

Removing “Arab” from the Syrian Arab Republic Would “Balkanize” the Country

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The Syrian Kurds are committed to changing their country’s name.

One of the group’s representatives told [Sputnik](#) that they insist on changing the constitutional name of the Syrian Arab Republic to the “Syrian Republic” so as to supposedly make the post-war country more inclusive for minorities, implying credence to the pre-war smears that the ruling Baath Party enforced a policy of so-called “Arab supremacy”. They also expressed their hopes that the forthcoming UNSC-mandated constitutional reform will result in a “decentralized” state. It’s noteworthy that [neither of the group’s demands are new](#), and that they were actually included in the [Russian-written “draft constitution”](#) that Moscow presented during the first Astana Summit over two years ago in January 2017, but they take on a heightened significance given that the kinetic military phase of the conflict is winding down and being replaced by a [mostly non-kinetic political one](#) that will decide the country’s future.

The Baath Party solidly remains in power in Syria despite almost a decade of [destructive Hybrid War](#) against it because it genuinely enjoys the democratic support of most of the population, and it’s in connection with this that one should mention that most of the 85% of ethnic Arabs in the country support the ruling authorities’ official ideology of Arab Nationalism. Actually, there’s a larger percentage of Arabs in the Syrian Arab Republic than there are Russians in Russia, and the titular population of both states is overwhelmingly in favor of retaining their country’s constitutional name, which neither of them regard as being “discriminatory” against their minority compatriots. In the Syrian case, however, the Kurds control the most agriculturally, hydrologically, and energy-rich one-third of the country despite comprising only around 15% of its population and not even being a majority in most of the areas that they control, so their demands nowadays are disproportionately much more influential than they’d otherwise be.

Words having meaning, and the [socialist-supporting Kurds](#) know that as much as anyone, hence one of the reasons why they want to change their country’s constitutional name. It’s not just for “political correctness”, but because they intend for that to be the basis for “Balkanizing” the notionally unified Arab identity of the country into atomized units centered on sect, region, and other factors in order to expand their “decentralized” system all across the country and set the basis for a de-facto “internal partition”. To be clear, autonomy doesn’t in and of itself result in an “internal partition”, but the way in which the Kurds [want to implement it](#) could [dangerously lead](#) to that outcome, which is what they’re after in order to secure their sub-state “sovereignty” through a variation of the so-called “Yinon Plan”.

Removing “Arab” from the Syrian Arab Republic would be the same as removing “Rus” from Russia, which would make it much easier to socially engineer new artificially created identities as a means of dividing-and-ruling these strategic states. Many arguments will likely abound in the coming months about why this change is supposedly “necessary”, but it should always be remembered that it would run the enormous risk of facilitating this worst-case scenario, whether or not the non-Kurdish voices advocating for this even realize it. In view of this, any proposed change to the constitutional name of the country shouldn’t be agreed upon by political parties as part of some larger “compromise” aimed at ending the war, but should be put to a referendum in order to have the people themselves decide whether they want to abandon their Arab identity.

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