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"Essentially, the subject is always between 2 points"

Weekly Political and Geopolitical Developments

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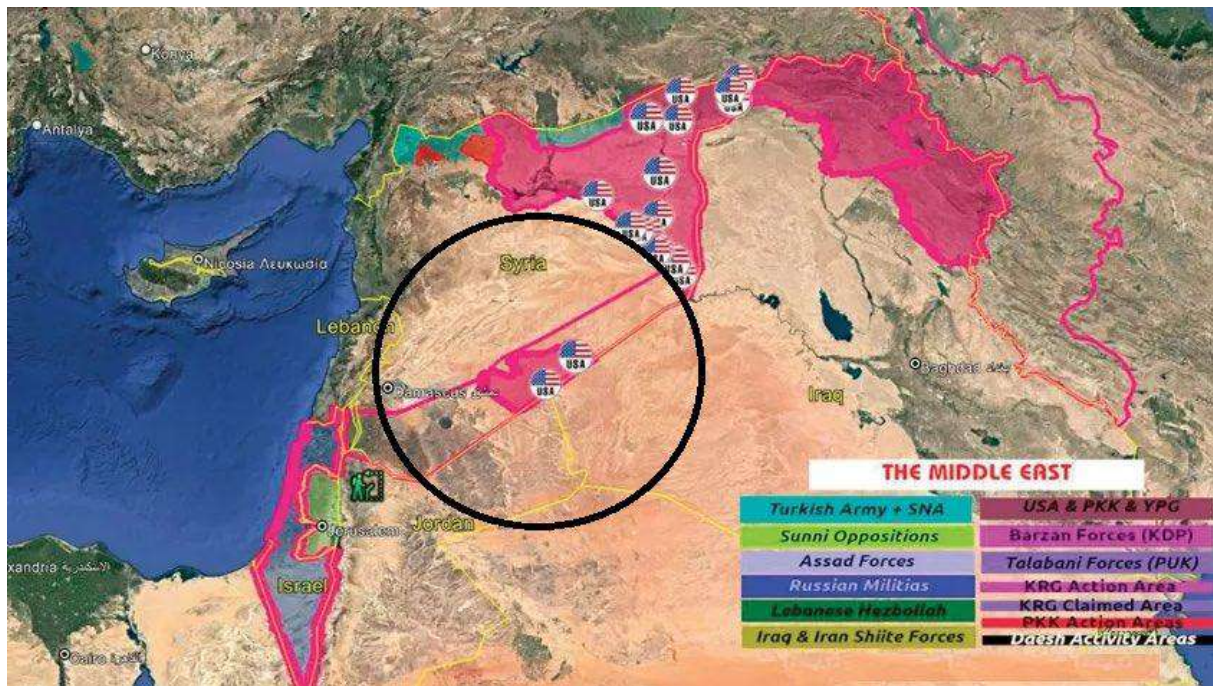
Prepared by: **Hakan Çalışkantürk**

2twoblackdots@gmail.com

<https://www.2blackdots.com>

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THE DRUZE REGION IN SYRIA, THE "DAVID CHORIDER" AND THE GLOBAL POWER STRUGGLE



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Entrance

Recent clashes in southern Syria threaten the country's fragile stability again. Violent incidents erupted on July 13, 2025, especially in **the Druze areas of Suwayda province**, leading to hundreds of casualties and a major humanitarian crisis. There is information coming from official channels that thousands of **Druze and Bedouin civilians** have been displaced and approximately **128 thousand** people have been forced to migrate after a week of conflict. The Syrian government has evacuated **some 1500 Bedouin civilians from the** conflict zone by bus to safe areas, and has taken a series of measures to prevent the humanitarian crisis from deepening by pushing for **mutual hostage exchanges** and ceasefire agreements. At first glance, these events appear to be a local **sectarian tension** (between the Druze community and the Sunni Bedouins), but there are strong indications that there is a deeper strategic struggle behind the tension, which includes the rivalry of regional and global powers.

As a matter of fact, while the conflicts continued, Israel carried out airstrikes in the region claiming to protect the Druze population in Suwayda and targeted the transitional government forces that were actually fighting the Bedouin militias. This development has strengthened the conviction that such ethno-sectarian conflicts in Syria are not spontaneous but are a reflection of global power competition. The fact that since the beginning of the Syrian civil war, the fault lines in the country (Arab-Kurdish, Sunni-Alawite, Druze, etc.) **have been deepened mostly by foreign interventions** and have been turned into tools of the struggle for influence by different actors; When taken **together with the "Corridor of David" project** put forward in the context of the Suwayda events, it is **understood that Israel and some other powers have activated a new part of the plan to divide Syria, which has been known for a long time.**

In this report, we will comprehensively discuss the current situation in Syria from a strategic and security perspective. **We will examine the developments since the Shara government came to power in late 2024** and the repercussions of the global power struggle in Syria. In particular, we will evaluate the conflicts in the **Druze region** in southern Syria, Israel's **"Corridor of David" project**, the plans of the US through Syria and the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces), and the roles of Iran and other actors. We will also emphasize the importance of regional initiatives such as the Iraq-Turkey-centered **Development Road Project** for the future and integrity of Syria. In the context of Turkey's security, we will present a comprehensive analysis by examining the possible effects of the developments in Syria and Turkey's policies.

The Syrian Civil War and the Role of Global Actors (2000-2024)

The coming to power of Bashar al-Assad **after the death of Hafez al-Assad in 2000** ushered in a new era in Syria. Although relative stability continued under the authoritarian Baathist regime throughout the 2000s, socio-economic

problems and political repression increased social discontent. **The Arab Spring demonstrations**, which began in 2011, began with peaceful protests against the regime in Syria, but soon escalated into a full-fledged **civil war** with harsh violence and divisions. evolved.

In the 2012-2014 period, the conflict deepened along sectarian and ethnic identities, effectively dividing the country into various parts. **Regime forces** (with Iran as their backers and, after 2015, Russia) held the western and central cities of the country, while opposition Sunni Arab armed groups were active on the northern and southern fronts. In the same period, terrorist organizations (PYD/YPG), including the PKK, strengthened the autonomous administration initiative in the northeast. The emergence of ISIS in 2014 accelerated the involvement of the US-led coalition in Syria. **On the one hand, the U.S. has established influence in eastern Syria by supporting terrorist organizations led by the YPG under the umbrella of the SDF against ISIS, and on the other hand, it has initially provided logistical support to some opposition groups. Israel, on the other hand, has been closely monitoring the instability in Syria since the first years of the war, and has continued to carry out airstrikes near Damascus and Iranian-linked targets from time to time, especially in order to prevent the Iran-Hezbollah axis from becoming stronger.**

Russia's military intervention **after 2015** enabled the regime to gain the upper hand on many fronts and to return major cities to Damascus' control. By 2018, the active hot fighting phase of the war had largely subsided, while the territory of Syria was roughly divided into three parts: **1) The western and internal areas under the control of the regime and its allies, 2) the northwest where HTS is located (Idlib and Euphrates Shield areas), 3) The northeast (east of the Euphrates) controlled by the US-backed SDF.** This de facto division has created a picture in Syria **that reflects the spheres of influence of global and regional powers.** On the one hand, the Russian-Iranian-backed central government, on the other hand, terrorist organizations under the auspices of the United States, **and Israel's** de facto strengthening of its military presence in the Golan (attempts to legitimize its annexation of the Golan with the support of the United States) have been part of this equation.

In the face of the devastating consequences of the war, the international community called for a political transition within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 2254. However, for many years, negotiations were inconclusive. **In 2023-2024, a new diplomatic momentum was observed in the region: a transitional government between the parties at the end of 2024, although developments such as the softening of Syria's relations with the Arab world (the return of membership in the Arab League in 2023), Turkey's contacts with Damascus through Russia, and Iranian-Saudi normalization seem to have prepared the ground for a solution to the Syrian crisis** An agreement could not be reached on its establishment to the desired extent. In this context, in the new period that started in Damascus in December 2024, **a "Syrian Transitional Government"** was established under the leadership of **Ahmed (Farouk) al-Shara**. It is understood that the representatives of the regime and the opposition took part in this government with certain formulas, and a transition process supported by the international community (Russia, Turkey, USA, Arab countries, etc.) began. As a matter of fact, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan *rightly described the establishment of the Shara-led administration as a historic opportunity*, saying that "a new era began in Syria on December 8 of last year."

The primary goal of the transitional government **is to restore the sovereignty of the country, integrate all armed groups into the central authority, and ensure stability.** In this context, the Shara administration also negotiated with the SDF in the northeast. Controversial claims that an agreement has been reached **between the Damascus administration and the SDF/YPG** in January 2025, that the YPG will lay down its arms and dissolve itself **within a certain timetable**, and that its elements will join the Syrian national army, were reported in the press. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan also stated in a statement in March 2025 that Turkey is closely following **the agreement reached between the Damascus administration and the YPG** and that they have conveyed some of their concerns about this agreement to their Syrian counterparts. **The Ahmed Shara administration** has made commitments to its neighbors that it will not be in contact with terrorist organizations and will not pose a threat to neighboring countries. This commitment also includes Israel, and there is an opinion that the Shara administration does not pursue a hostile policy towards Israel.

However, the atmosphere of insecurity created by the proxy wars that have been going on in Syria for more than a decade makes it difficult for the new transitional government to consolidate its authority. Against this backdrop, **the Suwayda crisis, which erupted in July 2025**, showed that a new power struggle has flared up in southern Syria.

Suwayda Events: Conflicts in the Druze Region and Their Meaning

Suwayda province is a mountainous region on the southern tip of Syria, **inhabited by a predominantly Druze minority.** Throughout the civil war, Suwayda remained relatively calm thanks to the Druze community's distant but non-confrontational stance with the Assad regime, and was a region where neither the opposition insurgency nor radical groups could establish serious influence. However, after 2023, in the environment of transition and power

vacuum throughout Syria, security weaknesses and **power struggles of local militias** have emerged in Suwayda . The violence that erupted in the region on July 13, 2025, **quickly escalated into clashes between Druze militia forces and armed groups from neighboring Sunni Bedouin tribes; Heavy weapons**, mortars and machine guns were used during the fighting; village roads were cut off, some houses and villages were set on fire; Targeted attacks against Druze and Bedouin civilians **have** been reported.

The clashes lasted about a week and led to **hundreds of casualties**. When the Druze militias retaliated harshly against the news of attacks on members of the Druze community, a **humanitarian crisis** arose throughout the province. According to UN data, **more than 128,000 people** were forced to leave their homes within a week. The Syrian transitional government has deployed additional security forces to the region, forming a **security cordon** and declaring a **fragile ceasefire**. Then, buses were sent to Suwayda to evacuate Bedouin civilians who remained in the line of conflict; **As of July 21, 2025, more than 1200 families** have been safely evacuated from the region and placed in makeshift camps in Dara'a province on the border with Jordan. Syrian Interior Minister Ahmed al-Dalati explained that this step aims to protect civilians and create a basis for reconciliation to which displaced Druze families can return, and has taken an approach that prioritizes regional and local security.

Although the conflict in Suwayda appears to **be a Druze vs. Bedouin** ethno-sectarian tension on the surface, it contains many indications that it is being read as *part of a wider power struggle in the background*. Transitional government officials emphasized that the events **were provoked** and that there was a role of external elements aimed at destabilizing Syria. As a matter of fact, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan stated that Israel **is fueling ethno-sectarian conflicts in Syria by pursuing a "policy of provocation"**¹ and that this is a strategy that will backfire even for Israel's own security. Indeed, the Israeli government, especially during the Netanyahu era, has adopted an approach of minimizing threats to Israel by keeping neighboring countries weak and in a state of internal turmoil. In this context, there is a widespread belief that the Druze insurgency in southern Syria serves Israel's **"divide and rule"** strategy in the region.

Israel's role in the conflict has also strengthened this conviction. While the fighting continued, **on July 14-16, 2025**, the Israeli Air Force carried out a series of airstrikes on some military targets around Suwayda and even near Damascus. Although Israel has not made an official statement, information from the region indicates that Israeli jets are providing air support to Bedouin groups fighting Druze militias . According to Euronews, Israel has flown dozens of sorties into Suwayda, where the Druze are in the majority, striking groups **that are "de facto on the side of the Bedouins"** in the conflict. Although these elements targeted by Israel are described in the report as *"interim government forces"*, what is probably meant here is local elements opposed to the transitional government or different armed actors supporting Bedouin militias, which Israel considers to be its ally. As a matter of fact, towards the end of the conflict, it was reported that an agreement was reached on the condition that the Bedouin fighters leave the province in exchange for the release of some **Druze hostages** held by the Bedouins. As a result, a ceasefire was reached with the mediation of regional countries such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and Israel and the Syrian transitional government indirectly agreed to respect the ceasefire.

An important aspect of the Suwayda events is **the attitude of the Druze community**. Historically, the Druze have existed as a distinct minority in Syria and have never been a full ally of either the Sunni majority or the Alawite regime. During the civil war, they neither rebelled massively against the Assad regime nor were active in the opposition camp, focusing more on defending their own territory. In the new order created by the fall of Assad, the Druze notables **are in a dilemma between the demand for autonomy within the integrity of the country and complete separation**. During the **recent clashes, the spiritual leader in Suwayda**, Sheikh Hekmat al-Hijri², asked the international community **for protection for the Druze** and remarkably called for **the opening of a road connecting the Druze areas with the Kurdish areas in northeastern Syria**. This demand suggests that the Druze may seek to secure their future by allying with terrorist organizations in the north rather than in Damascus. Western diplomatic sources have reported that this demand expressed by Hijri is exactly compatible with the **"Corridor of David"** project that Israel is trying to establish. In other words, one wing of the Druze leadership leaves the door open to an Israeli-backed scenario.

On the other hand, the Druze community in general approached the conflicts in Suwayda with caution. Many Druze opinion leaders have argued that the Shara-led transitional government should be given a chance and that the problems should be resolved through dialogue. As a matter of fact, while the majority of the Druze population

¹ It means that a state, political group or actor provokes a person, group or country it targets, forcing it to give a desired reaction, or deliberately raising social or political tensions. This policy is usually carried out for strategic purposes.

² Sheikh Hekmat Salman al-Hijri (born June 9, 1965) is a Venezuelan-born religious leader who is one of the three spiritual leaders of the Druze community in Syria. After returning to Syria with his family, he studied law (Damascus University, 1985–1990), settled in the village of Kanawat in Suwayda in 1998, and took over the Druze leadership in 2012 upon the tragic death of his older brother, Ahmad al-Hijri. Its relationship with Israel is interpreted by most non-Syrian observers as a strategic alliance beyond the issue of "protection".

welcomed the end of the despotic rule of the Assad family, they declared that they were inclined to solve the issues through negotiations, although they were concerned about the influence of Islamist elements in the new period. **Ahmed al-Shara, the leader of the transitional government**, also addressed the people during the clashes and said, "We will not allow the problem of who will rule Suwayda to be turned into a sectarian war." Shara openly criticized armed groups loyal to the Druze spiritual leader Hijri and called for national unity for the Druze community. and pledged that the perpetrators of attacks on civilians will be held accountable. In other words, the Shara administration has shown an attitude determined to keep the Druze community within the integrity of Syria.

In summary, the Druze-Bedouin conflict in Suwayda is not just a local ethnic tension, but also a question of "who will gain power in the south of Syria?" It is a struggle in which global and regional actors are also involved for the answer to the question. In this struggle, while Israel is trying to attract the Druze to its side; The Syrian transitional government and its supporters (such as Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia) are trying to prevent the division of the country. This is where the concept of the "Corridor of David" emerges.

Orta Doğu

Haberler > Orta Doğu > Davud Koridoru: İsrail'in Sessiz Genişleme Planı

Davud Koridoru: İsrail'in Sessiz Genişleme Planı

The "Corridor of David": Israel's Strategic Plan and Objectives



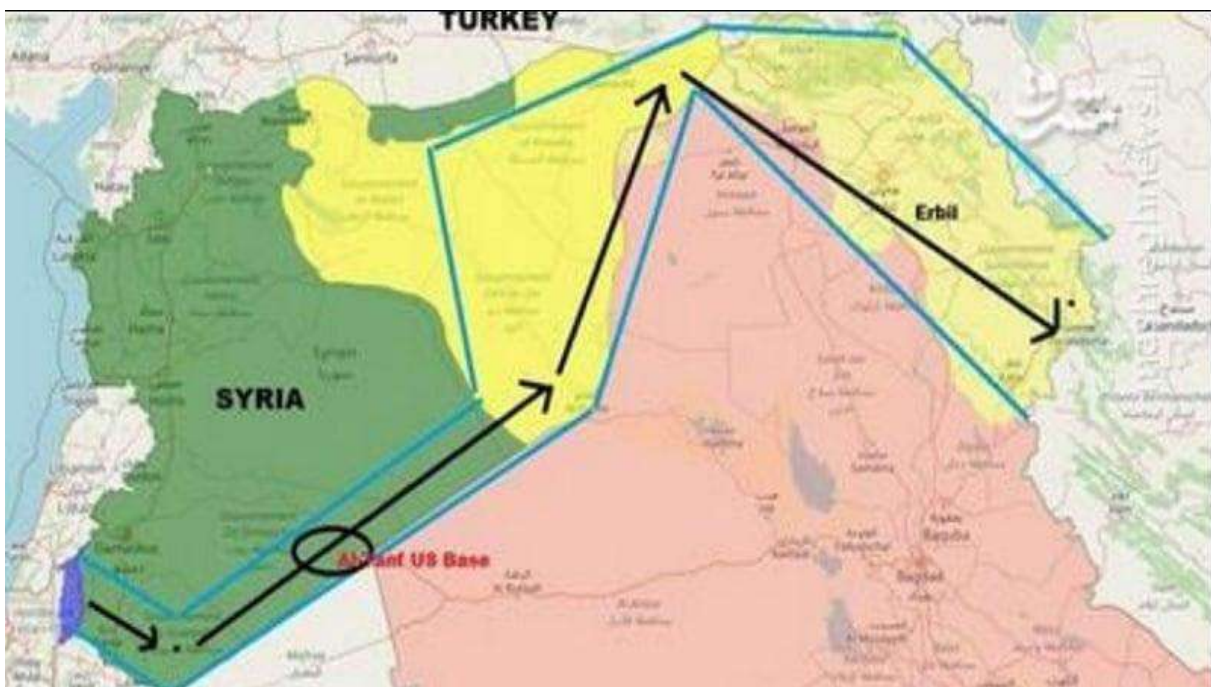
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The term "Corridor of David", which has come to the fore with the recent conflicts, actually refers to a strategic project that has been mentioned before. The Corridor of David is Israel's project to create an allied line for itself through Syrian territory. This line will start from the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights, pass through the Druze

region of Suwayda in **southern Syria**, and reach SDF-controlled areas in **northeastern Syria**. In other words, Israel aims to be a de facto neighbor of **Northern and Eastern Syria** with a corridor of influence that runs through Syria. By naming the corridor "David" (David in Hebrew), it ³ emphasizes Israel's ancient claims to this region with a historical-biblical reference and gives a political message. The figure of "King David"⁴ is seen as one of the symbols of Israel's claim to legitimacy in the Middle East and its expansionist ideology. Therefore, the choice of this name **suggests that the project is also associated** with a religious-mystical mission.

From a strategic point of view, the Corridor of David represents the spillover vector of a **defensive to offensive** geopolitical move in Israel's long-term security doctrine. To date, Israel has pursued a strategy of "pre-emptive strikes" and buffer zones to keep away threats from neighboring countries (Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran) that it considers enemies. However, the aim of the David Corridor is to increase Israel's depth in the region by establishing a line of influence **extending from the south of Syria to Iraq and from there to the Iranian border**. Thanks to this corridor, Israel **will be able to create a geopolitical reality** that will divide Syria into two and cut off **Iran's land connection to Lebanon** (the Shiite Crescent). It is no coincidence that Israel wants to reshape the Middle East through the Corridor of David; this project **is part of the ideological-strategic goal called** the "Greater Israel Project".

The **"Greater Israel Project"** is based on the radical Zionist ideology of expanding Israel's borders from the Nile to the Euphrates. Of course, this goal should not be understood as direct annexation of territory, but rather **as expanding its sphere of influence through** the dismemberment and reduction of peripheral countries. The famous **Oded Yinon⁵ Plan of 1982 explicitly** recommended this strategy: the Arab countries that are Israel's neighbors should be divided along ethno-sectarian fault lines (Iraq is Shia, Sunni, Kurdish; Such as the division of Syria into Alawite (Nusayri), Sunni, Kurdish, Druze regions). Thus, the small and weak statelets that will emerge will no longer be a threat to Israel, and Israel will be able to remain the dominant power in the region. In Israel, especially right-wing-evangelical circles support this vision, and in the United States, evangelical lobbies give unconditional support to Israel's expansionist policies.



https://parstoday.ir/tr/news/west_asia-i279750

In this context, the Corridor of David can be considered as the Syrian leg of Israel's plan to divide neighboring countries. Druze are at the beginning of the corridor and Kurds are at the end. Israel has long sought to **protect and protect the Druze** in southern Syria and turn them into potential allies. The Druze community is a minority with

³ Approach that deals with the historical reality of events in the holy books (especially the Old Testament and the New Testament).

⁴ For Israel, the figure of "King David" is one of the cornerstones of national identity and religious legitimacy, both historically and symbolically. In Jewish tradition, David is considered a king chosen by God and the leader who made Jerusalem the capital of Israel. The archaeological excavations of the "City of David" in Jerusalem and the expectation of the Messiah from the "Descendants of David" reinforce its historical and eschatological importance. For the modern state of Israel, David is both the founding leader of unity and the ideal ruler model in the Torah. The Star of David (Magen David) on the flag is a contemporary expression of this symbolism, and his figure is used to show that both religious and national affiliation are rooted in the sacred past.

⁵ Oded Yinon is the author of the article "A Strategy for Israel in the 1980s" published in the journal *Kivunim* (i.e. *Directions*) in 1982. He is a former journalist who served in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and also wrote for the *Jerusalem Post*. Jonathan Cook and some academic authors suggest that the Yinon paper is linked to U.S. neoconservative policies, providing a "strategic background" to events such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

historical ties to Israel, as it also has a presence in the Golan Heights and inside Israel. By protecting the Syrian Druze, Israel is encouraging the formation of a pro-Israel entity in the south. At the other end of the corridor, the northeast, **is the SDF**. Israel has provided diplomatic and covert support to the Syrian Kurds since the beginning of the Syrian war, and some senior Israeli officials have even hinted that they welcome the establishment of a Kurdish statelet in northern Syria. Because such a formation would both weaken Syria and cut off Iran's line to the Mediterranean. Israel is trying to paralyze the central authority by supporting the Druze in the south of Syria and the Kurds in the north.

In order for the Corridor of David to be implemented, **the south of Syria must first come under Israeli influence**. This is possible with the de facto disintegration of a Druze autonomous region centered on Suwayda. Israel's involvement in the Suwayda events stems from its desire to take this *indispensable first step*. Indeed, Israel's military intervention under the pretext of protecting the Druze is an attempt to make **a historic move** in its favor in the region. In this way, on the one hand, Israel *aims to convince the international community that* "we are saving the Druze from genocide" **and to make them forget the disputes over the Golan Heights**, on the other hand, **it aims to take control** of southern Syria by creating a de facto geopolitical reality. It tends to seize. If it succeeds in this, Israel believes that it will push its occupation of the Golan Heights into the background of the world agenda and accept the new status quo, and there are predictions that the continuation of the corridor, that is, the second phase of the plan, **will target the Kurdish region in northern Syria**. After establishing the Druze corridor in the south, Israel aims to create a **Kurdish corridor** in the north in a similar way. In fact, there is already a large area under the control of the SDF in the **northeast of Syria, east of the Euphrates** (Jazeera and Euphrates regions). However, the establishment of a permanent and independent structure in this region is a dangerous move that will completely change both the integrity of the Syrian state and the balance of the region. Israel considers a possible Damascus-SDF reconciliation to be contrary to its interests. As a matter of fact, Hakan Fidan stated that Israel continues to support separatist elements in Syria, especially **encouraging the continuation of the PKK/YPG presence**. Turkish officials have stated that the integration agreement reached between the Syrian transitional government and the SDF with the mediation of Turkey is perceived as a threat by Israel and may be tried to be disrupted. Because if the SDF integrates into the regime and the authority of Damascus is re-established in the northeast, **the Daoud Corridor project will be finished before it begins**. For this reason, the Israeli administration (especially the Netanyahu government) **desires the continuation of the "regional chaos"** environment in Syria and the continuation of terrorist organizations as a separate armed force.

It should be stated without any doubt that the David Corridor is **a part of Israel's regional security and hegemony strategy**. In line with the above, the objectives of this strategy can be summarized as follows:

- **To dismember and weaken Syria: To make** the Druze and Kurdish regions autonomous against the center, permanently weakening Damascus' control over the country. In this way, both **to destroy the integrity of Syria** and to degrade **Iranian influence in Damascus**.
- **Cutting off the Iran-Lebanon (Hezbollah) corridor:** A pro-Israeli pipeline in eastern Syria would block Iran's arms/logistics transfer route to Syria and Lebanon via Iraq. Thus, **Hezbollah's influence in Syria and Lebanon** will be reduced, and Israel's northern front will be relieved.
- **Controlling natural resources and water:** 90% of Syria's oil and gas resources are in the northeast. Thanks to the Corridor of David, Israel can gain access to these riches east of the Euphrates. According to the analysis of the Iranian-based **Tasnim News Agency**, Israel plans to advance by creating a safe line from the Tanf region to the Euphrates River with the help of American bases and reach the Euphrates basin. In the event of this scenario, Israel could seize a significant part of Syria's water resources (rivers and lakes in southern Syria – Israel has already taken control of 6 important water sources in this region in recent months) and obtain oil in the east. It is **a strategic fact** that Israel is on its way to dominating 30% of Syria's water resources.
- **Providing access to the sea with Kurdish allies:** The David Corridor also means that Israel **has a direct connection with Kurdish entities in the region**. In this way, Israel will be able to establish an integrated land pipeline with the Kurdish Regional Government of Northern Iraq (KRG) and the SDF in northeastern Syria, and will be able to trade oil and natural gas through this line. In fact, Tasnim's analysis emphasizes that KRG oil can be transported overland to Israel without the need for Turkey, thus increasing Israel's energy security. This point *also coincides with the allegations that "the US aims to take the so-called Kurdistan to the sea through the David Corridor"*. Because a Kurdish entity that can establish a land connection with Israel will actually have **the opportunity to access the Mediterranean (Israeli ports)**. This is one aspect of the issue of "going to sea". Another dimension is a possible **Mediterranean pipeline** project: It may be aimed

to establish a pipeline that will carry Iraqi and Syrian oil, and perhaps even Iran's Khuzestan oil in the future, to the Mediterranean via Israel. This means an alternative to Turkey's Ceyhan line and an energy corridor that bypasses Turkey.

- **Containment of Turkey:** Strategists in Israel say that the David Corridor will also mean **the encirclement of Turkey from the south**. Thanks to the corridor, Turkey's Syria policies can be suppressed by establishing influence at both ends of Syria through the PKK/PYD in the north and the Druze groups in the south. Such a geopolitical encirclement could weaken Turkey's security architecture, as well as limit its energy projects and military maneuvering space in the Eastern Mediterranean. In other words, if the David Corridor is realized, we may enter a period that requires new moves not only in Syria but also in Turkey's security architecture and security interactions in the immediate vicinity.

The above points explain why the David Corridor project may be seen as attractive by its allies such as Israel and perhaps partly the United States and Britain. However, the realization of this project depends of course on the reaction of other actors and the balance of power on the ground. A change in the status of southern Syria in favor of Israel **would provoke the reaction of Iran, Russia and even Arab countries**. As a matter of fact, during the Suwayda crisis in July 2025, countries such as **Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, and the UAE** openly criticized the Druze rebellion and Israel's attacks on Syria. These countries have taken a stand in favor of the territorial integrity of Syria by supporting the new government of Syria. At this point, **the position of the USA, one of the global powers**, gains importance.

U.S. Syria Strategy and the SDF Factor



<https://www.veryansintv.com/abd-davut-koridorunun-dugmesine-basti>

The U.S. was involved in the Syrian civil war with the aim of "overthrowing Assad" in the first stage, but after 2014, it shifted its priority to the fight against ISIS. In this process, the U.S. created a partner of terrorist organizations in Syria under the name of **SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces)**. The YPG, which formed the backbone of the SDF, was the armed force of the Syrian Kurds, but also included some Arab and Assyrian elements. Between 2015 and 2019, with the support of the US, the SDF took control of large areas in the east of the Euphrates, such as **Jazeera, Kobani, Tell Abyad, Manbij, Raqqa, and Deir ez-Zor**. After the end of the active phase of the war, the United States left a force of about 900 soldiers in Syria and switched to a policy of **protecting the SDF-controlled areas**. Although U.S. officials openly say that they stayed there "to prevent the oil in eastern Syria from falling into the hands of ISIS" (and the purpose of the establishment of this laboratory organization is very clear), in reality these oil fields (Rumeylan, the Omar field in Deir ez-Zor, etc.) **Keeping it out of reach of Damascus and Iran** was part of the strategy. While this situation **prevented the rich energy resources of the Eastern Euphrates** from becoming a trump card for the Damascus administration, it provided the United States and, indirectly, the SDF with income and bargaining power.

Although the U.S. vision for Syria's future has never been clearly articulated, **a permanent division in Syria**, or at least a weak federal structure, has been seen as in the U.S. interest. If one reason for this **is to limit Iran's influence**, the other is to create **an element of pressure on Russia**. Although the decision to withdraw US troops was made

during the Trump administration, the Pentagon and the foreign policy establishment have tempered this decision due to concerns that a complete withdrawal from Syria **would give the Russian-Iranian axis leverage**. After all, the United States, including the Biden administration, has maintained and continues to partner with the SDF in eastern Syria for the same reasons.

U.S. support for terrorist organizations in Syria has been **a matter of serious tension with Turkey**. Turkey considers the YPG, the backbone of the SDF, to be an extension of the PKK and a terrorist organization. Since 2016, Turkey has prevented the formation of a "terror corridor" in northern Syria by launching three major military operations (Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch, and Peace Spring) **in northern Syria**. As a result of this operation, Turkey took some critical areas in northern Syria (Jarablus-Azaz line, Afrin and Tel Abyad area) from the SDF and gave them to the control of the opposition it supported. Thus, it physically undermined the possibility of an uninterrupted terror corridor from the Iraqi border to the Mediterranean. However, in the east of the Euphrates, **the Hasakah-Raqqa-Deir ez-Zor line** remained in the hands of the SDF.

Although the U.S. **has not made a direct statement on** the David Corridor, it is **clear that such a project would not have been conceivable without the American presence**. The most critical point in Israel's Corridor of David move **is the US base and control area in Tanf**. Since 2016, American special forces have been stationed in the Tanf region, where the borders of Syria, Jordan and Iraq intersect, training **a Syrian opposition group called Magavir al-Sawra**. It is strategically located in **the middle of the Damascus-Baghdad highway** and cuts off Iran's land corridor to Syria. In the David Corridor move, Israel plans to **"establish a safe route by moving northward with the help of American bases in Tanf."** In other words, Israel's extension from the southeast of Syria to the Euphrates can only take place **under the auspices of the United States**. Therefore, the U.S., with at least one wing (we can say pro-Israel neo-con circles), winks at this plan.

On the other hand, another part of the American state machinery did not take kindly to the agreement between the SDF and Damascus **for the stability of Northeast Syria**. As a matter of fact, in 2023-2024, the United States conducted diplomacy to prevent possible new Turkish operations in northern Syria and to relieve the SDF, while encouraging the SDF's dialogue with Damascus through its Arab allies. As a result, there was a rapprochement between the Damascus-Transitional Government and the SDF. This suggests that there may be a different strategic approach within the United States than Israel's: to **allow a controlled integration to counterbalance Russian-Iranian influence, rather than losing Syria entirely**. As a matter of fact, it is noteworthy that the US Special Envoy for Syria, Tom Barrack, said in Lebanon after the Suwayda crisis, *"An agreement must be reached that will allow Syria's seven-month-old interim government to fully exercise its powers."* Barrack also stressed that the authority of the transitional government should be recognized, saying that *"the Syrian authorities should be held responsible for what happened, but they should also be given responsibility to maintain order."* These statements indicate that the United States, at least officially, maintains its position that it **supports the territorial integrity of Syria** for the time being.

But at the unofficial level, within the Pentagon and the CIA, **there is still a tendency to keep Syria weak and divided**. Israel's lobby also exerts influence on U.S. policy. Especially as nuclear tensions with Iran continue, breaking Iranian influence in Syria is a common U.S.-Israeli goal. Here, the SDF holds the trump card in their hands. If Damascus and the SDF fail to reconcile and clashes break out, the SDF area under the protection of the United States may remain as a separate administration for a long time, which would effectively mean the division of Syria. This is exactly what Israel wants. Therefore, **a contradiction emerges in the U.S. policy in Syria**: On the one hand, it defends unity diplomatically, and on the other hand, it actually maintains a separate order on the ground through the SDF. If this contradiction is not resolved in the future, the Syrian crisis is likely to remain a frozen conflict and deepen according to regional developments.

In summary, **the U.S. strategy in Syria** currently appears to have three elements:

1. **Limiting Iran's influence:** This is being done through the Corridor of David plan, economic sanctions and a military presence in eastern Syria. Iran's **Tehran-Baghdad-Damascus-Beirut logistics line** is being cut by the Tanf base; With the *Caesar Act* sanctions imposed on Syria, the country is kept economically weak.
2. **Holding the SDF as leverage:** As long as the eastern part of Syria's oil remains under SDF control, the pressure on Damascus continues. If the fate of Syria is negotiated in the future, the SDF wants to keep its leverage on the table against both Damascus and Moscow.
3. **Counter-terrorism and ISIS bet:** Officially, the reason why the US is there is supposedly not to revive ISIS. Indeed, in places like Hol Camp, ISIS variants are still a so-called danger. The U.S. gains international legitimacy on this ground. But if the threat of ISIS is exaggerated behind the scenes, the excuse for staying in Syria will continue.

So perhaps the ideal scenario for the U.S. is that **Syria remains undivided, but not fully under Russian/Iranian control – a win-lose policy.**

In the final analysis, the U.S. and Israeli approaches to Syria diverge as much as they overlap. **Although the Corridor of David** seems to be more of an Israeli dream, it is supported by some in the United States. In particular, Israel and the US hawks are partners in the strategy of containing Iran. On the other hand, although the sensitivities of NATO allies such as Turkey and the reactions of the Arab world prevent the United States from openly supporting this issue, the influence of the Israel lobby should not be ignored.

Iran and Russia: Is it possible to defend the "Shiite axis"?

Iran still sees Syria as a critical link in its "axis of resistance." In the Iran-USA/Israel conflict that has been going on since 1979, the **Syrian and Lebanese** fronts are strategically important; Iran has established **a Lebanese front** against Israel through **Hezbollah**; It has positioned Syria as a neighboring ally of Israel, a supply route to Lebanon, and a sphere of influence in the Arab world. Therefore, when the crisis erupted in Syria in 2011, Iran made a great effort to keep the Assad regime alive through the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Shiite militias (fighters from Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan). This financial and military support of Iran has been one of the factors that prevented the collapse of the Syrian regime.

Iran is firmly opposed to the dismemberment of Syria and especially **to the formation of a pro-US-Israel corridor**. In fact, the Iranian media was among the first to mention the David Corridor project. According to Iranian sources, Israel's recent moves to penetrate southern Syria are part of this **"reaching the Euphrates"** plan. As it is known, while the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris are already a matter of tension between Turkey, Syria and Iraq, the possibility of Israel dominating these areas means a new geopolitical equation.

From the Russian point of view, Moscow has linked its interests in Syria to **the preservation of a unitary state structure**. Even when it intervened militarily in 2015, it emphasized territorial integrity. Russia has the **Tartus naval base and the Khmeimim air base in Syria**, which can only be secured under the authority of a central government. The formation of a US/Israeli-backed corridor in northern Syria is also a challenge to Russia's influence in the Middle East. From time to time, Russian media and officials have also talked about the US plans to divide Syria. For example, the Russian Foreign Ministry stated that the Americans *had established "alternative administrations"* in the east of the Euphrates and that this situation was unacceptable.

However, Russia was forced to reduce its attention to Syria due to the Ukraine war that broke out in 2022. In this vacuum, Iran has increased its influence, but at the same time, Israel has intensified its attacks on Syria, taking advantage of Russia's distraction. There was a kind of tacit agreement between Israel and Russia on the ground in Syria : Israel strikes Iranian targets in Syria but Russian air defense systems do not prevent it, and Russia does not defend Syria against Israel, and in return, Israel is careful not to harm Russian forces. This balance is still partially maintained. However, if Israel embarks on a total dismemberment move such as the Corridor of David, Russia cannot be expected to remain silent. Probably, Russia will try to prevent such a scenario through diplomacy (Astana process, UN, etc.).

On the front of the Arab countries, the situation is interesting. While Saudi Arabia and the UAE initially wanted Assad to be overthrown, they changed their positions after 2018, fearing the strengthening of Iran. In 2023, they took Syria back into the Arab League and made peace with Assad. Jordan, for example, reacted very harshly to the events in Suwayda and feared that the Druze-Bedouin conflict would spread to its country. The King of Jordan has warned that Israel's adventurism in Syria could set the region on fire (as reported in the press). Egypt also said that the partition of Syria would set a bad example for the Arab world.

Therefore, **Iran, Russia and most of the Arab countries are now united in** support of the transitional government and territorial integrity **of Syria**. This is an interesting coalition: for the first time, Iran and Saudi Arabia are on the same side. Israel's Corridor of David move is likely to face such a wall of opposition. Still, Israel has historically taken similar risky steps with Western support (its occupation of the Golan Heights and the West Bank in 1967, its invasion of Lebanon in 1982, its expansion of the Palestinian territories in the 2000s, etc.). Now it is trying to stir up Syria, perhaps with more covert methods.

Turkey's Perspective and Security Concerns

Turkey is the neighboring country that has been the most affected since the beginning of the Syrian crisis. In 2011, Turkey supported the opposition against the Assad regime, and in the following years, it made efforts for regime change by patronizing various armed groups. However, after 2014, the priority was the **PKK/YPG presence** on its border. Ankara has repeatedly stated that if a **"terror corridor"** is established in northern Syria, it will pose a threat **to its national security**. For this reason, it carried out military operations and smashed the control of the YPG in the

northern belt of Syria. However, the SDF presence still continues in **the Hasakah-Qamishli-Kobani region and the Manbij-Tel Rifaat line**, and Turkey rightly sees this as a continuation of the threat.

From Turkey's point of view, **the David Corridor** is another version of this scenario. Because if the David Corridor is realized, it will not only be possible for the PKK/PYD to become a state in northern Syria, but also for Israel to play a role in this equation. In this case, Turkey will be faced with a hostile corridor on its southern borders. There **is a possibility that Israel will gain strength** in the Eastern Mediterranean energy equation, **especially at Hatay and Mediterranean exit** points, and that it may establish pipelines that bypass Turkey. This situation may **create new crises in Turkey's field of action in the Blue Homeland** concept.

Since Ankara saw these risks, Turkey accelerated its cooperation with Syria with the establishment **of the Shara transitional government**. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan's visit to Damascus in March 2025 and his meeting with the "new administration" showed that Turkey supports normalization in Syria. In these meetings, it is seen that Turkey conveyed its sensitivities, especially about **the future of the YPG**. *"We went over the agreement reached between the Damascus administration and the YPG and conveyed our concerns about it,"* Fidan said, emphasizing that this should really be implemented and supervised. In addition, Fidan stated that they **appreciated the policy of the Ahmed Shara administration not to pose a threat to Israel**, and that Syria's peace with its neighbors would contribute to peace in the region. Here, Turkey is also sending an indirect message to Israel: "Look, the new Syrian government is not hostile to you, so don't attack them." However, in the same speech, Fidan criticized Israel and said **that the Netanyahu government supports the continued presence of separatist elements such as the PKK/YPG in Syria** and that this policy is unhealthy. This is a clear expression of Turkey's view on the David Corridor issue. Turkey has frequently stated that it will not allow any move that will harm the security architecture in the short, medium and long term with the new equations that will occur in the region.

Turkey states **that it does not intend to clash with any country, not just Israel**, in Syria, and that its aim is to eliminate the threat of terrorism and ensure stability. In his statements in 2023 and 2024, President Erdoğan emphasizes the territorial integrity of Syria and says that they support the transition process in this context. In addition, Turkey argues that international support should be mobilized for the reconstruction of Syria and the return of refugees.

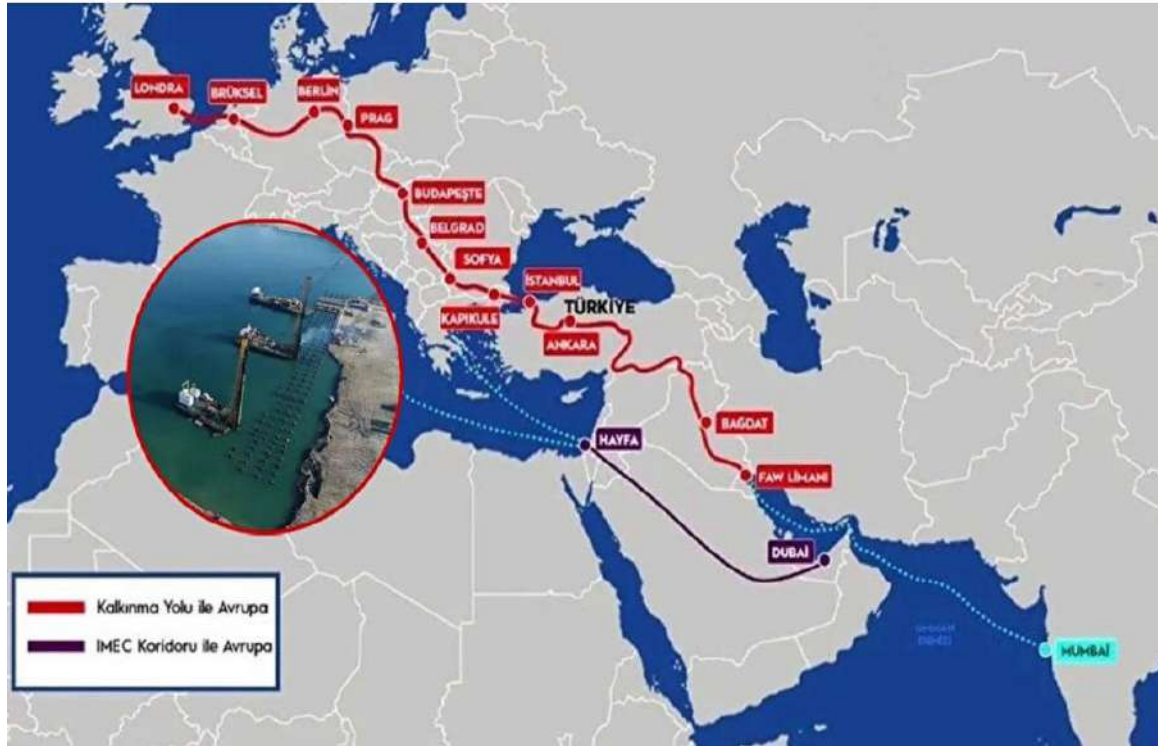
In the context of Turkey's security, **the formation of a permanent division or terror corridor in Syria is an unacceptable scenario**. In such a case, the PKK/PYD statelet could be a constant source of instability and terror, and actors such as Israel could use it as a trump card against Turkey. An Israeli-guided Kurdish-Druze axis could squeeze Turkey from the south, creating the potential for a permanent conflict on its borders. It could also create an asymmetrical situation in Turkey's fight against the **PKK presence in Iraq**. If a line starting from Sinjar and extending to Qamishli converges, the possibility of Turkey's counter-terrorism operations in Iraq and Syria being interconnected is far from being a development that Turkey can accept. Turkey's determination has been clearly and effectively demonstrated.

Turkey **considers the territorial integrity of Syria a matter of national security**. The most concrete expression of this is the emphasis in the National Security Council statement in 2022 that a terrorist state will never be allowed in the north of Syria. While maintaining its military deterrence on the ground, Ankara is **trying to solve the problem through** diplomacy and cooperation at the table.

In particular, regional economic initiatives such as the **Development Road Project** show that Turkey has adopted a new vision of integration with Syria and Iraq.

"Development Road" Project and Regional Cooperation Perspective

The Development Road Project is a major infrastructure project that the Iraqi government announced in 2023 and is trying to develop together with Turkey. The project envisages an integrated road and rail transport corridor from the Persian Gulf to Turkey. This line, which is approximately 1200 km long, will start from the Grand Fav Port in Basra, cross Iraq and reach the Turkish border (Habur/Zakho). From here, it is aimed to create a trade route that **will extend to Europe** by connecting to the Turkish railway network. President Erdoğan described the project as *"a visionary project that will make a great contribution to the stability and prosperity of Iraq and our entire region"*, while Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan described the Development Road as *"an important and visionary agenda focused on prosperity rather than conflict and division"*.



<https://www.instagram.com/p/DDRKEktlgeq/>

As for the importance of this project in the context of Syria; First, the project **can reduce the dynamics of conflict** by promoting *economic integration in the region*. This new Silk Road passing through Iraq **also provides the opportunity for Syria to participate in the project**. Minister Fidan was asked, "*Is it possible for Syria to join the Development Road?*" To the question, Fidan said, "*It is possible, it would be good. Syria can be a part of this project with certain formulas.*" This indicates that if the Damascus administration establishes stability, perhaps a connection to Mosul via Aleppo or an integrated line through the port of Latakia may be considered. That is, if Syria achieves peace, it will be included in regional trade corridors and removed from isolation.

Secondly, the Development Road project offers **an alternative to Iran's plan to reach the Mediterranean Sea through the southern corridor and Syria**. Iran wanted to strengthen its axis by establishing a railway and highway connection to Syria via Iraq. However, the fact that the Iraqi government is carrying out this project with Turkey rather than Iran **distances Iraq economically from the Iranian axis**. This could also limit Iran's potential for influence in Syria. Likewise, the Gulf countries are willing to invest in the Development Road (such as Saudi Arabia, UAE). Thus, if the region is drawn to the axis of cooperation instead of competition, **there will be no ground for divisive scenarios**. For example, projects such as the Corridor of David are based on conflict and separation. However, the Development Path is a vision of unification and development. These two approaches are two different paths for the future of the Middle East.

Turkey wants Syria to be included in the Development Path, as this will be an economic lifeline for the reconstruction of Syria and the **peace corridor extending to Europe through Turkey** will expand. This serves both Turkey's economic gain and security in the long run. Because a prosperous and integrated Syria would be a neighbor with common interests.

While the Development Road project **is the economic pillar of regional peace efforts**, plans such as the Corridor of David play a destructive role in this effort. If Israel and its supporters continue to stir up the region, these projects may naturally be disrupted. For example, when there are security threats, investment does not come, trade does not work. In this respect, the success of the Development Road also depends on the establishment of security in Syria and Iraq. Turkey has been negotiating intensively with Baghdad to eliminate the PKK presence in Iraq and sees this as essential for the future and influence of the Development Road. Similarly, ending terrorism in Syria is necessary for the development environment. In other words, a political-diplomatic solution and economic development will be complementary processes.

Conclusion and Insights

The recent developments in Syria and the city of Suwayda show us that the conflicts in the Middle East are the projection of great power struggles that cannot be explained by simple internal dynamics . Behind what appears to be the Druze-Bedouin conflict lie Israel's **strategic moves, the calculations of the United States, Iran's defense reflexes and the interests of the countries** in the region. Therefore, it is not possible to see the conflicts in Syria

as *local conflicts that develop in their natural course*, and the Turkish State Mind clearly reads the field reflections of such scenarios **on the global and regional power competition**. As a matter of fact, claims such as the David Corridor plan reveal how Syrian territory is used on the geopolitical chessboard.

In terms of future perspective, several scenarios stand out:

- **Success of the Transitional Government:** If the transition process led by Ahmed al-Shara turns into a successful political solution despite all the difficulties (for example, the establishment of an inclusive government by making a new constitution and holding elections), Syria will gradually enter the path of normalization. In such a case, **there is no basis for foreign intervention plans such as the Corridor of David**, because the central authority maintains control over every corner of the country. Reconciliation will be established in the Druze region, and the Kurdish issue will be resolved through integration. In this scenario, Israel's attempts at provocations would have to subside; because with a stable Syria, the risk of direct conflict would be high and its international legitimacy would be low. Turkey, the Leader and Pivot country of the Middle East Field, which stands out with its peace diplomacy and constructive moves in the region, is working to reach this conclusion. The realization of this scenario **is also the most positive prospect for Turkey's security**. Against Turkey, which has a holistic state authority on its borders, the shelter opportunity of terrorist organizations will decrease, the refugee problem will be solved, and regional trade will revive. With projects such as the Development Road, the whole region wins.
- **Freezing of Processes and Continuation of De Facto Division:** This means that the current situation does not change in the medium term. In other words, even if the Shara transitional government remains in power, it will not be able to fully penetrate a part of the country, the SDF will remain in its own region, and the opposition will continue to exist. In this case, Syria **remains Lebanonized**. Israel strikes Iranian targets with airstrikes whenever it can, but it does not embark on a large-scale ground adventure. The Corridor of David remains on paper, but in places like Suwayda, there are occasional attempts to cause trouble. The risk for Turkey in this scenario is **that the terrorist threat will not be completely over**.
- **Implementation of the Daoud Corridor Scenario (Worst-Case Scenario):** If Israel and its supporters act very aggressively and take steps that upset the balance of power in the region – for example, if the Israeli army occupies permanent positions in southern Syria or establishes a buffer zone in the Druze region under the pretext of protection – this will plunge Syria into a new spiral of war. If such a step is taken, reprisals from Iran and Hezbollah could follow, triggering a new war between Israel and Lebanon. Turkey certainly does not want Israeli influence on its borders; In such a case, the rapprochement between Ankara and Damascus may lead to different security cooperation. In short, this scenario **would lead to large-scale regional chaos**. This is not in the interest of any rational actor.

As a result, the recent Suwayda events and the David Corridor discussions in Syria show us **the collision of regional chaos scenarios and regional cooperation scenarios**. On the one hand, there is Israel's strategy of keeping its neighbors weak under the pretext of security concerns, and on the other hand, there is the desire of Turkey and the countries of the region to end the conflicts and focus on the economy. A large number of people, including Turkey, **seem determined not to allow such imperial projects to support** the integrity and sovereignty of Syria.

In the coming period, **the solution of the Syrian crisis will continue to be directly related to Turkey's national security**, and the **vision of regional development** can only be realized in a peaceful environment. Projects such as the Corridor of David will remain far from reality.

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Prof. Dr. Murat KOÇ / Çağ University Regional Security Studies Application and Research Center