

Will the Coming End of ISIS Unleash War on Israel?

After a nine-month battle, Iraq took control of the ISIS stronghold in Mosul. Now the coalition remains focused on taking the fight to ISIS in Raqqa, Syria, the terror group's self-proclaimed capital.

Some experts are warning the battle against the Islamic State might just be a prelude to a much more dangerous battle just ahead.

Most believe the victory in Mosul and the offensive against ISIS in Raqqa signal the end of the Islamic State caliphate. But what happens next is the major question facing the Middle East.

"You have so many actors both at the state and the sub-state level that are working in these very amorphous coalitions against one another, with one another, that this is a very dangerous place," Caroline Glick, an adjunct fellow with the Center for Security Policy, told CBN News. "This becomes a tinderbox."

Glick says a wide range of actors, including Syria, Russia, the U.S., Turkey, the Kurds, Sunni Islamic groups, Hezbollah and Iran all make up that volatile mix.

"You got a lot of people with weapons. You got a lot of weapons going on in a small territorial unit and its implications for both great power relations and of course for the ability to cause massive instability in neighboring countries like Jordan—and as you mentioned Israel, and of course Iraq is all part of the same theater—are just almost mind-boggling," Glick said.

Avi Melamed is author of *Inside the Middle East*. "Not so far

from here we have thousands of Shiites–Iranian-backed militias that are fighting in Syria,” he said.

Melamed says the West needs to know the war in Syria stretches beyond its borders.

“The war in Syria is way beyond a civil war,” he said. “Actually what we see right now in Syria is a huge stage of a huge regional power struggle, roughly speaking between two major forces. One is the Iranians and their backed militias on the one hand and the other is the Arab Sunnis.”

Glick warns Syria is flooded with Iranian troops.

“The Syrian military is Iranian. Hezbollah is Iranian, of course. Iran is Iranian, and they have an unlimited number of troops they can bring in at will, and they are bringing to Syria from Afghanistan, from Pakistan,” Glick explained. “It’s basically a bottomless well of personnel that Iran can bring over as cannon fodder for its hegemonic aims in the Middle East.”

Melamed warns Iran is trying to create a land bridge to Lebanon on the Mediterranean that would pose a great danger to Israel.

“Because you have to remember that the Iranian regime vows the elimination of the State of Israel ... [They’re] trying to launch a military front against Israel on the Golan Heights. This could result in a massive eruption because Israel will not stand for that and rightly so,” he said.

Melamed says in order to understand today’s Middle East, you must go back in history to President Obama.

“Obama’s administration is definitely responsible for what I call a growing whirlpool of violence,” he continued. “The major reason for that is Obama’s administration for whatever the reasons are lined up with the Iranians, enabling the

Iranians to expand their influence, violently and pro-actively in different arenas in the region.”

Now Iran’s proxy, Hezbollah, poses an unprecedented threat to Israel.

“They’re in control of Lebanon and openly threatening war with Israel,” Glick explained. “And not only are their armaments sophisticated to a degree that we’ve never seen before in the hands of a terrorist, controlled by a terror regime, but their men, their men under arms, their soldiers are battle-hardened, gruesome, brutal warriors who have been in the battlefield in Syria for the past six years.”

Melamed believes the danger is greater now than when all of the Middle East ganged up on Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War.

“It’s much greater. Look, we are looking today at reality where you have dozens of thousands of Shiite militants that are already operating in Syria, massively armed, financed and guided by the Iranians,” he said. “The Iranians are the same way. They took over Lebanon by remote control using the Hezbollah. The Iranians are envisioning a similar future to Syria.”

That could lead to a confrontation with global implications.

“Israel’s signals are going to be very powerful because Israel is determined to not allow the Iranians to make the Golan Heights a stage of war,” he said. “The ramifications of the potential developments that I was portraying of that reality on the ground, the ramifications are not only local, they’re not only regional, they are exceeding the regional level; they could be global.” {eo}

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