

NIKOLAOS VAN DAM

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN
SYRIA



POLITICS AND SOCIETY UNDER
ASAD AND THE BA'TH PARTY

I. B. TAURIS

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the Ba'th Party

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'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

Published for the first time in a fully revised and updated paperback edition, Nikolaos van Dam's book is a classic study of politics and society in modern Syria. Explaining the factors that have enabled the regime of Hafiz al-Asad to stay in power much longer than any other since independence, the book shows how Asad's disappearance may seriously disrupt Syria's uneasy stability.

Through an in-depth examination of the role of sectarian, regional and tribal loyalties, van Dam traces developments within the Ba'ath

Party and the military and civilian power elite from the 1963 Ba'athist takeover up to the present day. He shows how the period of profound social change that followed 1963 saw the rise of the

Islamic minority communities in national politics and the transformation of the lives of people from the countryside.

Particular attention is given to issues such as the implications for Syria's future of the monopolization of power by Asad and his Alawi-dominated officers' faction; Sunni opposition to the regime; and the evolution of Syrian politics through the 1980s and 90s. This book will be of great interest to students of politics and society in the Middle East and the Third World.

Nikolaos van Dam is a specialist on Syria and is currently Ambassador of the Netherlands in Cairo.

Cover photo: street painting of Hafiz al-Asad, his late son, Basil (right) and his second son Bashar (left) erected in Aleppo on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Asad regime, November 1995. Photo: Nikolaos van Dam

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