

Syria: A Turning Point That Doesn't Turn?

8

6

Save



People gather at Saadallah al-Jabiri Square to celebrate after Syria's army command notified officers that President Bashar al-Assad's rule had ended, in Aleppo, Syria, on Dec. 8, 2024. Karam al-Masri/Reuters



By Armstrong Williams

12/18/2024 Updated: 12/18/2024

A A Print

Commentary

History features a multitude of turning points.

The number that doesn't turn, like the Arab Spring, eclipse the number that does turn, like the American Revolution.

Post-Assad Syria is most likely to prove to be a turning point that doesn't turn. The Assad family dictatorship reigned for 50 years. Previously, Syria subsisted as part of the Ottoman Empire before evolving into a French protectorate after World War I in the division of spoils by the victors.

Syria secured independence in 1945. A series of military coups and one-party governments followed, culminating in the dictatorship of Hafez al-Assad in 1971. He brooked no opposition until his death in 2000. He was succeeded by his son Bashar al-Assad, a trained ophthalmologist, who bettered the instruction of his brutal father until he was driven from power on Dec. 8 and fled to Moscow. Bashar, who represented the minority Alawite sect, had been propped up by Russia, Iran, and Iranian proxy Hezbollah.

Syria has never enjoyed self-government. It has never developed a civic culture necessary to fortify democracy and the rule of law, including a free media, a multi-party system, an independent and impartial judiciary, separation of powers, and civilian supremacy over the military. Its boundaries are artificial, drawn for the convenience of the French and British Empires. Syria sports a bewildering array of combustible political factions, including Armenians, Assyrians, Druze, Palestinians, Kurds, Yazidi, Mhallami, Arab Christians, Mandeans, Turkmens, Greeks, and Alawites.

The overthrow of Assad culminated 13 years of civil war commencing with the Arab Spring. In the interim, Syria suffered a stupendous brain drain. More than 6 million Syrians were displaced, over half the population. The leading opposition group, HTS (Hayat Tahrir-al-Sham) was formerly linked to Al Qaeda and is classified as a terrorist organization by the United States. Can a leopard change its spots? Afghanistan's Taliban 2.0 promised a moderate Islam upon regaining

power in 2021, but soon turned grislier and more misogynist than Taliban 1.0.

The United States intelligence community was clueless about the rapid ouster of Assad, showing our cluelessness of foreign political dynamics. Nothing the United States can do will materially influence post-Assad Syria, just as we have been unable to control political developments in Libya, Somalia, or Iraq after we destroyed their respective political infrastructures. The United States should withdraw its 900 soldiers in Syria who have accomplished nothing positive and are sitting ducks for terrorist attacks. The withdrawal should be ordered by President Donald Trump on the day of his inauguration, Jan. 20, 2025.

Syria is likely to be splintered among multiple militia factions for years if not decades to resemble post-Gaddafi Libya and post-Siad Barre Somalia. Israel may occupy southern Syria as a buffer zone against terrorism. Turkey will move heaven and earth to crush Syria's Kurds which they perceived as proxies for Turkey's terrorist PKK. Arab Christians are likely to be persecuted by radical Muslims. The need for humanitarian assistance will be staggering.

On the surface, the overthrow of Assad seems to be a defeat for his chief backers Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah. But in a larger sense, all three will be strengthened. They will no longer be hemorrhaging resources on a losing, corrupt regime, like the United States benefit from withdrawing from Vietnam after squandering over \$1 trillion.

Assad's fall from power completes the Arab Spring's coming full circle. Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, and now Syria witnessed revolutions against dictatorships only to end with dictatorships, albeit with new faces. As the French adage goes, "the more things change, the more they stay the same."

The Syrian hecatomb should awaken President Trump to the timeless wisdom of President George Washington's Farewell Address: eschew entangling alliances, project invincible self-defense, and maintain strict neutrality in all foreign conflicts. Racing abroad in search of

monsters to destroy, experience verifies, are cures vastly worse than the diseases.

History will record the toppling of Assad as a turning point in history that did not turn.

Views expressed in this article are opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

Sign up for Epoch Focus newsletter. Focusing on one key topic at a time, diving into the critical issues shaping our world. [Sign up with 1-click >>](#)



Armstrong Williams

Author

Armstrong Williams is a political commentator, author, entrepreneur and is founder of Howard Stirk Holdings.

Author's Selected Articles

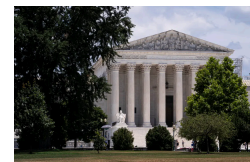
A Spiritual Depression

Dec 14, 2024



The Supreme Court Is Not Red Versus Blue

Jun 28, 2024



The American Spirit of Resilience

Jun 17, 2024



Freedom of Speech Is Our Deliverance From Terror

May 01, 2024



RELATED TOPICS

Syria conflict

Copyright © 2000 - 2024 The Epoch Times Association Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Cookies Settings](#)