

Poll shows 81 percent of Syrians believe US created ISIS

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A recent opinion poll commissioned by the BBC and performed by the market research firm ORB across all 14 governates of Syria found that 82 percent of those surveyed believe that the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), with which the government of President Barack Obama is ostensibly at war, is itself a creation of Washington.

The poll interviewed 1,365 Syrians across the country between June 10 and July 2, and had a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points. Johnny Heald, ORB International managing director, said that the poll “includes those people living under the control of the regime, under the control of the so-called Islamic State [ISIS], [Al-Qaeda affiliate] al-Nusra, the wider opposition and the YPG [Kurdish fighters].”

Also included in the poll’s findings was that roughly half of those surveyed opposed US-led airstrikes on Syria and, not surprisingly, only 21 percent believe that their lives are better now than when the government of President Bashar al-Assad controlled the entire country.

The poll has been largely ignored by the corporate media in the US and the West generally. Those few outlets that have reported it have led with its finding that one out of five Syrians surveyed said that ISIS exerted a positive influence, as opposed to the four out of five who believe that the Islamist militia is a proxy force for US imperialism.

This is hardly surprising, as the results run so diametrically counter to the official propaganda line in Washington, which casts the Syrian government as somehow operating in league with ISIS in a bid to discredit the virtually nonexistent “moderate opposition.”

In reality, while claiming to be engaged in a war to, in President Barack Obama’s words, “degrade and ultimately destroy” ISIS, over one full year of US

military operations have not begun to do either. Moreover, Washington and its key regional allies have proven again and again to be the Islamist militias’ principal sources of strength and support.

That ISIS is the product of the criminal US wars of aggression in the region is indisputable. Neither it nor any similar movement existed in either Syria or Iraq until after the US carried out its unprovoked invasion of 2003, killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and deliberately stoking sectarian tensions in a divide-and-conquer strategy to pit Shiites and Sunnis against each other.

In 2011, the US-NATO war for regime change in Libya utilized Al Qaeda-linked militias—now affiliated with ISIS—as proxy ground troops in overthrowing and murdering Muammar Gaddafi and plunging the country into a state of chaos that continues to this day.

Subsequently, both fighters and weapons were funneled from Libya to Syria under the guiding hand of the CIA in a bid to reprise the strategy of regime change in Libya by overthrowing Assad and toppling a third secular government in the region. Once in Syria, ISIS enjoyed ample support from Washington’s main regional allies: Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar.

The belief held by four out of five Syrians that ISIS is “made in the USA” is no doubt further strengthened by the massive infusion of US weaponry that took place following the collapse of the American-armed Iraqi security forces in the summer of last year. The Iraqi regime acknowledged that the Islamists captured some 2,300 US-made Humvees, not to mention scores of tanks, artillery and vast quantities of “small arms” and ammunition.

While the overrunning of Mosul and other cities proved a debacle for US policy in Iraq, where billions of dollars and years of effort had been spent training

puppet security forces, the massive armament of ISIS, which is one of the principal armed opponents of the Assad regime, could not have been wholly unwelcome in Washington.

Meanwhile, the popular conviction in Syria that ISIS is a US Frankenstein's monster is no doubt further fueled by the so-called war against the Islamist militia, which, after more than a year of bombing, has succeeded in reducing neither its number of fighters nor the amount of territory where it holds sway in both Iraq and Syria.

Meanwhile, as the chief of the US Central Command, Gen. Lloyd Austin, admitted Wednesday, with \$40 million out of a \$500 million US training program for Syrian anti-ISIS fighters spent, the number of such US-trained fighters on the ground in Syria totals "four or five," with barely 100 others undergoing training.

Given such results, it is impossible for the overwhelming majority of Syrians to escape the conclusion that the so-called "war against ISIS" is merely window dressing for Washington's pursuit of its main objectives in Syria. These consist of the overthrow of Assad—with ISIS, the al Nusra Front and other Islamist militias serving as US proxy ground troops—the tightening of the US grip on the energy-rich Middle East and the weakening and isolation of the main allies of Damascus: Iran and Russia, which are among the next targets for the global eruption of American militarism.



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