

## **Conflict in Syria and the Opportunity to Reduce Iran's Regional Influence and Iran's Threat to the International Community**

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Syria and Iran have a relationship of mutual convenience that has deepened over the years because each country has realized that it would be difficult to achieve their own personal goals in the region without the help of the other. The current conflict in Syria presents a threat to the regional and international power and influence of Iran because the current Syrian regime provides Iran with a regional Shi'a ally and with geographical freedom of movement to store, transport, and delivers weapons to terrorist groups working against Israel and working for Lebanon and the Palestinian movement. Cooperation between Syria and Iran is also a force multiplier for both countries in their pursuit a of weapons of mass destruction program. The current conflict in Syria presents an opportunity for the international community to assist the population of Syria in its desire to replace the current Bashar al-Assad regime, which has the potential of reducing the regional and international power and influence of Iran. Replacing the Bashar al-Assad regime may also create an opportunity for Syria to become a functional member of the international community. Therefore it is important for the international community to work together and take advantage of the opportunity to replace the Bashar al-Assad regime and assist the population of Syria.

**Key Terms:** Syria, Iran, Bashar al-Assad, Ahmadinejad, Lebanon, Israel, Hamas, Hezbollah, Arab Spring, Palestinian

The current uprising in Syria is an important issue in the international community because it may be a turning point in the historical Syria-Iran alliance and because it may provide the international community with the opportunity to change the Syria-Iran alliance and reduce Iran's ability to continue as a threat to the region and to the international community. The current internal Syrian conflict is a product of Syria's history, leadership style, and indirectly a product of the Arab uprisings that started in 2010. Syria has a history that spans thousands of years, but the history of Syria in this paper will be limited to the current era from 1946 to present day. It is important to understand the current era history of Syria in order to understand the causes of Syria's current internal conflict between the population of Syria and the Bashar al-Assad regime.

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Syria's internal conflict also has regional implications because of the relationship and alliance between Syria and Iran. To explain the evolution of the relationship between Syria and Iran it is important to understand Iran's current era history and its regional and international goals. Although the region of Iran also has a tremendously long history, the history of Iran in this paper will be limited to Iran's current era history from the 1979 Iranian Revolution to present. From the time Iran was recognized as an independent state, Syria and Iran have fostered an alliance and have worked together in order to achieve their own personal goals in the region. The relationship between Syria and Iran has deepened over time because each country has realized that it would be difficult if not impossible to achieve their own personal goals in the region without the help of the other. Therefore the conflict and instability occurring within Syria has the potential of profoundly effecting Iran's ability to achieve its goals in the region and in the international community.

There are several vital contributions to Iran's personal goals in the region and in the international community that Syria provides to Iran that explain why Iran is providing verbal and physical support to keep Bashar al-Assad in power. Keeping Bashar al-Assad is important to Iran, which is why Iran is working against the desires of the population of Syria, many members in the International community, and the members of the League of Arab Nations that would like to see Bashar al-Assad removed from power. Syria provides Iran with the ability to manipulate events in the Middle East, acts as a minority Shi'a ally in the region, provides Iran with a geographical extension of Iran's territory by allowing Iran freedom of movement in and through Syria, and provides support to and cooperates with Iran on developing a weapons of mass destruction program that both countries can benefit from.

Because the alliance between Syria and Iran has been identified as an inhibitor to regional peace and a threat to the international community, the internal conflict in Syria provides the international community with a rare opportunity to possibly change the Syria-Iran dynamic in the region and within the international community. Therefore, the international community should take advantage of this opportunity by planning and taking action to remove the Bashar al-Assad regime from power in Syria. If the international community works together to remove the Bashar al-Assad regime from power in Syria it is also important that the international community prevent a leadership void and chaos in Syria, encourage a non-secular government in Syria, work to reduce Syria's isolation from the international community, and encourage Syria to become more involved in following international laws governing weapons of mass destruction. Insight on the history of Syria in the current era will help provide insight on why the international community has the opportunity to change the dynamic between Syria and Iran.

Although the history of Syria spans thousands of years before present, this paper will focus on the history of Syria from its independence from France in 1946 to present day. Syria gained independence in 1946, but Syria did not have viable government leadership or national stability until the reign of Hafiz al-Assad, which began in 1970. Between 1946 and 1970, Syria experienced numerous violent coups, united itself with Egypt in 1958 and then subsequently became independent from Egypt again in 1961, and lost the Golan Heights territory to Israel in the 1969 Arab-Israeli War. According to the CIA World Factbook, "during the 1990s, Syria and Israel held occasional peace talks over its return" (CIA). However, none of the peace talks between Israel and Syria to return Golan Heights to Syria have come to fruition.

Hafiz al-Assad ruled Syria from 1970 until his death in 2000 when Syrian leadership was passed on to Hafiz al-Assad's son Bashar al-Assad who continues to lead Syria at the present time. Ironically Syria's governmental and military leadership is made up of Syria's minority Shi'a branch of the Islamic faith called Alawi, whereas the majority of the Syrian population is made up of Sunni Muslims. The lack of Sunni representation in the government and military leadership has caused some disparity over the years, but not as much disparity as the continuation of Islamic rule, oppression of government opposition, and continuation of the Emergency Law. A background note on Syria by The U.S. Department of State explains that "the Emergency Law, which effectively suspends most constitutional protections for Syrians, was formally in effect through a declared State of Emergency from 1963 until 2011 and remains the de facto standard for security operations" (U.S. Department of State).

Although there has been opposition towards the Bashar al-Assad regime since his placement as president of Syria in 2000, internal Syrian conflict and protests have been minimal until March 2011. In March 2011, "residents of a small southern city took to the streets to protest the torture of students who had put up anti-government graffiti" ("Syria"). It is important to note that this March 2011 protest did not occur in isolation. There have been many events since Bashar al-Assad has become Syria's president within Syria and within the international Arab community that have built on Syria's national frustrations with the Bashar al-Assad regime and have galvanized the population to protest Bashar al-Assad's policies and demand his resignation.

Throughout Bashar al-Assad's reign, members of the government who have attempted to reform Syria's authoritarian regime have been removed from their positions and arrested. For example in 2001, "two independent members of parliament, Ma'mun al-Humay and Riad Seif, who had advocated political reforms, were stripped of their parliamentary immunity and tried and convicted of charges of 'attempting to illegally change the constitution'" (U.S. Department of State). Adding to Syrian public frustrations is Bashar al-Assad's policy that authorizes military violence to repress Syrian government opposition groups and civilian protesters. And another more remote contribution to Syria's current internal conflict has to do with the Arab uprisings that started in the international Arab community in 2010.

In December of 2010 protests occurred in Tunisia that were initiated by the population of Tunisia because of oppression, dictatorship, and human rights violations committed by the Tunisian government. This Tunisia uprising initiated a systematic international Arab modernization movement called Arab Spring. The violent and repressive behavior of the Bashar al-Assad regime towards the Syrian population, the torture of students by Syrian's governmental forces in March 2011, and the success of many Arab nations in the international community to reform their government through national protests contributed to the initial Syrian population protest in Dara'a in March 2011 against the Bashar al-Assad regime. The Syrian population protests against the Bashar al-Assad regime and the call for his resignation by the Syrian population and the international community have continued since March 2011.

At the present, Bashar al-Assad has not resigned from being the president of Syria because he is still able to maintain control with the help of Russia and Iran. Bashar al-Assad "has relied on allied countries, especially Iran and Russia, to block international action, hoping to buy time to put down the protesters himself" (Badran). Russia has an interest in keeping Bashar al-

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Assad in power because it allows Russia to maintain a presence and influence in the Middle East and to balance the power and influence of the United States in the Middle East. And Iran desires to keep Bashar al-Assad in power because of Bashar al-Assad's commitment, alliance, and support of Iran's controversial goals in the region and the world.

Like Syria, the region of Iran has a history that goes back thousands of years before present. This paper will focus only on the history of Iran starting with the Iranian Revolution when Iran became an Islamic Republic in 1979 to present day. There were several causes that led to the 1979 Iran Revolution. Prior to the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the leadership of Iran was Mohammad Reza Shah and his policies of modernizing Iran, marginalizing the clerics, eliminating Islamic law, and promoting the economy with the help of the United States was a source of frustration for the majority of the more conservative Shi'a population and clerics of the time. Because Mohammad Reza Shah feared opposition to his leadership, governmental and secret police violence was used against protesters to oppress any opposition towards Iran's leadership or policies. "Iran between 1971 and 1977 had one of the world's worst records on the number of secret executions, deaths under torture, and killings in the streets" (Abrahamian 6). The Iranian governmental and secret police violence against Iranian civilians who opposed the Mohammad Reza Shah and his policies was one of the main causes of the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

The 1979 Iranian Revolution changed the leadership characteristics and policy of Iran drastically. The territory of Iran became the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iran transformed from a non-secular authoritarian government to a theocracy government ruled by Islamic law, and the leadership of Iran disassociated itself from any alliances with the United States or non-Islamic Western influences. In a background note on Iran by the U.S. Department of State it is pointed out that the "Supreme Leader, Khomeini steered Iran's foreign policy sharply away from its close alignment with the West" (U.S. Department of State). This resulted in Iran reaching out to other nations in the Middle East to establish national policy, the most notable ally being Syria.

Since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Syria has been an important ally of Iran and part of Iran's development in the region. "Syria was the first Arab country to recognize the provisional government of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan after the shah's ouster" (Goodarzi). Not long after the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Iraq invaded Iran initiating an eight year war between the two countries. Saddam Hussein may have stated that Iraq invaded Iran due to fears that Iran's revolution would influence a revolution in Iraq and cause conflict between the Sunni and Shi'a populations within Iraq, but Iraq invaded Iran with the goal of establishing itself as a regional hegemony. "Iraq launched the war in an effort to consolidate its rising power in the Arab world and to replace Iran as the dominant Persian Gulf state" (Global Security). The Iran-Iraq War was a unifying force for Iran and Syria because Iran needed Syria's assistance to fight the Iraqi forces and to stimulate an Iranian economic foundation and Syria needed Iran as an ally to help promote Syrian goals in the region. Therefore Syria and Iran made their alliance official in 1982. "In March 1982 when a high-level Syrian delegation, headed by then Foreign Minister Abd al-Halim Khaddam visited Tehran and concluded a series of bilateral agreements on oil and trade, and a secret pact on military matters" (Goodarzi).

The Iran-Iraq War ended in 1988 as a result of a United National Security Council cease-fire agreement. From the termination of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988 until 1997, Iran experienced marginal leadership, economic decline, a lack of political reform, and growing dissatisfaction with Iranian leadership from the Iranian population. When Eslam Mohammad Khatami became Iran's president in 1997, he tried to turn around Iran's economy and initiated political reform in order to reduce Iran's isolation from the international community. However, the more conservative actors in Iran prevented political reform and eventually succeeded in voting in Iranian president Ahmadinejad in 2005, who is a much more conservative president than Eslam Mohammad Khatami.

Since taking power in 2005, President Ahmadinejad has continued to isolate Iran from the international community due to his continued sponsorship to international terrorist groups, continued pursuit of nuclear weapons capability, continued threats against Israel and the United States, authorization of Iranian military violence against the 2009 Iranian election protesters, and most recently Iran's support of Syria's president Bashar al-Assad's violent military action and severe repression against opposition groups protesting Bashar al-Assad's continued presidency. Contributing to the ability of Bashar al-Assad to stay in power in Syria and the ability of Ahmadinejad to stay in power in Iran is the strong alliance, committed mutual support, and cooperation between Syria and Iran.

From 1979 to present, Syria and Iran have maintained a loyal relationship of support and cooperation for mutual security and mutual desires to continue to manipulate events in the region. According to Jubin Goodarzi the historical record shows that Syria and Iran working together have resulted in Syria and Iran's ability to successfully manipulated events in the region despite international efforts to bring peace to the region.

They forced U.S. peacekeepers out of Lebanon in 1984, and thwarted Israel's effort to bring Lebanon into its orbit during an 18-year occupation that finally ended in Israel's unilateral withdrawal in 2000. The odd bedfellows together sired or supported Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and an array of radical Palestinian groups. All reject peace. And together they have inflicted repeated setbacks on six American presidents. (Goodarzi) Because of the ability of Syria and Iran to manipulate events in the Middle East, mutual support between the two nations presently continues and is demonstrated through Iran's support to the Bashar al-Assad regime.

The main motivating factor contributing to Iran's support of the Bashar al-Assad regime is if Bashar al-Assad regime or chosen successor stays in power in Syria, it is a guarantee of a continued alliance between Syria and Iran. This continued alliance between Syria and Iran is vital to Iran for several reasons. One reason has to do with the Shi'a and Sunni division in the Islamic community. Since Bashar al-Assad and much of the Syrian governmental and military leadership are part of a Shi'a sect called Alawi Islam, Iran has a Shi'a ally in the predominantly Sunni Syria and predominantly Sunni Middle East. "Syria is a critical front in one of the two great competitions that define the Middle East today – the challenge from Shi'ite Islamist supremacist ideology, led by the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the challenge of Sunni Islamist supremacist ideology, led by al –Qaeda" (Satloff 45). If the Bashar al-Assad regime is removed

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from power, it is unlikely the new Syrian regime will be predominantly Shi'a and Iran will lose an ally in spreading the influence and dominance of Shi'a Islam regionally and globally.

In addition to Syria being a Shi'a ally, geographically the alliance between Syria and Iran provides Iran with a direct connection to Hamas in Golan Heights, Hezbollah in Lebanon, targets within Israel, and an ability to have a physical presence and influence within Lebanon. The benefit to Iran having freedom of movement across the geography of Syria is it provides Iran with the ability to transit weapons, troops, and money to Hamas in Golan Heights, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the supporters of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria, directly to Lebanon if necessary, and directly to anti-Israeli groups within Israel if necessary. "The Syrian regime is Iran's key strategic partner in the Middle East, serving as Tehran's link to terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah" (Ensher). Recently Iran has increased its investment in Syria by providing weapons to the Syrian government and helping Syria build its military. Iran has also established an Iranian Revolutionary Guard Base in Damascus Syria and has plans to build another in Latakia Syria. Iran invested in the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Bases in Syria in order to secure its ability to transit weapons and troops across Syria to Lebanon, Hezbollah, and Hamas. These bases in Syria also provide an Iranian military footprint within close proximity to Israel and Lebanon with the base in Latakia providing Iran with the ability to transit weapons with less cargo oversight by airline authorities. "Latakia is regarded as a more suitable destination as it is not subjected to the same level of scrutiny as Damascus. For this reason Iran has agreed to provide \$23 million to build a new complex at Latakia airport to handle the arms shipments" (Coughlin).

And finally, with Bashar al-Assad in power in Syria, Iran maintains a partner and ally in the development of weapons of mass destruction guaranteeing mutual security and regional influence. The idea that Syria and Iran were working together in building a nuclear weapons program was presented to the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives on 23 June 2011 by Mr. John Bolton; a former U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations and former Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. "There may also be other reasons for Iran's visible involvement in suppressing the Syrian dissident movement, related to safeguarding Iran's own nuclear weapons program and whatever weapons-related activities in addition to the reactor might be underway in Syria" (Bolton 27-8). The alliance between Syria and Iran in the development of weapons of mass destruction is a force multiplier for both countries because each country can share the knowledge of weapons engineers from each respective country, it increases the landmass available to build and hide weapons of mass destruction, and increases the potential production capacity.

In addition to the nuclear weapons programs in Syria and Iran, it has also been recognized that Syria has a chemical and biological weapons program. Mr. Robert Satloff stated in the Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives that, "Syria has, as we know, not just a nuclear issue but chemical weapons program, biological weapons program" (Satloff 57). Mr. Robert Satloff is the executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. The combined weapons of mass destruction research and development programs of Syria and Iran and cooperation and sharing between Syria and Iran on weapons of mass destruction technology creates a situation where Syria and Iran have access to nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. As an example of Syria and Iran mutually benefiting from weapons of mass destruction programs, there are "reports that Syria has recently benefited from sales and technology transfers by Iran. These reports indicate that Syria is undertaking 'an

innovative chemical warfare (CW) program in cooperation with Iran” (Cordesman 11).

In conclusion, Iran supports the Bashar al-Assad regime because Iran knows the Bashar al-Assad regime will continue its support, alliance, and cooperation with Iran, which is vital to Iran’s goals to manipulate events in the Middle East in order to prevent regional and international resolution over Israel, to maintain a regional Shi’a ally, to keep the geographic freedom of movement to transit weapons and troops to and through Syria, and to keep its partnership with Syria in developing weapons of mass destruction. If the Bashar al-Assad regime is removed, it is highly unlikely the regime that replaces Bashar al-Assad will be as accommodating in helping Iran achieve its regional and international goals. There is a possibility that if the current Bashar al-Assad regime collapses or is successfully removed Syria may experience a leadership void and internal chaos. In this case, Syria would be in no position to assist Iran in any way and could lead to a more dangerous and destabilizing situation in the region. If Syria experiences a leadership void, chaos, and no international support of troops on the ground in Syria, “Israeli officials and intelligence analysts say they also worry about an increased presence by Al Qaeda in Syria and the possibility that Syria’s large storehouse of arms could end up in the hands of Hezbollah and other anti-Israel groups” (Bronner).

If a new regime successfully replaces the Bashar al-Assad regime, there are several reasons why the new regime will not be as accommodating as Bashar al-Assad in supporting Iran’s regional and international goals. A new Syrian regime may want to work towards a solution over the Israeli issue in order to reduce conflict in the region and to reduce military strikes by Israel on Syrian soil. An Israel-Arab resolution goes against the goals of Iran. It is also important to note that Syria is made up of primarily Sunni Muslims. Since the majority of the Syrian population is Sunni Muslim, it is highly unlikely a new regime and military leadership will be composed of a Shi’a majority. If governmental and military leadership in Syria is made up of an equal mix of Shi’a and Sunni Muslims or primarily Sunni Muslims, Iran will not get the support it currently has with the Bashar al-Assad regime. “Except for Mr. Assad’s minority Alawite sect, other components of Syria’s fractured sectarian mosaic have no affinity for Iran” (Gladstone). Therefore Iran would lose a major ally in supporting the establishment of Shi’a dominant secular leadership in the countries that make up the Middle East.

It is also highly unlikely that new leadership in Syria would continue to allow Iran to establish and maintain Iranian Revolutionary Guard bases within Syria and enjoy the freedom of movement of weapons and troops Iran enjoys with the current Bashar al-Assad regime. The main reason supporting the idea of Iran losing its bases and freedom of movement in Syria stems from the fact that Iran is currently supporting Bashar al-Assad’s violence and repression against the population of Syria and as a result Iran is losing support, alliance, and legitimacy among the Syrian population. “There are Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps encampments and Iranian weapons and advisers throughout Syria. And Iranian-controlled Hezbollah forces from Lebanon have joined in butchering the Syrians who have risen up against Mr. Assad” (Halevy). And finally a new Syrian regime may be willing to have a more transparent weapons program and be willing to adhere to international weapons of mass destruction standards in order to become a functional member of the international community instead remaining in its current isolation status. In this case Iran would lose its regional ability to exchange weapons of mass destruction components and technology.

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Since new leadership in Syria could lead to more peace and stability in the region and reduce Iran's power and influence in the region and the international community, the most important international effort should be to remove the Bashar al-Assad regime from power in Syria. It would also be just as important for the international community to be ready to address the issues that may be created by the removal of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria. The international community should be ready to address the situation in Syria by assisting Syria with security and stability so Syria is not forced to rely on Iran for funding, security, and weapons support. If Syria, with the assistance of the international community, is able to provide itself with stability and security then Iran does not have an angle of approach to reestablish itself within Syria.

In order to address the possibility of a leadership void and chaos in Syria upon the removal of Bashar al-Assad, the international community must have a plan for follow-up leadership and security in Syria. Efraim Halevy, a lawyer and Israeli intelligence expert, recommends "a force with a mandate from the Arab League should then ensure stability until a new Syrian government can take over" (Halevy). An international plan to address the possibility of a leadership void and chaos in Syria upon the removal of Bashar al-Assad will also prevent the creation of a terrorist safe haven in Syria and reduce the possibility that the proliferation of unsecured weapons of mass destruction will end up in the hands of international terrorist groups.

In order to promote peace and a better understanding between Syria and Israel, the international community should encourage mediated dialogue between Syria and Israel. With a new Syrian regime, without the influence of Iran, there is a higher potential for an Israel-Arab resolution in the international community. Part of moving towards an Israel-Arab resolution in the international community is promoting a non-secular replacement regime in Syria and recommending a plan for power sharing in government and military leadership between Syrian Shi'a and Sunni Muslims. This would promote a balance of Sunni-Shi'a power in the Middle East and reduce Iran's influence over the new Syrian regime's Israeli policy.

Another way to reduce or eliminate Iran's influence in Syria would be to reduce Syria's isolation in the international community. Continued isolation of Syria would only create an environment in the international community that would force Syria to reestablish an Iranian alliance. In order to reduce Syria's isolation, the international community would need to initiate a dialogue with Syria and encourage the League of Arab Nations to reestablish Syria's membership. "Any workable outcome in Syria will have to involve the United States, Russia and Arab countries" (Halevy). This would prevent Syria from seeking Iran's assistance in the future and prevent Iran from reestablishing itself in Syria and regaining regional power.

And finally, in order to reduce the possibility that a new Syrian regime may want to continue the pursuit of a secretive weapons of mass destruction program, the international community must maintain the current sanctions on Syria and Iran, encourage Russia and China to honor these sanctions, and promote a security agreement between Syria and Israel so Syria feels less threatened by Israel and subsequently reduces Syria's need to continue a weapons of mass destruction program. If the international community takes this opportunity to take action in Syria, the international community has much to gain and Iran has much to lose. Therefore it is

important for the international community to take advantage of this opportunity and make the effort to take action in Syria.

The current uprising in Syria provides the opportunity for change within Syria with help from the international community. It is important for the international community to take action in Syria because this action has the potential of changing the regional dynamic between Syria and Iran. The internal Syrian dynamic is a product of Syria's history since its independence in 1946 and the subsequent leadership of Syria since 1970 when Hafiz al-Assad took over as president of Syria. The history of Syria in the current era explains how Bashar al-Assad came to power and what has led to the conflict and uprisings in Syria. Syria's internal conflict has regional and international implications because of the relationship and alliance between Syria and Iran. A collapse or removal of the Bashar al-Assad regime would affect Iran and Iran's ability to achieve its regional and international goals.

The evolution of the relationship between Syria and Iran has made it possible for Iran to establish itself as a regional power and as a threat to the international community. Like Syria the region of Iran has a tremendously long history, but the history of Iran in this paper is limited to Iran's current era history from the 1979 Iranian Revolution to present. From the time Iran was recognized as an independent state, Syria and Iran have fostered an alliance and have worked together in order to achieve their own personal goals in the region. The relationship between Syria and Iran has deepened over time because each country has realized that it would be difficult if not impossible to achieve their own personal goals in the region without the help of the other. There are several vital contributions to Iran's personal goals in the region and international community that Syria provides to Iran that explain why Iran is providing verbal and physical support to keep Bashar al-Assad in power. Iran's support to the Bashar al-Assad regime is unpopular in the region and the international community and has further isolated Iran from the population of Syria and from the international community. However Iran has a lot to lose if there is a change of leadership in Syria so Iran continues to provide support to keep Bashar al-Assad in power.

Syrian leadership currently provides Iran with the ability to manipulate events in the Middle East, acts as a minority Shi'a ally in the region, provides Iran with a geographical extension of Iran's territory by allowing Iran freedom of movement in and through Syria, and provides support to and cooperates with Iran on developing a weapons of mass destruction program that both countries can benefit from. Because the alliance between Syria and Iran has been identified as an inhibitor to regional peace and a threat to the international community, the internal conflict in Syria provides the international community with a rare opportunity to possibly change the Syria-Iran dynamic in the region and the international community. Therefore the international community should take advantage of this opportunity by planning and taking action to remove the Bashar al-Assad regime from power in Syria.

If the international community works together to remove the Bashar al-Assad regime from power in Syria it is also important that the international community have a plan to prevent a leadership void and chaos in Syria, encourage the development of a non-secular government in Syria, work to reduce Syria's isolation from the international community, and encourage Syria to become more involved in following international laws governing weapons of mass destruction.

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The international community has everything to gain by taking action in Syria because there is a possibility this action in Syria could lead to an Israel-Arab resolution, bring more peace and stability to the region, and lead to Syria becoming a productive member of the international community. If the international community takes action in Syria, there is the potential of further isolating Iran and reducing Iran's ability to threaten the region or the international community.

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