



The Struggle For Power in Syrian: Politics and Society Under Asad and the Ba'th Party

Nikolaos van Dam

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This is a fully revised and updated paperback edition of this study of power in Syrian politics.

The book explains the factors which have enabled the regime of Hafiz al-Asad to stay in power much longer than any other since independence; it also shows how al-Asad's disappearance may seriously disrupt Syria's present stability. Providing an in-depth analysis of the role of sectarian, regional and tribal loyalties in contemporary Syrian history, the author focuses attention on developments within the military and civilian power elite and the Ba'th Party organization. He shows that the 1963 Ba'thist takeover constituted a decisive turning-point. With the help of the army and the Ba'th, members of Islamic minority communities, especially Alawis, Druzes and Ismailis, and people from the poor countryside, were brought to the fore, and went through a process of rapid national emancipation. In 1970 this culminated in the monopolization of power by al-Asad, whose Alawi-dominated officers' faction has ruled Syria ever since. The text considers the political history of Syria in the 1980s and 1990s and speculates on its future.

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