

Syria not Lebanon is the Creation of the Sikes-Picot Agreement

Contributed by Elias Bejjani
Thursday, 22 October 2009

Lebanon has been hit by an actual devastating curse since it became an independent country within its current borders in 1920. This curse is embodied in the avarice, envy, detachment from reality and hatred arising from neighboring, Syria, many of whose politicians, rulers and intellectuals have failed to date to accept the solid reality of Lebanon's entity, distinguishable identity sovereignty and independence.

They have angrily and vengefully alleged for years - without any actual historical or geographical facts - that Lebanon is a part of their country. All Lebanon's major and shocking problems during the last 70 years have invariably stemmed from this Syrian falsehood, a delusion which they concocted. Syrian officials and politicians seek every opportunity to loudly and brazenly proclaim this false allegation.

The latest mockery in this ongoing Syrian soap opera appeared in the contents of a very sinister op-ed that was published in the Saudi daily, Al Riyadh, on 12/10/09 and then reproduced on 14/10/09 in the Syrian government-run mouthpiece, Al Wattan, in which the argument was made for re-uniting Syria and Lebanon into the romantic entity that many Arab nationalists have salivated over for decades.

The Saudi journalist apologized two days after the publication of his opinion in Al Wattan on the basis that he was mistaken in both perception and expression. Al Wattan did not publish his apology. In his opinion he had uttered what the Syrians have been rhetorically parroting since 1916: "that Lebanon was the creation of the Sikes-Picot Agreement of 1916 through which France and the UK with the assent of Russia stripped it from Syria."

It is really annoying and boring that we the Lebanese should live with this ongoing, shameful and deliberate Syrian twisting of the facts. They gave themselves a political historical identity that does not in reality exist and endeavor to impose their mockeries through propaganda that intends to stir emotions, but is devoid of all the required actual historical and geographical basis and facts.

A thorough review of the Sikes-Picot Agreement of 1916 that was reached between France and the UK with the approval of Russia negates all the Syrian allegations and unveils their lies. France and the UK which occupied most of the Middle Eastern countries in World War I divided among themselves the responsibilities and influence in these countries. Syria and Lebanon were among these countries. Their deal was known as the Sikes-Picot Agreement. Meanwhile, the League of Nations acknowledged the contents of this agreement in April 1922.

For the Syrians to reject the Sikes-Picot Agreement simply shows that they are actually rejecting the existence of their own state. One might comprehend from such a naive stance of rejection that the Syrians would prefer to go back to the Ottoman era and its provincial system.

That obsolete system offered as its top position a wali (local governor) instead of an Ottoman ruler. It also indicated that France and the UK dismantled certain existing Arab states to establish artificial ones, like the current Republic of Syria.

In fact, there was an Arabic plan to establish one big strong Arab State, but it did not take place for many reasons stemming from the will of both ruling powers at that time, France and the UK. This fact was taken into consideration when the borders of the current Middle East countries were decided on and demarcated.

The best response to the nonsensical false Syrian allegation would be through displaying historical facts according to their chronology in a bid to put an end to this bold Syrian forgery of history.

First fact: Lebanon, both the distinguishable political identity and people, has expressed itself in many forms. Without dwelling deeply into Lebanon's remote history, we know that it was an independent entity at least at the beginning of this century, more specifically, in 1517 at the beginning of the Ottoman era. During that era, Prince Faker Eddine, known as Sultan Al-Baer (the master of the land), established the well-known Lebanese Maani Emirate.

Second fact: The Maani Emirate enjoyed self-autonomy, had its own army, as well as its own foreign independent relations. This Lebanese prince cut numerous accords with foreign countries and fought the Ottoman authorities to maintain a kind of independence. Meanwhile, the entire surrounding area, including the current state of Syria, were divided into provinces ruled directly by an Ottoman governor (wali).

Third fact: Syria as it is known today has never been a politically independent entity. The name Syria was given by the

Greeks to a geographical area located between the Dejla and Euphrates rivers and Phoenicia. Syria was not a name for a separate state.

Fourth fact: In year 1920 the Lebanese entity was recognized as an existing state, and not as a newly established one. At that time the existing borders of the Lebanese Emirate were taken into consideration when the current Lebanese State borders were demarcated. The Lebanese regions that were annexed to the neighboring provinces were returned to the State of Lebanon.

Fifth fact: During that era the current geographical Syria was divided into four small provinces: the Alawi province, the Druze province, the Damascus province and the province of Aleppo. The same status prevailed until 1925 when the province of Damascus was integrated with that of Aleppo and both were given the name of the State of Syria. The four provinces were joined together in 1939 and called the Syrian Republic. The UN recognized this newly established republic in 1941 after it was liberated from the French Vichy troops.

Sixth fact: The current Syrian Republic is a product of the Sikes-Picot Agreement, and with the French occupation and the League of Nations the current Syria would have remained divided into four provinces fighting each other.

Seventh fact: One doubts very much that Syrian Alawi Baathist officials are not fully aware of the French documents that exhibit plainly the Alawi's stance in calling for an independent Alawi State. These officials are definitely fully aware of the names of the Alawi leaders who signed the documents.

Accordingly, based on these facts we can conclude that Syria and not Lebanon is a fake country created by the Sikes-Picot Agreement. Meanwhile, Lebanon is a country deeply rooted in ancient history, the earliest documented records dating back at least 7000 years.

Three quotations from the Bible (Old Testament) show with no shred of a doubt that Lebanon was throughout all historical eras recognized as a distinguishable entity. Even its borders are mentioned:

*Judges 3:3: "the five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath."

*Song of Solomon 4/7 & 8: "You are all beautiful, my love. There is no spot in you. Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards."

*Joshua 13/5-7 "and the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad under Mount Hermon to the entrance of Hamath; all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim, even all the Sidonians; them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only allocate it to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you. Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh."

The Syrians' objection and rejection of the outcome of the Sikes-Picot Agreement is a mere empty propaganda tactic, and in case they are not happy with it, the Syrian Baathist regime will have to revert to its previous system of four provinces and dismantle the current Syrian state.

The core of the problem with Syria lies in the fact that its Baathist regime is oppressing and impoverishing its own people and depriving them of democracy and all kinds of freedoms. By publicly airing such baseless emotional strife with its neighbors, this regime strives to cover up all its hardships and failures and attribute to the Sikes-Picot Agreement, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, etc... It blames everyone else, but never recognizes its disastrous self-inflicted failures in all domains.

The Syrian regime has drifted towards dictatorial rule and has been camouflaging its evil axis of conduct and practices with a fake national ideology which in reality is no more than a set of empty, deceptive rhetorical slogans, and the allegation that Lebanon is a part of Syria is one of them.

Click Here to read the Sikes-Picot Agreement
<http://www.clhrf.com/unresagreements/sykes-picot1916.htm>

*Elias Bejjani
 Canadian-Lebanese Human Rights activist, journalist and political commentator
 Email phoenicia@hotmail.com
 Web sites <http://www.10452lccc.com> & <http://www.clhrf.com>
 Mailing phoenicia group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Phoenicia/>
 LCCC Face Book <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=17974722934>