

Russian warships to enter Syrian waters

Written by Chris Perver

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A Syrian news agency reported yesterday that the Russian Federation is planning to send [naval warships](#) to the Mediterranean as the crisis in Syria deepens. Over 3,500 people are thought to have lost their lives in the conflict which erupted as a result of the 'Arab Spring', a wave of popular protests backed by hard-line Islamic groups that have resulted in the overthrow of several secular governments in the Middle East. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov recently warned that the conflict in Syria was starting to look more like a [civil war](#), as defectors from the Syrian army mount reprisal attacks against government positions.

Quote: *"It is not a secret that along with the peaceful demonstrators, whose strivings and demands we support, there is more and more participation of armed groups who have an entirely different agenda from reform and democracy in Syria," Lavrov said.*

And unfortunately he may be right. Shortly before he died, Muammar Gaddafi warned the West that Al-Qaeda groups had become involved in the uprising and were striving for control of Libya. But Western leaders were keen to depose Gaddafi at any cost and show their support for 'freedom' and 'democracy' in the Arab world. Now the rebels have imposed Sharia law in the country and the [black flag](#) of Al-Qaeda flies over the Benghazi courthouse. The Muslim Brotherhood, the militant Islamic organization that gave birth to Hamas, also looks set to control at least [one third](#) of the Egyptian parliament if and when elections are held. Former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had kept a tight rein on hard-line Islamic groups that threatened Egypt and the region's stability, but now that looks set to change. As a result of Obama's support for regime change in Egypt, Israel may be heading towards another conflict with its southern neighbour.

It's more difficult to know exactly how things will progress in Syria. While the country is officially secular, it is governed by an Alawite Muslim party that has close ties with Shi'ite Islam. Iran is predominantly Shi'ite, as is Hizbullah. It is not in their interest for the Assad regime to fall. But if that happens, it will most likely be replaced by a Sunni-led government that will favour ties with Al-Qaeda, Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood. Iran's influence in the region will wane as a result. If the Syrian government collapses, Iran may attempt to exert control over the region via Hizbullah, as they have done in Iraq. Assad has also threatened to [attack Israel](#) and cause *"an earthquake that will burn the region"*

if Western powers attempt to remove him from power. Add to this the possibility of an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities within the year, and you have a recipe for a conflict that could easily spill over into a regional war.

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The prophecy of Ezekiel (chapters 38-39) predicts that during the last days, the Russian Federation (Magog, Tubal), along with Iran (Persia), Libya, Ethiopia (Sudan), Turkey (Togarmah, Gomer), along with many other peoples, will move against Israel in the latter days. It's hard to believe that just a few years ago Iran and Turkey were some of Israel's closest allies. Today Iran is the number one threat to Israel's existence, and other nations now controlled by Islamic governments are [moving in that direction](#). It's easy to see how the war mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39 could now come about. This shows us just how close we may be to its fulfilment. It also shows us just how close we may be to the Lord's return.

As Christians, we need not be dismayed at the signs of the times, for they prove to us that the Bible is the Word of God, and that the Lord is still in complete control of world events. You may wonder, with so much chaos and calamity in the world, how could God possibly be in control of it all? Everything that happens in the world today is according to the permissive and sovereign will of God, especially concerning end time prophecies. For instance, in Ezekiel 38-39, the Lord says He is the one who will bring this confederation of armies against Israel in the latter days. "I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee

", Ezekiel 38:16. And His purpose in doing this is that the nations will come to know the God of Israel when they see this miraculous victory. In Zechariah 14:2, at the battle of Armageddon, the Lord says, "

I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle

". And His purpose here is to turn the hearts of the nation of Israel back to their Messiah and reveal the Lord Jesus Christ as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Zechariah 12:10, Revelation 19). While God is in complete control of world events, that does not mean to say that everything that happens in the world is ordained of God and in accordance with His express will. Some things He allows in accordance with His permissive will. That is, although He does not desire it, He allows it to happen for a reason. Unfortunately God's express will, the things God really desires, do not always come to pass. Some examples of this from the Bible. In God's express will, He does not desire the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11). But in His permissive will, the wicked still die. The Bible says it is not God's will that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2

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Peter 3:9). But many will not come to repentance. And again, the Lord Jesus Christ desired to gather all of Israel unto Himself as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings (Luke 13:34). But they resisted His will. So how can a good God allow death and suffering in the world? It is not in God's express will, but He allows it according to His permissive will. For the Lord has given us a free will to choose for ourselves, and He will not violate that will. But praise God that He is still able to work all things together for the good of those that love Him (Romans 8:28). That is why as Christians we can have hope, even though the world is in such turmoil today. He is in control, and will work all things according to His will and purpose. Do you have this hope? Have you trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation? Turn away from your sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation today.

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