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Israel: America's Mad Dog in Syria

By Tony Cartalucci
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*Israel has played an increasingly provocative role in the destructive conflict unfolding within and along Syria's borders since 2011. To many observers, it appears Israeli policy borders between opportunistic and unilateral aggression. In reality, Israel's role in the Syrian conflict fits a much larger and **long-term pattern with Anglo-American plans not only for Syria but for the entire region.***

A more recent row between Israel and Syria was the reported incursion of Israeli warplanes into Syrian airspace, including attacks near the eastern Syrian city of Palmyra. Palmyra hosts an ongoing battle between Syrian forces and the self-proclaimed "Islamic State" (ISIS) terrorist organization. Israeli airstrikes against Syrian forces – then – would have facilitated ISIS operations in the region.

Israel is a State Sponsor of Terror, Not a Champion Against it

Israel has existed as a nation-sized, de facto forward operating base for Anglo-American interests since its creation in the 20th century. It has pursued aggressive regional policies that have intentionally pitted itself against its neighbors as a means of maintaining a Western foothold and point of leverage in North Africa and the Middle East for decades.

Ongoing conflicts between Israel and Palestine are fueled by an orchestrated strategy of tension between a manipulated Israeli population and controlled opposition – Hamas – politically backed, armed, and funded by Israel's own regional collaborators including Saudi Arabia and Qatar.



When proxy military operations began against the Syrian state in 2011 under the cover of the US-engineered "Arab Spring," Israel along with Jordan and Turkey, played a direct role in backing militants and undermining Damascus.

While Jordan has played a more passive role, and Turkey a more direct role in facilitating proxy militant forces, Israel has played the role of "unilateral provocateur." While Turkish, US, and other "coalition" forces are unable to directly attack Syrian forces, Israel – posing as a unilateral regional player – can and has done so regularly since 2012.

CNN in its article, “Israeli jets strike inside Syria; military site near Palmyra reportedly targeted,” would note:

In November 2012, Israel fired warning shots toward Syria after a mortar shell hit an Israeli military post, the first time Israel had fired on Syria across the Golan Heights since the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Israeli jets have been striking targets in Syria since at least 2013, when US officials told CNN they believed IDF jets had hit targets inside Syrian territory.

CNN would also report:

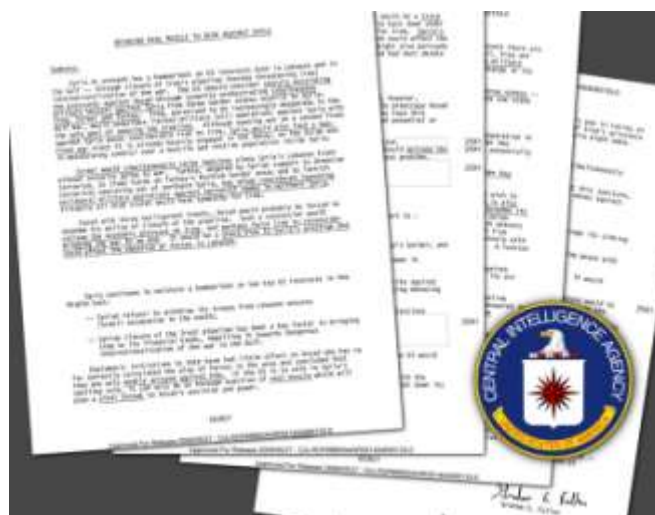
Israeli strikes may have gone as far inside Syria as the capital. In 2014, the Syrian government and an opposition group both said an IDF strike had hit Damascus’ suburbs and airport.

And while Israeli politicians and military officials claim their aggression seeks to stop the transfer of weapons to terrorist organizations, organizations they deem as “terrorist” are in fact the sole forces within Syria fighting actual, internationally recognized terrorist organizations including Al Qaeda, its various subsidiaries and affiliates, as well as the Islamic State itself.

Paradoxically, these genuinely terrorist organizations have existed along Israel’s border enjoying de facto protection from Israeli forces from Syrian military operations.

Israel’s Role as America’s “Mad Dog” is No Secret

Israel’s geopolitical role as “unilateral mad dog” has been a matter of stated US policy since at least the 1980s – and in specific reference to America’s repeated attempts to undermine and overthrow the Syrian state amid much larger objectives aimed at Iran and the region as a whole.



A 1983 document – part of a deluge of recently declassified papers released to the public – signed by former CIA officer **Graham Fuller** titled, “[Bringing Real Muscle to Bear Against Syria](#)” (PDF), states (their emphasis):

Syria at present has a hammerlock on US interests both in Lebanon and in the Gulf — through closure of Iraq’s pipeline thereby threatening Iraqi internationalization of the [Iran-Iraq] war. The US should consider sharply escalating the pressures against Assad [Sr.] through covertly orchestrating simultaneous military threats against Syria from three border states hostile to Syria: Iraq, Israel and Turkey.

The report also states:

If Israel were to increase tensions against Syria simultaneously with an Iraqi initiative, the pressures on Assad would escalate rapidly. A Turkish move would psychologically press him further.

In 2009, US corporate-financier funded policy think tank, the Brookings Institution, would publish a lengthy paper titled, “[Which Path to Persia?: Options for a New American Strategy toward Iran](#)” (PDF), in which, once again, the use of Israel as an apparently “unilateral aggressor” was discussed in detail.

Of course, a US policy paper describing planned Israeli aggression as part of a larger US-driven conspiracy to attack, undermine, and ultimately overthrow the Iranian state reveals there is nothing “unilateral” at all about Israel’s regional policy or its military operations.

In 2012, the Brookings Institution would publish another paper titled, “[Saving Syria: Assessing Options for Regime Change](#)” (PDF), which stated:

Some voices in Washington and Jerusalem are exploring whether Israel could contribute to coercing Syrian elites to remove Asad.



Saving Syria: Assessing Options for Regime Change

Daniel Byman, Michael Deacon, Kenneth Pollack, and Salim Shabib

SYRIA IS TRAPPED IN A CRUMBLING PRECIPICE, and however it might fall will entail significant risks for the United States and for the Syrian people.

The brutal regime of Bashar al-Assad is employing its loyal military forces and sectarian thugs to crush the opposition and maintain its tyranny. Even if Bashar falls, Syria may not be out of the woods: an increasingly likely alternative to the current regime is a bloody civil war similar to what we see in Lebanon, Bosnia, Congo, and most recently in Iraq. The horrors of such a war might even exceed the brutal domination of Assad's control, and would cause significant loss to Syria's neighbors—Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Israel—that could be disastrous for them and for American interests in the Middle East.

But the unrest in Syria, which is now causing its second year, also offers some important opportunities, ones that would come from the fall of the regime of Bashar al-Assad, whose family has ruled the country with an iron grip for over forty years. Syria is Iraq's oldest and most important ally in the Arab world, and the Iranian regime has doubled down on Assad, providing him with financial aid and military support to shore up his regime. Assad's departure would deal a significant blow to Tehran, further isolating it at a time when it has few friends in the region or the world. In addition, Damascus is steadfast in its hostility toward Israel, and Assad's regime is also a longtime supporter of terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, and has at times aided al-Qaeda terrorists and former regime

elements in Iraq. The regime's collapse, therefore, could have significant benefits for the United States and its allies in the region.

Actively ousting Assad, however, will not be easy. Although the Obama administration has for months called for Assad to go, every policy option to remove him is flawed, and some could even make the situation worse—seriously a recipe for inaction. Doing nothing, however, means standing by while Assad murders his own people, and Syria plunges into civil war and risks becoming a failed state. Already the violence is staggering: as of March 2012, at least 8,000 Syrians have died and thousands more have been arrested and tortured in trying to topple the regime. At the same time, Syria is fragmenting. The Syrian opposition remains divided, and the Free Syrian Army is more a brand than a meaningful, unified force. Al-Qaeda is urging fighters to join the fray in Syria, and sectarian killings and atrocities are growing. Should the violence continue to intensify, Syria's neighbors may increase their meddling, and instability could spread, further weakening already fragile neighbors like Iraq and Lebanon.

So to protect U.S. interests, Assad cannot triumph, but a failed Syria, one wracked by civil war, would be just as bad. Thus, U.S. policy must walk this tightrope, trying to remove Assad, but doing so in a way that keeps Syria on track (some capable of policing its borders and ensuring order at home). At the end of the day, however, removing Assad may not be desirable.

explaining:

Israel could posture forces on or near the Golan Heights and, in so doing, might divert regime forces from suppressing the opposition. This posture may conjure fears in the Assad regime of a multi-front war, particularly if Turkey is willing to do the same on its border and if the Syrian opposition is being fed a steady diet of arms and training. Such a mobilization could perhaps persuade Syria's military leadership to oust Assad in order to preserve itself.

Once again, the use of Israel as one of several regional provocateurs executing policy as part of a larger US-orchestrated conspiracy is openly discussed.

As each Israeli incursion into Syria unfolds – regardless of the details, claims, and counterclaims made regarding each incursion – it should be analyzed within the context of US interests, not “Israeli” interests. And regardless of the details of each incursion, the ultimate purpose is to escalate the conflict continuously until Syria and its allies react and provoke a much larger, direct military conflict the US and others amid its axis of aggression can openly participate in.

It should be noted that in Brookings' 2009 paper, "Which Path to Persia?," using Israeli attacks to provoke an Iranian response and thus justify direct US military intervention involving everything from an air campaign against Tehran to a full-scale US invasion and occupation were among the centerpieces of the policy paper.

It is clear that an identical policy is now being pursued against Syria. Unveiling the true nature of Israel's incursions into Syria and resisting the temptation to escalate the conflict further is key to confounding US designs and rendering the provocations of its proxies – including Israel and Turkey – moot.