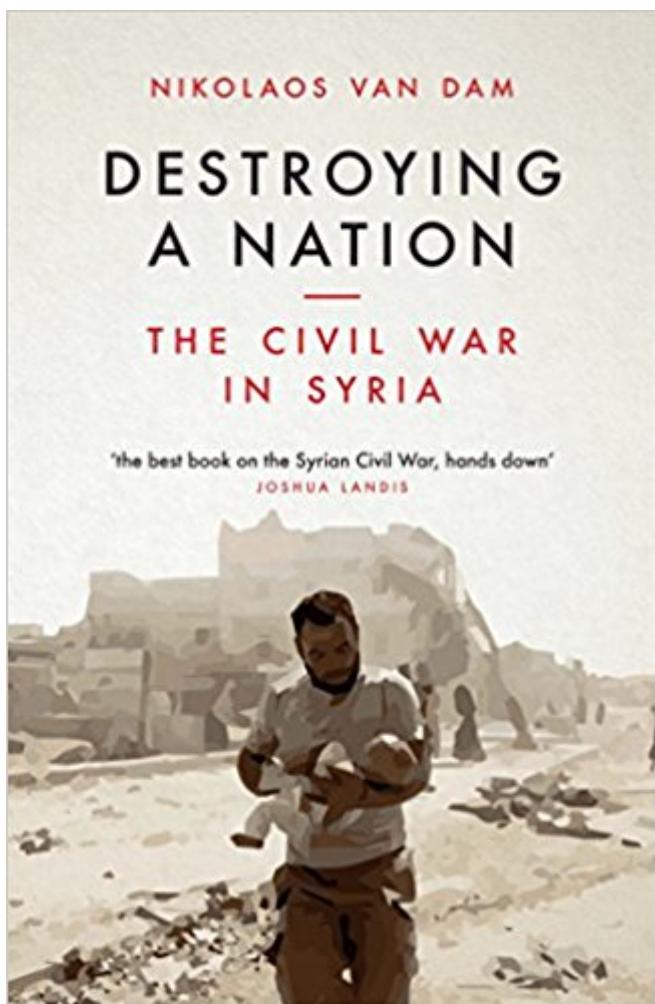


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# Destroying A Nation: The Civil War In Syria



## Synopsis

Following the Arab Spring, Syria descended into civil and sectarian conflict. It has since become a fractured warzone that operates as a breeding ground for new terrorist movements, including ISIS, as well as the root cause of the greatest refugee crisis in modern history. In this book, former Special Envoy of the Netherlands to Syria, Nikolaos van Dam, explains the recent history of Syria: the growing disenchantment with the Asad regime, the chaos of civil war, and the fractures that led to an immense amount of destruction in the refined social fabric of what used to be the Syrian nation. Through an in-depth examination, van Dam traces political developments within the Asad regime and the various opposition groups from the Arab Spring to the present day, and provides a deeper insight into the conflict and the possibilities and obstacles for reaching a political solution.

## Book Information

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'[A] monumental work on Syrian power politics' - Robert Fisk, The Independent, 'An excellent book' - Patrick Seale, 'An admirable study... invaluable for anyone with a serious interest in Middle Eastern politics' - Peter Mansfield, 'The most informative explanation of the effects of sectarianism and regionalism on Syrian politics' - Philip S. Khoury, MERIP Reports, '[An] excellent study of the sectarian bases of Syrian politics' - Foreign Affairs, 'Only a handful of important books have been written on modern Syria; and Nikolaos van Dam's The Struggle for Power in Syria is one of them' - Joshua Landis, International Journal of Middle East Studies, 'Nikolaos van Dam is a rare species: An academic analyst and an excellent diplomat who has accompanied and shaped recent Syrian

history in theory and practice. He is also brutally honest, including with Western policy failures, and hard to be put into a political camp in this polarized conflict. On the basis of profound studies of the Baath system, he explains how Syria's disaster inevitably unfolded in the context of the Arab Spring, the brutal internal logic of an encrusted regime, and the vested interests of foreign powers. Van Dam's insights from old and new Syria make this book a valuable guide in the complex web of this worst conflict of our century. We get a taste of the difficult search for a new social contract and a political solution in Syria - if this is still possible before the state fails.' - Carsten Wieland, author of Syria: A Decade of Lost Chances, 'Nikolaos van Dam is simply one of the top experts on Syria. Setting the Syrian conflict within its historical and contemporary contexts, he draws on his unique combination of scholarly excellence and practical diplomatic experience. This book is a sophisticated, yet accessible and readable analysis of a highly complex situation. It substantially updates and advances our understanding of the ever evolving war in Syria.' - David W. Lesch, Ewing Halsell Distinguished Professor of History at Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas and author of Syria: The Fall of the House of Assad, 'This book is indispensable to understand the depth of the Syrian crisis. It plunges into history and it decrypts the sectarianism functioning of Syrian society and power. All those who look at the future of Syria must read Nikolaos Van Dam's book before making new decisions that would lead to more chaos.' - Fabrice Balanche, Associate Professor and Research Director at the University of Lyon 2, "This is the best book on the Syrian Civil War, hands down. Nikolaos van Dam has been steeped in Syrian history and politics for decades as a diplomat and historian. He has read everything on Syria in numerous languages. He is both wise and balanced. Whether you want an accessible introduction to the regional conflict or to deepen your knowledge of Syria, Destroying a Nation is a must read by a true scholar." - Joshua Landis, Director of the Center for Middle East Studies, University of Oklahoma, 'Nikolaos van Dam is one of the finest Syriatologists of all time. His seminal book, The struggle for power in Syria is a must read for anybody wanting to understand the modern history of Syria after the Baath coup of 1963. His new book will be an overnight classic as well, analyzing Syrian politics and the present conflict not through regional dynamics of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, or through anything related to Syrian-US or Syrian-Russian relations, but rather through the narrow prism of Syrian domestics. Often overlooked by Syria scholars, it focuses on sect, class, history and geography to explain events of both today and tomorrow.' - Sami Moubayed, author of Under the Black Flag

Nikolaos van Dam is a specialist on Syria who served as Special Envoy of the Netherlands for Syria in 2015-16. He has previously served as Ambassador of the Netherlands to Indonesia, Germany,

Turkey, Egypt, and Iraq.

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