

Syria conflict

Politics



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Introduction The Syrian Arab Republic is an Arab country in Western Asia, bordering Lebanon and the Mediterranean Sea to the West, Turkey to the North, Iraq to the East, Jordan to the South, and Israel to the Southwest. In March 2011, the Syria conflict has begun due to various reasons and is still going on today. This outbreak is one of the key factors which resulted the Arab Spring (Arab Uprising). Arab Spring refers to the democratic uprisings that arose independently and spread across the Arab world in 2011.

The protest originated in Tunisia in December 2010 and quickly took hold in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. In these countries, the citizens initiated the protests as the ruling families have been keeping the power for too long (Arab Spring, 2012). In Syria, the conflict goes up to its peak as the revolution against the rule of Syria President Bashar Al-Assad's (Mr Assad). According to the latest report of the Human Right Organization, more than 36, 000 people were killed in this civil war (Khera, 2012).

In this essay, the roots of the conflict will be traced and analysed using the International relation (IR) theories. Literature Review A literature review has been conducted to investigate the causes of the conflict by applying IR theories. The traditional core of IR relates to issues concerning the development and change of sovereign statehood, in the context of the larger system or society of state. In general, there are four (4) major theoretical traditions in IR and will be covered as part of the study scope: •Realism; •Liberalism; International Society; and •International Political Economy (IPE). Realism Several general realist ideas and assumptions were discussed (Jackson, 2010). These are related to different aspects such as pessimistic

view of human nature; international conflicts that are ultimately resolved by war, high regard for the values of national security and state survival and basic scepticism that there can be progress in international politics that is comparable to that in domestic political life. In summary, with realist, states are the most important factor.

All states tend to pursue self-interested and their primary concern is survival (Wikipedia). Liberalism The other theory is Liberalism, which started by John Locke in the seventeenth (17th) century. He believed that as the development of technologies and people can master the nature, there are great potential that people could flourish in states that guaranteed individual liberty. Liberals, differ from realist, take a positive view of human nature. And for them, conflict and war are avoidable.

According to John Locke, the core concern of Liberalism is the happiness and contentment of individual human beings. A country is in a state of liberalism when a citizen within that country can live their lives and pursue their happiness without other people interference. (Jackson, 2010) There is a major debate between idealist Liberalism and pessimist Realism. A main point in this debate is concerned about "human nature", as Liberalism takes a positive view of human nature while Realism holds a negative view. (Jackson, 2010) (Arab Spring, 21) International Society

Unlike Realism and Liberalism International Society is one of classical IR approach which tries to avoid the stark choice between state egotism and conflict and human goodwill and cooperation. Instead of adopting the classical Realist pessimistic view or classical Liberalism optimistic view, it occupies a position between those two and develops that into a separate IR <https://assignbuster.com/syria-conflict/>

approach. (Jackson, 2010) International Political Economy International Political Economy (IPE) is the debate where they claimed that there is a link between politics and economics as well as the nature and extent of economic globalization.

IPE is ultimately concerned with the ways in which political forces (states, institutions, individual actors, etc.) shape the systems through which economic interactions are expressed, and conversely the effect that economic interactions (including the power of collective markets and individuals acting both within and outside them) have upon political structures and outcomes. (Jackson, 2010) Syrian Conflict review The first protest erupted on March 2011 in Deraa after the arrest and torture of some teenagers who were painted with revolutionary slogans on a school wall.

In order to manage the uncontrollable chaotic situation, minimum military forces were suitably in place to minimise the protest through the use of checkpoint road blocks. As the protest continued and spread widely over the country the citizens demanded for the President Bashar Al-Assad's resignation. By July 2011 hundreds of thousand people taking to streets, town and cities across the countries such as Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Deraa (BBC, 2012). As the act of protest has become uncontrollable, the government applied the military forces to crush the dissent and sending tanks to Deraa in late March 2011.

Rockets and mortars were also used to hit the rebel stronghold (See Appendix 1. 1 - Homs Feb 2012). After a month of bombardment, the rebels retreated with an estimate of more than 700 people were killed. People within the country have to flee to neighboring countries such as Turkey up to <https://assignbuster.com/syria-conflict/>

several months. According to the statistics recorded by the United Nations refugee agency, there are more than 200, 000 Syrians who have registered with the agency fled to Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey. There was also an unofficial estimate of the refugees which puts the number much higher and those figures are expected to rise.

The Government in Jordan as well as other countries permitted the stay of Syrians within the countries, provided with minimum necessities and protection such as food and security guards. All the refugees were instructed to assemble in one common area, allowing the government to take care and control the crowds easily. In this Syria crisis, number of bomb blasts took place in different cities. Many people were killed in the civil war due to the bomb strikes. Apart from causing deaths most of the facilities in the cities were destroyed.

The war has deniably resulted various negative implications to Syria in terms of people, environment and asset. The Syrian government has put the blame of these activities to the terrorists which linked to the al-Qaeda as well as a shadowy group called al-Nusa Front. The al-Nusa Front has said to be one who controlled and manipulated all the attacks and bombing activities. Based on the latest figures provided by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the number of deaths reported has been increased to 21067 and 5980 people were killed due to the security forces.

Therefore the United Nations has charged the Syrian government and security forces for the violation of international humanitarian law. A peace plan was suggested and conducted by the UN envoy, Kofi Annan and the negotiation mission started in April 2012. However as violence escalated, Mr. <https://assignbuster.com/syria-conflict/>

Annan resigned and withdrew from the country. At the same time Mr. Assad still shows no sign of leaving his power and there seems to be no end to the crisis. Trace down the root of the problem. As mentioned in the previous sections, the outbreak of the civil war has brought many negative implications to the country.

There appears to have no solution for the civil war. Thus various researches were conducted to investigate and analyse the causes of the problem. In most recent research, Manfreda has pointed critical points which has led to the Syrian uprising (Manfreda, 2012): •Political Repression; •Unstable Economy; •Media influence; and •Fear of state power. The political repression is one of the main reasons which causes the outbreak of Syrian war. Since 1950s, there was not any peaceful transfer of power, as the change appears to happen through a military coup or an uprising (Manfreda, 2012).

For instance as soon as the President Bashar al-Assad has inherited the power in 2000, he quickly rushed into the process of reformation while the power remains concentrated in the ruling family. Besides political repression, the instability of economy in Syria is believed to be one of the causes which led to the uprising. The economy in Syria has become unsustainable due to the quick expansion of the population. At present the population in Syria is estimated to be 20 million, with an average growth rate of 2.4 percents. Based on the statistical review this figure stays among one of the world's highest growth rate.

A Syrian economist, Nail Sukkar has agreed that Syria is currently having a problem with the oversizing of population. It is difficult for the government to

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sustain the citizens by providing sufficient welfares and healthcares. The unemployment rate has increased because the government is not able to create sufficient job opportunities to the people. An official figure was reported by the governmnet stating that the unemployment rate is estimated to be 10 percents. However with the combination of other independent estimates the rate of unemployment is believed to be approximately 25 percents.

In addition, the natural disaster such as persistent drought struck north-eastern of Syria. This has caused a severe devastation to the farming communities and affected more than a million of people since 2008. Due to the negligence of the government, thousands of farmer families were suffered frompoverty. These people from the farming communities have vented their angers and frustrations through participation of the protest activities. Furthermore due to the cautious reform of the remnants of socialism, it opened the door to private investment which in turn triggered an explosion of consumerism among the urban upper-middle classes.

However, privatization has favored families with personal links to Assad, which made the jobs remained scarce for people within the country (Manfreda, 2012). Apart from that the awareness was raised by different means of media. The advancement intechnologyhas exposed the people to the world issues throguh various approaches for instance internet. Previously the government tried to refrain the youths from exposing to more information by limiting the means of media. However the attempt was failed since the state media is no longer the main channel to the citizens.

The use of the new media is critical to the activist networks that underpin the uprising in Syria (Manfreda, 2012). Although the fear of state of the citizens has existed for a very long time since the ruling of Assad family, the brutal responses to the people in the peaceful protest in Spring 2011 has outraged the people. As a result of the snowball effect, more citizens joined the protest. Additionally, many Syrians resent the fact that so much power is monopolised by the Alawi families, a Shiite religious minority to which the Assad family belong.

Although this is not considered as the driving force of the uprising in Syria, the combination of a majority Sunni pretest movement and an Alawi-dominated military has added to the tension in religiously mixed areas, such as city of Homs (Manfreda, 2012). Analysis the problem using IR theoretical. The causes led to the outbreak of the Syrian war were discussed in the former section. In this section the problems will be analysed using the IR theory. Irrefutably, the brutal and aggressive way of ruling in Syria by Assad family triggered the anger of the people in the country.

The Realism theory can be accounted for the approach adopted by the Assad family in ruling the country. As stated in the Realism theory, as a human character, people always desire to be in driver's seat. Thucydides (1972: 406) also stated that the standard of justice depends on the equality to compel and that in act the strong do what they have to power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept Also, Machiavelli (1984: 66) indicated the main responsibility of the ruler is always to seek the advantages and to defend the interests of their state and thus ensure the survival.

In this , President Bashar Al-Assad's ways of ruling the country is understandable, as he wants to lead the country to the new path of development, which can secure the country state and position amongst the Arab countries (Robert, 2010). However, these action moves created a massive conflict between the citizens and Assad family as the security of the citizens is being abused. This has directly caused he citizens losing their senses of security with the ruling family and consequently the rebellion arose.

According to Thomas Hobbes , he believes that Sovereign states are the principal factor in international system. States are inherently always obsessed with security which might lead to " security dilemima" whereby increasing one's security power can bring along even greater instability as an opposing power builds up its own arms in response. Since ruling Syria, the Assad family had built up a very strong security power through various means such as developing the massive destruction weapons.

This has indeed intimidated the safety of the neighbouring Arab countie and it is now understandable why certain countries such as Turkey and Isarel supported the rebel by providing armors and weapons for the people to go against the government. At the same time, Mr. Assad was assisted by Russia with the supply of weapons to continue fighting in the war. Therefore the situation has gone worse due to the supports from other countries in the war. With Liberalism theory, liberals believe that monopoly in power must be avoided.

With the Republican liberalism theory, it is believed that democary states do not go against each other as they share the same moral values, and to their

mutually beneficial tie of economic cooperation and interdependence. However, for the Arab countries in general and Syria in specific, the monarchy system has been adopted by these countries over the centuries. Based on the findings in the previous section, it was identified that there is no peaceful power transfer in Syria since 1970. The prolonged imbalanced situation has resulted in the rise of the awareness among the citizens.

Besides the issues of wealth and poverty mentioned by IPE are critical in the world of politics. Violent conflicts nowadays can even take place inside the states due to the unstable economy, especially the weak states where the conflict can be bonded up with the development and underdevelopment. Since 1970, the Assad family has been tightly manipulated the economy. All the privileges of economy went to the family and thus creating an imbalanced condition between the ruler and citizens. In addition, due to the overgrowth of population, there were no adequate job opportunities provided by the government to the citizens.

As a result the unemployment rate has increased causing the people to suffer from poverty. Conclusion In a nutshell, the revolution in Syria is inevitable due to the number of reasons such as the adoption of monarchy system and instability of economy. It is believed that the only way to terminate the civil war is through the assistance of external forces to suppress the furious citizens and introduce a fair and transparent political process for the selection of new ruler in the country for instance through the adaptation of democracy system.

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