



Michael Arizanti  @ColdBrief · 2h



Let me get this straight.

Israel, Iran, the PKK and parts of the Muslim Brotherhood tried to brand Al-Sharaa as a forever jihadi - a dangerous terrorist with no place in civilized politics.

Then the Salafi jihadis, Iran-backed militias and Sufi hardliners turned around and called him a Zionist agent.

Both camps are wrong. And both know it.

Since December 8, Al-Sharaa has done nothing but govern. No revenge. No purges. No theocracy. Just politics - steady, calculated, and deliberate.

From day one, his message has been the same: Syria is for all Syrians. Not some Syrians. Not the right Syrians. All of them.

He never whitewashed his past. He didn't need to. He showed the world something more powerful - that he's a human being. A family man.

Someone who watches basketball. Someone who apparently has good taste in music.

Watching Missy Elliott doesn't make him a sellout. Praying in a mosque doesn't make him a theocrat. That's called being a person.

Because here's the reality of governing a nation as ancient, complex and fractured as Syria:

He is president for the conservative sheikh in Deir ez-Zor and the young woman who wants to dance in Damascus. For the Alawite, the Druze, the Christian, the Kurd, the Mandaean. He even opened the door for Jews of Syrian heritage to return.

That means everyone will occasionally see something they don't like. That's not a bug. That's democracy.

If Al-Sharaa had chosen the Bashar playbook, Assad remnants would be in mass graves. Druze drug networks - backed by Israel - would be crushed by force. PKK hardliners causing chaos in the north would be bombed into submission. The list goes on.

Instead he keeps reaching for soft power when hard power would be easier. That takes discipline. That takes vision.

Is he perfect? No. Is Syria's transition messy? Absolutely.

But Al-Sharaa is doing something no Syrian leader has seriously attempted in decades - governing for everyone.

Deal with it.