

# In the collapse of the Syrian Regime, Is there Potential for a US Strike on Iran's Nuclear Program?

By Jerry Gordon and Brig. General (US Army Retired) John Adams

Jerry Gordon, a Senior Editor of *The New English Review*, invited retired US Army Brig. General John Adams to discuss Israel's military doctrine and strategic options in conducting the Jewish state's civilizational war with the Iran-backed Hamas and Hezbollah. Given his extensive background as a 30-year veteran of combat, staff, and international military, diplomatic assignments, and post-service

informal analysis and discussions with former Senior IDF commanders, he addresses the issues behind the conflict and risks of an escalating Middle East regional war.

[Watch](#) the YouTube discussion with Brig. General (US Army retired) John Adams with the following transcript.

## Background of General John Adams

John Adams retired as a Brigadier General from the U.S. Army in September 2007 after over 30 years of active-duty service. His final military assignment was as Deputy United States Military Representative to the NATO Military Committee in Belgium. John is a veteran of Operation Desert Storm (1991), where he earned the Bronze Star Medal of Operation Guardian Assistance in Rwanda (1996) and served throughout the Balkans from 1998-2003. He served as a military attaché with the U.S. Embassies in South Korea, Croatia, Belgium, and Rwanda. In 2004, he served on temporary duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was deployed outside the United States for eighteen of his

thirty years of active-duty service, including duty in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. His extensive and diverse experience makes him a trusted source for insightful analysis.

He was stationed at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, and participated in disaster recovery operations at the crash site.

For the past five years, he has participated in unofficial fact-finding missions in Israel, Egypt, Turkey, the Balkans, and Cuba. He has close business relationships with retired officers of the Israeli Defense Forces and several NATO Allies and is a strong supporter of the U.S. alliance with the State of Israel and NATO.

## **Background and Major Issues**

431 Days since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, when 1,400 Israeli and other nationals were killed. IDF Casualties exceeded 816 killed, with more than 4,500 injured. Of 252 Hostages taken on October 7, 2023, 97 remain, including the bodies of 39 confirmed dead by IDF. IDF is engaged in a multi-front war backed by Iran with Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and a counterterrorism campaign in the West Bank against Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Palestinian terror groups. On December 8, the brutal 54-year reign of the Al-Assad minority Alawite family rule of Syria collapsed. President Bashar al-Asaad and family fled to Moscow after less than a two-week assault by Syrian rebels led by Abu Mohammad al-Jolani of the former Al Qaeda group Hayat Tahrir Al Sham. Al-Jolani is a designated Global Terrorist by the US with a bounty of \$10 million on his head. On December 8, 2024, al-Jolani entered the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and declared victory. Many attribute this stunning development to Israel's civilizational war successes, destroying Hamas in Gaza and decapitating Hezbollah leadership in Lebanon, resulting in a cease-fire brokered by the Biden Administration and French Government of President Macron and the defeat by Israel, with US and allied

assistance of Iranian ballistic missiles and drones launched against the Jewish State, as well as Israel's counterattack on Iran's air defense system and nuclear research facilities. Then, there was the inability of Russia to come to Bashar's aid as it did in 2015 when it launched critical air attacks.

The suggestion is that Putin's War in Ukraine is a priority. Thus, questions have been raised about the status of Russia's strategic naval base at the port of Tartus and air base at Hmeimeem.

### **Topics for Discussion**

1. Why did the 54-year-long al-Assad despotic regime in Syria fall so quickly to Syrian rebels in a week led by a US Global former Al Qaeda Terrorist leader, Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, with a \$10 million US bounty on his head?
2. What is the background of Syrian rebel leader Al-Jolani and the former Al Qaeda Group he leads, Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS)?
3. How despotic was the toll of the Bashar al-Assad Syrian regime following the 2011 Arab Spring uprising?
4. Bashar al-Assad fled Syria with his adult children to join his wife, Asma, in Moscow, who was being treated for cancer backed by more than \$2 billion in offshored assets to live under Putin's protection. What can be done to bring him to justice for the murders of 500,000 Syrians murdered by his Mukhabarat intelligence agency and the return of an estimated 5 million refugees displaced to Turkey, Europe, and even the US?
5. Besides freeing prisoners from Assad regime jails, what does the HTS intend to do with ISIS prisoners and families in the UN Al Hol refugee camp controlled by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Force in the country's northeast?
6. How significant was the Israeli destruction of HAMAS in Gaza and the weakening of Hezbollah in Lebanon in the

launch of the HTS-led conquest of Assad's Syria from its bastion in Idlib Province in the country's northwest border with Turkey?

7. What role did Russia's war in Ukraine play in hobbling any rescue of the Assad regime, given its air attacks in 2015, which played a significant role in its survival until now? How vulnerable are Russia's prized Syrian naval and air bases in Syria?
8. How damaging is the fall of the Assad regime to Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei's "Axis of Resistance" given the loss of HAMAS, Hezbollah, and now Syria in surrounding Israel?
9. Despite the loss of Syria and the weakening of Iran's conventional drone and ballistic missile capabilities by Israel and the US, what is the potential danger of its threat to Israel and the US from its announced ramp-up of nuclear uranium enrichment objected to by the IAEA? Is it time for a joint US-Israel strike to take out Iran's nuclear program?
10. Among Israel's first actions after the fall of the Assad Regime were the seizure of the Syrian side of strategic Mount Hermon and entry in the UNDOF "buffer zone." Israel unleashed 350 air and Naval missile ship strikes that allegedly destroyed upwards of 80% of its military capabilities. Of significance were attacks on chemical and biological warfare centers to prevent these capabilities from falling into terrorist control. These Israeli air strikes fulfilled what neither the former Obama Administration nor World Anti-Chemical and Biological Warfare Agencies sanctions could.
11. Syria, artificially created in the allied Mandates after WWI, was a collection of tribal and minority groups: Sunnis in the Northwest and Central areas, Alawites on the Mediterranean Coast, Druze in the South, Kurds in the Northeast, and Assyrian and Syriac Christians. After the fall of the Al-Assad regime, will the country fall into chaos, or will a federal system arise along the

lines of the failed Lebanese confessional government system or ethnic cantons?

12. Turkey's autocrat President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sponsored the "New Syrian Army" Jihadists' rampage of the Kurdish Enclave of Afrin in Northwest Syria and established a buffer zone along a stretch of the northern frontier threatening the Kurdish Northeast bastion. Turkey has also housed more than 5 million refugees who fled the al-Assad regime's brutality. Now, Turkish-backed NSA Islamists have captured Kurdish-held Manbij on the West Bank of the Euphrates. That leaves open a Turkish-backed Islamist push to attack the historic Kurdish bastions of Kobani on the Eastern bank of the Euphrates.
13. Syrian rebels, after a brief exchange, took over Deir ez Zur from the Kurdish Syrian Democratic Force (SDF) force backed by the US. A meeting was held with SDF Commander General Mazlum Kobane and US CENTCOM Commander General Michael Kurilla as Kobane criticized the US for not protecting the Kurds.
14. Before the sudden dramatic turn of events in Syria, Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar, in his speech following his appointment, made a point of singling out Kurds as a strategic asset of Israel to be protected, a fact made clear in Prime Minister Netanyahu's remarks on the fall of Assad Regime. The Kurds in the country's northeast abutting Turkey were the instrument of the US defeat of ISIS through the command of the Syrian Democratic Force during the Trump first term. Michael Rubin of the American Enterprise Institute, in a Middle East Forum article, suggests it's "show time" for Israel and the US to honor their commitments to the Kurds in Syria. How realistic is that?
15. The US's role in negotiating the release of the remaining Israeli, US, and foreign hostages held by Hamas and reliance on intermediaries like Egypt and Qatar as honest brokers has failed. Is it time for

Israel to undertake its operations to retrieve these long-suffering victims of the October 7<sup>th</sup> pogrom?