

Al-Manar TV in conversation with President Bashar al-Assad: Countering Terrorism

Source: [Al Manar](#)

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad asserted that terrorists are the true tool of the Zionist aggression on Syria and that their acts are more dangerous than those of the Zionist entity.

In an interview with al-Manar TV that was broadcast Tuesday evening, Assad said the essence of the crisis in Syria is the foreign interference, and once this interference ceased in all its forms, then it would be possible to say that the crisis reaches its final stages.

“Because confronting terrorism then would be easier.”

His Excellency said that so far, there is no suitable environment or essential elements for the political track to succeed in reaching a solution for the crisis, noting that the states that support terrorism are imposing figures in any dialogue that represent these states and not the Syrian state.

President Assad said that the United States doesn't want terrorism to triumph, and at the same time doesn't want to become weak to the point that stability is achieved in the region; rather the United States wants matters to continue moving towards chaos and weakening of all states, adding that the crisis proved that Recep Tayyip Erdogan is a mere puppet with dreams, the last of these dreams being the buffer zone, but he can't move in this direction without the approval of his US master.

He stressed that defending the homeland isn't just by bearing

arms; rather defending the homeland is done by all things that make it stronger and more resilient in the face of attacks, adding that the Syrians' hope for victory is the incentive for confronting terrorists and the plot devised for Syria.

Assad said that if any international envoy was completely impartial, then the west wouldn't have approved them, and so the biased statements of envoys are part of their role. He also reiterated that any initiative must respect Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and leave the decision to the Syrian people while prioritizing counterterrorism.

In response to a question on Syria's confidence in emerging victorious from the terrorist war waged on it and what this confidence is based on, President al-Assad said that if there hadn't been hope of victory among the citizens, then Syria wouldn't have persevered for four and a half year.

"This hope is the incentive for confronting terrorists and confronting the plot devised for Syria and applied in it like it was applied in a number of other Arab countries," he said.

"We rely firstly on people, of course after relying on God, but if you don't have public support then you cannot withstand. If you don't have public support then there is no value for any political or national direction you adopt as a president or official or state. First, you rely on the people, and second on friends who stand firm alongside Syria and support it in the region and in the world," His Excellency said.

On the recent involvement of Oman and the visit paid to it by Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign and Expatriates Minister Walid al-Moallem and how that may be one of the keys for solution, President al-Assad said that Oman has an important role in dealing with various points of tension in the region and cooling them down, leading to a solution, and it's self-evident that the Foreign Minister's visit is in the context of

resolving the crisis, and it's also self-evident that the Omani role is to help resolve the crisis.

The President stressed that the strength of a country is primarily based on the unity of the people before relying on its army or political system, and the greater part of the people are unified, but when there are elements of treason, extremism, and terrorism, then these points constitute weak points that cannot be ignored, and must be dealt with when other elements become secondary.

He said that the United States, throughout its history, "is elusive with its statement, and of course as time went on, this quality for the United States became the basis of policy. This means that what one official says, another official will contradict within days, and what one official says in the morning in a speech or a statement, they will say the opposite on the next day. This is one of the qualities of U.S. policies; abandoning allies, abandoning friends, backstabbing."

His Excellency said that on the other hand, Russia's policy was never like the American one, not during the days of the Soviet Union and not now, asserting that Russia's policy is based on principles and growing more so, and therefore when the Russian Foreign Minister makes several statements and other officials make statements in the same context, it becomes obvious that Russia's policy is concrete.

On the relation between the crisis in Syria and the nuclear Iranian deal, and whether Syria could be a victim in this regard or was an offering that provided gains, President al-Assad asserted that Syria is certainly not a victim, simply because it wasn't a part of the nuclear negotiations, despite the fact that western forces tried to coerce Iran to have the Syrian issue become a part of the nuclear issue in order to get concessions from Iran regarding its support for Syria, but Iran was adamant and refused this completely, which was a

correct, objective, and smart decision.

“Was Syria presented as an offering? Certainly not, but we could say that Syria made offerings,” the President elaborated, saying that when one’s allies are strong, that makes you strong, and when they are weakened, you are weakened as well, but saying that Syria’s steadfastness led to the nuclear deal is an oversimplification as the deal is the result of a long process that began by the Iranian people a long time ago, with Iran withstanding pressure for 12 years and holding fast to its principles throughout the negotiations during the past two years.

In answer to a question on whether the world is heading toward a new form of coalition, with Syria possibly being closer to a coalition with Iran than with anyone else, President al-Assad said that the alliance between Syria and Iran is 35 years old, and so being allied to Iran and vice versa is nothing new, noting that when Iran was subjected to an unjust war, Syria stood by its side, and now that Syria is subjected to an unjust war, Iran is standing by its side.

Regarding the political scene after Syria emerges victorious and Iran’s potential role in it, President al-Assad said that what would change is probably the influence of the Syrian-Iranian alliance on the international arena, because Iran now has more prospects to play a bigger role in it, and Iran’s strength will strengthen Syria, and in the same way Syria’s victory will be a victory for Iran.

His Excellency said that Syria and Iran share viewpoints and have mutual principles, and they form the axis of resistance, and so the principles will not change; only some tactics may change, or maybe some results on the ground.

In response to a question on the disillusionment of Syrians over the state of the Arab nation and whether he excuses that feeling, President al-Assad said “Excusing it doesn’t mean

that we all pursue that direction. We excuse them because conditions promoted citizens to turn against Arabism, and this is fact for most citizens. This promoted them to make no distinction between true, genuine Arabism and those who hide behind Arabism while in fact their hearts, minds, sentiments, and interests lie elsewhere that is completely outside the region.

“This is similar to what has happened in the past, maybe in several areas, but less than before; confusing those who exploit Islam like the Muslim Brotherhood and other extremist and terrorist organizations with true Islam. There was confusion; they believed that all those who use the word Islam or Muslim are true Muslim. This confusion happens constantly.

“I would like to say to everyone who doubts or confuses between the two issues that Arabism is an identity we cannot abandon. You belong to a family, and maybe one person or more from that family would treat you wrong, but even if you change your surname, you will continue to belong to that family in your upbringing, identity, nature, and everything about you. You cannot be detached from your identity. The Arab identity isn't a choice; to belong to a religion and a nationality is your identity, and when you reach this point, this is what the enemies want: for us to disavow ourselves of our identity. The essence of the cause now and the wars that are happening isn't about toppling regimes; rather this is a stage and a tool, nor is it about undermining states and economy. All those are tools. The final goal is undermining the identity, and when we reach that point preemptively, we're giving the enemies a free gift that precludes their need later for military intervention or for using terrorists.”

On the effect of the political activity in Iraq on the coordination between Syria and Iraq, the President asserted that coordination with Iraq hasn't been affected negatively, as Iraqis are aware that they are embroiled in the same battle against a mutual enemy, and that what happens in Syria will

reflect on Iraq and vice versa, so unifying the battle, like what is happening between Syria and Lebanon's Hezbollah, there will be better results in less time and at a lower cost.

Regarding what the difference is between the presence of Hezbollah fighters in Syria and the other side having foreign fighters, the President said that the difference lies in legitimacy, stressing that Hezbollah entered Syria through agreement with the Syrian state which is the legitimate, elected representative of the Syrian people and is supported by their majority, so the state has the right to invite forces to defend the Syrian people, while the other forces are terrorists who came to murder Syrians and against the will of the people and the state.

On his relation with Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah, President Assad said that this relation is strong and dates back to more than 20 years ago, and any observer can see that this is a relation characterized by honesty and transparency, as Nasrallah is absolutely honest, transparent, principled, and loyal to his principles and his associates and friends to the extreme.

"The relationship is one of a resistant state and a true resistant figure who gave his son in defense of Lebanon," he said, adding that evaluating a relationship requires a third person to observe it and talk about it.

On the escalation by Saudi Arabia against Syria, specifically the statements of the Saudi Foreign Minister following reports of Syrian-Saudi meetings, President al-Assad said that media escalation is of no concern, as what matters is actual practices of states, so when a state supports terrorism, then what value does media escalation or media appeasement have?

"This is what concerns us, and in the end the result is the same, meaning that with and without escalation, the Saudi state supports terrorists in Syria, this is a fact that

everyone knows, so escalation here is meaningless," he said, adding that in terms of the verbal escalation, then Syria could respond in a similar manner and ask what one would expect from a group that hasn't entered human civilization?"

"Would one expect them discourse that is moral, objective, has a political dimension, or is wise? We shouldn't expect any of those. If we do expect that, then the problem lies with us, not with them," he said.

On Jordan's talk about a buffer zone and the presence of a joint, military and security operations' room, President al-Assad said "it means Jordan talks about a Jordanian decision or a US decision... this is the question... so when a country or an official talks, we have to ask about the extent of independence of this official or country in order to express his opinion, noting that "until now, the majority of the Arab countries runs behind the US leash, they have no role."

On the Syrian-Egyptian relations and the responsibility of Egypt for the delay of its return, Assad said, undoubtedly, the relation with Syria, Egypt and Iraq has a peculiarity as these states are the base of Arab civilizations throughout history, underlying that "What we want, in the first phase, is that Egypt not to be a launch-pad against Syria or against others in the Arab countries, but in the second phase we want Egypt to play the role of the important country which helps the other Arab countries."

The President added that relations between Syria and Egypt are the ones which achieve balance on the Arab arena... Syria believes that it stands in the same trench with the Egyptian army and with the Egyptian people against terrorists who change their names.