

# AMERICA'S FAILED QUAGMIRE

The WaPo has a report providing new (actually conflicting, especially as to start date) details on America's "covert" efforts in Syria.

In all seriousness, Administration officials (some anonymous) and a former Syrian opposition figure told WaPo that the whole point of this was quagmire: weakening Bashar al-Assad, but not too much.

Supplied mostly from stocks owned by Saudi Arabia, delivered across the Turkish border and stamped with CIA approval, the [TOW] missiles were intended to fulfill another of the Obama administration's goals in Syria – Assad's negotiated exit from power. The plan, as described by administration officials, was to exert sufficient military pressure on Assad's forces to persuade him to compromise – but not so much that his government would precipitously collapse and leave a dangerous power vacuum in Damascus.

Consider what this strategy means for civilians on the ground, especially refugees that the international community is already underfunding.

Even crazier, though, is that the US believed we could prevent our Saudi allies from pressing their advantage.

"A primary driving factor in Russia's calculus was the realization that the Assad regime was militarily weakening and in danger of losing territory in northwestern Syria. The TOWs played an outsize role in that," said Oubai Shahbandar, a Dubai-based consultant who used to work with the Syrian opposition.

"I think even the Americans were

surprised at how successful they've been," he added.

[snip]

But the TOW missile program is already in progress, and all the indications are that it will continue. Saudi Arabia, the chief supplier, has pledged a "military" response to the Russian incursion, and rebel commanders say they have been assured more will arrive imminently.

In any case, our "strategy" in Syria seemed to misunderstand both our Saudi allies and Assad, not to mention Russia's, intent (unless they intent was to expand the proxy war beyond Ukraine). As well as the consequences.