Kofi Annan, the ex-UN Secretary General acting as a mediator to solving the Syrian crisis made a very ominous declaration after his talks yesterday with President Bashar El-Assad in Damascus that bodes ill for Syria, the Levant and possibly the whole Middle Eastern region for a long time to come.

Kofi Annan made a statement after his apparent futile talks with Assad terming the situation in Syria as “Quite Dangerous.” For a savvy Annan, possibly the world’s most trained diplomat in international relations and international conflicts, to make such a statement signals that some worse scenarios are in the offing in Syria. If one is to interpret what Annan’s term “Dangerous” meant with regard to the Syrian stalemate, one would venture predict that what Kofi Annan was saying that Annan’s reading of the Syrian situation is that Syria is set for a “Long Protracted Fratricide; internecine Civil War” that would burn the green with the dry, and to a no avail.

Kofi Annan seems to have failed in his first call on President Bashar El-Assad to admonish compromise, dialogue and concessions to the Syrian oppositions. Assad & his team appear to be digging their heels (“Après moi le déluge”) prepared, if need to, to engage in a last battle to prevail. President Assad & his Team have reached the point of no return, no compromise; come what may.

The current showdown with the Syrian opposition to Assad much is as the case with Iran is being conceived as a regional, geopolitical struggle beyond local boundaries and being limited Syrian local issue. With China and the Russian Federation steadfast in blocking any unfavorable anti-Assad resolutions at the Security Council, the Syrian crisis is fast serving as a stand-off, much reminiscent of the era of the Cold War, a geopolitical rivalry and contestation between hitherto the Eastern/Communist Bloc & the Western Capitalist Camp. Both the Western Powers & the Russians seem to be intending, if need to, to use Syria as grounds for their proxy battles.

Prince Saud El-Faysal’s, Saudi Foreign Minister’s statement yesterday calling to arm the Syrian opposition to stand-up to President Assad’s regular army and internal security forces is further calling to pouring
fuel into the fire, a prelude to inviting an all-out internecine Civil War that would only rage in intensity to no foreseeable conclusion.

The Saudi official’s statement cannot be totally divorced from Saudi internal security concerns of the consolidation of an Iran-Iraq-Syria-Hizbullah axis viewed by the Saudis and by the other Arab Gulf States as posing a potential direct security threat to them.

The brewing civil unrest in Bahrain that’s anew showing new signs of flare up is raising serious security concerns for the other Arab Gulf states, foremost Saudi Arabia, that figure among their indigenous populations significant Shiite minorities. The Proximity of Bahrain, rather the physical connectivity of that tiny Monarchy to predominately Shiite populated oil-rich Saudi Eastern shores, is giving serious fears to the Saudi Authorities that their Shiite minority could be susceptible to external influences and the potential stirring of unrest. To the Saudi Authorities that eventuality figures high in their security concerns that, in view of the current havoc slamming the whole Middle Eastern region, appears to be increasingly perceived as an imminent security threat, knocking at their very doorsteps.

In that, the Saudis appear willing to take a proactive posture to pre-empt the perceived potential security threat by moving into bold actions. Breaking the Iran-Iraq-Syria-Hizbullah axis appears to occupy Saudi top priority list in considering pre-emptive initiatives. Syria is the link that appears weakening with the worsening internal security situation whose snapping at the seams, i.e. the Assad Regime, could cause the whole Iran-Iraq-Syria-Hizbullah Axis to crumble that in turn would forestall future security threat to Saudi Arabia.

Much in the sad reminisces of Lebanon’s nearly two decade long civil war played out conveniently by proxies settling the accounts of rivaling regional powers in line with the geopolitical game of the superpowers, Syria, sadly, appears a fertile ground for Lebanon-like break-up, a lingering and a long-protracted Civil War in the offing.