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The West's criminal culpability in Syria

By Peter Lee

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The Guardian newspaper in the UK, in its trademark handwringing fashion, is this week marking the fourth anniversary of the Syrian conflict: 200,000 dead, 3.5 million refugees.

The Guardian should also commemorate three-and-a-half years of bloodshed, destruction, and misery inflicted upon Syria by the United States, the European Union, and the Gulf Cooperation

Council - make that murder, war crimes, and collective punishment IMO - much of it enthusiastically endorsed by the Guardian and its media brethren.

Think I'm exaggerating? But first read the piece that I wrote in November 2011, when it was clear that the domestic uprising was headed for defeat and the West and GCC faced the crucial choice whether to let Assad cobble together some reconciliatory process ... or try to bring him down with a foreign-supported insurrection.

We all know - or should know - what choice was made. And we should know - but probably don't know - the actual cost. Consider these numbers: 7,000 ... and 193,000.

The first, 7,000, is the estimated death count for the Syrian unrest after the Syrian government had crushed the rebel enclave in Homs in February 2012 and shattered the domestic uprising.

The second, 193,000 is the death toll since then ... since the United States, the GCC, Turkey, and their enablers began pumping money, arms, and diplomatic support into the various Syria-based paramilitaries that eventually encompassed not only the hapless Free Syrian Army but Al-Qaeda, IS, and their affiliates and allies.

When you read my piece, you'll see some bad pennies turning up again. Like Victoria Nuland, charged with inciting the Syrian opposition to ignore reconciliation. Like Abdelhakim Belhadj, who, on his long march from anti-Gaddafi Islamist to reputed head of IS Libya, shows up in Turkey to succor the Syrian opposition.

A lot of death ... a lot of murder ... has been packed into those three-and-a-half years. 7,000 versus 193,000.

As I mentioned on my twitter feed, I wonder if there's any second thoughts in the US State Department about spurning the reconciliation route in Syria I doubt it. The US foreign policy regime deals in consequences, not causes, so it can shirk responsibility for its failures and claim victories instead.

But remember those numbers: 7,000 vs 193,000.