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# **SYRIA'S NEW CHAPTER**

**A SPECIAL VIP BRIEFING BY AVI MELAMED | JANUARY 2025**





NJY CAMPS



Jewish Federations  
of North America



Hillel  
International



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CONGREGATION  
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☒ GENERAL FRAMING

☒ ASSAD'S RULE AND IRAN'S HEGEMONIC PROJECT

☒ POST-ASSAD SYRIA

➤ REBEL POWERS

➤ SYRIA | A STAGE OF TURKISH-ARAB COMPETITION

➤ RAMIFICATIONS ON ISRAEL

➤ WHERE IS SYRIA HEADING?

☒ Q&A



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# | SESSION AGENDA



Inside  
The  
Middle  
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INTELLIGENCE PERSPECTIVES

1 / 23 / 2025



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# | GENERAL FRAMING | MAP OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Historical name of the geographic region stretching between the Arab Peninsula to the south, Turkey to the north, Iraq to the east, and the Mediterranean Sea to the west.



# | GENERAL FRAMING | AL-SHAM (THE LEVANT)

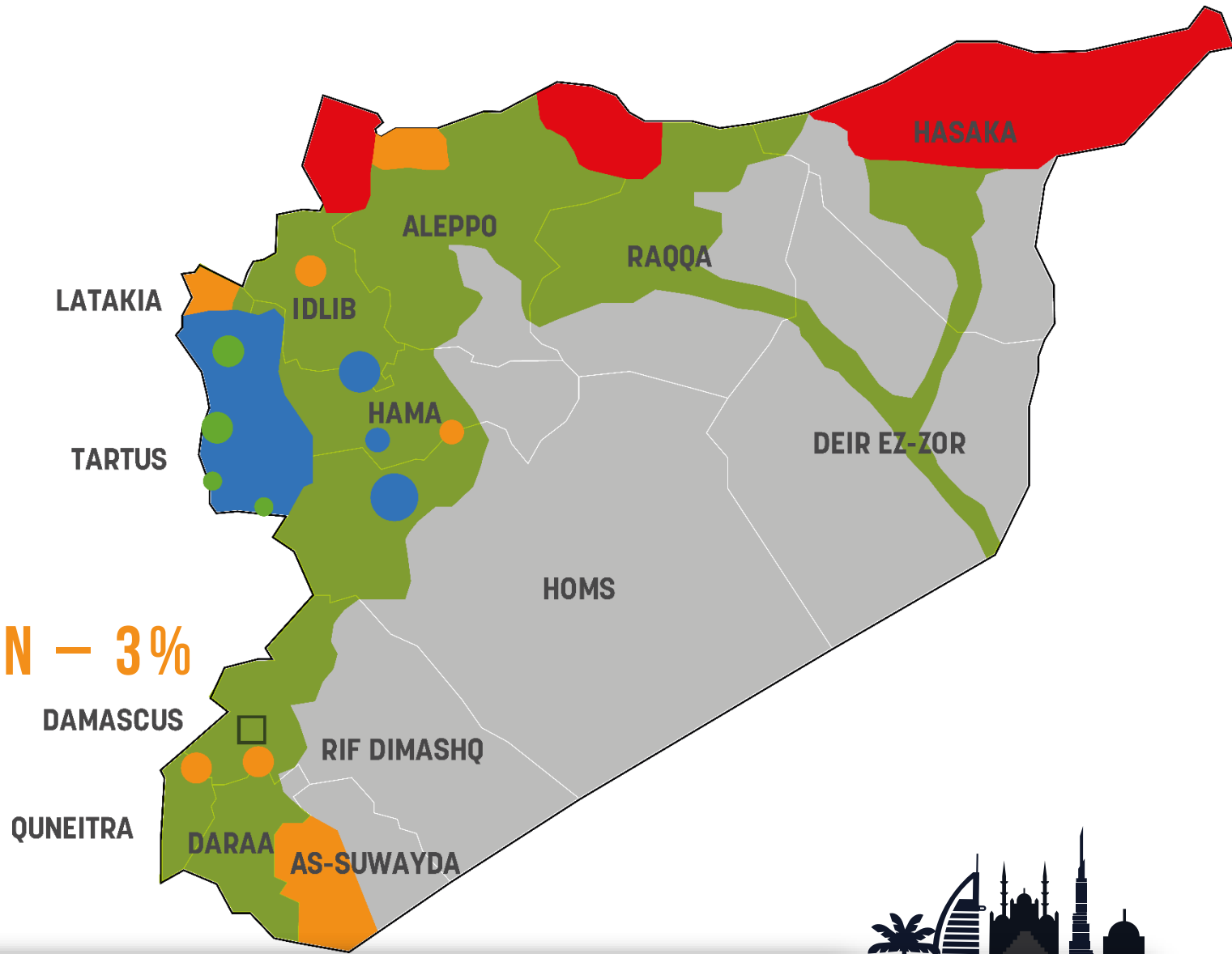
**POPULATION 24 MILLION**

**SUNNI - 50%**

**ALAWITES - 15%**

**KURDS - 10%**

**DRUZE, CHRISTIANS, TURKMAN — 3%**



# | GENERAL FRAMING | SYRIA MAP & DEMOGRAPHY



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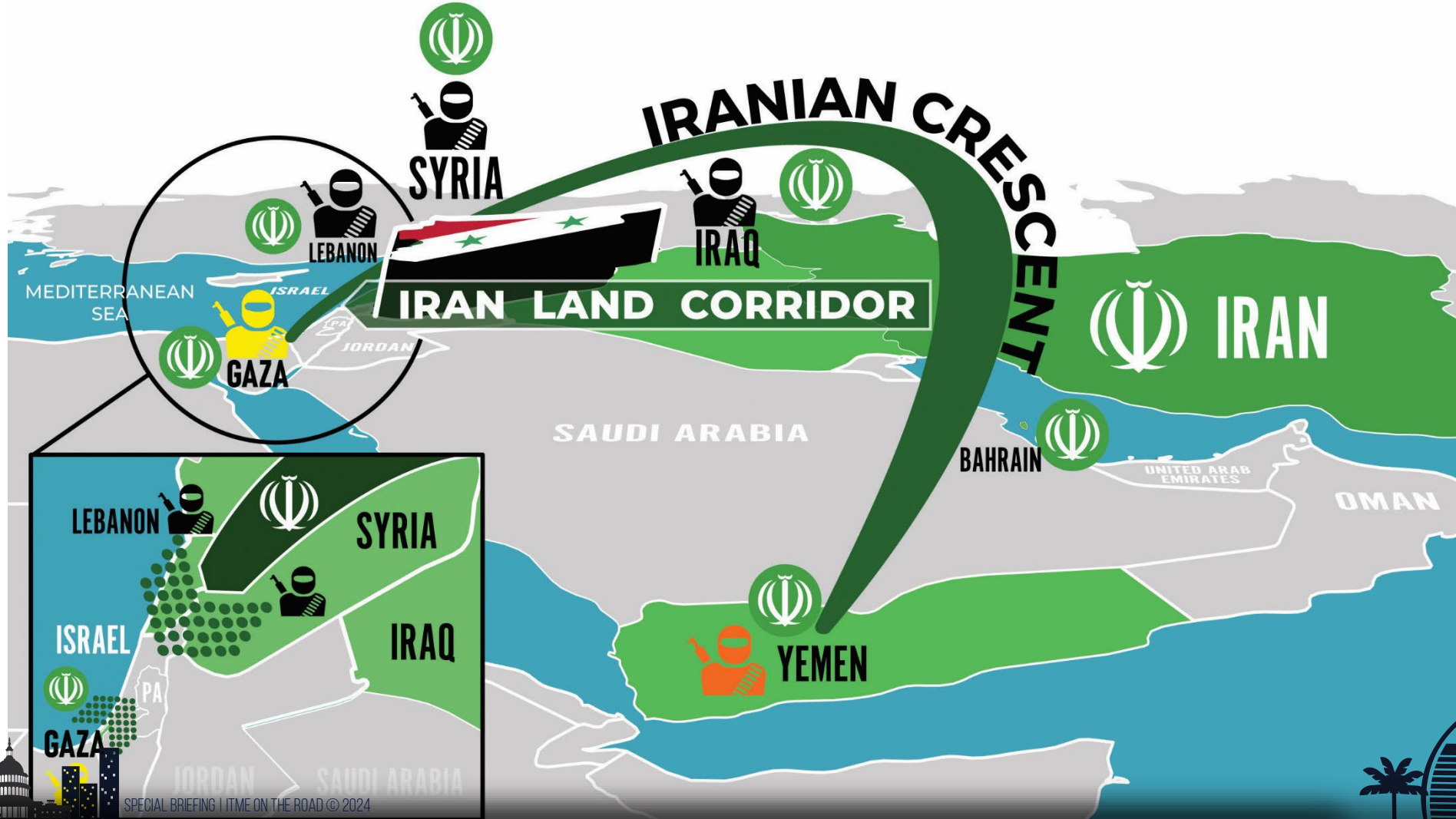


# NETWORK OF TERROR | MILITIAS ENTRENCHING IRAN IN ARAB WORLD



## | IRAN & THE AXIS OF RESISTANCE

# SYRIA | LYNCHPIN OF AXIS OF RESISTANCE



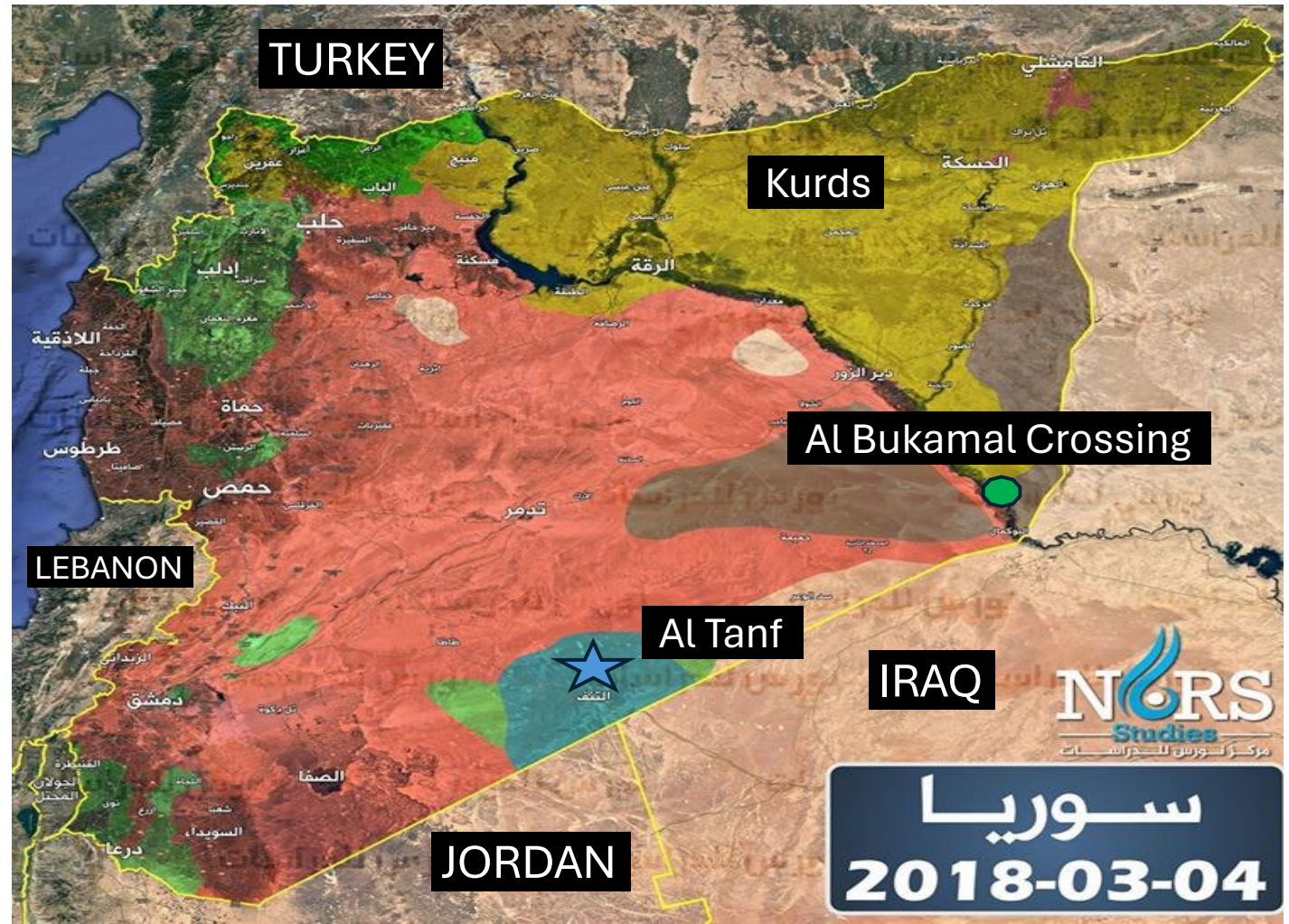
## ASSAD'S RULE & IRAN'S HEGEMONIC PROJECT

# TURKEY & THE WAR IN SYRIA



## ASSAD'S RULE & IRAN'S HEGEMONIC PROJECT

- 1970 - 2000 Hafez al Assad rule
- 2000 Bashar al Assad Rule
- 2011 Outbreak of uprising, which becomes "The War in Syria"
- To save Assad, Iran streams militias, including Hezbollah, to support Assad
- Sept. 2015 Russia intervenes to support Assad
- 2018 Assad stabilizes his rule.
- Remains of rebel force concentrated in northwest Syria
- Kurdish autonomy is in northeast Syria
- US protectorate in the border triangle of Syria, Jordan & Iraq
- Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi'ite militias control AbuKamal passage on Syria/Iraq border



# | WAR IN SYRIA | 2011 - 2018



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# THE SPARK

**THE SPARK FOR THE 2011 UPRISING IN SYRIA WAS THE CASE OF HAMZA AL-KHATIB, A YOUNG SYRIAN BOY FROM DARA'A IN SOUTH SYRIA, WHO WAS ARRESTED BY ASSAD SECURITY FORCES AND TORTURED TO DEATH.**

**HIS CRIME WAS SPRAYING GRAFFITI ON THE WALL, CALLING FOR THE DOWNFALL OF ASSAD'S RULE.**



**| POST-ASSAD SYRIA**

# MAJOR REBEL POWERS | SYRIAN NATIONAL ARMY (SNA / FSA)



- **1<sup>st</sup> Rebel framework** made up of **soldiers and officers** who **defected** from the **Syrian Arab Army** (Assad's army).
- **Supported by Turkey**



| SYRIA | STAGE OF TURKISH-ARAB COMPETITION

# MAJOR REBEL POWERS | HTS (HAYAT TAHRIR AL-SHAM)

- Began in 2012 as **Al-Qaeda in Syria** under the name ***Jabhat al-Nusra*** (The Support Front)
- 2016 broke away from Al-Qaeda
- 2017 established a **local government in Idlib** (northern Syria) for local administration & governance.
- Supported by Qatar & Turkey



**Ahmad Hussein Ali al Shareh AKA Abu Mouhammed al Joulani**



2016



2025

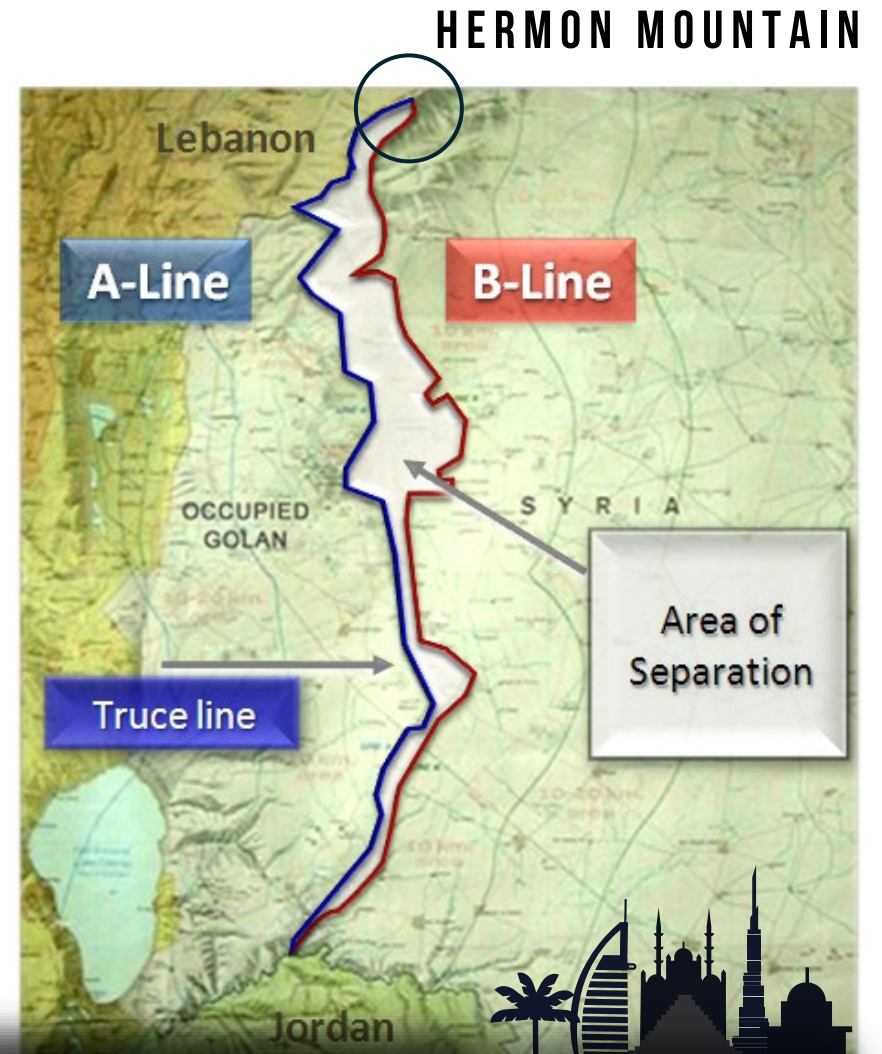


| SYRIA | STAGE OF TURKISH-ARAB COMPETITION



# THE ISRAEL-SYRIA GOLAN HEIGHTS BORDER

- Further **weakening** of Iran's **Axis of Resistance**
- **Expanding Israel's control** into the "Area of Separation" - including the Syrian side of the Hermon Mountain.
- **Destroying Iran & Assad's Army, Air Force, Naval bases, and military manufacturing complexes.**
- **Neutralizing evolving threats** to Israel emanating from Iraq and Jordan



| IMMEDIATE RAMIFICATIONS ON ISRAEL

# TURKEY'S HEGEMONIC PROJECT



## | WHERE IS SYRIA HEADING?

# WHERE IS SYRIA HEADING?

- ❖ A Process of Rehabilitation?
- ❖ Danger of Disintegration?
- ❖ A Delicate Equilibrium between Islamist, Multiethnic, and Liberal identities?
- ❖ Taliban-style State?
- ❖ Democracy?
- ❖ A Stage Radiating Instability?





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UNDERSTANDING THE UNDERLYING FACTORS SHAPING  
THE MIDDLE EAST IS CRITICAL TO WESTERN INTERESTS.

EXPANDING AUTHENTIC PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST IS  
ESSENTIAL FOR ANYONE THAT WANTS TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE REGION'S  
COMPLEX REALITY OR MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE REGION.

TO UNDERSTAND ISRAEL & THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT  
YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THE MIDDLE EAST



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**TO UNDERSTAND ISRAEL YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THE MIDDLE EAST**