

Asma Al-Assad: How Western Media Turned “A Rose in the Desert” into “A Cheerleader for Evil”

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In early March 2011, right before the [carefully calculated and planned](#) imposed war and invasion in Syria, **Vogue Magazine** published a surprisingly positive article titled: [Asma al-Assad: A Rose in the Desert](#).

“Asma al-Assad is glamorous, young, and very chic—the freshest and most magnetic of first ladies. Her style is not the couture-and-bling dazzle of Middle Eastern power but a deliberate lack of adornment. She’s a rare combination: a thin, long-limbed beauty with a trained analytic mind who dresses with cunning understatement. Paris Match calls her “the element of light in a country full of shadow zones.” “She is the first lady of Syria”.



Asma Al-Assad with students (Source: The Rabbit Hole)

The article gave readers an inside view of what life was like for the Assad’s In Syria. It didn’t exaggerate, or misrepresent information and had a seemingly unbiased tone.

“Back in the car, I ask what religion the orphans are. “It’s not relevant,” says Asma al-Assad. “Let me try to explain it to you. That church is a part of my

heritage because it's a Syrian church. The Umayyad Mosque is the third-most-important holy Muslim site, but within the mosque is the tomb of Saint John the Baptist. We all kneel in the mosque in front of the tomb of Saint John the Baptist. That's how religions live together in Syria—a way that I have never seen anywhere else in the world. We live side by side, and have historically. All the religions and cultures that have passed through these lands—the Armenians, Islam, Christianity, the Umayyads, the Ottomans—make up who I am.”

“Does that include the Jews?” I ask. “And the Jews,” she answers. “There is a very big Jewish quarter in old Damascus.”

Also included in the article is some background information on the first lady. **Asma Akhras** was born in London in 1975 to a Syrian-born cardiologist and his wife, a diplomat who had served as first secretary at the Syrian embassy. She went to Queen's College a private school, graduated from King's College London, and worked for some time at JP Morgan in Manhattan. She was accepted into the prestigious ivy league school Harvard but instead of attending she accepted a marriage proposal from **President Bashar** in 2000 after secretly dating for some time.

The article detailed some other information as well, but nothing that would strike the knowledgeable reader as pretentious, over the top, or propaganda material. The response however from other publications written by disgruntled journalists was outrageous. They spoke as if they had more knowledge about conditions in Syria than a journalist that actually went to Syria and wrote about the experience.

Soon after the Vogue article was published the war in Syria began, with a [staged uprising in Daraa](#). Another war against Vogue Magazine and this article, in particular, was waged by many publications, in particular, those that had ties or were sympathetic to the illegal state of [Israel](#).

These publications shamed, insulted, belittled and demanded that this story be retracted or changed to fit the demonization campaign that spawned in mainstream media.

A few years prior in 2009 The Huffington Post published a slide show entitled, “[Asma Al Assad: Syria's First Lady And All-Natural Beauty](#).”

In 2010 the Harvard Arab Alumni Association's website promoted an event featuring Asma by praising her as an avid supporter of “a robust, independent and self-sustaining civil society.” Asma convened a conference for the Syria Trust for Development about “the emerging role of civil society in development.”

As [reported](#) in Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs website, The First Lady

“...opened the conference by declaring that **the state wanted to open more space for civil society to work, develop and partner with the government in designing and implementing development-oriented policies.** We will learn from our mistakes, she said, and a law will be passed soon — after consultations with civil society — to provide non-governmental organizations the safeguards they need to operate effectively. She challenged them, for their part, to rise to the occasion and achieve higher levels of efficacy and professionalism. Her overall theme of partnership reflected a realization

that the government alone could not provide all the expertise or services needed to develop the country at the pace that its citizens expect.”

Syria hosted a conference of Harvard Arab Alumni with Asma leading the event.

The website [was enthusiastic about Mrs. Assad's role in Syrian national life](#) and the connection between her work and that of her husband's:

“In her role as Syria's first lady, Her Excellency Asma al-Assad applies her experience, energy, and influence to her country's social and cultural development. Her role reflects the significant economic, political and social change that is happening in Syria today. Asma al-Assad's work supports that of President Bashar al-Assad by fostering the emergence of a robust, independent and self-sustaining civil society.”

Harvard Arab Alumni met in Damascus, *“Under the Patronage of H.E. Mrs. Asma al-Assad, The First Lady of Syria.” “We are honored that Harvard Vice Provost for International Affairs, Prof. Jorge Dominguez, will be joining us in Damascus to deliver the Harvard Guest Address.”*

In 2010, French Elle voted Asma *“the most stylish woman in world politics,”* and Paris Match called her *“an eastern Diana,”* a *“ray of light in a country full of shadow zones.”*

Even US Politicians appreciated and admired the Assads before this war bloody war was waged on the sovereign nation. Paying them visits and speaking about them in positive and affirmative tones.

Former Speaker of the House **Nancy Pelosi** stood on Syrian soil in April 2007 and [famously declared](#) that *“the road to Damascus is a road to peace.”* During her visit, Pelosi had [an enjoyable shopping tour](#) through Damascus markets.

Even **Secretary of State Hillary Clinton** bought the Assad-is-a-reformer narrative, telling [CBS News](#) on March 27, 2011:

“There is a different leader in Syria now. Many of the members of Congress of both parties who have gone to Syria in recent months have said they believe he's a reformer.”

Senator John Kerry, President Obama's former informal envoy to Syria. [Kerry feverishly pushed](#) to revive diplomatic engagement with the Assad regime. Indeed, he was a frequent guest of Bashar's; the two men and their wives were known to dine together in Damascus and discuss bilateral relations. He delivered a [speech](#) in Washington that [heaped praise](#) on Assad for the generosity he personally extended to the former Democratic presidential candidate during his many visits to Damascus.

All seemed well in Syria according to politicians and media alike. Was that all just a front? Were they all lying? Or were they dubbed into believing something that wasn't true? Maybe they were tricked? Could it be that the Assad's had put them all under a spell? No, no, no.

They were not handed a memo yet that going forward they would be limited to derogatory terms and hate speech however ridiculous or nonsensical it may be when speaking about the Assad's. It was a requirement or else they would face ridicule much like what happened to Vogue Magazine after they published their article on the first lady.

They needed to quickly recant their support, respect, and admiration in order to fit with the new script. New terminology would replace the old, regime and dictator instead of government and president. Also, going forward all mainstream media outlets are required to mention barrel bombs, chemical weapons, and how the US will protect and save poor Syrians who are being bombed by their "brutal dictator" by well.. bombing them. Wait.. what?

Why this sudden change in March 2011?

Simply because mainstream media completely flipped it's scripted and started to demonize this "Rose in the Desert" along with her husband President Dr. Bashar Al Assad in an all-out [propaganda campaign](#) that fit the US/NATO "regime change" narrative. Asma Al-Assad never was nor is she evil. President Bashar Al Assad is not a ruthless dictator but instead they both are very much loved and respected in THEIR country by their people which is all that should matter.

Before this invasion took place in 2011 and over 300,000 foreign mercenaries came in from over 80 countries, Syria was one of the safest countries in the world, and the only secular, nonsectarian and united country in the Middle East. For the first ten years of his presidency there were no major issues, no bombings, beheadings by terrorists, none of that so how is this something that President Bashar brought to the country? That is a huge misconception, one of many that the western media has helped instill in the [minds of gullible people](#) who have completely refused to use logic and critical thinking or to even question what they are being told.

The agenda in most mainstream media outlets globally soon became to destroy the first Assad's image by any means possible, with a proliferation of lies and negative press. The same demonization that was used previously by imperialist nations in pursuit of destabilizing yet another country in the region. The modus operandi was the same, create an over the top propaganda media campaign to win the public's sympathy and wage a "humanitarian intervention" in order to save the people of a country from their corrupt "dictatorship" run government by ousting the elected president, installing a puppet president approved by the US/NATO, stealing their resources, and establishing a long-term military base on the pretense that they are helping to rebuild the nation they themselves unapologetically destroyed. Much like they did with other countries they were "spreading democracy" in prior such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya etc.

The plethora of articles one will find by doing a simple google search that reek of propaganda and are filled to the rim with bias, sectarian hate speech, and outright lies is profound. For the knowledgeable reader, they are simply infuriating to read.

I have included one such propaganda spewing article below published by The Guardian and some interesting information I found about the author as well.

"Asma al-Assad is a cheerleader for evil. Her UK citizenship should be revoked"

was written by **Nadhim Zahawi**.

In this poorly written and utterly pathetic excuse for an article, Zahawi states

“The Assad regime has a seemingly infinite capacity for evil, and an inability to be touched by compassion. At the very best he is dangerously deluded about what is happening, and the atrocities he has ordered. But most likely he is a monster.” Even though his article was supposedly about Asma Al-Assad he took whatever invalid and fact-deprived hits that he could at her husband as well.

Interestingly enough Mr. Zahawi a Kurdish Iraqi politician who visited Syria in 2011 and resides in the U.K. also had this to say “*Removing Mrs. Assad’s citizenship is not illegal, because she is also a citizen of Syria. The home secretary has the power to do so when she believes it would be “conducive to the public good”. Asma al-Assad should never be welcome in our country again.*” On that note, I hope Mr. Zahawi is forbidden to return to Syria as well.

After looking into Mr. Zahawi a little further I found that he is the vice-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Kurdistan Region in Iraq, which receives secretarial support from Gulf Keystone Petroleum International, an oil company of which Zahawi is Chief Strategy Officer. Concerns have been raised about how MPs’ independence might be compromised by such links between APPGs and private companies, and specifically about how Zahawi’s connections with the oil industry affect his role as MP. Zahawi has been co-chair or vice-chair of this APPG since it was established in 2008/9.

Also worth noting, in November 2013 Zahawi “apologized unreservedly” after *The Sunday Mirror* reported that he had claimed £5,822 expenses for electricity for his horse riding school stables and a yard manager’s mobile home.[19] Zahawi said the mistake arose because he received a single bill covering both a meter in the stables and one in his house. He would repay the money though the actual overcharge was £4,000.[20] An article in *The Independent* also drew attention to the number of legitimate but “trivial” items on Zahawi’s expenses.

In January 2011, Zahawi appeared in the Commons debate discussing the end of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme wearing a musical tie which proceeded to play during his contribution. The Deputy Speaker advised him to be more selective when choosing ties to avoid a musical accompaniment to debate in the chamber.

An investigation by the *Guardian* has revealed close links between a Conservative MP and two companies based in a tax haven. Nadhim Zahawi has financial ties to Balshore Investments and Berkford Investments, which operate from a lawyer’s’ office in Gibraltar. He does not declare a connection to either company on the MPs’ register of interests.

The same script in mainstream media is used repeatedly yet people still fall for it. Isn’t it time for the masses to recognize this repetition and bring an end to these bankers wars based on lies? We are all of one race, the human race and we need to end these countries destructive imperialist driven plots. World domination by the elite is not in the best interest of humanity.

The United States has been practicing this destructive behavior in toppling sovereign

nations for their own benefit since 1898. New imperial influence of U.S. (1898-1917): New territories gained in Spanish American War: Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, Philippines. Up until present day with Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Venezuela, the Philippines etc. At some point, this bloodshed has to end. Sovereignty has to be preserved. Cultures and customs need to be protected against greedy nations who only have their own best interest at heart. Whether it be neo-colonialism, imperialism, economic imperialism, etc. These ruthless regimes will do whatever it takes to complete their bloody missions.

Antikrieg TV -In 2010, the Syria's First Lady Asma al-Assad talked to diplomats and intellectuals at the Paris Diplomatic Academy. She spoke without notes, about Syria's history and how that heritage informs daily life.

"Some often ask me how then can Syria remain stable, moderate and influential in a region that is increasingly being surrounded by extremism, ideologism (sic), sectarianism and all other forms of negative perceptions in our society," she told the gathering. "The typical answer I get is because of military, political, security reasons. Again, I believe I have a different view.

"It's the very essence of our culture. It's what our history teaches us of openness and engagement," she said. "It's the sense of identity and pride that we have knowing who we are in the world and knowing what we've contributed to the world over thousands of years that give us that sense of stability and that sense of moderation.

"Some of you might think I am talking politics. ... Trust me, I have no interest in politics," she continued. "My interests are elsewhere. But living in the region for as long as I have, I realize that politics affects every facet of our lives."

Many people who have never heard of Syria before it became front page news after this imposed war was launched by outside forces on it's land, think they have the right to speak ill about a nation that people like myself are originally from. Their profound arrogance is matched by their ignorance. What they may not realize is that they are indirectly contributing to the bloodshed by spreading this false propaganda. It would be better for them to never speak about Syria than for them to carelessly spread information that is nothing more than dirty gossip that they heard on their T.V. If they truly care, they need to educate themselves by reading and watching alternative media sources and listening to independent journalists, that do not have a vested interest in seeing Syria crumble and fall into the hands of the vultures in the West and their allies.

Sarah Abed is an independent journalist and political commentator. Her articles can be read at the [Rabbit Hole](#).

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