



POLICY BRIEF - SYRIA

*A comparative diagnostic of the political, economic, military,
& social dimensions of Syria*

10/10/2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite objections from the international community, including the UN, the US, the EU, and Turkey, an end to the bloodshed in Syria appears distant.¹ Vetoes at the Security Council by China and Russia have prevented stronger sanctions or outside intervention, and with key supporters of the Syrian regime in Iran and Hezbollah, Bashar's military crackdown will continue.² Crucial CIPF indicators such as Governance and Political Instability, History of Armed Conflict, Population Heterogeneity, and Economic Performance have all experienced persistent or increased deterioration since Assad's crackdown began in March 2011. This diagnostic asserts that the most likely scenario for Syria entails continued repression of protests despite international isolation and eventual reforms in efforts to please dissidents, culminating in new regime leadership following the eventual fall of President Bashar al-Assad.

BACKGROUND / HISTORY





The Syrian Arab Republic, now home to 21 million people, ended its long history of occupation by declaring its independence on 17 April 1946. In the immediate post-war period until the late 1960s, Syria was marred by coups, regime change, and political chaos. In 1963, the Socialist Ba'ath Party assumed control of all executive and legislative authority and implemented the 1963 Emergency Law which transformed Syria into a one-party state.³

In 1970, General Hafez al-Assad initiated what would become a three-decade long reign after securing power through a bloodless military coup. Under Assad's leadership Syria emerged as an authoritarian state operating under the guise of a republic as most positions of power shifted to army officers of Syria's Alawite minority and violence became the primary tool to silence opposition.⁴ In response to an uprising by the Muslim Brotherhood in 1982, Assad launched a military assault on Hama, devastating the city and killing thousands of civilians. This ruthless repression was demonstrated time and again in dissuading popular opposition over the course of Assad's rule.⁵

Assad's son, Bashar, took power in July 2000 following his father's death. As President, Bashar's response to political opposition soon mirrored those of his father as pro-democratic uprisings due to the *Damascus Spring* and *Damascus Declaration* were violently suppressed. While Assad worked to implement economic reforms during the 2000s, by 2005 the Ba'ath Party had withdrawn plans for any substantial political reforms.⁶

As rebellions broke out across the Middle East in early 2011, groups of Syrian protestors ushered in a new round of pro-democratic dissidence in March. This demonstration of opposition, like others under Bashar's rule, prompted a violent response from the government. Since March, the Syrian army has hunted down government opponents, killing over 3500 civilians and suspected dissidents. As of October 2011, chaos has spread across many parts of Syria, raising concerns about human rights violations and the possibility of civil war.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Actor:	Impact:	Effects:
International Community 	Mixed	(+) The U.S. has called for Assad's resignation and imposed sanctions. (+) The EU has targeted Syria with numerous sanctions, ranging from import bans on oil to frozen assets in order to pressure Assad into ending his violent repression. ⁷ (+) Arab League has criticized Syria and called for early elections to end Assad's term before 2014. (-) On 4 October 2011, the UNSC failed to pass a resolution due to veto's by China & Russia. The resolution would have formally condemned Syria's repressive tactics and levied threats of reprisals, such as harsh sanctions, against Assad. ⁸ (-) The U.S. and NATO have ruled out intervention in Syria. President Assad has few obstacles to his campaign of repression as the international community has yet to forcefully command his attention.
Lebanon 	Mixed	(+) Lebanon continues to call for a peaceful resolution and has only verbally responded to incursions. ⁹ (-) Syrian tanks and forces have crossed into Lebanon to hunt down protesters. Lebanon is also hosting 4000+ refugees who have escaped the violence in Syria.
Iran 	Negative	(-) Regards Syria as a crucial geopolitical ally in its opposition to Israel. No visible action yet, but the Iranian leadership is interested in ensuring continuity in the Syrian regime ¹⁰ . They also believe the Assad regime creates a more fertile ground for Iran's expansion of Shia ideology in the region.
Turkey 	Positive	(+) Despite strong relations between the two countries, Turkey has cut many political ties with Syria, is demanding political reform, and is expected to impose major sanctions in October 2011. ¹¹

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

President Bashar al-Assad	Mixed	(+) Maintains support from a large portion of the population. Unrivaled control of Syrian politics and the intimidating presence of the military has thus far prevented civil war. (-) Assad's family has controlled the Presidency for more than four decades. Determined to hold on to his position and willingly utilizes violence to counter opposition to his rule. ¹²
National Opposition	Negative	(-) National opposition movement has led to the formation of the National Syrian Council, demanding Assad's resignation and considerable reform of Syrian civil rights. ¹³ Defiant protesters and the extreme repressive respond has seriously destabilized Syria.
Syrian Army & Republican Guard	Negative	(-) Defecting soldiers have either fled the country or joined resistance movements, increasing the possibility of a civil war. (-) The President's brother, Maher, leads the Republican Guard and has personally crushed opposition throughout Bashar's presidency, including during the current crisis ¹⁴
Alawite Minority	Negative	(-) Control over major political and economic institutions by the minority Islamist sect is linked to Assad's family and Ba'athist rule. Since Bashar's father took power the Alawis (12% of population) have ruled over the majority Sunnis. ¹⁵
Sunni Majority	Mixed	(+) Wealthy Sunni merchants with business ties to the government have helped maintain stability and avoid a sectarian civil war by remaining loyal to al-Assad's regime. ¹⁶ (-) Removing al-Assad and the Ba'ath Party from power would afford more political and civil service opportunities for Sunni Muslims in Syria.

KEY INDICATORS			
Extremely High Risk	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
SF = STABILIZING FACTORS		DF = DESTABILIZING FACTORS	
AS = ASSESSMENT		AS = ASSESSMENT	
CIFP - VOLATILE		HISTORY OF ARMED CONFLICT	
		↓ DETERIORATING	
DF	<p>Armed Conflict: CIFP 2006 ranked Syria a 1.0 (1= minor armed conflict, 2= intermediate armed conflict, 3= War) CIFP Risk Assessment Indicators define a country with at least 1000 battle-related deaths/year to be at war. On Sept 12, 2011, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, confirmed Syrian death toll to be at least 2,600 since the beginning of the turmoil. Syria is currently at War.¹⁷</p> <p>Refugees produced: The CIFP 2006 score is 3.2 (1= high number of refugees, 9= high number of refugees). UNHCR reports that as of January 2011, there were 18,452 refugees originating from Syria, and 9,764 asylum seekers.¹⁸ The current conflict has forced thousands to seek refugee status in neighboring Turkey. As of June 17, 9,600 Syrian refugees were living in four camps managed by Turkey bringing the total population of concern to 37,816.¹⁹</p> <p>Refugees Hosted: The CIFP 2006 is 4.2 (1= low number of displaced persons, 9= high number of displaces persons). Syria also hosts a large number of refugees: 496,000 Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA in 9 official and 3 unofficial camps,²⁰ 1 million displaced Iraqis of whom 126,000 are assisted by UNHCR, and finally 2,700 Somali, 1,200 Afghan, and 1,500 various other refugees all of whom are assisted by UNHCR.²¹ Syria possesses 300,000 stateless people, asylum-seekers include: 300 Somali, 100 Sudanese, 150 Afghani, and 50 others assisted by UNHCR.²²</p>		
AS	<p>The increase in refugees originating from and hosted by Syria, UNHCR's inability to assist the large number of Iraqi refugees, and institutional barriers such as UNRWA's struggle to cope with the needs of an increasing Palestinian refugee population exacerbated by a decrease in the regular budget (\$5.2 million by the US in 2009, and Canada in 2010), all reflect an already unstable situation – a situation that is volatile and deteriorating within the current conflict.</p>		
CIFP - VOLATILE		GOVERNANCE & POLITICAL INSTABILITY	
		↓ DETERIORATING	
SF	<p>Regime Durability: Syria ranks a 2.3 in durability in the 2006 CIFP risk assessment (1 = high, 9 = low durability).</p>		
DF	<p>Level of Democracy: The 2006 CIFP report ranked Syria 8.2 (1 = strongly democratic, 9 = strongly autocratic). The 2007 CIFP Country Ranking Table ranked Syria's democratic participation at 7.06 and government accountability at 7.51 (1-3.5 the country is performing well compared to others, 6.5 or higher country is performing poorly next to others). Syria remains a one-party state - the Baath dominated national progressive front alliance the only legally recognized party - the president the only candidate in a reelection every seven years, while the weightless constitution has been suspended since 1963. The minority Alawite sect make up the Baath party, the national and the military elites. Worldwide Governance Indicators show a downward trend: 8.2 in 2000, 6.7 in 2005, and 4.7 in 2010 (out of possible 100).²³</p> <p>Restrictions on Civil and Political Rights: The 2006 CIFP ranked Syria a 9 (1 = free, 9 = not free), reaffirmed by 2010 figures.²⁴ Political rights score a 7 and civil rights a 6 (1 = most, 7 = least free), as Syrians cannot participate freely in the political process and enjoy little freedom to develop views, institutions, and personal autonomy apart from the state. Based on 2007 data from the CIFP Country Ranking Table, Syria scores a 5.54 in rule of law and 8.38 in human rights category.</p> <p>Restrictions on freedom of the Press: Syria scored an 8.0 on the 2006 CIFP (1 = free, 9 = not free). Freedom of the press does not exist in Syria. Nearly all of Syria's radio and television outlets, newspapers and publishing houses are state owned.²⁵ The Ministry of information and the Ministry of culture routinely censor both domestic and foreign publications, and journalists face frequent harassment. 2010 data reaffirms freedom of the press as non-existing.²⁶</p> <p>Level of Corruption: In 2011 Syria was ranked in the bottom third of most corrupt states when measuring the perceived level of public-sector corruption.²⁷ CIFP 2006 ranked Syria a 6 (1 = low, 9 = high corruption), consistent with its control over corruption over the last decade where Syria ranked between 11.2 and 18.5 percentile (out of 100).²⁸</p>		
AS	<p>Syria's score on overall governance has been declining: -1.05 in 2000, -.091 in 2005, and -.71 in 2010 (scale = -2.5 to 2.5, higher values = better governance).²⁹ The recent protests speak to the lack of legitimacy of the current Government. In early October, Syrian dissidents formally established the Syrian National Council, with the stated goal of overthrowing President Assad's government. This group brings together pro-democracy networks, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, other banned Islamic political parties, Kurdish factions, and important tribal figures. These groups and thousands of other Syrians have been protesting the government's lack of accountability, exclusion, and corruption, while others seek social and economic rights. Human right groups report human rights abuses against over 10,000 people who have been arrested without charges in the last 6 months of protests, providing a glimpse of the grave human right violations.³⁰</p>		
CIFP - VOLATILE		MILITARIZATION	
		↓ DETERIORATING	
SF	<p>Military Expenditure: The CIFP 2006 score is 9.0 (1= low expenditure, 9= high expenditure). In 2010, Syria's total increased to \$2236 Million, from \$1994 million in 2006. Over that period its military expenditure as percentage of GDP was reduced (4.4% to 4%), while its regional military expenditure increased (2.07% to 2.36%).³¹ This regional increase has allowed Syria to play a larger role in the region, and deter prospects of outside intervention specifically during the current uprising.</p> <p>Total Armed Forces: The CIFP 2006 score is 9.0 (1=Low number of armed forces, 9=High number of armed forces). Syria's manpower as of 2010 (male ages 16-49) available for military service is 5,889,837, with 5,055,510 fit for military service. The numbers for their female counterpart is 5,660,751 with 4,884,151 fit for military service.³²</p>		
DF	<p>With Syria's economic situation regarded by some as one of the main reasons behind the current uprising, the increase in military expenditure has come at the expense of expenditures aimed at improving and stabilizing the economy.</p>		
AS	<p>With allies in Iran and Lebanon, Syria's increase in military expenditure may pose a risk to the Sunni block in the Middle East, and to Israel and its western allies. Therefore, while the indicators may suggest Syria's military expansion is stabilizing, it may come at the expense of deteriorating relations and various economic sanctions with other countries both regionally (Ex. Turkey) and Internationally (Ex. EU). The Syrian military has also lost legitimacy in the eyes of many of its own people and the international community for its bloody crackdown on its own people.</p>		

CIFP		POPULATION HETEROGENEITY	STABLE
SF	Ethnic Diversity: The CIFP 2006 score is 3.0 (1= low diversity, 9= high diversity) includes 90.3% Arab and 9.7% Kurdish, Armenian and others. It is less diverse than Iraq (75%-80% Arab, 15%-20% Kurdish, Assyrian and Turkoman, 5% other), while more diverse than Lebanon (95% Arabs, 4% Armenian, 1% other). ³³		
DF	Religious Diversity: The CIFP 2006 score is 5.0 (1=low diversity, 9= high diversity). includes 74% Sunni Muslims, 16% other Muslims or variations including Alawite and Druze, and 10% Christians of various denominations. In comparison to both Iraq (60%-65% Shia, 32%-37% Sunni, and 3% Christian or other) and Lebanon (59.7% Muslim and 39% Christian), Syria is less diverse. The disparity in political and economic power, as the minority Alawite hold the vast majority, has created a very unstable environment. ³⁴ Risk of Ethnic Rebellion: The CIFP 2006 score is 2.0 (1= low risk, 9= high risk). Risk of an ethnic conflict is determined to be low, but religious conflict is an important factor in the current uprising, with the majority Sunnis demanding more representation within their government. This situation seems to deteriorate further as Assad seems unwilling to meet the demands of the Sunni majority, and the Sunni majority seem unwilling to back down on their demands for toppling Assad's regime.		
AS	While the risk of ethnic conflict is low, the risk of religious conflict is extremely high. While the Arabs make up the vast majority of the Syrian population, they are separated by their religion.		

CIFP		DEMOGRAPHIC STRESS	DETERIORATING
DF	Total Population: 20,446,000 in 2010, ³⁷ and ranked a 7 by CIFP in 2006 (1 = low population, 9 = high population). Population Growth Rate(%): Growth rate from 2000-2009 was 2.7%, ³⁶ a high growth rate compared to the average worldwide of 1.17%. ³⁷ In 2006, its CIFP score was 7.8 (1 = low, 9 = high growth rate). Urban Population (% of Total): Syria scored a 6 (1 = low, 9 = high urban population growth rate). Urban population is slowly increasing in relation to total population, from 53% in 2000 to 55% in 2010. ³⁸		
AS	Population Density (People Per Sq.km): Population density is steadily increasing from 103 people/square Km in 2006, to 105 in 2007 and finally 111 in 2010. ³⁹ Syria's global rank score according to CIFP 2006 is a 6 (1 = low, 9 = high density). Urban Population Growth Rate (Annual %): Remained 3% from 2006-2010, ⁴⁰ its CIFP score was a 6 (1 = low, 9 = high). Youth Bulge: Despite a declining trend in the youth bulge, making up 39% of the population in 2006, 37% in 2009, and only Syria's youth bulge is 35% for 2010, ⁴¹ the percentage of youth from 0-14 in proportion to the rest of the population is still high according to the CIFP 2006 which gave Syria a 6.4 (1=low, 9=high growth rate).		
AS	Syria's high growth rates and its increasing concentration in urban centers point to potential problems of overpopulation in the future. Specifically in urban centers, this can cause major infrastructure challenges and exacerbate already present issues like access to freshwater resources. Furthermore, 67% of those unemployed in the Syria are between the ages of 18 and 30. ⁴² As large numbers of youth come of age Syria, may face significant disillusioned and unemployed youth unhappy with their prospects for the future. The problem of overpopulation can become exacerbated in a climate of political instability as many demand reforms from a government and a budget already at its breaking-point.		

CIFP - VOLATILE		ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE	DETERIORATING
SF	GDP Per Capita (PPP): Syria scored 6 on the CIFP 2006 (1 = low, 9 = high GDP per capita), GDP per capita has increased from 4,394 in 2006 to 5,238 in 2010. ⁴³ GDP/capita is used as a metric of social well-being. Syria remains a low-middle income developing country. Inflation: Peaked to over 15% in 2008, reduced to 4.4% in 2010. ⁴⁴ It scored a 2.4 on the CIFP 2006 (1 = low inflation, 9 = high inflation). Official Exchange Rate: Has remained constant at 11 Syrian Pounds/US dollar from 2006-2010. ⁴⁵ It has a parallel exchange rate, which provides incentives for remittances and exports through official channels, improved supply of basic commodities, and contains inflation. ⁴⁶ Its CIFP score in 2006 was a 5 (1 = low, 9 = high exchange rate). Total Debt Service (% of GNI): A CIFP 2006 mark of 2.4 (1 = low, 9 = high debt service). Syria has further eased its heavy foreign debt burden through rescheduling deals with foreign creditors, and settled its debt with the World Bank. ⁴⁷ Total debt service has been reducing from 3% in 2006, to 2% in 2007, to only 1% for 2008-09 respectively. ⁴⁸		
DF	GDP Growth Rate (annual %): Annual rate from 2000-2009 was 4.4%, increasing to 6% in 2009, before falling to 3.8 % in 2010 compared to 5.1% regionally. ⁴⁹ These numbers are largely due to an inefficient and centrally planned economy characterized by low levels of industrial production and rural productivity. The two main pillars of the Syria economy are oil and agriculture. Oil and gas alone account for 1/4 of government revenues, exports, and GDP. Droughts in 2008 and 2009 badly affected the agricultural sector and cut exports of some of Syria's largest crops (2010 marked first time in 2 decades it became net importer rather than exporter of wheat). ⁵⁰ In the CIFP 2006 it scored 6.8 (1 = low, 9 = high growth rate). FDI, Net Inflows (% of GDP): Historically one of Syria's most salient economic issues, Syria scored a 7 in the CIFP 2006 (1 = high, 9 = low investment), increasing its flows from 2% in 2006, to 3% in 2008, to 5% in 2009-2010 respectively. ⁵¹ Modest economic reforms undertaken in 2008 may be beginning to improve the situation. ⁵² Trade Openness (Trade as a % of GDP): Scoring a 5.6 on CIFP 2006 (1 = high, 9 = low openness), Syria has a major and continuous decline in its trade openness going from 77% in 2006, 76% in 2007, to 66% from 2008 through 2010. ⁵³ This indicator is closely linked to economic growth, and thus correlates with the declining trend in total GDP growth. ⁵⁴		
AS	Despite recent modest reforms (2008-2010), the Syrian economy faces serious economic challenges related to decreasing revenue from oil, lack of economic diversification, low levels of industrial productivity and meager foreign investment. The large public sector (notably the military and police) are a drain the system. Eight months of protests and crackdowns have exacerbated the problems: sanctions by the US and Europe threaten to affect bank transactions as international banking institutions have reportedly stopped accepting US dollar payments from Syrian merchants, ⁵⁵ tourism has ground to a halt, unemployment is high, large-scale investment projects are on hold, oil production and export has declined due to unrest and potential sanctions, drops in agriculture due to social unrest, and the price of food is increasing. ⁵⁶		

S	<p>Access to Improved Water Source: CIFP 2006 score is 3.0 (1= high % with access and 9="low % with access). From 1990-2008, 8,079,000 people gained access to improved sources of drinking water. Overall, 89% of the population have access to a source of drinking water (94% urban areas, 84% rural areas)⁵⁷.</p> <p>Access to Sanitation: The CIFP 2006 score is 5.0 (1= high % with access, 9= low % with access). From 1990-2008 9,819,000 people gained access to improved sanitation. Overall 96% of the population have access to sanitation (96% in urban, 95% in rural areas)⁵⁸</p> <p>Life Expectancy: The CIFP 2006 score 5.0 (1= high life expectancy, 9=low life expectancy). Life expectancy age of 76 in 2009 is up one year from 2006-08 figures.⁵⁹</p> <p>Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000 live births): The CIFP 2006 score is 4.6 (1=low mortality rate, 9=high mortality rate). Down to 14 in 2010 from 15 in 2007-08 and 16 in 2006.⁶⁰</p> <p>Maternal Mortality Rate (per 100,000 live births): The CIFP 2006 score is 6.0 (1=low mortality, 9=high mortality) seems to have stabilized at 46 women who die during childbirth.⁶¹</p> <p>Secondary School Enrollment (%GROSS): The CIFP 2006 Score is 7.0 (1=low enrolment, 9=high enrolment), increasing steadily from 69 in 2006 to 75 in 2009.⁶²</p> <p>Literacy Rate Adult (total % of people ages 15 & up): The CIFP 2006 score is 6.4 (1 = low enrolment, 9 = high enrolment). The CIA Factbook reported 84% in 2009, an increase from 2004 when it was 81%.⁶³</p> <p>Health Expenditure per capita (current \$US): The 2006 CIFP ranked Syria a 6.0. The health expenditure per capita of Syria as of 2009 is 72, which is an improvement from 2006 when it was 64.⁶⁴</p>
DF	Primary School Enrolment (% Gross): enrolment % steadily decreasing from 126 in 2006 to 122 in 2009. ⁶⁵
AS	Overall, levels of human development are improving from previous years. However, with the current turmoil, this trend may reverse as government shifts its focus to remaining in power. As violence increases, human development indicators will be negatively affected. Despite the positive figures, these could change rapidly by next year.

S	Deforestation: CIFP 2006 places Syrian deforestation at 2.0 (1 = low, 9 = high deforestation).
F	Arable land (hectares/person): Despite reported problems with soil erosion, ⁶⁶ Syria scores a 3.0 according to CIFP 2006 (1 = low, 9 = high number of people/sq km of arable land). Trend is steady at .20 hectares/person 2006-2010. ⁶⁷
DF	Freshwater resources: CIFP 2006 gives Syria a 7.0 (1 = high, 9 = low number of resources). Water shortages caused by climate change and contamination of inland waterways by industrial waste and sewage are further predicted to worsen. ⁶⁸ Syria's 371 renewable internal freshwater resources per capita have remained steady from 2000 - 2010, despite drops from 420 in 2001 and 480 in 1995. ⁶⁹
AS	While deforestation and access to arable land are not an issue in Syria, lack of freshwater resources could have negative economic consequences and even prove to be destabilizing. Climate change and contamination may increase competition for scarce water resources, increase the militarization of strategic natural resources, lead to conflict with neighboring states, ⁷⁰ decreased food security, and potentially forced migrations in the long run.

S	International Organizations: In terms of economic organizations, CIFP 2006 ranked Syria a 5.0 with 1 being (1 = High, 9 Low Membership.) Syria is a member of various economic organizations including the IMF and the Arab Monetary Fund. Syria is a member of other international organizations within the Arab world (Arab League, Council of Arab Economic Unity, Arab Common market), and beyond (IMF, INTERPOL, WHO, and the ICRC). ⁷¹ Despite this, as of the 2006 CIFP Syria was given a ranking of 6.0 (1 = high membership, 9 = low membership).
DF	Foreign Relations: The current Syrian turmoil has led to deteriorating foreign relations with almost every state (Iran is one of few exceptions).
F	International Disputes: The Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights since 1967 still continues with 1000 UN Disengagement Observers patrolling the buffer zone. Lacking a treaty or other documentation describing the boundary, portions of the Lebanon-Syria boundary are unclear with sections in dispute. Since 2000, Lebanon has claimed Shab'a Farms in the Golan Heights as well. There is also a 2004 agreement and pending demarcation to settle boarder disputes with Jordan. ⁷²
S	Presently, the list of countries to recall ambassadors from Syria is increasing (important regional players including Turkey & Saudi Arabia). As the government's violent crackdowns intensify, this list will get longer. Going forward, Syria will only face increasing international isolation.

 POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

Best	Although unlikely, the best possible scenario would see the immediate resignation of President Bashar al-Assad, followed by the Syrian National Council forming the interim government, and calling for free and democratic elections open to all within the next year. A more realistic ideal scenario would see escalating defections of entire battalions of the Syrian army as a predominantly Sunni army is ordered by Alawite superiors and generals to shoot at fellow citizens, usually of the same religion. ⁷³ If the army takes the side of the protesters, the regime would be forced to resign, as was seen in Egypt, and the ensuing steps listed above become more plausible. ⁷⁴
Worst	The worst case scenario sees existing religious divisions in the country exacerbated by armed civilian violence between Sunni's, Alawite's, Christian's and Druze, fueled by the geopolitical interests of the major regional players (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Hezbollah, Turkey, potentially Israel & Western allies), resulting in a civil war. ⁷⁵ No less dangerous is the scenario where a Western power attempts to intervene unilaterally in Syria, infuriating Iran or even worse Russia and China, resulting in an escalation of tensions threatening global peace and stability. ⁷⁶
Most-Likely	In all likelihood, reality on the ground will play itself out somewhere between the poles laid out above. Although stronger sanctions may come, significant players in the International community are not willing to allow a similar intervention to that which transpired in Libya only months ago. ⁷⁷ Now insulated from outside intervention, President Bashar al-Assad will continue his campaign of repression and bloodshed. It appears that the protesters will not be deterred, reforms will be made in an effort to please the majority, it would seem fair to say that eventually the regime will fall, but in the short term, the pillars and institutions created by the regime will last long beyond any demise of its leader.

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