

Política Internacional e Geopolítica

a crise do mundo globalizado

**INSTITUTO CULTURAL
D. ANTÓNIO FERREIRA GOMES
José Pedro Teixeira Fernandes**

**2020-2021
SESSÃO Nº 29**



PARTE I – TEMA PRINCIPAL

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (1)

[FONTE: Encyclopedia Britannica]



HEAD OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
President: [Bashar al-Assad](#),
assisted by Prime Minister:
Hussein Arnous

CAPITAL
[Damascus](#)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE
Arabic

OFFICIAL RELIGION
none¹

MONETARY UNIT
Syrian pound (S.P)

POPULATION
(2020 est.) 26,271,000²

POPULATION RANK
(2019) 51

POPULATION PROJECTION 2030
28,647,000

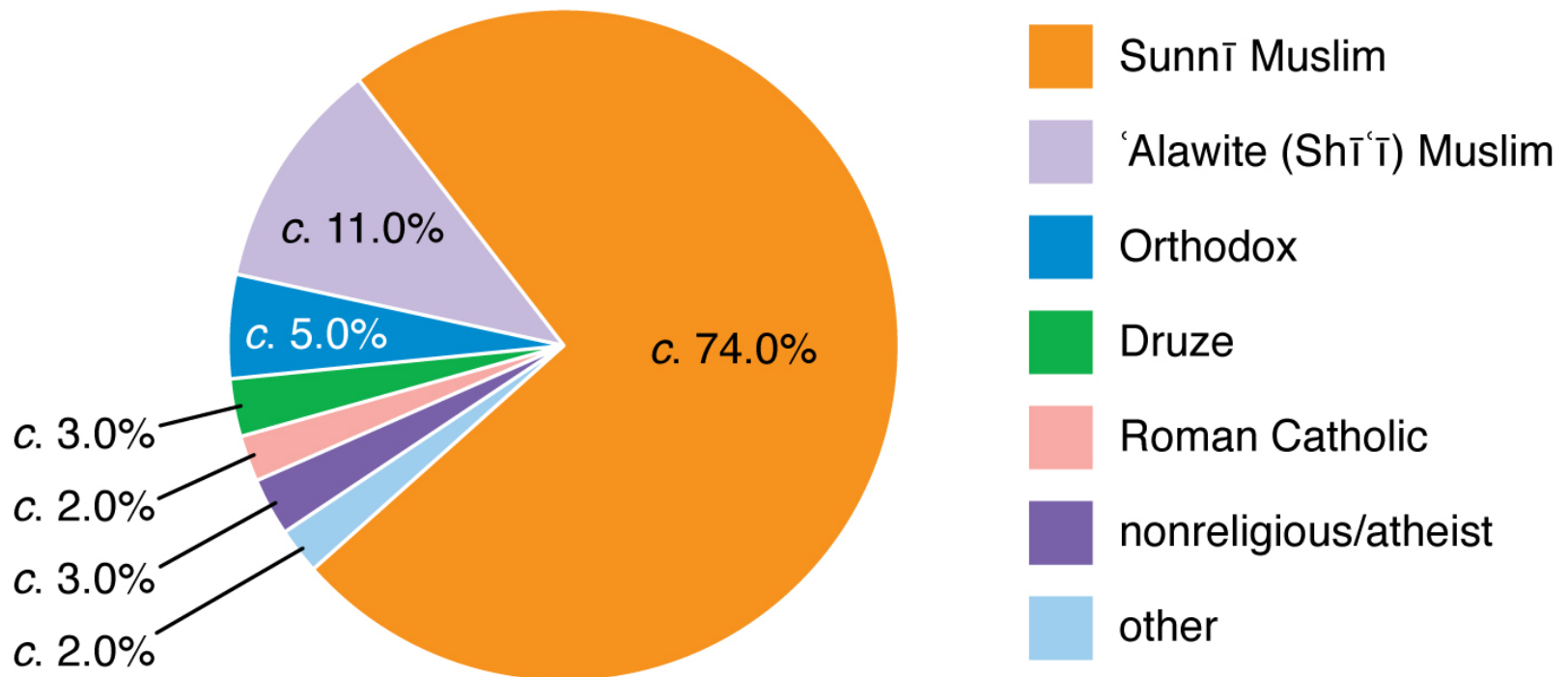
TOTAL AREA (SQ MI)
71,498

TOTAL AREA (SQ KM)
185,180

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (2)

[FONTE: Encyclopedia Britannica]

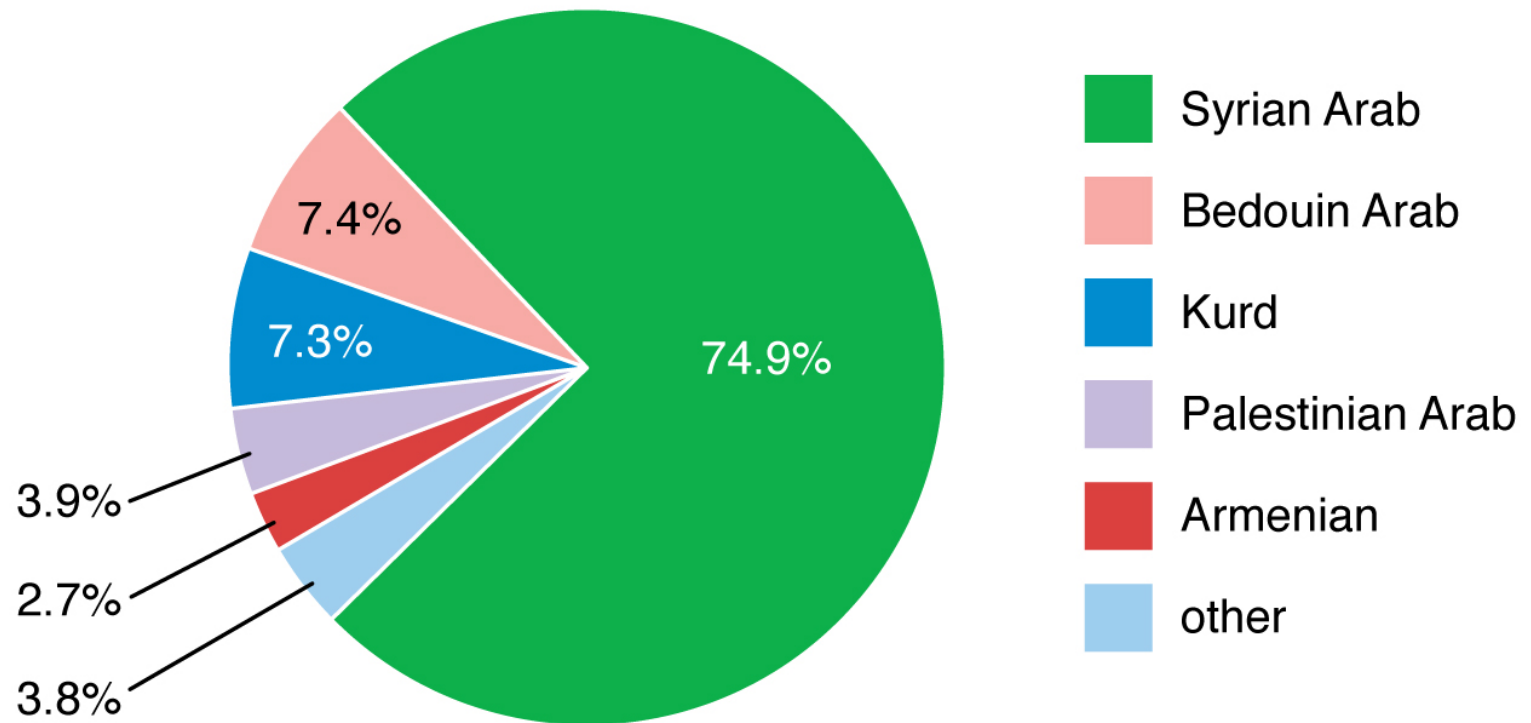
Religious affiliation (2000)



O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (3)

[FONTE: Encyclopedia Britannica]

Ethnic composition (2000)



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O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (4)

[FONTE: Encyclopedia Britannica]

Bashar al-Assad

Bashar al-Assad, (born September 11, 1965, Damascus, Syria), Syrian president from 2000. He succeeded his father, Hāfiz al-Assad, who had ruled Syria since 1971. In spite of early hopes that his presidency would usher in an era of democratic reform and economic revival, Bashar al-Assad largely continued his father's authoritarian methods. Beginning in 2011, Assad faced a major uprising in Syria that evolved into civil war.



Assad, Bashar al-
Bashar al-Assad.

Press Service of the President of Russia

Early life

Bashar al-Assad was the third child of Hāfiz al-Assad, a Syrian military officer and member of the Baʿth Party who in 1971 ascended to the presidency via a coup. The Assad family belonged to Syria's 'Alawite minority, a Shīʿite sect that traditionally

constitutes about 10 percent of the Syrian population and has played a dominant role in Syrian politics since the 1960s.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Early life
- Presidency
- Unrest and civil war

Bashar al-Assad

QUICK FACTS



BORN

September 11, 1965 (age 55)

[Damascus, Syria](#)

POLITICAL AFFILIATION

[Baʿth Party](#)

ROLE IN

[Syrian Civil War](#)

NOTABLE FAMILY MEMBERS

Father [Hafiz Al-Assad](#)

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (5)

[FONTE: Encyclopedia Britannica]

Presidency

Hafiz al-Assad died on June 10, 2000. Hours after his death, the national legislature approved a constitutional amendment lowering the minimum age for the president from 40 to 34, Bashar al-Assad's age at the time. On June 18 Assad was appointed secretary-general of the ruling Ba'th Party, and two days later the party congress nominated him as its candidate for the presidency; the national legislature approved the nomination. On July 10, running unopposed, Assad was elected to a seven-year term.

Although many Syrians objected to the transfer of power from father to son, Bashar's ascent engendered some optimism both in Syria and abroad. His youth, education, and exposure to the West seemed to offer the possibility of a departure from what had been the status quo: an authoritarian state, policed by a network of powerful overlapping security and intelligence agencies, and a stagnant state-run economy reliant on shrinking oil reserves. In his inaugural speech, Assad affirmed his commitment to economic liberalization and vowed to carry out some political reform, but he rejected Western-style democracy as an appropriate model for Syrian politics.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (6)

[FONTE: Encyclopedia Britannica]

Unrest and civil war

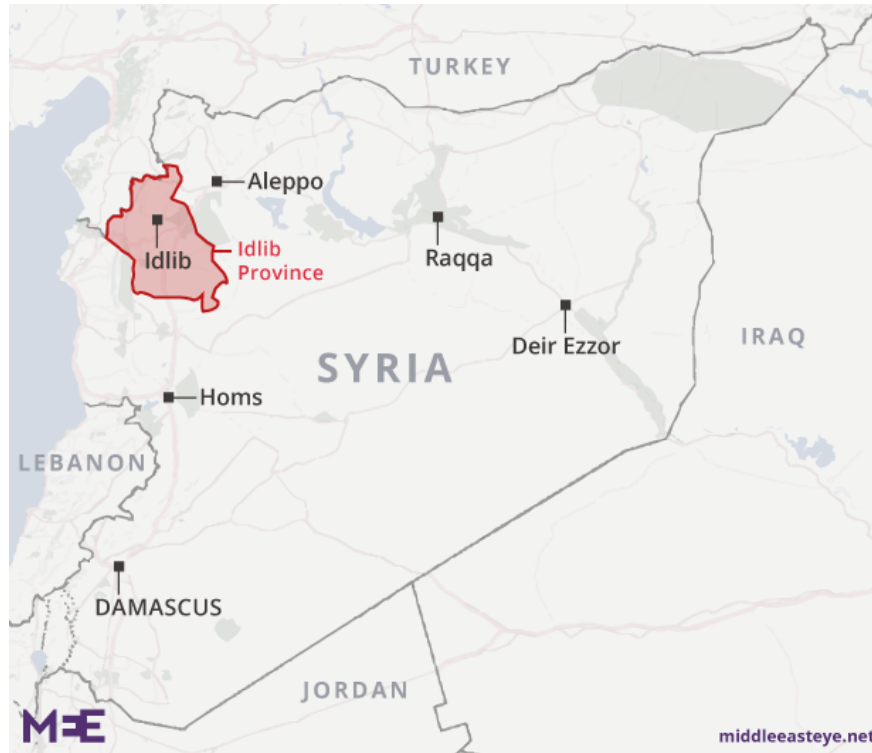
Beginning in March 2011, Assad faced a significant challenge to his rule when antigovernment protests broke out in Syria, inspired by a wave of pro-democracy uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa. (*See Arab Spring.*) While Syrian security forces used lethal force against demonstrators, Assad offered a variety of concessions, first shuffling his cabinet and then announcing that he would seek to abolish Syria's emergency law and its Supreme State Security Court, both of which were used to suppress political opposition. However, implementation of those reforms coincided with a significant escalation of violence against protesters, drawing international condemnation for Assad and his government.

As unrest spread to new areas of the country, the government deployed tanks and troops to several cities that had become centres of protest. Amid reports of massacres and indiscriminate violence by security forces, Assad maintained that his country was the victim of an international conspiracy to instigate sectarian warfare in Syria and that the government was engaged in combating networks of armed insurgents rather than peaceful civilian protesters.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (7)

[FONTE: Foreign Policy, 19/03/2021. MAPA: Middle East Eye]

Assad's Violence Started a Conflict That Will Burn for Decades



This week marks the 10-year anniversary of the first anti-government protests that broke out in Damascus and Aleppo in [March 2011](#). But this solemn date marks only the start of the Syrian revolution, not the opening shot of the Syrian civil war, which began only after [months](#) of a brutal crackdown that had already left thousands of people dead at the hands of the regime's security forces. That violence, initiated by President Bashar al-Assad, began the largest human-made human catastrophe since World War II, on a scale so unfathomable that the United Nations officially abandoned trying to count the death toll in [January 2014](#). It's a conflict that isn't over—and that never had to happen.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (8)

[FONTE: Foreign Policy, 19/03/2021]

The U.N.'s last attempt at an estimate was 400,000 dead, issued by then-Special Envoy for Syria [Staffan de Mistura](#) in 2016. Even at that time, the number barely reflected the actual human cost. It became impossible to count the death toll from the daily bombardments, and even more impossible to set a figure for those who later succumbed to their wounds, died from preventable diseases, or starved to death as a result of barbaric sieges—or the hundreds of thousands of Syrians who disappeared, summarily executed or tortured to death in the Assad regime's [death camps](#). The circle of suffering goes beyond the dead: rape victims, torture victims, traumatized children, widows and widowers, displaced people. It's a list with no end.

The world doesn't even seem interested in counting anymore. But the least that outsiders can do is to speak of the start of the violence accurately and name the perpetrators.

The Syrian civil war must be defined not by the defiance and courage of those who took to the streets in 2011 but instead by the [slogan](#) Assad's personal militias used to drive fear into the hearts of the Syrian people: "Assad or no one. Assad or we burn the country." This is the only promise the regime has ever kept. This is why it is wrong to mark this date as the start of the Syrian civil war: Syrians did not choose to become the victims of a violent military crackdown for one man's lust for power; it was a crime perpetrated against them.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (9)

[FONTE: Foreign Policy, 19/03/2021]

Syria's economy has collapsed to depths unprecedented even during the height of the violence, with the value of the Syrian pound plummeting daily. As of March 16, it was [4,550 Syrian pounds](#) to the U.S. dollar. For context, its [prewar](#) value was roughly 50 Syrian pounds to the dollar; comparatively, the Syrian pound was trading at roughly 600 to the dollar in [2016](#). But even before the recent spiral, the regime had done virtually nothing in the way of reconstruction, with areas it captured years ago [still lying in ruins](#).

The regime's allies in Iran and Russia will not fund reconstruction, instead looking to the European Union and others to foot the bill for their destruction of Syria's infrastructure.

The regime's allies in Iran and Russia will not fund reconstruction, instead looking to the European Union and others to foot the bill for their destruction of Syria's infrastructure. The West will not open the coffers, nor will it drop sanctions, without progress toward a political transition that the Assad regime burned the country to avoid pursuing.

Even if the moral and ethical horror of renormalization of the Assad regime could be negotiated or ignored, the regime, as all [available evidence](#) indicates from its behavior, would only use additional funding to rebuild its security state and continue to use aid as a weapon of war, something that the [U.N. has shamefully enabled](#) from its office in Damascus since day one.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (10)

[FONTE: Foreign Policy, 19/03/2021]

What little influence the Western powers have on the ground in Syria is confined to small pockets surrounding U.S. forces, such as the Tanf border crossing with Jordan, and in northeastern Syria alongside their allies in the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), essentially a U.S.-backed offshoot of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), a separatist movement with its own [human rights issues](#) that finds itself in an uncomfortable partnership with both its [unreliable U.S. ally](#) and the [Assad regime and Moscow](#). The SDF also finds itself in the unfortunate position of managing the indefinite detainment of Islamic State fighters, despite having no infrastructure or political autonomy.

Syria today is a failed state, effectively Balkanized into competing spheres of influence. It is teetering on the brink of famine, with a staggering 90 percent of the population living below the poverty line, [according](#) to the International Committee of the Red Cross. Even with those shocking figures, the regime and Russia continue to deliberately hamper international aid efforts, the cruelty acting as a critical component of the regime's total grip on power.

While the future of Syria remains unwritten, the next 10 years look to be at least as painful as the last. It is not only Syria's territorial map that has become locked in stalemate; the political and diplomatic process is almost nonexistent. The war is not over, just in stasis, and the suffering continues in a landscape so broken and chaotic that even the highest authorities on the planet cannot meaningfully quantify the dead.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (11)

[FONTE: RT, 27/05/2021]

Syrian President Bashar Assad wins re-election with 95.1% of votes

27 May, 2021 20:36 / Updated 1 day ago



President Bashar Assad has been reelected to a fourth term with over 95% of the votes cast, defeating two challengers – including a former senior official of a rebel coalition, Syrian authorities have announced.

Turnout in Wednesday's election was 78%, with Assad winning over 13 million votes, according to Hammouda Sabbagh, speaker of the Syrian legislature.

Mahmoud Ahmad Marei, who previously served as secretary-general of the rebel coalition National Front for the Liberation of Syria, received some 470,276 votes, or 3.1%, while Abdullah Sallum Abdullah of the Socialist Unionist Party came in third with about 213,968 votes, or 1.5%.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (12)

[FONTE: DW 27/05/2021]

Syria election results: Bashar Assad wins 4th term

Assad has won another seven-year term with a vote share of 95.1%. The rather predictable official results are unlikely to quell criticism from the West.



Syrian President [Bashar Assad](#) won a fourth term in office with 95.1% of votes, the country's parliament speaker announced in a live conference on Thursday.

Hammoud Sabbagh also said voter turnout was 78.66%.

The Syrian government's official Twitter account posted: "The Syrians had their say. Bashar al-Assad wins the presidential elections of the Syrian Arab Republic after obtaining 95.1% of the votes inside and outside Syria."

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (13)

[FONTE: DW 27/05/2021]

Assad's government claimed the election showed Syria was still functioning normally despite the decade-old conflict, which has killed hundreds of thousands of people and driven some 11 million people — about half the population — from their homes.

US casts doubts over ballot fairness

US and European officials have [questioned the legitimacy of the ballot](#), saying it violated UN resolutions seeking to resolve the ongoing conflict in Syria. Those officials have also complained over a lack of international monitoring for the election.



Assad supporters took to the streets of Damascus to celebrate his victory.

Voting was only possible in areas of the country under [government control](#). Many refugees who have fled the fighting in Syria in recent years were also either unable or unwilling to participate.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (14)

[FONTE: União Europeia, 27/05/2021]

Syria: Statement by the High Representative Josep Borrell on the presidential elections

The elections that took place in Syria on 26 May met none of the criteria of a genuinely democratic vote, do not contribute to the settlement of the conflict. Elections in Syria should take place only within the framework of a genuine political process, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2254. They can only be credible if all Syrians, including internally displaced people, refugees and members of the diaspora, are able to participate in a safe, and neutral environment without threat of intimidation and in a free and fair political competition.

The EU considers that the elections yesterday undermine efforts to find a sustainable solution to the Syrian conflict. It cannot lead to any measure of international normalisation with the Syrian regime. The political process must be fully inclusive to ensure that all segments of Syria's society are involved in shaping the country's future unity and reconciliation.

The European Union is prepared to support free and fair elections in Syria in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2254 and under supervision of the UN, to the highest international standards of transparency and accountability, with all Syrians, including members of the diaspora, eligible to participate.

The European Union continues to demand an end to repression, the release of detainees, and meaningful engagement by the Syrian regime and its allies towards the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2254. The European Union reiterates its support to the efforts of UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen to advance all aspects of this Resolution.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (15)

[FONTE: Washington Institute, 26/03/2020]

Idlib May Become the Next Gaza Strip

Given the military situation on the ground and the overriding interests of each party, the jihadist-run rebel pocket will likely be further reduced into a small, overpopulated border strip north of the M4 highway.

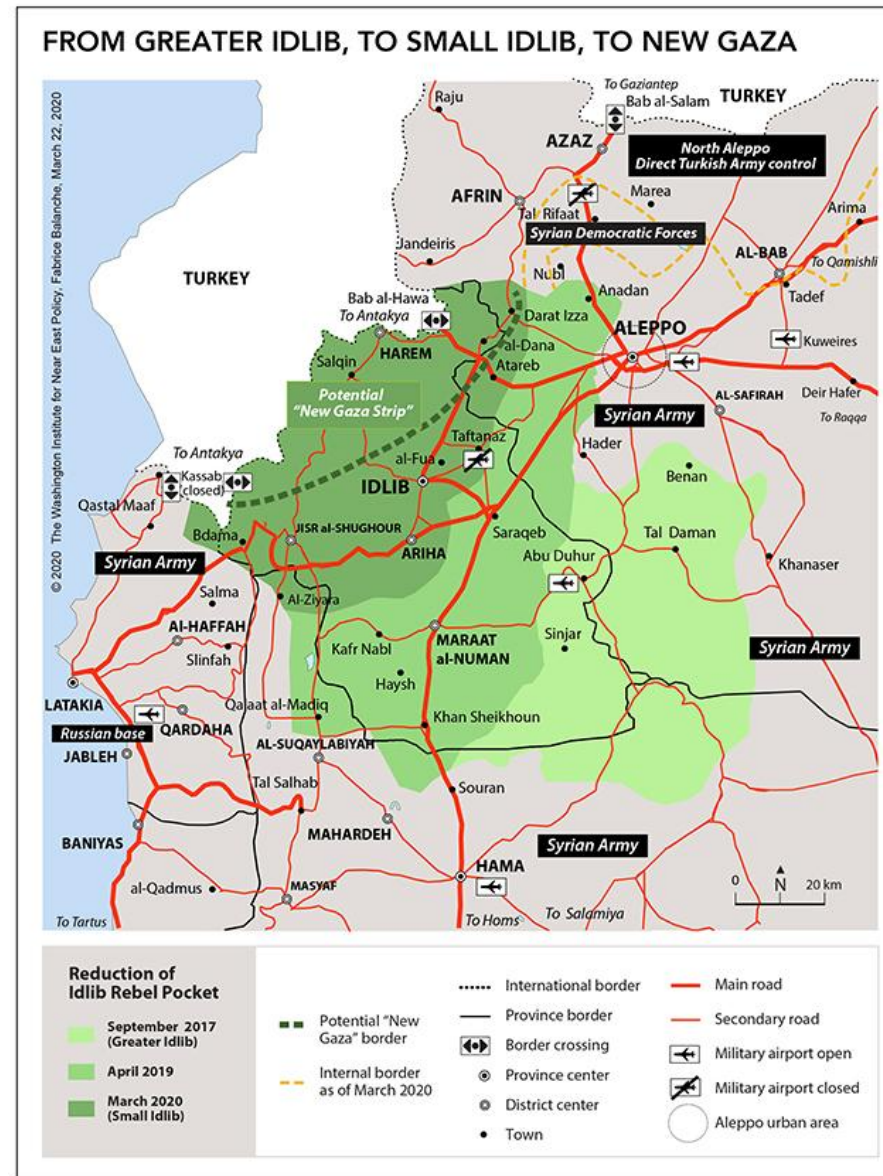
Russia and Turkey's March 5 ceasefire agreement in Syria's Idlib province was the latest step in a process that has shrunk the rebel pocket in half since April 2019. Yet even this arrangement is only temporary given Bashar al-Assad's determination to do away with what he and his allies see as "Jihadistan." A closer look at the area's territorial and demographic situation shows how ongoing developments will likely lead to the creation of a "New Gaza Strip" in northwest Syria—that is, an overpopulated refugee zone where terrorists are in control, essentially forcing the international community to work with them because they are the "de facto authorities," as the UN puts it.

FROM "GREATER IDLIB" TO "SMALL IDLIB"

The rebels now control only 3,000 square kilometers of Idlib, down from 7,000 last April and more than 9,000 in September 2017, when the Syrian army launched its first major offensive to retake "Greater Idlib." Earlier this month, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated the rebel pocket's population at 2.6 million. It was 3 million in April 2019, including 1,300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs). Since then, more than 400,000 people have fled the pocket to seek refuge in the portion of north Aleppo under direct Turkish control. Fearing regime violence and realizing that housing is saturated in Idlib, the majority of them settled in Afrin, in homes abandoned by Kurds who fled the Turkish offensive of winter 2018.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (16)

[FONTE: Washington Institute, 26/03/2020]



O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (17)

[FONTE: Washington Institute, 26/03/2020]

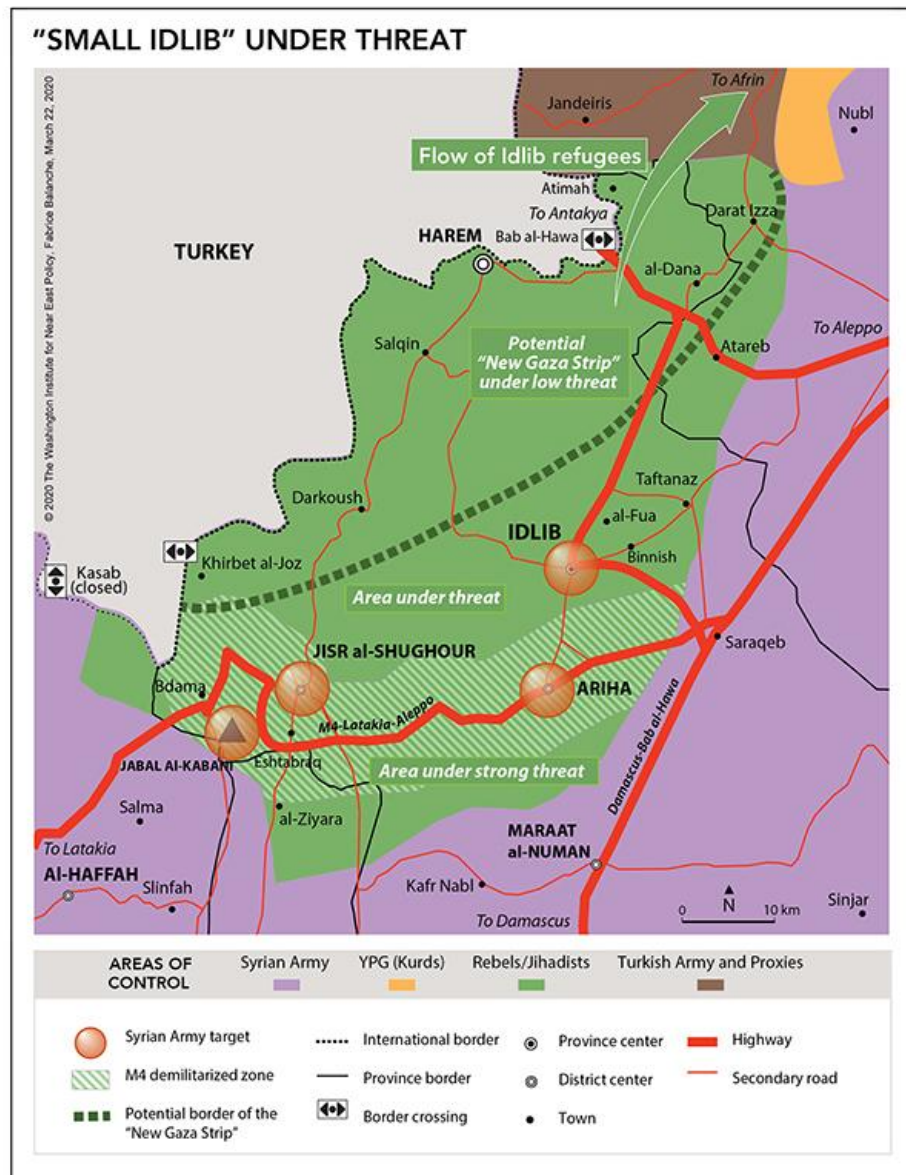
In terms of humanitarian action, OCHA now considers Idlib and north Aleppo as one entity with 4 million inhabitants (2.6 million in the former, 1.4 million in the latter). This indicates that the agency anticipates more Idlib IDPs fleeing to north Aleppo in the coming months.

Regarding rebel fighters, the Idlib pocket contained around 50,000 a year ago, though it is difficult to estimate their number today due to war losses and departures. The [architecture of the rebellion remains the same](#), with the organization Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) dominating, flanked by various jihadist groups still officially linked to al-Qaeda. Some groups were involved in the most recent battle against the regime but no longer hold territory in Idlib (e.g., Failaq al-Sham, Jaish al-Ahrar). They are now based in north Aleppo and came over with the Turkish army.

In the civil field, HTS has cemented control through its “Government of Salvation,” created in September 2017. This administration gradually ousted the local structures of the interim government based in Gaziantep, Turkey, as well as local committees that benefited from international NGO support. Turkish authorities are therefore being pragmatic about the situation by working closely with HTS in Idlib. Group leader Abu Muhammad al-Julani hopes to see the pocket become a Turkish-protected buffer zone where his Islamic emirate can flourish. Yet his dream would now have to be squeezed into “Small Idlib,” a territory only one-third as large as the zone previously envisioned—and which could shrink even further as described below.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (18)

[FONTE: Washington Institute, 26/03/2020]



THE NEW GAZA

Two-thirds of Idlib's population is now clustered in a 1,000-square-kilometer strip bordering Turkey. That amounts to 2 million people, or four times more than this frontier area originally held. Several hundred thousand IDPs have settled there since 2012. Most of them have crowded into makeshift field camps, especially once the more formal IDP camps

filled up. Accommodations in the strip's small localities are also saturated and offer even worse conditions than the camps. The fact that this overpopulated area is now wholly under the thumb of designated terrorist groups makes the comparisons to Gaza unavoidable.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (19)

[FONTE: Brookings Institute, 13/05/2021]

The coming crisis in Idlib



On July 10, 2021, Bab al-Hawa, the last remaining border crossing between Turkey and the Syrian rebel province of Idlib, may close as Russia [plans to veto](#) an extension to [U.N. Security Council Resolution 2533](#). For the 3.4 million civilians in Idlib—over 2 million of them displaced from elsewhere in Syria—this would be a disaster. Approximately 75 percent of the population in northwest Syria is dependent on U.N. aid to meet their needs; around 85 percent of that aid comes through this border crossing.

Caught between a severe economic crisis exacerbated by Lebanon’s economic meltdown, [further U.S. sanctions in 2020](#), and the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation is desperate in all of Syria. The U.N. Refugee Agency (UNHCR) says [13.4 million Syrians need humanitarian aid](#), 20 percent more than last year, but assistance reached only 7.7 million. [Nine out 10 people are living in poverty while Syrians](#) without secure access to food increased 57 percent in the past year. [UNICEF says that 90 percent of Syrian children](#) need humanitarian assistance. The internally displaced are especially vulnerable, acutely so in conflict-prone Idlib and northwest Syria. Cross-border aid is critical to avert a humanitarian disaster. Yet, that is exactly what may happen, accompanied by massive civilian displacement and a possible war between Russia and Turkey.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (20)

[FONTE: Brookings Institute, 13/05/2021]

However, within a year, Idlib's population will find itself totally dependent on an intractably hostile regime. Others such as University of Lyon's Fabrice Balanche [see the possibility of a bargain between Turkey and Russia](#) over the M4 highway leading to perhaps a rump Turkish protectorate, or a new Gaza consisting of “a narrow strip of land under the control of ... HTS, managing a population of refugees, under a drip of international humanitarian aid.”

You know you are in a bad situation when Gaza appears as an acceptable outcome, especially these days as fighting again engulfs the strip and Palestine. But even for that to happen, an agreement would have to be reached with HTS or they would have to be militarily pushed away from the highway. [Even if HTS wanted to deal, more radical armed groups could and have played](#) a spoiler role when it comes to deals with Russia. It seems that caught between HTS and Russia, Turkey will hang on to what TOBB University's Saban Kardas calls its [mission impossible in sustaining Idlib's unstable equilibrium](#).

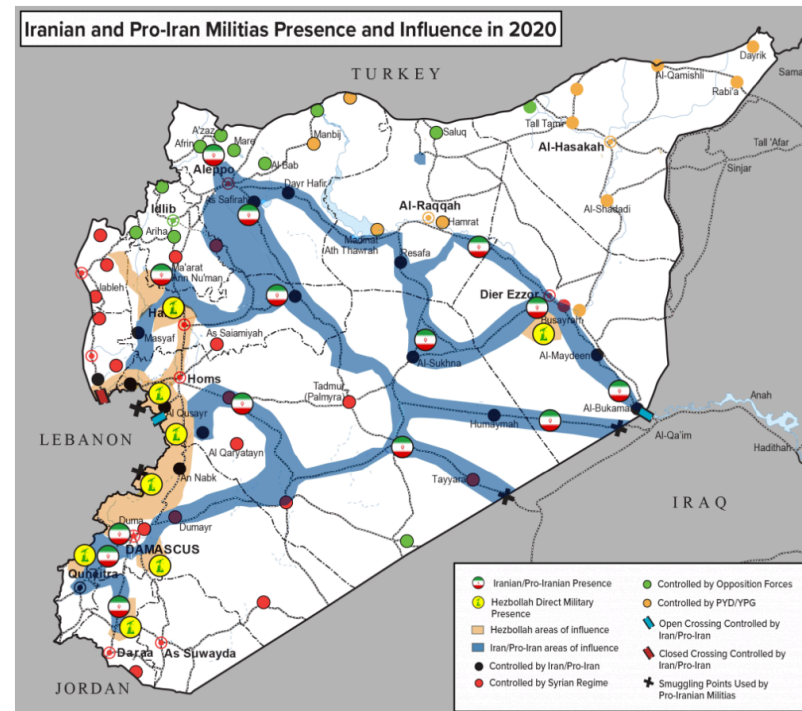
Yet, despite frequent flare-ups, no one wants a full-scale war, nor is it likely that the regime is enthusiastic about accommodating over 4 million Sunni oppositionists in Idlib and northwest Syria. And despite the Erdogan administration's estrangement from the U.S. and partners in Europe as well as its regional isolation, there is still Turkey's NATO membership. So, a rump Idlib may emerge, especially as the M4 highway is opened, [but the critical matter of U.N. participation in the aid effort](#) will be quite contentious. Just as in Gaza, it is also likely that trade and aid routes will be contested for years—until and if a political settlement is ever reached.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (21)

[FONTE: Anchal Vora / Foreign Policy, 15/03/2021. MAPA: Atlantic Council]

Iran Is Trying to Convert Syria to Shiism

Ten years after entering Syria's civil war, Tehran is using religion to make its influence there permanent.



Former Syrian President Hafez al-Assad's Baath Party regime was the first to recognize, and offer legitimacy to, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's Islamic revolution in Iran. But Assad was careful to never let Iran expand its influence in Syria as it later did in Lebanon through Hezbollah.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (22)

[FONTE: Anchal Vora / Foreign Policy, 15/03/2021]

The desperation of his son and successor Bashar al-Assad has given Iran's expansionists their chance. Iranian forces entered Syria soon after its civil war started a decade ago to help defend the younger Assad's regime against rebels. Tehran supported the Syrian regime in the war, along with its Lebanese proxy Hezbollah, and even enrolled Shiite fighters from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan to aid the cause. Over time, Iran recruited local Syrian fighters in militias ostensibly to guard Shiite shrines, and it intensified relations with the higher echelons of the Syrian military apparatus, particularly the 4th Division headed by one of Hafez al-Assad's other sons, Maher al-Assad.

A decade into the conflict, Iran-backed militias control the outskirts of Damascus and patrol the strategic towns on the Syria-Lebanon border. They are present in large numbers in southern Syria near Israel, have multiple bases in Aleppo, and since the Islamic State's defeat in 2018 have also set up camp in towns and villages on the Syria-Iraq border.

But it's not only through arms that Iran has secured its arc of influence from Tehran through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon. Over the last few years, as the military conflict has subsided, Iran has expanded its cultural influence in the war-torn nation to encourage Sunnis to convert to Shiism or at the very least soften their attitudes toward their sectarian rivals. *Foreign Policy* spoke to recent converts and their friends inside regime-held Syria who said that the economic collapse in Syria made it hard to ignore the perks Iran offered.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (23)

[FONTE: Al Monitor, 4/02/2021]

Russia, Iran compete for influence in Syria via private security companies

A man watches as Russian troops escort a convoy of Syrian civilians leaving the town of Tal Tamr in the northeastern Hasakeh province to return to their homes in the northern town of Ain Issa on Jan. 10, 2021. - DELIL SOULEIMAN/AFP via Getty Images
February 4, 2021



Russia and Iran are taking every opportunity to increase their influence in Syria. They recently urged [private security companies](#) to open offices across Syria, offering young men large amounts of money to work for them amid deteriorating economic conditions and a lack of job opportunities in the Syrian regime-controlled areas.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (24)

[FONTE: Al Monitor, 4/02/2021]

There are over [70 private security companies](#) registered in Syria. These companies provide protection to wealthy individuals and supporters of the Syria regime. They also offer protective services facilities and factories, accompanying convoys and large transfers of cash.

Since 2013 they have expanded the scope of their activities and formed relationships with Russian or Iranian groups. They accompanied high-ranking military leaders or guarded premises for the Russian forces, including oil facilities in Qamishli, Hasakah and Deir ez-Zor. Others protected the Iranian convoys arriving in Syria for religious purposes and even fought alongside Iranian and Russian forces.

The main companies working for the Russian forces include [Al-Maham](#), which is owned by the [Qatirji Company](#) which imports oil from the areas controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces.

Another is the Damascus-based [Sanad Guard and Security Services](#). The company, which has ties to the Russian forces, provides [guarding services](#) to oil facilities directly controlled by Russia, like al-Tim and al-Ward and al-Shoula oil fields in Deir ez-Zor.

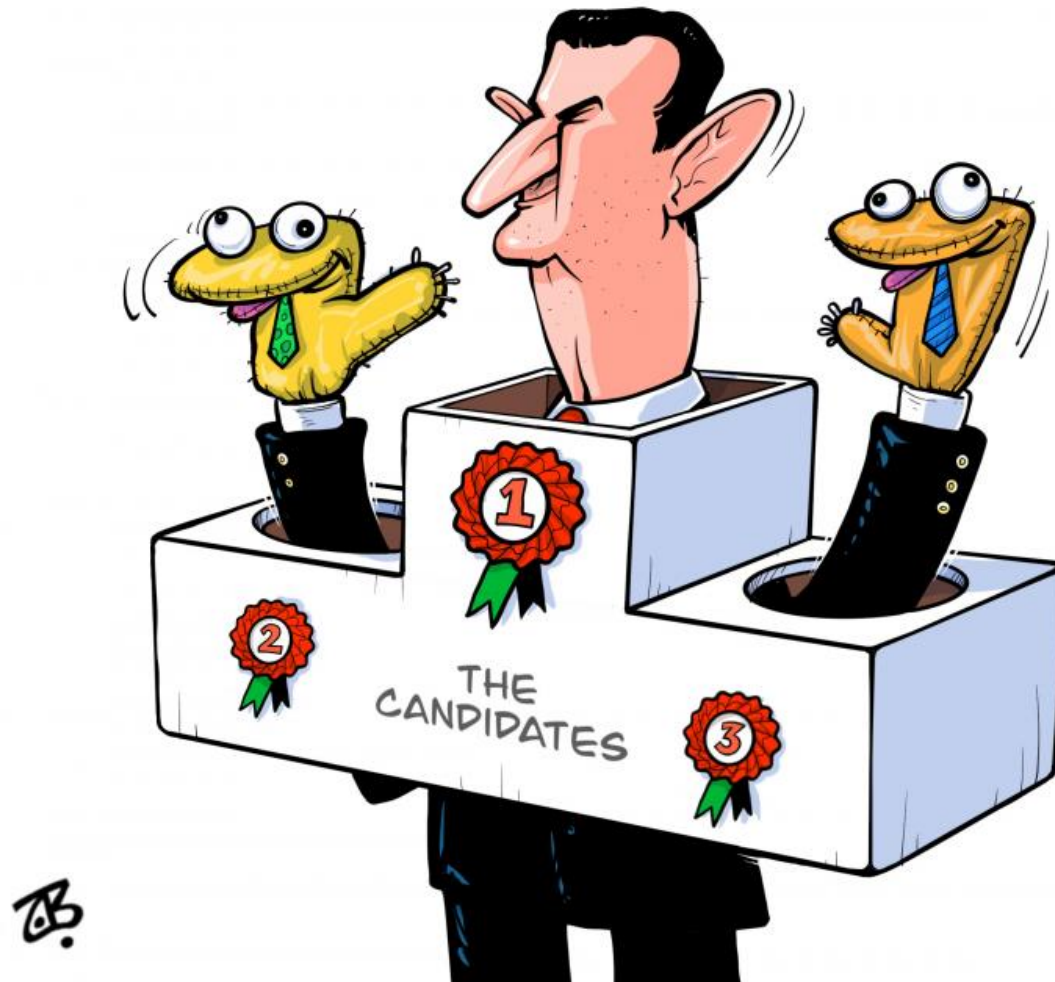
[Al-Sayad Company](#) works with Russian forces to pursue Islamic State cells in the Syrian desert.

Members of the [Russian Wagner Group](#) positioned at the Deir ez-Zor military airport oversee training for private security companies affiliated with Russia.

O regresso da Síria à “normalidade”? (25)

[FONTE: Cartoon Movement / Emad Hajjaj]

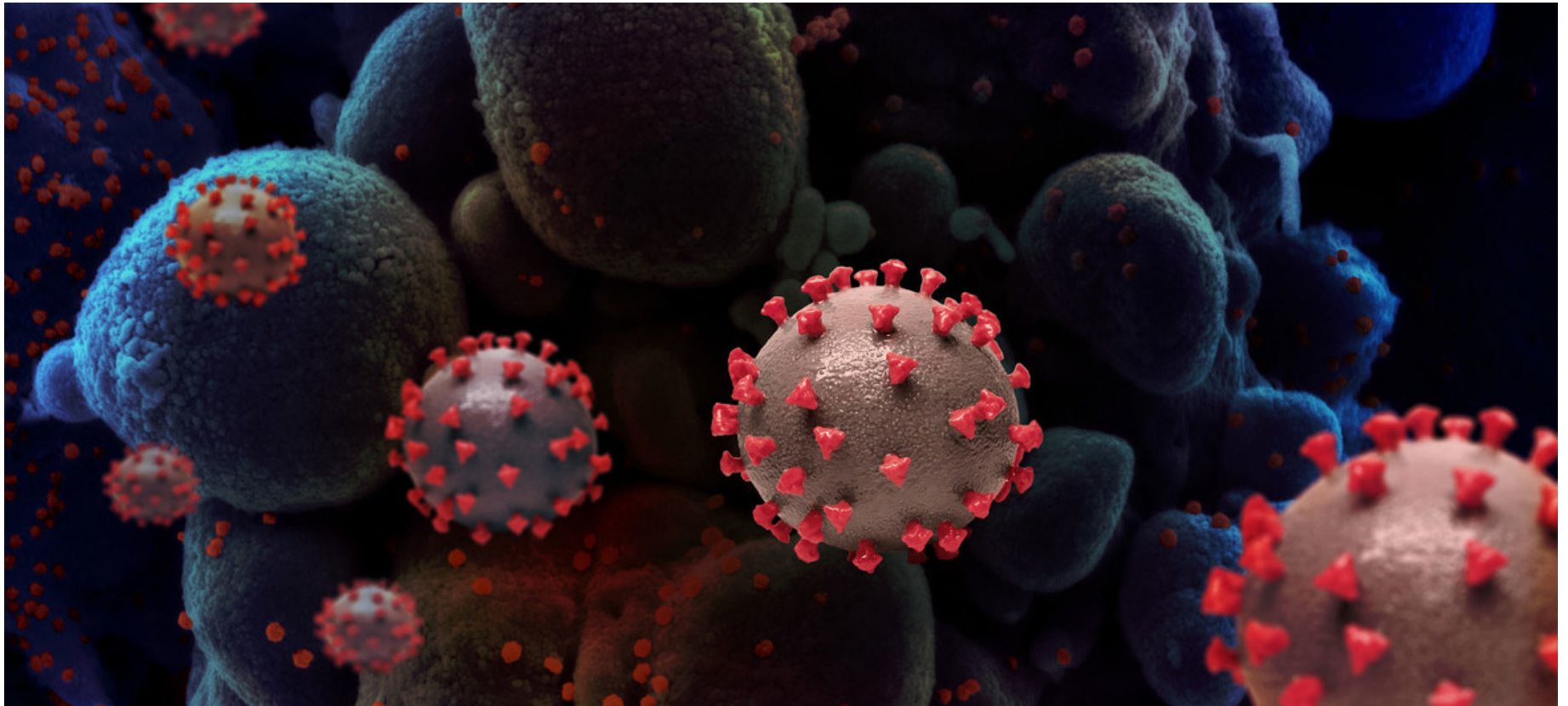
SYRIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION





PARTE II – NOTAS BREVES

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (1) [FONTE: ONU News]



As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (2) [FONTE: Science 14/05/2021]

LETTERS

Edited by **Jennifer Sills**

Investigate the origins of COVID-19

On 30 December 2019, the Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases notified the world about a pneumonia of unknown cause in Wuhan, China (1). Since then, scientists have made remarkable progress in understanding the causative agent, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), its transmission, pathogenesis, and mitigation by vaccines, therapeutics, and non-pharmaceutical interventions. Yet more investigation is still needed to determine the origin of the pandemic. Theories of accidental release from a lab and zoonotic spillover both remain viable. Knowing how COVID-19 emerged is critical for informing global strategies to mitigate the risk of future outbreaks.

inclusive of broad expertise, subject to independent oversight, and responsibly managed to minimize the impact of conflicts of interest. Public health agencies and research laboratories alike need to open their records to the public. Investigators should document the veracity and provenance of data from which analyses are conducted and conclusions drawn, so that analyses are reproducible by independent experts.

Finally, in this time of unfortunate anti-Asian sentiment in some countries, we note that at the beginning of the pandemic, it was Chinese doctors, scientists, journalists, and citizens who shared with the world crucial information about the spread of the virus—often at great personal cost (8, 9). We should show the same determination in promoting a dispassionate science-based discourse on this difficult but important issue.

Jesse D. Bloom^{1,2}, Yujia Alina Chan³, Ralph S. Baric⁴, Pamela J. Bjorkman⁵, Sarah Cobey⁶, Benjamin E. Deverman³, David N. Fisman⁷, Ravindra Gupta⁸, Akiko Iwasaki^{9,2}, Marc Lipsitch¹⁰, Ruslan Medzhitov^{9,2}, Richard A. Neher¹¹, Rasmus Nielsen¹², Nick Patterson¹³, Tim Stearns¹⁴, Erik van Nimwegen¹¹, Michael Worobey¹⁵,

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (3) [FONTE: Science 14/05/2021]

In May 2020, the World Health Assembly requested that the World Health Organization (WHO) director-general work closely with partners to determine the origins of SARS-CoV-2 (2). In November, the Terms of Reference for a China-WHO joint study were released (3). The information, data, and samples for the study's first phase were collected and summarized by the Chinese half of the team; the rest of the team built on this analysis. Although there were no findings in clear support of either a natural spillover or a lab accident, the team assessed a zoonotic spillover from an intermediate host as "likely to very likely," and a laboratory incident as "extremely unlikely" [(4), p. 9]. Furthermore, the two theories were not given balanced consideration. Only 4 of the 313 pages of the report and its annexes addressed the possibility of a laboratory accident (4). Notably, WHO Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus commented that the report's consideration of evidence supporting a laboratory accident was insufficient and offered to provide additional resources to fully evaluate the possibility (5).

As scientists with relevant expertise, we agree with the WHO director-general (5), the United States and 13 other countries (6), and the European Union (7) that greater clarity about the origins of this pandemic is necessary and feasible to achieve. We must take hypotheses about both natural and laboratory spillovers seriously until we have sufficient data. A proper investigation should be transparent, objective, data-driven,

David A. Relman^{16,17*}

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As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (4) [FONTE: CNN, 27/05/2021]

The Covid-19 origin story has massive political consequences



(CNN) — A growing storm over the origins in China of Covid-19 has explosive political implications for the United States at home and abroad, as well as the dueling legacies of two presidents that will be defined by the pandemic.

[President Joe Biden](#) on Wednesday told Americans [he had ordered](#) US intelligence agencies to report in 90 days on whether the virus originated not in animals and spread to humans but might have [escaped from a Chinese laboratory](#).

The move deepened a mystery encompassing the pernicious spread of a deadly pathogen, an intricate epidemiological puzzle, the opacity of a totalitarian system and the bitter overtones of a superpower rivalry. It will fan doubts about the World Health Organization's capacity to tease out lessons from the current crisis in order to prevent future pandemics.

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (5) [FONTE: CNN, 27/05/2021]



In the US, it leaves both the former Trump administration and the Biden White House facing calls for transparency about their efforts to establish how the virus started and whether politics tainted their investigative efforts. If it turns out the virus did escape from a laboratory, former President Donald Trump may be able to claim some vindication. But it would also highlight how his repeated habit of trashing the truth and bending intelligence to suit his own political ends shattered his credibility on this and other issues.

The focus on the laboratory theory in recent days multiplied calls in Washington for the US to make China pay a price for the pandemic, even before the full extent of its origins are known, adding more toxicity to a geopolitical joust that may spark a new Cold War.

But finding answers will be hard. China has every reason to cover up a virus that stained its prestige as a rising and sophisticated power with nearly 3.5 million people dead worldwide. Its nationalist leader Xi Jinping and the Communist Party have no time for shame of culpability that would mar their core case to the world -- that their one party rule is a better fit for the 21st century than democracy -- a narrative [Biden has publicly vowed to combat](#).

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (6) [FONTE:

Washinton Post, 28/05/2021]

Biden's renewed focus on covid origins ramps up pressure on WHO for more aggressive investigation

[Adam Taylor](#) May 28, 2021 at 10:46 p.m. GMT+1



Security guards outside the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, China, on Feb. 3. (Thomas Peter/Reuters)

The U.S. initiative was partly a response on dismissive remarks about an investigation made by a Chinese official at a WHO event on Tuesday, officials said.

The WHO, an overstretched United Nations agency responsible for coordinating the international response to the pandemic, is feeling the pressure. But it has few powers to investigate on its own.

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (7) [FONTE:

Washinton Post, 28/05/2021]

The World Health Assembly

Biden's statement this week appeared to be timed for international impact. His remarks came in the midst of a week-long ministerial meeting that sets the WHO agenda for the year.

"Biden's instincts are that [an investigation] would be better off coming from an international body like the World Health Organization," said Lawrence Gostin, a professor of global health law at Georgetown University.

U.S. officials at the event, the World Health Assembly, issued new calls for an international investigation on Tuesday — which Chinese delegates resisted.

"The real fight is what's happening at the World Health Assembly," said Jamie Metzl, a National Security Council staffer in the Clinton administration who organized an open letter calling for more scrutiny of the Wuhan lab this year.

One Chinese official at the assembly said Tuesday that "China's part" in the WHO's probe into the virus's origins "has been completed," and that the investigation should focus elsewhere, an apparent reference to the unsupported Chinese theory that the virus was imported into China, possibly on frozen food.

According to some experts, pushing on the public for further investigation could lead Beijing to close up even more.

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (8) [FONTE: Washinton Post, 28/05/2021]

At the assembly on Tuesday, Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra carefully directed his words not at the WHO, but at Beijing.

International experts should be given “the independence to fully assess the source of the virus and the early days of the outbreak,” referencing the restrictions on the 17 international experts who traveled to Wuhan early this year, Becerra said.

The United States also released a statement, co-signed with 13 other countries, that called for a “transparent and independent analysis and evaluation, free from interference and undue influence, of the origins of the covid-19 pandemic.”

China has shown little sign of backing down, however, with Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Zhao Lijian saying Thursday that the United States “does not care about facts and truth.”

Even if the assembly backed a motion for a broader investigation, Gostin said, China could simply opt out.

“The WHO simply has no power to require China to allow it onto its territory or to hand over data and specimen samples as well as genomic sequencing information,” he said. “Tedros’s hands are completely tied.”

Nonetheless, forcing China to keep blocking an investigation has a point, said Metzl, who has worked both with Biden as a Senate aide and with the WHO as an adviser.

It makes “completely clear to everyone on Earth that China intends to continue its massive and ongoing cover up,” Metzl said.

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (9) [FONTE: WHO]



The WHA74 will take place virtually from 24 May to 1 June 2021, in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. You will be able follow proceedings on the webcast below.

Theme: Ending this pandemic, preventing the next: building together a healthier, safer and fairer world.

Watch live WHA74 sessions

The sessions can be watched live on 24 May - 1 June 2021. Recordings will be available in the sidebar listing.

DATES:

24 May – 1 June 2021



World Health Organization

▶

对会议进程所做的口译意在协助交流，并不属于会议进程的作准或逐字记录。

Plenary | Committee A | Committee B

Sixth Plenary session
10:00-10:50
C Room
Item 6 - Executive Board: election
Item 7 - Awards
Item 8 - Reports of the main committees

Fifth Plenary session
10:00-13:00
C Room
Item 5 - Admission of the new Members and Associate Members
Item 3 - Address by Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General

Fourth Plenary session
14:00-17:30
C Room
Item 3 - General Discussion

Third Plenary session
10:00-13:00
C Room
Item 3 - General Discussion

World Health Organization

28/05/2021

World Health Organization

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World Health Organization

25/05/2021

World Health Organization

25/05/2021

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (10) [FONTE:

WHO]

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Biography

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

Dr Tedros: “Our vision is not health for some. It’s not health for most. It’s health for all: rich and poor, able and disabled, old and young, urban and rural, citizen and refugee. Everyone, everywhere.”

Profile

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was elected WHO Director-General for a five-year term by WHO Member States at the Seventieth World Health Assembly in May 2017. In doing so, he was the first WHO Director-General elected from among multiple candidates by the World Health Assembly, and was the first person from the WHO African Region to head the world’s leading public health agency.

Born in the Eritrean city of Asmara, Dr Tedros graduated from the University of Asmara with a Bachelor of Biology, before earning a Master of Science (MSc) in Immunology of Infectious Diseases from the University of London, a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Community Health from the University of Nottingham and an Honorary Fellowship from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (11) [FONTE: CNN, 31/03/ 2021]

14 countries and WHO chief accuse China of withholding data from pandemic origins investigation



Hong Kong (CNN) — It was supposed to offer insight into the origins of the [Covid-19 pandemic](#). But since its release on Tuesday, the long-awaited World Health Organization investigation has drawn criticism from governments around the world over accusations it is incomplete and lacks transparency.

In a [joint statement](#), the United States and 13 other governments, including the United Kingdom, Australia and South Korea, expressed concerns over the study's limited access to "complete, original data and samples."

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (12) [FONTE: CNN, 31/03/ 2021]

The European Union issued its own statement, expressing the same concerns in slightly softer language. The criticism follows an admission from WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, that investigators faced problems during their four-week mission to the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus was first detected in December 2019.

In a news briefing Tuesday, Tedros appeared to contradict the study's central findings by suggesting the theory that the virus escaped from a Wuhan laboratory should be followed up -- even though the report noted such a possibility was "extremely unlikely" and did not recommend further research on the hypothesis.

The WHO investigation, conducted more than a year after the initial outbreak, came under intense scrutiny from the outset. Some [scientists](#) and the [US government](#) have questioned the independence and credibility of the study, raising concerns over Chinese government influence. Beijing, meanwhile, has accused Washington and others of "politicizing" the origin of the virus.

After repeated delays, the WHO report, compiled by a team of international experts and their Chinese counterparts, was finally released on Tuesday. It provides a detailed examination of the data collected by Chinese scientists and authorities from the early days of the pandemic, but offers little new insight or concrete findings on where and how the virus spread to humans.

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (13) [FONTE: Fox News, 27/05/ 2021]

Jonathan Turley: Facebook says mentions of COVID-19's possible origins in Wuhan are now allowed. How generous

Facebook's statement reflects that assumption that, of course, it should be the only arbiter of what can be discussed by users

Radio host Jason Rantz on what Big Tech and the media got wrong on 'Fox News Primetime'

Read the headline above a couple times. There was a time when such a headline would only appear on the satirical outlet [The Onion](#) but it is actually true.

[Facebook](#) has long banned anyone who discussed the evidence that a worldwide pandemic killing millions and destroying the global economy may have been released from a government lab in Wuhan, China.

[Facebook](#) would not allow the theory to be discussed as "debunked" despite widespread criticism that the social media giant was, again, engaging in corporate censorship.

The false claim that this theory was "debunked" was pushed by various media platforms as part of the criticism of then-President [Donald Trump](#) and his administration.

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (14) [FONTE:

Global Times, 26/05/2021]

US mired in its own Cultural Revolution and COVID-19 conspiracies

By Global Times



The conspiracy theory that COVID-19 began as a lab leak in Wuhan is again being placed under the spotlight of US mainstream media outlets. On Sunday, The Wall Street Journal published a report, "Intelligence on Sick Staff at Wuhan Lab Fuels Debate on COVID-19 Origin." The Washington Post has joined the hype, with articles such as "How the Wuhan lab-leak theory suddenly became credible" published on Tuesday.

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (15) [FONTE: Global Times, 26/05/2021]

There is a considerable amount of anti-intellectual people in the US, who can be easily affected by political manipulations. They can be easily brainwashed to become anti-China. As a result, be it COVID-19 or China, the Americans' thinking and perception has been going around circles without any progress.

It is no longer news that US mainstream media outlets are tools of American political propaganda. But now, even elite scientists like Dr. Fauci, a top expert in public health, are being kidnapped by politics. This is a dangerous tendency. In terms of COVID-19, Fauci had made some statements that contradicted former president Donald Trump. Because of these statements, he received death threats, and his daughters were harassed. Now that Fauci has overturned his previous statement on the enigma of COVID-19 origins, he is bowing to politics.

But once science is kidnapped by politics, the decision-making of a society will only become irrational. The US today is like China during the period of Cultural Revolution (1966-76), when all issues were highly politicized. This being the case, how can US society develop without the capability to come up with scientific decisions? This is a pressing problem for the US.

Against the backdrop of such a political environment, the US will keep hyping its conspiracy theories to pass the buck. Facts are the most convincing way to refute them. China can also promote investigation into origins of COVID-19 in the US with reasonable doubts. Why was the US biological lab at Fort Detrick suddenly closed in 2019? Why did a mysterious pneumonia, linked to vaping, break out in the US in the same year? We can also insist that the WHO group should visit the US for an investigation with Chinese scientists' participation.

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (16) [FONTE: Financial Time, 31/05/2021]

China's wolf warriors bristle at Covid blame

A new US investigation into the origins of the pandemic raises the stakes for Beijing and Washington

yesterday



The Xi administration and its wolf-warrior diplomats have spent the past year alienating potential partners

The slump in relations between China and Australia sounds like a small detail in the great picture of world affairs. But this is a corner of the canvas that merits close attention. It provided an early indication of China's extreme sensitivity to international calls for an inquiry into the origins of Covid-19.

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (17) [FONTE: Financial Time, 31/05/2021]

The origins of the dispute may be just as significant as the way it unfolded. Late last year, Chinese diplomats released a dossier listing [14 grievances](#) against Australia. The gripes included blocking foreign investment deals and funding “anti-China” research. But one particular grievance stood out.

Looking at the [chronology of the dispute](#), it is apparent that the moment China truly escalated matters was when Canberra [demanded](#) an independent inquiry into the origins of Covid-19. Scott Morrison, the Australian prime minister, even called for international experts to be given “weapons inspector-style powers” in conducting their probe. China’s ambassador to Canberra [responded](#) by warning that this perceived insult might trigger a boycott of Australian produce by Chinese consumers. Within months, the Chinese government itself had taken the initiative by imposing tariffs.

Beijing did eventually agree to a World Health Organization investigation. But the inspectors were very [limited](#) in what they could see. China’s evident desperation to control the narrative backfired — fanning the [suspicions](#) of those who believe that the country has something to hide.

In reality, a guilty conscience is not the only plausible explanation for Beijing’s response. The broader difficulty is that China’s reaction to any criticism in the outside world seems to be a toxic mix of threats, shrill rhetoric and secrecy. This applies whether the topic is Xinjiang, Taiwan or Covid-19.

As origens da covid-19: as implicações políticas da investigação dos EUA (18) [FONTE: Financial Time, 31/05/2021]

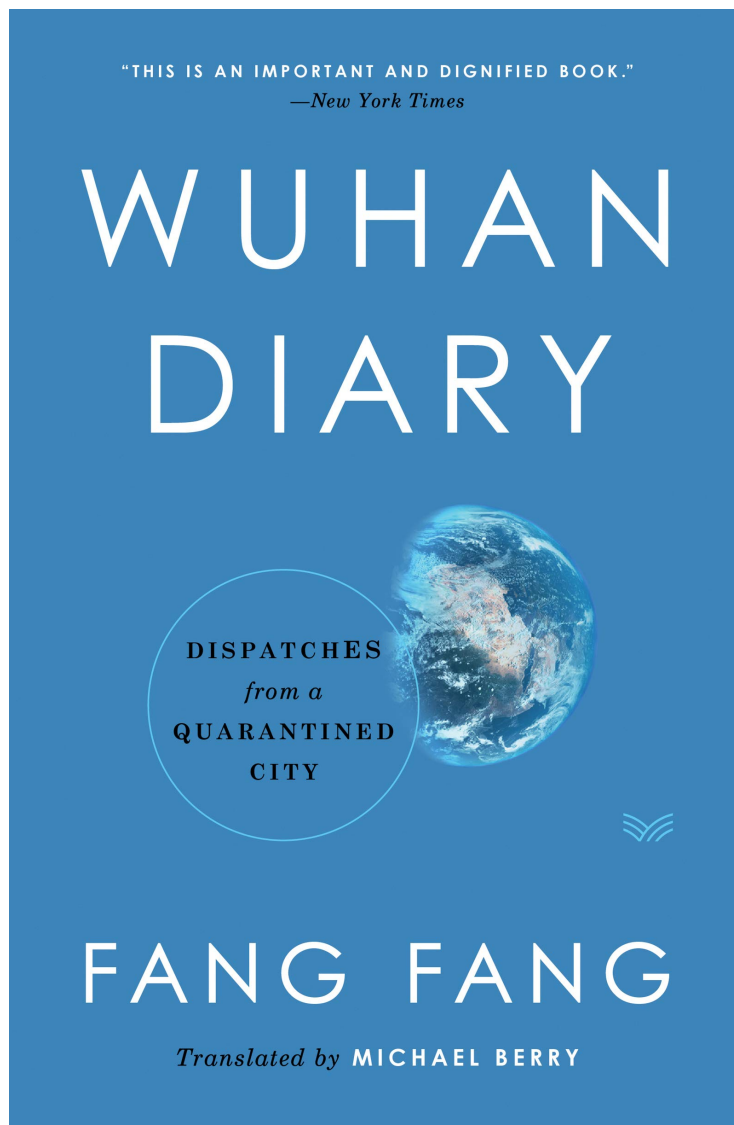
When it came to investigating Covid-19, the Chinese government was also indirectly shielded by Donald Trump. The fact that the former US president is widely regarded as a liar — and had a clear political motive for blaming China for the pandemic — made it [easy to dismiss](#) all suggestions of a lab-leak in Wuhan as just another far-right conspiracy theory.

Joe Biden's more cautious approach is paradoxically more threatening to Beijing because it carries more credibility — both at home and overseas. The US president has openly [admitted](#) that his intelligence agencies are divided about the lab-leak theory. He may be genuinely fearful of the consequences if the theory is confirmed. Even if the Biden administration attempted to limit the fallout from such a finding, there would probably be lawsuits in the American courts — demanding vast reparations from China. The White House's efforts to maintain a delicate balance between confrontation and co-operation with China would be blown out of the water.

The stakes for China are very high. Over the past year, China has succeeded in [changing the narrative](#) over Covid-19. After initially reeling under the impact of being the first to be hit, Beijing has managed to highlight China's success in containing the disease, compared with the high death tolls in the west.

The news of the fresh US inquiry suddenly puts Beijing on the spot again. Faced with this immensely difficult situation, China will need all the friends it can find. But the Xi administration and its wolf-warrior diplomats have spent the past year alienating potential partners. The latest blow was the European Parliament's decision to [freeze](#) the ratification of a major investment agreement between China and the EU — following Beijing's imposition of [sanctions](#) on European officials and institutions, which was itself a response to EU sanctions imposed over Xinjiang.

Sugestões de leitura



SYRIAN REQUIEM

The Civil War and Its Aftermath

ITAMAR RABINOVICH
CARMIT VALENSI

