

Will Iran Leave Syria?

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Brigadier General Yadollah Javani, the lieutenant commander for the Iranian elite force's political affairs wing has been known to say, 'Iran has been present in Iraq and Syria at the invitation of the legitimate governments of these countries and sided with the regional nations based on the common interests of the countries.' Further according to Javani Iran would not be involved outside its borders should the domestic situation change in Lebanon, Syria and Afghanistan.

The irony is that Iran is part of the problem in each of these and other countries and is not as it claims there to assist in the solution. Javani made his remarks in response to evidence that Iran supports globally designated terrorist organizations such as Lebanese Shiite Muslim movement Hezbollah, Hamas in Gaza and even the Afghan Taliban. This is the problem Iran perpetuates; violence and conflict within others states to further Iran Revolutionary ideology.

A case to show this and to show that Brigadier General Yadollah Javani and others in Iran are not telling the truth about their intentions and actions is the Battle for Idlib in northern Syria expected since early September 2018. The battle was to have been the last battle for the last major rebel holdout in the Syrian civil war that has gripped Syria resulting from the spread of the Arab Spring that started in Tunisia in December 2010 and that saw protests spreading to Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria. But the battle has not yet happened.

On the face of it had the battle taken place and had it been won by President Assad's forces having an outright victory without the use of chemical weapons, then by all logic Assad would no longer have needed Iranian or even Russian support. So it would have been a major watershed for Iranian involvement in Syria and Iran could have withdrawn from Syria.

In my opinion the chain reaction from an Assad victory in the Battle for Idlib would have created more challenges, mainly for Iran, than it would have resolved so Iran has been at the fore of delaying it and prefers rather to ferment the civil war. Continual strife in Syria benefits Iran as it allows a situation where the border between Lebanon and Syria is unguarded enabling Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah, that is Iran's proxy, to operate on both sides without hindrance. With continual Iranian control of Syria Hezbollah with Iranian assistance and pressure could move into a position to engage Israel on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights.

The Battle for Idlib is not just the physical battle it is also symbolic of the potential results and consequences. Should the Battle for Idlib take place and should Assad's forces win and should the civil war end, maybe because of Russian pressure and assistance then Iran will be left in a brittle position regionally.

If the civil war in Syria were to end then Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf states would need to find another battleground for their proxy Sunni-Shia fray. It could also mean a push for the long-awaited independence for a Kurdish state and stability in Iraq, or the opposite given American withdrawal from Syria – a Turkish invasion. So the end of the Syrian civil war would trim down Iranian influence throughout the region.

In short, a truly remarkable change could happen in the Middle East dependent upon the results of the Battle of Idlib that should have happened months ago but hasn't yet. Or may the opposite as it may be a fizzle for Presidents Assad's forces might not achieve the desired victory or they might use chemical weapons. Don't hold your breath because prediction is different from forecasting. Even should a battle for the end of the Syrian civil war take place, there is no indication when it will or what the results and consequences will be. One thing is for certain the end of the Syrian civil war will not end Iranian bellicose intentions against Israel. The possibility of Iran leaving Syria soon or quickly or at all doesn't depend on the Syrian civil war but on Israeli leadership acting against the Ayatollah.