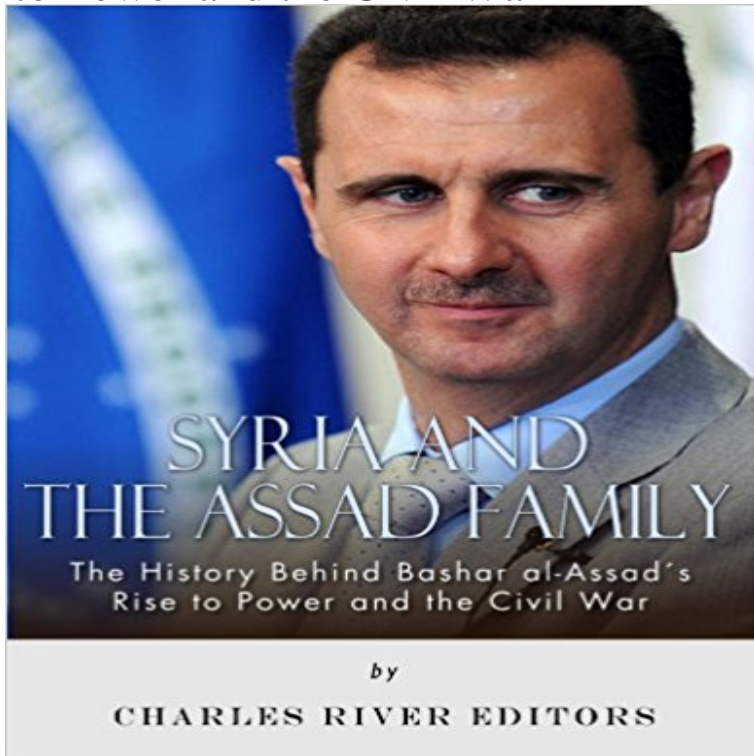


Syria and the Assad Family: The History Behind Bashar al-Assads Rise to Power and the Civil War



*Includes pictures. *Includes excerpts of interviews done by the Assad family. *Explains the history of the Alawites and the Baath Party, as well as Hafez al-Assads presidency. *Includes a bibliography for further reading. *Includes a table of contents.

â€œIm not a puppet. I wasnt made by the west to go to the west or any other country. Im Syrian. Im made in Syria. I have to live in Syria and die in Syria.â€ Bashar al-Assad, 2012

In early 2011, a political movement swept across the Arabic speaking world that toppled despotic regimes and dictatorships. The political movement, which became known as the â€œArab Spring,â€ was popular in nature and made use of the internet, particularly social networking websites, to remove dictators such as Ben Ali of Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and Muammar Qadaffi of Libya. Those dictators, who ruled their countries for decades, were unable to stem the tide of popular indignation against them even though they tried using force and propaganda in ways reminiscent of the Cold War era. While some of these dictators bowed to the political pressure and others were pushed out by force through civil wars, the events of the Arab Spring have come to be overshadowed by the civil war in the Arabic speaking nation of Syria, which has been ruled throughout the 21st century by Bashar al-Assad. Though he had not planned on ruling Syria, several events conspired to make Bashar the successor of his father Hafez, who himself was notorious for crushing an uprising in the Syrian

city of Hama by massacring thousands of inhabitants. Though the West frequently looked for signs that Bashar might be a reformer, due in part to his formerly popular Western wife, Assad remained part of a critical alliance with Iran and the sub-state groups Hamas and Hezbollah, forming an influential bloc that has influenced events across the Middle East, and one that Israel and the West have tried to break over the past decade. Like the other dictators, Assad faced popular demonstrations against his regime at the height of the Arab Spring, but the outcome has proved to be much different there than in the other Arab nations. Assad steadfastly refused to step down from power, and the protests against him and his government quickly turned violent, which eventually enveloped Syria in a civil war that has already killed over 100,000, left over half a million refugees, and shows no signs of ending anytime soon. Furthermore, on August 21, 2013, a chemical weapon attack outside of the capital city Damascus left around 1,500 civilians dead, and anti-Assad factions in Syria, as well as enemies of the Assad regime in other countries, have blamed Bashar for the attack, while Assad claims his enemies are responsible. A crisis that may have threatened to involve either the United States, Russia, or both, appears to have been solved at least temporarily, but bigger issues concerning Syria still remain. The two major questions that concern the future of Syria are whether Bashar al-Assad will literally and politically survive the civil war, and what Syria's future will be in the wake of the civil war.

Answering these questions requires an understanding of Bashar's religious sect, the Alawites, the regional strife among Sunni and Shiite nations, Arab nationalism, and the Assad family as a whole. Syria and the Assad Family explains how Hafez al-Assad's son grew up and the events that brought him to power in Syria. It also comprehensively analyzes the ongoing civil war against Assad. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Syria's notorious dictator like you never have before.

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his attrition have exacerbated the regimes central challenge of generating combat power. Alawite shabiha mafias are led by extended members of the Assad family

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