V. The Future
What are the possible outcomes? Should the war against Daech be the priority? Is the regime of Assad a lesser evil?

Until the attacks in Paris in 2015, François Hollande seemed to maintain the principle “Neither Assad nor Daech”, but following these tragedies he seemed to give priority to the eradication of Daech. The French continue to debate over this question of priority. But is it really possible to separate the two objectives? In fact, it is not, and for three reasons:

1. From the beginning, Daech and Assad have had an objective complicity. Not only because the imprisoned jihadists liberated by Assad in May 2011 sooner or later joined the ranks of Daech, but also because the regime always preferred bombing the rebel groups and the civilian population rather than Daech, and apart from a few exceptions, such as the taking of their base at Tabqa, Daech likewise preferred attacking opposing rebel groups than the Syrian regular army.

2. The continuation of the bombing of civilians by the regime, now seconded by the Russians, has encouraged candidates for the jihad who now mainly join Daech. The departure of Assad and the end of the killing of civilians would be the most effective way to limit their attraction for Daech.

3. It is only in establishing a veritable political transition in Damascus without Assad that it would be possible, under certain conditions, for the opposition army to join forces with the regular army in order to constitute a ground force capable of eradicating Daech.

diary.thesyriacampaign.org – 5 reasons we can’t beat Isis while Assad is in power

liberation.fr – Bachar al-Assad moindre mal contre Daech : chiche !

After Aleppo
Today the martyrizing of unarmed populations in Syria is symbolized by the tragedy of the city of Aleppo.

Do not forget that Aleppo was liberated from the IS by revolutionary forces in January 2014! But under the pretext of the “battle against terrorism”, Aleppo was besieged starting in July 2016, with intensive bombing by the Russians and the regime, despite fact that at the same time pro-Assad Iraqi et Afghani militia and Iranian “Guardians of the Revolution” were combattting on the ground. East Aleppo fell in December 2016.

There are no longer any hospitals functioning, as they have all been destroyed and the “White Helmets” (civilian rescue squads) have also been bombed. The number of civilian victims, including many children, increases each day. It is also to be feared that the takeover of the districts of East-Aleppo will be accompanied by many arrests and unfortunately, many “disappearances”, as the regime and its allies are driven by revenge against those who resisted them for so long.

Bassem Khalifé, a resident of the district of Bustan Al-Qasr in East Aleppo, declared, “Each time we go out, we say farewell to our families”.

The fall of Aleppo and the indifference of the international community made this battle a turning point. Firstly, in addition to the loss of lives and territory, the new balance of power is very unfavourable to the opposition. Revolutionary dynamics are re-configurated in very difficult conditions. Secondly, it is a military victory for Al-Assad and his allies. But above all, it is the confirmation that since the battle of Homs two years earlier, the Syrain regime is only capable of taking back territories emptied of their populations.

In the end, Daech is also a victor. On November 21, 2016, Stephen O’Brien, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations for Humanitarian Affairs declared before the UN Security Council : “Month after month I have reported to this Council that the level of depravity inflicted upon the Syrian people cannot sink lower, only to return the following month with hideous and, with shocking disbelief, new reports of ever-worsening human suffering… Humanitarian conditions in eastern Aleppo have gone from terrible to terrifying and now barely survivable by human beings.”

Beyond the humanitarian crisis, the question arises of the impotence of the UN and its incapacity to impose peace and security. Limited to denouncing war crimes, the UN has not taken any action to end the massacre. Faced with the death of a quarter of a million people, this position, which could be considered to be a form of passive complicity with the aggressors, risks, in addition, to encourage terrorism, as Daech has already pointed to this position in its discourse on “injustice”.

Although all efforts were concentrated on the bombing of a city where it wasn’t present, the organization symbolically took up the initiative at Palmyra.