

# Sectarian Conflict Eroding Crisis-hit Syria. Western Intelligence Ops?

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*It's now three years that Syria has been engulfed in a destructive civil war which is leading nowhere but simply continues to claim the lives of innocent civilians falling prey to the greediness and voracity of the imperial powers and those who intend to disintegrate Syria and disrupt the solidarity of its people.*

It's reported that since March 2011, more than 130,000 Syrians were killed in the clashes that have erupted inside the war-torn country, and more than 2 million others were displaced.

The Western mainstream media persistently try to portray the violence in Syria as part of the wave of revolutionary movements in the Arab world that started from Tunisia three years ago known as the Arab Spring, but the irony is that there is virtually no sign of a popular uprising or civil movement in Syria that can qualify the unrest in this country as a revolution. What is happening in Syria is an unspeakable, all-out sectarian conflict fueled by the foreign powers and terrorists from more than 80 countries whose ultimate objective is to tear the country apart and dismantle it as an integral part of the axis of resistance.

In a systematic and organized way, the United States and some of its regional and trans-regional allies have concocted a scheme for Balkanizing Syria through embroiling the country's different religious sects in an erosive and seemingly unending clash; Sunnis against the Alawites and Twelver Shiites against the Christians. This will ultimately result in acrimony, quarrel and bitterness in Syria and pave the way for what the enemies of peace and harmony in Syria have been looking for: the dismantlement of the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

Some analysts believe that Syria is paying the price for its resistance against Israel. Of course Israel, which directly benefits from conflict and unrest in Syria, is inclined to see a chaotic, turbulent and tumultuous Syria rather than a Syria which is unified, strong and powerful. This belief that Israel sees its interest in the continuation of unrest in Syria is substantiated by many analysts and politicians who have closely monitored the developments in the Middle East in the recent years. In an interview with Press TV in September 2012, the former Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Abdullatif Sener said "the unrest in Syria benefits Israel, because Syria is one of a few countries standing against Tel Aviv." According to Sener, Israel seeks to weaken Syria to undermine the Palestinians and Hezbollah.

Even there are some Israeli officials who are not afraid of openly bragging about their ambition for destabilizing Syria, saying that the emergence of Syria without Bashar al-Assad or any other leader who is opposed to the policies of Tel Aviv would be the most favorable outcome of the civil war in the Arab country. On January 26, 2012, the Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth carried the statements made by former Military Intelligence Chief and Head of the Institute for National Security Studies Amos Yadlin who said “the changes in Syria bear strategic benefits for Israel.” Yadlin, however, further went on to disclose his real intentions for the region and stated that Iran should also be subject to political transformations emanating from the Arab Spring: “If the revolution finds its way to Tehran it could save Israel the huge dilemma of choosing between two alternatives – a viable nuclear Iran or preventing a nuclear Iran.”

All the parties involved in this erosive conflict, including the United States, the European powers, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar and Israel pursue certain interests in Syria. But all of them converge on the point that Bashar al-Assad must go, and a leader should be put in place that follows the orders given to him rather than representing the will and interest of his people. Under such circumstances, the United States will never object that the Syrian government is not a democratic and representative government and is inattentive to the calls of its people; but when Bashar al-Assad is in power, his campaign against the extremists, takfiris and insurgents would be tantamount to a “killing of his own people” and should be condemned!

All things considered, the war that is being waged on Syria, with the involvement of those dangerous killers whom the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry honorably brands as “moderate terrorists” is leading to an erosive, obnoxious and bloody sectarian conflict which one can hardly think of an end for. Those who are pitting the Shiites against the Sunnis and vice versa are making use of the diversity of denominations in Islam as an instrument to spread unrest and confusion among the Muslims and undermine their unity and integrity. They fear that the growth of the Muslim community will entail a heavy price for them.

And unfortunately, the extremist takfiris and salafists who are being dispatched to Syria en masse by certain countries in the region on behalf of the imperial powers are taking the artificial battle they’ve invoked between the Shiites and Sunnis to the neighboring countries, and one can only think of their intentions in terms of a pernicious effort to provoke the different sects of Muslims, including the Sunnis and Shiites, to commit violence against each other and engage them in internal conflicts. This is in line with the efforts made by the United States and some of its allies that are trying their best to plunder the natural resources of the Muslim nations and dominating their lands.

The recent bombings in Lebanon and Iraq which the takfiri, salafist and Al-Qaeda fighters claim the responsibility for indicate that the sectarian conflict that has come into sight from Syria is spilling into the other Middle East nations, and can be considered a blaze which will take in and burn the whole region in a tragic manner.

For instance, it was reported on January 16 that a suicide car bombing killed at least 5 people and wounded 42 others in the northwestern Lebanese city of Hermel. Hermel is a Shiite-majority city in the Beqaa Governorate where Hezbollah wields a remarkable influence, and it’s said that the members of Al-Nusra Front, which undertook the responsibility for the bombing, are planning more attacks in such areas to punish the Shiite population of Lebanon for their crime of supporting the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

On February 2, the British paper The Independent published an article in which it elaborated on the growth of sectarian conflict in the Middle East as a result of the protraction of violence and bloodshed in Syria, writing that the Lebanese communities are being dragged into the “neighbor’s civil war” simply because it’s perceived that they support the side of the conflict which is disfavored by the “big boss” and its friends, namely the United States, its NATO and Arab allies. However, the January 16 bombing was not the first instance of assault on the “100 percent Shiite” Hermel district. According to The Independent, over the past two years, more than 150 rockets were fired into Hermel by the Al-Nusra Front. The town is targeted mostly because it’s an important logistical hub for Hezbollah, which has openly sided with Bashar al-Assad in his battle against the insurgents and foreign-backed mercenaries, and is known as the “capital of resistance.”

Although it’s difficult to demonstrate that the bloodletting and violence in Syria has caused sectarian conflict, it can be maintained that the three-year civil war in Syria has very bold sectarian overtones and many of the motivations of the parties involved in the war are sectarian. Unquestionably, one is that the takfiris and salafists in Syria are dismayed that the Sunni majority country is ruled by a Shiite Alawite government, and their consternation has gone to such extremes that they have taken up arms against the government, brutally behead its supporters and kill whoever they think is somewhat related to or supportive of the government.

I remember talking to a Syrian citizen a few weeks ago. She told me that Bashar al-Assad has always maintained a policy of preserving balance and equilibrium between the followers of divine religions in Syria, and religious tolerance is something which is widely practiced in the country. She was saying that the Alawites and other Shiites, Sunnis and the Christian and Jewish minorities have always lived with each other peacefully and interacted constructively, and this atmosphere was created by Bashar al-Assad, but it’s really indeterminate and unclear what will happen if he goes, either voluntarily or by force, and what the next leader will do to maintain religious equality.

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria has confirmed in a recent report that sectarian violence has increased in Syria, and there are other reports testifying that sectarian conflict is being expanded into Lebanon and Iraq and is likely to engulf the whole Middle East very soon.

The fact that takfiris, salafists and other fundamentalists who don’t accept as Muslim whoever is politically opposed to them are now gaining power and contributing to the Balkanization of Syria is really disturbing, and it seems that nothing worthwhile comes out of the negotiation rooms in Geneva that can help Syria see the face of peace and tranquility once again; however, experience has shown that whenever the decision-making is entrusted to the people themselves, they make the best choices. It’s up to the Syrian people to decide whether they want Bashar al-Assad to remain in power or not. Killing and terrorizing will not help find an answer to the dilemma.

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