

U.S. Refusal To Aid the Syrian Earthquake Disaster Victims Is Barbaric

by Col. Richard H. Black (ret.)

Feb. 7—Col. Black issued the following statement today in response to the refusal of the U.S. to provide assistance to Syria after the horrendous earthquake which had just struck Syria and Türkiye. Col. Black is a former Marine and Army JAG officer, who headed the Army's Criminal Division at the Pentagon and later served as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates and the State Senate.

A video of Col. Black's statement is available [here](#).

On Monday [Feb. 6] there was a terrible earthquake that hit Türkiye and Syria. It was a 7.8 on the Richter scale—a shallow earthquake that was very damaging. It hit Syria's second largest city, Aleppo, doing enormous damage and created many casualties. The Biden administration has sent aid to Türkiye, has reached out to them, has aid workers going there. However, the U.S. State Department chose this time of death and suffering to make a very antagonistic statement toward the people of Syria. There was a fellow, Ned Price, a spokesman for the State Department, who said, and I quote:

"I will make the point that it will be quite ironic if not counterproductive for us to reach out to a government that has brutalized its people over the course of a dozen years now. Gassing and slaughtering them, being responsible for much of the suffering they've endured."

I've got to tell you: I have never seen such a barbaric response to a tragedy where you literally have people in Aleppo city, Syria, who are looking up at piles of concrete; their lives are coming to an end; they're freezing in the cold; they're there without food, without



Schiller Institute

Col. Richard H. Black (ret.)

water, and they're dying. Meanwhile, the State Department takes that opportunity to re-emphasize the fact that we are bitter because we could not impose our will on the Syrian people.

It was in 2020 that the United States imposed the Syria sanctions out of anger at the fact that Syria had driven back the ISIS and al-Qaeda terrorists that the United States had supported, and was trying to overwhelm the government with. So, now the State Department looks at this as an opportunity to simply ratchet up the regime of starvation and freezing that we have imposed on Syria through the cruel Caesar sanctions.

I'm quite disgusted by the actions of the United States State Department. It is really unbecoming of any civilized nation to choose this moment to take out its vengeance on the poor suffering people of Syria.

LIFT THE IMMORAL SYRIA SANCTIONS

Will the Turkish and Syrian Presidents Now Meet?

by EIR staff

Feb. 12—Chandra Muzaffar, the founder and president of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), released a call on Feb. 12 "urging the American, Brit-

ish, Australian, Canadian, Swiss, and some European Union and Arab League governments to lift the unjust, immoral sanctions against Syria in order to lessen the

immense sufferings of the people caused by the massive earthquake of February 6, 2023.”

Muzaffar, in his statement, highlighted the horrendous and murderous impact of the U.S. efforts to overthrow the Syrian government in 2011.

EIR has documented the U.S.-NATO hand behind the Arab Spring events of that year. Lyndon LaRouche forcefully [spoke out](#) following the Oct. 21, 2011 killing of Muammar Qaddafi, that the underlying motive was to escalate the destruction of Iraq and Syria, and ultimately to go to a nuclear confrontation with Russia.

LaRouche said in addition that “since the mass murder in Libya, which was perpetrated by the President of the United States in defiance of the Constitution—and it’s criminal murder; this is not killing, this is criminal murder, politically motivated murder of a head of state, in a war which was conducted in violation of the U.S. Constitution. ... intended is a confrontation with Russia, the principal nuclear power on this planet. ... The only other nation which is relevant for major warfare, using nuclear or thermonuclear power, is the United States.”

In November 2011, Syria was expelled from the Arab League. In 2011, it was also hit, Muzaffar notes, with a “whole range of new sanctions from travel bans and asset freezes to prohibitions on exports and restrictions upon the oil sector. The EU also joined the U.S. in embargoing the oil sector. Twenty percent of Syria’s GDP came from oil. It has been estimated that the country has lost 107 billion U.S. dollars from its oil and gas earnings since 2011. ... Some Arab League states also froze Syrian government assets as did Türkiye in 2011. But none of these actions had as severe an impact upon the Syrian economy and State as the capture of territories containing oil and producing wheat and cotton by rebel groups linked to governments, ethnic movements or terrorist outfits in the region.” Beyond blocking Syrian oil, the United States has now occupied much of the oil fields, taking the oil and keeping the income.

Looking to the future, reflecting the epochal shift to a moral order coming from the Global South, Muzaffar

writes:

“One hopes that this mammoth catastrophe will persuade some of the principal actors in these conflicts to reflect deeply on what has happened—the unfathomable suffering of millions of human beings on both sides of the Türkiye-Syria border. If their suffering is to have any meaning at all, let it herald the end of conflicts and killings along the border and in other parts of Syria. In this regard, it is encouraging that the United Nations has appealed to all warring parties to observe a ceasefire with immediate effect to enable humanitarian assistance to be channeled to the victims of the earthquake.



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“One hopes that this mammoth [earthquake] catastrophe will ... herald the end of conflicts and killings along the border and in other parts of Syria. If that happens, the deaths of thousands will not have been in vain.” —Chandra Muzaffar. Shown: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (l.) and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (r.).

“There is another glimmer of hope. Even before the earthquake, on the 5th of January 2023, the president of Türkiye, Recep Erdoğan indicated that he wants to meet up with the Syrian president, Bashar Assad, to discuss and resolve their differences. Let us hope and pray that both men will work towards such a meeting—a meeting which will result in a mutually acceptable solution to their problems. If the two leaders who enjoyed a close friendship some time ago make peace with one another, there is a strong possibility that Türkiye and Syria will be able to come together on a firm footing and most of the other protagonists will also be able to bury the hatchet.

“If that happens, the deaths of thousands—especially little children—in one of the greatest tragedies in recent times would not have been in vain.”