

# Black Flag Over Damascus. Mike Whitney

By [Mike Whitney](#)

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Theme: [Terrorism](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

***“The black flag of Salafist Islam has been raised over Damascus. ISIS/Al Qaeda has won.... The same terrorists who attacked us on 9/11. Whom we waged war against in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Losing thousands of our servicemen and women. Costing trillions of dollars. They won. And we helped them. America stands for nothing. ...”*** —Scott Ritter@[RealScottRitter](#)

**General Mike Flynn**, the former head of the Pentagon’s Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), warned his colleagues in the Obama administration, that supporting terrorist groups to prosecute proxy wars on Washington’s behalf, was a risky business that would eventually backfire leading to the establishment of ‘a Salafist principality in Syria.’ That warning has now become a reality.

Of the 50-or-so mainstream articles on the fall of the Syrian government, not one bothered to mention the fact that **the Sunni militia that toppled Bashar al-Assad is currently on the US State Department’s list of terrorist organizations**. Nor did they mention that the same jihadist group is on the United Nations list of terrorist organizations. Nor did they mention that **the leader of the group—Abu Mohammad al-Jolani—has a \$10 million bounty on his head offered by the US government**. None of this information was reported to the public because the media does not want the American people to know that **Washington just helped install a terrorist regime at the center of the Middle East**. But that’s what’s really going on.

And it’s even worse than it looks because, ultimately, **the 13-year-old Syrian campaign is not really aimed at Syria, but Iran. Syria is just the last obstacle on the path to Tehran, but Tehran is the icing on the cake**. Crush Iran and Israel takes the ‘top spot’ in the Middle East; it becomes the regional hegemon overnight. Meanwhile—Uncle Sam gains access to the pipeline corridors it has sought for over 2 decades, corridors that will transport natural gas from Qatar to the Mediterranean and then onward to markets in Europe. **The gas will be provided by a US puppet, extracted by western oil companies, sold in US Dollars, and used to maintain a stranglehold on European politics**. At the same time, all other competitors will be either sanctioned, sabotaged or excluded entirely. (Nordstream)

Most people are unaware of how pipeline politics have shaped events in Syria making the country a target for US aggression. But from 1949 until today, US intelligence services have tried repeatedly to topple the leader of the Syrian government in order to oversee and control a Trans-Arabian Pipeline “intended to connect the oil fields of Saudi Arabia to the ports of Lebanon via Syria.” Robert F Kennedy summed it up in a brilliant article he wrote more than a decade ago:

**The CIA began its active meddling in Syria in 1949**—barely a year after the agency’s creation. Syrian patriots had declared war on the Nazis, expelled their Vichy French colonial rulers and crafted a fragile secularist democracy based on the American model. But in March 1949, **Syria’s democratically elected president, Shukri-al-Quwatli, hesitated to approve the Trans-Arabian Pipeline, an American project** intended to connect the oil fields of Saudi Arabia to the ports of Lebanon via Syria. In his book, *Legacy of Ashes*, CIA historian Tim Weiner recounts that **in retaliation for Al-Quwatli’s lack of enthusiasm for the U.S. pipeline, the CIA engineered a coup replacing al-Quwatli with the CIA’s handpicked dictator**, a convicted swindler named Husni al-Za’im. Al-Za’im barely had time to dissolve parliament and approve the American pipeline before his countrymen deposed him, four and a half months into his regime. [Why the Arabs Don’t Want Us in Syria](#), Robert Kennedy, Politico

Washington’s long history of covert action against Syria is well documented in Kennedy’s piece which also pinpoints the precise moment when the US decided it would do ‘whatever it takes’ to topple the regime and replace it with a compliant flunky. Here’s Kennedy:

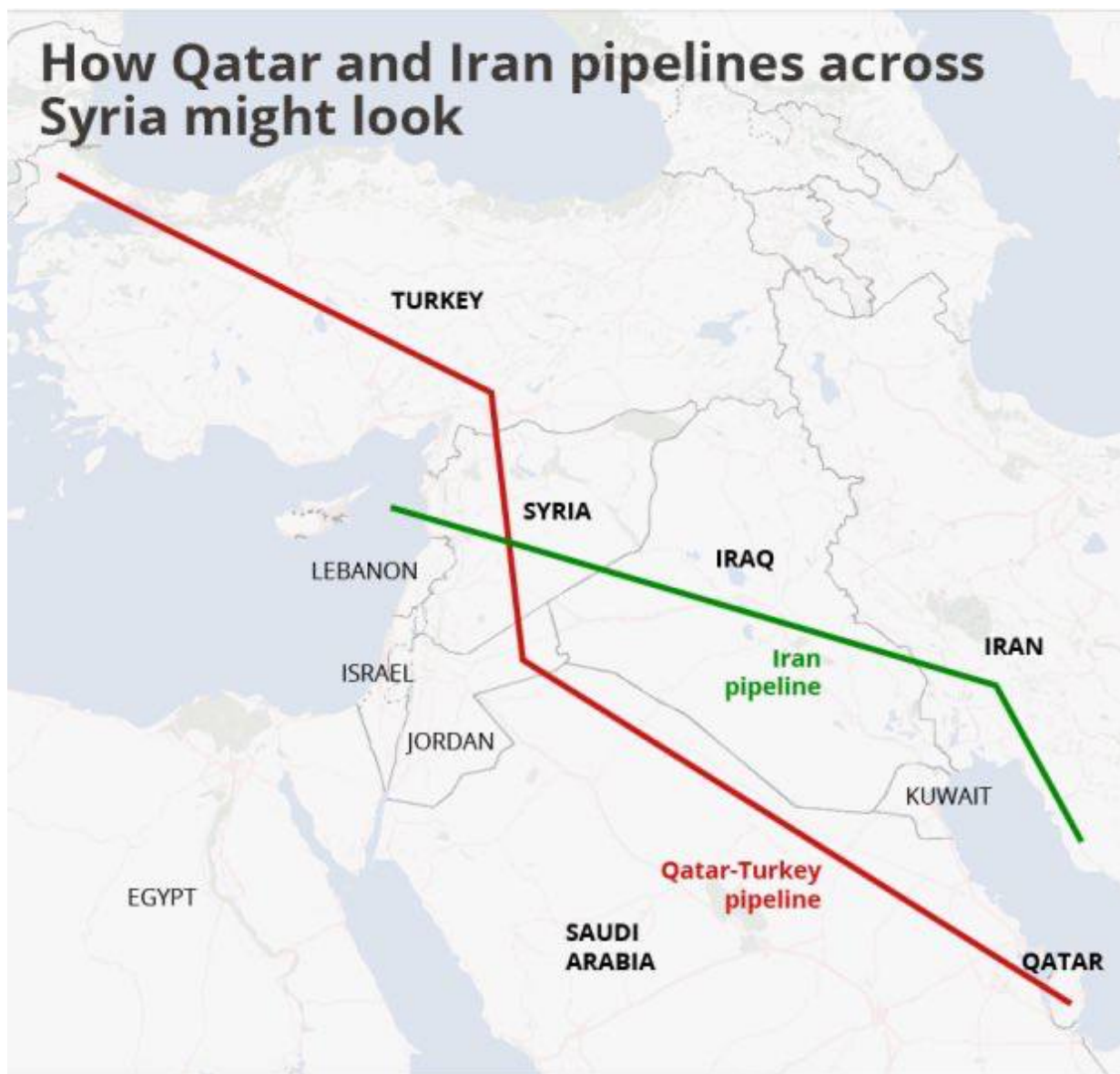
**... our war against Bashar Assad did not begin with the peaceful civil protests of the Arab Spring in 2011. Instead it began in 2000, when Qatar proposed to construct a \$10 billion, 1,500 kilometer pipeline through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Turkey.** Qatar shares with Iran the South Pars/North Dome gas field, the world’s richest natural gas repository. The international trade embargo until recently prohibited Iran from selling gas abroad. Meanwhile, Qatar’s gas can reach European markets only if it is liquefied and shipped by sea, a route that restricts volume and dramatically raises costs. **The proposed pipeline would have linked Qatar directly to European energy markets via distribution terminals in Turkey, which would pocket rich transit fees.** The Qatar/Turkey pipeline would give the Sunni kingdoms of the Persian Gulf decisive domination of world natural gas markets and strengthen **Qatar, America’s closest ally in the Arab world. Qatar hosts two massive American military bases and the U.S. Central Command’s Mideast headquarters.** [Why the Arabs Don’t Want Us in Syria](#), Robert Kennedy, Politico

This helps to explain why Syria factors so largely in US geopolitical plans to control critical resources as a way to preserve the dominance of the dollar and to contain China’s explosive economic growth. The US is determined to control the vast resources of the Middle East to maintain its privileged position in the global order. Here’s more:

**Assad further enraged the Gulf’s Sunni monarchs by endorsing a Russian-approved “Islamic pipeline” running from Iran’s side of the gas field through Syria and to the ports of Lebanon. The Islamic pipeline would make Shiite Iran, not Sunni Qatar, the principal supplier to the European energy market and dramatically increase Tehran’s influence in the Middle East and the world. Israel also was understandably determined to derail the Islamic pipeline, which would enrich Iran and Syria and presumably strengthen their proxies, Hezbollah and Hamas.**

Secret cables and reports by the U.S., Saudi and Israeli intelligence agencies indicate that **the moment Assad rejected the Qatari pipeline, military and intelligence planners quickly arrived at the consensus that fomenting a Sunni uprising in**

**Syria to overthrow the uncooperative Bashar Assad was a feasible path to achieving the shared objective of completing the Qatar/Turkey gas link.** In 2009, according to WikiLeaks, soon after Bashar Assad rejected the Qatar pipeline, the CIA began funding opposition groups in Syria. It is important to note that this was well before the Arab Spring-engendered uprising against Assad. [Why the Arabs Don't Want Us in Syria](#), Robert Kennedy, Politico



So, **once Assad agreed to the “Islamic pipeline”, his goose was cooked.** Washington was never going to let that happen. As we said earlier, Washington is fully committed to controlling critical resources in the Middle East as a way to contain China and maintain its increasingly tenuous grip on global power. The Abraham Accords also factor into this geopolitical strategy by normalizing relations between Israel and its Islamic neighbors (primarily Saudi Arabia) in order to create an economic corridor that allows for the rapid transport of manufactured goods from India to Europe. **Washington sees economic integration in the region as the principle means for preserving its global primacy. That doesn't mean that Israel's ambitions to dominate the Middle East wasn't the**

**driving force behind the war in Syria and the ousting of Assad. It was, but there were other considerations as well, geopolitical considerations.**

So, you can see why the US wanted to install a government that was more receptive to Washington's interests. What's hard to understand, however, is how this is all supposed to work. **Assad is gone and al Qaida won. We know that. Now what?**

I can't imagine that any of the young men who have spent the last decade of their lives galivanting around the desert in 4x4s blasting anything that moves, know a lot about running a government. So, who's going to run the agencies, pay the workers and perform the mundane clerical tasks that that are expected of every government? Who's going to run the schools, fix the roads, and police the streets? Of course, maybe Mr. al-Jawlani has talents we don't know about and will miraculously rise to the occasion making sure the agencies are fully staffed and the trains run on time, but that seems extremely unlikely. What is more probable is that the architects of this dreadful fiasco plan to run the country and its flailing economy into the ground, greatly intensifying the suffering of ordinary working people, increasing the public dissatisfaction until an attempt is made to violently overthrow the new regime.

We could be wrong. There is a remote chance that the Sunni militants in HTS will address the needs of the people and lead them to a prosperous and secure future. But we all know that is not going to happen. This regime is merely a tool in the hands of foreign interests who want to seize as much of Syria's natural wealth as possible while eliminating a potential threat to Israel's relentless expansion. In short, the neocon powerbrokers who fomented this evil strategy did so without the slightest regard for the safety or well-being of any of the 23 million people who currently call Syria home. Their lives just don't matter.

What does matter (to Tel Aviv and Washington) is having a proxy army that is willing to do its bidding in an upcoming war with Iran. That matters. And that is why the US and Turkey use "contract" soldiers who will do what they are told in exchange for the lavish salaries they receive. HTS is paid for its services, and those services are going to involve the launching of attacks on Iran and Hezbollah. So, this is NOT an experiment in new forms of governance. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham doesn't have the slightest interest in running the government. Syria is merely a base of operations for launching attacks on Iran and Hezbollah. That's it. That's what they're paid to do, make war.

It's all about geography, gas, USD and Israel. And of those four, Israel looms largest.

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**Michael Whitney** is a renowned geopolitical and social analyst based in Washington State. He initiated his career as an independent citizen-journalist in 2002 with a commitment to honest journalism, social justice and World peace.

He is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG).

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