



US' cruel sanctions on Syria ineffective: Op-ed

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In an article for *The American Conservative*, author Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute explains why the US sanctions on Syria have been ineffective and disastrous for its people.

According to Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute, the US sanctions on Syria have proven ineffectual and catastrophic for its people as the country suffers from war for more than a decade.

Bandow expressed that Syria's neighbors attempt to reach an agreement with Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad while the US expects Syria's neighbors to uphold its brutal sanctions against the country.

In an op-ed for *The American Conservative*, Bandow calls Syria "an enormous tragedy," detailing how it is the most disastrous nation in the Arab Spring.

According to him, the US had "no serious security interests at stake but advanced a complicated, even exotic agenda. Successive administrations sought to simultaneously oust Assad, defeat the Islamic State, and expel Iranian and Russian forces. "

Along the way, the US-sponsored extremist insurgents backed Syrian Kurds, while Ankara collaborated with the Islamic State. He claims that these muddles prolonged the devastating, multi-sided civil war, causing the death of thousands of Syrians.

He articulates that despite his support for leaving Syria, President Donald Trump inexplicably appointed hawks like 'Never Trumper' James Jeffrey, who aggressively opposed government plans. To frustrate Trump's pullout plans, Jeffrey and other officials shamelessly lied to the president about the United States' troop presence in Syria and used Trump's desire to pillage Syrian oil.

Congress responded by applying the Caesar sanctions, which went into effect in 2020. The policy severely impoverished Syria's already destitute inhabitants, drawing plaudits from Jeffrey and another Trump ambassador, Joel Rayburn.

As a result, Bandow states that the strategy was "both inhumane and maladroit."

Bandow states that the World Food Programme reported that, "following 12 years of conflict, an economy crippled by runaway inflation, a currency that has collapsed to a record low and soaring food prices, 12 million people do not know where their next meal is coming from. Another 2.9 million people are at risk of sliding into hunger, meaning that 70% of the population may soon be unable to put food on the table for their families."

He questions how impoverishing the Syrian people helps advance democracy and accuses supporters of sanctions of showing little regard for human life and compares it to the late Madeleine Albright's dismissal of the dead Iraqi children due to sanctions.

Bandow notes that despite this, US President Joe Biden remains committed to the US occupation in Syria. He adds that the US allies in the region are rekindling their diplomatic ties with Assad, the most recent involving Syria's rejoining the Arab League.

The author adds that the US supports Saudi Arabia and the UAE in Yemen despite their war causing the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Yemenis. He also calls the US invasion of Iraq an "incompetent occupation" that killed tens of thousands.

He blatantly points out that the US. policymakers "have repeatedly demonstrated that they have no idea how to bring democracy, stability, or peace to other nations, including Syria."

Bandow concludes by expressing that sanctions disproportionately affect those with the least and that Washington should enable Syrians and their neighbors to start working together to repair the harm of the past.