As Russia’s influence in Syria wanes, Turkey steps in

written by Prof. Kobi Michael | 20.02.2025

Prof. Kobi Michael: Russia’s interest in Syria is really crucial, and in exchange for that interest they would be willing to invest quite a bit of effort and maybe bend.

The new Syrian regime also has an interest in cooperating with Russia, since it is still under intense scrutiny from the international community, especially the United States. It needs, so to speak, to think about all the security guarantees it can generate for itself, and it can dictate certain conditions to the Russians from a position of strength.

Sharaa could extract economic carrots from Russia, and more importantly, military supplies, because the new Syrian army does not have a functioning force, and the Americans or Europeans would not sell them weapons. I’m not sure the Chinese would agree to sell them much. As a result, the new Syrian regime could demand military supplies from the Russians in exchange for letting them stay.

Turkey, too, looks set to equip the new Syrian military, but its capabilities still fall short of Russia’s in this respect.

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