

TRANSCRIPT

Victory Coalition and Israel365Action Virtual Briefing

JOINT BRIEFING ON SYRIA: AL QAEDA IS IN CHARGE, EMBOLDENED Israel Intervenes to Protect the Druze, Other Minorities; Threatens al-Julani's Regime

Frank Gaffney and Rabbi Pesach Wolicki with Mansur Ashkar and Dr. David Wurmser
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Media File: Webinar_Syria.mp4

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT:

Frank Gaffney: [00:00:10] Good morning. As we speak, it is early on the East coast. It is a little later in Europe and in the Middle East, where some of our guests are participating. We wanted to come together for this briefing, sponsored by our Victory Coalition, a project of the Institute for the American Future, which I'm proud to be the president as well as Israel 365 Action, whose executive director is our co-host and one of our panelists, Rabbi Pesek. We are joined for the purpose of providing an urgent briefing on the eve as we speak of a UN Security Council meeting in which Syria will be the topic. It is the topic for us [00:01:00] today. Specifically, the question of whether, as a practical matter, the people running the government of Syria are al Qaeda operatives not newly minted moderates people committed to living side by side with Israel, perhaps even engaging in an Abraham accord with the state of Israel. Patel is what the government of Ahmed al-Qaradawi is doing to its own people, the minorities specifically, whether they're Druze, whether they're Christian, whether they're Alawite, whether they're Kurd. There is unmistakably a sense of the Sharia supremacist agenda that has been a hallmark of Both, of course, al-Qaida and ISIS and all [00:02:00] terrorist organizations with which a man better known, perhaps by his nom de guerre Mohammed Al Julani now the president of Syria has been associated throughout his well rather horrifying career. The president of the United States has conferred legitimacy on him. And his new role as president of Syria, as well as greatly enabled a, well, expansion of the resources and presumably, the capabilities of his regime by lifting

sanctions. We're going to explore today the advisability of having done so and under circumstances in which, most recently the Druze have been murderously attacked, and Christian Church, shortly before that attack began, [00:03:00] with the evident help of not only the immediate perpetrators said to be members of Al Julani's old organization, but also, it appears, government forces at well, at least in the case of the massacre of Druze.

Frank Gaffney: [00:03:22] In the past few days. We're going to hear first from a Druze and Israeli Druze, which is an important point, that the Druze are people who have lived for quite some time on both sides of the Israeli Syrian border, and one of the reasons why the State of Israel has taken such a concern and interest in what is happening to the Druze on the other side of that line is what it means, of course, for relatives and loved ones of people on Israel's side of that line. We're going to hear [00:04:00] first and foremost from Mansour Pushkar, a man who has served in the Israel Defense Forces. The special forces, by the way, of those military of Israel. He is a host of a podcast entitled The Mansour Ashar Podcast on YouTube. And he is serving at the moment as a spokesman for Jews on both sides of the border. We're delighted to have him with us. I had the opportunity to interview him yesterday for our Securing America television program on Real America's Voice. I think you will find very interesting what he has to say about what is going on at the moment inside Syria and its implications not only for the Druze, but for the people of Syria more generally, and indeed the region. Mansour, welcome. It's so good to have you with us. The floor is yours, sir.

Mansur Ashkar: [00:04:57] Thank you for having me, Frank. I [00:05:00] just finished watching a video that was sent to me by some of the Syrian people that I'm in touch with, showing the onslaught. Massacre of a hospital, bodies of women, children, patient laying on the floor, tens, if not even more than 100 of them completely slaughtered. By who? By the government, not by random factions and affiliated. It is very disturbing to see, and I've been one of the first ones to go openly and say that in the beginning that I Shah, he's a terrorist. He murdered people with his own hands. He beheaded people. He's probably raped victims. He's a terrorist himself. And I said from the beginning, he's a terrorist. He's still a terrorist. Now we're seeing and I'm listening to this in Arabic. We're seeing that the Syrian country, the government, the media, the people are all affiliating themselves under the banner of Al-Qaeda. They're supporting the genocide of Christians, of Druze, of Alawites, the country. [00:06:00] We're not hearing a lot of

voices saying, stop. We're hearing our voice is saying, do it more. We're seeing Al Jolson is sending tanks and artillery, accompanied by clear jihadis with ISIS flag, with Al-Qaeda flag, driving side by side with them. Some of his soldiers on these tanks have ISIS patches going into side of villages, massacring, slaughtering. I had my family members who were sending me reports that these jihadists outside their doors, and they just entered their house.

Mansur Ashkar: [00:06:28] I lost contact with them for two days, only to hear later on that they actually rounded them all out in the street, started killing, executing. And in that exact moment, the fighter jets of Israel came roaring over the sky and these jihadists got scared. And then Druze brave fighters who came from the mountain to go and rescue them. Went in. Pushed them out and managed to rescue them under fire of tanks. Heavy shelling, including military drones that apparently were bought by Syria, not by Syria, by Qatar, and by Turkey provided to Algerian Al-Qaeda government [00:07:00] to go and exterminate minorities. Now everything that we're seeing in the videos right now and in the report is pointing that Syria have fallen to become the next the next al Qaeda land, a government that was stolen by terrorists who were going to start using their own people. Mark my words, they will start using their own people as human shields very soon. They already gave a directive to their fighters to start using human shields in order to evade. We have it recorded in order to evade the Israeli airstrikes. They gave orders, directives, audio that was sent to the soldiers. Not to the not to the jihadis. He even said to the Ministry of Defense of Syria and the brave soldiers of Syria, stop recording the massacres. Keep doing the massacres. Keep shaving their beards.

Mansur Ashkar: [00:07:47] Mustaches, slit their throat, burn them alive. But just don't record it. Because we've seen what happened when we did that to the Christians. That's what he said. When we did that to the Christians, we recorded it all fired back at us. So please keep killing them. Just don't record it. So [00:08:00] when you have your government, your soldiers giving these commands as they go in to slaughter innocent civilians, what else do you need to understand that Syria have become an al Qaeda land, and that the people of Syria, that's more concerning the media I'm watching. They're the reporters on the ground. They're all pushing that narrative. And when you have a country that falls under dictatorship of radical jihadis, what's going to happen is that the peaceful people, because they do exist. I have some peaceful people in Syria that are contacted me, Ex-Muslims and etc. but the peaceful people becomes invisible

when that happened to your country. Like in Iran, like other places, you won't hear them. Like in They don't dare to speak. They won't go out because they will kill them and kill their families. And this is right now what is happening in Syria. So whoever thought that just because you put a suit on and looks like a hipster, now he has changed and stopped being a jihadist. It's very wrong. And I would say it's very dangerous. One of the reasons that they did these attacks, by the way, on the [00:09:00] minorities, is because they felt that the West, mark my words, they felt that America and Europe is now supporting them, removing sanctions.

Mansur Ashkar: [00:09:09] And they also felt why do you think they dared to bring down tanks and artillery and grad missiles southern of Damascus, when Israel told them directly, if you bring these weapons under Damascus, we're going to shoot them down. The reason they dared is because they felt the West is on our side right now. They would not let Israel attack us. That is our green light to go in massacre. They went in. Thank God. Israel doesn't listen to the international community when it comes to defending itself and defending its allies. And they know the Middle East better than anyone. And they said, hell no, you're not bringing these tanks down. You're not going slaughtering people, innocent minorities. And Israel started behaving basically like a regional power, which they should, and saying, we're going to dictate how the reality is going to look in the Middle East. We're not going to allow these jihadists to go and slaughter and murder. We're talking about an attempt to create an October 7th epic style, [00:10:00] because when October 7th happened in Israel, we've seen the same images, you know, fleeing over the massacre and desecrating of bodies, murdering women and children. Same thing is happening in Syria. Only in Israel we have the IDF that went and contained it, stopped it first.

Mansur Ashkar: [00:10:15] It was a civilians special forces. A lot of my friends who flew with helicopters and jeeps and went to one of the front line, fighting few against many with the civilians, women and women and men fighting to stop these savage jihadists that came to plunder and destroy the land of Israel. And the IDF came and stopped it. So the damage was contained If they wouldn't, they would have reached Tel Aviv. Be'er Sheva would have seen much more. They don't have a gap limit. Let's kill 500. When we stop, they just want to kill as much as they can. In Syria, there's no one to stop them because the government is the one doing it. So the only one stopping in Syria is the brave Druze fighters in the streets of Sweden and Israel, undoubtedly, who came with

fighter jets, who went and blew up the Pentagon of Syria. You [00:11:00] can call it that way. Literally shot a missile into the Ministry of Defense in Syria, sending them a clear message. Hand off the Druze. Stay away from our border. And that is the reality. Whoever thinks otherwise. Guys, it's sad to say I wish it was otherwise, but I see a future where Syria, from the way it's going, is going to become the next al Qaeda land in the Middle East. And that is very, very concerning.

Frank Gaffney: [00:11:25] Thank you very much. Incredibly insightful and gripping depiction of this situation as it is unfolding literally as we speak. We appreciate your service in the IDF as well as your very important contribution to this program. And hear next from our co-host, Rabbi Pesach Wolicki. Rabbi Wolicki is a, well, extraordinary contributor to the public policy debate on both sides of the Atlantic. I'm happy to say [00:12:00] in his role as executive director of Israel 365 action he is a podcaster as well. Shoulder to shoulder is the name of his program. He is also a columnist for The Jerusalem Post. And we are very proud to co-sponsor these briefings. I believe this is the fifth of them one a week trying just to keep abreast of the developments of the day and to make sense of the vital strategic interests of both the United States and Israel. In so many of these topics, this one of surpassing importance at the moment. Rabbi Pesach Wolicki, welcome back. The floor is yours, sir.

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki: [00:12:47] Thank you, Frank, and thanks for putting this together and being so dogged about having these briefings and I appreciate when you, when you send me a message or give me a call said, let's do another briefing. Let's do another briefing. So even if I sometimes [00:13:00] complain you know, trust me, I'm so grateful to you and so honored to have you as a friend and to be and to be doing these things. Look, this situation with the Druze is so predictable. It's so obvious. We all knew it was coming. Let me also remind everyone that with this supposed cease fire, which, as months were correctly said, is not really a cease fire, but what? The United States ordered the Syrian Army to remove its forces from Soeda. As a way of bringing some end to the hostilities, pressuring Israel to back off at the same time, and thinking that that's somehow going to bring to bring some sort of peace to the region, I think the United States is behaving shamefully. And what I mean by that is, number one, in the statements that have come out both from the Secretary of State and in the press briefing, that Tammy Bruce, the spokesperson for the State Department, she gave a two hour briefing yesterday, one of her regular weekly briefings, and [00:14:00] was asked

about the situation and all she could come up with was an empty word salad that not once addressed the issue of the Druze.

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki: [00:14:07] Even when she was asked about it directly, it's very clear that the administration just was hoping that this problem goes away. They have their geopolitical strategies about, you know, cleaning up Al Jilani and treating them like a, like a statesman, recently removing the terrorist designation of his terrorist militia and dropping the sanctions and talking about the Abraham Accords and Trump praising him as a good guy. All of. And then when yesterday, when yesterday, asked about the situation, not having a clear response, what it really means is that the administration had no plan B for what would happen when Al Jilani, if we would say when, but if Al Jilani would revert back to his old jihadist ways they had, it seems that they have no plan B, and that is and that's and that's shameful. And what it really [00:15:00] bodes really poorly is. Those of us who are supporters of President Trump and appreciate his foreign policy in the Middle East, both in his first term and in many respects so far in his second term. The peace through strength policies, one of our strongest, are probably our strongest argument for his policies is that they're based in reality and our strongest criticism of the policy of all the failed policies about the Middle East is that they are divorced from reality, that they ignore the real motives of the nefarious actors in the region.

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki: [00:15:34] And here we have right in front of us in real time, watching the way Secretary Rubio and his spokesperson and the lack of any statement out of President Trump. All of this points to this administration sliding into its own delusions about the Middle East. That could be extremely dangerous. So that's one point I wanted to make. Another point that's important to make, and I want to build off of what Mansoor said about, [00:16:00] you know, he having served in the Israeli army and being a proud Israeli. People need to understand the domestic aspect of this issue in Israel. People the way, the way the media is portraying it. Israel is getting involved in a conflict in a neighboring country that has nothing to do with it. But people have to understand domestically, there have been mass demonstrations by the Druze community leading up to Israel getting involved, basically demanding that Israel get involved in this. Many Druze from the Israeli Druze community have crossed the border to help their family members. The Druze community is a very patriotic, loyal Israeli community. They serve in elite combat units. Mansoura is far from being the only one.

When I served in the army, my commander was Druze. The Druze community is very much a part of the Israeli fabric. And when that loyal patriotic community that pays in blood, just as Jewish Israelis do in our wars, stands up and says we need to defend [00:17:00] our family members and Israel must step in.

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki: [00:17:03] And it's not just having Israel's arm twisted our defense minister and our prime minister all the way back when the Assad government fell, pledged at the time to protect the Druze minority because we all knew that this was going to happen. So there's actually a domestic issue if Israel if we just want to pull back from the ethics and morality of it, if Israel would not get involved here, they would actually be betraying a very significant very significant population in Israel, a population of Israeli citizens. Now pulling back the camera even further. And perhaps Doctor Wormser will talk about this, giving us, you know, his you know, with his deep and broad understanding of the Middle East. But just to perhaps I'm teasing you up. David, this all points to the failure of the of the Western approach to the Middle East that goes all the way back to the end of the Ottoman Empire and the carving up of the Middle East at you know, early on in the [00:18:00] 1920s, when French and British and American statesmen took out maps and basically drew lines on a map and created all these brand new countries that had never existed before, like Syria, Iraq, Jordan. These are all fake countries that were that were carved out of the crumbled Ottoman Empire. And where they drew the lines very often has nothing to do with the reality on the ground.

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki: [00:18:28] What I mean by that is that, you know, when you look at a map of the Middle East and you see these straight lines, it's like on the Syrian and Jordanian borders and some of the or the borders around it. When you see straight lines and sharp right angles, you know that you're dealing with a phony border that has nothing to do with reality. The world is not built that way. That's the topography of planet Earth, doesn't allow for straight line borders that go for hundreds of miles. So it's obviously a fake, phony border where these Westerners just drew lines on a map and invented brand new countries. And the reason I'm bringing that up is that in the process [00:19:00] in that process, it completely ignored the ethnic diversity and the ethnic groups that had been there for centuries and millennia who have their own identities in their own areas. And that's why we have this festering problem of the of the mistreatment of the Kurds and how the Kurds have not had independence because they were basically cut out of the deal at the time. They made some political missteps that

led to them not being included and having their own country. But the Druze community ended up finding itself on different sides of these brand new borders. And the concept that we hear about that we've been hearing about since Israel went in, after the Assad regime fell to, to secure some territory that would allow it to be a buffer between Israel and this jihadist regime.

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki: [00:19:49] We've been hearing complaints about Israel compromising the, quote unquote, territorial integrity of Syria, which is nonsense for two reasons. Number one, the reason I just stated that the whole [00:20:00] concept of Syria as a country is just an invention of some of some Western, of some Western statesmen at the end of the Ottoman Empire. It's not a real border. And also because Syria has never recognized its border with Israel, there's officially Syria remained in a state of war with Israel. There's no peace treaty. If you go back from 1948 till today, you'll see that the border between Israel and Syria has constantly been moving and shifting, and therefore, there's no necessity in international law for Israel to honor any kind of border with Syria, recognizing any kind of territorial integrity. There now calls in the in the Druze community by some. And Mansour could speak to this better than I could, even for Israel to take control of their areas. To there some were even calling for their area to be annexed by Israel. I'm not sure that that Israel what Israel plans to do and what they want to do, but the West has got to wake up. And this has been a theme of all of our of [00:21:00] all of our briefings.

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki: [00:21:02] Frank, the West has got to wake up and actually have a realistic foreign policy about the Middle East that recognizes who the jihadists are, what their motives are. And the last thing I'll say is that back on March 11th, right after over a thousand Alawites were massacred by the same types of militias, the same jihadist Al Julani, Sunni militias. These Shia, these ice, sorry, these ISIS, al Qaeda alumni who are massacring Druze in Soweto right now, where all the same ones who are massacring the Alawites and when and when that happened, we had Al Julani state that Syria is a state of law. Law will take its course. And he went on to say that there will be punishment and accountability for the horrible people who did these acts of massacring the Alawites. Now, ever since March, there has been no accountability. No one has been punished for this. So right now, in [00:22:00] today's headlines, we see Al Julani saying the same thing, condemning the killing of the Druze in words and saying that there will be accountability for the perpetrators. We know from what happened with

the Alawites that there will be no accountability for the perpetrators. Bottom line? America has got to wake up, give itself a, you know, a nice bucket of cold water to the face and start treating Al Jilani like the terrorist that he is. I'll leave it there.

Frank Gaffney: [00:22:25] That's a very, very much appreciate those comments and we will explore them further in Q&A in a moment. Before we do, we will turn to Doctor David Wurmser for. As has been forecast, the big picture, as well as his insights into the specific stakes involved here for yes, again, the people of Syria, especially the minorities there, the people of Israel, some of whom have family ties, some of whom are simply strategically very concerned [00:23:00] about what's happening across that border, as well as what it means for us, especially if our policies are not guided by realism. David Wurmser is a very experienced hand in all of these matters. No stranger to these briefings, I'm very pleased to say, as a result of his leading role in our victory coalition, he is a person who has served at the highest levels of the US government, working in an office of an undersecretary of state and National Security Council, Middle East expert, as well as an expert in those matters for Vice President of the United States. These days, he is the director of the Mideast program at the center for Security Policy. And we're extremely grateful to him for his faithful participation in these briefings and great work more generally. David Wurmser, the floor is yours, sir.

David Wurmser: [00:23:59] I [00:24:00] thank you, Frank. First of all, before I begin just one little administrative matter, Monsieur, if you can tell us where we can get that pin that you have on your shirt, that would be excellent. At one point the Druze Israeli flag intertwined. Okay, so let me go. I will go to the 40,000 foot level. Although that's already a bit of it's been touched on. But let me start with something very specific. There's a Christian town north west of Damascus. Malala. It's the last town that still speaks the language of Christ which is Syriac Aramean. It's a dialect of Aramaic which was spoken by Christ about 2 or 3 months ago. The town evacuated. It evacuated because they were threatened by clerics and fighters from the government of Syria. So it didn't start with the Druze. It won't end with the Druze. It [00:25:00] every minority. Literally every minority in Syria is skeptical of the government, is terrified, feels existentially threatened, and fears that it faces a slaughter. Whether it's the Yazidis all the way in the northeast corner or the Christians near the sea near the Lebanese border, the Druze down in the south, near the Jordanian border and the Israeli border, or the Alawites on the coast, and even Shiites. Every single minority in Syria fears this government. And the reason

is they never saw it as anything different than dressing for her and ISIS, which is al Qaeda and ISIS. And they know where that comes from, and they know who these people are, and they know that Islamists don't moderate.

David Wurmser: [00:25:52] They either abandon then Islamism. And we have friends. And many who've done that, who genuinely abandoned [00:26:00] Islamism, who, by the way, often then become its greatest critics. Or you still are an Islamist, but just dress nicely so that that's really, it's an on off switch. It's sort of like radical communism. You don't really have communism with a human face. It goes one way or the other. Either you abandon it or you stay a communist, even if you dress nicely. So that's number one. And I start with the Christians because I'm going to end with the Christians. The second thing is that these are Salafis, these are Muslim Brotherhood, but they're also Salafi Salafis. Are those the early generations of Islam. And the belief in Islam is that the woes of Islam, the failure to continue to expand, to conquer the entire world emanate from the fact that the purity of the early generations, the Salafi of Islam was abandoned and as a result, until Islam returns to its pure origins, [00:27:00] it will not fare that well. And that's the explanation for the 1000 plus year defeat. Failure to expand and in many cases, retreat of Islam. That's at the core of the ideology that that animates al Qaeda, ISIS and so forth, which is why they try to emulate the Salafi. Now, why is this important? Because the epic Sunni quote, fundamentalist government, the highest form of the Salafi government that ever was the Umayyad Caliphate, which came to power a few decades after Muhammad and lasted for about a hundred years.

David Wurmser: [00:27:43] And the decline of Islam is seen as the decline of the Umayyad empire. And where was the Umayyad empire anchored in Damascus? It wasn't anchored in Mecca or Medina, it was in Damascus. So the Salafi movements, [00:28:00] these al Qaeda, ISIS, this brand of Muslim Brotherhood extremism, all of which is extreme. But this is a particular focal point of the Muslim Brotherhood of this brand of the Muslim Brotherhood. It was mystically energized by the fall of Damascus and its return not to Sunni Arab rule, but to specifically Salafi Sunni Arab rule, which is HTS and ISIS. This is a mystical event. This is a feeling that finally, the Muslim world has found the has returned to its origins and will now resume its global conquest. And so you have this immensely powerful, energizing image that is evoked by the conquest of Damascus by Salafi Islamists. And that's why they won't share the government with anybody [00:29:00] else. They want a unified government, but they don't want to

incorporate, enfranchise or empower minorities within that government. They want a Salafi government that's unified over all of Syria. And now they incorporate in it to see that they have regional ambitions. Let's look at who they've incorporated in this movement. And in government has included the movement of Ahmed Hamad Al Mansour, an Egyptian Salafi who flies the flag with the crescent and three stars, which is the Islamist flag of Egypt.

David Wurmser: [00:29:36] So this right out threatens Egypt, which is why Egypt has been a bit nervous about what happened in Syria. Then you have Hamas. Hamas members are part of the government structures, the Defense ministry and so forth. Then you have Jordan. Jordan. You have the who has said first Kerak, then Jerusalem, then Mecca. Kerak is the castle from which Saladin launched [00:30:00] his attack on Jerusalem. So you conquer Kerak in order to get to Jerusalem, which is on the road to Mecca. So again, the idea that Islam will now reawaken and imperially retake all its lands, impose a purity on all its own lands, and from there launch outward. So we have really a regional problem, really a global problem. Now, first of all, what happens is there's desperate minorities, and this creates a strategic conundrum. Desperate minorities cannot be asked to commit suicide for the greater good of the region and stability with these Islamist forces. So they turn to whomever they can, and unfortunately, if the West doesn't stand and help them, we already saw how Christian minorities turned to Russia and others. And eventually we're going to see them turn to Iran, because there's nobody else for them to turn to other than Israel. So [00:31:00] again, you cannot ask of minorities to commit suicide. So we need to provide them an off ramp of protection. So that brings me to the ultimate question which is which is three major points. One is start bouncing off of what Pesek said.

David Wurmser: [00:31:17] There are some fundamental problems in US policy. And again, I think what happened here is what's happened again and again and again. The president has a rather thin veneer of aides who do get things. And the president himself has good inclinations and generally arrives at the right place. But he often has to revert at first to the professionals in his government, the establishment in his government to provide structure for policy, his intelligence community, his Middle East experts, and so forth. And they have failed miserably for the last, really the last 100 and some years, but certainly in the last ten, 20 years. And specifically, [00:32:00] they're wedded to this concept of a unified Syria. You've had enough death and massacres of minorities and

other minority rules over other minorities in Syria, that you really can't put Humpty Dumpty back together again. The only way you can is if one of them and there are only minorities in Syria, we forget Sunni Arab Syrians account for only about 40 to 45% of Syria. If Kurdish, Sunnis or others, Druze, etc. So there's nothing. There is no movement that is not a minority, and the only way they can rule in a unified, centralized state is to impose their will on the other minorities. And with all the bloodshed, bad blood, and especially with the ideological insanity that now animates the reigning Syrian government that is a prescription for massacre after massacre after massacre.

[00:33:00] So the idea of unifying Syria under a centralized government is essentially calling for the massacre of minority of minorities by others.

David Wurmser: [00:33:10] And therefore, I think it's both the humane and practical answer. To talk about devolution of power, a confederal structure, perhaps even independent states. The second thing I think we're dealing with is we look at the UAE, we look at Saudi Arabia, and we're quite calmed about the Sunni issue because they really do show a path toward modernity slowly emerging. It's not certain, but certainly it's better than what we see elsewhere. But we've come to believe that the Sunni problem is calmed and it's controlled. And the truth is, it's not. There's a tremendous agony. And to and this, this disharmony. Well, really chaos and rage and a [00:34:00] danger that emerges from an unsettled Sunni world that is coming to terms with modernity. Earning urban Sunni Islam has yet to settle into a stable state, and we are dealing with all sorts of ideological fervor, a cauldron of instability that emerges from that. And until that happens, we have to take a much calmer and much more sober view of Sunni Arab governments that are that emerge on the basis of their Sunni identity rather than perhaps some older identities. And that gets me to my last point, which is specifically Syria and Lebanon. What we see here is the cradle of Western civilization, Judaism, Christianity. And then there's other minorities that came perhaps later, but for example, with the Druze, they date the foundations of their [00:35:00] religion. Back to Jethro, the father in law of Moses himself.

David Wurmser: [00:35:04] These are ancient cultures. These are ancient civilizations, and they're all existing in this western corner of the Fertile Crescent. And this is their last stand. This is the last stand of Christianity in the Middle East. This is the last stand of Judaism in the Middle East. This is the only stand for the Druze in the Middle East, the Yazidis, ET cetera. So in many ways, this this western Mediterranean stands at the

clasp of either a collection of smaller entities that are true to their ancient foundations, protected by a local power, which may be Israel, may be other countries from the West, Greece or so forth, surviving that that, if done right, become the [00:36:00] anchor of the Western Mediterranean of stability and a pro-Western zone in the world. Or it can become the last stand that was indeed the last stand of all these minorities. And they all go down to what will become a reinvigorated Sunni imperial, expansive effort. So I really think what's happening here is a major strategic A moment and all I can say is, thank God that we have a major Western power right there that's able to project its power, but it needs, therefore to be supported in doing so. And the West has to become sober. What happened with our ambassador to Turkey, essentially saying the things he said over the last few weeks are outright complicit in what happened over the last few days. And we really have to reexamine all the foundations of our policy.

Frank Gaffney: [00:36:57] David. Thank you. This is exceptionally important, [00:37:00] and I think, as always, brilliantly articulated. Could you could you just develop a little bit more fully what you just alluded to there? I assume you're talking about the US ambassador to Turkey.

David Wurmser: [00:37:11] Well, yeah, we're talking about us.

Frank Gaffney: [00:37:13] And how is it as you see, it impacted what's happened over the past few days?

David Wurmser: [00:37:19] We have a government in Syria which has shown its fangs again and again and again. It keeps dressing up in a suit, but it shows its fangs. I'm not going to pronounce on Jelani himself whether he reformed or not, but the bottom line is his government rests on al Qaeda and on ISIS, and it is and is a monopoly of ISIS and al Qaeda and not allowing any other power. Now, in the framework of that, you had the US ambassador, Tom barrack to Turkey, who is, in essence defining our policy toward Lebanon in Syria. Talk about Julani being [00:38:00] George Washington. Believe me, history has produced very few. George Washington's George Washington was not only a national unifying figure for the United States, he was also an epic moral figure. That set sort of a moral character to the United States to compare Julani who, as I said, the Druze are not the first rodeo we've had with him in terms of massacres. Comparing him to George Washington is both offensive. But second of all, more importantly, it sends a

signal to everybody in the region, especially all these minorities, they're abandoned, that we are leaving them to their fate, which is death. And they will turn, therefore to Iran and Israel for protection. Luckily, the Druze turned to Israel.

David Wurmser: [00:38:50] But I can't count on the fact in the northeast, whether the Yazidis or the Kurds do, but they will turn to who they have to turn to survive. The [00:39:00] second thing is then Barak kept with this all sides ism and kept forcing this to be understood as a small local dispute over a cow or something, which it isn't. We see the instant presence. We've seen foreign fighters captured by the Druze, Chechens, Russians, Uyghurs. We saw the same toxic mix when the Alawite areas. These there aren't even Syrians there. This is a global magnet. Now, this regime is a global magnet for Islamism, the way the Taliban were before nine over 11, etc. And we ignore this at our peril, and our ambassador ignores it at our peril. And he's relying on the establishment wisdom for all this. And this is, again, we've seen the administration runs into trouble when it listens to the establishment voices that it's unfortunately still has to rely on, because it's a thin [00:40:00] veneer. So that's what I was getting at about now, whether Tom barrack can reform and become a good ambassador, probably in Turkey. But I think in terms of being able to manage the Levant as a whole, I think he's burned his credibility with the actors.

Frank Gaffney: [00:40:18] Thank you. David Mansoor. Could you just develop a little bit more fully at this point? Because one of the narratives that we are hearing and it's evidenced, of course, in the pronouncements of Al Jilani that the government of Syria is not a party to what's happening here, is not supportive of it is not as I think all three of you have alluded to actually playing for the al Qaeda ISIS team. What are your folks on the ground saying about the direct involvement [00:41:00] of government forces in these attacks and the clear direction of the regime in terms of seeking the elimination of these, Druze in this moment. And also, I think you mentioned on my show yesterday, Christians are there as well, having sought refuge among the Druze from the attacks that have been taking place against them.

Mansur Ashkar: [00:41:29] First of all, if the government is not involved, then why is everyone running away from the government? Second of all, if the government is not involved, then why is it tens of tanks from the government's artillery jeep if the government are involved? And why is it that the government soldiers are the one going

and killing, massacring, shaving beards and basically shelling the cities of the Druze? Now mind that the government is arming on top of that, these jihadists. So they [00:42:00] see them as their analysts, as if the government's intention is to go and exterminate these minorities, the Christians, the Druze and the Alawites, and they're asking the help of the jihadists. Now, that's what happened when you use a faction of jihadis to take over a country, and then you basically make them soldiers. We've seen reports and I've seen some very disturbing videos of Chechen soldiers who are caught fighting alongside the government in killing the Druze. Some Druze capture these, you know, soldiers, and they interrogated them and they were from Chechnya. So it's undoubtedly clear that the government is the one doing it. And the government media is not condemning these terrorists, is actually supporting these actions, trying to paint a picture that the Christians and the Druze and the other minorities there are the outlaws, because they're not submitting.

Mansur Ashkar: [00:42:48] I'm so happy that, you know, Doctor David here said what he said. And it was very refreshing because I really hope that Trump have in his administration, people with the knowledge of Doctor David here, it became quite rare [00:43:00] to see someone that actually see the true picture of the Middle East, who knows the history. You can't ignore the history of the dream that many of these Salafis and many of these jihadists have of creating the Muslim Ummah. And when someone came from al Qaeda and ISIS, I can tell you for 100% that this is his dream. There was this interview with him lately that someone asked him how did he feel on nine over 11? And he came in a moment of honesty and said, I'll be silly if I lie to you. But I rejoiced like any other Muslim. So I know that not all Muslims rejoiced in that, but many did, because there is still the dream of the Muslim empire to conquer the world. And there is a lot of factions that jump on that dream and see it as their goal. This is what they live for and what they would want to die for. So again, I really hope because there's a there's a verse in the Bible and I'm going to try to translate it to English, you know, with lack of good advice or advisers.

Mansur Ashkar: [00:43:56] A nation will fall and I'm freely translating, [00:44:00] you know, to English. And you need very good advisors that understand the Middle East, not just can just take really cool selfies here and there that really understand very well the Middle East and who are the good guys and who are the bad guys, because you will never have a stability in the Middle East unless you identify who are the bad guys and

you start supporting the good guys and your allies. I think America, if anything, should back up Israel and should start supporting Christians, start supporting Druze, start supporting all the Yazidis, different factions of minorities that are fighting to live and should start measuring. If you really have a partner in the Middle East, one of the best measuring stone for that is how do they treat minorities? Do you let them have freedom of religion? Are they free to walk in the streets? Can they leave their doors open at night? Or are they afraid that they're going to get kidnaped any day, any moment, and become sex slaves? The only place is I'm a Druze. I live in Israel.

Mansur Ashkar: [00:44:54] My sister can walk however she wants in the street. My mom is one of the most respected Arab women in [00:45:00] the streets of Israel. She walks in my town, the mayor greets her. Everybody says hi to her. Everybody loves her. She loves everyone. Her best friends are Bedouins, Christians. They sit every day. A Druze, a Bedouin, a Christian and a Jew. It sounds like a joke. Walking to a bar, they don't go to a bar. They walk into the salon, you know. They sit on the carpet. They sit and they talk and they rejoice. That is Israel for you. That is a place where you see how minorities are treated. Peace loving minorities, not the one that I want to bring. Muslim Brotherhood radicalism. So to answer your question, is it. It's beyond doubt already. That is, the regime is the one committing these atrocities. Now, does Julani maybe try to stop it? Can he stop it? Has he completely lost control? He's just a puppet in a suit. Now, we're soon going to find out. But either way, that government has done almost nothing to prove that they're trying to create a better Syria and done almost everything they can to prove that they're trying to create another al Qaeda land.

Frank Gaffney: [00:45:57] Yeah. Rabbi, this brings me to you. We [00:46:00] as I said, have done a series of these briefings together. You've been very active with your videos is real 365 action and in other platforms, Jerusalem Post and so on. One of the things that is at work here, it seems, and I think again, several of you have touched on it, but just to draw you out on it, if U.S. policy is based on realism or should be for sure. Could you stitch together several other things that are related to, but not directly about, the topic at hand? Turkey and Qatar and the roles that they are playing in the Middle East. Point one and point two. More generally, the policies that have brought us the end of the so-called 12 day war with Iran and the pursuit [00:47:00] of a cease fire in Gaza. I think it's fair to say that in our previous briefings, we've addressed each of these and raised

questions about the realism of them. But could you put that together in the context of what we're talking about here in Syria, please?

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki: [00:47:17] Well, I'll do my best. The in terms of other examples of these delusions that really have taken American policy away from a realistic understanding of things. And I think it's not just naivete, it's deliberate. So first and foremost, I would put at the top of the list is the treatment of Iran throughout this entire fiasco with you know, Donald Trump proudly declaring that he held Israel back from taking down the Iranian regime. And you know, this this leads to a larger question for the West at the same time as everyone in the West who [00:48:00] who was concerned about the Islamic takeover of European countries, the Islamic threat in America, whether it's Mamdani or Epic City or just the general issue, you know, this is the issue facing Western civilization. And all the same people who recognize that if you look them in the eye and say, okay, what's your plan? What's your plan for Western civilization to push back and to win in the end and to survive in the end, and to have peaceful relations with the rest of the world? And what's your plan? Do you think it's going to come without a kinetic confrontation that actually takes down these evil actors? You think you can just kick the can down the road and negotiate and negotiate and negotiate and play these games forever, and they don't really have an answer.

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki: [00:48:52] And that's the so the biggest delusion is and we talked about this on the previous briefing. Is this I. Is this [00:49:00] this willful delusion that the motives of these people are somehow related to our motives and that therefore they can be bought or they can be or things that they if we negotiate with them and they sign something that it has meaning. These are all these are all parts of the of these are all different applications, shall we say, Frank, of the same delusion. So you have, you know, so there's wishful thinking all over the place. That's you know, that's where I think the policy is just continues to shoot itself in the foot and continues to make these same errors. And what's, again, what's so tragic, as I said before, is that when Trump has those moments where he kind of snaps out of it and, and does like the peace through strength, you know, you think back to the move of the embassy to Jerusalem, which was which was pushing back was really it was showing that the king has no clothes and pushing back on one of these delusions. Oh, you know, the Muslim [00:50:00] world is going to freak out if we move the embassy. No they won't.

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki: [00:50:03] Nothing happened. And, you know, to have the kind of pushback that we need against Islamism, against Islam. We need to be realistic, and we need to be courageous. And there's this, you know, so that's that kind of I think that kind of ties together all the things that you're asking about, about this lack of this, lack of looking it in the eye and saying, we need to deal with this problem. And that's why I was so disturbed by Secretary Rubio's comments, as I mentioned by Tammy Bruce's press conference, where you see, if you go read through the, the transcript of it, they, they obviously have no idea how to how to respond to this. They're not they're not speaking clearly about who these jihadists are. Frank. So, you know, to me, look, it's possible right now that the Druze community is actually [00:51:00] suffering for the fact that they're pro-Israel. And that could be and, you know, so they're actually, like, victims of anti-Semitism, as it were. You know, in a sense, they're being victims of the fact that they are that Israel is protecting them and that they are favorable to Israel. And this is and, you know, this I think this is part of where the world has this blind spot to their suffering.

Mansur Ashkar: [00:51:28] I, if I may add what you just said, the Druze community in Syria is undoubtedly suffering not only because of pro-Israel, but just because they're not against Israel. That's how bad it goes. So, you know, they've been trying to make them look all one of the questions that they ask them all the time before the slaughter are you with Israel? And that forces them to say, no, no, we hate, you know, the father. But when you have conversations with them, you know, one on one, then we don't hate them. There are cousins. But, you know, if we say that we don't hate them, they'll kill us. So the level of anti-Semitism [00:52:00] that you have in these places is so, so insane and intense that just enough that you don't hate the Jews will already mark you as a target.

Frank Gaffney: [00:52:10] Very important point. David, last question to you as we speak, as I mentioned earlier, there is an imminent UN Security Council meeting. There will be presumably much in vain against Israel and what it has done on behalf of the Druze. Maybe some concern expressed about what the regime is up to, but probably not very much knowing the UN. Could you just make book on what you expect the United States to do in the course of this debate. I don't know that there's a resolution that will be offered condemning Israel or, you know, insisting that it withdraw or otherwise blaming Israel first, which is typically [00:53:00] what the UN does. But can

you give us some? Well, both predictions as to what the hopefully realistic policy of the US will be in this context and what it should be, at the very least under these circumstances, as you've all laid them out so brilliantly.

David Wurmser: [00:53:23] Well, the way the UN resolution probably would be crafted is something the United States would and would have to veto the maximal amount that is already outlined by the Syrian government. And it's turning to the Security Council. First of all, it's not asking just that Israel not helped the Druze. It's asking for Israel to withdraw from the Golan Heights back to its 67 borders. It doesn't say to 67 borders just withdraw from the Golan Heights, which implies the 67 borders, and that it and it [00:54:00] respects the sovereignty of Syria and no longer interferes in its neighbor. The danger there is, yes, America will veto it and so forth. In that form, the danger that we have is what happens if a sly move is made by Qatar, Saudi Arabia and others along with the Russians and Chinese, to say, okay, okay. You know, we'll take out the issue of the Golan Heights, which obviously, the United States, having recognized Israel's control of the Golan Heights as the sovereign territory they knew the United States would veto that, but go to something more anodyne that looks anodyne but isn't, Namely the principle of noninterference in your neighbor and that Israel can't intervene, can't continue to fight in Syria. There's a real problem there because Israel still has remnants of Hezbollah it has to deal with. And second of all, as we said, it is in a protector status of minorities, [00:55:00] both for its own internal reasons, the Druze, but also strategic Israel cannot allow cannot sit there and fight two years to defeat Hamas in Gaza, only to have a much larger and more dangerous Hamas show up on its northern border. Israel has to maintain a certain buffer zone of no fly zone in the southern half of Syria, and a no threatening army zone south of Damascus.

David Wurmser: [00:55:29] So any UN resolution that then sort of takes off the Israeli ability to enforce that is very dangerous, but would look very. Oh, you know who can oppose this? You know, people not interfering in their neighbors. Good neighbors have fences and don't invade each other's territory. So I'm afraid, you know, that's what I'm afraid of, that there's, quote, a moderate resolution put forward that we abstain on and so forth. My sense is that the administration will get it and will veto this, but that is going to keep coming back over and over again. [00:56:00] So that's one of the things now about Trump himself. One thing I do have to say, we always look at President Trump and the art of the deal and how much he likes to make deals and the great negotiator.

And he is. But actually the greatest moments of President Trump in the first administration, and in some ways already in the second, are moments of moral clarity. He channels the sort of the morality, the common morality of the American people. And when he falls back on his gut instinct of morality, he gets it right. And those are actually more important and more impressive achievements of his than the deals that he signs. And in the Middle East, we see the constant attempt at deals. Is drawing him away from his moral clarity. And that's so, so I really, you know want to see Trump be Trump. And that's, that's really where I'm afraid some of these advisers [00:57:00] who've led him down the primrose path are taking him is away from that.

Frank Gaffney: [00:57:05] This has been an extremely important contribution to the debate about American policy towards Syria. Well, for that matter, Israel's policy towards Syria, our understanding of it Syria's status and the fate most immediately of its minorities and what the implications are for all of the above, if they wind up being essentially eliminated. Genocidal. Which is unquestionably the agenda of these Sunni Salafists Sharia supremacists jihadists. Call them what you will. There is no mistaking a realistic policy that is going to serve the vital interests of [00:58:00] the people on our side of the football, namely, of course, the American people, the people of Israel. These communities in Syria and others elsewhere in the region who I think are watching with considerable unease as to whether we are, in fact, going to continue to take an unrealistic policy, to take one that emboldens it's and enables these Sharia supremacists to believe they will succeed if they continue to advance on their agenda of U.S. regional domination in the first instance with global domination. In due course, I'm so grateful to Mansoor Ashar, to Oleksiy, and to David Wurmser for your insights today, for [00:59:00] your responding to the appeal to have another of these emergency briefings, and with the profound hope that President Trump will not only be exposed to these arguments, but heed them as he makes decisions of very great importance to freedom loving people worldwide, as well as here in the United States and in Israel. God bless you all. Thank you for joining us. A videotape of this program will be available shortly. We thank Oleg Passion for both facilitating it and making that possible. As always, we are deeply in his debt for his great work. Please. Once this product is available, I believe both at Israel 365 actions site. I think that's dot com, if I'm not mistaken, as well as victory coach. I hope you will share it widely, as its [01:00:00] contents are of considerable importance, not just to the immediate task of this UN Security Council, but to the policy directions in this particular country, but far greater

importance, truly region and worldwide. Again, God bless you all. Thank you for listening.