

As Iran weakens, Turkey emerges as new threat to Israel and the West

written by Ruth Wasserman Lande | 17.12.2025

Following the horrifying events of October 7, 2023, Israel has spent the last two years battling its way to a point where it has significantly weakened its arch-nemesis, the Islamic Republic of Iran, along with Tehran's various proxies – including the Palestinian terror group Hamas in Gaza and the militant Islamist force Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, another valuable Iranian asset, has also collapsed, dealing an additional blow to the ayatollahs in Tehran.

The regime itself has begun a slow but unmistakable internal unraveling. But wounded animals are dangerous, and we should be clear-eyed: Tehran has not yet spoken its final word.

Even as Iranian civilians face acute shortages of water and other basic necessities, the regime continues to pour vast sums into rebuilding Hezbollah and bolstering Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Syria, right along Israel's northern border.

Although the current Syrian authorities – namely the Sunni jihadists led by Ahmed Hussein al-Sharaa, also known as Abu Mohammad al-Julani – are traditional adversaries of Iran, the shared goal of eliminating the State of Israel and conquering Jerusalem has forged an unlikely, tactical alliance between Sunnis and Shi'ites in Southern Syria.

Two years after the war in Gaza began and a year after the ceasefire with Lebanon and the fall of Assad, the northern arena remains an enormous challenge for Israel and for civilians living along its border.

The Islamic paradox

A deeper understanding of Sunni-Shiite enmity reveals a paradox: when the West targets Sunni Islamic extremism, such as ISIS, Shi'ite extremism led by Iran resurges. When Israel or the West weakens Iran's axis, the opposite occurs.

Thus, in the wake of the dismantling of the Shi'ite axis – largely by Israel in the past two years – Turkey, a Sunni state, has emerged as the new "Iran."

Ankara's de facto occupation of parts of Syria, along with its military footprint across Africa – particularly in Libya and Sudan – where it bolsters Muslim

Brotherhood factions, has made its expansionist ambitions clearer than ever. Beyond its undeniable presence in Syria, Turkey is also working aggressively to entrench itself in the Gaza Strip, positioning itself to encircle Israel from both the south and the north.

Its persistent efforts to insert Turkish “social workers” into Gaza under the banner of humanitarian aid are, in fact, part of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s strategy to “liberate” Jerusalem and present himself as the uncontested leader of the Muslim world – paving the way, in his vision, for a revived Ottoman Empire.

Expansion West

Yet, Turkish expansionism is largely overlooked internationally, despite posing a serious national security threat to many European countries, given the extreme Muslim Brotherhood ideology that Erdogan’s regime embraces and exports.

Combined with Turkish military strength, widespread Islamist indoctrination across numerous Muslim-majority states, and Qatari petrodollars, a systemic, long-term penetration of Western societies is underway. It is only a matter of time before countries in Europe, Canada, Australia, and the United States find themselves culturally and educationally overwhelmed.

One option is to wait – fearfully or naively, depending on one’s perspective – for this to unfold.

A more proactive, less fatalistic approach recognizes that today’s global village means that unchecked indoctrination in the Muslim world never remains contained. Islamist extremism must be curbed using the considerable leverage the West – particularly the United States – possesses over numerous states. This is essential to the West’s very survival.

Global wake-up call

Supporting minorities such as the Kurds is not merely an act of humanitarian concern amid Turkish-led ethnic cleansing. It is also a strategic response to Ankara’s expansionist agenda. The Kurds were instrumental in defeating ISIS in Iraq and Syria; they could play a crucial role again.

Above all, the problem must be diagnosed accurately: the spread of Muslim Brotherhood ideology. The United Arab Emirates offers a model worth emulating, with its sweeping educational reforms and unapologetic stance against extremism. Incitement and indoctrination in Egypt, Jordan, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Syria, Lebanon as well as a myriad of other Muslim countries must be stopped. The infiltration of this indoctrination into the West must also be

immediately curbed before it is too late.

October 7 was indeed horrific. Yet it also served as a global wake-up call, exposing extremist forces that had long existed but operated with less visibility. Now, two years later, the world can no longer look away.

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