



## The « Democratic » Partitioning of Syria

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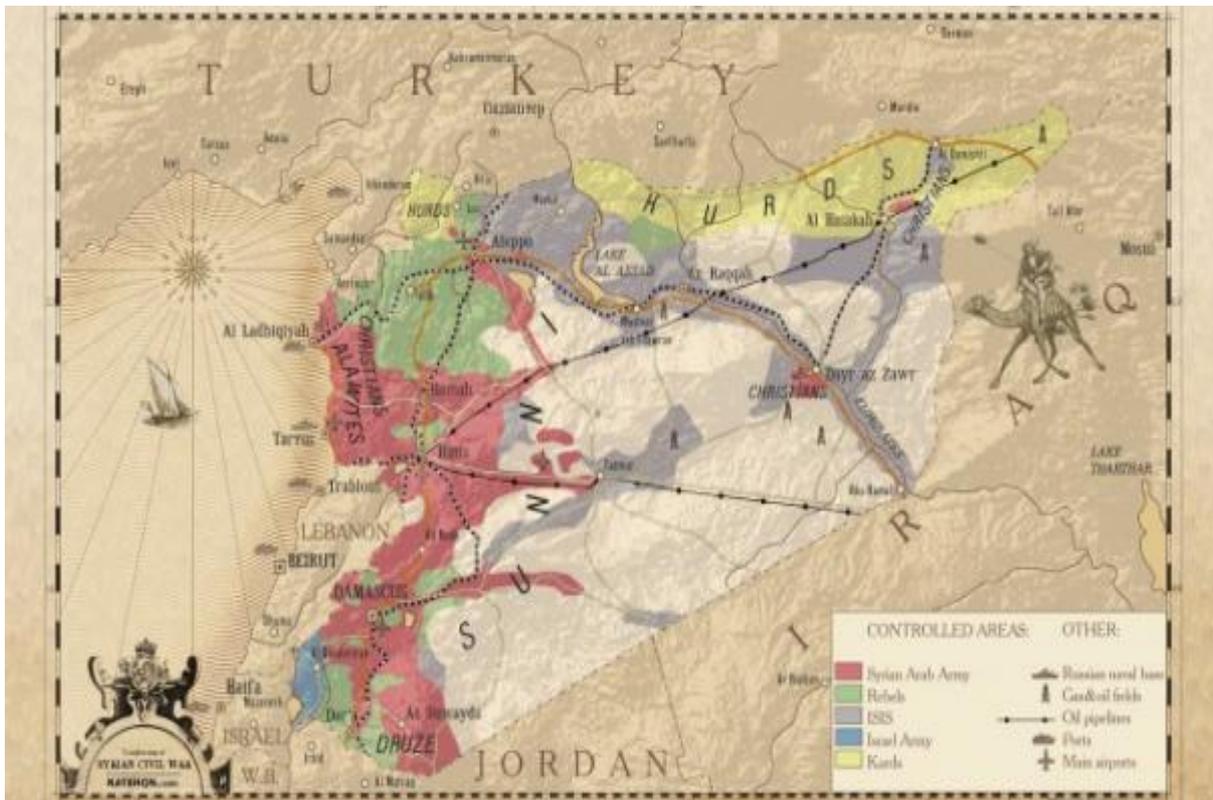
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*The War on Syria is entering into a qualitative new phase, whereby it's becoming increasingly clear to the world that the US is no longer capable of militantly pursuing its regime change ends against President Assad. Instead, a new strategy has sprung up by which the US is trying to shape the Syrian battlespace in such a way that the circumstances are created for a post-Daesh "federalization" of the country, one which would de-facto result in its [internal partitioning along identity lines](#) and the dramatic weakening of what had half a decade ago been the most solid and stable country in the Mideast.*

It would also allow for the US to skillfully divide and rule the rest of Syria through the expected exploitation of formalized identity fault lines. Key to this scenario's actualization are the Kurds, which are being pushed front and center into playing the on-the-ground vanguard role on the US' behalf. The author earlier wrote an extensive [three-part series](#) about the PYD's hate-filled manifesto which describes the "federalization" of Syria as one of its defining objectives, and the reader is welcome to reference those articles for specific information about the Kurds' self-stated motivations and vision, but the present piece moves out of the realm of theory and into an investigation of how the US and its partners could operationalize this plan in practice.

The first part speaks on the present strategic situation in Syria and the role that the Race for Raqqa will have in determining the country's post-Daesh future. Next, the article details the political posturing that will play out after the world's most notorious terrorist group is defeated and how Syria could thenceforth become divided into the two competing electoral blocs of "federalist" and unitary supporters in the run-up to the forthcoming elections. Finally, the last part warns about the risk of an intra-patriot split between the unitary-supporting Ba'ath Party and Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), and how the SSNP could suddenly become the most influential party in all of Syria, especially if it defected to the "federalists".



## The Twelve-Month Countdown

The nature and pace of everything that’s happening in Syria right now is directly influenced by the [UNSC Res. 2254](#) from December 2015, which states that a new constitution and election must be held under United Nations supervision within 18 months from that time. It also says that “all Syrians, including members of the diaspora” (refugees/immigrants), must be eligible to participate as well. Looking at the timeframe agreed to in the text, it’s clear that June 2017 is the deadline for this to happen. Furthermore, the document emphasizes “the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic”, meaning that none of the signatories – including the US – is officially in favor of the country’s de-jure dissolution. This clause is obviously subject to wide interpretation, since the Kurds argue that “federalization” still retains each of these four principles, while Damascus sees a unitary (non-“federalized”) state as the only solution and [officially holds the position](#) that “federalization” “directly threatens the integrity of our country, runs counter to the Constitution, contradicts the national concepts, even is at variance with the international resolutions and decisions.”

Nevertheless, while it’s expected that [moreclashes](#) might occur between the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and the YPG (the PYD’s fighting wing) in the future, the US will for the most part likely restrain its ally and force it to go along with the UNSC’s agreed-upon democratic and electoral motions in resolving the War on Syria. Part of the reason for this charade is because the US wants its post-Daesh plans to have “international legitimacy” and for no member of the global community to object to the “legal”, “democratic”, and “electoral” fracturing of Syria into a federation of identity statelets. Of course, the Kurds will fight to prevent the SAA from liberating any of their occupied territory in the run-up to the new constitution and related elections, but they wouldn’t have any ‘plausible’ reason for further expanding their conquests after Daesh’s defeat and will predictably sit still and try to formalize their gains instead. The reason that the SAA wouldn’t move forward with liberating the rest of the country during this time is because the US and Russia might enter into an

agreement to strictly enforce the SAA-YPG “line of control” immediately after the [Race for Raqqa](#) is finished. Chances are that Washington would move first by declaring that it would unilaterally strike the SAA if it encroaches on the Kurds’ conquered territories, with Moscow replying that it would do the same against the YPG if they attack the SAA.

Through this manner, a very cold and fragile ‘peace’ will settle over Syria, with the threat of decisive military intervention by each of the two most important Great Powers being the only thing that keeps the SAA and YPG from attacking one another and transforming the War on Syria into an actual civil war for the first time since it started. Neither Russia nor the US wants a larger confrontation between them – let alone one of a conventional military nature – so it’s likely that they’ll work hard to make sure that the “line of control” doesn’t substantially change until after the planned elections. The two major points of tension that could erupt during the twelve-month countdown to the UNSC-mandated vote and constitutional reformation deadline are in [Raqqa and North Aleppo](#), which the Kurds had threatened to annex into their prospective “federation”.

This is bound to produce conflict with the non-Kurdish locals, which might be one of the reasons why the Kurds have been clarifying that their “federation” isn’t just for them, but is composed of “Rojava and Northern Syria”, thus extending a branch of cooperation to other non-Kurdish anti-government groups in the occupied territories. Nevertheless, there will be some people and groups within this unilaterally “federated” boundary that haven’t lost their inclusive Syrian civic/civilizational patriotism and don’t fall for the exclusive ethnic-sectarian identity classifications that the US and its allies have tried so hard to force onto the country, and it’s here where the SAA could provide “behind-the-lines” support in aiding anti-“federalization” freedom fighter movements. Expectedly, this would potentially draw the militarized ire of both the US and YPG and prompt Russia to stick up for its ally and threaten direct action against the YPG in retaliation, thus keeping Syria in the global news even after Daesh is finished.

#### Post-Daesh Political Positioning

Despite the very real potential that the War on Syria has for progressively descending into a civil conflict between the SAA and YPG, it’s predicted that Russia and the US will keep a strong handle on their allies to make sure that this doesn’t happen. While clashes between the two might become more frequent, the post-Daesh “line of control” between them probably won’t change much at all in the absence of an all-out campaign by one side or the other, and both combatants will instead accept the reality of the situation and work on maximizing their political positions in the run-up to the elections and constitutional reform. The nationwide trend will be that the Kurds will try to have the other anti-government organizations coalesce around a “federalization” front, while Damascus will do the opposite in rallying its allies around the cause of a united and indivisible Syria.

#### Pro-“Federalization”:

Concerning the Kurdish-led “federalization” movement, the PYD will attempt to strike short-term political alliances with all “moderate rebel” Salafist groups that are allowed to participate in the election, convincing them that they all have a ‘shared interest’ in further weakening Damascus’ authority over the country (especially in the peripheral northern and eastern regions) in order to deepen their own newfound power by extent. For example, the Kurds would like to have their own quasi-independent statelets in the northern part of the country, just as the Salafists would like to introduce Islamic law over the areas that they

currently control and influence. Even after Daesh's conventional defeat and the liberation of Raqqa (or its annexation by the Kurds), some of the sympathetic locals will still retain their extremist views, and no amount of fighting will cleanse them of these corrupted ideals. The mental effects of five years of warfare and unipolar-supported ideological manipulation cannot be overturned in psychologically reintegrating the proponents of exclusive ethnic-sectarian identity politics into the inclusive nature of Syrian civic/civilizational patriotism in the one short year before the elections.

Needless to say, many of these people will agitate for some sort of Salafist political representation, even if the groups that eventually emerge out of these demands can't legally affirm their public adherence to these 'ideals' as a precondition for running (and not violating existing Syrian law). In their quest to acquire as much de-facto "independence" as they can in order to impose Sharia law in the areas under their control and/or influence, these Salafist supporters have a plain strategic convergence with the Kurds, who also want quasi-"independence" but for secular ethno-nationalist reasons. These two groups wouldn't naturally have anything else in common aside from this, and they've even fought against each other on numerous occasions in the past, but what could keep their short-term 'marriage of convenience' lasting into the indefinite future would be the unique structure of 'compartmentalized autonomy' that the Kurds are proposing for their "federation". The reason why they've been promoting that their imagined political entity a "union" of "Rojava and Northern Syria" is because they know that they can't realistically sustain their conquests since they're [actually a minority](#) in the very regions of "Rojava" that they claim as their own. Thus, there's an existential political need for them to team up with other anti-government groups in broadening their unilaterally proclaimed "federation" into including the nondescript region of "Northern Syria" and granting "autonomy" (including the right to Sharia law) to every non-Kurdish identity within it.

Another factor that needs to be included in the mix when discussing the Kurds' pro-"federalization" allies are the millions of Syrian refugees and immigrants that left the country during the course of the war, many of which have strong anti-government sympathies. UNSC Res. 2254 mandates that they all have the right to participate in the political process, though once more it isn't clear how this can happen in practice and is again a subject of divisive interpretation. Damascus might rightly state that only document-holding Syrians can vote in the elections, and further, that only those in countries where Syria still has a diplomatic presence are functionally eligible to do so in person, which in both cases is a necessary precaution in protecting against fraud. On the other hand, the US and its EU allies might assert that all refugees and immigrants must be able to vote no matter what their document status is and regardless if Damascus has an official presence in their new host country or not, potentially proposing "mail-in" ballots as a workaround measure in return for them agreeing to "recognize" the UNSC-decreed election. Damascus probably wouldn't agree to this, but a compromise might be made if the EU allows Syrian embassies and consulates abroad to reopen, which would be an implicit recognition of the legitimate government and a major reversal of existing policy, though potentially a [pyrrhic victory](#).

Pro-Unitary:

On the other side of things, Damascus will mobilize its wide base of civil society supporters in order to electorally protect Syria's unitary nature and counter the Kurds' "federalization" scheme. The government can count on the backing that it has received from the National Progressive Front, a broad umbrella of patriotic forces, in making sure that the next

government is once more led by the ruling Ba'ath Party. This political group has presided over Syria for decades and is still by far the most popular, but it needs to prepare for a post-Daesh reality in which the pro-“federal” coalition of Kurds and Salafists acquires a loyal following in some corners of the country, particularly in the north, northeast, and east. There's also the chance that patriotic citizens might vote against the Ba'ath Party and for one of the other myriad members of the National Progressive Front as a protest against what they perceive to be (or are influenced by the unipolar forces to believe is) the ruling party's failed pan-Arabist ideology and corruption. Both factors on their own probably wouldn't be enough to substantially affect the Ba'ath Party's parliamentary majority, but taken together and concurrently occurring (especially when combined with the refugee/immigrant wildcard vote), they could eventually pose a sizeable threat. It's already been described why certain constituencies would vote for the pro-“federal” Kurdish-Salafist coalition (other than out of reactionary regional identity motivations that play into the hands of the “federalists”), so now it's time to explain how forces from within the patriotic coalition could leave the Ba'ath Party and eventually endanger its parliamentary majority.

Out of all the groups in the National Progressive Front, the one most likely to siphon off votes from the Ba'ath Party is the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP). This Lebanese-founded organization has a [very rich history](#) and works towards the formal recreation of “Greater Syria”, which they describe in detail on their [website](#) as including most of the Fertile Crescent, Cyprus and parts of Turkey, Egypt, and Iran. Also called “Natural Syria”, one SSNP-affiliated author [wrote](#) that the Kurdish-inhabited areas of southeastern and southern Turkey fall under its domain as well, arguing that they historically formed a part of Syrian civilization that could be [reestablished](#) via the “[golden opportunity](#)” that “federalization” presents. The unofficial thinking goes that the SSNP – and as they see it, all of Syria (both present and “Greater”) – would unequivocally benefit through “federalization” because it would produce a mechanism through which the Turkish Kurds could then leave Ankara and join Damascus, somehow assuming that their wild pro-“independence” sentiments could be tempered and that all of these complicated interlocking processes could be achieved peacefully. Of course, the US would never allow its Turkish NATO ally to be dismembered on behalf of “Greater Syria” (though it might countenance this in favor of a unipolar-aligned independent “Kurdistan”) and it's actually Syria itself which would likely be inadvertently dismembered in a boomerang fashion through its “federal” facilitation of “Greater Kurdistan”, but nonetheless, SSNP supporters are the most likely members of the National Progressive Front to be attracted to this dangerous and reactionary idea.

Additionally, the US establishment curiously seems to be on the verge of accepting the SSNP as a legitimate party in Syria, which is extraordinarily odd because it has hitherto only held out this “right” for the “moderate rebel” terrorists that it and its regime change coalition support. The reader should draw their attention to a March 2016 article by the influential Foreign Policy magazine, which while not known for the strength of its writing or the objectiveness of its assessments, is nevertheless a very reliable barometer in gauging the prevailing attitudes of the US foreign policy establishment. In the article titled “[The Eagles of the Whirlwind](#)”, one of the magazine's Lebanese-based partners embedded themselves within the SSNP for some time and produced a surprisingly objective and fair report. What's so remarkable about the article is that it didn't distort or malign the SSNP's activities or vision, despite speaking about how the group has fought on the side of the SAA in protecting the country from the type of foreign terrorists that the US and its allies actively assist. It's pretty unprecedented that a high-profile and establishment-linked US outlet would do something like this, and because it's such a pattern-breaker in bucking the conventional

trend of the past five years, it must be seen as a part of a calculated strategy that will be explained in the next section.

### The Intra-Patriot Split

What the US wants is that the SSNP splits the patriotic vote in the upcoming elections and forces the Ba'ath Party to enter into a coalition-like arrangement with it on a more formal and equal footing than it currently has under the National Progressive Front. The US seems to have identified the SSNP as the patriotic party most likely to siphon off votes from the Ba'ath Party, hence why it has appears to be on the verge of changing its position towards the group and readily accepting it as a political actor inside the country. The US is in a delicate position where it can't directly interfere in the SSNP-Ba'ath relationship because it would soundly be rejected, so all that it can do is given unsolicited informational assistance to the group like what it did through the Foreign Policy article. The SSNP has patriotically fought tooth and nail alongside the SAA in defending the country, and its leader, Ali Haidar, was appointed from the then-opposition to be Minister of State and National Reconciliation Affairs in a strategically shrewd move by Damascus early on in the war. As is typical for someone who used to be opposed to the government, Haidar had some choice criticisms about the authorities and even once [said](#) that "there are extremists in the regime", but his loyalty to Syria and President Assad's decision to appoint him in the first place shouldn't be doubted one bit.

### Same Patriotism, Different Vehicles:

What the author wants to draw attention to, and which is also what he believes that the US is interested in, is that the rank-and-file SSNP members might have a more ambitious outlook for their party in the post-Daesh reality, especially considering that some of them are literally fighting on the frontlines and dying to protect their country, but a point which also shouldn't be forgotten is that they're also doing this in the name of their party and its ideals, too. For whatever their personal reasons may be, they're not doing this on behalf of the Ba'ath Party but for their own political organization, though this of course does not make them less patriotic than any Ba'ath Party member who is risking their life for the same national cause. It does, however, allow for observers to analyze the driving logic behind this discrepancy and why some people would be willing to martyr themselves for Syria under the SSNP's name and not the Ba'ath Party's.

From an outsider's standpoint, a plausible explanation is that the SSNP retains its decades-long opposition tradition at heart and does not appear to believe that Syria's future is inherently connected with the fate of President Assad. In their eyes, Syria is a multi-millennial civilization that doesn't base its survival on any one person, no matter the present circumstances, and that it is only through a convergence of pressings interests that finds them fighting on the same side as the government in patriotic defense of their shared homeland. Contrast this with the Ba'ath Party, which, while not deifying the Assad family, holds them in the highest regard as the stewards of the Syrian state and places enormous significance on their historic contributions to its development across the globally transformative period of the past 45 years. They too understand that Syria is a multi-millennial civilization that will continue to survive in spite of its present predicaments, but they believe that President Assad is by far the best and only person to lead their country during these trying times and under these historical circumstances.

Comparatively, a few points of strategic departure can be seen between the two parties.

Both of them are patriotic and sincerely love their homeland, but they have different attitudes towards President Assad and the focus of Syrian foreign policy. The SSNP isn't "anti-Assad" but it isn't too enthusiastically "pro-Assad" either, with their current support of the Syrian President being mostly a reaction to the external treachery against him. In times of peace, they'd qualify as part of the patriotic opposition – proud advocates of their country, but differing with the ruling establishment within a legal and acceptable framework. Part of their differences with the Ba'ath Party would obviously be over President Assad because, like any opposition party, they'd prefer to see their own leaders running the government instead of the incumbent. Another divergence that the SSNP has with the Ba'ath Party is over the scope of Syrian policy, believing that it should be "Syria-centric" and not pan-Arabist, or in a more practical sense, should be focused more on Syria proper and the functional revival of "Greater Syria" than on engagement with the wider Arab world (which they don't necessarily identify with, in any case).

To be fair, the Ba'ath Party and President Assad are more internally focused nowadays and will likely remain so well into the future as a result of the general Arab World's treachery against Syria, though they don't share the SSNP's vision of redrawing national borders and possibly entering into war with their neighbors or "federally" fragmenting their own state in order to achieve this. In that sense, the Ba'ath Party is much more moderate and realistic in its policies than the SSNP, though during times of war and the extraordinary duress that Syria has been under for half a decade non-stop already, it's easy to see how people could become attracted to the SSNP's relatively "radical" and unique brand of patriotism. When the country is under attack from external threats, such apparently minute differences between the SSNP and Ba'ath Party are mostly moot, but in the post-war aftermath and amidst a transitional period of political restructuring and constitutional revisionism, they take on a heightened meaning and could offer insight into the future behavior of both parties.

#### From The Fringe To The Forefront:

As it stands, the SSNP is the only party that could realistically divert patriotic votes from the Ba'ath Party and weaken the popular mandate of the governing majority. The reputation that its members have for being loyal and battle-hardened protectors of Syrian statehood was earned with the blood of countless martyrs and cannot be refuted, and their political leader is symbolically the minister of State and National Reconciliation Affairs, a post of substantial national importance for the future of Syria. It's little wonder why the SSNP feels emboldened and enthusiastic about its future electoral prospects, mostly because it's cultivated such sincere goodwill among broad segments of the population. Being a stereotypically leftist party, it eschews identity politics and is completely inclusive, thus mirroring the Ba'ath Party and providing its discontented or disillusioned members with a familiar organization through which to voice their dissent. It's this ease of crossover appeal which plays strongest to the SSNP's political advantages in the forthcoming election, but another of its major assets has to do with its marketing approach. Being an opposition party with scarcely any parliamentary representation right now and no realistic way to affect national policy, its members are unrestrained in emotively pandering to the most hyper-patriotic elements of society by speaking as ambitiously as they want about creating "Greater Syria" while having zero accountability for the consequences.

The combination of a well-earned reputation, flexible crossover appeal, and hyper-patriotic messaging makes the SSNP the most viable alternative to the Ba'ath Party within the National Progressive Front and the group most likely to attract votes from the ruling party's

constituency. This wouldn't necessarily warrant much attention under normal circumstances, but in the context of the War on Syria and the US' "Plan B" of "federalizing" the country in lieu of overthrowing the government, it becomes perhaps the single-most important electoral variable in the next 12 months. The Ba'ath Party absolutely needs to win a convincing majority of the votes in the next election in order to withstand the pressure coming from the pro-"federal" coalition that's running against it, the latter of which, to remind the reader, is forecasted to be a cosmopolitan collection of Kurds, Salafists, and refugees-immigrants (the diaspora). Even if the former electoral patterns hold true under a newly revised political system and the Ba'ath Party comes out on top again, it would still need to command a sizeable presence of support in the prospectively "federalized" areas in order to prove the argument that this unilateral initiative is not the "will of the local people" living there and is thus subject to post-election law enforcement measures spearheaded by the SAA.

But, if a surging SSNP cuts into the Ba'ath Party's vote and diverts part of the patriotic electorate over to its side, then this could weaken the ruling party and dampen its hopes of governing without entering into some sort of more formalized bilateral coalition with the SSNP than the multilateral and broad-based National Progressive Front. Under this new domestic political reality, the Ba'ath Party would need the SSNP in order to gain a qualitative edge to its already existing electoral support (perhaps to push it above a predetermined threshold of civil support, arbitrarily estimated at 60-70% with Kurds, Salafists, and the diaspora taking part), but reversely, this would also make it inordinately dependent on the SSNP for these very same reasons and thus propel the previously minor fringe party to the national forefront as the only organization capable of influencing the ruling party under this arrangement. The reason why this is such a salient issue is because the aforementioned strategic divergences between the two groups might come to the surface and motivate the newly empowered SSNP to begin flirting with "federalism" as a means of pressuring the Ba'ath Party into agreeing to some of its more radical political ideas/"reforms". After all, the Ba'ath Party is completely opposed to "federalism" in any iteration whatsoever, but if it becomes dependent on its junior SSNP partner as an important pillar of its post-electoral support, then the latter could coyly play around with the idea in order to scare its larger coalition partner into acceding to its demands (as per the "Western Democratic" playbook of coalition politics).

The Path To Hell Is Paved With Good Intentions:

The worst thing that could happen is if the SSNP was actually serious about its commitment to "federalism" and wasn't just using it as a part of its political game in gaining an upper post-electoral hand against the Ba'ath Party. There's no reason to doubt the party's patriotic credentials, but it might be that they become "too patriotic" in the sense of believing - however well-intentioned they may be - that "federalization" is the "golden opportunity" to realize their dream of "Greater Syria". Should that happen, then the SSNP would find itself in open opposition with the Ba'ath Party and by pure coincidence on the same side of the issue as the US and its Kurdish-Salafist allies. It follows that the SSNP's position on "federalism" is thus becoming an issue of premier national security importance in Syria, and that this might be the reason why the US has started to publicly display a positive attitude towards the party. It isn't because the US has any working relationship with it whatsoever, but that Washington wants to present this minority (patriotic) opposition group as a more pragmatic foil to the Ba'ath Party in order to stir inter-Syrian tensions and undermine President Assad's government after the upcoming elections.

The reader should remember how the “federalization” (internal partitioning) of Syria is the US’ “Plan B”, so it has every reason to present “federalization”-friendly groups and ones which could potentially become so in the best of light, thus explaining the unprecedentedly positive coverage that Foreign Policy gave to the SSNP in late March. Interestingly, whether by coincidence or design, that story came out shortly after the Kurds unilaterally declared “federalization” (which would have obviously been known to American strategic planners well in advance), so it may have been connected in some way. Again, the SSNP does not have any relationship with the US government and is totally opposed to it, which is why Foreign Policy used one of its local Lebanese partners to reach out to the group instead of relying on an American reporter. Nevertheless, the party has yet to issue any refutation that it was misled by the journalist, so it can be inferred that it was aware that the story was being written for a popular US establishment-representing magazine. There’s nothing wrong with any patriotic Syrian group or even the government itself doing media appearances with any US publication as a means of getting the truth out about the War on Syria, and this is something which should be commended in all ways and especially celebrated whenever it’s accurately reported, so it’s extremely unlikely that the SSNP even realized that they were being used by the US in order to indirectly present the party as a US establishment-approved actor.

The US’ motivations in doing so, like it was previously explained, are to begin a rough pilot program in familiarizing the West with this group, hoping that it will naturally and on its own come to accept the idea of “federalization” and become a leading proponent of it sometime in the future (possibly even after the elections and following a policy reversal). If this happens, then it would fulfill noted Canadian professor and Global Research founder Michel Chossudovsky’s definition of an [“intelligence asset”](#), which he describes as sometimes “not be[ing] aware that they are supported and monitored by Western intelligence” in the first place. The US sees no chance that the SSNP would ever come to full power in Syria and make good on its “Greater Syria” claims against NATO-member Turkey(which in any case wouldn’t have Russia’s support because of Moscow’s unwillingness to go to war with the US over this issue), but identifies the group as being capable of breaking ranks with the Ba’ath Party if it decides to embrace “federalism” as its preferred vehicle for presumably furthering its ideological designs on the region. This would weaken the ruling party at the precise moment when it needs all of the pro-unitary support that it can muster in deflecting the US’ latest highly sophisticated asymmetrical aggression through the “Plan B” of “federalizing” (internally partitioning) Syria as a back-up to overthrowing the government.

### Concluding Thoughts

The War on Syria is on the cusp of entering a new stage, with the US and its on-the-ground Kurdish-majority allies gearing up for a campaign to retake Raqqa, if [CENTCOM head General Joseph Votel’s secret \(and illegal\) visit to northern Syria](#) was any indication. The immediate post-war environment will be shaped by the “federal” and unitary forces jostling among themselves for political positioning in the run-up to the forthcoming elections and constitutional redrafting mandated by UNSC Res. 2254. Scheduled to take place before the end of June 2017, there’s a little over one year left before all the pieces fall into place and the latest chapter of the War on Syria is politically brought a close (although possibly not finished in full). The US and its allies have signaled that they do not intend to legally dismember Syria, but that they are more than willing to go through “democratic” motions in de-facto splitting it up until a collection of “federalized” identity statelets instead. Everything will come down to the upcoming elections when the “federal” and unitary supporters

dramatically face off in epically determining Syria's domestic political future for the coming years, and it's more important than ever that the Ba'ath Party gets as much political support as it can in staving off the Kurdish-Salafist (and potentially -diaspora) pro-"federalization" coalition.

The SSNP, while currently a very close, reliable, and trusted partner of the government, is at risk of being misled into supporting "federalization" out of the perception that this is the quickest and most efficient way of realizing its dream of "Greater Syria". Furthermore, this party's patriotic and battle-tested reputation makes it likely to perform very well at the polls, so it's realistically capable of splitting the patriotic vote and decreasing the Ba'ath Party's overall share. Just like with anything in life, capabilities have to be paired with intentions in order to gain workable value. If the SSNP's intentions change from being pro-government to supporting its own ideological self-interests and embracing "federalization" in the run-up to the elections or changing its mind to do so thereafter (no matter if it truly believes that this is in the collective national/civilizational/"Greater Syrian" interest or not), then it could suddenly become the most pivotal player in all of Syria by tilting the tide towards this initiative and irreparably weakening the Ba'ath Party's position in pushing back against it.

It might even be for this reason that the US establishment-representing Foreign Policy magazine gave such an uncharacteristic and unprecedented stamp of approval to the SSNP a few months ago in one of its hallmark articles, potentially wanting to familiarize the Western audience with the party in anticipation of later providing it with soft unsolicited informational support if this scenario ever materializes. After all, the US has nothing at all to fear from the SSNP and its "Greater Syria" ideology, but the SSNP and the rest of Syria has everything to fear from the US manipulating this idea for its own "federalization" purposes in "democratically" partitioning Syria after the defeat of Daesh.

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