

Topic 1

I. Past and Current International Action

The issue of insurgency and terrorism, while a major issue for the entire world, is especially relevant in the Middle East. With multiple insurgent movements, along with the growing presence of extremist groups such as ISIS, it is imperative that the Arab League find ways to stop the growth of such movements to safety to the people. In the past years, Syria has experienced both a civil war and has fought several terrorist groups within its borders ("Syria"). Given the current predicament of the country, Syria is more pressed than other countries to find a better solution to counteract insurgency and terrorist movements.

On the international scale, there have been several important actions taken to stop the rise of terrorism. On September 8, 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy ("UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy"). This resolution was structured into four pillars: addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, preventing and combatting terrorism, building states' capacity and strengthening the role of the United Nations, and ensuring human rights and the rule of law ("UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy"). This was the first time in which all member states agreed to a common approach to combat terrorism ("UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy").

When one looks more specifically towards the actions taken by the Arab League, one can observe a more specific approach to counter-terrorism. In April of 1998, the Arab League adopted the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism, which provided both preventive and suppressive measures to address the issue of terrorism in Arab countries. ("Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism"). The preventative measures sought to stop potential terrorist

groups from acquiring the necessary resources to commit acts of terror, while the measures of suppression aimed to effectively arrest and prosecute terrorists, as well as protect sources of information ("Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism"). The convention also stressed the need for states to cooperate and exchange information when needed ("Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism"). When looking at the Arab Convention as well as the UN Strategy, it is clear that the Arab countries must come up with more specific and comprehensive strategies to fight terrorism.

II. Country Position

While Syria believes that there could be some non-military measures taken to fight insurgents and terrorists, such programs still require military action in order to be successful. Syria has a very strong reason to believe so, as the country currently faces threats from both rebel forces and terrorist groups. Since 2011, Syria has been engaged in a civil war against rebels who wish to unseat the government of Bashar al-Assad, a conflict that has been required to be met with military action to protect the Syrian people from the violent acts of the rebels ("Syrian Civil War"). While the Syrian government has been occupied with the rebel forces, terrorist groups such as ISIS and the al-Nusra Front seized this opportunity to take power for themselves and cause further panic among the Syrian people ("Syria"). This makes further counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism measures a great interest to the Syrian government.

Besides the actions Syria has taken to counter insurgency and terrorism militarily, the country has taken legislative measures to ensure the safety of its people. Syria has two main pieces of legislation regarding counter-terrorism, Law 19 and Law 20 (Ducassoux). The first, Law 19, defined what are considered terrorist actions and defined the corresponding penalties for

such actions (Ducassoux). The second, Law 22, specifically established Counter-Terrorism Courts to hear terrorism cases and regulated the procedure of such cases (Ducassoux). Together, these acts of legislation give the government greater jurisdiction in dealing with terrorists and make the suppression of terrorism more effective.

III. Proposed Solutions

As rebellion and terror continue to divide and alarm the Syrian nation, Syria believes that further solutions are required to bring peace to Syria as well as the rest of the Arab nations. Internationally, there has definitely been the idea that political reform and greater societal inclusion of individuals is the solution to these issues. Syria believes that this point may right to some extent, and that this may be part of the solution to the problems in the Arab world. With that taken into consideration, Syria's proposal to fight insurgency and terrorism in all Arab League can be broken down into two parts.

The first stage calls for the creation of an Arab League database which compiles cases of insurgency and terrorist recruitment in Arab countries. All Arab League countries would contribute information to gathered by their own investigative agencies to the database. The incentive to contribute possibly sensitive information to a common database would be access to a greater collection of different cases of insurgent and terrorist recruitment. This would give governments a broader range of cases and more data to investigate the causes of recruitment and possible methods to reduce insurgent and terrorist recruitment. After three years of the database's existence and the investigation of that information, this council would draft a public report detailing new proposed solutions to recruitment based off of what was observed in the database.

The second part of this solution would be for Arab League governments to send special representatives appointed by the Arab League to areas with high risk of insurgent or terrorist recruitment. Ideally, the time frame for this action would be one year after the database has been created. Using the initial information gained from the database, these representatives would attempt to communicate with the communities in these high-risk areas to broaden support for the government. These special representatives would also convey concerns from these groups to the government and be mediators of talks if necessary. This will make these communities more involved in the government process and help reduce insurgency and terrorist recruitment from these areas. The results of these diplomatic missions could also be added to the database and help formulate further counter-terrorism policy. In the long term, these measures should help stabilize the Arab world and reduce violence in these countries.

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Topic 2

I. Past and Current International Action

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Arab countries, and especially the Middle East, have faced constant war and conflict. In many of these conflicts, it has seemed that mediation has been ineffective, which raises concerns if a new approach to conflict mediation should be adopted by Arab League countries. There has been a common notion that for conflicts between or inside Arab League member states, the Arab League should have a role in the mediation of such conflicts. The main issue is that the Arab League may possibly not be the best option of mediation, given its arguably spotty record in mediating past conflicts among Arab League members.

One example of such a failed attempt by the Arab League was in the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. This was a clear example of conflict between two Arab League members, Kuwait and Iraq, yet the Arab League did not prove successful in mediating such a conflict. The Arab League had attempted several times to get Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait, but none of those demands succeeded and the Arab League instead facilitated the military action taken by Arab countries to liberate Kuwait from Iraq (Youssef). As a result, the Gulf War caused a great number of deaths by the thousands and created an atmosphere of political instability in the Middle East ("Persian Gulf War"). But from this, we see that in this case while the Arab League did not succeed in deescalating the conflict, it showed that it could take action regarding the conflict in the way it facilitated the action taken by Arab militaries to free Kuwait.

II. Country Position

Syria is not entirely confident in the Arab League's ability to resolve conflicts in its current state, due to past Arab League action taken towards Syria. The greatest example is in the actions taken by the Arab League towards the Syrian government following the start of the Syrian Civil War. After the conflict began, due to actions that the Syrian government views as completely just, the Arab League suspended Syria's membership to the Arab League ("The Role of the Arab League"). In 2011 the Arab League sent an observer mission to Syria to observe the continuing conflict, but that mission was withdrawn the following year and was criticized by the international community for its lack of guidance, training, and equipment ("The Role of the Arab League"). The Arab League then turned to the United Nations for help to resolve the conflict, but this again proved ineffective at creating peace in Syria ("The Role of the Arab League").

As a result of the failure of the Arab League's, resolution attempt, the war in Syria has been lengthened to the present day, which has caused the loss of countless more lives. And in this absence of effective mediation, Syria has relied on its allies, most notably Russia and Iran, to attempt to end this rebel movement through its own means ("Syrian Civil War"). By taking the conflict into its own hands, Syria and its allies have seen measurable success against the rebel forces. As a result of Syria's military campaigns against the rebel forces, rebel influence has been reduced only the province of Idlib (Marcus). With this development, the end of the Syrian may be in sight. Despite these events, Syria still believes that a diplomatic solution through mediation is possible for future conflicts, and even possible through the Arab League with the proper changes.

III. Proposed Solutions

Based on these past events, it is clear why Syria may not have full confidence in the Arab League's capability to mediate and resolve conflicts in the Arab world. Syria would like to propose a revision to the way mediation is approached in intra-Arab conflicts. Syria still believes that mediation of conflicts is paramount and would like to emphasize the importance of communication, but Syria believes that the method of mediation should be more flexible. Syria proposes that in the event of Arab conflict, the belligerents in this conflict should start mediation as soon as possible, but that this mediation should not necessarily be run by the Arab League. The Arab League should identify the conflict, and then the sides of that conflict must agree on which group will handle such mediation, whether it be a third-party nation or the Arab League itself.

The process of conflict mediation should follow a specific guideline. First, the Arab League would be given authority to identify intra-Arab conflicts, and these conflicts would be identified when the Arab League convenes. If a conflict is pressing, each member state will be given the right to call an emergency meeting of the Arab League to identify a specific issue. Once the conflict has been identified, the opposing sides of that conflict would choose a suiting mediator. This would allow for the most desired conditions of negotiation, which would make mediation more effective. If the opposing sides cannot agree, the responsibility of mediation would fall on the Arab League. With this guideline, Syria hopes that future conflicts can be resolved with greater ease and effectiveness.

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