

## Syrians Return Home As the Terrorists Are Pushed Out

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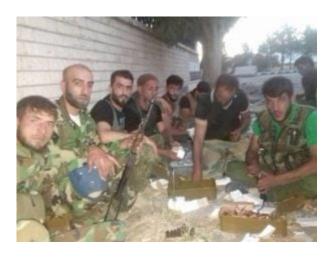
After six years of fighting a brutal and long war against foreign-backed terrorist proxy forces, the Syrian army – and its allies – have made significant gains in recent months. The Syrian army's recent triumphs include liberating many areas in the <u>Homs</u> province, reaching the <u>Iraqi border</u> in what was described as a "strategic turning point in the war," in addition to securing the <u>Aleppo</u> province from ISIS. It is clear that the Syrian army has the upper hand in the conflict, a fact that the hawks in Washington, London, Brussels, Riyadh and Tel Aviv find too difficult to stomach.

As the Syrian army prevails on the ground, capturing territory from the militants in the process, hundreds of thousands of Syrians are returning to their homes. As Andrej Mahecic, the spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Refugee Agency, <u>said</u> in a press briefing at the end of June, many Syrians are returning "to their homes" partly due to a "real or perceived improvement in security conditions" in many regions recently liberated:

"[The] UNHC is seeing a notable trend of spontaneous returns to and within Syria in 2017. Aid agencies estimate that more than 440,000 internally displaced people have returned to their homes in Syria during the first six months of this year. In parallel, UNHCR has monitored over 31,000 Syrian refugees returning from neighbouring countries so far in 2017.

The main factors influencing decisions for refugees to return self-assisted mostly to Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Damascus and to other governorates are primarily linked to seeking out family members, checking on property, and, in some cases, a real or perceived improvement in security conditions in parts of the country."

Although the conflict is far from over, and the rebuilding of Syria will likely cost <u>hundreds of billions</u> of dollars, many Syrians can now see the light at the end of the tunnel. The defeat of foreign-backed mercenaries and the stabilization of Syria has always been of central importance to help solve part of the refugee/migrant crisis that has gripped Europe in recent years.



Syrian Arab Army in Quneitra (Source: Al Masdar News)

Short of any extremely reckless action by the West and its allies, the Syrian army will continue to liberate large parts of the country from the foreign-backed militants, paving the way for more internally and externally displaced Syrians to return to their homes. In their desperation however, the enemies of Syria may again stage a false flag chemical weapons attack and blame it on the Syrian government, in an attempt to justify a major military intervention to turn the tide.

## The Need to Resist Balkanization

The second option available to the enemies of Syria is to continue the agenda of attempting to Balkanize Syria into different micro-states and mini-states, with the West clearly using Kurdish factions in an attempt to further this strategy. Ideally, the enemies of Syria wanted to force regime change in Damascus and then Balkanize the country into multiple rump states, although with regime change looking increasingly unrealistic, Balkanization in itself has become a central objective of the West.

There is literally an abundance of evidence that supports the thesis that Balkanization is a major goal of the West and its allies. In 1982, Oded Yinon, an Israeli journalist who had close connections to the Foreign Ministry in Israel, wrote an article titled: "A Strategy for Israel in the Nineteen Eighties." In the document, Yinon detailed how the "dissolution of Syria" into "ethnically or religiously unique areas" was a primary objective of Israel:

"Lebanon's total dissolution into five provinces serves as a precedent for the entire Arab world including Egypt, Syria, Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula and is already following that track. The dissolution of Syria and Iraq later on into ethnically or religiously unique areas such as in Lebanon, is Israel's primary target on the Eastern front in the long run, while the dissolution of the military power of those states serves as the primary short-term target. Syria will fall apart, in accordance with its ethnic and religious structure, into several states such as in present day Lebanon, so that there will be a Shi'ite Alawi state along its coast, a Sunni state in the Aleppo area, another Sunni state in Damascus hostile to its northern neighbor, and the Druzes who will set up a state, maybe even in our Golan, and certainly in the Hauran and in northern Jordan" (p.11, point 22).

A decade later, an article appeared in an extremely influential US publication which echoed the strategy advocated by Yinon. Published in the 1992 issue of Foreign Affairs, the magazine of the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR), the article was titled: Rethinking the Middle East, and was written by Bernard Lewis, the British-American historian, neoconservative and CFR member. In the article, Lewis outlines how many Middle East states could disintegrate into a "chaos of squabbling, feuding, fighting sects, tribes, regions and parties:"

"Another possibility, which could even be precipitated by fundamentalism, is what has of late become fashionable to call 'Lebanonization.' Most of the states of the Middle East—Egypt is an obvious exception—are of recent and artificial construction and are vulnerable to such a process. If the central power is sufficiently weakened, there is no real civil society to hold the polity together, no real sense of common national identity or overriding allegiance to the nation state.

The state then disintegrates—as happened in Lebanon—into a chaos of squabbling, feuding, fighting sects, tribes, regions and parties. If things go badly and central governments falter and collapse, the same could happen, not only in the countries of the existing Middle East, but also in the newly independent Soviet republics, where the artificial frontiers drawn by the former imperial masters left each republic with a mosaic of minorities and claims of one sort or another on or by its neighbours."

In 2013, the former US Secretary of State and CFR member, Henry Kissinger, revealed his desire to see Syria Balkanized into "more or less autonomous regions" whilst speaking at the Ford School:

"There are three possible outcomes. An Assad victory. A Sunni victory. Or an outcome in which the various nationalities agree to co-exist together but in more or less autonomous regions, so that they can't oppress each other. That's the outcome I would prefer to see. But that's not the popular view.... I also think Assad ought to go, but I don't think it's the key. The key is; it's like Europe after the Thirty Years War, when the various Christian groups had been killing each other until they finally decided that they had to live together but in separate units. So that is the fundamental issue, and we're beginning to move towards that" (from 27.35 into the interview).

Then at the end of 2015, Foreign Affairs published an article titled: <u>Divide and Conquer in Syria and Iraq</u>; <u>Why the West Should Plan for a Partition</u>. It was written by Barak Mendelsohn, an Associate Professor of Political Science at Haverford College and a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. In the article, he argues that the "solution" to the current crisis in Syria and Iraq is the Balkanization of these countries into multiple micro-states, creating an "independent Sunni state" (or <u>Sunnistan</u>) in the process:

"The only way to elicit indigenous support is by offering the Sunnis greater stakes in the outcome. That means proposing an independent Sunni state that would link Sunni-dominated territories on both sides of the border. Washington's attachment to the artificial Sykes-Picots borders demarcated by France and Britain a century ago no longer makes sense. Few people truly believe that Syria and Iraq could each be put back together after so much blood has been spilled. A better alternative would be to separate the warring sides. Although the sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Shias was not

inevitable—it was, to some extent, the result of manipulation by self-interested elites—it is now a reality."

This is just a snapshot of the evidence that proves that the enemies of Syria want to Balkanize the country, with the Brookings Institution being another US think tank that has advocated this strategy, in one form or another, ad nauseam. Officials in Syria are well aware of this plan however, that is why the Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad, has repeatedly emphasised that he wants to <u>recapture all of Syria</u>.

Steven MacMillan is an independent writer, researcher, geopolitical analyst and editor of <u>The Analyst Report</u>, especially for the online magazine <u>"New Eastern Outlook"</u>.

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