

Is America Tampering with the Sykes-Picot Maps?

(Part 2)

The “New Levant” Project

(Translated)

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The statement by the American envoy to Syria and Lebanon, Tom Barrack, on 12/7/2025 regarding the possibility of Lebanon’s return to the Levant was noteworthy. This statement added to a previous post on his X platform account on 25 May 2025, which also drew attention, where he said, “A century ago, the West imposed maps, mandates, penciled borders, and foreign rule. Sykes-Picot divided Syria and the broader region for imperial gain—not peace. That mistake cost generations. We will not make it again.” He added, “The era of Western interference is over. The future belongs to regional solutions, but partnerships, and a diplomacy grounded in respect... Syria’s tragedy was born in division. Its rebirth must come through dignity, unity, and investment in its people. That starts with truth, accountability—and working with the region, not around it.”

This statement sparked concern among non-Muslim sects, but at the same time, they stirred the emotions of many Muslims in Lebanon and Syria. The truth is that the concern of the first group, and the optimism of the second group, are both misplaced. This is because these misleading statements by Barrack do not reflect an American intention to unify ash-Sham (Levant) and end its division under any circumstances. Instead, Barrack’s subsequent statements came to dispel these illusions. On 24 August 2025, Barrack said, “Not a federation but something short of that, in which you allow everybody to keep their own integrity, their own culture, their own language, and no threat of Islamism.” Indeed, he was more explicit in his call for autonomous regions in an interview with the Turkish Anadolu Agency, which stated, “In the context of his search for a more balanced administrative model, Barrack referred to the Ottoman ‘millet’ system, considering it a rich reference for useful experiences. This system granted each religious community within the Ottoman state a degree of autonomy, allowing it to manage its educational, religious, and legal affairs in a diversified context.” Barrack had said, “The best system for Turkey is the Ottoman millet system. For me, İzmir is an example of Jews, Muslims, and Christians living together, a blend of these communities. This is a situation that should exist all over the world and in the Middle East. I think Turkey can be the focal point of all this.” Despite his misrepresentation of the Ottoman millet system, which was never a system of autonomy, he used this distortion to promote the idea of autonomous, separate regions.

If we take into account that Barrack is careful in his statements not to embarrass the new government in Damascus, or the one in Ankara, it is necessary to look beyond his statements to what the American administration itself says on this matter. Among the prominent positions of the American administration concurrent with Barrack’s statements is the statement by the U.S. State Department spokesperson, Tammy Bruce, who said on 18 July 2025, “The future of Syria is in the hands of its people. Our priority now is stability. We do not oppose federalism or self-governance, but the decision lies with Syrians.” Accordingly, Tom Barrack’s statements about “Bilad al-Sham” and the injustice of Sykes-Picot are inseparable from the broader context of the American plan for the region. This leads us to discuss the “New Levant” project.

The New Levant project was the focus of a report prepared by the World Bank in March 2014, entitled, “Over the Horizon: A New Levant.” The report states, “With a combined population of 224 million, land area of 2.4 million km², and nominal GDP of US \$1,408 billion, complemented with its proximity to major markets, and access to transportation corridors, the “New Levant” countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and the

Palestinian Territories) have significant economic importance in the region.” The report also states, “The Levant countries have major assets for success in the tourism sector, including a favorable climate and attractive coastline, a large pool of human resources, a variety of historical and cultural sites, and geographical proximity to Europe.” This last sentence is the crux of the matter, the successful economic region, which is what the U.S. State Department spokesperson expressed by saying, “Our priority now is stability.”

This New Levant project did not remain mere ink on paper since the World Bank published it, but began to find its way to reality since 2019 with the three countries, Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq, with the emergence of changes in regional power balances that began entering a transitional phase.

The three countries held several meetings at the summit, or foreign ministers, level to finalize the launch of a new geopolitical space based on their cooperation, perhaps the most significant being the trilateral summit held in Baghdad on 24 March 2019, which included former Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, and Jordan’s King Abdullah II. Then, the three continued their meetings on this topic at the summit held in September of the same year in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meetings, followed by the third summit in Amman in August 2020, the fourth in Baghdad in June 2021, and the fifth in December 2022. Al-Kadhimi introduced the term “New Levant” for the first time during his visit to the United States in August 2021, in a statement to the American newspaper, “The Washington Post.”

However, this project could not be completed without the inclusion of Syria, Lebanon, and subsequently the Jewish entity. Its completion awaited the resolution of the Syria issue and the exit of both Syria and Lebanon from Iranian guardianship, which was an obstacle to the project’s implementation, and this has now become reality after the fall of Bashar’s regime and the expulsion of Iranian influence from Syria and Lebanon, and thus, in America’s view, the time has come to fully implement this project.

Thus, this is the background of Barrack’s statements, and in light of it, his talk about the Levant and the removal of Sykes-Picot borders is understood. **The American project for the region is to fragment it into autonomous regions, whether under the title of federalism or administrative decentralization.** It is highly likely then that the borders of the states we know today, established by Britain and France, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan will be erased, as well as the borders separating the occupied territories from their surroundings, to be replaced by “blood borders,” as phrased by the retired American lieutenant colonel, Ralph Peters, in his famous article published in 1 June 2006 in the “Armed Forces Journal,” and then establishing a new union linking these blood-based entities, with the Jewish entity taking the lead.

However, the Trump administration is not rushing to fully complete this project at the present time, as achieving this matter takes time, according to Tom Barrack. The priority now, as stated by the U.S. State Department spokesperson, is stability, where the region becomes a new American plantation, with the region’s people becoming the workers and farm hands, receiving the crumbs of investments that America leaves for them.

We ask Allah (swt) to thwart their efforts, to aid believers and sincere people in reclaiming the authority over their land, liberating its occupied parts, and in restoring the sovereignty of the Shariah, reviving their civilization within all Muslim lands, and eradicating colonialism.

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