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Hezbollah and the Shia and Sunni Sectarian Issue: Nasrallah and the Bigger Picture

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The conflict in Syria remains unresolved because the United States wants to bleed everyone to death. At the same time, Turkey and feudal kingdoms in the Gulf, for example Qatar and Saudi Arabia, refuse to give up on their sectarian dream. Therefore, Hezbollah (Hizbullah) in Lebanon is on the frontline in preserving the rich religious mosaic of the Levant alongside dismantling the Shia-Sunni divide.

In a past article by Modern Tokyo Times it was stated: *“It is ironic that Hezbollah (Hizbullah) in Lebanon under His Eminence, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, is more concerned about the*

plight of Christians and other religious minorities, rather than the so-called democratic West. Indeed, it is abundantly clear that America, France and the United Kingdom are fully behind the emptying of Christians throughout the Middle East based on their close ties with feudal Gulf monarchies. Therefore, while Saudi Arabia bans the Christian faith it is also clear that Western meddling in Iraq, Libya, and Syria, is leading to a catastrophe for the Christian populations of these nations. Indeed, it is even hard to say nations about Iraq and Libya because Gulf and Western destabilization policies have led to failed states. Syria, thankfully, is fighting tenaciously in order to preserve the religious mosaic and to prevent another failed state.”

Nasrallah in a speech on November 3, 2014, highlighted the complexity of what is happening throughout a vast region. In doing so, he dispels many simple myths based on the Shia-Sunni divide that is being supported by Gulf and Western powers in order to sow the seeds of their respective geopolitical ambitions. Of course, the Shia suffer greatly by sectarian terrorism in many nations and they face mass discrimination in countless Sunni dominated nations. However, the bigger picture is much more complex because in Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, Mali – and other states, it is clear that the Shia component doesn't exist militarily because the Shia are too few in numbers. Despite this, persecution still takes place against the Shia but this reality is outside of the Sunni-Shia divide because various forces within the Sunni Muslim community are at loggerheads based on many factors.

Nasrallah highlights this reality by stating: *“We will take quick examples. In Libya, two internal sides are fighting. At least one of these sides is bombing the other from warplanes, and both are shelling each other with rockets and staging suicide operations against each other. There are hundreds of victims killed and wounded by now. Houses are being demolished, and the war is taking place in more than one Libyan city. Each of the two Libyan sides is supported by a regional axis in the region. What have Shiites to do with this conflict? Where is the Sunnite-Shiite conflict in this? As long as we are saying things as they are let's name things. The Qatari-Turkish axis is supporting one side in Libya, and the Saudi-UAE axis along with others is supporting the other side in Libya. Well, where is the Shiite-Sunnite conflict between these two axes in Libya? Where are the Shiites in Libya who are part of the Sunnite-Shiite conflict? Well, that is an important country and a dear people. They suffered a lot under Kaddafi, and they were waiting for salvation and a noble and a happy life but they did not find but this calamity before them. Is this conflict to be dubbed a Sunnite-Shiite conflict? What has this to do with that? This is first.”*

After focusing on Libya, Nasrallah then moved on to Egypt because he stated: *“Where is the Sunnite-Shiite conflict? Notice that what is taking place in Egypt is very important and serious not only on the Egyptian level but also on the level of the region as a whole. So first I talked about a political bloody conflict in an isolated far country, and now I am talking about a conflict in a country that forms half of the Arabs and is in the heart of the Middle East. Well, this conflict which is not a Sunnite-Shiite conflict is one of the major forms of conflict in the region. Still you are not taking it into consideration in the depiction you are making.”*

Nasrallah then points out that even in Syria the sectarian issue can be dismantled also. Yes, Takfiris seek to crush the Alawites and the Shia – and many other minorities have been

slaughtered. However, the same Takfiris are killing Sunni Muslims. At the same time, various Sunni dominated terrorist and sectarian groups are also butchering fellow Sunni Muslims. Indeed, religious Sunni Muslim clerics in Iraq and Syria fear radical Sunni fanatics that seek to crush indigenous Sunni Islam.

Once more Nasrallah rightly points out that various Sunni dominated groups in Syria are also butchering each other. This can be seen by various internal religious massacres by the Free Syrian Army (FSA), Nusra, ISIS and a plethora of sectarian forces that are also intent on ruling their respective areas based on the deaths of fellow Sunni Muslims. Indeed, the crisis in Kobane further more highlights this reality because the Kurds are mainly Sunni Muslim just like ISIS. Alas, the same reality applies to a major component within the political reality of Turkey whereby vast numbers of Kurds have perished. Once more vindicating the focus of Nasrallah by showing the struggles within the region based on politics, religious divisions within the same sect, nationalism, power concentration goals, political motives – and so forth – alongside the geopolitical ambitions of outside forces throughout the Gulf and West. In other words, the Shia-Sunni divide is being over-hyped because forces seek further tensions throughout a vast region.

Nasrallah states: ***“Well, coming closer to the sensitive place, we move to Syria. Someone might approach this issue saying the conflict with the regime is sectarian. That is not true however. Moreover, is the conflict between “ISIL” and Nosra – this long bloody conflict – in which thousands were killed and wounded a Sunnite-Shiite conflict? Is the conflict between Nosra and the other armed Syrian opposition factions the last of which took place in Idlib and Jabal Al Zawiyeh and the bursting and suicide operations between Nosra and the so called Syrian Rebels front a Sunnite-Shiite conflict? Is the battle in Ain Arab Kobane which preoccupied the region and the world and the international coalition a Sunnite-Shiite conflict? Now you wake up and sleep on news that the international coalition is bombarding Kobane? The Kurds and “ISIL” do not include Shiites as far as I know – that is if we want to make a sectarian categorization.”***

Likewise, Nasrallah stresses that attacks against Christians in Iraq and Syria ***“that mount to the level of annihilation,”*** also is nothing to do with a Sunni and Shia conflict. This holy leader stresses the same about the brutal massacres of the Yezidis (Yazidis) and the mass persecution they face.

In other words, the power dynamics within Egypt, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UAE all have collective responsibility to varying degrees based on internal geopolitical ambitions. Yes, the Shia suffer from daily massacres in an array of different countries at the hands of Sunni Takfiri sectarian groups. Alongside this, the Shia face discrimination in nations like Bahrain, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and many other Sunni dominated nations. However, conflicts in Egypt, Libya, Mali, Somalia – and others, don’t have a Shia component to any major degree. Therefore, regional geopolitical ambitions, Western meddling, Takfiri indoctrination, nationalism, power control mechanisms, political motives, and other important factors, are all tearing nations apart based on various bigger pictures.

Hezbollah is fully aware that the forces of sectarianism are being supported by various Gulf and NATO powers. Likewise, Nasrallah knows full well that radical Sunni Takfiri clerics and

religious leaders have ulterior motives based on sectarianism. Yet, much of this is being funded by Gulf petrodollars and by Western allies that are also sowing Takfiri radicalism in Western nations.

Nasrallah contends that: *“We as Shiites must not accept to deal with the conflict taking place in the region as a sectarian conflict. Our battle in the region as Shiites is not with Sunnites. It is rather with the American hegemony. It is with the “Israeli” project. It is with the Takfiris who want to crush everyone. The battle is not sectarian or factional as far as we are concerned. We must not accept that, and we must not act accordingly. Never!”*