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War and Peace: From London to Aleppo

sekyerek

By Kwame Sekyere*

A narrative that parallels the experience of politicians in Downing Street being disturbed by the sound of protesters, with the experience of civilians in Aleppo being disturbed by the sound of war.

On the 13th of December at 10 Downing Street, politicians, political advisors and other professionals sat down to have their daily meetings and discussions, to consider issues both at home and abroad. They were having a general conversation about the weather and how positive anticipations of Christmas come with the dread of icy winds.

Each time they spoke their words would be drowned out by a bombardment of footsteps and with each sentence uttered, a shelling of chants would overwhelm it. Their discussions were armed with a barrage of 'pardon?!' and 'excuse me?!' because of the constant disruption caused by the protesters outside.

So they would go to the thermostat and turn it to 25 degrees. They would make a call to the kitchen and ask for the tea to be renewed. They would circle the room and make sure that every window was closed and all the curtains were drawn. Then they would be settled enough to have a productive meeting in peace.

In what was once a building in Eastern Aleppo, what is left of a family sit down to share the food they had rationed for the evening. Over their meal they discuss what they should say in their latest tweet, trying to construct a message that would hit home in all the countries in which it will be read.

As they speak, the sound of planes relegates their voices to mere background noise and as the engine sound increases, so do their fears as they know the aircraft edges closer. In this moment of fear they call out to the world to help them, correcting the typos in the message caused by hands that tremble in the same manner that the surrounding buildings do.

To everyone who can hear me!#SaveAleppo#SaveHumanity

— *Lina shamy (@Linashamy) December 12, 2016*

As the pitter-patter of bullets turns to the pitter-patter of rain, and the bullets that once streamed past their windows turn to rain drops, there comes a rare moment of peace.

Good news for people in Aleppo! It's raining! That means there are no planes in the sky! 😊

— *Bilal Abdul Kareem (@BilalKareem) December 13, 2016*

Back at Number 10 this sentiment was shared: the rain had brought an end to their troubles too. As the showers increased the number of protesters decreased, then the footsteps and chants quietened. Now they could properly discuss issues at home and abroad in peace.

In writing this narrative I wanted readers to leave, asking themselves some questions about the U.K's (individuals, institutions and the Government) involvement in the peace process in Syria:

- *Can we compare a protest to an act of war on apathy?*
- *Is it in the sound of peace or the sound of war that key decision makers can truly understand the way to act on the events in Syria?*
- *Is marching with placards the most effective way to protest?*
- *How can we make sure key decision makers are aware of the experiences and emotions of civilians in Syria?*

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