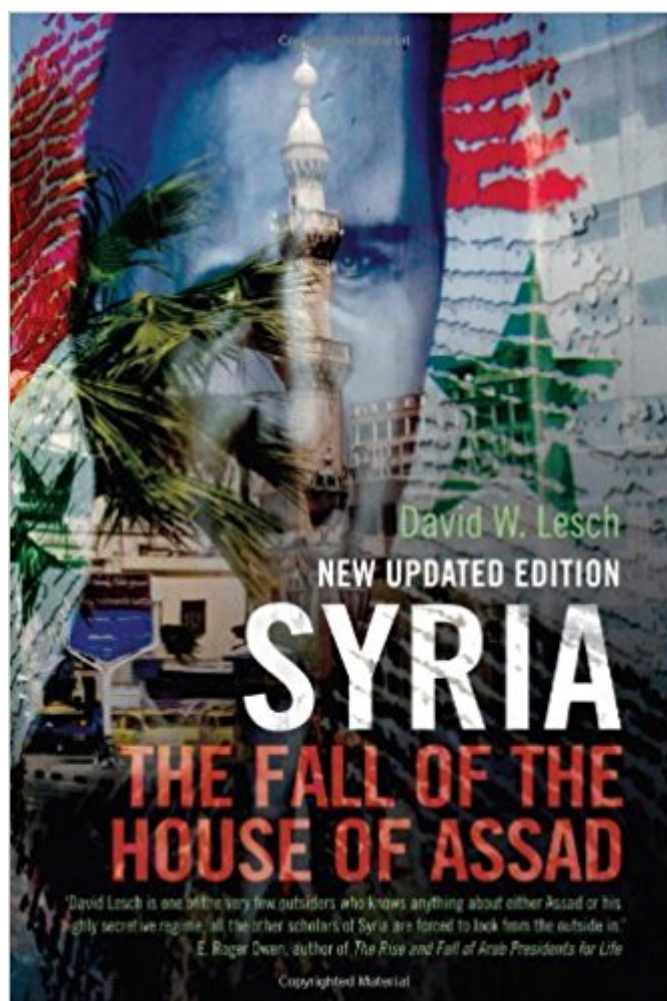


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Syria: The Fall Of The House Of Assad; New Updated Edition



Synopsis

In this timely book, David Lesch – one of the only Westerners well acquainted with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad – sheds new light on the ophthalmologist-turned-tyrant and how his regime has failed his country. For this updated edition, Lesch has added an epilogue that discusses the formation of the Syrian Coalition; the use of chemical weapons; whether or not outside nations should intervene; Al-Qaeda and Jihadist groups in Syria; the lessons of Iraq; the Geneva Communique plan for the country's future; and the ongoing human cost of the Syrian conflict.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"David Lesch is one of the very few outsiders who knows anything about either Assad or his highly secretive regime; all the other scholars of Syria are forced to look from the outside in." – E. Roger Owen, author of *The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life* (E. Roger Owen) "What separates this book from others on Syria and the Syrian uprising is the sense of immediacy that comes from Dr Lesch's long acquaintanceship with Bashar al-Assad and regime insiders and the anger and sorrow he feels about their betrayal of Syria." – James L. Gelvin, author of *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know* (James Gelvin) "Detailed and thoughtful in the potential outcomes for this key Middle Eastern state." – The Bookseller (The Bookseller 2012-07-13) "Personal knowledge and on-the-ground experience inform this behind-the-headlines chronicle of the Syrian conflict." – Kirkus (Kirkus) "Insightful, valuable..Understanding Syria is

important, and David Lesch's book is invaluable for those who want to do so." Philip Seib, Dallas Morning News (Philip Seib Dallas Morning News)"Lesch ably tackles Bashar's failures. He excels in explaining the underlying economic reasons for the Syrian people's frustrations with their regime." Rayyan Al-Shawaf, Christian Science Monitor (Rayyan Al-Shawaf Christian Science Monitor)"David Lesch's Syria is timely, relevant, and to the point, providing the educated reader with everything needed to make sense of what is happening in that country. . . A major contribution to our knowledge of Syria and the Middle East. Anyone who seeks a real understanding of these subjects must read this book." Andrew Rosenbaum, New York Journal of Books (Andrew Rosenbaum New York Journal of Books)

David W. Lesch is professor of Middle East history at Trinity University. He lives in San Antonio, TX.

interesting observation of the beginning of Syria's civil war in the wake of the Arab Spring. Lesch does his job contemplating the evolution of Bashir, his search for "reform," and the frustrations of Syria's masses meeting the old regime and the promise of 2011. He notes that Bashir al-Assad's "reform process" (ie, introduction of pro-Western capital investment) led to increasing inequality and corruption, yet conveniently blames this on "crony capitalism" rather than the market mechanism itself. I can't see where cronyism plays any greater role in Syria than in "really existing capitalism" in the US, Europe, or elsewhere. The reforms themselves led to destabilization; while those who egged the demonstrations on, flush with the victory of global color-coded revolutions and the then-apparent successes of Tunisia and Libya, were drooling for Bashir's fall like some overripe fruit. The Syrian opposition was unrealistically hopeful that the West would come to its rescue in assisted regime-change intervention. Given Obama's early opposition to the fiasco that is now Iraq, this would not happen. Professor Lesch is an experienced policy analyst funded by several European institutes and was prophetic in noting the likelihood of civil war if things got out of hand with powerful Islamist forces waiting in the wings to exploit it. Yet he seems unable to connect his own dots at certain points, such as the contradictory nature of market reform noted above. He compares Bashir's failure to Gorbachev's "success," yet Gorbachev did *not* succeed in reforming the USSR but leading to its transition to something quite different. This was and remains the stated the Western policy goal in Syria, as enunciated by the ever-blunt Hillary Clinton in 2011. However, Bashir and his security-military apparat were not going to quietly crumble and cede power because Westerners think it necessary they do so. The middle class reformers, with their Western educations

and orientation, which Westerners pin such hopes upon, have no mass base in the streets or villages. Hence their easy muscling aside by populist Islamists - with aid from Saudi Arabia, which the West seemed loath to block. Dr. Lesch's hope that Syria could "morph into something resembling a democratic, open society" (p. 124) is to repeat the naivete that thought Tiananmin Square could "democratize" China. Lesch takes dictators like Qaddafi, Saddam, and the Assads to task for "just not getting it;" for living in their own sycophantic little worlds, blinding them to how out of touch they are with the people they misrule. There is truth in that, but I rather think that Dr. Lesch and the "democratizers" don't get it. These men truly believe they have the right to rule, given them by God, history, the people (at some point) or their own struggles to attain power. They refuse to surrender their life's meaning, work, and very identity, like an old farmer standing with his shotgun in the path of an oncoming highway bulldozer. Call them stubborn and misguided; but we yet remember the 300 Spartans and the Maccabbees. So what should the "international community" - that is, the US and NATO - "do?" Professor. Lesch should be enough of a historian to know that revolutions cannot be made from outside without foreign intervention, in which case they become dependent satellite regimes. Oppositionists so certain that Syria was Tunisia, egged on by a West anxious to remake the Middle East, did as much as Assad to create the stalemate that spawned ISIS. Perhaps it was best they do nothing. The outcome could not have been worse for the Syrian people.

The book is certainly topical. I was disappointed in that it does not cover the career and political history of Syria under Hafez Assad. The book is primarily concerned with Bashir Assad and events of the last three years with emphasis on the current civil war. In that context, the author does his job and the book presents many useful facts and observations regarding Syria's recent history and to a certain extent about the current Assad. But, if you were looking for a more in-depth political history of Syria from the rise of the Assad Dynasty (1973 onward), you won't find it in this book.

Lesch is one of the few Western academics who had access to Assad and high-ranking regime officials. His painstaking narrative on how Syria's "Arab Spring" devolved into a civil war and the world's largest humanitarian disaster is extremely useful.

Bit off

An excellent overview of Syria's recent past illuminating the present crisis .Essential reading for

anyone who wants to have insight to events in Syria and the region today

Well constructed history and insight of the Syria conflict. I especially appreciated the discussion of the roles and actions of regional players.

This is not the kind of book you "like" or "love ". It's a story that makes your heart hurt for the people of Syria. In view of current events and not knowing a lot about Syria I read this book to learn more about the history of the Assad regime. It's a shocking story of oppression, terror, indifference and corruption by one ruling family against an entire country. Power and religion drive it all. History shows that Assad has never been a man of his word and Syrian people suffer because of it. They've been promised reforms for decades but it never comes. Big promises and zero results. My take away from this book. By the time I finished reading this book Putin is working with Basha to destroy all Syria's chemical weapons. There is a lot of very current events in this book. Now I understand those critics who suspect we're being duped. What a nightmare.

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