

# The War against ISIS, Syrian Opposition and Middle East Christians: A Discussion with M. Zuhdi Jasser, Walid Phares, John Hajjar

by Jerry Gordon (October 2014)



Syrian Opposition Coalition Council member Dr. Kamal Al-Labwani (on right) at International Conference on Counter Terrorism Conference Herzliya, Israel, 9/11/14

Source: Times of Israel

President Obama's eve of 9/11 speech in which he declared "war" on the Islamic State, formerly ISIS, contained a commitment to arm and support so-called moderate Syrian opposition to assist in "degrading and ultimately destroying" the Salafist Jihadist self-declared Caliphate. That commitment Obama made clear did not include any a commitment to put US "boots on the ground." Instead his plan relies on air attacks, training and support of Iraqi military forces, Kurdish peshmerga and Free Syrian Army contingents.

[Watch](#) the President's national televised address outlining his ISIS strategy:

A [coalition](#) of 10 regional Sunni countries are considering joining, although in what capacity is unclear. Turkey, a major NATO member rejected participation. During a US Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing on September 16<sup>th</sup> Chaired by Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI), Defense Secretary Hagel and General Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, presented [testimony](#) on plans for combating ISIS. Dempsey didn't rule out prospects that US troops might be engaged in combat roles against ISIS under, what White House press spokesman Josh Earnest called "hypothetical conditions." In response to the President's request, The House of Representatives on September 17<sup>th</sup> [passed](#) a measure approving the President's plan to train, arm and equip the Syrian Opposition by a vote of 256 to 153.

President Obama may have been referring to the Free Syrian Army. But which Free Syrian Army (FSA)? One group is the Free Syrian Army, with a Supreme Military Command in Erdogan's Ankara that purportedly sold American Journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, who were barbarously murdered by ISIS. Those graphic beheadings deliberately conveyed on videos aroused American public opinion demanding action that prompted Obama's televised address to the nation.

Dramatically, one leader of the "moderate" Syrian opposition Dr. Kamal al-Labwani, a veteran Syrian secular opponent of the Assad regime living in exile in Sweden, surfaced in Israel coincidental with President's ISIS strategy speech, at the annual [International Counter Terrorism \(ICT\) Conference](#) in Herzliya. Labwani's attendance at the ICT conference may reflect the outreach by the other FSA led by the Syrian Opposition Coalition headquartered near embattled Aleppo composed of ex-Assad military including Alawites, Christians and Sunni tribal leaders currently battling ISIS inside Syria. Ilana Freedman estimates through her sources that there could be as many as 50,000 Syrian opposition fighters in this "other FSA."

Perhaps, Dr. Labwani's visit to the ICT conference in Israel may have also discussed possible mutual interests regarding covert support of the FSA military command and indigenous Sunni tribes' opposition to ISIS and the Assad regime. If the case, one can only hope that might include linking up with Syrian Kurdish resistance forces, despite earlier differences.

While these positive efforts were going on in support of secular democratic opposition in Syria against both the Assad regime and ISIS, an event occurred at a gala in Washington on the evening of 9/11 sponsored by a new group, *In Defense of Christians*. The disruption during a speech by US Texas Sen. Ted Cruz indicated the extent of infiltration in America by a cabal composed of Middle East Christian Clerics and wealthy elites beholden to the Shiite nexus of the Islamic regime in Tehran, and Assad in Damascus. John Hajjar of Middle East Christians in America (MECHRIC) had [warned](#) of this cabal in a series of articles prior to the 9/11/14 evening event in Washington.

Hajjar's warning was crystallized by the disruption of a speech by Texas US Senator, Ted Cruz, who was booed off the stage by some in the audience when he said "Christians have no greater ally than Israel." He strode off the stage saying: "If you will not stand with Israel and the Jews, Then I will not stand with you. Good night and God bless."


[Watch](#) this You Tube video of Sen. Cruz's speech disrupted by audience hecklers at the *In Defense of Christian* gala:

During the day on 9/11/2014, five Middle East clerics, who attended the *In Defense of Christian* evening gala, went to the Obama White House for [discussions](#) about the status of Middle East Christians.

Against this background, the Lisa Benson Radio Show with Zuhdi Jasser and this writer as co-host held a discussion on these issues with Walid Phares and John Hajjar.



**M. Zuhdi Jasser:** Welcome America to the broadcast of the Lisa Benson Show. The only show on Salem Radio Network solely dedicated to protecting the American homeland, the West and its closest ally Israel. Week after week the Lisa Benson Radio Show on National Security Matters provides accurate, measured and intelligent information. My name is Zuhdi Jasser. I am the President of the American Islamic Forum for Democracy dedicated to fighting on the frontlines in the war against political Islam, Islamism and the war of ideas, I call the battle for the soul of Islam. I am proud to be sitting in for Lisa and I am joined by my co-host and good friend Jerry Gordon, Senior Editor of the *New English Review* and its blog *The Iconoclast*. Today we have a jam packed show.

 **Jerry Gordon:** This is going to be an extraordinary program. Interesting that this week has been packed with commemoration of the thirteenth anniversary of 9/11 with events all over this country. As a witness to 9/11, I know what the feeling was like on that day when those towers in lower Manhattan fell with thousands killed across this country also in Washington and in Shanksville. We published [an interview with a 9/11 survivor](#) in the *New English Review*, Ms. Deborah Weiss, formerly a lawyer in New York in which she told her harrowing tale of living next door, trying to get to work in a building adjacent to the twin towers and being displaced for well over a year. She became interested in what caused 9/11; conducted her own self study, moved to Washington and became an effective advocate against political Islam. That is an important bridge for many of us in this country.

**Jasser:** This is so important as we get further from 9/11 and many people say well maybe we shouldn't be as obsessed about it. Yet the Middle East has changed immensely to the worse in many ways as there was the hope for freedom, an Arab awakening which has turned into an Islamist movement to fill the vacuum. The sad thing is we talk to students now beginning junior high and others were not alive on 9/11 and see interviews with some in college that barely have any idea what happened on 9/11; it's frightening. Yet you wonder why our policy seems to be more like 9-10-01 rather than where they should be today in a world that is more

threatening than ever. We have Muslims serving in ISIS in the thousands; more than ever have been radicalized in the past year alone. So when you look at national security from the domestic or global front the thirteenth anniversary of 9/11 really hits home for the need to remind Americans as we do every year about the threat that continues.

**Gordon:** That's correct. In a presentation I gave early in September, I asked one of those millennials, an eighteen year old in the audience, if he knew what 9/11 all about and the answer was he didn't. At the end of the session he said he was grateful for our discussion about the entire event, the background and the rise of Islamism currently in this world. We have a situation before us that we believe may be more dangerous in some respects than what we had, as you pointed out, just prior to 9/11. We were ignorant. We are supposed to be knowledgeable about it currently but the answer is we are really not. We do not understand how a group as barbaric as ISIS could arise so rapidly now estimated by the CIA at well over thirty-one thousand adherents. They are flocking to this self-declared caliphate stretching across both Syria and Iraq nearly the size of the country of Belgium.

**Jasser:** As the American public starts to see all of the different fronts, it becomes overwhelming. We have seen both from the left and from the right moves towards more non-interventionism or more appropriately neo-isolationism. We are just sort of war weary and it has become more of a political issue than one of security. As we try to awaken Americans to the threat complex as it is from the Taliban to the Brotherhood to Al Qaeda to ISIS to more of the Arabists with the Assads and the Mubaraks who are now the el-Sisi, I think the problem is simple. It is about the surge of an ideology filling the vacuum left by departing dictatorship, Islamism. It is the new cold war and the President's speech this week hopefully we'll address in the next hour not only 9/11 and what we are reminded of but what the President's strategy is against ISIS. What is this coalition he is building and what is the future for American security abroad in the Middle East, North Africa and also domestically. Towards the end of the hour we are going to talk about a conference in Washington called *In Defense of Christians* which was portrayed as a conference to defend minority Christian rights. However, as we saw what happened to Senator Cruz we'll talk about that in the last segment.


**Gordon:** Ironically I consider this program to be a continuation of the discussion that we had with Sherko Abbas, the Syrian Kurdish leader at the end of July. It deals with the nexus of the Shia Crescent in that region between the Islamic regime in Teheran, the former Maliki government in Iraq and, of course, Assad in Syria. All of whom were fairly active in creating the space for the mushrooming of ISIS.

**Jasser:** There is no doubt and that is the untold story. The Muslim Brotherhood and the

Islamist movement globally thrive off of anti-Westernism and sectarianism throughout the Middle East. We see the Assad regime portraying itself as the only answer to ISIS. Meanwhile it has left ISIS alone. Our guest is Walid Phares who has just finished a BBC interview. He is a Fox News Middle East and Terrorism Analyst and author of [\*The Lost Spring, U.S. Policy in the Middle East and Catastrophes to Avoid.\*](#) He has served as an advisor to the anti-terrorism caucus in the U.S. House since 2007 and co-Secretary General for the Transatlantic Parliamentary Group on Counter Terrorism. Later we will also be joined by John Hajjar who is an Executive Committee Member of the Middle East Christian Committee or MECHRIC. What do you think about the President's speech? What is his short term military strategy? What does winning mean in that context?

**Gordon:** There are four or five points. Let's deal with the military aspect as against the so-called doctrinal aspect of his speech. The President was talking about an expansion of so-called systematic air attacks in both Syria and Iraq. That may be problematic if the Assad regime is going to start knocking down "coalition aircraft." He's also talking about an increase in support of forces on the ground in Iraq providing some assistance and training. One has to question that given the flight of the Iraqi Army from Mosul that really caused a massive humanitarian crisis with the Yazidi minority and certainly the Christians. I know that Dr. Phares is intimately familiar with that. Then the question is military assistance to what kind of Syrian opposition? The public is confused about what appears to be two kinds of Free Syrian Armies. One which unfortunately is fairly Islamist that sold American Journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff to ISIS resulting in their barbaric murders. The question is really what is an effective opposition that is secular and democratic in Syria? We may what happened in Iraq during the first Gulf War, creation of a no-fly zone.

**Jasser:** Walid, I gave our listeners your background. You and I have crossed paths many times not only on Fox but also before the Arab Spring as your book calls it *The Lost Spring*. Walid, what would be winning in this context?

 **Walid Phares:** Thank you so much for having me gentlemen. It's always a pleasure to be with both of you. Over the years I have been promoting democracy and moderation in the Middle East; however, let me address what would victory be? The Administration's stance on victory is that ISIS will be bombed, degraded and eventually eliminated. The projection by the Administration would be that in Iraq, the Iraqi Army, the Kurds and eventually some Sunni tribes will terminate ISIS on the ground while the bombing is happening from the air. A more complicated victory would be that ISIS would be weakened to a point whereby, the moderate segment of the opposition will actually seize the position of ISIS but not the regime. That would be the view of the Administration.

**Jasser:** Walid, on the conversation about Syria I can't tell you how confused and disarmed America is in trying to figure out who the good folks are. As a Syrian American I'll tell you one of the most offensive things I heard the President trying to tell me as a Muslim what's Islamic and what is not. He was trying to tell us that the good guys are the pharmacists, the farmers and the doctors and they are not warriors. It mocked what the future of Syria is and who started the revolution. Here you have the leader of the free world mocking them so how can Americans get their heads or their arms around really who the good folks are other than seeing ISIS, radicalization and really no leadership. Can you walk us through how we can look at what parts of the Free Syrian Army can be supported and would be an option to both the evils of Assad and ISIS?

**Phares:** This is the hardest subject and discussion in Congress, Washington and in Europe; how to determine who the moderate is or who is the non-Jihadist in the Syrian opposition? Unfortunately we missed the train. We missed the bus since 2011 and it has been part of these discussions here in DC. When the so-called Arab Spring, began in March 2011 the first stage lasted until about September/October. What did we see on our TV screen? We saw thousands and thousands of young civil society people. Now the Administration talks about professions like dentists and doctors and it doesn't go by profession. It goes by who is more secular in civil society, the anti-Ba'athists on the one hand and anti-Jihadists on the other hand.

That was the reality for the first few months and it was very intense. We saw it on You Tube. What happened was we stayed inactive in Syria, as we became inactive in Libya. We did not identify and recognize the popular forces in Syria. Assad forces started firing on the crowds killing many people. Who was going to fill in the streets? Those who wanted to fight. There were a minority in the beginning so instead of seeing tens of thousands of people on You Tube now we were seeing dozens of fighters. So the fighters' political affiliation is different from the popular demonstrators and quickly the fighters reflected what was there in Syria before. You had the Muslim Brotherhood, the offshoot of the Kurds in the North, every single faction which was in opposition and armed. There were the ones that started the military uprising. In 2012 and 2013 after the militarization there was an Islamization of part of the opposition. The FSA was originally a collection of officers and sergeants and soldiers of the Assad Syrian Arab Army. They broke away formed the FSA and fought back against the regime. Later on there were many forces that took the name and the flag of the FSA but were Jihadists. You have lawmakers and foundations here in DC who would look at the Jihadists and see a badge of FSA, then they concluded all of the FSA is bad. Then the other side who are real FSA and said no. They are good. So that's where the confusion is coming from.

**Jasser:** The way it has been portrayed is as a civil war. We don't know how it's going to come

out. In the absence of American influence, you have a regional conflict that has on the one side Russia, Iran, Hezbollah, and Assad. On the other side, the Sunni Militants from Saudi Arabia fueled by Gulf States, Qatar, and Muslim Brotherhood influence. Thus you have the evolution of what you currently see which is radical Jihadists versus radical Shiites, so called secularists fueled by Iran. That's why in the West, the more liberal groups have been marginalized. It is because it's not a civil war but rather a regional conflict that America's been missing. Do you agree with that Walid?

**Phares:** I do agree and let me be more precise to help listeners better understand what's on the ground. In my perspective, the civil society (the one that I want to collaborate or work with) is not active. We can't reach them. The forces on the ground are not just two. There are not two camps there are at least three. You have the regime as you just mentioned, the regime of Assad has Iran as an ally which has inserted the Iranian Revolutionary Guard omni presence in Syria. Iran has the equivalent of several divisions in Syria. Everybody knows Hezbollah is inside Syria fighting with the special forces of Iran and Syria. Third you have Iraqi Shia Militia an ally of Iran fighting with us. The other camp which has grown very large are all of the Jihadists. They are Jabhat Al Nusra or ISIS which is a giant in the Jihadi camp and of course other small Islamist groups, followers of the Muslim Brotherhood. But you still have a third camp that you know people cannot see the FSA/ secular opposition on the one hand and the Jihadists on the other one.

**Jasser:** I couldn't agree more and I would say that those are the future of Syria; I believe it's a majority. They are losing the infrastructure and their will because they are pounded by barrel bombs on the one hand and Islamists under draconian Sharia law in various cities on the other; so they find themselves lost. Unfortunately the rise of the Islamist ideology has been encountered because we haven't had a West with the intestinal fortitude to take on this ideology. Instead the President has just been marginalizing that discussion. If he truly empowered the anti-Islamists that would naturally bring to the forefront in the Free Syrian Army the ones who we would want to support. What do you think the strategy should be? We have the President, the commander in Chief and on the one hand conservatives who say wait until 2016. Can Syria wait that long?

**Phares:** What the Administration is trying to do without being vocal or clear about it, they want to fund the moderates in the Syria opposition and arm and equip them. When you follow the details of who the Administration is trying to reach to inside Syria you would find that it's true. They are marginalizing ISIS. They are not really of course dealing with Al Nusra which is an armed Al Qaeda terrorist group but they are not going to the secular side. They are actually dealing with what they call moderate Islamists, the military force of the Muslim

Brotherhood in Syria. That is not well explained to the American public. The choice that we would like to see America go with in Syria is not the Muslim Brotherhood just because they are against the ISIS. We really want to go back to those secular officers and soldiers and regular people who can connect better with civil society. That has not been done at this point in time.

**Jasser:** As we look at the solution obviously it has to start with destroying ISIS and its command and control in Northeastern Syria and Raqqa and then begin to evolve strategy out of that.

I can tell you as the son of Sunni Muslims who escaped Syria that one of the arguments we have been making against the Assad regime is that the diversity of Syria was its greatest asset. As long as these countries are diverse it forces them to be pluralistic and work towards democracy. What should America's approach be to protecting minorities across Iraq and Syria. We saw the Yazidis are being slaughtered, Christian populations are evacuating the Middle East which is where their roots and origins are. What do you think, how should that be approached?

**Gordon:** To Walid's credit he's actually floated some suggestions. Those involve pushing back at the margin the areas that in Iraq where ISIS had taken over and providing a protective force for the re-entry of those minorities whether they are Yazidis or Assyrian Chaldean Syriac Christians in Iraq to their ancestral villages on the Biblical plains of Nineveh. That's one aspect of it. The other aspect is taking a leaf out of comments that were made by a prominent Syrian opposition leader Kamal Al-Labwani in Herzliya, Israel this past week. He was there attending the International Counter Terrorism Conference sponsored by the IDC. He floated the creation of a no-fly zone which worked rather effectively for the Kurdish minority in the Northeast of Iraq during the first Gulf War and led to the establishment of the Kurdish Regional government. The same thing could also be done in the context of areas in Syria where according to my colleague Ilana Freedman, there are potentially about fifty thousand opposition forces that Walid and others might consider as being "moderate and secular" in that regard. They need the support of the US and in particular the West. If you put that together you have the emergence of an effective strategy to at least secure these minorities from engaging in complete flight to their Diasporas.

**Jasser:** I can't tell you how important that is. Because what is different from Iraq when we went in 2003 is that you have a growing movement on the ground in Syria to topple the Assad regime and also confront ISIS. Walid, what are some points you think we should know about protecting minorities in the Middle East?



**Phares:** I was amazed at what Jerry had said and he covered it very well. Let me just say that Syria has a majority of Sunnis and then the rest are ethnic minorities. Now these ethnic minorities are backing the Assad regime, the Alawites and some part of the Christians mostly in the South, and reluctantly some of the Druze. You have the other minorities not very happy with this failing regime from long time ago that includes the Kurds, part of the Christians and part of the Druze. It is very important to have two strategies and I would strongly recommend to the administration to have two strategies in Syria. One for the Sunni majority, another for the minorities to form the opposition. The lead opposition would be moderate and those involved should be the FSA, Human Rights Organizations and NGO's. That would completely sideline the Jihadists. It is a crucial matter. For the minorities, Jerry was right. You have the triangle in the Northeast where you have a Kurdish majority in area with some Christians, they should be dealt with as the Kurds and the Christians of Northern Iraq are dealt with. A no-fly zone to begin with and supporting them. Also there Sunni tribes also opposed to the Assad regime and Iran that needs to be to part of the plan in Washington.

**Jasser:** The soul in the Middle East is its minorities, its Christians and Yazidis. They have to be protected and you were focusing on Syria because ultimately that spawned ISIS. To protect the minorities we have to have a strategy.

We wanted to spend this last segment talking about a conference in Washington that occurred September 9 to 11, 2014 called *In Defense of Christians*. It's a start-up organization that has a very laudable goal which is to highlight the plight of Christians as we have seen at the hands of ISIS; the genocide that was impending against groups like the Yazidis and the Christians. However, many of us were concerned about some of the aspects of this conference not only Walid but John Hajjar who is an executive committee member of the Middle East Christian Committee or [MECHRIC](#). He started to raise the alarms that CAMERA reported on some concerns about this organization. I have invited John on to tell us about these concerns were before this conference occurred. The conference highlighted members of its board included John Ashcroft, it had speakers to include Senator Cruz, and a number of other conservatives who were involved in this conference. We wanted to take this as a teaching moment for some of the pitfalls or landmines that exist in dealing with this topic. John, welcome to the program.

**John Hajjar:** Thanks, it's really great to be here. Thanks for having me on.

**Jasser:** Walk us through what lead to this conference and what the concerns were before it ever began.

**Hajjar:** It is a laudable goal because right now Christians are being persecuted in large

numbers along with other non-Muslim minorities in the Middle East and moderate Muslims, as well. This has now become an existential issue especially in Iraq and Syria where a Christian community was uprooted from you know, the city of Mosul where they have ancient roots going back over six thousand years. In light of these current events this group, [In Defense of Christians](#) called a conference. There were many good people involved with the organization, well intentioned who generally are concerned about religious persecution, persecution of the Christians. However, there were some questionable characters involved as well in such a well funded event. They sprang from nowhere it definitely raised concerns among us involved in human rights for years. When we dug a little deeper we found the name of [Gilbert Chagoury](#) who is a questionable Lebanese Nigerian businessman in Nigeria and others. We saw distinct ties to Iran, Syria and Hezbollah. That gave rise to more questions and the more we dug the more suspicious we became.

**Jasser:** It really feeds into the concern about common enemies such as Iran and other regimes. If we narrow the focus too much which is why I have always been when you testify before Congress you have to maintain what is the vision for the Middle East. It is about freedom and democracy which prevents alliances with governments like Iran. If you look at the website for In Defense of Christians that Dexter Van Zile [reported](#) at CAMERA, it was odd how that their website mentioned almost nothing, if anything about Iran, about Hezbollah and about Assad. Those countries are used to taking hits on freedom and democracy and criticism because they have nothing to lose. We don't give them any aid. But, there is nothing about regime change and somehow they tied the future of the Christian minorities to Assad which is not a policy.

**Hajjar:** If you look at where all the leaders of these Eastern rites churches are from, the Maronites in Beirut, the Malachite church which has a patriarchal seat in Damascus, and then the Assyrian and Chaldean Christians in different areas in Iraq, you'll note the common denominator they are all Iranian controlled capitols. The Iranians are very strategic in their thinking. Actually they are a lot more calculating in the way they go about things than the Shiite fundamentalist groups would be or the Sunni fundamentalist side as manifest by ISIS. Everybody knows now about these beheadings being carried out by ISIS and we all agree that it is a great evil and a great threat. However, when it comes to the Iranian/Syrian axis they are portraying themselves as the saviors of the Christians. Unfortunately, there are a lot of Christians in the Middle East who bought into that lie and they think that the greater evil right now is ISIS. They are presenting the most pressing problem. They forget the history of Hezbollah and the Assad regime in Lebanon and what they have done killing hundreds of thousands of Lebanese and now two hundred thousand Syrian dead. Those are not the people that

the Christian leaders and any Christian can stand by over the long term.

**Jasser:** It is very easy for Iran to defend the rights of Christians in Syria. That doesn't do it when it comes Iran where you have pastors and others who are imprisoned, house churches are shut down, they are hung and the apostates are killed. They do it as a tool for their end. I think one the other side of the coin of Islamism is Arabism. We saw one of the other names behind this conference was [Jamal Daniel](#), who was a long time friend of the Bush family. Many of us who are Syrians know that his family has a large pedigree with the Ba'athists in support of the Assad regime. Ultimately you will find very little on his new so-called liberal website [Al-Monitor](#), there is very little criticism of Assad and nothing about regime change in Syria.

**Hajjar:** Same goes for [Jim Zogby](#) the head of the Arab American Institute. He has been the Arabist cause for decades. Now all of a sudden he's had a revelation like St. Paul on the road to Damascus. He is so concerned with the Christians in the Middle East when he has shown no interest whatsoever in the plight of Christianity in the place of his birth for decades. You may call into question what his real motivation is.

**Jasser:** The Arabists have long been using the lobby of the Islamists out of Saudi or the Gulf, notwithstanding the plight of Christians, to basically focus on their primary demagoguery which is anti-Israel, anti-Zionism and anti-Western belief.

**Hajjar:** If you look at raw numbers the only place in the Middle East where Christianity is stabilized and in fact growing is in Israel proper among the Palestinian Christians. Every other country in the Middle East with historic Christian populations, the indigenous people from the Copts in Egypt, to Maronites, Malachites, and Syriacs in Syria and Assyrian Chaldeans in Iraq, their numbers are declining precipitously. Forty percent of the population a hundred years ago down to less than four percent today.

**Jasser:** And their future is not with dictatorships even though their primary enemy is Islamist.

**Phares:** What is Iran really trying to do with the minorities' game? This is not something new. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union the Iranian regime, the Syrian regime and their allies Hezbollah in Lebanon and the allies in Iraq, especially after the toppling of Saddam Hussein, have built a huge network of interests, financial interests. You have elites in Baghdad, you have elites in Damascus, you have elites in Lebanon, all tied through economic interests backed by the Iranian regime. What the game is about here is Iran trying to use elites, including the Christian minorities. The Iranians are trying to use these Christian minorities led by these specific elites as their vassals. These are the satrapies of the

Iranians who come to the United States and tell them look, the Christians and the Yazidis want Assad and want Maliki and whoever comes after him with Iran as their protector. These elites hope that when the markets open in Iran if the Iranian U.S. relationship is stabilized they would be the first one to move in. So there is a lot of financial economic interest in this game.

**Jasser:** The dictators are putting in a lot of money into the lobbies, their own lobbies in Washington and we need to look for transparency in these gatherings and if they are not talking about regime change from genocidal governments like Syria then you have to start to wonder what's really behind it. Thank you so much for giving us an opportunity to talk about the tough issues. Thank you, John Hajjar, Walid Phares, Jerry Gordon and all of you for joining us on this broadcast of the Lisa Benson Radio Show. Zuhdi Jasser here from the American Islamic Forum for Democracy. God bless.

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