

Virginia Senator Black: ‘I Will Be Syria’s Voice’

by Robert Ingraham

May 1—On April 26, 2016, Virginia State Senator Richard Black began a three-day visit to the nation of Syria. Prior to his trip, Black said in a letter that he was traveling to Syria “in an attempt to restore peace and prevent the slaughter of Christians and other minorities.” During the trip, according to the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), Black also pledged that as soon as he returns to the United States, he will work towards organizing discussions in the Congress in order to change the prevailing view about what is happening in Syria, that he will work to lift the sanctions against Syria, which he termed a violation of international law, and that he will seek to reopen the Syrian Embassy. “I will be Syria’s voice,” SANA reports Black as stating.

During his three-day visit, Senator Black held in-depth discussions with the Speaker of the People’s Assembly Mohammad Jihad al-Laham as well as other leading government and civilian leaders. On April 28, Iran’s Press TV, its English-language service, prominently featured a report of Black’s meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his advisors in Damascus. In the television clips of the meeting, Black emphasized that what is happening in Syria bears no resemblance to the disinformation being spread by elements of the U.S. administration. In the same television coverage, President Assad is

shown stating that terrorism knows no borders and that the fight against terror requires a joint international effort that is not limited to the military level.

The Larger Picture

Three weeks prior to Senator Black’s trip to Syria, he delivered a speech to a conference sponsored by the Schiller Institute in New York City, titled [“The Folly of U.S. Military Interventions in Iraq, Syria, and Libya Since 2011.”](#) In that presentation, Black delivered a thorough analysis of how, in the fifteen years since the 2001 9/11 attack, the United States and Great Britain have carried out a relentless campaign of regime-

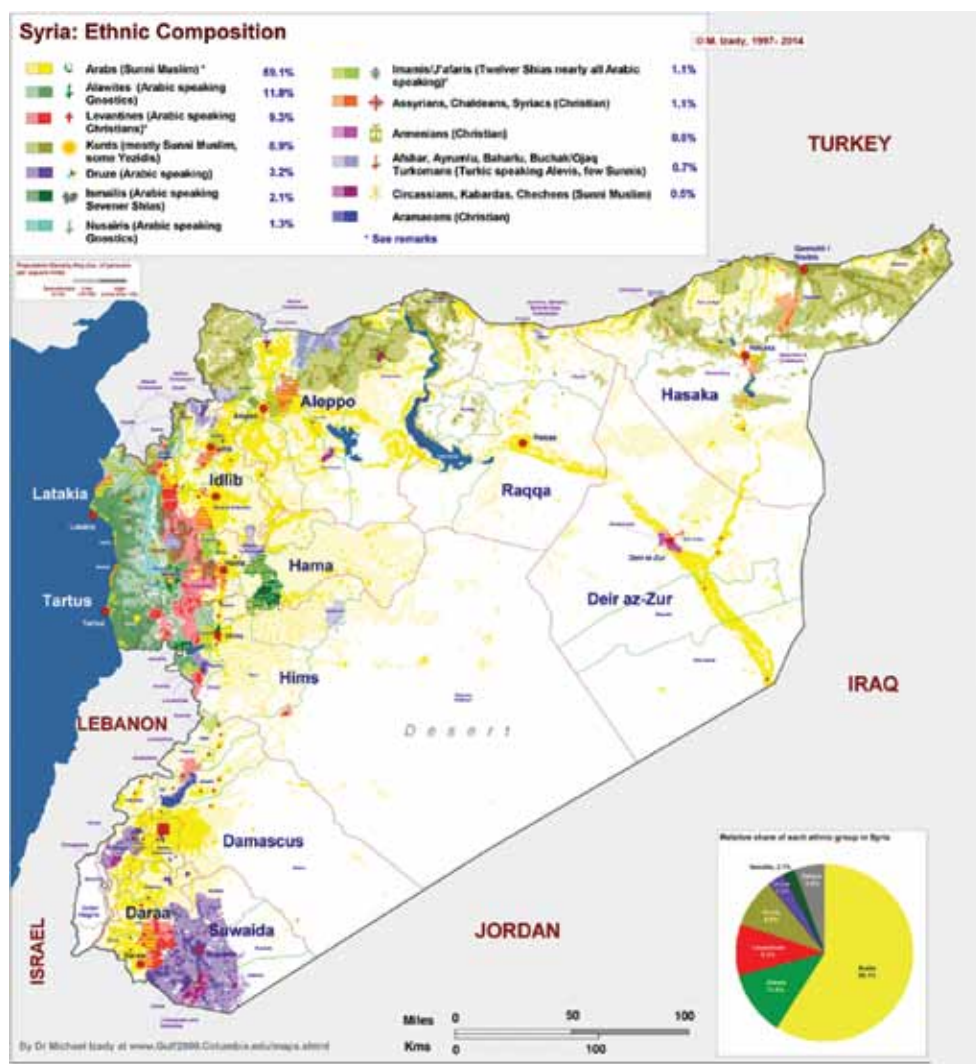
change carnage throughout the Arab world including, but not limited to the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, the murder of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, a failed attempt to install a (British) Muslim Brotherhood regime in Egypt, and the continuing effort to overthrow the government of Syria and turn the country over to the hordes of ISIS (Daesh). Not only has none of this had anything to do with the perpetrators of 9/11, but the current effort to destroy Syria, Black stated, has placed the United States into a direct alliance with Turkey and Saudi Arabia, the two chief backers of terrorism in the region.

In his address, Black went on to emphasize the



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Virginia State Senator Richard Black



The multi-religious and multi-ethnic character of Syria.

moral contradiction of this current alliance. Syria is a secular nation with a democratically elected government. Under the Assad government, all religious groups, including a sizable Christian minority, have free exercise of their faith, and the rights of women are the most advanced in the Arab world. Conversely, Saudi Arabia has never held an election, women have no rights, and beheadings and other forms of barbaric punishment are routinely carried out on both opponents of the monarchy and religious minorities.

What Is at Stake

More than 162,000 people have been killed in Syria since 2011, according to reports, and 11 million have fled Syria or have become refugees within it. This car-

nage and suffering is horrific, but the larger implications are more horrible. In his interview with the Speaker al-Laham, as reported by SANA, Senator Black said that what is happening in Syria now affects the future of civilization for the entire world, that if the Syrian government were to lose the war, there would be devastating repercussions for civilization and humanity in general. Black stated that the steadfastness of a country like Syria in the face of all the American, European, and Arab Gulf powers is “a miracle from God.” In reply, al-Laham stressed that Syria is combating terrorism and extremism on behalf of the whole world, and that victory over the armed terrorist organizations will be a victory for civil values for all people.

In another interview, Black said that the crisis in Syria did not start within the country, but rather in Western and Gulf capitals

and their intelligence services, which made the decision to create chaos, and have done so, shedding much blood in the process. Black praised Russia’s intervention into the war against terrorism, saying that it produced great changes in the dynamic in the region.

In a series of text messages from Black to the *Washington Post*, he further elaborated the reasons for his trip. According to the *Post*, Black stated, “I am hoping to move us away from our insane policy regarding Syria. Syria has greater women’s rights and religious freedom than any nation in the Arab world,” and, “We are allied with two of the most vile nations on Earth, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, which are intent on imposing a Wahhabi fundamentalist government on the Syrian people.”

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