

Ahmed al-Sharaa's Visit to Washington: A Slippery Slope of Dangerous Concessions

(Translated)

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Following the flight of Bashar al-Assad and the collapse of his security and military apparatus in December 2014, Syria witnessed rapid political transformations that could be classified as sudden events, for which global powers were unprepared. The visit of the head of the transitional government, Ahmed al-Sharaa, to the United States and his meeting with President Trump emerged as a significant milestone in these transformations, fraught with profound controversy regarding the political and ideological price the country might pay for international recognition and the purported stability.

This visit was preceded by moves in Riyadh and the United Nations, so that Ahmed al-Sharaa's visit to Washington would be the culmination of a dangerous path that is sliding the country into the depths of dependency, where sovereignty is lost and will is taken away due to the approach of relying on the mirage of deceptive foreign support.

The visits did not pass without controversy. Some see them as a necessary step towards breaking out of isolation, while others consider them the beginning of a series of concessions that will empty the revolution of its original content.

Several things and many details emerged in the scene, and the most important of which are those related to informal protocols, but the most important thing lies in the agenda that the American administration imposed on the new Syrian leadership:

- **The Caesar Act:** The American stick hanging over the top of the agenda. The Caesar Act was enacted allegedly to protect civilians. Although sound political reasoning dictates that the sanctions should be lifted immediately upon the fall of the Assad regime, against which they were imposed, what occurred was a suspension of the law, not its cancellation. This temporary freeze is interpreted in political analysis as a Damocles' sword; a threat ready to be wielded should the new government fail to fulfill its obligations.

- Maintaining economic pressure, while simultaneously discussing a partial easing of restrictions on living conditions, aligns with a mindset of disciplining the popular base. This is the approach adopted by various countries throughout the years of the revolution. The objectives of all plans ostensibly aimed at pressuring and punishing the regime have all shared a single goal: to control the behavior of the revolutionary masses and keep them in a constant state of pressure, preventing them from considering a broader political project or raising their voices with demands for sovereignty.

- Keeping people trapped in a vicious cycle of struggling for survival is a Western strategy to undermine any aspiration to build a state with independent decision-making.

The International Coalition: Legitimizing Occupation or a Necessity?

The most dangerous aspect of the debate was the pressure to force Syria to join the US-led international coalition against terrorism, which many ulema and mujahidoon view as a crusader alliance that has declared war on Islam, under the pretext of fighting ISIS.

This coalition, whose intervention in Syria dates back to 2014, has a long history of massacres targeting the popular uprising, far removed from its stated goals of combating terrorism. Accepting membership in this coalition would effectively legitimize the American military presence, its bases, and its areas of influence on Syrian soil.

Previously, the presence of foreign forces was illegitimate or temporary, linked to the SDF-controlled areas or the fight against ISIS. Now, however, signing the coalition agreement would legalize this presence, and make any opposition or criticism of it a crime punishable by law for harming international relations!

This concession represents a pivotal point that undermines the principle of sovereignty and the restoration of decision-making power upon which the revolution was founded, and opens the door to direct intervention in Syrian security and military affairs.

The Normalization Issue and the Ideological Clash:

Pressuring Damascus to conclude security agreements with the Jewish entity, similar to the Abraham Accords, puts the new government in direct conflict with the fundamental principles of a large segment of its support base. The issue is not merely border demarcation, or withdrawal from the Golan Heights; it is about recognizing an illegitimate entity on the Blessed Land of Palestine.

This American endeavor aims at several things. First, it seeks to solidify the notion that political Islam is unfit to govern, paving the way for its eventual demise, or replacement with a more pragmatic and internationally acceptable construct. Second, it targets certain communities of immigrants and mujahideen by forcing the new government to actively combat what is termed "extremism," according to Western definitions, even if this means fighting factions that were partners in overthrowing Bashar al-Assad. This could potentially lead to infighting among former allies under the pretext of preserving the writ of state.

The Anticipated Domestic Explosion:

This explosive mix of economic pressure, as the Caesar Act, concessions of sovereignty, as the alliance with America, and ideological clash, as normalization with the Jewish entity, raises genuine fears of an internal explosion. The mujahidoon, both Syrian and foreign, who fought to establish a state governed by Islamic Shariah Law, categorically reject this path and view submission to Western demands as a betrayal of their sacrifices.

This discontent exposes Syria to the risk of a major domestic conflict that serves only foreign policy interests. While the Syrian public may currently refrain from erupting for fear of descending into further chaos, the continued economic pressure, coupled with concessions of sovereignty, is eroding its patience and resilience.

In summary: Post-pragmatism:

The meeting between the head of the interim administration, Ahmed al-Sharaa, and Trump revealed that the political transition in Syria will be neither easy nor free. It is a true test for the new leadership, balancing the pragmatism required for international recognition, with preserving the essence and principles of the revolution. Amid this struggle between the scheming and plotting will of the United States and the supplication of the Syrian people, anticipation remains the prevailing sentiment.

In conclusion, we say that the region, and perhaps the world, is on the verge of an earthquake; based on a clash between two ideologies; a capitalist ideology whose mind-set is to exploit people, plunder their resources and enslave them, and the Islamic ideology which is based on guardianship, in accordance with the Shariah rulings of Islam and the protection of the subjects of the state. It is a conflict that will ultimately lead to the realization of what Allah (swt) promised the believers, and what His noble Messenger (saw) foretold, so that the sacrifices of yesterday will be the basis for the desired victory, far from the rules and conditions of the hegemons, because we are certain that the outcome is for the righteous.

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