrian Oil Exports
460	17	Assad Frames Syrian Struggle as Him Against Western Colonizers
461	18	Syria Faces New Claim on Chemical Arms
462	19	More U.S. Help for Syrian Rebels Would Hinge on Pledges
463	20	Kerry Says U.S. Will Double Aid to Rebels in Syria
464	21	Slaughter Reported Near Damascus
465	22	Two Archbishops Are Kidnapped Outside Northern Syrian City
466	22	More Help for Syrian Rebels
467	23	Israel Says It Has Proof That Syria Has Used Chemical Weapons
468	23	Dithering While Damascus Burns
469	24	Could Syria’s Civil War Create Jihadis in Europe and the U.S.?
470	24	Were Chemical Weapons Used in Syria?
471	25	U.S. Sees No Conclusive Evidence of Chemical Arms Use by Syria
472	25	Syria Claims Disruption of a Rebel Supply Line
473	26	Syrians Report Broad Fighting and Suspicious Airstrike
474	26	Obama Not Rushing to Act on Signs Syria Used Chemical Arms
475	27	Islamist Rebels Create Dilemma on Syria Policy
476	28	Lawmakers Call for Stronger U.S. Action in Syria
477	28	Israel Says It Is Not Seeking U.S. Intervention in Syria
478	29	Syrian Prime Minister Escapes Assassin’s Bomb
479	29	Ill-Considered Advice on Syria
480	30	Poll Shows Isolationist Streak in Americans
481	30	Obama Considers Expanding Support for Syrian Rebels
May (2013)		
482	1	Besieged Syrian Leader Makes Rare Public Appearance
483	1	Echoes of Saddam’s War in Dilemma Over Syria’s Chemical Weapons
484	2	Syrian Forces Strike Rebels in Wide-Ranging Assaults
485	2	Obama Can’t Go It Alone in Syria
486	3	Israel Bombs Syria as the U.S. Considers Its Own Military Options
487	3	Outwitting Sanctions, Syria Buys Dell PCs
488	4	Israel Targeted Iranian Missiles in Syria Attack
489	4	This Ain’t Yogurt

490	5	Syrian Rebels May Have Used Sarin
491	5	Syria Is Not Iraq
492	6	Intervene With Western Aid
493	6	Questions and Answers on Syria and the U.S.
494	7	No Easy Answers on Syria, Obama Says
495	7	Hezbollah Takes Risks by Fighting Rebels in Syria
496	8	New Diplomatic Push to End Civil War in Syria
497	8	U.S. Fears Russia May Sell Air-Defense System to Syria
498	9	Hezbollah Threatens Israel Over Syria Strikes
499	10	UN. Rights Chief Urges Faster Action to End Fighting in Syria
500	10	Details Emerge About Syrian Electronic Army's Recent Exploits
501	11	Why Putin Can't Solve Syria
502	11	Netanyahu and Putin to Discuss Syria
503	13	A Focus on Syria for Obama and Cameron
504	13	Video Appears to Show Syrian Rebel Mutilating a Soldier's Corpse
June (2013)		
505	6	Syrian Forces Chase Rebels Who Fled Fallen Town
506	6	As Syrian Fighting Nears Border, Israel Considers Its Options
507	7	In Its Biggest Appeal Ever, UN. Requests \$5 Billion in Humanitarian Aid for Syria
508	7	News of U.S. Surveillance Draws Anger of Activists and Militants Abroad
509	8	Syrian Opposition to Sit Out Any Talks Unless Arms Are Sent, General Says
510	8	The Syria the World Forgot
511	9	Protester Dies in Clash That Apparently Involved Hezbollah Supporters
512	10	Still More Questions Than Answers on Nerve Gas in Syria
513	10	Rebels' Losses in Syria Complicate Options for U.S. Aid
514	11	Suicide Bombers Attack in Central Damascus
515	12	Dozens of Shiites Reported Killed in Raid by Syria Rebels
516	12	Starved for Arms, Syria Rebels Make Their Own
517	13	Text of White House Statement on Chemical Weapons in Syria
518	13	U.S. Is Said to Plan to Send Weapons to Syrian Rebels
519	14	IHT Quick Read: June 14
520	14	Polls Show Chemical Weapons Affect Public's View on Syria
521	15	U.S. to Keep Warplanes in Jordan, Pressing Syria
522	17	Syria and Russia Warn West Against Aiding Rebels
523	17	Obama and Putin at Odds on Syria, but Want Talks
524	18	G-8 Meeting Ends With Cordial Stalemate on Syria
525	18	Syrian Tensions Spill Into a City in Southern Lebanon
526	19	The Price of Loyalty in Syria
527	19	While Claiming Battle Gains Against Rebels, Syria's Assad Is Facing Currency Crisis
528	20	Philippines Warns That It May Pull Peacekeepers Out of Golan
July (2013)		
529	8	Another Leader Quits Post in Syrian Exile Group
530	8	Syrian Governing Party Ousts a Political Insider
531	9	Car Bombing Injures Dozens in Hezbollah Section of Beirut
532	9	Russia Says Study Suggests Syria Rebels Used Sarin
533	10	Syria's Human Tragedy
534	10	Tightening Siege by Syrian Rebels Stirs Anger

535	12	The Story Behind Syria and Egypt
536	12	Syrian Rebel Infighting Undermines Anti-Assad Effort
537	13	Iraq Says It Can't Halt Arms to Syria
538	13	Israel Airstrike Targeted Advanced Missiles That Russia Sold to Syria, U.S. Says
539	14	No Quick Impact in U.S. Arms Plan for Syria Rebels
August (2013)		
540	7	Syrian Army Kills Scores of Rebels in Ambush
541	7	Jordan Says It's Questioning Two Syrians on Arms
542	8	Syrian Rebels Claim Attack on Caravan With Assad
543	8	As Foreign Fighters Flood Syria, Fears of a New Extremist Haven
544	9	Journalists in Syria Face Dangers of War and Rising Risk of Abduction
545	12	Syrian War Shapes Trip by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
546	12	Arms Shipments Seen From Sudan to Syria Rebels
547	13	Safety Concerns Delay UN. Chemical Arms Inquiry in Syria
548	14	Jordan Asks for Assistance in Securing Syrian Border
549	14	Disappearance of Activist Priest in Syria Stirs Fears He Is Dead
550	15	Syrian War Fueling Attacks by Al Qaeda in Iraq, Officials Say
551	15	With Eyes on Syria, U.S. Turns Warehouse Into Support Hub for Jordan
552	16	Syria: Government Warplanes Strike Rebel-Held District in Contested City
553	16	Hezbollah Makes Vow to Step Up Syria Fight
554	18	UN. Team Arrives in Syria to Assess Possible Chemical Arms Use
555	19	Syria: Thousands Flee to Iraq
556	21	Images of Death in Syria, but No Proof of Chemical Attack
557	21	General Says Syrian Rebels Aren't Ready to Take Power
558	22	Obama Officials Weigh Response to Syria Assault
559	22	The Corpses in Syria
560	23	Russia Urges Syria to Cooperate in Chemical Weapons Inquiry
561	23	Bombings Strike Lebanon, as Mosques Are Targeted in Growing Violence
562	24	Obama and Advisers to Discuss Syria
563	24	Signs of Chemical Attack Detailed by Aid Group
564	25	Confident Syria Used Chemicals, U.S. Mulls Action
565	26	Kerry Cites Clear Evidence of Chemical Weapon Use in Syria
566	26	Responding to Syrian Atrocities
567	27	Reports of Syria Chemical Attack Spur Question: Why?
568	27	Bomb Syria, Even if It Is Illegal
569	28	Britain to Wait on Weapons Report Ahead of Syria Strikes
570	28	More Answers Needed on Syria
571	29	Make Assad Pay
572	29	One Great Big War
573	30	U.S. Releases Detailed Intelligence on Syrian Chemical Attack
574	30	Absent on Syria
575	31	What Happened to the Rule of Law?
576	31	Kerry Seeks to Reassure Syrian Opposition Leader
September (2013)		
577	1	Forcing Obama's Hand in Syria
578	1	President Seeks to Rally Support for Syria Strike
579	2	President Gains McCain's Backing on Syria Attack
580	2	Debating the Case for Force

581	3	Red Lines Matter
582	3	Arm and Shame
583	4	Syria and the Constitution
584	4	What Sir William Would Do in Syria
October (2013)		
585	16	To Be a Syrian Refugee in Egypt
586	16	Disposal of Chemical Arms in Syria Progresses
587	17	Erdogan, Syrian Rebels' Leading Ally, Hesitates
588	18	Syria: 9 Lebanese Captives Are Freed
589	18	A Top Syrian Intelligence Officer Is Killed in Fighting
590	19	Swap Frees Lebanese Held by Syrian Rebels in Exchange for Turks
591	20	Bomber Tied to Al Qaeda Kills Dozens in Syrian City
592	21	Qaeda-Linked Group Is Seen Complicating the Drive for Peace in Syria
593	21	In Syria, Doctors Risk Life and Juggle Ethics
November (2013)		
594	22	Powerful Rebel Groups in Syria Announce Creation of Umbrella Alliance
595	22	Colleagues Remember Journalist Missing for One Year in Syria
596	23	Syrian Rebels Seize Control of Oil Field From Assad
597	23	Syria Seen as Most Dire Refugee Crisis in a Generation
598	25	Talks on Ending Syria's Civil War to Begin in January
599	26	Syrian Rebel Group Skeptical of Talks
600	27	Syria Will Attend Geneva Peace Talks
601	28	Syrian Forces Press Rebels With Gains
602	28	Disillusionment Grows Among Syrian Opposition as Fighting Drags On
603	29	Chemical Weapons Watchdog Rejects a Request by Syria to Convert Arms Sites
604	29	Out of Syria, Into a European Maze
December (2013)		
605	2	Top UN. Rights Official Links Assad to Crimes in Syria
606	3	Syria Crisis Is Worsening, UN. Relief Official Says
607	3	Jihadist Groups Gain in Turmoil Across Middle East
608	4	A U.S. Reply, in English, to Terrorists' Online Lure
609	4	UN. Official Details Plans for Removing Syria's Chemical Arms
610	6	Syria's Spreading Bloodshed
611	6	Nuns, Missing in Syria, Resurface in Video
612	7	Explosion in Golan Heights Appears to Target Israeli Troops
613	9	Delay Foreseen in Removing Syrian Chemicals
2014		
January		
614	1	Syria's Raging Health Crisis
615	1	Lebanon Arrests Leader of Qaeda-Linked Group, Reports Say
616	2	Deadly Bombing in Beirut Suburb, a Hezbollah Stronghold, Raises Tensions
617	2	Hezbollah Moving Long-Range Missiles From Syria to Lebanon, an Analyst Says
618	3	Qaeda-Linked Insurgents Clash With Other Rebels in Syria, as Schism Grows
619	3	Fleeing the Bombs in Aleppo, Syria, and Ending Up in New Jersey
620	6	Rebel Infighting Spreads to an Eastern Syrian City
621	6	Jordan to Renew Appeal on Syrian Refugees
622	7	Qaeda Group Leader in Syria Suggests Islamic Court to End Rebel Infighting
623	7	Saudis Back Syrian Rebels Despite Risks

February (2014)		
624	9	Break in Siege Is Little Relief to Syrian City
625	10	The Message From Homs
626	10	Use Force to Save Starving Syrians
627	12	Syrian Rebels Sketch Peace Plan That Omits Demand for Assad's Ouster
628	13	UN. Security Council Urged to Act on Humanitarian Aid to Syria
629	14	Kerry Says Obama Wants New Options for Syria Strife
March (2014)		
630	15	Syrian Forces Close to Taking Over Long-Held Rebel Town
631	16	Syrian Government Forces Seize Town in a Deep Blow to Opposition
632	17	Kerry Announces U.S. Representative to Syrian Opposition
633	17	Three Years of Strife and Cruelty Puts Syria in Free Fall
634	18	U.S. Orders Syrian Embassy and Consulates to Suspend Operations
635	18	Report Issued on War Crimes in Syria
636	19	Gains Reported in Removing Syrian Chemical Supplies
637	19	Syria: Rebels Seize Southern Prison
638	20	Syria Delivers Another Shipment of Chemical Weapons for Disposal
639	20	Syria's War Fuels Rise of Asylum Seekers, UN. Report Says
640	21	Russian Defiance Is Seen as a Confidence Builder for Syria's Government
April (2014)		
641	22	Turkey Was Inept, Not Evil, in Syria
642	22	Claims of Chlorine-Filled Bombs Overshadow Progress by Syria on Chemical Weapons
643	23	Diplomatic Efforts on Syria Have Failed, UN. Chiefs Say
644	23	Syria: First Candidate Announces Presidential Run
645	24	UN. Finds Humanitarian Aid Still Blocked in Syria, Despite Resolution
646	24	If Assad Wins War, Challenge From His Own Sect May Follow
647	26	Slow, Grinding Strategy of Inflicting Syria Misery
648	27	Syria Misses New Deadline as It Works to Purge Arms
649	28	Syria Announces Assad's Bid for Re-election as War Rages
650	28	Lawyers Say UN. Aid Does Not Need Syria's Consent
May (2014)		
651	2	French Jihadists in Syria
652	2	Car Bombs in Central Syria Kill at Least 19
653	3	Evacuation of Syrian Rebels From Western City Is Delayed
654	5	Syrian Opposition Delegation Is Given Diplomatic Status
655	7	Syrian Rebels Depart Homs District Under Deal
656	7	Rebels to Ask for Antiaircraft Missiles
657	9	An Explosion and a Blockade, and a Syrian Pact Is in Limbo
658	9	A Pulverized Prize Changes Hands, Peacefully, in Syria
659	13	UN. Mediator on Syria Quits; French Envoy Says Chemicals Were Used
660	13	A Call for Justice for Syrians
661	14	Health Care Workers Under Attack in Syria, Doctors Say
662	14	U.S. Projects Tough Stance to Both Sides of Syria War
663	15	Car Bomb Kills More Than 40 at Syrian Border Crossing
664	15	U.S. Seeks to Bypass Assad So More Aid Can Reach Syrian Civilians
665	27	Chemical Weapons Inspectors Escape Attack in Syria
666	28	Syria to Miss Deadline On Weapons, Official Says

667	28	Terror's Front: Local Groups, Eyes on West
668	29	Foreign Jihadis Fighting in Syria Pose Risk in West
669	30	Suicide Bomber Is Identified as a Florida Man
670	31	Before Syrian Suicide Blast, a Quiet Life in the Suburbs
671	31	Obama's Foreign Policy Book
June (2014)		
672	1	Suspect Held in Jewish Museum Killings
673	2	Politics Seen Undercutting Credibility of a Court
674	2	Fearing Converts to Terrorism, France Intercepts Citizens Bound for Syria
675	3	Assad's Win Is Assured, but Limits Are Exposed
676	3	Seeking Clues in Man's Arc From Life in Florida to Fatal Blast in Syria
677	4	Assad Engineers His Re-election
678	4	Germany Charges 3 With Terrorism
679	5	Syria: Assad Praises Election and Iran
680	10	Arm Syria's Opposition
681	10	The Real War of Ideas
682	16	Questions and Answers About the Crisis in Iraq
683	16	Who Will Win in Iraq?
684	17	Don't Fight in Iraq and Ignore Syria
685	17	What to Do With the Twins?
686	18	A Glimpse of Syrian Lives Ravaged by War in Homs
687	18	What to Call Iraq Fighters? Experts Vary on S's and L's
688	19	The Diplomacy of Force
689	20	UN. Leader Deplores Syria War's Spread to Iraq
690	20	Syria: Bomb Kills More Than 30 Near a Central City
691	21	Sunnis in Iraq Make Some Gains in Fighting in the North and West
692	22	Militants Take Major Border Post; Kerry Hints U.S. Is Open to a New Premier
693	22	Iraq's Military Seen as Unlikely to Turn the Tide
694	23	Last of Syria's Known Chemical Arms Are Shipped Abroad for Destruction
695	24	After Opening Way to Rebels, Turkey Is Paying Heavy Price
696	26	UN. Official Says Syrian Rules Are Preventing Aid Delivery
697	26	Obama Requests Money to Train 'Appropriately Vetted' Syrian Rebels
698	27	While Iraq Burns
699	27	Syria: Dispute Unsettles Rebel Coalition
700	28	Arsonists and Firefighters
701	28	They Said It Couldn't Be Done
702	29	In the Shadow of Lebanon
703	30	ISIS Threatens Al Qaeda as Flagship Movement of Extremists
July (2014)		
704	1	Iraq Must Not Come Apart
705	3	Scores of Militants Reported Killed by Iraqi Army, but Group Seizes Syrian Oil Field
706	3	Obama's Blueprint for Fighting Terrorism Collides With Reality in Iraq
707	4	Quarantine the Middle East
708	4	Refugee Camp for Syrians in Jordan Evolves as a Do-It-Yourself City
709	7	The Promise of Aleppo's Radicals
710	7	Jihadis Tug at Edges of a Staunch American Ally
711	8	Holder Urges Europeans to Step Up Antiterrorism Tactics

712	9	Obama's Understated Foreign Policy Gains
713	9	Veteran Diplomat Said to Be Picked as Third Envoy in Syrian Conflict
714	10	New Envoy for Syria Appointed
715	12	U.S. and Iraqis Try to Fragment Extremist Group
716	13	Holder Voices 'Extreme Concern' About Terrorist Bomb Makers
August (2014)		
717	18	Syria's Chemical Arsenal Fully Destroyed, U.S. Says
718	19	Militant Group Says It Killed American Journalist in Syria
719	19	Will the Ends, Will the Means
720	20	Obama, 'Appalled' by Beheading, Will Continue Airstrikes
721	20	President Obama on James Foley, and Muslim Victims
722	21	U.S. General Says Raiding Syria Is Key to Halting ISIS
723	21	Despite ISIS Horror, Congress Is Wary of U.S. Military Expansion
724	22	Death Toll in Syria Estimated at 191,000
725	22	Blamed for Rise of ISIS, Syrian Leader Is Pushed to Escalate Fight
726	24	Britain Said to Be Close to Identifying ISIS Suspect in Journalist's Beheading
727	24	ISIS Tightens Its Grip With Seizure of Air Base in Syria
728	25	Syria Declares Its Readiness in Backing Efforts to Fight Jihadists
729	25	Obama Authorizes Air Surveillance of ISIS in Syria
730	26	Bashar al-Assad: Freemy or Foe?
731	26	U.S. Mobilizes Allies to Widen Assault on ISIS
732	27	Syrian Rebels Take Control of Crossing in the Golan
733	27	Questions on Airstrikes in Syria
734	28	ISIS Said to Kill 150 Syrian Captives in 2 Days, Videotaping the Horror
735	28	U.S. Identifies Citizens Joining Rebels in Syria, Including ISIS
736	29	Obama Again Tips the Scales Toward Caution on Syria
737	29	Stop Dithering, Confront ISIS
738	30	Syrian Rebels Trade Fire With Troops From UN.
739	30	ISIS Militants Behead Lebanese Soldier and Hold 18 More
740	31	Obama and the Warmongers
741	31	Germany Steps Up Its Response to Global Security Crises
September (2014)		
742	16	UN. Investigators Cite Atrocities in Syria
743	16	House Expected to Vote on Training Syrian Rebels to Fight ISIS
744	17	U.S. Army Chief Says Ground Troops Will Be Needed Against ISIS
745	17	Syrian Forces Are Seen Stepping Up Attacks on Rebels as U.S. Sets Sights on ISIS
746	18	The Senate Ducks a Clear Vote on Aid for Syrian Rebels
747	18	U.S. Goal Is to Make Syrian Rebels Viable
748	20	U.S. Suspects More Direct Threats Beyond ISIS
749	20	Grand Illusion in Syria
750	21	Obama to Lead UN. Effort to Halt Movement of Terror Recruits
751	21	Though Adversaries on the Surface, U.S. and Hezbollah Share a Goal
752	22	As U.S. Bombs Fall, British Hostage of ISIS Warns of Another Vietnam
753	22	Airstrikes by U.S. and Allies Hit ISIS Targets in Syria
754	23	Into Syria
755	23	Wrong Turn on Syria: Helping Assad?
756	24	ISIS' Harsh Brand of Islam Is Rooted in Austere Saudi Creed
757	24	A New Focus on Foreign Fighters

758	25	Warplanes Blast Militants' Refineries in Syria, Targeting a Source of Cash
759	25	Bravo, Prime Minister Cameron
760	26	In the Homestretch, Obama Comes On Strong
761	26	U.S. Considers a No-Fly Zone to Protect Civilians From Airstrikes by Syria
762	27	Turkey Inching Toward Alliance With U.S. in Syria Conflict
763	27	U.S., Defending Kurds in Syria, Expands Airstrikes Against Islamic State Militants
764	28	Obama Acknowledges U.S. Erred in Assessing ISIS
765	28	Nusra Front Vows Retaliation for Strikes in Syria
766	29	Here There Is No Why
767	29	Opposition in Syria Is Skeptical of U.S. Airstrikes on ISIS
768	30	Turkey Makes Bid to Expand Military Role
769	30	Europe Tries to Stop Flow of Citizens Joining Jihad
October (2014)		
770	7	Will Syria Be Obama's Vietnam?
771	7	Investigators in Syria Seek Paper Trails That Could Prove War Crimes
772	8	ISIS Advances in Syrian Border Town of Kobani Despite Airstrikes
773	8	Mr. Erdogan's Dangerous Game
774	9	Turkey's Dangerous Bet on Syria
775	9	Turkey Seeks Buffer Zone on the Border With Syria
776	10	ISIS Intensifies Siege of Kurdish Enclave in Syria
777	10	As Western Bombs Fall on Syria, Western Jihadists Defend Their War on Assad
778	11	I.S. = Invasive Species
779	13	Women Fight ISIS and Sexism in Kurdish Regions
780	13	For Syrian Kurds, a Refuge in Turkey but Not a Home
781	14	A Pump War?
782	14	C.I.A. Study of Covert Aid Fueled Skepticism About Helping Syrian Rebels
783	15	U.S. Steps Up Strikes on Embattled Syrian Town, Aided by Data From Kurds
784	15	Finally, a Name for ISIS Strikes: Operation Inherent Resolve
785	16	Kurds Stuck Between Foes Once Again
786	17	U.S. Commander Reports Heavy ISIS Losses in Syrian City of Kobani
787	17	ISIS Militants in Syrian Border Town Begin to Retreat After a Monthlong Battle
788	20	U.S. Airdrops Weapons and Supplies to Kurds Fighting in Kobani
789	20	Turkey to Let Iraqi Kurds Cross to Syria to Fight ISIS
790	21	U.S. Says It Stopped 3 Young Women Seeking to Join Islamic State
November (2014)		
791	8	The Fight Republicans Need Now
792	9	Obstacles Limit Targets and Pace of Strikes on ISIS
793	10	Syrian Leader Says UN. Cease-Fire Proposal Is Worth Considering
794	11	Freud and the Middle East
795	13	ISIS Chief Emerges, Urging 'Volcanoes of Jihad'
796	13	Strikes by U.S. Blunt ISIS but Anger Civilians
797	14	Islamic State Says It Plans to Issue Its Own Currency
798	14	Yazidi Girls Seized by ISIS Speak Out After Escape
799	30	Straining to Make Room for Refugees as the War in Syria Floods the World
December (2014)		
800	1	A French Town Reels After Teenage Girl Vanishes, Apparently to Join Jihadists
801	1	No Agreement Reached on Syrian No-Fly Zone
802	2	Lebanon Detains ISIS Leader's Relatives, One of Them His Daughter

803	3	U.S. and Iran Both Attack ISIS, but Try Not to Look Like Allies
804	4	Feeling Uneasy About the Future
805	5	Germany, in a First, Convicts a Returned Jihadist
806	5	Britain Puts 2 in Prison After Return From Syria
807	6	How ISIS Drives Muslims From Islam
808	7	Syria Reports New Strikes From Israel Near Capital
809	8	World to Desperate Syrians: We Won't Help
810	8	UN. Seeks \$16.4 Billion to Address 2015 Crises
811	8	Rich Nations Urged to Take In Syrian Refugees
812	9	UN. Food Agency to Resume Aid to Syrians After Donors Step Up
813	9	Kerry Warns Senate Against Curbs on Fighting ISIS
814	10	Rules of Engagement, Still Missing
815	12	Senate Committee Bothered to Authorize War Against Islamic State
816	12	Syrian Refugees, Once Stuck, Enter Jordan
817	13	For Jihadists, Denmark Tries Rehabilitation
818	13	Still Failing Syria's Refugees
2015		
January		
819	1	Vanguard of Syria's Uprising, Now on the Run From ISIS, Weighs a Bleak Future
820	1	Syria Deaths Hit New High in 2014, Observer Group Says
821	2	As Refugee Tide Swells, Lebanon Plans a Visa Requirement for Syrians
822	5	Migrant Deaths on the Mediterranean
823	5	Turkey Will Help Train Moderate Syrian Rebels, Diplomat Says
824	6	Reports of Civilian Deaths Prompt Inquiry Into Strikes Against ISIS
825	7	Terrorists Strike Charlie Hebdo Newspaper in Paris, Leaving 12 Dead
826	7	'Dangerous Moment' for Europe, as Fear and Resentment Grow
827	8	Al Qaeda Trained Suspect in Paris Terror Attack, Official Says
828	8	Raising Questions Within Islam After France Shooting
829	9	Charlie Hebdo and the Assault on French Identity
830	9	Chicago Man Is Indicted on Charge of Trying to Aid ISIS
831	10	French Premier Declares 'War' on Radical Islam as Paris Girds for Rally
832	10	Old Nazis Never Die
833	11	Jihadism Born in a Paris Park and Fueled in the Prison Yard
834	13	West Struggles to Halt Flow of Citizens to War Zones
835	13	Syria Peace Hopes Dim Further as Opposition Rejects Moscow Talks
836	14	The Jihadist in Our Family
837	14	Kerry Supports Syrian Peace Talks in Russia
838	15	Two Italian Aid Workers Held Hostage in Syria Are Released
February (2015)		
839	15	Every Insurgency Is Different
840	16	The Limits of Third-Generation Jihad
841	16	Anger of Suspect in Danish Killings Is Seen as Only Loosely Tied to Islam
842	17	UN. Envoy to Syria Announces Possible Truce in Aleppo
843	17	Gaps in France's Surveillance Are Clear; Solutions Aren't
844	18	Syrian Rebels Regain Territory Near Aleppo
845	18	Obama Urges Global United Front Against Extremist Groups Like ISIS
846	19	On Terror, Gentle Hand or Iron Fist
847	19	Turkey: Deal Set to Aid Syrian Rebels

848	20	Children, Caged for Effect, to Mimic Imagery of ISIS
849	20	Advocate for Syrian ‘Moderates’ Changes His Mind
850	21	Debating a Change of Faith Under Brutal Captivity
851	21	Concern in Britain as Schoolgirls Seek to Join Islamic State
March (2015)		
852	22	Medical Students From Britain Are Sought in Syria
853	26	National Guardsman Accused of Trying to Join ISIS in Libya
854	26	U.S. and Syria Discuss Missing Journalist
April (2015)		
855	1	ISIS Seizes New Territory in Deadly Attacks in Syria
856	2	Make ISIS' Leaders Face Justice
857	3	Main Syria-Jordan Crossing Under Insurgent Assault
858	3	Use Force to Stop ISIS’ Destruction of Art and History
859	4	Covering Hostages, Without Becoming Pawns
860	4	Islamic State Seizes Palestinian Refugee Camp in Syria
861	6	Crisis in Palestinian Camp in Syria Has Worsened Since ISIS Invasion, UN. Says
862	6	4th Brooklyn Man Is Charged in Plot to Join ISIS
May (2015)		
863	10	Doctors Group Recounts Migrant Rescue as E.U. Plans Crackdown on Smuggling Rings
864	11	Kerry, Seeking Answers on Conflict in Syria, to Meet With Putin
865	11	Clues on Twitter Show Ties Between Texas Gunman and ISIS Network
866	12	Inspectors in Syria Find Traces of Banned Military Chemicals
867	13	Traces of Chemicals in Syria Add to Pressure on Obama to Enforce a ‘Red Line’
868	14	Let Syrians Settle Detroit
869	14	ISIS Advance in Syria Endangers Ancient Ruins at Palmyra
June (2015)		
870	15	Boston Muslims Struggle to Wrest Image of Islam From Terrorists
871	15	Kurds and Syrian Rebels Storm ISIS-Held Border Town
872	16	Offering Services, ISIS Digs In Deeper in Seized Territories
873	16	ISIS Loses Control of Crucial Syrian Border Town
874	17	Claims of Syrian Chlorine Bombs Counter News of Progress on Chemical Arms
875	18	ISIS-Imposed Fuel Embargo Threatens Syria’s Medical Centers
July (2015)		
876	22	3 Spanish Journalists Missing in Syria and Feared Abducted
877	22	Suicide Bomber in Suruc Is Said to Be a Turk With Possible Ties to ISIS
878	23	U.S. Jets to Use Turkish Bases in War on ISIS
879	23	Review: ‘A Gay Girl in Damascus,’ a Documentary About a Hoax
880	24	Turkey, Anticipating Attack, Strikes 3 ISIS Targets in Syria With Jets
881	25	Australia Arrests Nurse Who Says He Worked With ISIS Under Duress
882	26	Assad, in Rare Admission, Says Syria’s Army Lacks Manpower
883	27	Turkey and U.S. Plan to Create Syria ‘Safe Zone’ Free of ISIS
884	27	Turkey’s Shift on the Syrian War
885	28	Turkey Wins NATO Support as It Steps Up ISIS Fight in Syria
886	28	Turkey’s Focus on Crushing Kurdish Separatists Complicates the Fight Against ISIS
887	31	Rivals of ISIS Attack U.S.-Backed Syrian Rebel Group
888	31	Britain and France Point Fingers as Migrant Crisis Becomes a Political One
August (2015)		

889	3	Saving Tunisia From ISIS
890	3	Syria: U.S. Sets New Sanctions
891	5	Barrel Bombs, Not ISIS, Are the Greatest Threat to Syrians
892	5	Britain Charges Anjem Choudary, Radical Preacher, With Aiding ISIS
893	6	U.S. and Russia to Back UN. Vote on Chemical Attacks in Syria
894	7	UN. Security Council Adopts Measure to Identify Chlorine Bomb Users in Syria
895	7	Dozens of Syrian Christians Missing From Town Attacked by ISIS
896	10	Inside Syria: Kurds Roll Back ISIS, but Alliances Are Strained
897	10	Nusra Front Announces Withdrawal From Front Line Against ISIS in Syria
898	11	Newlyweds Are Accused of Planning to Join ISIS
899	11	New Diplomacy Seen on U.S.-Russian Efforts to End Syrian Civil War
900	12	Why Turkey Is Fighting the Kurds Who Are Fighting ISIS
901	12	Iran's Foreign Minister Visits Syria for Talks With Assad
902	13	Why ISIS Trumps Freedom
903	13	U.S. and Turkey Face Questions in Anti-ISIS Effort
904	14	U.S.-Led Air Campaign Is Linked to Civilian Deaths in Syria
905	14	ISIS Is Suspected of a Chemical Attack Against Kurds in Syria
September (2015)		
906	1	Icelanders Use Facebook to Open Door to Refugees
907	2	Brutal Images of Syrian Boy Drowned Off Turkey Must Be Seen, Activists Say
908	3	Migrant Chaos Mounts While Divided Europe Stumbles for Response
909	3	Migrant Smuggling in Europe Is Now Worth 'Billions'
910	4	Piercing the Denial on Refugees
911	4	Russian Moves in Syria Pose Concerns for U.S.
912	5	U.S. Warns Russia Over Military Support for Assad
913	5	Who Failed Aylan Kurdi?
914	6	U.S. Revamping Rebel Force Fighting ISIS in Syria
915	6	German Quota System Highlights Possible Path and Pitfalls for Handling Crisis
916	7	Britain Says It Killed 3 ISIS Suspects in First Drone Strike in Syria
917	7	Russia Answers U.S. Criticism Over Military Aid to Syria
918	8	Britain Won't 'Hesitate' on Drone Strikes in Syria
919	8	U.S. Moves to Block Russian Military Buildup in Syria
920	9	Tony Abbott Says Australia Will Accept 12,000 More Refugees
921	9	Russia Defends the Presence of Its Military Advisers in Syria
922	10	Compassion for Refugees Isn't Enough
923	10	Obama's Syrian Nightmare
924	11	Break the Gridlock on Syria
925	11	Russia's Risky Military Moves in Syria
926	14	Don't Trust Putin on Syria
927	14	Russian Moves in Syria Widen Role in Mideast
928	15	Putin Defends Russian Military Aid to Syria
929	15	For Those Who Remain in Syria, Daily Life Is a Nightmare
930	16	France Says It Will Join Air Campaign Against ISIS in Syria
931	16	Few U.S.-Trained Syrians Still Fight ISIS, Senators Are Told
932	17	The Elusive Truth About War on ISIS
933	17	Finger-Pointing, but Few Answers, After a Syria Solution Fails
934	18	U.S. Begins Military Talks With Russia on Syria
935	18	Putin Goes to Syria

936	19	Russian Buildup in Syria Raises Questions on Role
937	19	Islamic Militants Kill 56 Captive Syrian Soldiers
938	20	ISIS Defectors Reveal Disillusionment
939	20	U.S. Will Accept More Refugees as Crisis Grows
940	21	Russia Expands Fleet in Syria With Jets That Can Attack Targets on Ground
941	21	Netanyahu and Putin Spar Over Syrian Threat to Israel
942	22	David Petraeus Urges Stronger U.S. Military Effort in Syria
943	23	Amid Fresh Tension Over Syria, Obama and Putin Seek to Meet
944	23	Syrian Refugee Tripped in Hungary Fights Unfounded Accusations of Extremist Ties
945	24	White House Says President Obama and Vladimir Putin Will Meet Next Week
946	25	Truce Struck in 2 Areas of Syria
947	25	U.S. Says Rebel It Trained Surrendered Matériel in Syria
948	26	Thousands Enter Syria to Join ISIS Despite Global Efforts
949	26	Hospitals Devastated in Syria, War-Wounded Seek Treatment in Jordan
950	27	France Says Its Airstrikes Hit an ISIS Camp in Syria
951	27	An Obama-Putin Meeting Makes Sense
952	28	Hillary Clinton Criticizes Failure of Training Syrian Rebels
953	28	Putin and Obama Have Profound Differences on Syria
954	29	Obama's Call at UN. to Fight ISIS With Ideas Is Largely Seen as Futile
955	29	Russia Buildup Seen as Fanning Flames in Syria
October (2015)		
956	23	The Myth of Putin's Strategic Genius
957	23	Bashar al-Assad, Flying High
958	25	Russian Ships Near Data Cables Are Too Close for U.S. Comfort
959	26	Violence in Syria Spurs a Huge Surge in Civilian Flight
960	27	Iran Is Invited to Join U.S., Russia and Europe for Talks on Syria's Future
961	28	The Military Escalation in Iraq and Syria
962	28	After a U.S. Shift, Iran Has a Seat at Talks on War in Syria
963	29	Iran's Role in the Syrian Crisis
964	29	Rancor Between Saudi Arabia and Iran Threatens Talks on Syria
965	30	Syrian Government Attacks Rebel-Held Suburb, Killing 40, Activists Say
966	30	Obama Sends Special Operations Forces to Help Fight ISIS in Syria
967	31	Battle Heats Up Over Exports of Surveillance Technology
November (2015)		
968	1	Caged Hostages From Syrian President's Sect Paraded Through Rebel-Held Suburb
969	2	Iran Says It May Quit Talks on Syria Over Saudis' Role
970	2	New U.S.-Backed Alliance to Counter ISIS in Syria Falters
971	7	As U.S. Escalates Air War on ISIS, Allies Slip Away
972	8	Confirmation of Attack on Russian Jet May Strengthen Putin's Resolve in Syria
973	10	Obama Turns to Diplomacy and Military in Syria, and Is Met With Doubts
974	12	'Jihadi John' Targeted in Strike, Pentagon Says
975	12	U.S. Steps Up Its Attacks on ISIS-Controlled Oil Fields in Syria
976	13	Syria Talks: What Countries Want
977	26	Paris Attacks Have Many in France Eager to Join the Fight
978	26	Time Before Iraq Invasion Holds Lessons for Fight Against ISIS
979	27	President Obama's Hypocrisy on Syria
980	28	Spain Yesterday, Syria Today

981	29	E.U. Offers Turkey 3 Billion Euros to Stem Migrant Flow
982	29	Predatory Islamic State Wrings Money From Those It Rules
983	30	How the Paris Attackers Honed Their Assault Through Trial and Error
December (2015)		
984	1	Russians Unlikely to Attack ISIS in Syria, Obama Says
985	1	ISIS Promise of Statehood Falling Far Short, Ex-Residents Say
986	2	Voters, Worried About Terrorism, Look for Leaders at Home on Silver Screen
987	2	Putin's Syrian Misadventure
988	3	What It Will Take to Bankrupt ISIS
989	3	To Crush ISIS, John Kerry Urges Deft Removal of Syria's Assad
990	4	Fear Ignorance, Not Muslims
991	4	U.S. Presses for UN. Resolution to Fight ISIS' Financing
992	6	President Obama's Tough, Calming Talk on Terrorism
993	7	Syria Blames U.S. in Base Bombing, but Americans Blame Russia
994	7	U.S. Seeks to Avoid Ground War Welcomed by Islamic State
995	8	Lessons of the Past Hint at Hurdles in Fight to Stop ISIS
996	8	Obama's Plans to Stop ISIS Leave Many Democrats Wanting More
997	9	Third Assailant in Bataclan Paris Attack Was a Frenchman
998	9	A Congress That Doesn't Want to Weigh In on War
999	10	Syrian Rebels Form Bloc for New Round of Peace Talks
2016		
January (2016)		
1000	1	Man With Fake Explosives Killed in Paris on Charlie Hebdo Anniversary
1001	1	As Rebel-Held Town of Madaya Starves, Syria Agrees to Food Aid, UN. Says
February (2016)		
1002	8	America's Syrian Shame
1003	9	British Effort to Identify Potential Radicals Spurs Debate Over Profiling
1004	9	ISIS, in a First, Says It Was Behind Attack in Syrian Capital
1005	10	As Syria Devolves Further, Allies Criticize American Policy
1006	10	Russian Intervention in Syrian War Has Sharply Reduced U.S. Options
1007	11	Death Toll From War in Syria Now 470,000, Group Finds
1008	11	Defense Secretary Says Anti-ISIS Coalition Has Agreed to 'Step Up'
1009	12	United Arab Emirates to Bolster Its Efforts Against ISIS, U.S. Says
1010	12	Syrian War Could Turn on the Battle for Aleppo
1011	13	Facing Allies' Doubt, John Kerry Voices Confidence in Syria Cease-Fire
1012	13	Jordan Struggles Under a Wave of Syrian Refugees
1013	14	Syrian Officer Gave a View of War. ISIS Came, and Silence Followed.
1014	14	Syria Accord Looms Over Europe Security Meeting
March (2016)		
1015	8	Eating Leaves, and Other Ways Besieged Syrians Try to Survive
1016	9	ISIS Detainee's Information Led to 2 U.S. Airstrikes, Officials Say
1017	9	Tairod Pugh, Ex-U.S. Serviceman, Is Found Guilty of Trying to Aid ISIS
1018	10	Germany Obtains List of Foreigners Suspected of Fighting for ISIS
1019	10	Obama Criticizes the 'Free Riders' Among America's Allies
1020	11	Fill In the Foreign Policy Blanks
1021	11	Are as Many Civilians Dying in South Sudan as in Syria?
1022	12	Signs of Hope Five Years After Start of Syria's War
1023	13	Explosion in Ankara Kills at Least 34, Turkish Officials Say

1024	14	Stop Your Backsliding, Europe
1025	14	Putin Orders Start of Syria Withdrawal, Saying Goals Are Achieved
1026	15	Putin's Syria Surprise
1027	15	What Quagmire? Even in Withdrawal, Russia Stays a Step Ahead
1028	16	Reconsider a Refugee Deal With Turkey
1029	16	Syrian Kurds Hope to Establish a Federal Region in Country's North
1030	17	Don't Fear the Russians
1031	17	The Dangerous Allure of a Syrian Partition
1032	18	What Russia Accomplished in Syria
1033	18	What's in the E.U. Deal With Turkey? Controls, Concessions and Swaps
1034	19	A View of ISIS's Evolution in New Details of Paris Attacks
1035	19	Migrants Lament as Deal With Turkey Closes Door to Europe
1036	20	Turkish Member of ISIS Carried Out Istanbul Bombing, Official Says
1037	21	The Kurds' Push for Self-Rule in Syria
1038	21	The Arrest of Salah Abdeslam, a Paris Suspect, Ends Manhunt, Not Questions
1039	22	The Scorpion's Tale: Did Assad Take Putin for a Ride?
1040	22	Brussels Attacks Raise Questions on Readiness
April (2016)		
1041	15	Russian Forces Remain Heavily Involved in Syria, Despite Appearances
1042	16	Syria's Future: A Black Hole of Instability
1043	16	U.S. Plans to Step Up Military Campaign Against ISIS
1044	18	Obama Calls on Putin to Help Reduce Violence in Syria After Peace Talks Stall
1045	19	Syria Cease-Fire Crumbles as Bombings Kill Dozens
1046	20	Leader of Syria Rescue Group, Arriving in U.S. for Award, Is Refused Entry
1047	21	Kurds and Syrian Forces Clash, Adding Wrinkle to War
May (2016)		
1048	23	Suicide Attacks Hit 2 Syrian Cities in Assad Stronghold, Killing Scores
1049	24	Bronx Man Accused of Trying to Join ISIS Is Arrested
1050	25	U.S. Says Its Strikes Are Hitting More Significant ISIS Targets
1051	26	U.S. Commandos Work With Syrian Fighters in Push Toward ISIS Stronghold
June (2016)		
1052	1	Syria, Facing Deadline, Allows Limited Aid to Besieged Town of Daraya
1053	1	A Wrenching SOS
1054	2	Germany Charges 4 Syrians in Plot to Attack Düsseldorf
1055	2	UN. Plans No Imminent Airdrops of Aid in Syria, Despite Expired Deadline
1056	4	In Turkey, a Syrian Child 'Has to Work to Survive'
1057	7	Defiant Bashar al-Assad Vows to Retake 'Every Inch' of Syria
July (2016)		
1058	9	Iran, Once Quiet About Its Casualties in Syria and Iraq, Now Glorifies Them
1059	9	The Secret Rules of the Drone War
1060	11	South Africa Charges Twins Over Plot to Attack U.S. Embassy and Join ISIS
1061	12	Administration Rebuts Soldier's Suit That Calls ISIS Fight Illegal
1062	13	Why the U.S. Military Can't Fix Syria
1063	14	John Kerry Meets Vladimir Putin to Discuss New Syria Plan
August (2016)		
1064	4	How a Suicide Bomber Made His Way From Syria to Strike in Ansbach, Germany
1065	5	U.S. Could Exceed Goal of Accepting 10,000 Syrian Refugees
1066	5	Syrians Seeking Asylum in South Korea Find Only a Cold Shoulder

1067	6	From Syrian Rubble to German Concert Halls With a Piano, a Mission and Survivor's Guilt
1068	6	Military Success in Syria Gives Putin Upper Hand in U.S. Proxy War
1069	7	Rebel Offensive in Syria Challenges Government Siege of Aleppo
1070	8	Putin and Erdogan, Both Isolated, Reach Out to Each Other
1071	9	Talking to Terrorists
1072	9	Fighting in Aleppo Leaves 2 Million Without Water, UN. Says
1073	11	What Russia and Turkey Bring to Syria
1074	11	Syria's Chemical Weapons Have Been Destroyed. So, Why Do Chlorine Gas Attacks Persist?
1075	12	In Syria, Battles for Aleppo Seem as Endless as the War Itself
1076	13	Watching My Beloved Aleppo Rip Itself Apart
1077	13	U.S. Drones Record ISIS Fighters Fleeing Manbij in Northern Syria
1078	14	Fighting Rages in Aleppo, Syria, Killing Dozens of Civilians
1079	15	Under Pressure Over Aleppo Siege, Russia Hints at Seeking Deal With U.S.
1080	16	Russia Sends Bombers to Syria Using Base in Iran
1081	16	How Do Trump's Conspiracy Theories Go Over in the Middle East? Dangerously.
1082	17	Does the U.S. Ignore Its Civilian Casualties in Iraq and Syria?
1083	17	Syrian Government and Russia Are Accused of Using Napalm-Like Bombs
September (2016)		
1084	15	Mike Pence's Illegal Treatment of Syrian Refugees
1085	15	Syria Is Delaying Aid Deliveries in Violation of Cease-Fire, UN. Says
1086	16	U.S. Special Operations Forces Arrive in Syria to Advise Turks in ISIS Fight
1087	16	Rags, Tea and Advice as Syrians Fret Over Cease-Fire
1088	17	His Grip Still Secure, Bashar al-Assad Smiles as Syria Burns
1089	17	U.S. Admits Airstrike in Syria, Meant to Hit ISIS, Killed Syrian Troops
1090	18	Straightforward Answers to Basic Questions About Syria's War
1091	18	How a U.S. Airstrike Missed ISIS, but Damaged U.S. Policy in Syria
1092	19	Aid Convoy Is Hit in Syria as Cease-Fire Falts and Bombings Resume
1093	19	François Hollande, France's President, Urges Action on Climate and Syria
1094	20	U.S. Officials Say Russia Probably Attacked UN. Humanitarian Convoy
1095	20	It's Not Like Hollywood: Why U.S. Airstrikes Go Awry
1096	21	Obama Administration Considers Arming Syrian Kurds Against ISIS
1097	21	Russia Denies Any Role in Deadly Convoy Attack in Syria
October (2016)		
1098	24	Awaiting Next U.S. President: A Splintered Middle East in 'Free Fall'
1099	24	German Terrorism Case Highlights Europe's Security Challenges
1100	26	Warning of ISIS Plots Against West, U.S. Plans Assault on Raqqa
1101	26	Airstrikes Hit a School in Syria, Killing Dozens
1102	27	Bitter Rift Deepens as Russia Rejects Findings on Syria's Use of Chlorine Bombs
1103	27	Clearing the Jungle in Calais
1104	28	'I Dream in Fruit': What Hunger Looks Like in Syria
1105	28	Syrian Rebels Launch Offensive to Break Siege of Aleppo
November (2016)		
1106	1	Assad in Person: Confident, Friendly, No Regrets
1107	2	Russia Extends Aleppo Cease-Fire and Urges Rebels to Leave
1108	2	You Don't Need a No-Fly Zone to Pressure Russia in Syria
1109	3	A Stronger Court for Crimes Against Humanity
1110	4	'I Saw My Father Dying': A View From Aleppo's Government-Held Side

1111	6	U.S.-Backed Militia Opens Drive on ISIS Capital in Syria
1112	7	Saving Refugees on the Mediterranean: a Luxury Yacht With a New Purpose
December (2016)		
1113	15	'It's So Sad,' Donald Trump Says of Syria, Promising 'Safe Zones'
1114	15	Aleppo Evacuation Effort Restarts, and Assad Calls It History in the Making
1115	16	Assad's Lesson From Aleppo: Force Works, With Few Consequences
1116	16	U.S. Destroys 14 Tanks at ISIS-Held Base in Syria
1117	17	Aleppo Rebuilt, With Cardboard and Colored Pencil
1118	18	Aleppo Evacuations Will Be Monitored After UN. Reaches Deal
1119	19	UN. Will Send Monitors to Aleppo, as Evacuations Resume
1120	19	Russian Ambassador to Turkey Is Assassinated in Ankara
1121	20	War Crimes Proposal Would Help UN. Build Cases on Syria
1122	20	Russia, Turkey and an Assassination
1123	21	Hezbollah Is Using U.S.-Made Military Vehicles in Syria, Israel Says
1124	21	UN. Inquiry Alludes to Russia and Syria as Bombers of Aid Convoy
1125	22	Turning Point in Syria as Assad Regains All of Aleppo
1126	23	An Alliance to Worry the West
1127	24	A Joyful Bustle to Get Ready for Guests: Syrian Refugees
1128	25	Weakened Militarily, ISIS Still Has Power to Sow Deadly Mayhem
1129	25	Aboard a U.S. Eye in the Sky, Staring Down ISIS in Iraq and Syria
1130	29	New Cease-Fire Begins in Syria, but Violations Are Reported Within Hours
1131	29	The State of the War in Syria
2017		
January (2017)		
1132	8	Airstrikes by Russia Buttress Turkey in Battle vs. ISIS
1133	9	U.S. Commandos Kill Midlevel ISIS Leader in Syria
1134	11	Assad Has Won in Syria. But Syria Hardly Exists.
1135	11	Fewer Migrants Entered Germany in 2016, and Rejections Increased
February (2017)		
1136	22	More U.S. Troops May Be Needed Against ISIS in Syria, a Top General Says
1137	23	For Syrian Refugees, There Is No Going Home
1138	24	Czech Is Sentenced to Prison for Trying to Join ISIS
1139	24	U.S. Aid to Syrian Militia Strains Turkish Ties
1140	25	Tunisia Fears the Return of Thousands of Young Jihadists
1141	25	U.S. Blocks Syrian Rescue Worker From Attending the Oscars
1142	27	Russia Looks to Exploit White House 'Turbulence,' Analysts Say
1143	28	Russia and U.S. Clash Over Syria in Security Council Vote
March (2017)		
1144	1	Russia Sides With Chemical Weapons
1145	1	Senior Qaeda Leader Is Killed in Drone Strike
1146	21	Resurgent Syrian Rebels Surprise Damascus With New Assaults
1147	21	U.S. Military Investigating Reports of Civilian Deaths in Syria Airstrike
1148	22	U.S. Airlifts Hundreds of Militia Fighters in Attack to Cut Off Raqqa, Syria
1149	24	Syrians in Turkey: The Human Smuggler and the Young Refugee
1150	24	The Jihadi Who Turned to Jesus
1151	25	Congress's Duty in the War With ISIS
1152	27	High-Ranking Syrian Officials Could Face Reckoning in Landmark Spain Case
1153	27	At Site of Deaths, Our Reporters Find Cost of U.S.-ISIS Battle

1154	29	U.S. War Footprint Grows in Middle East, With No Endgame in Sight
1155	30	What It Means When 5 Million Syrians Leave Their Country
1156	30	Iraqi and Syrian Civilians in the Crossfire
1157	31	2 Sue Trump and U.S. Officials, Claiming They Are on 'Kill List'
1158	31	White House Accepts 'Political Reality' of Assad's Grip on Power in Syria
April (2017)		
1159	2	Why They're Called to Action at Women in the World
1160	3	Explosion in St. Petersburg, Russia, Kills 11 as Vladimir Putin Visits
1161	4	Worst Chemical Attack in Years in Syria; U.S. Blames Assad
1162	4	A New Level of Depravity, Even for Bashar al-Assad
1163	5	President Trump's Real-World Syria Lesson
1164	5	Should I Run for My Life or Stay With My Patients?
1165	6	Banned Nerve Agent Sarin Used in Syria Chemical Attack, Turkey Says
1166	6	The Grim Logic Behind Syria's Chemical Weapons Attack
1167	7	63 Hours: From Chemical Attack to Trump's Strike in Syria
1168	7	After the Airstrikes on Syria, What's Next?
1169	8	A Strike in Syria Restores Our Credibility in the World
1170	8	U.S.-Led Force Reduces Attacks on ISIS in Syria After Airstrike
1171	9	For Obama, Syria Chemical Attack Shows Risk of 'Deals With Dictators'
1172	9	Syria, Trump Doctrine, Masters: Your Weekend Briefing
1173	10	Syria Conspiracy Theories Flourish, at Both Ends of the Spectrum
1174	10	On Syria, an Administration in Disagreement With Itself
1175	11	Trump Faces the Limits of American Power
1176	11	White House Accuses Russia of Cover-Up in Syria Chemical Attack
1177	12	Why Is Trump Fighting ISIS in Syria?
1178	12	Mr. Trump's Fickle Diplomacy
1179	13	Assad Says Videos of Dead Children in Syria Chemical Attack Were Faked
1180	13	18 Syrian Fighters Allied With U.S. Are Killed in Coalition Airstrike
1181	14	Why American Airstrikes Go Wrong
1182	14	More Than 7,000 People Evacuated From 4 Besieged Syrian Towns
1183	15	Dozens Killed as Blast Strikes Convoy Carrying Evacuated Syrians
1184	15	Mr. Trump's 10-Second Convictions
1185	16	A Lesson in Moscow About Trump-Style 'Alternative Truth'
May (2017)		
1186	23	Inside the Air War Over Syria: A High Altitude 'Poker Game'
1187	24	Hunt for Manchester Bombing Accomplices Extends to Libya
1188	24	U.S.-Russia Hotline Is Buzzing Even After Strike on Syria
1189	27	U.K., in Mourning, Asks if Manchester Bomber Could Have Been Stopped
1190	27	'Forgive Me': Manchester Bomber's Tangled Path of Conflict and Rebellion
June (2017)		
1191	3	Manchester Bomber Met With ISIS Unit in Libya, Officials Say
1192	6	The Error of Arming the Syrian Kurds
1193	6	U.S.-Backed Forces Begin Assault on Raqqa, ISIS Stronghold in Syria
1194	7	What Happens in Tehran Doesn't Stay in Tehran
1195	7	U.S. Strike on Syria Mosque Complex Was Legal, Defense Dept. Says
July (2017)		
1196	4	Ex-Judge Chosen by UN. to Gather Evidence of Syria War Crimes
1197	5	Russia Deploys a Potent Weapon in Syria: The Profit Motive

1198	6	Bombs Will Not Defeat ISIS (but Maybe the Internet Will)
1199	6	For Russia, Trump-Putin Meeting Is a Sure Winner
1200	7	What Assad Has Won
1201	7	U.S., Russia and Jordan Reach Deal for Cease-Fire in Part of Syria
1202	8	ISIS, Despite Heavy Losses, Still Inspires Global Attacks
1203	8	My Son, the Jihadist
1204	9	Iraqi Prime Minister Arrives in Mosul to Declare Victory Over ISIS
1205	9	The Islamic State Is Not Dead Yet
1206	10	The Spoils, and Profits, of Conflict
1207	10	Truce in Part of Syria, Announced by Trump, Survives First Day
1208	12	The Challenges After Mosul
1209	12	First, a Symbol of Occupy Wall Street. Then He Waded Into Syria.
1210	13	Trump Backed Off Putin Because ‘What Do You Do? End Up in a Fistfight?’
1211	13	Excerpts From Trump’s Conversation With Journalists on Air Force One
1212	15	Iran Dominates in Iraq After U.S. ‘Handed the Country Over’
1213	15	Russia Isn’t Delivering for Donald Trump
August (2017)		
1214	8	Braving Cancer Amid the Chaos of Syria
1215	8	Iranian Drone Buzzes U.S. Fighter Jet Over Persian Gulf
1216	9	Frustration Over a War and Its Crimes
1217	11	Combative Trump Pulls His Punches for One Man: Putin
1218	13	In a Syria Refuge, Extremists Exert Greater Control
September (2017)		
1219	15	Why the U.S. Allowed a Convoy of ISIS Fighters to Go Free
1220	15	The Terrorist Attack That Failed to Terrify
1221	16	Syrian Children Return to School Amid the Ruins in a Rebel-Held Area
1222	18	In Syria, the World’s Democracies Failed Us
1223	18	Trump at UN. Talks Up, but Does Not Press, Mideast Peace
1224	20	U.K. Police Arrest 3 More Over Parsons Green Attack
1225	21	Syrian Refugee Held in London Tube Bombing Is Released
October (2017)		
1226	3	Syrian Soldier Is Guilty of War Crime, a First in the 6-Year Conflict
1227	5	Why Do We Want to Watch Gory Jihadist Propaganda Videos?
1228	6	American Held as ISIS Suspect, Creating a Quandary for the Trump Administration
1229	13	Some Urgent Questions About Turkey
1230	16	Democracy Is Possible in Syria. My Friend Knew How.
1231	17	Raqqa, ISIS ‘Capital,’ Is Captured, U.S.-Backed Forces Say
1232	17	Can Trump Claim Credit for a Waning Islamic State?
1233	18	With Loss of Its Caliphate, ISIS May Return to Guerrilla Roots
1234	18	From Playground to Killing Ground: An ISIS Legacy
1235	19	This Is What Victory Over ISIS Looks Like
1236	19	As ISIS’ Role in Syria Wanes, Other Conflicts Take the Stage
1237	20	Russia-U.S. Diplomatic Dispute Could Endanger Syria Investigation
1238	22	U.S.-Backed Fighters Take Largest Syrian Oil Field From ISIS
1239	22	ISIS Fighters Are Not Flooding Back Home to Wreak Havoc as Feared
1240	23	Scores of Bodies Are Found in Syrian Town After ISIS Retreats
1241	24	Russia Blocks UN. Move to Renew Syria Chemical Weapons Inquiry

1242	24	John McCain: We Need a Strategy for the Middle East
1243	26	Tillerson Says Assad Family's Reign 'Is Coming to an End' in Syria
1244	26	UN. Panel Points Finger at Syria in Sarin Attack on Village
1245	28	Will Congress Ever Limit the Forever-Expanding 9/11 War?
November (2017)		
1246	22	What We Owe the Innocent Victims of America's Wars
1247	22	Russia, Turkey and Iran Propose Conference on Postwar Syria's Future
December (2017)		
1248	3	Help Assad or Leave Cities in Ruins? The Politics of Rebuilding Syria
1249	4	Five Strongmen, and the Fate of the Arab Spring
1250	5	It's Official: Lebanese Prime Minister Not Resigning After All
1251	6	Russia Balks at Cross-Border Humanitarian Aid in Syria
1252	6	U.S. Says 2,000 Troops Are in Syria, a Fourfold Increase
2018		
January (2018)		
1253	8	Russia Says Its Syria Bases Beat Back an Attack by 13 Drones
1254	10	The Only Thing Turkey and the U.S. Can Agree On
1255	11	She Left France to Fight in Syria. Now She Wants to Return. But Can She?
1256	11	Fighting Rages in Syria's Last Major Insurgent Stronghold
1257	12	The Lingering Dream of an Islamic State
1258	25	Allies or Terrorists: Who Are the Kurdish Fighters in Syria?
1259	26	On Turkey's Border With Syria, Many Are Eager for War
1260	26	Will America Stand Again With the World's Refugees?
1261	27	Foreign Fighters Back Kurdish Militia in Syria in Fight Against Turkey
1262	28	America Has Chosen the Wrong Partner
1263	28	Female Kurdish Fighter Kills Turkish Troops in Likely Suicide Bombing in Syria
1264	29	We Fought for Our Democracy. Now Turkey Wants to Destroy It.
1265	29	New Scrutiny Coming for Refugees From 11 "High-Risk" Nations
1266	30	Syrian Peace Talks in Russia: 1,500 Delegates, Mostly Pro-Assad
1267	31	Two Men Can Stop the War Between Turkey and the Kurds
1268	31	As U.S. Allies Clash, the Fight Against ISIS Falter
February (2018)		
1269	1	A Visit to the Tense Front Line Between Kurds and Turks
1270	2	Haunted by Memories of Syrian Torture, Saved by Art
1271	2	Some Syrian Refugees Are Going Back to War Alongside Turkey
1272	3	Russian Warplane Shot Down in Syria by Rebels, Defense Ministry Says
1273	4	Thousands of ISIS Fighters Flee in Syria, Many to Fight Another Day
1274	4	Turkey's Worst Day Yet in Syria Offensive: At Least 7 Soldiers Killed
1275	5	Videos of Syrian Militia Abusing Kurdish Fighter's Corpse Stir Outrage
1276	6	'Extreme' Suffering in Syria as Government Steps Up Bombing
1277	7	Living Under Assad's Siege
1278	7	On Northern Syria Front Line, U.S. and Turkey Head Into Tense Face-off
1279	8	U.S.-Backed Coalition in Syria Strikes Pro-Assad Forces
1280	8	Why Is the Syrian Civil War Still Raging?
March (2018)		
1281	15	'We Were Dying in There': Thousands of Syrians Flee Rebel Enclave
1282	15	Finally, Trump Has Something Bad to Say About Russia
1283	17	On the Road in Syria, Where Covering the War Is a Paper Chase

1284	18	Syrian Rebels, Backed by Turkey, Seize Control of Afrin
1285	19	Driving With Assad: Syria's President Tours a Destroyed Suburb
1286	21	Ending Secrecy, Israel Says It Bombed Syrian Reactor in 2007
1287	21	The Young Feminist Who Died for My People
1288	29	Greece's Island of Despair
1289	30	A Colder War With Russia?
1290	30	Trump Orders State Dept. to Suspend Funds for Syria Recovery
1291	31	'2 Bitter Options' for Syrians Trapped Between Assad and Extremists
April (2018)		
1292	3	Is Putin a C.I.A. Agent?
1293	4	Trump Drops Push for Immediate Withdrawal of Troops From Syria
1294	4	They Have Many Differences, but on Syria, Trump Seems Much Like Obama
1295	5	U.S. Forces in Syria: Building More Outposts, Pulling Up Lawn Chairs
1296	5	Trump's Approach to Syria Is No Way to Run a War
1297	6	Is Trump Sowing the Seeds for ISIS 2.0?
1298	7	Poison Gas Attack Reported by Syrian Anti-Government Activists
1299	7	2 Dead in Münster, Germany, After Truck Driver Crashes Into Crowd
1300	8	Dozens Suffocate in Syria as Government Is Accused of Chemical Attack
1301	8	Burning Eyes, Foaming Mouths: Years of Suspected Chemical Attacks in Syria
1302	9	After Chemical Weapons Attack in Syria, Trump Weighs Retaliation
1303	9	Bashar al-Assad Knows What He Can Get Away With
1304	10	America's Three Bad Options in Syria
1305	10	Trump Needs to Be More Trumpian in Syria
1306	11	Suspected Chemical Attack in Syria: What We Know and Don't Know
1307	11	In a Syrian Town, People Started Shouting: 'Chemicals! Chemicals!'
1308	12	Staring Down on Syria
1309	12	Airlines Clear Skies Over Syria, Noting Threat of Missile Strikes
1310	13	A Coordinated Attack on Syria
1311	13	Trump's Syria Strikes Show What's Wrong With U.S. Foreign Policy
1312	14	7 Takeaways From the Airstrikes on Syria
1313	14	A Hard Lesson in Syria: Assad Can Still Gas His Own People
1314	15	Trump to Impose New Sanctions on Russia Over Support for Syria
1315	15	After U.S. Strikes, Syria Returns to War as Usual
1316	16	For Survivors of Aleppo Siege, the News From Syria Is Especially Painful
1317	16	Chemical Arms Experts Blocked From Site of Syria Attack
1318	17	In Syria, O.P.C.W. Is Asked to Arbitrate: Chemical Attack or Not?
1319	17	Trump's Problem in Syria? It Was Obama's Too
1320	18	Gunmen Shot at UN. Team Near Site of Reported Chemical Attack, Official Says
1321	19	Missile Strikes Are Unlikely to Stop Syria's Chemical Attacks, Pentagon Says
1322	19	Is Russia Sponsoring Terrorism?
1323	20	A French Honor Not Always for the Honorable; Assad Returns His
1324	21	Inspectors Examine Site of Suspected Chemical Attack in Syria
May (2018)		
1325	24	How a 4-Hour Battle Between Russian Mercenaries and U.S. Commandos Unfolded in Syria
1326	27	At Least 4 Russians Killed in Syria in Firefight With ISIS
1327	28	Anger Spreads as Syria Leads Global Disarmament Body
June (2018)		

1328	1	Trump Had Power to Attack Syria Without Congress, Justice Dept. Memo Says
1329	1	U.S. Strikes Killed Nearly 500 Civilians in 2017, Pentagon Says
1330	3	North Korea Says Syria's Assad Will Visit With Kim
1331	4	U.S. and Turkey Agree on Kurds' Withdrawal From Syrian Town
1332	5	Deep Inside the Obama White House
1333	7	American ISIS Suspect Fights Plan to Release Him in Syria
1334	29	Syrian Assault Flouts U.S.-Backed Cease-Fire and Sets Off New Exodus
1335	30	Syrian Offensive Leaves Thousands Stranded at Jordan's Closed Border
July (2018)		
1336	4	Wives and Children of ISIS: Warehoused in Syria, Unwanted Back Home
1337	5	For Europe, Cutting the Flow of Migrants Challenges Basic Ideals
1338	6	ISIS May Be Waning, but Global Threats of Terrorism Continue to Spread
1339	6	Japanese Journalist, Missing in Syria Since 2015, Appears in New Video
1340	11	Memories Lost and Futures on Hold: A Look Inside a Camp for Syria's Displaced
1341	12	Susan Rice: Trump Must Not Capitulate to Putin
1342	12	Netanyahu Says Putin Agreed to Restrain Iran in Syria
1343	13	In Conservative Munich, a Theater Turns Radical and Defends Refugees
August (2018)		
1344	8	In Lebanon Town, Refugees and Locals Agree on 1 Thing: Time for Syrians to Go
1345	10	Turkey's Downward Spiral
1346	12	The Iraqi Spy Who Infiltrated ISIS
1347	13	Another Surprise Meeting With Putin. This Time, It's Merkel.
1348	14	Parents of Austin Tice, Journalist Seized in Syria, Are Confident He's Alive
1349	14	U.S.-Turkey Tensions Could Stall Progress Against ISIS, Officials Say
September (2018)		
1350	16	A World of Tyrants and Graves
1351	17	Russia and Turkey Announce Demilitarized Zone in Last Rebel-Held Part of Syria
1352	17	Trump to Cap Refugees Allowed Into U.S. at 30,000, a Record Low
1353	18	Putin Calls Downing of Russian Plane in Syria 'Tragic' and Absolves Israel
1354	19	Fewer Attacks, but a More Complex Terrorist Threat in 2017, U.S. Says
1355	21	U.S. Weighs Next Steps as Syria's Civil War Enters Climactic Phase
October (2018)		
1356	25	Japanese Journalist Freed From 3-Year Captivity in Syria
1357	25	Hollywood's Forgotten Heroes: Female War Correspondents
November (2018)		
1358	6	Fight Against Last Vestige of ISIS in Syria Stalls, to Dismay of U.S.
1359	6	Iran & Saudi Arabia, Thelma & Louise
December (2018)		
1360	9	Battered ISIS Keeps Grip on Last Piece of Territory for Over a Year
1361	12	Home and Husband Lost, a Mother of 8 Fears Her Sight Is Next
1362	14	Strasbourg Suspect Was on a Watch List: What Are the 'S Files'?
1363	14	Turkey Threatens Incursion Into Syria, Raising U.S. Concerns
1364	19	Trump to Withdraw U.S. Forces From Syria, Declaring 'We Have Won Against ISIS'
1365	19	Trump's Decision to Withdraw From Syria Is Alarming. Just Ask His Advisers.
1366	20	Kurdish Fighters Discuss Releasing Almost 3,200 ISIS Prisoners
1367	20	Jim Mattis Was Right
1368	21	Glee in Russia Over Trump's Foreign Policy Largess

1369	21	Can Trump Avoid Making an Even Bigger Mess Out of Syria?
1370	22	For Trump, ‘a War Every Day,’ Waged Increasingly Alone
1371	22	Splitting With Trump Over Syria, American Leading ISIS Fight Steps Down
1372	26	Trump Makes Surprise Visit to American Troops in Iraq
1373	26	Syria Faces Brittle Future, Dominated by Russia and Iran
1374	28	Syria’s Kurds, Feeling Betrayed by the U.S., Ask Assad Government for Protection
1375	28	The Good News About Terrorism
1376	30	Trump Mollifies Lindsey Graham on Troop Withdrawal From Syria
1377	31	Trump to Allow Months for Troop Withdrawal in Syria, Officials Say
2019		
January (2019)		
1378	2	Where Doulas Calm Nerves and Bridge Cultures During Childbirth
1379	2	Trump’s Freewheeling and Mostly Fact-Free Cabinet Meeting
Case study		
<i>The New York Times</i>		
Aleppo		
2016		
July		
1380	14	Pro-Government Forces Advance in Syria Amid Talk of U.S.-Russia Cooperation
1381	15	U.S. and Russia Agree on Steps to Combat ISIS in Syria
1382	27	Blast Kills Dozens in Kurdish-Held Syrian Town; Crisis in Aleppo Worsens
1383	28	Syria Outlines Plans for Conquest of Aleppo, Backed by Russian Power
1384	29	Hospitals in Syria Are Airstrike Targets
1385	31	Where CPR on a Boy Is Time Wasted: U.S. Doctors Recall Aleppo’s Horrors
August (2016)		
1386	3	The Case for (Finally) Bombing Assad
1387	4	Syrian Burn Tires to Prevent Airstrikes
1388	5	Syrians Seeking Asylum in South Korea Find Only a Cold Shoulder
1389	6	Military Success in Syria Gives Putin Upper Hand in U.S. Proxy War
1390	7	Rebel Offensive in Syria Challenges Government Siege of Aleppo
1391	9	Fighting in Aleppo Leaves 2 Million Without Water, UN. Says
1392	10	Russia Announces Daily Cease-Fire in Aleppo
1393	11	What Russia and Turkey Bring to Syria
1394	11	Obama’s Worst Mistake
1395	12	In Syria, Battles for Aleppo Seem as Endless as the War Itself
1396	13	Watching My Beloved Aleppo Rip Itself Apart
1397	17	Syrian Government and Russia Are Accused of Using Napalm-Like Bombs
1398	18	Do You Care More About a Dog Than a Refugee?
1399	18	How Omran Daqneesh, 5, Became a Symbol of Aleppo’s Suffering
1400	19	Article of the Day ‘How Omran Daqneesh, 5, Became a Symbol of Aleppo’s Suffering’
1401	21	One Photo of a Syrian Child Caught the World’s Attention. These 7 Went Unnoticed.
1402	22	Photo Editors’ Notebook: What Makes the Image of Omran Daqneesh Extraordinary?
1403	22	UN. Relief Official Calls Crisis in Aleppo the ‘Apex of Horror’
1404	23	Kurds Close to Control of Northeast Syria Province, Portending a Shift in the War
1405	24	Syria Used Chlorine in Bombs Against Civilians, Report Says

1406	25	America's Retreat and the Agony of Aleppo
1407	25	Besieged Town of Daraya Agrees to Surrender to Syrian Government
1408	26	Why I Go to Aleppo
September (2016)		
1409	2	Looking Back at Alan Kurdi and Other Faces of Syrian Crisis
1410	4	U.S. Presses for Truce in Syria, With Its Larger Policy on Pause
1411	5	'Gaps of Trust' With Russia Bar a Syrian Truce, Obama Says
1412	5	Syrian Forces Make Gains Near Aleppo With Russian Help
1413	7	Doctors in Aleppo Tend to Scores of Victims in Gas Attack
1414	8	'What Is Aleppo?' Gary Johnson Asked. Let Us Explain.
1415	8	'What Is Aleppo?' Gary Johnson Asks, in an Interview Stumble
1416	9	Russia and the United States Reach New Agreement on Syria Conflict
1417	10	Even Amid Cease-Fire Countdown, Syria's Conflicts Deepen
1418	11	Spate of Deadly Attacks in Syria Ahead of Cease-Fire
1419	12	The View From Syria as a Cease-Fire Takes Effect
1420	13	Aleppo Rescue Describes City After Cease-Fire
1421	13	Details of Syria Pact Widen Rift Between John Kerry and Pentagon
1422	14	Syrian Nurse Explains Protests in Aleppo
1423	14	After Years of War, Celebrities Find a Syrian Group to Back
1424	15	Syria Is Delaying Aid Deliveries in Violation of Cease-Fire, UN. Says
1425	15	Streets and Skies Suddenly Quiet, Syrians Watch Cease-Fire With Unease
1426	16	Rags, Tea and Advice as Syrians Fret Over Cease-Fire
1427	17	His Grip Still Secure, Bashar al-Assad Smiles as Syria Burns
1428	17	Syria's Unraveling Truce: 'My Children Woke Up, Again, to Explosions'
1429	18	How a U.S. Airstrike Missed ISIS, but Damaged U.S. Policy in Syria
1430	19	Aid Convoy Is Hit in Syria as Cease-Fire Falters and Bombings Resume
1431	20	UN. Suspends Convoys to Syria After Attack on Aid Trucks
1432	20	U.S. Officials Say Russia Probably Attacked UN. Humanitarian Convoy
1433	21	Russia Denies Any Role in Deadly Convoy Attack in Syria
1434	21	John Kerry Urges Grounding of Military Aircraft in 'Key Areas' of Syria
1435	22	Foreign Wars and Terrorism
1436	22	Amid New Airstrikes in Syria, an Aid Convoy Arrives
1437	23	'Doomsday Today in Aleppo': Assad and Russian Forces Bombard City
1438	23	Hundreds of Thousands of Syrians Are Trapped, Unable to Get Food or Aid
1439	24	In Syrian War, Russia Has Yet to Fulfill Superpower Ambitions
1440	24	Syrian Forces Tighten Siege of Rebel-Held Areas in Aleppo
1441	25	Syria and Russia Appear Ready to Scorch Aleppo
1442	26	Unrelenting Assault on Aleppo Is Called Worst Yet in Syria's Civil War
1443	27	Syrian Troops Clash With Rebels as Bombs Fall on Aleppo
1444	27	Why So Many Children Are Being Killed in Aleppo
1445	28	A Bomb Shatters an Aleppo Building, and Videos Capture the Rescue Minute by Minute
1446	28	Russia's Brutal Bombing of Aleppo May Be Calculated, and It May Be Working
1447	29	Vladimir Putin's Outlaw State
1448	29	Russia Rejects John Kerry's Demands on Syria, Accusing U.S. of Promoting Terror
1449	30	Over 100 Children Among 338 Killed in Aleppo Attacks This Week, W.H.O. Says
1450	30	Chappatte on the Aleppo Nightmare
October (2016)		

1451	3	Tension With Russia Rises as U.S. Halts Syria Negotiations
1452	4	U.S. Election Cycle Offers Kremlin a Window of Opportunity in Syria
1453	5	Let's Get Putin's Attention
1454	6	UN. Syria Envoy Offers to Escort Rebel Fighters From Aleppo
1455	6	In Fight for Aleppo, Tangled Alliances in Syria Add to Chaos
1456	7	John Kerry Calls for War Crimes Investigation of Russia and Assad Government
1457	11	Putin in Syria: Chechnya All Over Again
1458	12	How the UN. Can Save Aleppo
1459	12	Kerry Opens a New Diplomatic Push for a Cease-Fire in Aleppo
1460	14	Berlin, 1945; Grozny, 2000; Aleppo, 2016
1461	14	How Dictatorships Are Born
1462	15	New Syria Talks End Quickly, Giving Little Hope to a Beleaguered Aleppo
1463	17	Assault on Aleppo Will Halt for 8 Hours, Russia Says
1464	17	A Senior Russian Envoy's Take on Relations With the United States: 'Pretty Bad'
1465	18	Rebel-Held Areas of Aleppo Get a Break From Aerial Attacks
1466	18	How the Battle for Aleppo Is Taking Syria's War to a New Low
1467	20	We Have Tried Every Kind of Death Possible
1468	20	Wary of Russian Guarantees, Residents Stay Put in War-Torn Aleppo
1469	21	Aleppo Is a 'Slaughterhouse,' Says UN. Official Seeking War Crimes Inquiry
1470	21	The Siege Starts Without Warning
1471	26	Russia Drops Bid to Dock Ships at Spanish Port as NATO Adds Pressure
1472	28	'I Dream in Fruit': What Hunger Looks Like in Syria
1473	28	Syrian Rebels Launch Offensive to Break Siege of Aleppo
1474	29	Stark Choice for Syrians in Rebel Areas: 'Doom' or the Green Bus
November (2016)		
1475	1	Assad in Person: Confident, Friendly, No Regrets
1476	2	Russia Extends Aleppo Cease-Fire and Urges Rebels to Leave
1477	2	You Don't Need a No-Fly Zone to Pressure Russia in Syria
1478	4	'I Saw My Father Dying': A View From Aleppo's Government-Held Side
1479	8	My Journey Into Aleppo: Watching a Moonscape of War Turn Into a Functioning City
1480	10	UN. Warns of Starvation Peril in Rebel Side of Aleppo
1481	14	Syrian Rebels Brace for a Trump Cutoff, and Look for a Silver Lining
1482	14	Russian Jet Crashes Off Syria While Trying to Land on Carrier Kuznetsov
1483	15	Airstrikes on Aleppo Resume as Russia Begins New Offensive in Syria
1484	16	Life Is Turned 'Upside Down' as Jets Pound Rebel-Held Syrian Cities
1485	20	Aleppo Bombs Leave Quarter Million 'Living in Hell' and Without Hospital Care
1486	21	UN.'s Syria Envoy Suggests Donald Trump Has Limited Window to Work With Russia
1487	23	Searching the Sky for Bombs in Aleppo
1488	24	Warning Russia on Hacking Isn't Enough
1489	24	American Is Killed in First Casualty for U.S. Forces in Syria Combat
1490	26	Half a Million Children Are Trapped in Syria, United Nations Says
1491	28	Thousands Flee Aleppo, Syria, as Government Forces Advance
1492	28	For Bashar al-Assad, Winning the Syrian War May Lead to New Troubles
1493	29	Thousands Flee Parts of Aleppo, Syria, as Assad's Forces Gain Ground
December (2016)		
1494	1	A Risky Flight From Eastern Aleppo
1495	2	Assad's Secret Santa

1496	2	Egypt and Turkey Soften Positions on Syria, Benefiting Assad
1497	4	Syrian Troops Push Deep Into Rebel-Held Parts of Aleppo
1498	5	Russia Says Talks With U.S. Will Discuss Deal for Aleppo Rebels
1499	6	How the War Ends in Syria
1500	6	Angela Merkel Calls for Ban on Full-Face Veils in Germany
1501	7	In Rebel-Held Aleppo, Residents Report Increasing Desperation
1502	7	Girl Posting to Twitter From Aleppo Gains Sympathy, but Doubts Follow
1503	8	Russia Says Aleppo Combat Has Ceased; Residents Disagree
1504	9	Questions for: 'Girl Posting to Twitter From Aleppo Gains Sympathy, but Doubts Follow'
1505	9	Chaos and Desperation as Thousands Flee Aleppo Amid Government Advance
1506	10	'We Are Dead Either Way': Agonizing Choices for Syrians in Aleppo
1507	10	ISIS Close to Recapturing Palmyra From Syrian Forces
1508	12	Aleppo Close to Falling Under Complete Control of Syrian Government
1509	13	Battle Over Aleppo Is Over, Russia Says, as Evacuation Deal Reached
1510	13	Aleppo Activists Say Final Goodbyes as Assad Closes In
1511	14	Amid Rain of Shells, Aleppo's Civilians Offer 'Final Scream'
1512	14	Aleppo's Destroyers: Assad, Putin, Iran
1513	15	Aleppo Evacuation Effort Restarts, and Assad Calls It History in the Making
1514	15	Countries Showing Solidarity With Aleppo
1515	16	Aleppo Evacuation Halted Amid Confusion and Concerns About Killings
1516	16	A Harrowing Evacuation From Aleppo, in Stops and Starts
1517	17	Aleppo Rebuilt, With Cardboard and Colored Pencil
1518	18	Aleppo Evacuations Will Be Monitored After UN. Reaches Deal
1519	18	Russia Set to Block UN. From Monitoring Aleppo Evacuation
1520	19	UN. Will Send Monitors to Aleppo, as Evacuations Resume
1521	19	Bana al-Abed, Child Who Became Aleppo's Civilian Face, Is Evacuated
1522	20	Russia, Iran and Turkey Meet for Syria Talks, Excluding U.S.
1523	21	Erdogan Embraces Bana al-Abed, Who Brought Child's View of Aleppo to Twitter
1524	21	UN. Inquiry Alludes to Russia and Syria as Bombers of Aid Convoy
1525	22	Turning Point in Syria as Assad Regains All of Aleppo
1526	22	The Year In Pictures 2016
1527	30	How Syria Defeated the Sunni Powers
1528	30	Cease-Fire in Syria Frays but Holds, Giving Hope to Peace Talks
1529	31	Can Russia Make Peace as Well as War?
<i>The New York Times</i>		
Al-Raqqa		
2017		
June		
1530	6	U.S.-Backed Forces Begin Assault on Raqqa, ISIS Stronghold in Syria
1531	7	President Trump Picks Sides, Not Diplomacy, in the Gulf
1532	10	Beyond Raqqa, an Even Bigger Battle to Defeat ISIS and Control Syria Looms
1533	10	U.S.-Led Forces Said to Have Used White Phosphorus in Syria
1534	14	U.S.-Led Airstrikes in Syria Killed Hundreds of Civilians, UN. Panel Says
1535	16	Russian Military Says It Might Have Killed ISIS Leader
1536	18	U.S. Fighter Jet Shoots Down Syrian Warplane
1537	19	Russia Warns U.S. After Downing of Syrian Warplane
1538	20	Can You Kill the Islamic State?

1539	22	U.S. Sends Civilian Team to Syria to Help the Displaced Return Home
1540	23	No Death Knell for ISIS
1541	23	As U.S. Kills ISIS Leaders, a Notorious One Remains Elusive
1542	25	Commando Raids on ISIS Yield Vital Data in Shadowy War
1543	26	The Iran Puzzle
1544	29	ISIS Reverts to Insurgent Roots to Pose Long-Term Threat, Study Says
July (2017)		
1545	1	In a Desperate Syrian City, a Test of Trump's Policies
1546	2	U.S.-Backed Forces Close to Trapping ISIS Holdouts in Raqqa
1547	6	Bombs Will Not Defeat ISIS (but Maybe the Internet Will)
1548	7	Hand-Held Journalism in Harrowing Times
1549	8	ISIS, Despite Heavy Losses, Still Inspires Global Attacks
1550	9	Iraqi Prime Minister Arrives in Mosul to Declare Victory Over ISIS
1551	21	ISIS Leader Is Still Alive, Pentagon Chief Says
1552	23	What Should Europe Do With the Children of ISIS?
1553	31	New Dangers Stalk Syrian Children Still Haunted by Horrors Under ISIS
August (2017)		
1554	6	War-Crimes Prosecutor, Frustrated at UN. Inaction, Quits Panel on Syria
1555	20	Iraqi Forces Start Offensive to Retake Tal Afar From ISIS
1556	28	Lebanon Frees Hundreds of ISIS Fighters in Exchange for Soldiers' Bodies
1557	30	U.S. Airstrikes Block Convoy Transferring ISIS Fighters
1558	31	Officials Eye Euphrates River Valley as Last Stand for ISIS
September (2017)		
1559	8	The Last Days of ISIS' Capital: Airstrikes if You Stay, Land Mines if You Flee
1560	28	ISIS Releases Recording Said to Be of Its Leader
October (2017)		
1561	16	Democracy Is Possible in Syria. My Friend Knew How.
1562	17	Raqqa, ISIS 'Capital,' Is Captured, U.S.-Backed Forces Say
1563	17	'Come Out and Surrender': Inside Raqqa, With the Fighters Who Drove Off ISIS
1564	18	With Loss of Its Caliphate, ISIS May Return to Guerrilla Roots
1565	18	From Playground to Killing Ground: An ISIS Legacy
1566	19	This Is What Victory Over ISIS Looks Like
1567	19	As ISIS' Role in Syria Wanes, Other Conflicts Take the Stage
1568	20	On the Capture of Raqqa
1569	22	The Islamic State: From Insurgency to Rogue State and Back
1570	25	Islamic State Is 'On the Run,' U.S. Commander Says
1571	26	Red Cross Warns of 'Dehumanizing' Rhetoric in ISIS Fight
<i>The Independent</i>		
Aleppo		
2016		
July		
1572	11	Rif Aleppo: the decisive battlefield in the Syrian civil war
1573	12	Aleppo standoff: Violence cuts off aid route to rebel-held part of city, says UN
1574	17	Fears 300,000 people could starve to death after President Assad seizes control of road to Aleppo
1575	24	Syria air strikes: Two-day old baby dies as four hospitals hit in Aleppo
1576	25	Syria air strikes: Footage shows terrifying aftermath of attack on Aleppo children's hospital
1577	28	Syria civil war: 'Exit corridors to open' to allow residents to leave Aleppo

1578	31	Aleppo must not become synonymous with global inaction
August (2016)		
1579	1	Syria: Rebel shelling 'kills 28 civilians' in Aleppo
1580	1	David Miliband condemns hospital bombings and 'unspeakable humanitarian abuse' in Syria
1581	2	Syrian children burn tyres in beseiged Aleppo 'to create no-fly zones'
1582	4	UN hopeful of break in Aleppo fighting to provide aid to civilians in Syrian city
1583	6	Syrian civil war: Islamist rebels claim to have broken siege of Aleppo
1584	7	Syrian rebels breach government-imposed siege on Aleppo
1585	11	Syria war: Mother and children killed in suspected chlorine gas attack on Aleppo
1586	12	Syria war: Children among civilians killed in new air strikes on hospital and market in Aleppo province
1587	15	Syria crisis: US and Russia in talks to fight side by side in Aleppo, says Russian defence minister
1588	16	Syrian war: Children play games in the streets of Aleppo while bombs fall on surrounding neighbourhoods
1589	18	Syria civil war: The picture which shows the suffering of the children of Aleppo
1590	18	Syrian war: As the world focuses on Aleppo, new footage shows the full, tragic scale of destruction of Damascus
1591	19	Omran Daqneesh: CNN anchor breaks down over distressing image of boy pulled from rubble in Aleppo
1592	19	Omran Daqneesh: Rescue worker who saved boy photographed in Aleppo warns 'massacres happening every day'
1593	20	Brother of Omran Daqneesh 'dies of injuries in hospital' three days after Aleppo air strike
1594	20	Omran Daqneesh: Father of Aleppo boy speaks about harrowing strike on family house
1595	22	Syrian civil war: Aleppo doctor calls on Barack Obama and Angela Merkel to help end the bombing of civilian targets
1596	24	Meet the Syrian rescue team that saved five-year-old boy Omran Daqneesh from rubble in Aleppo
1597	27	Syrian war: At least 15 civilians killed as barrel bombs hit funeral for children killed in air strikes in Aleppo
September (2016)		
1598	7	Aleppo 'chlorine' attack: Disturbing video of child injured in strikes emerges
1599	10	Syria government 'approves' US-Russia peace agreement
1600	13	Assad government 'rejects' humanitarian aid from Turkey en route to Aleppo without Damascus approval
1601	15	Syrian government's aid block is in breach of ceasefire agreement, UN says
1602	19	'12 aid workers believed dead in air strike' on UN convoy near Aleppo
1603	19	Syria's other Aleppos: The cities also under siege that the world has ignored
1604	21	Syria air raid 'kills five medical workers near Aleppo'
1605	22	Syrian army announces new offensive on rebel-held Aleppo
1606	23	Aleppo attack: Syrian army to 'invade city with ground troops'
1607	23	Aleppo aid convoy attack: Russian bomb remains 'recovered from site'
1608	24	Syrian war: Dozens of civilians killed as almost 2 million left without water by 'relentless' air strikes in Aleppo
1609	25	France accuses Assad of war crimes in Aleppo
1610	25	'It could resonate in history': Experts warn of 'monstrous' attack by Assad on

		Aleppo
1611	27	Syrian government promotes Aleppo nightlife in 'shameless' propaganda video
1612	27	Syrian army troops advance on Aleppo as Nato calls air strikes 'blatant violation of international law'
1613	28	Syria war: Aleppo pushed even closer to the brink as air strikes hit two major hospitals
1614	28	US warns Russia it will 'cut ties' over Syria unless bombing in Aleppo stops
1615	29	Aleppo is 'worse than a slaughterhouse' says UN chief Ban Ki-moon after 96 children killed and hospitals bombed
1616	29	US calls bombing of Syria's Aleppo a 'gift' to Isis
1617	30	Syria conflict: as war rages, children in Aleppo play in pools left by bomb craters
October (2016)		
1618	1	Largest hospital in rebel-held Aleppo hit by barrel bombs
1619	1	Syrian swimmer and her 12-year-old brother killed by shelling in Aleppo
1620	3	Aleppo's children return to school despite continued shelling
1621	3	Largest hospital in rebel-held Aleppo 'completely destroyed'
1622	4	Syria conflict: Russia sends missile system to Tartus base as air strikes continue in Aleppo
1623	5	Russian 'experts' claim Aleppo aid convoy attack was 'staged hoax' after UN releases satellite images of air strikes
1624	5	https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-civil-war-latest-aleppo-siege-assad-forces-break-through-rebel-frontline-a7346396.html
1625	6	Syria conflict: Eastern Aleppo 'could be destroyed in two months', UN envoy warns
1626	6	Aleppo's residents look ahead to their next challenge after surviving Assad's bombs: How to not starve
1627	7	Violence in Aleppo is 'evil' and 'demonic', says Archbishop of Canterbury
1628	8	Russia vetoes UN resolution to end bombing in Aleppo dividing Security Council
1629	10	British diplomat gives damning speech over Russian support for Syria before staging walkout at United Nations
1630	11	Aleppo crisis: Drone footage shows the rubble where a city used to stand
1631	11	Talk of a no-fly zone over Aleppo distracts from more realistic plans to save those dying and starving in Syria
1632	12	Fierce air strikes resume in Aleppo as UK parliament condemns Russia's actions in Syria
1633	12	Aleppo doctor files legal action against Russia at European Court of Human Rights over bombing of hospitals
1634	13	Aleppo: Russian and Syrian bombing kills 150 people in just two days, rescue workers say
1635	13	UK and US both consider military options amid warnings Russia will 'flatten' Aleppo
1636	16	UK and US propose economic sanctions against Russia over 'barbaric siege' of Aleppo
1637	16	Aleppo: Chilling photos show how the ancient city has changed since the Syrian conflict started
1638	17	Omran may not have died in Aleppo this morning. But many more Omrans did
1639	18	While the world fixates on Mosul, Russia's eight-hour ceasefire offers no hope of lifting Aleppo's despair
1640	19	Syria war: Assad regime accuses EU of supporting terrorism and says it has no

		right to criticise them
1641	20	Omran Daqneesh: Assad claims pictures of five-year-old Aleppo boy pulled from rubble were 'faked'
1642	20	'Stop bombing Aleppo's children': Blood-stained teddy bears in Berlin have message for Putin
1643	21	Aleppo: 'children at risk' as illegal cluster bombings on city increase by 800%, report finds
1644	21	Compare the coverage of Mosul and East Aleppo and it tells you a lot about the propaganda we consume
1645	23	Heavy clashes resume as ceasefire ends and Russia steps up battle for Aleppo
1646	26	Russia and Syria 'have not bombed Aleppo for a week', Moscow claims, despite evidence to contrary
1647	27	Majority of British people want UK Government to act over Aleppo
1648	28	Aleppo: Fierce battles break out as rebels launch new offensive to break government siege
1649	29	Regime renews air strikes on Aleppo as rebels launch counterattack to break siege
1650	29	Massacre of innocents: As Syria and Russia bombard eastern Aleppo children are also dying in the west of the city
1651	30	Russia denies sending three submarines to Syria in preparation for major Aleppo assault
1652	30	What it's really like to be in the middle of the battle for Aleppo
1653	31	Assad and Putin to launch 'full scale' assault to secure victory in Aleppo
November (2016)		
1654	1	Aleppo's agony is far from over as Syrian general seeks further battles
1655	1	'We were living a real tragedy in east Aleppo': One family's journey across the city amid the bloodshed
1656	2	Aleppo: Russia announces 'humanitarian pause' as residents fear devastating 'final push' from Putin and Assad
1657	4	Aleppo: Rebel groups turn on each other as the Assad regime tightens its grip on the city
1658	4	Hundreds of fake limbs dumped outside Russian embassy in protest over Aleppo attacks
1659	8	Aleppo war: Rebels brace for final assault while US focuses on election
1660	8	Russia to launch new assault on Aleppo 'within hours' after arrival of warships
1661	10	Aleppo on last food packages, says UN as harsh winter approaches
1662	13	Aleppo siege: Bashar al-Assad tells citizens they have 24 hours to flee city before renewed bombing campaign
1663	14	Battle for Aleppo: Deaths reported as Assad begins 'final onslaught' to recapture city from rebels
1664	14	Aleppo offensive is just the next step in Russia's Syrian mission
1665	15	Aleppo air strikes resume as Russia and Assad prepare to launch massive offensive
1666	16	Russia claims it has not bombed Aleppo for '28 days', less than 24 hours after Syria air strikes resume
1667	17	'It is our Judgment Day': Assad and Russia pound rebel-held Syria with air strikes in renewed offensive
1668	19	Premature babies in Aleppo removed from incubators after air strikes hit city's only children's hospital
1669	19	Rescuers in Aleppo 'run out of bodybags' after intense day of bombardment where hospital is attacked

1670	21	Syrian war: Bashar al-Assad's forces advancing on rebel-held Aleppo as hospitals, schools and homes bombed
1671	22	'Will I die?': Syrian boy panics and fears for his life after alleged chlorine attack in Aleppo
1672	22	Aleppo rebels deny Syrian army claims they are hoarding warehouses full of food
1673	24	Syrian war: Aleppo residents play football together after government invitation
1674	26	Syrian government forces 'retake largest rebel-held area of Aleppo'
1675	27	Syria's Assad regime poised to split rebel-held Aleppo in half
1676	28	Minister heckled after suggesting humanitarian airdrops in Syria could put British aircraft in 'harm's way'
1677	28	Syrian family in war-torn Aleppo post farewell message as Assad regime forces advance
1678	29	Aleppo could witness one of the worst massacres since World War Two, France warns
1679	30	Aleppo siege: At least '45 Syrian refugees killed by regime artillery' while trying to flee
December (2016)		
1680	1	Clown of Aleppo 'dies in air strike' as Syrian government closes in on besieged city
1681	1	Aleppo risks becoming 'one giant graveyard', UN warns as Syrian and Russian forces continue advance
1682	2	This is why everything you've read about the wars in Syria and Iraq could be wrong
1683	2	Aleppo: Children killed while trying to escape battles between rebels and regime forces advancing on Syrian city
1684	3	Aleppo: Russia 'ready for talks' on rebel withdrawal as Syrian forces continue advance on besieged districts
1685	4	So many people are dying in Aleppo the graveyards are now full
1686	5	Syria: Nurse killed as Russian field hospital in Aleppo hit by shelling
1687	5	The seven-year-old girl tweeting from Aleppo has gone silent
1688	7	Aleppo: Theresa May and Barack Obama condemn Syria and Russia and call for immediate ceasefire
1689	7	Syrian army poised for biggest victory in the civil war after retaking Aleppo's Old City from rebels
1690	8	MI6 chief is right about the savagery blighting Aleppo but changing the situation will be difficult
1691	8	There's one key difference between the Second World War and the Syrian conflict – the rebels of Aleppo are no heroes
1692	9	Syrian army 'suspends Aleppo fighting', Russia claims
1693	10	Aleppo: World powers meet to stop Syrian city being 'completely destroyed' as Assad's forces advance
1694	10	Boris Johnson blames Assad regime for 'disregard for human life' in Aleppo
1695	11	Syrian rebels facing 'death or surrender' in Aleppo after heavy bombing
1696	12	If Assad takes eastern Aleppo he'll think he's won the war
1697	12	Battle for Aleppo is over as rebels withdraw, monitor claims
1698	13	Aleppo: More than 100 children trapped in building under heavy attack, says Unicef
1699	13	The rebels of Aleppo will fight on, but Assad is taking their last power base in Syria
1700	14	As Aleppo burns, we need to face the dark truth about where our foreign aid

		actually goes
1701	14	An evacuation in eastern Aleppo is in the interests of all sides
1702	15	President Assad claims 'History is being made in liberated Aleppo' in triumphant address
1703	15	Before and after pictures that sum up the desperate situation in Aleppo
1704	16	There's more propaganda than news coming out of Aleppo this week
1705	16	Aleppo: Rebels bussed out before evacuations suspended taken to 'killing zone'
1706	17	Aleppo: Syrian rebels claim evacuation being blocked by Iran
1707	17	Aleppo: 'House-to-house murder' of civilians under way as Syrian city falls to Assad, warns David Miliband
1708	18	'People's Convoy' sets off from UK to Syria to build new children's hospital in Aleppo
1709	18	Buses used to evacuate Syrians from villages 'attacked and burned'
1710	19	Aleppo: Nearly 50 orphans rescued in 'glimmer of hope' for Syrian city's children
1711	19	Evacuations in Aleppo resume following burning of five buses in Syria
1712	20	Russia, Turkey, Iran drawing up 'roadmap' to end Syrian crisis
1713	20	Foreign Office minister refuses to say Russia broke international law in Aleppo
1714	21	Aleppo: 3,000 to leave destroyed Syrian city after evacuations stalled for a day
1715	21	Israel is taking in injured Syrian refugees from Aleppo
1716	22	Syrian army says it has retaken Aleppo
1717	22	Shocking photos of Aleppo's old city show before and after Syria civil war began
1718	24	Rebel shelling kills three in Aleppo as air strikes on Idlib province resume
1719	26	Mass graves found in eastern Aleppo, Russia claims
<i>The Independent</i>		
Al-Raqqa		
2017		
June		
1720	6	Raqqa assault: US-backed Syrian rebels launch attack to liberate Isis stronghold
1721	6	Fears for civilians caught up in US-led air strikes grow as Raqqa assault begins
1722	7	A long battle for Raqqa may lie ahead – but even defeat will not mean the end for Isis
1723	15	Raqqa offensive: US-led coalition air strikes killing 'staggering' number of civilians, say UN war crimes investigators
1724	16	Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi dead: Russia says it may have killed Isis leader in Raqqa air strike
1725	18	US shoots down Syrian government fighter jet that dropped bombs near coalition-backed forces fighting Isis
1726	21	Record number of women killed in US-led air strikes in Syria and Iraq in May
1727	29	Isis' last escape route from Raqqa 'cut off' by US-backed SDF fighters, says Syrian monitoring group
1728	29	Kurdish woman fighting Isis in Raqqa laughs after being narrowly missed by sniper
July (2017)		
1729	7	Battle for Raqqa: Fighters begin offensive to push Isis out of Old City
1730	22	Women burn burqas and men shave beards to celebrate liberation from Isis in Syria
1731	24	Secret Russian-Kurdish-Syrian military cooperation is happening in Syria's eastern desert
August (2017)		
1732	2	US-backed forces make 'significant gains' against Isis in Raqqa
1733	5	Isis: 2,000 fighters using Raqqa's civilians as human shields as US-led coalition

		makes significant gains in Syria
1734	10	Syria's female soldiers prepare to take on Isis in battle for Raqqa
1735	22	Syria air strike: At least 42 civilians killed by US-led bomb attack in Raqqa, report activists
1736	23	Syrian civilian death toll mounts as Isis comes under increased pressure on all sides
1737	24	'Hundreds of civilians' killed in Raqqa as US steps up campaign to oust Isis from Syria, Amnesty says
1738	28	British volunteer fighting against Isis in Raqqa says it is a 'matter of time' before Islamic State falls
September (2017)		
1739	1	As US-backed forces seize Raqqa's Old City from Isis, UN condemns price of air strikes for civilians
1740	18	Syrian civilians fleeing Raqqa are taking up arms to go back and fight Isis
1741	20	From the front line in Raqqa: Isis to lose Syrian 'capital' in days after 'surprise attack' by US-backed forces
October (2017)		
1742	4	US air strikes kill 18 civilians in Raqqa
1743	8	'We want revenge': Meet the Yazidi women freeing their sisters from Isis in the battle for Raqqa
1744	11	Isis is facing near total defeat in Iraq and Syria – but it has been beaten and come back before
1745	14	Woman rips off black robes after being freed from Isis in Raqqa
1746	14	Raqqa: Isis on brink of losing battle for de facto capital 'today or tomorrow'
1747	16	US-backed SDF forces in final push against Isis in Raqqa
1748	16	The defeat of Isis in Raqqa will bring problems for the victorious Syrian Kurds
1749	17	Raqqa: Isis 'capital' liberated by US-backed forces - but civilians face months of hardship with city left devastated
1750	17	Raqqa: Isis completely driven out of Syria 'capital' by US-backed forces
1751	18	UK terror attacks likely to increase despite Isis' defeat in Raqqa
1752	21	Donald Trump says 'end of Isis caliphate is in sight' after de-facto capital of Raqqa recaptured
1753	21	As coalition retakes Raqqa from Isis, remaining foreign jihadis face certain death
1754	22	Russia compares US-led bombing of Raqqa to WWII destruction of Dresden
1755	28	Raqqa's fall: A journey into the heart of Isis's failed caliphate
1756	31	British Isis fighter claims he was 'playing PlayStation and going on bike rides' in Raqqa

Appendix 3

List of *The NYT's* editorials selected for this thesis

No.	Date	Headline
1.	28/04/2011	President Assad's Crackdown
2.	02/05/2011	The Long-Awaited News
3.	08/05/2011	A Fatah-Hamas Deal
4.	09/05/2011	They Should Be Condemning Syria
5.	17/05/2011	President Obama and the Arab Spring
6.	19/05/2011	Peace and Change
7.	21/05/2011	Malign Neglect
8.	03/06/2011	President Assad's Bloody Hands
9.	17/06/2011	Syria's Nightmare
10.	11/07/2011	The Long Pursuit of Justice in Lebanon
11.	18/07/2011	Syria's Struggle
12.	30/07/2011	They Risked Their Lives
13.	03/08/2011	Who Will Help the Syrians?
14.	08/08/2011	The Arab States and Syria
15.	18/08/2011	Truth About Syria
16.	31/08/2011	Isolating Assad
17.	20/09/2011	Turkey's Leadership
18.	30/09/2011	America's Man in Damascus
19.	10/10/2011	Enabling Mr. Assad
20.	08/11/2011	Syria and the Arab League
21.	16/11/2011	The Killing in Syria Goes On
22.	22/12/2011	Get Tougher on Assad
23.	09/01/2012	Violence Continues in Syria
24.	19/01/2012	Syria's Rising Toll
25.	01/02/2012	Russia's Bad Bet on Syria
26.	06/02/2012	Killing in Syria
27.	14/02/2012	The Enablers
28.	17/02/2012	Anthony Shadid
29.	24/02/2012	Syria's Horrors
30.	27/02/2012	A Costly Anachronism
31.	02/03/2012	Crushing Homs
32.	05/03/2012	Iran, Israel and the United States
33.	20/03/2012	Wrong Ways to Fight Assad
34.	28/03/2012	The Never-Ending Cold War
35.	09/04/2012	President Assad's Latest Bluff
36.	20/04/2012	Assad's Lies
37.	29/05/2012	The Massacre at Houla
38.	30/05/2012	Charles Taylor and the Next 50 Years
39.	01/06/2012	Set, and Left, Adrift
40.	08/06/2012	Assad, the Butcher
41.	12/06/2012	Russia, Soviet Style
42.	26/06/2012	A Flashpoint on Turkey's Border
43.	08/07/2012	A Treaty on Conventional Arms
44.	18/07/2012	Assassination in Damascus
45.	24/07/2012	The Candidates Talk Foreign Policy

46.	26/07/2012	An Arms Treaty Within Reach
47.	06/08/2012	If Assad Falls in Syria
48.	11/08/2012	Trade Relations With Russia
49.	13/08/2012	Israel and Iran
50.	28/08/2012	A Refugee Disaster in the Making
51.	30/08/2012	Mr. Romney Reinvents History
52.	04/09/2012	Egypt's Economic Struggle
53.	05/09/2012	A Touchy Relationship
54.	09/09/2012	A New Kind of Warfare
55.	10/09/2012	Renewed Tensions in Iraq
56.	19/09/2012	The United States and the Muslim World
57.	23/09/2012	On the Wrong Side
58.	25/09/2012	President Obama at the U.N.
59.	08/10/2012	In Search of Answers From Mr. Romney
60.	12/10/2012	A Debate With Clarity and Fervor
61.	23/10/2012	The Final Debate
62.	27/12/2012	Barack Obama for Re-election
63.	02/11/2012	Syria's Misery
64.	11/11/2012	The Foreign Policy Agenda
65.	19/11/2012	Hamas's Illegitimacy
66.	30/11/2012	Measured Approach to the Syrian Crisis
67.	10/12/2012	Al Qaeda in Syria
68.	21/12/2012	Russian Orphans as Political Pawns
69.	03/01/2013	Al Jazeera in America
70.	20/01/2013	The Syrian Refugee Crisis
71.	28/02/2013	Help for Syrian Rebels
72.	06/03/2013	Hugo Chávez
73.	19/03/2013	Iraq's Fragile Future
74.	19/03/2013	Ten Years After
75.	22/03/2013	Overdue Reconciliation
76.	26/03/2013	Down to the Wire
77.	22/04/2013	More Help for Syrian Rebels
78.	24/04/2012	Were Chemical Weapons Used in Syria?
79.	29/04/2012	Ill-Considered Advice on Syria
80.	08/05/2013	Diplomatic Stirrings on Syria
81.	20/05/2013	Why Is Russia Still Arming Syria?
82.	02/06/2013	Protests in Turkey
83.	03/06/2013	A Smart Change in Iran Policy
84.	06/06/2013	The New Security Team
85.	13/06/2013	Who Will Succeed President Ahmadinejad?
86.	14/06/2013	After Arming the Rebels, Then What?
87.	17/06/2013	A Promising Moment in Iran
88.	28/06/2013	Dangerous Divisions in the Arab World
89.	29/07/2013	Al Qaeda in Iraq Scores Big
90.	06/08/2013	What's the Point of a Summit?
91.	22/08/2013	The Corpses in Syria
92.	25/08/2013	Reading Tweets From Iran
93.	26/08/2013	Responding to Syrian Atrocities

94.	28/08/2013	More Answers Needed on Syria
95.	30/08/2013	Absent on Syria
96.	02/09/2013	Debating the Case for Force
97.	03/09/2013	Britain's Syria Vote in Perspective
98.	04/09/2013	The Stakes in Congress
99.	06/09/2013	Can Mr. Obama Avoid Mission Creep?
100.	09/09/2013	A Diplomatic Proposal for Syria
101.	11/09/2013	Diplomacy as Deterrent
102.	12/09/2013	Who Will Be Left in Egypt?
103.	14/09/2013	Testing Europe's Conscience
104.	15/09/2013	The Syrian Pact
105.	21/09/2013	President Rouhani Comes to Town
106.	24/09/2013	President Obama at the United Nations
107.	26/09/2013	Some Progress on Syria
108.	27/09/2013	Now, the Hard Part
109.	30/09/2013	Containing the Conventional Arms Trade
110.	22/10/2013	New Leaks, New Repercussions
111.	29/10/2013	Allies in Revolt
112.	30/10/2013	Endless War, Endless Suffering
113.	01/11/2013	Can Iraq Be Saved?
114.	09/11/2013	Kenya and the International Criminal Court
115.	18/12/2013	Tunisia's Reawakening
116.	31/12/2013	More Guns Will Not Save Iraq
117.	12/01/2014	Treading Water on Syria
118.	14/01/2014	Eradicating Polio Everywhere
119.	21/01/2014	Another Syria Peace Conference
120.	24/01/2014	Iran's Charm Offensive
121.	02/02/2014	A Tiny Glimmer From North Korea
122.	10/02/2014	The Message From Homs
123.	18/02/2014	What Next for Syria?
124.	04/03/2014	The Jihadist Pipeline
125.	07/04/2014	South Sudan Cannot Starve
126.	08/04/2014	After Rwanda's Genocide
127.	11/04/2014	Inching Forward With Iran
128.	26/04/2014	Meaningful Progress With Iran
129.	02/05/2014	French Jihadists in Syria
130.	03/05/2014	President Obama and the World
131.	06/05/2014	The Global Polio Threat, Back Again
132.	13/05/2014	A Call for Justice for Syrians
133.	18/05/2014	Europe's Migration Emergency
134.	28/05/2014	President Obama Misses a Chance on Foreign Affairs
135.	04/06/2014	Assad Engineers His Re-election
136.	12/06/2014	Iraq in Peril
137.	14/06/2014	The Milk Carton Guy
138.	15/06/2014	Fighting Terrorism With More Money
139.	17/06/2014	A Balancing Act on Iraq
140.	27/06/2014	While Iraq Burns
141.	28/06/2014	They Said It Couldn't Be Done

142.	14/07/2014	Europe's Migration Emergency
143.	23/07/2014	Iraq's Imperiled Minorities
144.	05/08/2014	The Extremist Threat to Iraq Grows
145.	06/08/2014	Making the Gaza Cease-Fire Last
146.	07/08/2014	Preventing a Slaughter in Iraq
147.	11/08/2014	Iraq Needs a New Prime Minister
148.	14/08/2014	Maliki and the Futility of Regime Change
149.	15/08/2014	A Painfully Slow Ebola Response
150.	21/08/2014	Death by Terror
151.	22/08/2014	Sri Lanka's Intransigence
152.	24/08/2014	A Necessary Response to ISIS
153.	27/08/2014	Questions on Airstrikes in Syria
154.	29/08/2014	The Terrorist With a British Accent
155.	31/08/2014	Europe's Migration Crisis
156.	02/09/2014	NATO's Urgent Challenges
157.	08/09/2014	Confronting the ISIS Threat
158.	09/09/2014	Hopes for Iraq's New Government
159.	10/09/2014	The Attack on ISIS Expands to Syria
160.	11/09/2014	Bolstering a Vulnerable Russian Neighbor
161.	11/09/2014	Legal Authority for Fighting ISIS
162.	13/09/2014	A Risky Bet on Syrian Rebels
163.	15/09/2014	Don't Hide the Syrian Aid Vote
164.	16/09/2014	The Slippery Slope Begins
165.	17/09/2014	Tests for a Still Broken Iraq
166.	18/09/2014	Murder in the Mediterranean
167.	20/09/2014	The Unlikeliest of Coalitions
168.	22/09/2014	Backsliding on Nuclear Promises
169.	23/09/2014	Wrong Turn on Syria: No Convincing Plan
170.	24/09/2014	A New Focus on Foreign Fighters
171.	26/09/2014	A Bad Antiterrorism Bill
172.	27/09/2014	Dismal Lessons From Libya and Yemen
173.	02/10/2014	The Fundamental Horror of ISIS
174.	04/10/2014	Reining In Egypt's Military Aid
175.	08/10/2014	Mr. Erdogan's Dangerous Game
176.	11/10/2014	Obama Should End the Embargo on Cuba
177.	15/10/2014	A Deadly Legacy in Iraq
178.	23/10/2014	Why Kobani Must Be Saved
179.	30/10/2014	Tunisia's Victory
180.	01/11/2014	The New War's Rising Cost
181.	18/11/2014	Congress Must Act on War Authority
182.	23/11/2014	The Danger of Foreign Jihadists
183.	24/11/2014	A Problem Beyond Mr. Hagel
184.	02/12/2014	World Food Program's Struggle to Feed Millions
185.	07/12/2014	Release the Guantánamo Force-Feeding Videos
186.	10/12/2014	Rules of Engagement, Still Missing
187.	12/12/2014	Uruguay's Guantánamo Gesture
188.	13/12/2014	Still Failing Syria's Refugees
189.	27/12/2014	Torture, Race, Marijuana and 12 Other Big Issues of 2014

190.	29/12/2014	Death Stalks the News Beat
191.	05/01/2015	Migrant Deaths on the Mediterranean
192.	07/01/2015	The Marches in Dresden
193.	13/01/2015	'France Without Jews Is Not France'
194.	19/01/2015	An Inclusive French Republic
195.	24/01/2015	Shifting Realities in Syria
196.	31/01/2015	Retroactively Authorizing War
197.	05/02/2015	The Spreading Rage at ISIS
198.	07/02/2015	The Pentagon's Excess Space
199.	11/02/2015	Obama Seeks an Expansive War Authorization to Combat ISIS
200.	14/02/2015	What Libya's Unraveling Means
201.	15/02/2015	A Death Sentence for Migrants
202.	27/02/2015	The Islamic State's Most Recent Victims
203.	03/03/2015	To Hurt ISIS, Squeeze the Cash Flow
204.	03/03/2015	Mr. Netanyahu's Unconvincing Speech to Congress
205.	05/03/2015	A Murder in Bangladesh
206.	13/03/2015	Turkey's Drift From NATO
207.	13/03/2015	Congress's Duty on Authorizing Force
208.	17/03/2015	Gen. Petraeus's Light Punishment
209.	19/03/2015	Bloodshed in Tunisia
210.	25/03/2015	Republican Budget Games
211.	31/03/2015	Saudi Arabia's Ominous Reach Into Yemen
212.	02/04/2015	A Promising Nuclear Deal With Iran
213.	02/04/2015	The Crimes of Terrorists
214.	05/04/2015	A War Zone's Ancient Past at Stake
215.	19/04/2015	Europe's Duty on Migrants
216.	24/04/2015	Catastrophe in Yemen
217.	02/05/2015	Stumbling Into a Wider War
218.	09/05/2015	Beyond the Iran Nuclear Deal
219.	10/05/2015	Magical Thinking on Migrants
220.	14/05/2015	A Tiny Crack in the Russian Ice
221.	22/05/2015	The Escalation of Unauthorized Wars
222.	05/06/2015	Europe's Shared Responsibility for Migrants
223.	08/06/2015	Democracy Wins in Turkey
224.	13/06/2015	Lost Voices of the World's Refugees
225.	07/06/2015	As Yemen Collapses
226.	18/06/2015	The Morning After the Iran Deal
227.	27/06/2015	Turkey's Shift on the Syrian War
228.	02/08/2015	The Real Eurotunnel Crisis
229.	06/08/2015	Greece's Refugee Crisis and Europe's Failure
230.	10/08/2015	The Pentagon's Dangerous Views on the Wartime Press
231.	12/08/2015	Who Threatens America Most?
232.	13/08/2015	The Precarious Balance in Tunisia
233.	15/08/2015	Ugly Attacks on Refugees in Europe
234.	18/08/2015	I Am Republican, Hear Me Roar
235.	24/08/2015	Heroes Thwart a Train Attack, Yet Europe Remains Vulnerable
236.	24/08/2015	An Opening for Diplomacy in Syria

237.	25/08/2015	The Crimes of Palmyra
238.	31/08/2015	Mr. Erdogan's War Against the Kurds
239.	04/09/2015	Piercing the Denial on Refugees
240.	08/09/2015	Caring for the Other Refugees
241.	10/09/2015	A Plan to Save Refugees and Europe's Open Borders
242.	11/09/2015	Russia's Risky Military Moves in Syria
243.	17/09/2015	The Elusive Truth About War on ISIS
244.	18/09/2015	Europe Should See Refugees as a Boon, Not a Burden
245.	18/09/2015	Here Comes Another Greek Election
246.	21/09/2015	Mr. Putin's Mixed Messages on Syria
247.	25/09/2015	An Obama-Putin Meeting Makes Sense
248.	28/09/2015	An Ambitious Development Agenda From the U.N.
249.	28/09/2015	Putin and Obama Have Profound Differences on Syria
250.	31/09/2015	Europe Must Reform Its Deadly Asylum Policies
251.	01/10/2015	Afghan Forces on the Run
252.	02/10/2015	Russia's Dangerous Escalation in Syria
253.	06/10/2015	Mr. Putin's Motives in Syria
254.	08/10/2015	Cultural Destruction as a War Crime
255.	09/10/2015	A Nobel Prize for Dialogue in Tunisia
256.	09/10/2015	An Incoherent Syria War Strategy
257.	10/10/2015	Why Is Money Still Flowing to ISIS?
258.	14/10/2015	The Grown-Ups Take the Stage at the Democratic Debate
259.	15/10/2015	A Grim Decision on Afghanistan
260.	15/10/2015	Russia's Fictions on Malaysia Flight 17
261.	21/10/2015	El Niño Strikes Ethiopia
262.	28/10/2015	The Military Escalation in Iraq and Syria
263.	29/10/2015	Iran's Role in the Syrian Crisis
264.	30/10/2015	Turkey's Erdogan Should Listen to the Voters
265.	02/11/2015	The Scare Tactics of Turkey's President Erdogan Pay Off
266.	04/11/2015	A Refugee, Not a Criminal
267.	06/11/2015	How the U.S. and Israel Can Move Forward
268.	11/11/2015	Don't Leave Refugees Out in the Cold
269.	12/11/2015	An Antidote to Cynicism in Canada
270.	14/11/2015	Terror in Paris
271.	17/11/2015	How to Fight ISIS
272.	17/11/2015	After Paris Attacks, Vilifying Refugees
273.	18/11/2015	Refugees From War Aren't the Enemy
274.	20/11/2015	The Price of Fear
275.	20/11/2015	Mrs. Clinton's Syria Strategy
276.	24/11/2015	Mr. Trump's Applause Lies
277.	24/11/2015	Repugnant Religious Litmus Tests
278.	25/11/2015	One Jet Closer to a Wider Confrontation
279.	30/11/2015	The Children Left Behind After Mass Shootings
280.	03/12/2015	What It Will Take to Bankrupt ISIS
281.	03/12/2015	A Better Safeguard Against Threats From Abroad
282.	04/12/2015	Fear Ignorance, Not Muslims
283.	04/12/2015	Russia's Fury Over Montenegro and NATO
284.	06/12/2015	President Obama's Tough, Calming Talk on Terrorism

285.	10/12/2015	The Trump Effect, and How It Spreads
286.	11/12/2015	Canada's Warm Embrace of Refugees
287.	11/12/2015	Ted 'Carpet-Bomb' Cruz
288.	16/12/2015	The Urgent Need for Peace in Yemen
289.	17/12/2015	An Appalling Silence on Gun Control
290.	18/12/2015	Doubts About Saudi Arabia's Antiterrorism Coalition
291.	22/12/2015	The Security Council Wakes Up on Syria
292.	25/12/2015	Moments of Grace in a Grim Year
293.	26/12/2015	A Fearful Congress Sits Out the War Against ISIS
294.	28/12/2015	New Tensions Over the Iran Nuclear Deal
295.	28/12/2015	The Importance of Retaking Ramadi
296.	04/01/2016	Saudi Arabia's Barbaric Executions
297.	06/01/2016	Mr. Erdogan Crosses Yet Another Line
298.	08/01/2016	Europe Must Do Better on Refugees
299.	12/01/2016	Agony and Starvation in the Syrian War
300.	21/01/2016	Mr. Putin and the Poisonous London Tea Party
301.	23/01/2016	U.N. Can Seal the Peace in Colombia
302.	26/01/2016	Opening a New Front Against ISIS in Libya
303.	30/01/2016	Hillary Clinton for the Democratic Nomination
304.	31/01/2016	A Chance to Reset the Republican Race
305.	01/02/2016	Denmark's Cruelty Toward Refugees
306.	03/02/2016	The Pentagon's Top Threat? Russia
307.	10/02/2016	10,000 Child Refugees Are Missing
308.	11/02/2016	A Chance to Halt the Brutality in Syria
309.	17/02/2016	Pope Francis at the Border
310.	23/02/2016	The Plan to Shut Down Gitmo
311.	23/02/2016	Relying Again on an Unreliable Mr. Putin
312.	24/02/2016	How Turkey Misreads the Kurds
313.	29/02/2016	A Better, Not Bigger, Military Budget
314.	04/03/2016	Syria's Shaky Respite
315.	05/03/2016	A Judge's Message to the Xenophobes
316.	06/03/2016	The Next Level of the Refugee Crisis
317.	08/03/2016	Trying to Read Donald Trump, in Translation
318.	11/03/2016	Fill In the Foreign Policy Blanks
319.	15/03/2016	Putin's Syria Surprise
320.	16/03/2016	Reconsider a Refugee Deal With Turkey
321.	18/03/2016	Genocide and the Islamic State
322.	19/03/2016	Transparency in the Drone Wars
323.	21/03/2016	The Kurds' Push for Self-Rule in Syria
324.	21/03/2016	A Presidential Rebuke to the Saudis
325.	22/03/2016	Standing With Brussels Against Terrorism and Fear
326.	28/03/2016	Mr. Trump's Dangerous Babble on Foreign Policy
327.	30/03/2016	America Needs Frank Talk on ISIS
328.	06/04/2016	A Deal That Puts Lives at Risk
329.	09/04/2016	The Race to Run the United Nations
330.	09/04/2016	Gun Dealers Hiding on Facebook
331.	11/04/2016	Europe's Urgent Security Challenge
332.	15/04/2016	What Needs to Come After the New York Primary

333.	18/04/2016	What Iran Needs to Fix
334.	22/04/2016	The Baghdad Follies
335.	22/04/2016	Unfinished Business From 9/11
336.	25/04/2016	A Risky American Expansion in Syria
337.	29/04/2016	A Moral Debt for Bombing the Doctors Without Borders Hospital
338.	04/05/2016	More Carnage in Syria
339.	06/05/2016	Mr. Erdogan's Expanding Power
340.	10/05/2016	A Soldier's Challenge to the President
341.	19/05/2016	Vladimir Putin's Dangerous Obsession
342.	27/05/2016	The World Reaps What the Saudis Sow
343.	01/06/2016	A Wrenching SOS
344.	03/06/2016	Yes, It's Genocide
345.	10/06/2016	Ban Ki-moon's Thankless Position
346.	13/06/2016	What Donald Trump Gets Wrong About Orlando
347.	14/06/2016	Mr. Obama's Powerful Words About Terrorism
348.	18/06/2016	Heading Off the Next Extremist
349.	21/06/2016	Slamming Shut America's Door
350.	22/06/2016	The False Lure of Military Intervention in Syria
351.	25/06/2016	The Security Consequences of Brexit
352.	29/06/2016	Behind the Cruel Attack on Turkey
353.	01/07/2016	When Friends Like Jordan Steal Weapons
354.	02/07/2016	How to Revive the Promise of the European Union
355.	05/07/2016	Fighting ISIS as It Shifts Tactics
356.	05/07/2016	Don't Let Iran's Progress on the Nuclear Deal Go to Waste
357.	09/07/2016	The Secret Rules of the Drone War
358.	15/07/2016	Our Best Defense Against Terrorists
359.	15/07/2016	Keeping NATO Relevant and United
360.	16/07/2016	The Counter-Coup in Turkey
361.	21/07/2016	Congress Should Let the Boeing Deal Proceed
362.	23/07/2016	Trumpworld vs. Clintonworld
363.	02/08/2016	In Libya, a New Front in the War on ISIS
364.	05/08/2016	Stuck in Platitudes on Migration Crisis
365.	11/08/2016	What Russia and Turkey Bring to Syria
366.	16/08/2016	Mr. Trump's Foreign Policy Confusions
367.	19/08/2016	Playing With Fire in Ukraine
368.	23/08/2016	The Fake \$400 Million Iran 'Ransom' Story
369.	25/08/2016	A Complicated Alliance With Turkey
370.	27/08/2016	Can Israel and the Arab States Be Friends?
371.	08/09/2016	A Debate Disaster Waiting to Happen
372.	14/09/2016	America's Mr. Diplomacy
373.	15/09/2016	Mike Pence's Illegal Treatment of Syrian Refugees
374.	22/09/2016	Foreign Wars and Terrorism
375.	25/09/2016	Why Donald Trump Should Not Be President
376.	27/09/2016	In a Tight Race, Every Party Matters
377.	28/09/2016	The Risks of Suing the Saudis for 9/11
378.	29/09/2016	Vladimir Putin's Outlaw State
379.	30/09/2016	In Jordan, Laws That Provoke Violence

380.	30/09/2016	Savaged by Boko Haram
381.	05/10/2016	A New Voice for a Complicated World
382.	07/10/2016	Cultural Destruction as a War Crime
383.	11/10/2016	America's Moral Duty in Yemen
384.	12/10/2016	Donald Trump's Weird World
385.	14/10/2016	The Coming Battle for Mosul
386.	17/10/2016	Shameful Silence on Donald Trump's Lies About Vote-Rigging
387.	26/10/2016	Clearing the Jungle in Calais
388.	03/11/2016	A Stronger Court for Crimes Against Humanity
389.	10/11/2016	Denounce the Hate, Mr. Trump
390.	10/11/2016	Doors Slam Shut for Afghan Refugees
391.	11/11/2016	The World Waits and Wonders About Donald Trump
392.	12/11/2016	The Danger of Going Soft on Russia
393.	15/11/2016	Why Rudy Giuliani Shouldn't Be Secretary of State
394.	24/11/2016	Warning Russia on Hacking Isn't Enough
395.	01/12/2016	A World of Trouble for Donald Trump
396.	11/12/2016	Russia's Hand in America's Election
397.	12/12/2016	Flawed Choices for the State Department
398.	13/12/2016	The Russian Doping Scandal Keeps on Growing
399.	14/12/2016	Aleppo's Destroyers: Assad, Putin, Iran
400.	19/12/2016	The Fantasy Version of Brexit
401.	20/12/2016	Russia, Turkey and an Assassination
402.	20/12/2016	A Cruel Test for Germany, and Europe
403.	30/12/2016	Take a Bad Year. And Make It Better.
404.	31/12/2016	Can Russia Make Peace as Well as War?
405.	08/01/2017	The Devastation of Nimrud
406.	01/01/2017	Rex Tillerson Sheds Little Light on His Boss
407.	17/01/2017	Russia Gains When Donald Trump Trashes NATO
408.	26/01/2017	'I Think Islam Hates Us'
409.	28/01/2017	Donald Trump's Muslim Ban Is Cowardly and Dangerous
410.	30/01/2017	Diplomats Decry Muslim Ban
411.	31/01/2017	A Government on Edge and in the Dark
412.	01/02/2017	Quebec's Response to Hate: More Tolerance
413.	07/02/2017	Blaming America First
414.	09/02/2017	A Critical Juncture for Somalia
415.	01/03/2017	Russia Sides With Chemical Weapons
416.	01/03/2017	Now, About That Role as Commander in Chief ...
417.	03/03/2017	Autocrats See a Green Light
418.	04/03/2017	President Trump's Island Mentality
419.	06/03/2017	President Trump's Muslim Ban Lite
420.	06/03/2017	The East Europeans Do an About-Face
421.	12/03/2017	Man Without an ISIS Plan
422.	16/03/2017	Preventing a Free-for-All With Drone Strikes
423.	25/03/2017	Congress's Duty in the War With ISIS
424.	27/03/2017	President Putin Under Pressure
425.	29/03/2017	Ignoring Diplomacy's Past and Its Future Promise
426.	30/03/2017	Iraqi and Syrian Civilians in the Crossfire

427.	04/04/2017	A New Level of Depravity, Even for Bashar al-Assad
428.	06/04/2017	Downsizing Mr. Bannon
429.	06/04/2017	Terror Respects No Borders, Sympathy Shouldn't Either
430.	07/04/2017	After the Airstrikes on Syria, What's Next?
431.	10/04/2017	On Syria, an Administration in Disagreement With Itself
432.	11/04/2017	The Palm Sunday Attack in Egypt
433.	12/04/2017	Mr. Trump's Fickle Diplomacy
434.	15/04/2017	Mr. Trump's 10-Second Convictions
435.	17/04/2017	Democracy Loses in Turkey
436.	24/04/2017	Asking for Trouble on Iran
437.	28/04/2017	How Not to Conduct Business in Wartime
438.	03/05/2017	The State Department Deserves Better
439.	06/05/2017	Two Presidential Candidates Stuck in Time
440.	09/05/2017	A Syrian Plan Worth a Look
441.	15/05/2017	Extremists in German Uniform
442.	18/05/2017	Turkey's Mr. Erdogan Does Not Get His Way
443.	19/05/2017	President Trump Tries to Engage the Muslim World
444.	23/05/2017	President Trump's Mideast Contradictions
445.	26/05/2017	President Trump Fails NATO
446.	31/05/2017	Donald Trump's Insult to History
447.	01/06/2017	Mr. Macron's Striking International Debut
448.	02/06/2017	The Problem With Jared Kushner
449.	07/06/2017	President Trump Picks Sides, Not Diplomacy, in the Gulf
450.	15/06/2017	How ISIS Grew in the Philippines
451.	19/06/2017	Fighting, While Funding, Extremists
452.	22/06/2017	Congress Steps Up on Foreign Policy
453.	26/06/2017	The Iran Puzzle
454.	04/07/2017	Turkey's 250-Mile Protest
455.	06/07/2017	Showdown in Hamburg
456.	07/07/2017	Even Now, Does Mr. Trump Get It on Hacking?
457.	10/07/2017	The Spoils, and Profits, of Conflict
458.	12/07/2017	The Challenges After Mosul
459.	15/07/2017	Russia Isn't Delivering for Donald Trump
460.	20/07/2017	Avoiding War With Iran
461.	27/07/2017	Congress Defies Trump on Russia
462.	03/08/2017	Mr. Maduro's Drive to Dictatorship
463.	09/08/2017	Frustration Over a War and Its Crimes
464.	14/08/2017	Before You Rip Up That Iran Deal ...
465.	17/08/2017	Exporting Chaos to Venezuela
466.	22/08/2017	Kurds' Risky Dream of Independence
467.	23/08/2017	President Trump and the Baby-Sitters Club
468.	22/09/2017	World Hunger Haunts the U.N. Festivities
469.	25/09/2017	A Trump Travel Ban We've Seen Before
470.	26/09/2017	Kurdistan's Dangerous Vote on Independence
471.	06/10/2017	Mr. Trump, Don't Scrap the Iran Deal
472.	13/10/2017	Some Urgent Questions About Turkey
473.	22/10/2017	America's Forever Wars
474.	23/10/2017	A Deadly Ambush's Great Mystery: What Are We Doing in

		Niger?
475.	04/11/2017	After ISIS, What Comes Next?
476.	08/11/2017	The Saudi Roundup at the Ritz
477.	09/11/2017	Mr. Trump, Alone With His Lies in a Warming World
478.	13/11/2017	President Trump's Thing for Thugs
479.	14/11/2017	Torches and Hate on the March in Poland
480.	18/11/2017	The Trump Administration Is Making War on Diplomacy
481.	23/11/2017	Telling the Truth About the Cost of War
482.	05/01/2018	Israel Digs a Grave for the Two-State Solution
483.	06/01/2018	Why Do Land Mines Still Kill So Many?
484.	09/01/2018	Unrest Shows the Iran Nuclear Deal's Value, Not Its Danger
485.	19/01/2018	Syria Is Now Mr. Trump's War
486.	31/01/2018	As U.S. Allies Clash, the Fight Against ISIS Falter
487.	21/02/2018	Who Has Innocent Syrians' Blood on Their Hands?
488.	01/03/2018	Ivanka Trump's Brand Building at the White House
489.	08/03/2018	What Happened to Trump's Red Line on Chemical Weapons?
490.	12/03/2018	Vladimir Putin's Toxic Reach
491.	13/03/2018	Trump May Make America Miss Rex Tillerson
492.	15/03/2018	Finally, Trump Has Something Bad to Say About Russia
493.	21/03/2018	Why Is Trump So Afraid of Russia?
494.	23/03/2018	Yes, John Bolton Really Is That Dangerous
495.	26/03/2018	Tough Action on Russia, at Last, but More Is Needed
496.	30/03/2018	A Colder War With Russia?
497.	01/04/2018	Trump's Iran Threat May Wreck Talks With North Korea
498.	04/04/2018	Trump's Irrational Border Plan
499.	05/04/2018	Trump's Approach to Syria Is No Way to Run a War
500.	09/04/2018	In Syria, Trump Faces the Limits of Bluster
501.	10/04/2018	The Law Is Coming, Mr. Trump
502.	11/04/2018	Saving Paul Ryan
503.	12/04/2018	Mike Pompeo Works the Hill
504.	13/04/2018	A Coordinated Attack on Syria
505.	18/04/2018	Macron, at the Barricades, Warns of Rising Nationalism in Europe
506.	23/04/2018	Will the Court Stand Up to Donald Trump?
507.	24/04/2018	When Presidents Go to War
508.	01/05/2018	Netanyahu's Flimflam on Iran
509.	02/05/2018	Let Abbas's Vile Words Be His Last as Palestinian Leader
510.	22/06/2018	Is Time Up for Turkey's Erdogan?
511.	25/06/2018	Erdogan Hasn't Killed Turkey's Democracy Yet
512.	26/06/2018	Bigoted and Feckless, the Travel Ban Is Pure Trump
513.	12/07/2018	Trump Got From NATO Everything Obama Ever Asked For
514.	16/07/2018	Why Won't Donald Trump Speak for America?
515.	27/07/2018	Trump in Space
516.	10/08/2018	Turkey's Downward Spiral
517.	31/08/2018	A Vengeful and Shortsighted Act
518.	08/09/2018	A Grim Endgame Looms in Syria
519.	03/10/2018	No Exit: Refugees Trapped in a Squalid Greek Camp
520.	09/10/2018	Nikki Haley Will Be Missed

521.	23/10/2018	What Is Turkey's Game?
522.	16/12/2018	Put Down the Golf Clubs, Visit the Troops
523.	21/12/2018	Shutdown? More Like A Breakdown
524.	22/12/2018	Trump After Mattis

Appendix 4

Experts and think tanks cited in the coverage of the "war on terror"

No.	Date	Name	Identified as	Work at	Affiliation
1	10/12/2012		- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Western governments
2	09/01/2013	Andrew Tabler	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has ties with governments and lobbyists.	Ties with US and Israeli government agencies and IPAC

3	11/03/2013	-	- SITE Intelligence Group	<p>- The Executive Director of SITE Rita Katz has ties with US intelligence and military institutions and previously served in the Israeli army (SITE 2019; Wallace-Wells 2006).</p> <p>Wallace-Wells, B 2006, "Private Jihad: How Rita Katz got into the spying business", <i>The New Yorker</i>, 21 May, accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/05/29/private-jihad</p> <p>SITE 2019, "About SITE", accessed 15/08/2019, https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Corporate/about-site.html</p> <p>- SITE's advisor Bruce Hoffman had previously worked with CIA and NSA and he is known to have a close relationship with Congressmen and other government agencies (Council on Foreign Relations 2019).</p> <p>Council on Foreign Relations 2019, "Bruce Hoffman", accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.cfr.org/expert/bruce-hoffman</p> <p>- SITE's advisor Rohan Gunaratna has ties and previously closely worked with US intelligence and military institutions RSIS 2019.</p> <p>RSIS 2019, "Dr Rohan Gunaratna", 23 January, accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/profile/rohan-gunaratna/#.XVSt5OMzbIV</p>	Ties with US, and Israeli military and intelligence agencies
4	13/03/2013	Rami Abdelrahman	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments

5	16/04/2013	-	- The International Center for the Study of Radicalization		No known affiliation
6	16/04/2013	-	- The Local Coordination Committees		No known affiliation
7	24/04/2013	-	- The International Center for the Study of Radicalization		No known affiliation
8	08/08/2013	Hussein Ibish	- A senior fellow at the American Task Force on Palestine		No known affiliation
9	08/08/2013	Charles Lister	- An analyst with IHS Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Center.		No known affiliation

10	15/08/2013	Nora Bensahel	- A senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security	Nora Bensahel worked as a research assistant for the former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry and worked with the RAND Corporation that has strong ties with the Pentagon (Bensahel 2019). Bensahel, N 2019, "Nora Bensahel", accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.american.edu/sis/faculty/upload/bensahel_bio_20150203.pdf	Ties with the Department of State
11	20/10/2013		- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
12	4/12/2013	William McCants	- A fellow at the Brookings Institution	- Former State Department counterterrorism official. Foreign Policy 2019, "Will McCants", <i>Foreign Policy</i> , accessed 15/08/2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/author/will-mccants/	Ties with government and intelligence institutions
13	28/05/2014	Frederic Wehrey	- A researcher at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	Frederic Wehrey is a veteran of the US Air Force and served in the Middle East (Carnegie Endowment for International Place, 2019). Carnegie Endowment for International Place 2019, "Frederic Wehrey", <i>Carnegie Endowment for International Place</i> , accessed 15/08/2019, https://carnegieendowment.org/experts/709	Ties with the Department of Defense

14	28/05/2014	Emile Hokayem	- The International Institute for Strategic Studies		No known affiliation
15	28/05/2014	Bruce Riedel	- A researcher at the Brookings Institution	- Former CIA officer. Riedel, R, 2020, "Bruce Riedel", <i>The Brookings Institute</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.brookings.edu/experts/bruce-riedel/	Ties with US intelligence agencies
16	29/05/2014	-	- The International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence		No known affiliation
17	24/06/2014	Soli Ozel	- A professor of international relations at Kadir Has University in Istanbul		No known affiliation
18	30/06/2014	Hassan Abu Hanieh	- Jordanian expert on Islamist movements		No known affiliation

19	20/06/2014	Shadi Hamid	- Fellow at the Brookings Institution.		No known affiliation
20	12/07/2014	Derek Harvey	- Directs the University of South Florida's Global Initiative for Civil Society and Conflict	- Held a number of intelligence and political positions. Harvey, D, 2020, "Derek Harvey", <i>Institute for Politics and Strategy</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.cmu.edu/ips/people/cmusp%20Fellows/derekharvey.html	Ties with intelligence agencies
21	12/07/2014	Michael Knights	- An analyst at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- Michael Knights has embedded with Iraqi security forces and he is known for his work with the Iraqi, Yemeni and other governments in the Middle East. Knights, M, 2020, "Michael Knights", <i>The Washington Institute for Near East Policy</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/knights-michael	Ties with security forces in Iraq and Yemen
22	21/08/2014	Brian Katulis	- A national security expert with the Center for American Progress, a Washington research organisation	- Brian Katulis has worked for the State and the Defense departments. Brian, K, "Brian Katulis", <i>The Center for American Progress</i> , accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.americanprogress.org/about/staff/katulis-brian/bio/	Ties with the White House, Department of State and Defense

23	21/08/2014	Kenneth M. Pollack	- A senior fellow at the Brookings Institution	<p>Kenneth Pollack is a former CIA analyst. He also worked for the National Security Council (AEI, 2019).</p> <p>AEI 2019, "Kenneth Pollack", <i>AEI</i>, accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.aei.org/scholar/kenneth-pollack/</p>	Ties with intelligence Agencies
24	21/08/2014	Stephen M. Walt	- A professor of international affairs at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School	A critique of U.S. foreign policy	No known affiliation
25	24/08/2014	Raffaello Pantucci	- Director of international security studies at the Royal United Services Institute	RUSI is funded by a number of government agencies including US and UK agencies.	Ties with the US and UK governments
26	24/08/2014	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
27	25/08/2014	Steven Simon	- A senior fellow at the Middle East Institute	<p>- Former White House adviser</p> <p>Simon, S, 2020, "Steven Simon", <i>Foreign Policy</i>, accessed 20/07/2020, https://foreignpolicy.com/author/steven-simon/</p>	Ties with the White House

28	25/08/2014	Brian Katulis	- A national security expert with the Center for American Progress	Worked in the departments of State and Defense in the Bill Clinton administration	Ties with the Department of Defense
29	28/08/2014	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
30	28/08/2014	Matthew Levitt	- Director of the Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- Mathew Lavitt served as a deputy assistant secretary for intelligence and analysis at the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The Washington Institute 2019, "Matthew Levitt", accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/levitt-matthew	Ties with the Department of the Treasury
31	18/09/2014	Andrew J. Tabler	- Senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy who tracks Syria	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has ties with governments and lobbyists.	Ties with US and Israeli government agencies and IPAC

32	20/09/2014	Jennifer Cafarella	- A Syria analyst with the Institute for the Study of War in Washington	- Jennifer Cafarella worked for the U.S military in the Middle East (ISW, 2019). ISW 2019, "Jennifer Cafarella", <i>Institute for the Study of War</i> , accessed 15/08/2019, http://www.understandingwar.org/press-media/staff-bios/jennifer-cafarella-0	Ties with the Department of Defense
33	21/09/2014	Kamel Wazne	- An analyst who studies Hezbollah and American politics.		No known affiliation
34	24/09/2014	Bernard Haykel	- Scholar		No known affiliation
35	24/09/2014	Al Turki Ben-Ali	- Scholar		No known affiliation
36	24/09/2014	William McCants	- A researcher on militant Islam at the Brookings Institution	William McCants served a "U.S. State Department senior adviser for countering violent extremism" (Foreign Policy, 2019). Foreign Policy 2019, "Will McCants", <i>Foreign Policy</i> , accessed 15/08/2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/author/will-mccants/	Ties with the Department of State

37	24/09/2014	Prof. Emad Shahin	- Teaches Islam and politics at Georgetown University		No known affiliation
38	24/09/2014	Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi	- Senior jihadist scholar		No known affiliation
39	30/09/2014	Peter Neumann	- A director of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization at King's College London	- Peter Neumann was a "senior consultant for the U.S. Mission to the United Nations during the process of crafting UN Security Council Resolution 2178 on 'Foreign Terrorist Fighters'" and also worked for the German government (ICSR, 2019). ICSR 2019, "Prof. Peter Neumann", accessed 15/08/2019, https://icsr.info/?team=prof-peter-neumann	Ties with the US and German governments
40	09/10/2014	Ozgur Unluhisarcikli	- The director of the Ankara office of the German Marshall Fund of the United States		No known affiliation
41	09/10/2014	Frederic C. Hof	- Senior fellow at the Atlantic Council	- Former American envoy to the Syrian opposition. Atlantic Council 2019, "Frederic C. Hof", accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/about/experts/list/frederic-c-	Ties with the Department of State

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42	09/10/2014	Halil Karaveli	M. - A senior fellow at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute in Stockholm		No known affiliation
43	15/10/2014	Loch Johnson	K. - A professor of public and international affairs at the University of Georgia and an intelligence expert	- "Special Assistant to the Chair of the Senate Select Committee House Sub-committee on Intelligence Oversight from 1975 to 1976. Routledge 2019, "Johnson Loch K. PhD", World Who's Who: Europa Biographical Reference, accessed 15/08/2019, http://www.worldwhoswho.com/public/views/entry.html?id=s12175074	Ties with the Congress
44	20/10/2014	Halil Karaveli	M. - A senior fellow at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute in Stockholm		No known affiliation

45	09/11/2014		- The Center for Strategic and Budgetary	- Funded by several government agencies and others including the Australian Department of Defence and Lockheed Martin Corporation (CSBA 2019a). Thomas G. Mahnken the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments has worked for the Department of Defense (CSBA, 2019b). CSBA 2019a, "Our Mission", accessed 15/08/2019, https://csbaonline.org/about/mission CSBA 2019b, "Staff", accessed 15/08/2019, https://csbaonline.org/about/people/staff/thomas-mahnken	Ties with the Department of Defense
46	14/11/2014	David L. Phillips	- Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights	- A former adviser in the United Nations and the State Department Phillips, D.L, 2020, "David L. Phillips", accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/20/politics/david-l-phillips/	Ties with the State Department
47	01/12/2014	Dounia Bouzar	- Anthropologist who founded an anti-radicalization center in Paris		No known affiliation

48	01/12/2014	Sasha Havlicek	- The chief executive of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue	<p>The Institute for Strategic Dialogue founder George Weidenfeld was a long-time Zionist and served in the former Israeli president Chaim Weizman in 1949.</p> <p>Cowell, A 2016, "George Weidenfeld, British Publisher of 'Lolita' and London Fixture, Dies at 96", <i>The New York Times</i>, January 2016, accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/21/books/george-weidenfeld-british-publisher-of-lolita-dies-at-96.html</p>	Ties with Israeli government
49	05/12/2014	Peter Neumann	- The director of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization at King's College London	<p>- Peter Neumann was a "senior consultant for the US Mission to the United Nations during the process of crafting UN Security Council Resolution 2178 on 'Foreign Terrorist Fighters'" and also worked for the German government (ICSR, 2019).</p> <p>ICSR 2019, "Prof. Peter Neumann", accessed 15/08/2019, https://icsr.info/?team=prof-peter-neumann</p>	Ties with the US and German governments
50	13/12/2014	Preben Bertelsen	- Psychology professor at Aarhus University		No known affiliation

51	13/12/2014	Erhan Kilic	- Turkish-born Aarhus lawyer and observant Muslim who acts as a mentor.		No known affiliation
52	07/01/2015	Michael J. Morell	- Consultant to CBS News	- Former deputy director of the C.I.A. Morell, M.J, "Michael J. Morell", <i>The CIPHER Brief</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.thecipherbrief.com/experts/michael-j-morell	Ties with US intelligence agencies
53	07/01/2015	Peter Neumann	- Director of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization at King's College London	- Peter Neumann was a "senior consultant for the US Mission to the United Nations during the process of crafting UN Security Council Resolution 2178 on 'Foreign Terrorist Fighters'" and also worked for the German government (ICSR, 2019). ICSR 2019, "Prof. Peter Neumann", accessed 15/08/2019, https://icsr.info/?team=prof-peter-neumann	Ties with the US and German governments
54	07/01/2015	Camille Grand	- Director of the French Foundation for Strategic Research	- Worked for NATO and the French government. NATO 2016, "Camille Grand", NATO, 3 October, accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/who_is_who_135548.htm?	Ties with NATO and the French government

55	07/01/2015	Andrew Hussey	- Paris-based professor of postcolonial studies		No known affiliation
56	07/01/2015	François Heisbourg	- Defense analyst and special adviser to the Foundation for Strategic Research	- François Heisbourg served as an international security adviser to the Minister of Defence IISS 2019, "François Heisbourg", accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.iiss.org/people/europe/francois-heisbourg	Ties with the French government
57	07/01/2015	Olivier Roy	- French scholar of Islam and radicalism	- Worked from 1984-2009 as a "consultant for the Policy Planning Staff of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs". European University Institute 2019, "Biography", accessed 15/08/2019, https://me.eui.eu/olivier-roy/	Ties with the French government
58	08/01/2015	Mathieu Guidère	- French expert on terrorism	- Worked with think tanks that have relationships with the French army and the US Department of Defense.	Ties with the French and US governments
59	08/01/2015	Jonathan Laurence	- The author of "The Emancipation of Europe's Muslims"		No known affiliation

60	08/01/2015	M. Steven Fish	- A political scientist at the University of California, Berkeley		No known affiliation
61	08/01/2015	Salem Abdel-Gelil	- A scholar from the state-sponsored Al Azhar institute	- Former official of the ministry overseeing Egyptian mosques.	Ties with the Egyptian government
62	08/01/2015	Prof. Sherif Younis	- Historian at the Helwan University		No known affiliation
63	08/01/2015	Mohammad Fadel	- Egyptian-American Islamic legal scholar at the University of Toronto		No known affiliation
64	08/01/2015	Raymond Ibrahim	- The author of "Crucified Again: Exposing Islam's New War on Christians"	- Worked in the Library of Congress (Hoover Institution 2019). Hoover Institution 2019, "Raymond Ibrahim", accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.hoover.org/profiles/raymond-ibrahim	Ties with the Congress

65	08/01/2015	Prof. Emad Shahin	- The editor of The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Politics		No known affiliation
66	11/01/2015	Jean-Pierre Filiu	- Professor of Middle East studies and specialist on French Islamic terror cells	- Worked as an adviser to the French former Prime Minister and Minister of Defense (Center for European Studies Harvard, 2019). Center for European Studies Harvard 2019, "Jean-Pierre Filiu", accessed 15/08/2019, https://ces.fas.harvard.edu/people/001497-jean-pierre-filiu	Ties with the French government
67	13/01/2015	Daniel Benjamin	- Scholar at Dartmouth	- Former top counterterrorism official in the Department of State Benjamin, D, 2020, "Daniel Benjamin", <i>The Brookings Institute</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.brookings.edu/experts/daniel-benjamin/	Ties with the Department of State
68	18/02/2015	Sasha Havlicek	- The Institute for Strategic Dialogue	- The institute is funded by a number of governments including the US.	Ties with government
69	18/02/2015	Samer Khalaf	- President of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee		No known affiliation

70	19/02/2015	Marc Lynch	- Director of the Institute for Middle East Studies at George Washington University		No known affiliation
71	20/02/2015	Gavin Rees	- The Europe director for the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma		No known affiliation
72	11/05/2015	J. M. Berger	- Senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and co-author of a book about the Islamic State	<p>J. M. Berger is a consultant for social media and security companies and government agencies and has a relationship with think tanks supported by the US army and intelligence.</p> <p>J. M. Berger 2019, "J.M. Berger", accessed 19/08/2019, https://www.jmberger.com/</p>	Ties with the US Department of Defense

73	11/05/2015	Daveed Gartenstein-Ross	A senior fellow who researches extremism at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies	<p>- Worked as a "senior advisor to the director of the US Department of Homeland Security's Office for Community Partnerships".</p> <p>FDD 2019, "Daveed Gartenstein-Ross", accessed 19/08/2019, https://www.fdd.org/team/daveed-gartenstein-ross/</p>	Ties with the Department of Homeland Security
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74	11/05/2015	-	- SITE Intelligence Group	<p>- The Executive Director of SITE Rita Katz has ties with US intelligence and military institutions and previously served in the Israeli army.</p> <p>Wallace-Wells, B 2006, "Private Jihad: How Rita Katz got into the spying business", <i>The New Yorker</i>, 21 May, accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/05/29/private-jihad</p> <p>CITE 2019, "About CITE", accessed 15/08/2019, https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Corporate/about-site.html</p> <p>- SITE's advisor Bruce Hoffman had previously worked with CIA and NSA and he is known to have a strong relationship with Congressmen and government agencies.</p> <p>Council on Foreign Relations 2019, "Bruce Hoffman", accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.cfr.org/expert/bruce-hoffman</p> <p>- SITE's advisor Rohan Gunaratna has ties and previously closely worked with US intelligence and military institutions RSIS 2019.</p> <p>RSIS 2019, "Dr Rohan Gunaratna", 23 January, accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/profile/rohan-gunaratna/#.XVSt50MzbIV</p>	Ties with US, and Israeli military and intelligence agencies
75	14/05/2015	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments

76	16/06/2015	Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi	- Fellow at the Middle East Forum		No known affiliation
77	16/06/2015	Hassan Abu Hanieh	- Jordanian expert on Islamist groups		No known affiliation
78	16/06/2015	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
79	23/07/2015	Andrew J. Tabler	- Expert on Arab politics at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has ties with governments and lobbyists.	Ties with US and Israeli government agencies and IPAC
80	28/07/2015	Francis J. Ricciardone	- Vice president and director of the Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East at the Atlantic Council in Washington	- A former ambassador to Turkey	Ties with the State Department

81	07/08/2015	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
82	10/08/2015	Cale Salih	- Visiting fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations and the author of numerous articles on Kurdish affairs		No known affiliation
83	14/08/2015	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
84	07/09/2015	Michael Clarke	- Director general of the Royal United Services Institute, a research organisation that specializes in defense issues	Michael Clarke was the "UK's member of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters" and he also was the "Defence Communications Advisory panel for the Ministry of Defence". RUSI 2019, "Professor Michael Clarke", <i>RUSI</i> , accessed 17/08/2019, https://rusi.org/people/cclarke	Ties with the British Ministry of Defence

85	08/09/2015	Simon Behrman	- Law lecturer at the University of East Anglia		No known affiliation
86	14/09/2015	Andrew S. Weiss	- Vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	Andrew S. Weiss worked for the Defense and the State departments. Carengie 2019, "Andrew S. Weiss", accessed 18/08/2019, https://carnegieendowment.org/experts/824	Ties with the Departments of Defense and State
87	14/09/2015	Jeffrey White	- Studies Syria at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- Former Defense Intelligence Agency officer White, J, 2020, "Jeffrey White", <i>The Washington Institute for Near East Policy</i> , accessed 20/08/2020, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/white-jeffrey	Ties with the Department of Defense
88	14/09/2015	Stephen J. Blank	- Expert on the Russian military at the American Foreign Policy Council	Stephen J. Blank consulted for CIA. SSI 2019, "Dr. Stephen J. Blank", accessed 19/08/2019, https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/people.cfm?authorID=21	Ties with intelligence agencies
89	18/09/2015	Andrew J. Tabler	- Syria expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has ties with governments and lobbyists.	Ties with US and Israeli government agencies and IPAC

90	19/09/2015	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
91	20/09/2015	-	The International Center for the Study for Radicalization at King's College London		No known affiliation
92	20/09/2015	Peter Neumann	- Director of the center and professor of security studies at King's College	- Peter Neumann was a "senior consultant for the US Mission to the United Nations during the process of crafting UN Security Council Resolution 2178 on 'Foreign Terrorist Fighters'" and also worked with the German government (ICSR, 2019). ICSR 2019, "Prof. Peter Neumann", accessed 15/08/2019, https://icsr.info/?team=prof-peter-neumann	Ties with the US and German governments
93	24/09/2015	Fiona Hill	- The Brookings Institution	- A former national intelligence officer Hill, F, 2020, "Fiona Hill", <i>The Brookings Institute</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.brookings.edu/experts/fiona-hill/	Ties with Intelligence

94	26/09/2015	Daniel L. Byman	- A professor at Georgetown University and a fellow at the Brookings Institution- a counterterrorism expert	- He worked for the US government. Brookings 2019, "Daniel L. Bayman", <i>Brookings</i> , accessed 17/08/2019, https://www.brookings.edu/experts/daniel-l-byman/	Ties with the US government
95	26/09/2015	Peter Neumann	- Director of the center and a professor of security studies at King's College	- Peter Neumann was a "senior consultant for the US Mission to the United Nations during the process of crafting UN Security Council Resolution 2178 on 'Foreign Terrorist Fighters'" and also worked for the German government (ICSR, 2019). ICSR 2019, "Prof. Peter Neumann", accessed 15/08/2019, https://icsr.info/?team=prof-peter-neumann	Ties with the US and German governments
96	29/09/2015	Letta Tayler	- Senior terrorism and counterterrorism researcher at Human Rights Watch		No known affiliation
97	29/09/2015	Frederic C. Hof	- A senior fellow at the Atlantic Council	- Adviser on Syria to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton Atlantic Council 2019, "Frederic C. Hof", accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/about/experts/list/frederic-c-	Ties with the Department of State

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98	29/09/2015	Andrew J. Tabler	- Expert on Syria at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has ties with governments and lobbyists.	Ties with US and Israeli government agencies and IPAC
99	30/10/2015	Aaron David Miller	- A vice president with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars	Aaron David Miller served as an advisor to Secretaries of State for more than 20 years (Wilson Center, 2019). Wilson Center 2019, "Aaron David Miller", <i>The Wilson Center</i> , accessed 17/08/2019, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/person/aaron-david-miller	Ties with the Department of State
100	02/11/2015	Barak Barfi	- Research fellow at the New American Foundation, a policy group in Washington		No known affiliation
101	08/11/2015	Vladimir Frolov	- A political analyst		No known affiliation

102	08/11/2015	Alexei Makarkin	- Analyst at the Center for Political Technologies		No known affiliation
103	08/11/2015	Stanislav Belkovsky	- Political analyst and frequent Kremlin critic		No known affiliation
104	08/11/2015	Dimitri Trenin	- Carnegie Moscow Center	Dimitri Trenin served in the Russian army (Carnegie, 2019). Carnegie 2019, "Dimitri Trenin", accessed https://carnegieendowment.org/experts/287	Ties with the Russian government
105	10/11/2015	Andrew J. Tabler	- Syria expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has ties with governments and lobbyists.	Ties with US and Israeli government agencies and IPAC
106	29/11/2015	Louise Shelley	- Director of the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center at George Mason University		No known affiliation

107	29/11/2015	Seth G. Jones	- Terrorism expert at the RAND Corporation	- Worked for the US Department of Defense. CSIS 2019, "Seth G. Jones", <i>Center for Strategic & International Studies</i> , accessed 18/08/2019, https://www.csis.org/people/seth-g-jones	Ties with the Department of Defense
108	29/11/2015	Daniel Benjamin	- Scholar at Dartmouth College	- Top counterterrorism official in the State Department. Benjamin, D, 2020, "Daniel Benjamin", <i>The Brookings Institute</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.brookings.edu/experts/daniel-benjamin/	Ties with the State Department
109	30/11/2015	David Thomson	- The author of a book on French jihadists		No known affiliation
110	4/12/2015	David Andrew Weinberg	- A senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, an advocacy group in Washington	- Provided research support to the State Department. UCLA 2019, "David Andrew Weinberg", <i>Center for Middle East Development</i> , accessed 17/08/2019, https://www.international.ucla.edu/cmed/person/1085	Ties with the State Department
111	07/12/2015	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments

112	07/12/2015	Jean-Pierre Filiu	- Professor of Middle East Studies at Sciences Po in Paris		No known affiliation
113	07/12/2015	Jessica Stern	- One of the authors of the book "ISIS: The State of Terror"	Jessica Stern was in President Clinton's National Security Council Staff. Fredrick S. Pardee School of Global Studies 2019, "Jessica Stern", accessed 18/08/2019, https://www.bu.edu/pardeeschool/profile/jessica-stern/	Ties with the White House
114	08/12/2015	Andrew J. Bacevich	- Military historian	Retired army colonel Bacevich, A.J, "Andrew J. Bacevich", <i>Macmillan Publishers</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://us.macmillan.com/author/andrewbacevich/	Ties with the Department of Defense
115	08/12/2015	Imad Salamey	- Associate professor of political science at the Lebanese American University in Beirut		No known affiliation

116	09/02/2016	Raffaello Pantucci	- Director of international security studies at the Royal United Services Institute	- RUSI is funded by a number of government agencies including US and UK agencies.	Ties with the US and UK governments
117	09/02/2016	Shashank Joshi	- Senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute	- RUSI is funded by a number of government agencies including US and UK agencies.	Ties with the US and UK governments
118	09/02/2016	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
119	12/02/2016	-	- The Carter Center		No known affiliation
120	10/03/2016	Peter Neumann	- Director of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization at King's College London	- Peter Neumann was a "senior consultant for the US Mission to the United Nations during the process of crafting UN Security Council Resolution 2178 on 'Foreign Terrorist Fighters'" and also worked for the German government. ICSR 2019, "Prof. Peter Neumann", accessed 15/08/2019, https://icsr.info/?team=prof-peter-neumann	Ties with the US and German governments

121	14/03/2016	Andrew J. Tabler	- Scholar on Syria at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has ties with governments and lobbyists.	Ties with the US and Israeli government and IPAC
122	14/03/2016	Alexei Makarkin	- The deputy head of the Center for Political Technologies in Moscow		No known affiliation
123	15/03/2016	Andrew J. Tabler	- An expert on Syria at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has ties with governments and lobbyists.	Ties with US and Israeli government agencies and IPAC
124	15/03/2016	Angela E. Stent	- A professor of government and Russia expert at Georgetown University	Angela E. Stent served in the Office of Policy Planning at the US Department of State. Georgetown University 2019, "Angela Stent", accessed 18/08/2019, https://gufaculty360.georgetown.edu/s/contact/00336000014RWsfAAG/angela-stent	Ties with the State Department

125	19/03/2016	Peter Bergen	- The director of the National Securities Studies Program at the New America Foundation		No known affiliation
126	15/04/2016	Mikhail Barabanov	- Senior research fellow at the Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies		No known affiliation
127	24/05/2016	Karen J. Greenberg	- The executive director of the Center on National Security at the Fordham University School of Law		No known affiliation
128	25/05/2016	Federico Borello	- Executive director of the Center for Civilians in Conflict		No known affiliation

129	25/05/2016	-	- IHS Conflict Monitor, a London-based organisation that tracks terrorist financing		
130	11/07/2016	Martin A. Ewi	- Terrorism expert at the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria		No known affiliation
131	14/07/2016	Andrew J. Tabler	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has ties with governments and lobbyists.	Ties with US and Israeli government agencies and IPAC
132	04/08/2016	Axel von Maltitz	- Therapist in the southwestern city of Lindau		No known affiliation
133	04/08/2016	Elizabeth Collett	- Director of the Migration Policy Institute Europe		No known affiliation

134	06/08/2016	Michael Kofman	- Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington	Michael Kofman worked for the US government. Wilson Center 2019, "Michael Kofman", accessed 18/08/2019, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/person/michael-kofman	Ties with the US government
135	06/08/2016	Jeffrey White	- Studies Syria at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- A former Defense Intelligence Agency officer. White, J, 2020, "Jeffrey White", <i>The Washington Institute for Near East Policy</i> , accessed 20/08/2020, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/white-jeffrey	Ties with intelligence agencies
136	06/08/2016	Emile Hokayem	- Middle East analyst at the International Institute for Strategic Studies		No known affiliation
137	16/08/2016	Andrey V. Kortunov	- The director general of the Russian International Affairs Council		No known affiliation

138	16/08/2016	Cliff Kupchan	- Specialist on Russia and Iran at the Eurasia Group, a political analysis firm in Washington	Andrey V. Kortunov held a senior position at the US State Department during the Clinton administration. Eurasia Group 2019, "Cliff Kupchan", <i>Eurasia Group</i> , accessed 18/08/2019, https://www.eurasiagroup.net/people/ckupchan	Ties with the State Department
139	16/08/2016	Konstantin von Eggert	- A political analyst and commentator on Dozhd, a Russian independent television channel		No known affiliation
140	17/09/2016	Aaron David Miller	- A Middle East analyst at the Wilson Center	- The Wilson Center receives funds from the US government. Wilson Center 2019, "Aaron David Miller", <i>The Wilson Center</i> , accessed 17/08/2019, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/person/aaron-david-miller	Ties with the US government
141	20/10/2016	Robert Farley	- Professor at the University of Kentucky		No known affiliation

142	21/10/2016	Soner Cagaptay	- A specialist on Turkey at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy	Soner Cagaptay served at the State Department's Foreign Service Institute. The Washington Institute 2019, "Soner Cagaptay", accessed 18/08/2019, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/cagaptay-soner	Ties with the Department of State
143	24/10/2016	Guido Steinberg	- Terrorism expert at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs	- The German Institute for International and Security Affairs receives funds from the German parliament.	Ties with the German parliament
144	24/10/2016	Peter Neumann	- A terrorism expert at King's College London (7)	- Peter Neumann was a "senior consultant for the US Mission to the United Nations during the process of crafting UN Security Council Resolution 2178 on 'Foreign Terrorist Fighters'" and also worked for the German government (ICSR, 2019). ICSR 2019, "Prof. Peter Neumann", accessed 15/08/2019, https://icsr.info/?team=prof-peter-neumann	Ties with the US and German governments
145	26/10/2016	Christopher Kozak	- Researcher at the Institute for the Study of War	- The Institute for the Study of War has a relationship with the Department of Defense.	No known affiliation

146	26/10/2016	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
147	26/10/2016	-	- The White Helmet		Ties with Western governments
148	19/12/2016	Sinan Ulgen	- The chairman of the Center for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies	- Former Turkish diplomat.	Ties with the Turkish government
149	24/02/2017	Miroslav Mares	- Czech expert on terrorism		No known affiliation
150	25/02/2017	Badra Gaaloul	- Civil-military analyst who heads the International Center of Strategic, Security and Military Studies		No known affiliation

151	25/02/2017	Col. Mokhtar Ben Nasr	- Head military analysis at the Tunisian Center for Global Security Studies		Ties with the Tunisian army
152	25/02/2017	Ridha Raddaoui	- Lawyer and co-author of a new report on terrorism in Tunisia by the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights		No known affiliation
153	27/02/2017	Sergei A. Markov	- Leading analyst friendly to the Kremlin		Former Russian MP
154	27/02/2017	Alexey Chesnakov	- A periodic Kremlin political adviser and the director of the Center for Current Politics		Ties with the Kremlin

155	27/02/2017	Alexander Dugin	- Nationalist Russian philosopher	Alexander Dugin served as an advisor to the Russian president Vladimir Putin. Arktos 2019, "Alexander Dugin", Arktos, accessed 18/08/2019, https://arktos.com/people/alexander-dugin/	Ties with the Kremlin
156	27/02/2017	Valeriy Solovey	- Professor at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations		No known affiliation
157	27/02/2017	Igor Yurgens	- A Russian economist who is prominent in business and development	Igor Yurgens served in institutions work for the Russian government. RIAC 2019, "Igor Yurgens", <i>Russian International Affairs Council</i> , accessed 18/08/2019, https://russiancouncil.ru/en/igor-yurgens/	Ties with the Kremlin
158	29/03/2017	Robert Malley	-Vice president for policy at the International Crisis Group	- Former senior official in the Obama administration. Malley, R, 2020, "Robert Malley", <i>The International Crisis Group</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.crisisgroup.org/who-we-are/people/robert-malley-0	Ties with the White House
159	29/03/2017	Katherine Zimmerman	- Research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute		No known affiliation

160	31/03/2017	Hina Shamsi	- The director of the National Security Project at the American Civil Liberties Union		No known affiliation
161	31/03/2017	Frederic C. Hof	- Director of the Middle East center at the Atlantic Council	- Adviser on Syria to Mrs. Clinton when she was secretary of state. Atlantic Council 2019, "Frederic C. Hof", accessed 15/08/2019, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/about/experts/list/frederic-c-hof#fullbio	Ties with the State Department
162	03/04/2017	Kirill Rogov	- A political analyst		No known affiliation
163	27/05/2017	Raffaello Pantucci	- Specialist in researching terrorism at the Royal United Services Institute	RUSI is funded by a number of government agencies including US and UK agencies.	Ties with the US and UK governments
164	03/06/2017	Cameron Colquhoun		- Former senior counterterrorism analyst at Britain's Government Communications Headquarters Colquhoun, C, 2020, "Cameron Colquhoun, <i>Chartwell</i> ", accessed 20/07/2020, accessed https://www.chartwellspeakers.com/speaker/cameron-colquhoun/	Ties with the British intelligence

165	03/06/2017	Peter Neumann	- Director of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence at King's College London	- Peter Neumann was a "senior consultant for the US Mission to the United Nations during the process of crafting UN Security Council Resolution 2178 on 'Foreign Terrorist Fighters'" and also worked for the German government (ICSR, 2019). ICSR 2019, "Prof. Peter Neumann", accessed 15/08/2019, https://icsr.info/?team=prof-peter-neumann	
166	03/06/2017		- The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point		Strong ties with the US Defense department and military
167	05/07/2017	Ivan P. Kononov	- Director of the Center for Strategic Trends Studies		No known affiliation
168	06/07/2017	Andrei V. Kolesnikov	- A political analyst at the Carnegie Moscow Center		No known affiliation

169	06/07/2017	Vladimir Frolov	- A prominent columnist who writes frequently on foreign policy (2)		
170	08/07/2017	Hassan Hassan	- A senior fellow at the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy in Washington.		No known affiliation
171	08/07/2017	Noah Bonsey	- An analyst with the International Crisis Group	The groups has ties with governments	No known affiliation
172	08/07/2017	Hassan Abu Hanieh	- A Jordanian expert in extremist groups		

173	15/07/2017	Ali Vaez	- Analyst at the International Crisis Group, a conflict resolution organisation	The groups has ties with governments	No known affiliation
174	11/08/2017	Evelyn Farkas	- A senior fellow at the Atlantic Council	- Former Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary under president Obama Farkas, E, 2020, "Evelyn Farkas", <i>Evelyn Farkas</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://evelynfor.ny.com/	Ties with Defense Department
175	11/08/2017	David J. Kramer	- A senior fellow at Florida International University	- A former assistant secretary of state under President George W. Bush. Kramer, D.J, 2020, "David J. Kramer", <i>The McCain Institute</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.mccaininstitute.org/staff/david-j-kramer/	Ties with the State Department
176	11/08/2017	Andrew S. Weiss	- The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.	- Former Russia adviser to US presidents Carengie 2019, "Andrew S. Weiss", accessed 18/08/2019, https://carnegieendowment.org/experts/824	Ties with the White House
177	15/09/2017	Thomas Joscelyn	- Senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies in Washington	Thomas Joscelyn served as a trainer for the FBI's Counterterrorism Division (FDD 2019). FDD 2019, "Thomas Joscelyn", <i>Foundation for Defense of Democracies</i> , accessed 18/08/2019, https://www.fdd.org/team/thomas-joscelyn/	Ties with intelligence

178	06/10/2017	Stephen Vladeck	- Law professor at the University of Texas.		
179	06/10/2017	Jonathan Hafetz	- A.C.L.U. lawyer		No known affiliation
180	17/10/2017	Columb Strack	- Analyst at the research firm IHS Markit, which has been tracking the territory that the Islamic State has surrendered		No known affiliation
181	17/10/2017	Peter Bergen	- National security analyst at the New America Foundation		No known affiliation
182	18/10/2017	Aaron Y. Zelin	- Studies jihadist movements at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has ties with governments and lobbyists.	Ties with US and Israeli government agencies and IPAC

183	18/10/2017	Daniel L. Byman	- Senior fellow at the Brookings Institution's Center for Middle East Policy	- Worked for the US government. Brookings 2019, "Daniel L. Bayman", <i>Brookings</i> , accessed 17/08/2019, https://www.brookings.edu/experts/daniel-l-byman/	Ties with the US government
184	18/10/2017	Bill Roggio	- A senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies who monitors terrorist groups	- Bill Roggio served in the US army (FDD 2019) FDD 2019, "Bill Roggio", <i>Foundation for Defense of Democracies</i> , accessed 18/08/2019, https://www.fdd.org/team/bill-roggio/	Ties with the Department of Defense
185	19/10/2017	Andrew J. Tabler	- Syria expert with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy	- The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has ties with governments and lobbyists.	Ties with US and Israeli government agencies and IPAC
186	19/10/2017	Eric Robinson	- An analyst with the RAND Corporation	Eric Robinson worked in the Special Operations Joint Task Force in Afghanistan (RAND 2019). RAND 2019, "Eric Robinson", <i>Rand Corporation</i> , accessed 18/08/2019, https://www.rand.org/about/people/r/robinson_eric.html	Ties with the Department of Defense

187	20/10/2017	Aron Lund	- Fellow at the Century Foundation, a research group, who has written extensively about Syria		No known affiliation
188	22/10/2017	Peter Neumann	- A director of the International Center for the Study for Radicalization at King's College London	- Peter Neumann was a "senior consultant for the US Mission to the United Nations during the process of crafting UN Security Council Resolution 2178 on 'Foreign Terrorist Fighters'" and also worked for the German government (ICSR, 2019). ICSR 2019, "Prof. Peter Neumann", accessed 15/08/2019, https://icsr.info/?team=prof-peter-neumann	Ties with the US and German governments
189	22/10/2017	Laith Alkhouri	- Director at Flashpoint, a business risk intelligence company in New York that tracks militant threats and cyberthreats		No known affiliation

190	23/10/2017	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
191	28/10/2017	Ian Bassin	Protect Democracy's executive director		No known affiliation
192	25/01/2018	Noah Bonsey	- Syria analyst with the International Crisis Group	The groups has ties with governments	Ties with governments
193	25/01/2018	Hassan Hassan	- Syrian analyst and author		No known affiliation
194	26/01/2018	Metin Gurcan	- A security analyst and a columnist for El-Monitor	- Former member of the Turkish Special Forces (The Washington Institute, 2019). Gurcan, M, "Metin Gurcan", <i>The Washington Institute for Near East Policy</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/metin-gurcan	Ties with the Turkish army
195	28/01/2018	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments

196	04/02/2018	Otso Iho	- Senior analyst at Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Center at IHS Markit in London		No known affiliation
197	04/02/2018	Ahmad Ramadan	- Head of the Euphrates Center Against Violence and Terrorism in Istanbul		No known affiliation
198	04/02/2018	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
199	04/02/2018	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
200	05/02/2018	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
201	08/02/2018	Aaron David Miller	- A Middle East analyst at the Wilson Center	- Former State Department official in Republican and Democratic administrations Wilson Center 2019, "Aaron David Miller", <i>The Wilson Center</i> , accessed 17/08/2019, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/pers	Ties with the US government

				on/aaron-david-miller	
202	04/04/2018	Aaron David Miller	- Vice president at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars	- Former State Department official in Republican and Democratic administrations Wilson Center 2019, "Aaron David Miller", <i>The Wilson Center</i> , accessed 17/08/2019, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/person/aaron-david-miller	Ties with the US government
203	27/05/2018	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
204	01/06/2018	Martin Lederman	- A Georgetown law professor	- Worked in the Department of Justice and the White House Lederman, "Martin S. Lederman", <i>C-Span</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.c-span.org/person/?martinlederman	Ties with the White House
205	07/06/2018	Jonathan Hafetz	- A.C.L.U. lawyer		No known affiliation
206	06/07/2018	Laith Alkhouri	- Senior director at Flashpoint, a business risk intelligence company in New York		No known affiliation

207	12/07/2018	Ofer Zalberg	- Analyst at International Crisis Group		No known affiliation
208	12/07/2018	Andrei Kortunov	- Head of the Russian International Affairs Council, a research group that advises the Kremlin		Ties with the Kremlin
209	12/07/2018	Amos Yadlin	- Head of the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv	- Former chief of Israel military intelligence.	Ties with the Israeli Intelligence
210	14/08/2018	Seth G. Jones	- Leads the Transnational Threats Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington	- Worked for the Department of Defense. CSIS 2019, "Seth G. Jones", <i>Center for Strategic & International Studies</i> , accessed 18/08/2019, https://www.csis.org/people/seth-g-jones	Ties with the Department of Defense.

211	14/08/2018	Aaron Stein	- Turkey specialist at the Atlantic Council, a Washington think tank	- The Atlantic Council has ties with governments	Ties with governments
212	21/09/2018	Ranj Alaalain	- One of the Brookings analysts	- Provided consulting services for governments	Ties with governments
213	06/11/2018	-	- The Institute for the Study of War in Washington	The institute maintains a strong relationship with the US Department of Defense	Ties with the Department of Defense
214	06/11/2018	Laith Alkhouri	- Senior director at Flashpoint, a business risk intelligence company in New York that assesses the global terrorist threat		No known affiliation

215	09/12/2018	Maxwell B. Markusen	- Researcher at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington		No known affiliation
216	09/12/2018	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
217	19/12/2018	Ehud Yaari	- Israel-based fellow of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy		
218	20/12/2018	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
219	21/12/2018	Vladimir Frolov	- Russian columnist and foreign affairs analyst		No known affiliation

220	21/12/2018	Nina L. Khrushcheva	- Professor of international affairs at the New School in New York, currently in Moscow		No known affiliation
221	21/12/2018	Valery D. Solovei	- Political-science professor at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations		No known affiliation
222	21/12/2018	Leslie Vinjamuri	- Professor of international relations at SOAS University of London		No known affiliation
223	26/12/2018	Richard N. Haass	- President of the Council on Foreign Relations	- Advisor to former Secretary of State Colin Powell. Haass, R.N, 2020, "Richard N. Haass", <i>The Council on Foreign Relations</i> , accessed 20/07/2020, https://www.cfr.org/expert/richard-n-haass	Ties with the Department of State

224	26/12/2018	Danielle Pletka	- Senior vice president for foreign and defense policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative Washington research group	Danielle Pletka was a "senior professional staff member of the Middle East and South Asia for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations" (AEI, 2019) AEI 2019, "Danielle Pletka", accessed 18/08/2019, http://www.aei.org/scholar/danielle-pletka/	Ties with the Department of State
225	26/12/2018	Daniel Benaim	- A fellow focusing on the Middle East at the Center for American Progress, a liberal research group in Washington	Daniel Benaim was "foreign policy speechwriter and Middle East adviser to former Vice President Joe Biden". Center for American Progress 2019, "Daniel Benaim", <i>Center for American Progress</i> , accessed 18/08/2019, https://www.americanprogress.org/about/staff/benaim-daniel/bio/	Ties with the White House
226	26/12/2018	Aron Lund	- Syria analyst and fellow at the Century Foundation, a think tank		No known affiliation

227	26/12/2018	-	- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights		Ties with Western governments
228	26/12/2018	Ali Rizk	- Beirut-based analyst who writes about Iran		No known affiliation
229	26/12/2018	Joost Hiltermann	- The Middle East program director for the International Crisis Group	The groups has ties with governments	Ties with governments
230	26/12/2018	Alexander Bick	- Lecturer and research scholar at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies	Oversaw Syria at the National Security Council under the Obama administration. Bick, A, 2020, "Alexander Bick", <i>The Wilson Center</i> , accessed 02/07/2020, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/person/alexander-bick	Ties with the White House
231	26/12/2018	-	- The Institute for the Study of War	- The Institute for the Study of War has a relationship with the Department of Defense.	Ties with the Department of Defense

232	28/12/2018	Faysal Itani	- Senior fellow at the Atlantic Council who studies Syria		No known affiliation
233	28/12/2018	Randa Slim	- Senior fellow at the Middle East Institute.		No known affiliation