

Syria's Assad says Paris now “knows what Syria has lived for five years”

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After the Islamic State (IS) terrorist attack in Paris Friday, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is seeking to win support in the ruling class in France and other imperialist powers, presenting his regime as a reliable, anti-terrorist ally of imperialism in the Middle East.

On Saturday, he met with a delegation of visiting French legislators and gave an interview to Europe1 radio. He drew a parallel between the Paris attack and numerous terrorist atrocities committed by Western-backed Islamist militias including IS in Syria since 2011, telling Europe1, “France has now seen what Syria has experienced for the last five years.”

Assad pointed out that the Paris attack was the direct consequence of the policies pursued by the US and its European allies in Syria: since 2011, they have used the same Islamist militias who carried out the Paris attacks as proxies to try to topple his government.

“We had warned about what would happen in Europe, three years ago. We had said, ‘Do not take what is happening in Syria lightly, it will be like an earthquake that will spread around the world.’ Unfortunately, European officials did not listen to what we were saying! They thought that we were threatening them,” the Syrian president said.

Washington, the European powers and their Persian Gulf allies stoked a devastating civil war as they armed, financed and trained Islamic militias to fight the Assad government. The imperialist war for regime change in Syria has claimed the lives of some 220,000 people and caused more than 10 million to flee their homes. Recipients of Western aid included both the Al Nusra Front, the Al Qaeda affiliate in Syria, and ISIS.

After the Paris attack, the French government is exploiting popular shock and horror at the attacks to push for an even greater bloodbath in Syria and police repression in France. The pose of outrage affected by

major politicians and media over the atrocity in Paris, as they escalate their filthy policy in Syria, reeks of hypocrisy.

One need not sympathize with the Syrian president to realize that Syria has seen hundreds of horrific terrorist atrocities similar to the Paris attacks, committed by Western-backed Islamist militias, since 2011. NATO governments and media were silent about their proxies' record, as they supported them to topple Assad and install a totally pliant, neocolonial regime in Syria.

Hundreds of suicide bombings have been carried out in Syria. In February 2013, a series of bombings in the capital Damascus killed more than 80 and injured at least 250 others on February 21. A massive car bomb exploded close to the offices of the Syrian Ba'ath Party, killing 59 and injuring more than 200 others. Among the other most notorious suicide attacks carried out by Islamist forces are included the December 2011 Damascus bombing, killing 44 people and injuring 166, and the May 2012 Damascus attack that killed 55 and injured 400.

The hypocrisy of European politicians who shed crocodile tears for the victims in Paris of terrorist militias they helped create in Syria—but who view similar terrorist attacks in Syria as a legitimate tool of foreign policy—is sickening. It underscores that final responsibility for the attack in Paris lies with the reactionary foreign policy of imperialism.

Pointing out the murderous hypocrisy of NATO's policy does not imply any political support for Assad. His regime, which has carried out countless political crimes against the people of Palestine and Lebanon and escalating attacks on the Syrian working class, is simply trying to signal to Western imperialism that it is a more reliable stooge than forces like IS.

In recent months, French parliamentarians, from both

the Socialist Party (PS) and the right-wing Republicans (LR), traveled to Damascus to hold talks with Assad. Before the Paris attack, a delegation of five deputies led by LR's Thierry Mariani met with him and hailed Russia's military intervention in Syria, bombing Islamist anti-Assad militias.

“Russia is carrying out a realist foreign policy. It acts in the general interest of peace,” said LR deputy Nicolas Dhuicq after a meeting with Assad.

For his part, Mariani stressed the "effectiveness" of the Russian intervention, adding, “All that can contribute to the struggle against terrorism is welcome.”

Assad pledged to work loyally with French imperialism, which has devastated his country in a criminal war, as long as they stopped trying to topple his government. “They don't even need to ask! They only need to be serious! We are ready to fight terrorism with them,” he said, complaining only that “until now the French government has not been serious.”

Assad issued an impotent plea to Hollande to shift his policies. “The question posed to the French today is: is the policy France has pursued for the last five years good for France? The answer is no!” Assad said, asking Hollande to review his policies: “Does he want to act in France's interests? If he wants to do that, he must change his policies.”



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