

Triggering Sectarianism in Syria, Destabilizing the Secular State

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Western politicians, and their Gulf counterparts, are engaged in a concerted campaign to portray Hezbollah's recent involvement in Syria as a main cause of the overt sectarian nature of the Syrian 'opposition', and are using Hezbollah to subvert the opposition's sectarian origins and inherent ideologies. Several underlying factors need to be addressed as to why this campaign is being pushed forward, and why it is important for Western and Gulf nations to exacerbate the demonization towards Hezbollah in the Middle East. This campaign can be construed as part of the US/Saudi (KSA)/Israeli agreed policy of "choking the resistance". That resistance being: Iran, Syria and Hezbollah, otherwise falsely labelled as the "Shi'ite crescent".

When one views the Syrian conflict in its true geopolitical reality – [which is a multi-national US-led regime change](#) effort designed to weaken Iran's staunch ally – it becomes clear as to why Hezbollah's inevitable involvement was a desired outcome of the concerted destabilization efforts from US allies. These allies, namely: Qatar and Saudi Arabia, (by extension the Hariri/Future Movement camp in Lebanon) have engaged in a strict policy to foment and enable a Salafist dominated sectarian insurgency to take hold in Syria. It is beyond ridiculous to suggest either the KSA or Qatar, are attempting to spread 'democracy', 'freedom' or even pluralism in a secular Arab country; while espousing intolerant Salafi/Wahhabi incarnations of Islam within their own lands. Put simply, both the Saudi Arabia (KSA) and Qatar have actively encouraged and fomented extremist militants and Islamic radicals to wage war in Syria because they are the type of ideologues that are closest to their own oppressive domestic doctrines.

Moreover, once the falsehood that the Syrian war simply erupted from oppression of 'peaceful protesters' is removed, and the harsh realities of the sectarian make-up of the Syrian 'opposition' is acknowledged; it becomes clear why Shi'a towns and villages along the Syrian/Lebanese border have been targeted and attacked by Salafist militants since virtually the onset of the conflict. Western and Gulf leaders denounce Hezbollah's intervention and accuse the resistance group of exacerbating sectarian tensions; willingly ignoring that for the past two years, the vast majority of 'opposition' militants have espoused a hardline sectarian Salafi ideology, and have indeed, poured through Lebanon's borders with arms and funds in tow.

A prominent example of this wilful ignorance arises in the much talked about town of Qusair. Many a Western politician portrayed the sectarian ramifications of Hezbollah's assault on the rebel-held town; but the same Western politicians (and lackey media) totally ignored, and then subverted the fact that when the rebels 'liberated' the town of Qusair from Government control in 2012, they quickly took it upon themselves to ethnically cleanse all

Christians from the area. Obviously, this has no bearing on the sectarian dynamic in Western politician's eyes. A multitude of hardline Sunni sheikhs have given veiled fatwas against Shi'a and Alawite seen as Government supporters, throughout the two-year conflict; culminating last weekend in prominent cleric Yusuf Qaradawi declaring through Qatari media that all young Sunni men should take up the fight against Hezbollah "the Shi'a party of Satan" and the minority Alawite Government of Assad in Syria.

During the course of the conflict, several revealing reports have shed light on just how large a role certain factions within Lebanese Government (Hariri/March 14/Future Movement) have taken it upon themselves to become conduits for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's policy of destabilization in Syria. Saad Hariri's camp in Lebanon is inextricably tied to Saudi Arabia and the US' paranoid and hegemonic plans for the Levant, in attempts to curb Iranian expansion and assert Saudi, ergo: Western dominance. In turn Saudi Arabia is acting in favour of its major global allies, those of a western variety, predominantly being the US and the UK in the decades long "special relationship". Again, these important dynamics have been thoroughly subverted and hidden from the Western public, yet every attempt is made to highlight Hezbollah's role in supporting the Assad government. Again, the fact Hezbollah has been defending Shi'ites, Christians and Sunni alike from Jihaddi/Salafists hell-bent on "cleansing" them from Syria and Lebanon's border region's goes unmentioned.

Acknowledging the geopolitical dynamic's of these "relationships", and the effects their joint campaigns are having on Syria and its surroundings; are key to understanding the sectarian quagmire that is in danger of engulfing the entire region. The US, along with its Gulf allies have been engaged for years in a concerted destabilization and subversion campaign against Syria in order to weaken Iran. These plans were specifically designed to also subvert Hezbollah, remove a bulwark to Israeli oppression and expansion, and ultimately determine a new political force in South Lebanon; one that is compliant to Western demands and subservient to Israel. The chosen policy in which this campaign was to be implemented was through the explicit fomentation and enablement of radical sectarian forces and societal division, evidently resulting in the sectarian nature of the conflict spreading throughout the region today.

In turn, the dominance of radical Sunni ideologues that espouse a hatred for Shi'a has not gone unnoticed inside Lebanon and Hezbollah's ranks, and is having the adverse effect that Saudi Arabia and their allies have long desired. Sectarian influenced attacks on Shi'ite towns and villages in the border regions have been commonplace. With the constant actual, and rhetorical threat to minorities and Shi'a coming from opposition Salafi elements, and the swathes of militants using Lebanon's borders and towns as staging grounds to attack Syria; Hezbollah has been backed into a corner with no way out other than to fight for its existence and vital supply lines. Hezbollah being reliant on the Assad Government is not through any sectarian affiliation, (which Western politicians and media like to portray, disregarding that many Shi'a view Alawites as heretics, and the Baathist ideology is strictly secular) but through a political and strategic relationship. The resistance in Lebanon cannot survive under current threats without the support of the Assad government, and vital land and logistic routes to Iran. Completing the "resistance axis".

The West and specifically the GCC are now portraying Hezbollah as the sectarian antagonist, claiming it is solely a Shi'a militant group fighting on behalf of the Assad government for its Shi'a connections to the Alawites of Syria, and Shi'a of Iran. Again, these simplistic attributions to Hezbollah bear no reality to its pluralistic nature. Its militant wing is currently fighting alongside Shi'a and Christians, in an army that is dominated by Sunni conscripts.

(yes the SAA is majority Sunni believe it or not) In Lebanon, Hezbollah provide for, and peacefully live alongside Shi'a, Sunni and Christian alike. Yet the dominant narrative coming from the West and the Gulf is that Hezbollah is responsible for increasing sectarianism. This is turning culpability for the sectarian dynamic of the Syrian conflict completely on its head; in order to subvert the violent, intolerant monster that the US, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and others have created to wage war on their behalf.

In another disturbing and recent example of the Syrian rebels sectarian ideology, from the village of Hatla, in Deir Ezzor; an estimated 60 Shi'a residents of the town were killed, apparently for the crime of being Government supporters (described as 'militia' in western media even though victims include women and children). Elements of Jabhat al Nusra, the prominent 'opposition' fighting force in Syria posted videos of the attack in which they state: "We have raised the banner 'There is no God but God' above the houses of the apostate rejectionists, the Shia," The language used by the 'rebels' on camera is again, explicitly sectarian, and commonplace among the many videos openly touted online by such radical groups: "This is the Shia, this is the Shia carcass, this is their end," the cameraman declares as a victim is revealed lying dead on the floor. Widespread sectarian killings are not anomalies inside Syria. During protests in 2011, the chants for reform and democracy were quickly usurped by sectarian slogans such as "Christians to Beirut, Alawites to the grave".

With recent death toll estimates from leading pro-opposition group the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (one man in Coventry but widely touted in Western media) suggesting that at least 43% of the dead are Syrian army members or Government militia; it raises the immediate question of how false the one-dimensional narrative of "Assad killing his own people" must actually be? Unless we are supposed to believe that over the course of two year's the Syrian Army has killed ten's of thousands of its own soldiers, it becomes difficult to envision this conflict as anything other than a foreign-funded war against the Syrian state. A war that from the beginning has been led by client states of the US, that espouse brutal, violent and intolerant versions of Islam, and have a proven history of furthering their covert policies by fomenting, arming and funding radical 'shock troops' to undertake sectarian warfare and societal division to meet their geopolitical objectives.

There are predominantly two parties to blame for the sectarianism rife in Syria and spreading beyond its borders, they are: Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Sitting behind these states, and driving their destructive policy is, as always, the Empire of the era. Those who gain the most from destabilizing whole resource-rich regions for their own benefit. For the last 60 years, that Empire has been the United States of America.

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