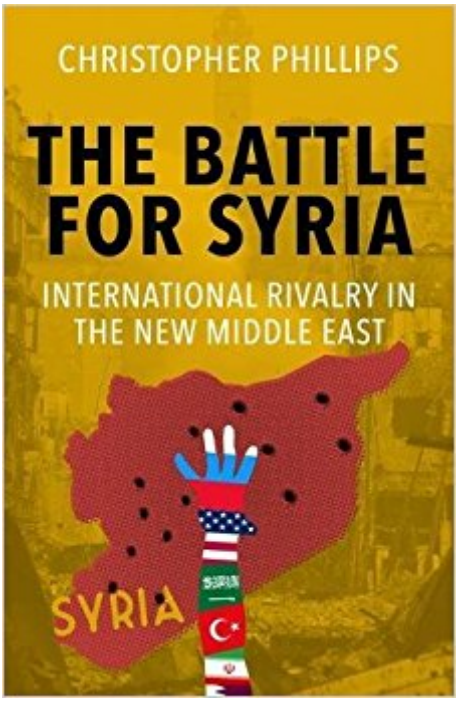
Ebook Directory
the best source of ebook

The book was found

The Battle For Syria: International Rivalry In The New Middle East



PDF
Adobe
DOWNLOAD EBOOK

Synopsis

An unprecedented analysis of the crucial but underexplored roles the United States and other nations have played in shaping SyriaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s ongoing civil war Most accounts of SyriaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s brutal, long-lasting civil war focus on a domestic contest that began in 2011 and only later drew foreign nations into the escalating violence. Christopher Phillips argues instead that the international dimension was never secondary but that SyriaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s warÃ Â was, from the very start, profoundly influenced by regional factors, particularly the vacuum created by a perceived decline of U.S. power in the Middle East. This precipitated a new regional order in which six external protagonistsÃ¢â ¬â •the United States, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and QatarÃ¢â ¬â •have violently competed for influence, with Syria a key battleground.Ã Â Drawing on a plethora of original interviews, Phillips constructs a new narrative of SyriaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s war. Without absolving the brutal Bashar al-Assad regime, the author untangles the key external factors which explain the acceleration and endurance of the conflict, including the WestÃ¢â ¬â„¢s strategy against ISIS. He concludes with some insights on Syria and the region's future.

Book Information

Hardcover: 320 pages

Publisher: Yale University Press (October 25, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 030021717X

ISBN-13: 978-0300217179

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1.3 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #99,985 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #12 inÃ Â Books > History > Middle East > Syria #154 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Middle Eastern #184 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Security

Customer Reviews

"Philips . . . argues in a lucid and readable manner with a good balance of facts and anecdotes, that while domestic triggers and the wider impact of the Arab Spring may have caused the crisis, it was maintained by 'external powers being unwilling to prioritise ending the conflict over their own wider geopolitical agendas.'"Ã¢â ¬â •James Denselow, New York Journal of Books"This is the

best work to date that focuses on the regional and international dimensions of the Syrian conflict. Christopher Phillips' research is meticulous, with both depth and breadth in large part gleaned from his interviews with top officials and representatives from most of the stakeholder states and groups in the war. A must-read for anyone who wants to better understand the multidimensional complexities of the conflict."Ã¢â ¬â •David Lesch, author of Syria: The Fall of the House of Assad"Syria's horrific civil war has been profoundly shaped by the competitive interventions and proxy wars by external powers. The Battle for Syria offers a brilliant, essential account of the international dimension of Syria's descent from uprising into insurgency and brutal state violence. This sober and judicious book will become a standard text for those seeking to understand Syria's tragedy."Ã¢â ¬â •Marc Lynch, author of The New Arab Wars: Anarchy and Uprising in the Middle East

Christopher Phillips is senior lecturer, International Relations of the Middle East, Queen Mary University of London, and associate fellow, Chatham House Middle East and North Africa Programme, where he founded the Syria and Its Neighbours Policy Initiative. He lives in London.

great product, great service

When the first protests broke out in the southern town of Deraa in March 2011, Syria had a population of around 21 million. Since that time, some 500,000 of the countryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s people have been killed, nearly two million have been injured, another five million have fled the country and more than six million have been internally displaced. The average life expectancy of a Syrian has dropped from 70 to 55 years. Christopher Phillips is therefore not exaggerating when he writes that the battle for Syria has given rise to ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœthe greatest humanitarian catastrophe of the twenty-first centuryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢.In fact, PhillipsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s refusal to engage in hyperbole is a distinguishing feature of his new book, The Battle for Syria: International Rivalry in the New Middle East. So too is his focus on the broader geopolitical puzzle in which the Syrian conflict is just one particularly brutal and bloody piece. As he rightly notes, reports about the crisis in Syria have tended to focus excessively on the internal dynamics of the war, and this is unfortunately more often a reflection of political bias than it is of sound analysis.Although Phillips does not deny the agency of Assad and his various domestic opponents, he is at pains to make clear that from the very beginning of the conflict in Syria, external actors have been essential in guiding and facilitating the actions of both the regime and the opposition. His goal in this book is to

show how the warÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s character, scale and scope have all been greatly impacted by these foreign influences.The Battle for Syria begins with an uncontroversial sketch of the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East as it stood on the eve of the Syrian crisis in 2011 ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ namely, as one in which waning United States influence had created the conditions for a power struggle between regional states, and in particular between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Phillips then gives a brief overview of the strategic outlook and interests of each of the six countries that would become the most important external players in the Syrian conflict (the US, Russia, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar), providing just enough detail to make the analysis convincing without his descriptions becoming cumbersome or distracting.Chapters Two through Five explore the early months of the conflict, the key period during which the path to civil war was paved. The escalating violence of the Syrian regime over the spring and summer of 2011 quickly sapped the international communityÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s patience with Assad: former partners in Qatar and Turkey decided to abandon him, while leaders in the US and Europe began imposing sanctions. All of these decisions were taken on the assumption that Assad and his regime would quickly collapse under the combined pressure of domestic unrest and international isolation. According to Phillips, however, this rested on a serious underestimation of the resilience of the Syrian government, and it would come to have fateful consequences for US policy on intervention (or, in the early days, a lack thereof).The next three chapters consider the reasons why the major external powers chose to back the various players they did and the important ways in which these decisions shaped the conflict. Most significant in this respect was the support given by anti-Assad regional powers to Islamic extremist groups in Syria. While Islamists had been present among the opposition from early on ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ Assad released many extremists from prison in an attempt to radicalise the protest movement and thus legitimise his crackdown ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ covert support from Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar for extremist elements helped to ensure that the insurgency took on an ever-more vicious and sectarian ideological hue. The supplementation of AssadÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s exhausted military forces with Shiite militiamen from Lebanon, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan has only fanned these flames.The final three chapters of the book explore both actual and threatened direct intervention by foreign militaries. Phillips explores the controversy surrounding the Russian-brokered solution to AssadÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s breach of President ObamaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœred lineÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ with an admirably even hand, drawing out the negative consequences of ObamaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s reticence without ignoring the constraints the US President was facing. The subsequent discussion of the US-led intervention against Islamic State is sound, but it does not provide much original insight. Phillips

compensates for this, however, with an incisive analysis of the ongoing Russian military intervention in Syria which has tipped the balance in favour of Assad without creating the conditions for his final military victory: the rebels and their foreign backers still remain committed to the fight. We are thus left with the rather unhappy conclusion that "until the various external actors involved either have their goals sufficiently satisfied or cut their losses and leave the stage, the war is likely to continue in some form."Phillips writes that he does not intend The Battle for Syria to be a history of the Syrian civil war, but rather "a study in international relations, which utilises broader approaches from that discipline to to increase our understanding of the origins, expansion and continuation of SyriaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s conflict." This characterisation is not entirely accurate: the content of the book is, in general, more descriptive than it is analytical or prescriptive. One unfortunate consequence of this is that we are not offered many insights into how the direction of the war could or should be changed. This lack of forward-looking analysis is especially regrettable in view of the potential for a US-Russia rapprochement in Syria under the incoming Trump administration. These points notwithstanding, Phillips does provide some genuinely valuable insight into the dynamics of a tragedy that will undoubtedly remain at the centre of the worldÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s attention for many years to come.

It is convincing enough to assume that there exists post-American Middle East which creates a kind of power (geo-political) vacuum to entice Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey into competing with the dwindling influence of the United States (US) in the Middle East; the battle for Syria is one such example where external forces are contending for dictating their terms. This is the central idea of the book.In the post-Cold war era, Syria has been enjoying an interesting combination of dynasty and socialism, led by President Bashar al-Assad, who belongs to Shia Alawi minority tribe (12% of the population) ruling over the Sunni Arab majority (65%). After December 17, 2010, when Mohamed Bouazizi immolated himself in Tunisia and sparked the Arab Spring of awakening, Deraa was the first Syrian city where anti-Assad slogans were heard from teenagers in early March 2011. The latent period of two and a half months was enough to let the Syrian regime brace the challenge.On page 48, Phillips writes: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“[I]t is quite possible that Syrians would have remained largely passive were it not for the trigger of the Arab Spring, which served as both an inspiration and a guideÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦Technology helped facilitate protestÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â¦It took days and weeks for Syrians and the world to learn about the Hama massacre in [February] 1982 [to quell the revolt of the Muslim Brotherhood], but in 2011 technology [e.g. internet, satellite television, Smartphone, social media and al-Jazeera] allowed instant

information.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• Here, whereas Phillips says that the presence or absence of technology to spread information makes a difference between the reaction of people to incidents in 1982 and 2011, he does not mention the significance of the authenticity of information to be spread through technology. Ironically, Phillips does not value the role of Wikileaks for giving people access to the raw truth ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ and not disinformation ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ spread through the prevailing technology in Tunisia leading to the Arab Spring in 2011. In the bibliography section, only one reference about Wikileaks ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ and that is related to ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“AnkaraÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s new foreign policyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ is found on page 288. Perhaps, Phillips does not appreciate that, more than technology, the difference lies in the legitimacy of information being bandied about, and that the revelation of information through Wikileaks became the immediate reason for the making of the Arab Spring.Phillips differentiates between uprising and civil war in Syria but considers 2011 an important year in both cases. From page 50 to 57, Phillips comments on uprising. He explicates two main pre-emptive modes of appeasement adopted by the Assad regime to keep Syrians in general away from toppling it through any uprising be it in the name of the Arab Spring, unlike Iraq, Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. The first mode is contingent on five buy-ins such as offering economic benefits to the Sunni merchant and middle class, extending patronage to important tribes, launching propaganda to depict Bashar al-Assad a reformer, avowing secularism of the regime to offer solace to secular Sunnis against Islamism and Jihadism and keeping Sunni-Alawi (Shia) tensions lower, and resorting to the appeal of stability be valued by the masses. The second mode is resorting to two coup-proofing strategies such as avoiding armyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s defection by buying its loyalty and resorting to spying (or ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“MukhabaratÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• which were 15 agencies by 2011) on the regime, general population and each other. Moreover, the Assad regime has protected itself not only by resorting to selective ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ and not wide-spread ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ violence against protestors through the security forces and Alawi pro-Assad non-state actors such as Shabiha but also by following a reconciliatory policy towards Kurds.The Assad regime has come into the grip of two major limitations. First, the UNSC Resolution 1973 which, on March 17, 2011, gave mandate to NATO to ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“intervene to protect anti-regime demonstrators that Gaddafi had threatened to crushÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• deters Assad from using brute force against protestors ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ to avoid any international intervention, as mentioned on page 56. Secondly, the caution given to Syria by US President Barack Obama on August 20, 2012, not to cross the red line of using chemical weapons against rebels closes the option of suppressing rebels, as mentioned on page 175. Hence, whereas the measures taken by the Assad regime has enabled

it to survive the uprising, the limitations imposed from outside have made it surrender Syria to a civil war.On page 196, Phillips writes: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Seeing advantage when the Syrian uprising turned into a civil war [by December 2011] ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| It eventually acquired sufficient supporters and territory inside Syria to rename itself the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) in April 2013ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•. This paragraph shows that December 2011 was the time when Syria was descending into a civil war while the US forces were withdrawing from Iraq as per the 2008 electoral pledge made by US President Barack Obama. This is the point in time which Phillips considers to have given an impression of perceived decline of US power in the Middle East and which consequently shapes a new geopolitical order in the region. Here, Phillips forgets to mention the significance of the Status of Forces Agreement between Iraq and the US signed in 2008 and expired on December 31, 2011, and which the government of IraqÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki refused to extend owing to domestic political opposition. The extension could have afforded the US some leeway to station a residual (combat) force in Iraq to counter any immediate threat, as the US and NATO signed similar agreements with Afghanistan in December 2014 for another ten years.If the Eisenhower doctrine (January 05, 1957) and the Carter doctrine (January 23, 1980) were any guide, the assumption of post-American Middle East would be a fallacy. Similarly, if the Clinton doctrine (February 26, 1999) were any guide, US planes would soon be hitting targets in the troubled spots in Syria. Neither is there any dwindling of US influence in the Middle East nor is there any new Middle East in the making. Nevertheless, the Afghanistan model can still be created in Syria by persuading the Assad regime to introduce reforms to make the government as representative as possible to let pro-democratic Syrians back the democratic process. The Syrian rebels of all hues can be treated as the Taliban and al-Qaeda are dealt with in Afghanistan.

Download to continue reading...

The Battle for Syria: International Rivalry in the New Middle East Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East (Library of Modern Middle East Studies) MiG-23 Flogger in the Middle East: Mikoyan i Gurevich MiG-23 in Service in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya and Syria, 1973 until Today (Middle East@War) Power and Policy in Syria: Intelligence Services, Foreign Relations and Democracy in the Modern Middle East (Library of Modern Middle East Studies) Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East, Third Edition (Indiana Series in Middle East Studies) From Resilience to Revolution: How Foreign Interventions Destabilize the Middle East (Columbia Studies in Middle East Politics) Online Activism in the Middle East: Political Power and Authoritarian Governments from Egypt to Kuwait (Library of Modern Middle East Studies) Democracy and Youth in the Middle East:

Islam, Tribalism and the Rentier State in Oman (Library of Modern Middle East Studies) The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century (Study of the Middle East Institute Ser) Writing Off the Beaten Track: Reflections on the Meaning of Travel and Culture in the Middle East (Contemporary Issues in the Middle East) Greater Middle East Region: Including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya and Turkey (Hammond Greater Middle East Region Map) Mamluk History Through Architecture: Monuments, Culture and Politics in Medieval Egypt and Syria (Library of Middle East History) Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800-1980 (Cambridge Middle East Library) The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria The Kurds of Syria: Political Parties and Identity in the Middle East Syria (Creation of the Modern Middle East) Land reform and development in the Middle East;: A study of Egypt, Syria, and Iraq Fatal Rivalry: Flodden, 1513: Henry VIII and James IV and the Decisive Battle for Renaissance Britain The Syria Report: The West's Destruction of Syria to Gain Control Over Iran (SOFREP) Lonely Planet Syria & Lebanon (Lonely Planet Syria and Lebanon) (Multi Country Travel Guide)

Contact Us

DMCA

Privacy

FAQ & Help