

The Syria Imperative: Military Intervention to Promote Israeli Interests?

By [Soraya Sepahpour-Ulrich](#)

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The Assad regime in Syria is facing increased scrutiny for its handling of demonstrators. The Syrian opposition has asked for arms and [NATO intervention](#) similar to what was witnessed in Libya. Washington Hawks such as former presidential candidate and U.S. Senator John McCain have called for military intervention in Syria to “protect civilians.” The call for the use of military force to “protect”.

Given the demonstrated lack of regard for human life and the aversion to justice (Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc.), what lies behind the imperative to intervene in Syria?

The protest movements in Syria started in Daraa — dubbed the epicenter of the anti-Assad protests. Daraa, traditionally supportive of Syria’s ruling Baath Party, suffered from reduced water supply triggering massive protests against the local administration and the regime for failing to deal with the acute water scarcity in the region. Water.

Therein lies the crucial motivation behind the support, agitation, and arming of Syrians against their government by those who endorse ‘humanitarian wars’. It would be naïve to believe that the ‘humanitarian’ interest in Syria comes on the heels of the uprisings in the region given that water has been and continues to be a critical determinant of state security and foreign policy between Israel and Syria (as well as Lebanon) dating back decades.

It was the 1967 war which resulted in the exponential expansion of Israeli water sources including the control of the Golan Heights (also referred to as the [Syrian Golan](#)). For decades, Syrian Golan and the return of its control to Syria has posed a major obstacle to the Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations. Israel’s water demands make it virtually impossible to accommodate this process. In fact, even with full control of the Golan, Israel’s water crisis in 2000 were so acute that it prompted Israel to turn to Turkey for water purchase.

In addition, Syria’s presence in Lebanon since the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in 1975 played a crucial role in hindering Israel’s never-ending water demands. Although the 1955 Johnston Plan (under the auspices of the Eisenhower administration) proposed diverting water from Lebanon’s Litani River into Lake Kinneret, it was not officially formulated, though it remained an attractive prospect. In 1982, Israeli forces established the frontline of their security zone in Lebanon along the Litani. Numerous reports alleged that Israel was diverting large quantities of Litani water.

Syria’s presence in Lebanon and the 1991 Lebanese-Syrian Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination, was a challenge to Israel and its diversion of water. When

Syria replaced Israel as the dominant power in southern Lebanon in May 2000, Israeli fears grew that Syrian success in controlling the Golan and by extension, Lake Kinneret, would have a devastating effect on Israel.

Perhaps this helps explain the fact that on September 13, 2001, while the United States was recovering from the shock of 9/11, the influential and powerful JINSA (Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs) had a [statement available as to how the U.S. should proceed](#). As part of its recommendations, it pointed the finger at not only at Afghanistan and Iraq, but also presented Iran, Pakistan, Syria, Sudan, the Palestinian Authority, Libya, Algeria (and eventually Saudi Arabia and Egypt) as danger spots. Shortly thereafter, in May 2002, the "[Axis of Evil](#)" was expanded to include Syria.

The next logical step was for the United States to pass and implement the [Syrian Accountability Act and the Lebanon Sovereignty Restoration Act](#) which in addition to sanctions, called for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon. The troops remained until April 2005. They were forced to leave a few short months after the assassination of [Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri](#) when Syria was accused of involvement in the murder. Clearly, Syria was not the beneficiary of the assassination.

Without a Syrian presence, Lebanon was made more vulnerable, facilitating the 2006 Israeli attack and invasion of water-rich Southern Lebanon.

While Israel lost the public opinion war in Lebanon and Syria remained intact amidst the accusations and chaos, it became necessary to once again put Syria in the spotlight. In 2007, Syria stood accused of having a nuclear bomb program. As a member of the NPT, rather than reporting such suspicions (unfounded) to the IAEA, Israel, with a green light from the United States, bombed a factory which it alleged was involved in nuclear weapons activities.

[Israel's attack on Syria](#) on 6 September 2007, remained secret until it was revealed by the former prime minister (1996-1999) and the then opposition leader, Binyamin Netanyahu — the current Prime Minister of Israel.

Netanyahu took office in March 2009. In April 2009, a U.S. funded London-based satellite channel, Barada TV, started broadcasting anti-regime propaganda into Syria. Barada TV's chief editor, Malik al-Abdeh, is a cofounder of the Syrian exile group *Movement for Justice and Development* headed by Anas al-Abdah. It is crucial to note that the pro-Israel [Dennis Ross](#), a former fellow at the AIPAC created *Washington Institute for Near East Affairs*, who is currently a senior advisor to Barack Obama, was present in a 2008 meeting with Anas al-Abdah ([see here](#)). Although the meeting took place in early 2008, the theme of the meeting was: "Syria in-transition".

Prophecy or planning, doubtless, there are many Syrians who do have grievances against their government and demand more rights. In this sense, their cause is no different than the many protests we witness on a daily basis around the world – including the United States. What is tragic about the Syrian situation, is that the imperative for intervention in Syria is not based on a genuine desire to help the people. The peoples' grievances is being used as a means to arm them, have them killed, and create the need for an intervention in order to promote Israeli interests.

The Syria imperative is Israel's gain paid for with the blood of the Syrian people.

Soraya Sepahpour-Ulrich has a Master's degree in Public Diplomacy from USC Annenberg for Communication and USC School of International Relations, Los Angeles. She is an independent researcher focusing on US foreign policy and the role of lobby groups. A public speaker, political commentator and columnist, and peace activist, Soraya lives in California.

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Articles by: **Soraya
Sepahpour-Ulrich**

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