



Ressort: Politik

How will the 'Game' end?

The Netherlands, 15.12.2024 [ENA]

The world has recently witnessed the end of another era — the Assad era. The Assad regime, which had been in power since 1970, was overthrown. For context, it should be noted that Syria's last president, Bashar al-Assad, came to power after his father, Hafez al-Assad, who had assumed power through a revolution. Fittingly, the dynasty ended in the same revolutionary way it began.

At this point, an Azerbaijani proverb comes to mind: “What comes with a neigh, leaves with a neigh.” It is no surprise that dictators often lose power through coups or uprisings. During their reign, they try to instill the idea of their indispensability and keep people in fear. The Assad regime was no exception. Bashar al-Assad, who succeeded his father after Hafez's death in 2000, continued the same policies. In recent years, the dictator, whose hands were stained with the blood of his own people and who caused mass atrocities, was no less cruel than his father.

Syria is strategically located, bordered by Turkey to the north, Iraq to the east and southeast, Jordan to the south, Israel and Lebanon to the southwest, and the Mediterranean Sea to the west. Its strategic importance has drawn the attention of various powers throughout history, with the country at times being under Ottoman or French control. Many other nations have also shown interest in Syria over the years. For instance, in 2011, when the uprising against the Assad regime began, several Western countries voiced support for the movement and called for Assad's resignation. Among these nations, Turkey stood out. Naturally, the turmoil in neighboring Syria raised concerns in Turkey.

Ankara also demanded Assad's resignation. Bashar al-Assad, an ophthalmologist by profession, appeared blind to the consequences of his actions, committing massacres against his own people. Over the years, Assad's primary supporters were Russia and Iran. While regional powers tried to bring an end to the Assad regime and its oppression of the Syrian people, Russia and Iran unabashedly backed him.

This is why, when the revolutionaries declared victory on December 7, speculation arose that Assad might flee to one of these two countries. Later, Russian officials revealed that Assad had sought asylum in Russia. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov confirmed that Russian President Vladimir Putin had granted asylum to Assad and his family.

Thus, another dictator's rule came to an end.

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What comes next? Will Bashar al-Assad face trial? Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov stated in an interview that Assad is under Russian protection. Discussing the possibility of Assad's extradition based on claims by the International Criminal Court (ICC), the diplomat noted that Russia is not a signatory to the ICC convention.

How will events unfold in Syria? Will the country maintain its territorial integrity? Will its future policies align with the West? These questions remain unanswered. Personally, looking at the past of Abu Muhammad al-Julani, who is mentioned as one of the leaders of the Syrian Revolution, I'm not optimistic about the latter question.

For now, we are all watching to see how events develop. Meanwhile, regional powers are not just observing but actively shaping the situation. Russia and Iran have been relatively quiet for now. There is speculation that Russia may have stepped back on the Syria issue, potentially expecting the West, particularly the United States, to reciprocate by easing its stance in the Russia-Ukraine war. Whether this proves true will become clear in time.

For now, Turkey seems to be the most active regional player. Just a few days ago, the head of Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MIT), Ibrahim Kalın, visited Damascus. Naturally, Turkey cannot ignore the events in its neighboring state.

Considering that Turkey views the PYD, established by Syrian Kurds, as an offshoot of the PKK terrorist organization, it's clear why the issue is sensitive for Ankara. However, one must not forget that Turkey is a NATO member, making it a player that also represents NATO interests in Syria. Among NATO members, Turkey has one of the closest relationships with Russia, which raises the possibility of Turkey acting as a mediator between NATO and Russia on the Syria issue.

Politics is sometimes compared to a game of chess. Let's wait and see how this "game" will end—will someone be "checkmated," or will it end in a "stalemate," a draw? Time will tell.

Bericht online lesen: https://conncet.en-a.eu/politik/how_will_the_game_end-90475/

Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:
V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDStV: Vugar Abbasov

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