Dimensions of Al-Zaydi's Visit to Syria and the Reshuffling of Regional Cards

(Translated)

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The visit of the Prime Minister of Iraq, Ali Falah al-Zaydi, to Syria on 28 October 2026 marked a significant milestone in the reordering of relations between the two countries, following the tensions that prevailed after the fall of the Assad regime. This visit cannot be viewed in isolation from regional transformations and the international struggle for influence in the region, nor from America's efforts to redraw the map of alliances and political, security, and economic relations in the lands of Muslims—all to ensure the continuation of its hegemony over the region and its control over its resources, wealth, and strategic position.

Observers believe the visit primarily focused on three main areas: political, economic, and security. Al-Hurra Channel and others reported, citing sources within the Coordination Framework and those close to al-Zaydi, that the U.S. Special Envoy to Iraq and Syria, Tom Barrack, was directly responsible for arranging and coordinating the visit. If accurate, this clearly reveals the extent of American interference in directing relations between countries in the region and raises serious questions about the true independence of these nations' political decision-making, and the degree to which their actions remain subject to American calculations and designs.

On the political front, America seeks to reshape the balance of power in the region, increase Iran's isolation, reduce its influence and that of its proxies in Iraq and Al-Sham, and work toward establishing a regionally based axis with Western alignment—comprising Iraq, Syria, and Jordan, along with affiliated forces in Lebanon—thereby limiting Iran's ability to influence events in the region.

Thus, these moves are not merely efforts to improve relations between neighboring states; rather, they form part of a broader struggle for influence among international and regional powers. America is working to rearrange the region's circumstances to serve its interests, employing existing regimes to implement its policies—whether through political agreements, economic partnerships, or security arrangements. Ultimately, the lands of the Muslims remain an arena for settling scores and exchanging influence, while the right of the Ummah to control its own decisions and determine its destiny remains absent.

On the economic front, America seeks to open alternative routes for transporting oil of the Gulf and Iraq through the territory of Syria, ensuring the continued flow of energy supplies and reducing dependence on the Strait of Hormuz—one of Iran's most significant pressure levers. The importance of these routes has grown amid disrupted navigation and the energy crisis resulting from America's war on Iran and the ensuing broad economic repercussions.

Al-Zaydi and Ahmed al-Shara' also discussed the project to rehabilitate the Kirkuk–Baniyas pipeline, alongside developing trade corridors and regional connectivity, which would provide Iraq with additional outlets for exporting its oil via the Mediterranean Sea. The talks also addressed cooperation in trade, agriculture, transportation, and investment.

Here, one must ask: Do these projects aim to achieve true economic independence for the lands of the Muslims, or are they merely redistributing energy and trade routes to serve the interests of international powers, foremost among them the United States? The wealth that Allah (swt) has placed in the lands of the Muslims should serve the Ummah and its interests, not become bargaining chips in the struggles of major powers or tools to enhance their influence and hegemony over the region's resources. Moreover, altering oil export routes—even if it brings immediate economic gains—does not necessarily mean liberation from dependency, so long as economic and political decision-making remains subject to external influence.

On the security front, the Transitional Authority in Syria has joined the international coalition to combat terrorism. Additionally, thousands of detainees affiliated with the ISIS organization have been transferred from prisons managed by the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces) to Iraq, as

part of security arrangements overseen by the United States. The U.S. is seeking to expand security coordination between parties that were previously at odds, including the Popular Mobilization Forces, which was one of the most prominent groups and militias supporting the now defunct Bashar Al-Assad regime.

This was evident in the official negotiations that took place in Damascus between al-Zaydi and Ahmed al-Shara', where an agreement was reached to arrange a visit by a high-level Iraqi security delegation to Syria. The delegation will include representatives from security agencies and the Popular Mobilization Forces to follow up on border security files and develop mechanisms for cooperation and coordination.

This development raises unavoidable questions: How do forces that were once opposing parties in the conflict become co-operating participants in joint security arrangements? Who determines the nature and objectives of these understandings? And is this being done based on the interests and security of the people of the region, or according to American calculations aimed at managing conflicts and repurposing existing forces to serve its strategy?

The United States, which led the international coalition and intervened militarily and politically in Iraq and Syria, does not act out of altruism for the peoples of the region. Rather, it operates according to its colonialist interests and insists on remaining the ultimate arbiter in shaping security and political arrangements. It is a mistake to view security coordination in isolation from this reality, or to allow counterterrorism to serve as a pretext for entrenching foreign influence and subjugating the lands of Muslims to the will of international powers.

Of course, the discussions were not limited to political, economic, and security issues; they also included activating and facilitating religious visits to Shia shrines in Syria, while exploring the formation of a committee to study the necessary arrangements for facilitating these visits and ensuring the security of the visitors.

This issue can be viewed as part of a broader path toward normalizing relations between the two countries and restoring patterns of relations that existed during the socialist Ba'thist regime.

Moreover, this path raises legitimate concerns among the people of the revolution in Syria, who made immense sacrifices to overthrow the Assad regime and took to the streets demanding change and liberation from tyranny and dependency. It is unacceptable for their sacrifices to become merely a fleeting stage, only for the country to revert to the very same policies and alliances they rebelled against—even if the faces and slogans have changed.

The greatest danger revolutions face is being co-opted and stripped of their substance, with the political system they rose against being reproduced—merely changing some faces and adopting new slogans. When the people of the revolution see the transitional authority reopening doors to the forces and alliances tied to the former regime and reweaving relationships based on the same international balances, this can breed profound disappointment and weaken people's confidence in their ability to achieve the change for which they shed blood and made sacrifices.

The issue of the Ummah is not about improving relations between fragmented entities whose borders were established by colonialism, nor is it about choosing between American influence and Iranian or other influences. Rather, it is about liberation from subservience to all colonialist powers and restoring the Ummah's independence and its authority in decision-making. This can only be achieved through genuine political unity that unifies the lands of the Muslims, restores the Ummah's standing, establishes Islam as the foundation of ruling governance, politics, and relations, and blocks the path of all those who wish to keep it divided, its wealth plundered, and its decisions held hostage.

Therefore, the fruit of revolutions should not be the rearrangement of colonialist influence in our lands, but rather the beginning of the Ummah's liberation (tahrir) from its hegemony, the restoration of its unity and independence, and the establishment of the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly-guided Caliphate) on the Method of the Prophethood—through which it regains its dignity, controls its own decisions, and safeguards its resources.