

I Am Accusing the Coalition of Alawite-Iranian-Hezbollah-Russian Federation in the Genocide and in an Ethnic Cleansing in Syria

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Abstract

This paper will explore the causes of and the main players in this formidable human tragedy, the tragedy of Sunni Arabs and their resistance to the dominance of the Alawite heretics and Iranian Shias. The Syrian war is a crime against Sunni Arabs because the war's main goal is an ethnic cleansing to remove the Sunni Arabs from Syria. This paper argues that the key reason for the war is ethnic cleansing based on the Sunni Arabs' religion and ethnicity and the resistance of Semitic Sunni to the invasion of the Alawite-Iranian-Hezbollah-Russian coalition in Syria. Some geopolitical, geo-military, and geo-economic reasons for the invasion will also be presented. During the course of this long, bloody war, nearly all the participants have changed their aspirations, aims, and objectives. Close to the end of the war, it is evident that the aspirations and aims that dominate the end phases contrast sharply with those held at the beginning of the war.

Keywords

Syrian Civil War, Sunni Arabs, Ethnical Cleansing, Crime Against Sunni Arabs

1. Introduction

The goal of the Assad regime during the civil war has been to suppress the Sunni Arab majority, regarded as Semitic adversaries of the Shia Alawites, the ruling minority. The aim has been to conduct an ethnic cleansing of Syria from Sunni Arabs to increase the percentage of Alawites in the total population and to influence the balance between Arabs versus Alawites and Sunnis versus Shias.

The different participants in this war, the Alawites and Arabs, have had different aims, which have altered during the course of the war. To gain an understanding of the events of the war, we need to examine the history of the region and the different participants.

The terms “anti-Semitic” and “anti-Semitism” have almost exclusively been applied to describe the hostilities toward and discrimination against the Jews [1] [2] [3]. The terms should cover the entire group of Semites—Jews, Arabs, as well as others. However, the German agitator Wilhelm Marr introduced this label in 1879 [2] to describe the anti-Jewish campaigns and it was mainly used to describe the actions against Jews. German Nazis (1933-1945) did not extend their anti-Semitic campaigns to Arabs, despite the fact that the Nazis knew that both Jews and Arabs were Semites.

Arab leaders collaborated with the Nazis as f.e. Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein (جمال عبد الناصر حسين), who subsequently became the president of Egypt from 1956 to 1970. During World War II, Nasser was arrested by the British for collaboration with the Nazis [4], as the following quotation indicates: “*During the war, Nasser and Anwar Sadat, another friend and political ally, established contact with agents of the Axis Powers, particularly several Italian ones, and planned a coup to coincide with an Italian offensive that would expel the British forces from Egypt*” [4] [5]. Nasser was not an anti-Semite, but a nationalist. He was granted the honor of being a hero of the USSR by Khrushchev, but Khrushchev was well known to be a staunch anti-Semite and, in private, among his Communist party members, he ridiculed and humiliated Nasser and Arabs in general. However, to receive support from Nasser against the West, Khrushchev followed the recommendation of Napoleon Bonaparte, who stated that “*I would kiss a man’s ass if I needed him*”. In the case of Khrushchev, this famous quotation should have been rephrased as, “*I must kiss the Semitic man’s ass because I have need of him*”.

A political and religious Arab leader known to be pro-Nazi and anti-Jewish was Amin al-Husayni, a member of the al-Husayni clan of Jerusalem. He was the Grand Mufti and leader of the Arab Higher Committee. From 1938 to 1945, including during World War II, al-Husayni closely allied himself with the Nazi regime [6]. Thus, pro-Nazi sentiments were common among Arab leaders, as were anti-British sentiments. Strong anti-Jewish feelings were also present because of the uprising of Zionism.

After World War II, many former Nazi war criminals contributed considerably to the development of armed forces and military intelligence as advisors in Syria [7] and served in Syria’s military, intelligence services, administration, and police [8]. Nazi war criminals served in Syria side by side with USSR military officers and KGB advisors as executioners, butchers, and torturers [8]. From 1971, military personnel from the former USSR participated directly in the military actions in Egypt and Syria and even in terror actions against Israel, although the USSR did not admit this at the time. Only after 1990 did the Russian authorities admit that military personnel from the former USSR participated directly in ac-

tions against Israel in 1971, 1973, and 1982. Even today, Russian military personnel participate directly in actions against Israel, as it became clear in Syria in September 2018 [9].

1.1. Ethnic Cleansing

Ethnic cleansing is defined as “*The forced removal of ethnic, religious, cultural or racial groups from a territory or country by another ethnic group with help or without help of foreign forces*”. Often, there is international silence or protests occur only a significant time after the actual event.

There are many examples from the near past, including the genocide of the Jews in Europe by the Nazis. When the Red Army freed Kiev (the capital of Ukraine), it discovered mass graves in the nearby ravine of Babyn Yar (Ukrainian: *Бабин Яр*). Here, the German Nazis and Ukrainian nationalists had massacred 33,771 Jews in just a few days, from 29 to 30 September 1941. Later, many thousands of communists and prisoners of war were massacred in Babyn Yar. The Ukrainian Auxiliary Police had carried out many extermination orders [10]. At the Teheran Conference in November 1943,

<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1943/1943-12-01c.html> the ruler of the Soviet Union, Stalin, proposed to announce publicly the Nazi’s atrocities against the civil population and Jews. Although the President of the United States (USA), Roosevelt, supported this idea, Great Britain’s Prime Minister, Churchill, opposed it. Churchill was anti-communist and a well-known anti-Semite with some positive sentiments toward Nazism. He defended British interests in the Middle East by preventing the Jews from escaping from Europe to Palestine. In this manner, Great Britain became a co-sponsor of the Nazis in the extermination of the European Jews from 1933 to 1945, which contradicted British proclaimed obligations in the Balfour Declaration (November 2, 1917)

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Balfour-Declaration> and the British Mandate for Palestine

https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/british_mandate_for_palestine. The three leaders agreed do not release the information about the Nazi’s atrocities against the Jews, prisoners of war, and the civil population until the end of the war. Thus, the war crimes did not become publicly known internationally until the time of the Nuremberg trials. Thus, international leaders concealed the facts about ethnic cleansing and the extermination of the civil population at the time that they occurred.

The massacre of Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia, known as the Volhynia Massacre, is still not well known to the international community. When the massacre took place, it was concealed by Nazis, and then later by the USSR and communists in Poland. Even today, it has been poorly studied and poorly documented

<https://polska.pl/history/history-poland/truth-about-volhynian-massacre/>,
https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoyvizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Massacres_of_Poles_in_Volhynia_and_Eastern_Galicia.html.

During World War II, the euphemism *čišćenje terena* (“cleansing the terrain”) was used by Ustaše in Croatia in relation to actions against Jews and Serbs [11].

The war in Yemen has many similarities with the war in Syria. Many Hutu (who participated in genocide) relocated in Yemen after they were expelled from Rwanda [12] for their atrocities against the Tutsi and Pygmy Batwa population [13] by the Rwandan Patriotic Front, led by Paul Kagame. In Yemen, these Hutu war criminals joined forces with Iran and with other Hutu from Africa, who had settled in Yemen in the past, to ignite war against the indigenous Sunni Arabs with the aim of exterminating and expelling Sunni Arabs from Yemen.

Another example of ethnic cleansing is the Katyn massacre that occurred in 1940. The People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (abbreviated as the NKVD), a government department of the Soviet Union, performed a mass execution of Polish war prisoners near Smolensk in the western part of the former USSR, killing mainly officers and intellectuals of the Polish and Belarusian nationality. In 1943, a mass execution of Belarusian civilians by the Nazis occurred in the same place.

1.2. The Middle East before and after World War I

It is necessary to know the history and the ethnic and religious composition of Syria to answer the question of why the war in Syria was and is a case of ethnic cleansing.

Syria is situated in Asia Minor, often called the Middle East, and it is located in what is known as the Fertile Crescent [14], which is a cradle of modern Afro-Euro-Asian civilization. It was a dwelling place for many different Semitic tribes, most of which have since been exterminated, including Phoenicians, the ancient and thalassic Semitic nation [15], the Arameans [16], Idumeans [17], and many other small and large Semitic tribes. Today, only the Arabs, Jews, and renegade tribe of Crimean Karaites [18] remain from the array of dozens of different Semitic nations. Because of its geostrategic placement, intense migrations and conquests have centered on this territory. For several hundred years, until the end of World War I, the Ottoman Empire [19] dominated Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and the Arabian Peninsula. Ottoman Empire entered World War I as one of the Central Powers, along with Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Bulgaria, co-belligerent and client states. As a result of the war, the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist, along with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany, and Imperial Russia. The Ottoman Empire capitulated by signing the Armistice of Mudros [20] on 30 October 1918, which marked the end of the Empire [21] [22] and created the situation in Middle East that continued until 1948. Most of the former territories of the Ottoman Empire became colonies of the French and British Empires. Syria was created, together with Lebanon, and became a French colony under the Mandate for Syria and Lebanon (1923-1946) [23]. The main population of Syria was Sunni Arabs, although many other people, including Alawites, Armenians, Druses, Greeks, Assyrians, and Jews have also inhabited the country. Before 1923, the Alawites were a minority, accounting for about 7%

of the population. Among the Sunni Arabs, the Alawites were long considered to be of low status, particularly as the Alawites were not always considered Muslims. However, the French colonists, following the rule of “divide and dominate”, chose to recruit minorities to the indigenous military forces, distrusting the majority Sunni Arabs. Alawites were considered suitable because they were not Arabs or Sunni and because of their low status among the Sunni Arabs. For the Alawites, service in the colonial indigenous military forces enabled them to lift their social status and escape from the peasantry; the fortunate ones were able to become low-ranking officers in the military forces. Over time, the composition of the indigenous military forces in Syria came to consist predominantly of Alawites, Druses, and Arab Christians. Sunni Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews were underrepresented or completely absent from these military forces.

1.3. Syria after World War II

The Mandatory Syrian Republic existed from 1930 to 1946 as a component of the French Mandate of Syria and Lebanon. As early as 1936, a treaty was drafted to grant independence to Syria, but the French parliament refused to accept it. From 1940 to 1941, the Syrian Republic was under the rule of the Nazi Vichy government, until the Allies invaded the territory in 1941. In 1944, Syria proclaimed an independent state, but only in October 1945 was the Syrian Republic recognized by the United Nations as an independent state *de jure*. On 17 April 1946, French troops were withdrawn from Syria and the Syrian Republic became a *de facto* sovereign state. Syria and the Republic of Egypt formed the United Arab Republic in 1958 under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser. It was their response to Israel, France, and Britain launching a war against Egypt in 1956, to gain the Suez Canal back from Egypt [24]. Following Khrushchev’s instigation, Nasser had announced nationalization of the joint British-French Suez Canal Company that owned and operated the canal and Nasser blocked Israel from using it. Egypt lost the military conflict in this so-called Suez Crisis. Although Khrushchev made a great deal of noise and issued threats, he gave little practical assistance to Egypt, beyond the provision of some military equipment. Only the involvement of the USA saved Egypt from collapse and Nasser from dethronement, as the USA forced Israel, France, and Great Britain to retreat from Sinai. Khrushchev was successful in influencing Nasser and later Hafez al-Assad. The union between the Syrian Republic and Egypt in the United Arab Republic lasted from 1958 to 1961. In 1961, Syria declared separation from Egypt and became the Syrian Arab Republic. In 1963, the Syrian Ba’athist party organized a military coup and usurped power in the country. Thus, from 1963 up to the present day, military dictatorships have defined the political structure of Syria. Today, Syria is governed by the pure despotism of the Assad dynasty.

1.4. Rise of the Assad Dynasty Dictatorship

Hafez al-Assad (6 October 1930-10 June 2000), the dictator of Syria, was originally a Syrian military officer. In 1955, he was commissioned as a lieutenant in

the Syrian Air Force and received additional training in Egypt. In 1957, Assad was sent to the USSR to be trained in flying MiG-17s, and, in Moscow, he was recruited by the KGB as an influence agent [25]. In 1963, Assad participated in the *coup d'état* in Syria that brought the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party to power. In recognition of his role in the coup, he was granted the position of Commander of the Syrian Air Force. In 1966, Salah Jadid organized a second coup by a more radical military faction of the army. Again, Assad was on the “right” side, the side of the victors, and he was appointed defense minister for his loyalty. In 1970, Assad himself organized the third military coup and ousted his former patron Jadid, then appointing himself as the leader of Syria. From 1970 to 1971, he appointed himself Prime Minister of Syria. He improved Syria's relationship with the USSR, propagated the concept of Pan Arabism, and competed with Nasser for first place as the defender of Arab interests against Israel. From 1971, he officially became the president of Syria, although in reality he was a dictator despite the formal title, and he held this position until his death in 2000. A cult of personality around Assad and his family was created and persists up to the present. Thus, from the beginning of Syria's history up to the present, the Alawites have gained and retained control of the military, intelligence, police, and security services. After the death of Hafez al-Assad in 2000, his son Bashar al-Assad succeeded him and became the President of the Syrian Arab Republic.

1.5. Who Are the Alawites?

Today, Alawites live in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Germany, Australia, and Israel, on the Golan Heights. The greatest number of Alawites live in Syria. According to Mehrdad Izady, in 2018, Alawites represented 17.2% of the Syrian population, an increase from 11.8% in 2010 [26]. Such a significant increase within a relatively short period of time, only eight years, is not a product of natural population changes, but has been achieved by the expulsion of Sunni Arabs from Syria. For Alawites, nationality and religion are interconnected. However, some Western scholars note that the genetic origin of the Alawites is disputed and unclear [27]. Alawites can belong to the Canaanites, Hittites, and Mardaites. There is agreement that the Alawites immigrated to Syria from elsewhere. They themselves often insist that they are descendants of Ali (Ali ibn Abi Talib), who has been considered the first Imam of the Twelver school. However, this is not correct because they are not Arabs, or they are not even Semites. There have been many tragic episodes in the past involving conflicts between the Alawites and the main Muslim population. During the reign of Selim I, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, the Alawites were persecuted in Aleppo [28], and a massacre took place in the Great Mosque of Aleppo on 24 April 1517. In this “Massacre of the Telal” (Arabic: مجزرة التل), as it is known, many thousands of Alawites were killed, as described in the presentation “Ottoman Empire massacre against Alawites” (Syrian Center for Studies, 9 May 2017 <http://sy-center.net/?p=1512>).

Another side of the story concerns an earlier episode in history. In 1097, when

the crusaders entered Syria, (according to Bar Hebraeus), “[the] crusaders concluded Alawites were not a truly Islamic sect [28] and cooperated with Alawites against the Muslims”. Ibn Taymiyya was strongly anti-Alawite and accused the Alawites of aiding the crusaders and Mongols, as the following quotation, cited in Daniel Pipes (1992) *Greater Syria*, Oxford University Press, p 163, ISBN 978-0-19-536304-3, indicates: “the Nusayris are more infidel than Jews or Christians, even more infidel than many polytheists. They have done greater harm to the community of Muhammad than have the warring infidels such as the Franks, the Turks, and others. To ignorant Muslims they pretend to be Shi’is, though in reality they do not believe in God or His prophet or His book... Whenever possible, they spill the blood of Muslims... They are always the worst enemies of the Muslims... war and punishment in accordance with Islamic law against them are among the greatest of pious deeds and the most important obligations [Ibn Taymiyya]”. In his book, Matti Moosa also accused the Alawites of aiding the crusaders and Mongols against the Muslims [28]. Historian Ibn Kathir (Ismail ibn Kathir (Arabic: ابن كثير, full name Abu Al-Fida, ‘Imad Ad-Din Isma’il bin ‘Umar bin Kathir Al-Qurashi Al-Busrawi (1301-1373)), characterized the Alawites as *kuffar* (infidels) and *mushrikeen* (polytheists). According to Ibn Kathir, whereas Muslims proclaim their faith with the phrase “There is no deity but God and Muhammad is His prophet”, the Alawis assert that “There is no deity but Ali, no veil but Muhammad, and no Bab but Salman”. As Alawis reject Islam’s main tenets, by almost any standard they must be considered non-Muslims [29].

“Alawis are self-described as a community of ‘true believers’. Alawites celebrate Mass, including consecration of bread and wine” [30]. Alawite doctrine incorporates Islamic, Gnostic, neo-Platonic, Christian and other elements and has, therefore, been described as syncretic [31] [32]. “The Alawi sect, which integrates doctrines from other religions—in particular from Christianity—arose from a split within the Ismailite sect. The Alawis appear to be descendants of people who lived in this region at the time of Alexander the Great. When Christianity flourished in the Fertile Crescent, the Alawis, isolated in their little communities, clung to their own preIslamic religion. After hundreds of years of Ismaili influence, the Alawis moved closer to Islam. However, contacts with the Byzantines and the Crusaders added Christian elements to the Alawis’ new creeds and practices. For example, Alawis celebrate Christmas, Easter, and Epiphany”, from [31] [32].

Alawites also believe that “they were originally stars or divine lights that were cast out of heaven through disobedience and must undergo repeated reincarnation (or metempsychosis) before returning to heaven [33] [34]. They can be reincarnated as Christians or others through sin and as animals if they become infidels. In addition, they believe that God might have incarnated twice; the first incarnation was Joshua who conquered Canaan, and the second was the fourth Caliph, Ali” (By Prof. John Myhill (May 4, 2011), the Alawites and Israel <https://besacenter.org/perspectives-papers/the-alawites-and-israel/>).

Despite the perspectives given above, the Sunni Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj

Amin al-Husseini, recognized the Alawites to be Muslims [35] in the interests of Arab nationalism (or in the interests of the struggle against Jews and Zionism). The meaning of Sunni Grand Mufti and his fatwa has no relevance to the other branches of Islam and even to Islam at all. However, in the Imam chart t.pdf, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Imam_chart_t.pdf the Alawites were placed among different sects that worship Shi'ism.

In 1971, Hafez al-Assad declared himself to be president of Syria. However, according to the Syrian constitution, the presidency was reserved for and permitted only to Sunni Muslims. This fact sparked resistance by the Sunni. In 1973, a new constitution was adopted for the benefit of Alawi Hafez al-Assad, as it specified that the president must only be Muslim, by this, it was not required to be Sunni by origin. It was unusable for majority Sunni to have Alawi as a president. “*Athari Sunni (modern day Salafis) scholars such as Ibn Kathir (a disciple of Ibn Taymiyya) have categorized Alawites as pagans in their writings*”^[35]
^[43] ^[44] https://infogalactic.com/info/Batiniyya#cite_ref-abdullah_44-0.

Ibn Taymiyyah (a prominent Islamic scholar) thought of the Alawites as “*more heretical yet than Jews and Christians*”^[49],

(بالنصيرية هم وسائر أصناف القرامطة الباطنية أكفر من اليهود والنصارى ; بل وأكفر من كثير من

من(المشركي)^[50] and, according to Carole Hillenbrand, the confrontation with the Shia's resulted because they “*were accused of collaboration with Christians and Mongols*”^[27]. Ibn Taymiyya had further active involvements in campaigns against the Mongols and their Shia allies^[33] [36]. He was the defender of a “true and clean” Islam; “*Ibn Taymiyyah took part in a second military offensive in 1305 against the Alawites and the Isma'ilis*”^[51] *in the Kasrawan region of the Lebanese mountains where they (the Alawites) were defeated*^[30] ^[49] ^[52]. *The Alawis eventually left the region to settle in southern Lebanon*^[53] [36].

Having an Alawi rather than a “real” Muslim president was contrary to the wishes of the majority of Syrians and it resulted in protests and demonstrations [37]. In 1974, to satisfy the constitutional requirement, Alawi Hafez al-Assad entered into an agreement with the founder of the Amal Movement and leader of the Twelvers in Lebanon Musa as-Sadr to issue a fatwa stating that Alawites were a part of the community of Twelver Shi'ite Muslims [38]. It appears that Alawi Hafez al-Assad was not concerned with whether the Alawites were regarded as Sunni Muslims in accordance with the fatwa issued by the Sunni Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini or whether they were Shi'ite Muslims in accordance with the fatwa issued by Musa as-Sadr. For Alawi Hafez al-Assad, what was important was to gain power over the Syrian population for himself and his family. However, silent resistance by the Sunni Arabs was a constant concern for both Hafez al-Assad and, later, Bashir al-Assad.

1.6. The Sunni Arab Revolution against the Al-Assad Dictatorship

Hafez al-Assad and Bashir al-Assad are the Alawi dynasty. They have been supported by their clan and by other Alawites. However, this has not been enough

to subjugate the main population, 80% of which were Sunni Arabs. Therefore, the Alawites required allies, which they found in the Armenians, Greeks, Maronites, and other Christians. They also found allies in different Shi'i sects, among the Iranians, and even among the idolaters, pagans, and infidels, such as the Russians.

Between March and July of 2011, public protests erupted in Syria [37] [39] [40]. The police and the army, under the command of Bashir al-Assad, answered with repression and even with gas assaults. The Syrian civil war had commenced. The pro-Assad forces were composed of the Syrian Armed Forces, the National Defense Forces, pro-government armed groups, Hezbollah, Iranians, Russians, and Iraqis (mainly Kurds). The opposition was composed of the Free Syrian Army, the Turkish FSA, the National Front for Liberation, the Islamic Front/SIF, Tahrir al-Sham, Al-Nusra Front, Guardians of Religion Organization, Democratic Federation of Northern Syria (SDF) YPG/YPJ, Kurds, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and many others. As in all civil wars, some groups that fight against the regime were also fighting against each other. Apart from the forces named above that were directly involved in the fighting, a number of other countries have supported or resisted the regime or the opposition groups. The Western countries and the Kurds have opposed the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. The USA, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Israel have fought both directly and by supporting the anti-regime coalition. Several other countries, including Turkey, Egypt, and China, have had a strong interest in the region and were also involved in the civil war.

In the beginning, the pro-Assad forces were defeated on all fronts, including Damascus, and parts of Damascus were in the hands of opposition forces. However, Russia has been actively involved in the war on the side of Assad and confusion and disorder have prevailed within the USA (under Obama leadership) and NATO, resulting in an absence of action that could support the opposition by counterbalancing the Russian and Iranian support of Assad. Far from being a rapid strike, the revolt of the Sunni Arabs has transformed into a long civil war.

2. The Political Motivations and Military Interests of the Forces Involved in Syria's Civil War

2.1. Alawites of Assad against the Syrian Sunni Arabs

In Syria, as we have explained, there is a clash between the Alawites of Assad and the Sunni Arabs. The revolt of the Sunni Arabs was based purely on their aspiration for liberation from enslavement by the Alawites. Bashir al-Assad could no longer subdue the Syrian Sunni Arabs only by exploiting the ideological struggle against Israel. In the revolt, Assad saw an excellent opportunity to cleanse Syria of significant numbers of Sunni Arabs and to cement his power by increasing the percentage of Alawites and tipping the ethnic balance in their favor.

2.2. Opposition to Assad

The regime of Bashar al-Assad used military force in their efforts to bring the protests of the Sunni Arabs under control. Several resistance centers then spontaneously emerged, which later became multiple armed resistance groups. Many small and large groups emerged—at least dozens and possibly hundreds—all of which possessed very different ideologies or without any ideology at all. Some groups contained as few as ten men, whereas others comprised tens of thousands. Despite these differences between the groups, there was a common feeling among them all of hatred of the Assad family and Bashar al-Assad. Some small groups fought against the Assad regime because their relatives were killed by Assad’s butchers, others participated to defend their religious and spiritual rights against infidels, and some were paid mercenaries. Several groups fought to receive the military training that would be useful to them in attempting to liberate their own countries, whereas others fought purely for criminal purposes. Thus, Syria has become a crucible for future partisans, terrorists, and groups with strong arm-brotherhood, large networks of transnational contacts, and good training in the use of arms, military tactics, and even military strategy. A description of all these armed groups and their aims is beyond the scope of this review. However, several groups will be described because this is necessary to gain an understanding of the dynamics of the war.

2.3. Russian “Volunteers” and Islamic Idealist Volunteers

The Russian Federation is following in the footsteps of the USSR and the Russian Empire, fighting with hidden forces based on the principle “их там нету” (“they are not our men”). In “How That Massive Battle between US Troops and Russian Mercenaries in Syria Went Down”

<https://taskandpurpose.com/russian-mercenaries-syria-firefight>, it was noted that “Russian ‘volunteers’ (PMCs) had been killed in the strikes” [41]. From the very beginning of the civil war in Syria, Russian mercenaries and military personnel have been present, participating in both pro- and anti-Assad movements. Fighters from the Caucasus who participated in the First and Second Chechen wars also participated in the anti-Assad movement. They were very well trained and highly motivated fighters, devoted to Islam. In addition, idealist volunteers arrived in Syria at their own expense and fought without pay. Such individuals were found in nearly every anti-Assad group and represented a core strength.

2.4. Kurds

The Kurdish participation in the Syrian war is complex. Kurds have been present on all fronts as compact military forces, and they have fought against nearly all the other groups and cooperated with both sides at different stages of the war. Their central concerns have been liberation from the Assad regime and resistance to Turkey. As a result of the partition of the Ottoman Empire following the Armistice of Mudros [20], many countries in the region became colonies of

France and Britain and then later became independent national states. However, the Kurds were divided among Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey and never received national statehood, despite having a large population of 40 to 45 million. The Kurds have a strong clan structure and these clans are often in rivalry. The majority of Kurds follow Islam or religions that are close to Islam, but there are also groups practicing of Christianity and Judaism. Kurds are known to be good fighters and have tended to ally themselves with the USA and NATO or with USA-friendly forces. Later in the Syrian civil war, after the USA declared the withdrawal of its forces from Syria, some Kurdish groups developed ties with Assad to prevent the occupation of their enclaves by the Turkish military.

2.5. Uyghurs

Uyghurs follow Sunni Islam, Atheism, and Buddhism. The majority of these people are concentrated in China, in the Xinjiang province where they have a population of around 15 million, but significant numbers also live in Kazakhstan (250,000), Uzbekistan (60,000), Kyrgyzstan (50,000), Turkey (50,000), Saudi Arabia (50,000), and Australia (10,000). Another 10,000 are spread across Pakistan, Russia, Canada, the USA, Japan, and Ukraine. Uyghurs are of Turkic ethnicity. They fought under Turkish military command in the Idlib province. Following Erdogan's doctrine to guard the Turkic ethnic population in Syria and to claim the Ottoman Empire territories, and to presenting Erdogan as a non-disputable leader of Islam Turks' have been involved in the Syrian civil war. Uyghurs have been involved in the Syrian war with the aim of receiving training and skills in combat and partisan warfare, for later use against the Chinese in the Xinjiang province.

3. Adversaries' Goals and Their Aims in Syria

3.1. Russia's History and Its Military, Economic, and Geopolitical Involvement in Syria

Russia has been and is a main force for instability in the Middle East, North Africa, South America, and elsewhere in the world. Today's Russian Federation is the successor of the former Soviet Union, which in turn was the clear successor of the Russian Empire. The geopolitical, military, and economic aspirations of the Russian Federation have not changed from those of the Russian Empire. A famous Russian song entitled "*Fly migratory birds*" illustrates the cynicism and perversity of the imperialistic credo of Russia. The song is from 1960 or 1970. The words of the song, written by Isakovsky with music composed by Blanter, can be translated as: "*I do not need Turkish coast and Africa I do not need... I do not need the alien sun and alien land is not needed to me...*" From the times of the Tsar Ivan IV "the Ivan Cruel" (1530-1584), and even before that, Russia's goal has been the invasion and conquest of territories in Europe and Asia, especially those in route to the Middle East. The conquest of Crimea was accomplished by Ekaterina II (1729-1796), who was the Russian Tsarina from 1762.

Crimea was taken from the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) at that time, and it was annexed by Russia again in recent times, this time taking it from Ukraine. Azov was taken by Tsar Peter I (1672-1725) from the Ottoman Empire. Having a presence on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean has been a priority of Russian imperialism. During the time of Tsar Ivan IV, the Novgorod and Pskov republics were destroyed and included in the Russian Empire, as were parts of Livonia and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Tsar Ivan IV also conquered the Kazan, Astrakhan, and Siberian Khanates. Then, as now, Russia's neighbors did not feel safe from potential conquest.

In the 1920s, Communist Russia attempted to establish a socialist republic in Iran, the Iran Socialist Soviet Republic or the Soviet Republic of Gilan [42].

In 1948, Stalin was hopeful that the then newly established state of Israel would join the socialist camp and become a satellite of Russia, and he was deeply suspicious of the Arab countries. After the Jewish state instead of choosing Socialism had chosen to ally with the West, Stalin decided to eliminate the entire Jewish population in Russia and commenced by organizing an anti-Semitic campaign known as the doctors' plot or the process against poisoners, in which a group of mainly Jewish doctors from Moscow were accused of planning to assassinate Soviet leaders. Later, the USSR leader Khrushchev was less fastidious than Stalin in his political choices and he decided to provoke the Arab leaders against the West, by making use of the Arab confrontation with Israel. In this way, he was able to put Russia's foot on Middle East soil. Khrushchev provoked the leader of Egypt, Nasser, to nationalize the Suez Canal, igniting the Suez Crisis and the Second Arab-Israeli War in 1956 [43] [44]. Israeli, British, and French forces occupied the Sinai and Suez Canal. Although the USSR was not directly involved militarily, in alliance with the USA, it forced the Israeli, British, and French forces out of Sinai and the Suez Canal has remained under the suzerainty of Egypt. Although the USA has not received any concessions from Egypt, in contrast, the USSR has become a major ally to Egypt, Syria, and various anti-Israeli organizations. The USSR became the major supplier of military equipment to Arab countries and the trainer of military personnel. Under the leadership of Khrushchev, and later Brezhnev, the USSR strongly opposed Israel in the United Nations and elsewhere. It provided significant economic and military assistance to Egypt, Syria, and several other Arab countries in return for their loyalty in the struggle against Israel and the West. With the collapse of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet equivalent to NATO, the USSR's previous satellites under the Warsaw Pact became allies of the West and became the enemies of the USSR and later Russian Federation. In this process, Russia lost the support of the main Arab states. Many of the Arab states reoriented themselves toward the West through peaceful methods, although military struggle occurred in some cases, such as in South Yemen [Kifner, J. (9 February 1986). "Massacre with Tea: Southern Yemen at War". *New York Times*, retrieved 17 September 2013] [45]. The total economic collapse of Russia occurred in the 1990s and most of the Arab nations then turned to the West. The exceptions were Iraq, Syria, and

Libya, all of whom were ruled by strong dictatorships. Subsequently, however, a period of very high oil prices gave Russia the opportunity to restore its economy. In this period of restoration, Russia's imperialistic military tendencies have revived, and it has established military bases in Syria, Livia, Venezuela, and elsewhere, and instigated conflicts with the ultimate aim of restoring its empire.

3.2. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States in Syria against Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia

Iranians have been the opponents of the Arabs from ancient times, as evidenced by the Iranian revolution propaganda, (the Islamic revolution in 1979) [46] and the Iraq-Iran War [47] [48]. Saudi Arabia and Qatar were planning a gas pipeline through their territory, the Kingdom of Jordan, Syria, and Turkey, to Europe or to the Mediterranean shores. Their aim was to become independent of the Strait of Hormuz, which is the main trade route (for exports and imports) from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the Gulf States. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States were aware of threats from Iran to close this Strait, which is only 21 nautical miles wide, to oil shipping. Thus, the aim of the planned pipeline was to become independent of the Strait of Hormuz and Iran. However, because the planned pipeline was in competition with Russian gas pipelines to Europe, Russia used Bashir al-Assad to prevent Saudi Arabia and Qatar building their pipeline through Syria. This became the "last straw that broke the camel's back" for the Saudi Arabians, who had always been critical of the al-Assad regime, but tolerated it to promote Arab unity as a tool against Israel. However, the direct preference given to the "infidels" of Russia by Bashir al-Assad and the undermining of Saudi Arabia's and Qatar's economic and military security was regarded as intolerable.

3.3. Goals of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey in Syria

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey are on the same side of the barricade in the struggle against the Bashir al-Assad regime. However, they have different goals and aims. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are generally protectors of Sunni Muslims against such "cursed infidels" as the Russians. They have demonstrated their support of Afghan' partisans against the Russian invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 [49] [50], and their support of the Kurds against Assad and their support in the First (1994-1996) [51] and Second Chechen War (1999-2009) [52] [53].

The economic motives of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates regarding the competition on the hydrocarbon market have been very important as competition with Russia. The situation has intensified after Russia's intrigue with Assad prevented construction of the gas pipeline through Syria; the pipeline was also important to the USA in competing with Russia for influence in Europe on the market of hydrocarbons.

Under Erdogan's leadership, Turkey has begun attempts to restore the Otto-

man Empire by presenting Erdogan itself as the main defender of Muslims, reacting sharply to Israel, and opposing the USA and Europe. Turkey's aim has been to regain control of the territories lost by the Ottoman Empire after World War I [20]. A significant portion of its territory on the southern border of Turkey is under Syrian governance [20]. This territory was mainly inhabited by Sunni Turks [54] and the fact that Arabs govern Turks there is confronting to Turkey's nationalism. Kurdish fighters (the Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK) [54] on the southern and southeast borders of Turkey have been aware of Turkey as a direct threat. Turkey has used the civil war in Syria as an excuse to occupy the borderland of Syria, especially in Idlib province. Turkey also used the tragedy of Syria's refugees from 2016-2018 as leverage to gain better conditions for Turkey's businesses and nationalities in the EU.

3.4. US Involvement

It is incorrect to consider that the USA sympathizes with any particular side in any conflict and this is particularly the case in the Syrian conflict. The USA has its own agenda, which is complicated and changes in relation to the situation and from Obama to Trump leadership. The main goals of the USA are being able to compete with the two other superstates, Russia and China, as well as with the EU and regional powers (e.g., Turkey, Iran, and Israel) for military and economic dominance in the region. The USA supports a broad array of countries and, although its actions can be correct at the distinct moment of time when they are applied, often they heavily conflict with its long-term interests. As an example, consider the conflict of interests regarding the oil businesses of the USA and its allies, which has resulted in the betrayal of the Shah of Iran and the Iranian Islamic revolution. It has indisputably occurred with the heavy engagement of two EU countries, France and Germany. Also, the poor judgment and short-term perspective of the USA leadership led Iraq to war with Iran, which led to a disproportionate growth in military power in Iraq and the total disobedience of Saddam Hussein to the interests of USA, particularly given his close relations with Russia. The chain of events developed following aggression by Iraq toward Kuwait. It would not have happened without intrigues in the USA administration and the involvement of State Secretary Fulbright. The need to repair the damage has led the USA into two Iraq wars. However, the defeat of Iraq has destroyed the balance of power between Iraq and Iran and in the Middle East in general. This has given Iran the opportunity for expansion and it has developed as a threat to USA interests in the Middle East and elsewhere. The tragedy of people of Iraq has become the tragedy of the Sunni Arab majority, Sunni Arab majority which has been made subject to the Kurdish Shia administration, the Shia administration which have been close-related with Iran's ayatollahs. This ignited resistance by the Sunni Arabs and the situation became as it is today—involving the appearance of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. A relatively small problem (the realization of oil businesses) in the past has become a

major problem in the present (international state-sponsored terrorism of Iran) for all countries in the region and also for the USA.

3.5. Involvement of Turkey

Turkey's motives in becoming involved in Syria have been partly described in subsection 3.3. Its primary aims are to regain the former Ottoman Empire territories under Turkish control, to defend the Turks' national minorities and, if possible, the Sunni Muslims, and to assist countries with a Turks' majority. In Syria, Turkey has tried to fulfill three of these important goals: defending a Turkish national minority, defending the Sunni Muslims, and regaining territories of the former Ottoman Empire. In addition, in Syria, Turkey is fighting against the possible establishment of a Kurdish national entity or Kurdistan as an independent national state. This last aim conflicts with the interests of the USA and Iran. Iran has an overwhelming influence on the Kurds governing Iraq. The spread of Kurdish sovereignty to Syrian territories populated with Kurds is a direct threat to Turkey but would suit Iran. Iranians and Turks are historical enemies as Iranians and Arabs are.

3.6. Involvement of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Iranians or Persians have been the primary nationals in the Persian Kingdom or Empire (Iran) in the past. Today, the ethnic composition of the Islamic Republic of Iran is as follows: Persians 61%, Azeri 16%, Kurds 10%, Lur 6%, Baloch 2%, Arabs 2%, Turkmen and Turkic tribes 2%, and "other" 1% (as of 2008 [56]). Iran's population was 77,891,220 in July 2011 [56]. The state religion is Islam (Twelver Shia) and the Muslims comprise 98% of the population, of which 89% are Shia and 9% are Sunni. Following the constitution, the religions of minorities are also recognized, including other forms of Islam (Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, Hanbali, and Zaydi), Christianity (Armenian, Assyrian, and Chaldean), Judaism, and Zoroastrianism [56]; however, atheism is a punishable offence.

The Islamic Republic of Iran was established after the Islamic revolution from 1978-79, following a referendum in April 1979 [57]. During the revolution, conflict occurred with the USA, and relations between the two countries have since deteriorated. Earlier, there were good relations between Iran and the USA, and between Iran and Israel, but these have become very hostile. By defending itself in the region, Iran has begun to expand its influence, both in Iraq (through the Kurdish administration) and with anti-Israeli organizations, such as Hezbollah (in Lebanon) and Hamas (in Gaza). The threats from Iran toward the USA and Israel, and vice versa, have developed as the hailstorm from the very beginning. There are several reasons for the involvement of Iran in Syria. They include assisting the al-Assad regime; promoting Shia Muslims' solidarity; the historical hatred between Shia and Sunni; economic competition with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates; anti-USA and anti-Israeli sentiment, competition with Turkey; and a desire for the imperialistic expansion of Iran in Asia. The

main aim has been and is the establishment of a foothold near Israel's borders in case of military confrontation with Israel or the USA. For these reasons, the Iranian government has been fighting and will continue to fight in Syria "up to the last Arab' life". Several other reasons should be taken into account, including future competition with Turkey on the Kurdish question and competition for leadership in the Islamic World. The religious opportunism of the Iranian leadership has been well demonstrated by its support of Christian Armenians against Shia' Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

3.7. Involvement of Israel

Modern Israel is 71 years old. Israel (/ɪzriəl, 'ɪzreɪəl/; Hebrew: יִשְׂרָאֵל; Arabic: إِسْرَائِيل) has been at war with its Arab neighbors from the first day of its declaration of independence. In recent decades, peace treaties have been concluded between Israel and Egypt, and between Israel the Kingdom of Jordan. With other Arab countries, Israel is formally or in reality at war. After the Yom Kippur War (1973), Israel has had a disengagement agreement with Syria. Syria never recognized the state of Israel. Syria allied itself with Iran during the 2006 Lebanon War by supporting Hezbollah and allowed Iran to ship supplies to Hezbollah through Syria. At present, Israel and Iran are sworn enemies. Israel has a population of 8,995,180 and its official religion is Hebrew (Judaism), with all other religions permitted freely, including atheism. Israel's religious composition is as follows: 74.7% Jewish, 17.7% Muslim, 2% Christian, 1.6% Druze, and 4% "other" [58]. Its main ethnicities are 74.5% Jews, 20.9% Arabs, and 4.6% "other" [59]. The Israeli army is composed of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), which are in close cooperation with the Military Intelligence Directorate (Aman) and with the intelligence services Mossad and Shabah [60]. The IDF has 176,500 active troops and an additional 445,000 reservists [61], which is ten times smaller than Iranian military potential. Despite its relatively small territory and population, Israel has become a powerful military and economic force in the region, and Israel has well-developed technology. As long has not been and is not established the peace agreement between the countries Israel and Syria, to Israel has not been and is not a difference between al-Assad or another Syrian leader. The cooperation between Syria and Iran is regarded by Jerusalem as a threat to the existence of the Jewish state. Iran's leaders have many times declared their intentions and desire to eliminate and destroy Israel. In Iran' confrontations with the USA, Iran has declared Israel as a target for an attack or simply as a hostage. Hostilities between Israel and Syria have existed constantly, but the presence of Iranian military forces in Syria has strongly elevated the military activity of Israel on Syrian soil, mainly against the Iranian military or paramilitary. Israel's aim in this regard has been and is to eliminate or weaken the threat against Israel's existence.

3.8. Involvement of China

China is a very old civilization, more than 4000 years old. From its earliest his-

tory, it was organized as a state. At times, China was one kingdom, whereas at other times it was composed of several kingdoms. In 1949, China became the People's Republic of China. Today, China has become the second largest superpower in the world. It is difficult to determine the exact number of people living in China, but it is estimated at somewhere between 1 and 1.5 billion. There are around 150 million Muslims in China, making them a significant minority. The Uyghurs are Muslims who mainly live in the Xinjiang province (see subsection 2.5. above) and in neighboring Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan claims that parts of Xinjiang province belonged to the old Kazakh khaganate and should be part of Kazakhstan. Several terrorist acts have been registered that were perpetrated by Uyghur nationalists against the Chinese. The government of China is aware of a large number of Uyghurs who participated in military actions in Syria and the support given to the Uyghurs by the Erdogan government of Turkey. When the war ends in Syria, these militant Uyghurs will be able to infiltrate China and become a threat to the stability in the country, especially with the support of Turkey and Kazakhstan.

4. Conclusion

Many countries and even more political interests have been and still are involved in the civil war in Syria; no country is involved purely because it wishes to protect the Sunni Arabs against ethnic cleansing by the al-Assad regime.

The USA under the Trump administration has declared it is not interested in being involved in any new military conflict that will require it to “put boots on enemy ground”.

Israel (in April 2019) has demonstrated that the situation in Syria with al-Assad in the leadership suits its interests. At the beginning of the civil war in Syria, Israel gave support to the Assad opposition. However, in April 2019, Israel returned two Syrian citizens from detention in Israel to Syria. One of these detainees was a contrabandist and the second had been detained for terrorist activity. Why, when Israel was hostile to the Assad regime eight years ago, has it suddenly become kind to the Assad regime in April 2019? The answer is complicated.

The “senior” defender of the rights of Palestine Arabs and Sunni Arabs, the “Sultan” of Turkey, Erdogan, does not intend to return major parts of Idlib province to Syrian sovereignty. This has opened up the possibility that the country will be partitioned. Erdogan's occupation of part of Idlib province in Syria and its absence of intentions to return this territory made it easier for President of USA Trump to recognize Israeli sovereignty on parts of Golan Heights. As long as Syria's territory remains divided, with parts of it controlled by Turkey, with parts of it controlled by the Kurds, and with parts of it controlled by anti-Assad partisans, Israel is comfortable with the presidency of Bashir al-Assad. While this situation persists, Israel has a stronger position in terms of keeping the Golan Heights under Israeli sovereignty. Thus, Turkey has directly harmed

the Arabs' interests, despite all of Erdogan's rhetoric.

In case of conflict with the USA, it is in Iran's interests to create a strong position in the Middle East by holding Israel as a potential hostage.

Islamic Republic of Iran and Hezbollah will fight "to the last Sunni Arab life in Syria".

Russia has a longstanding interest in having military bases in Syria in case of confrontation with the USA and the Western countries. For Russia is comfortable to have Bashar al-Assad as the ruler of Syria, although any other who will give Russia the right to have military bases in Syria will also be accepted.

The Kurds' interests differ from those of the Arabs'. The Kurds are attempting to establish the sovereign entity; however, this is not realistic without USA' support. The Iranian influence on the Kurds is contrary to USA interests. As always Kurds will end without winning.

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates are trying to assist the Sunni in Syria. They are competing with Russia in the oil and gas market, they are also under heavy threat from Iran. They cannot prevail alone over Iran, and they are seeking help from all Sunni and all Semitic countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan and even Israel, which is also in confrontation with Iran.

China is seeking a neutralization of the Uyghurs nationalists who are participating in the civil war in Syria and have support from Turkey. This could potentially lead to confrontation between China and Turkey.

Thus, in Syria, two main blocks have appeared in terms of potential Global confrontations: the USA, NATO, and the United Sunni and Semite countries, versus infidels and various terrorist organizations.

The Syrian Civil War is a crime against Sunni Arabs, the crime has been perpetrated and is committed by infidels.

The Alawite-Iranian-Hezbollah-Russian coalition must be put under trial at the International Tribunal for the Genocide and an Ethnic Cleansing of Sunni Arabs in Syria by perpetrating of Civil War.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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