

'The West, including Canada, have been playing a dirty and deceitful game in Syria'

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Edward C. Corrigan

Muslim Press has conducted an interview with Edward Corrigan, an international human rights lawyer, to ask for his take on Canada's role in the Syrian crisis and Israel's influence over Canada's foreign policy decisions.

Here's the full text of the interview:

MP: What role has Canada played in the Syrian conflict? Do you describe it as a positive role?

Edward Corrigan: In terms of helping Syrian and Iraqi refugees, the Government of Canada gets high grades. Canada has accepted more than 25,000 refugees in an orderly and timely fashion. In my view, Canada should be taking a much stronger role in helping to end the conflict.

MP: What's the result of the support that the so-called moderate rebels received from Canada, the US and other countries?

Edward Corrigan: In my view, they have accomplished very little other than help destroy Syria and help divide the Arab and Muslim World. I believe, however, that these were the original primary goals. It also has divided the peace movement and weakened its impact.

Canada has criticized the Assad regime and has also criticized the atrocities committed by ISIS and the other so-called "moderate" Islamic opposition groups. In my view, "the West," including Canada, have been playing a dirty and deceitful game in Syria, and also in other Arab counties, by undermining secular nationalist governments who have been protecting religious minorities and supporting extremist Sunni groups aided by foreign Salafist mercenaries in order to divide and weaken the Arab World and put Sunni Muslims against Shia Muslims and to attack religious minorities.

MP: Hundreds of opposition groups, including ISIS, are actively fighting against Assad's government. How have these groups emerged?

Edward Corrigan: Divide and Conquer is a very old game. The Romans used the strategy, the British also and now the Americans. Societies and countries are easy to control and exploit if they are fighting among themselves. The British and the French used divide and conquer technique to create weak "Nation States" when they divided the Arab World in the Sykes-Picot Accord. They helped create religious divisions and political conflicts in this process. The creation of Israel as a "Jewish State," is in my view, part of this same colonial divide and rule strategy.

In the modern period, the British and the Americans created Al-Qaeda, which is the Arabic word for the base or data base, to recruit Islamic militants to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan, and then to fight the Serbs in Bosnia. The Saudis helped fund the operation and they were assisted by Pakistani Intelligent Services, the CIA and MI6. The Americans and British also hoped to use these "Afghan Arabs" and other Islamic militants against Russia and even China who have significant Muslim minorities in order to stir up rebellion and to weaken their rivals.

Israel has been using this same strategy for years and even helped create Hamas in order to divide the Palestinian People and to put the secular PLO against an Islamic rival. It is my view that the United States, Britain, Israel and their allies, including the Saudis and the Turks, are employing this same strategy to effect regime change in Syria and to weaken Syria and to create a failed State. They have done this in Libya and have tried to do it in Iraq, Lebanon and also in Yemen.

ISIS, the Al-Nusra Front and most of the other so-called Syrian Islamic "opposition groups" are the logical outcome of this strategy. The West has demonized Al-Qaeda but now is supporting it in Syria, Iraq and Yemen and elsewhere. The Americans, the British, the French, the Israelis, the Saudis and Turkey can hide behind ISIS and other "Islamic Terrorist Groups" as they help create havoc and seize control of oil and other resources. There is a fair bit of evidence to support this view point.

MP: What do you think about the labeling of the opposition groups as "moderate"?

Edward Corrigan: This labeling as "moderate" makes it a little bit more acceptable for Western domestic populations to support these so-called "moderates." It also explains why the Americans, British, French and Israelis have not been serious in fighting these "Islamic terrorist" groups or ISIS. The so-called Islamic "moderates" have committed many atrocities including the recent beheading of a Palestinian child. If the Americans, the British and their allies were serious about fighting ISIS and the other "Islamic extremist" groups, they would be supporting the Assad Regime and Russia.

MP: How much influence do Israel and the United States have on Canada's foreign policy decisions?

Edward Corrigan: The United States is Canada's biggest trading partner and its media has a tremendous influence on Canada's politics. Canada, under the leadership of Pierre Elliot Trudeau (father of Canada's current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau) did not support the Americans in the Vietnam War and took in 60,000 American draft evaders as conscientious objectors to the War. Canada under Pierre Trudeau also took different positions on Cuba and China. More recently, Liberal Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien did not support the American invasion of Iraq. However, he did send troops to Afghanistan as did his successor Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper. So there is some room for disagreement between Canada and the United States. However, that room is limited. It can be an advantage to the Americans to use Canada as an intermediary.

Israel's influence is off a different order. Its influence lies upon four pillars in my view. One is the political strength of the organized Canadian Jewish community which tends to be dominated by pro-Israeli elements. The second factor is that the Israeli narrative has been unchallenged for many years until the recent period. The third factor is that the Christian Evangelical community in Canada strongly supports Israel as a part of their "End of Times" religious belief system.

Lastly, it is the organizational weakness of the Canadian, Palestinian, Arab and Muslim communities that allows the Zionists to virtually dominate the Canadian political system. The emergence of Independent Jewish Voices (Canada) which is critical of Israel's policies toward the Palestinians and who support the Boycott, Divest and Sanction Movement in an attempt to pressure Israel to end the Occupation of Palestinian land that opened up some room for debate on the Israeli-Palestinian issue in Canada.

MP: Israel's military intelligence chief, Major General Herzi Halevy recently stated that Israel prefers ISIS over the Syrian government. What's your take on this position?

Edward Corrigan: Israel defines itself as a "Jewish State." This is a component of Zionist political ideology which is in part religious and in part racial or ethnic. It also was in the intent of Theodore

Herzl and other leading Zionists to transform Judaism from being a religion into a form of secular nationalism based on race or ethnic origin. The reality, today, is that Zionism is a hybrid of all of these elements. However, what Zionists fear is a multi-religious and tolerant Middle East which respects the religious rights of minorities. Syria is an example of a multi-religious nationalist state where Christian and other minorities supported the Baathist government. Jews, for example, lived a relatively peaceful existence in Syria, and in virtually all Arab and Muslim countries in Arab and Islamic countries, until after the expulsion of the Palestinians in 1948 and again in 1967 and the creation of an exclusionary "Jewish State."

If the Middle East is dominated by extremist Muslim political groups and other religious groups, it validates the need for a "Jewish State." It also makes it very easy for Israel to get support from the "West" against religious extremist groups and also for Israel to foment religious divisions and to dominate the Middle East.

MP: Do you think Canada wants the same thing?

Edward Corrigan: Most Canadians, and in fact most Jews, do not understand the ideology of Zionism. They also have a very distorted view of the history of Zionism and what Israel has done to the Palestinians and its Arab neighbors. Israeli "hasbara," or propaganda, has been very successful in promoting a false narrative that superficially parrots the Western value system but acts in a decidedly contrary manner. It is this carefully constructed "false image" that most Canadians and Canadian politicians support, not the brutal reality.

Edward C. Corrigan holds a B.A. in History and a Master's Degree in Political Science from the University of Western Ontario. He also has a Law Degree from the University of Windsor and was called to the Bar of the Law Society of Upper Canada in 1992. His academic area of expertise is the Middle East and he has published many articles in academic publications including Middle East Policy, Middle East International, Outlook and Z Magazine. His article "Is it anti-Semitic to Defend Palestinian Human Rights?" was published as a chapter in, Anti-Semitism: Real and Imagined: Responses to the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism," (The Canadian Charger, Waterloo, Ontario, 2010), pp.83-99.