

Stevenson Model United Nations Conference
United Nations Security Council
Topic A: Arab Spring and its implications in Syria & Bahrain
October 29, 2011

Introduction

Beginning with the infamous self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia on 17 December 2010, the Arab world has erupted into a series of protests collectively referred to as "Arab Spring." These events have ranged from minor demonstrations to successful revolutions to bloody civil wars.

There have been a variety of motivations among the different Arab countries, but the most significant underlying cause is economic hardship, especially among the working class. Other goals were strictly political, as in the case of the liberal elites who demanded increased freedoms and democratization and conservative Muslim groups who sought to enter the political process in countries where they had been previously restricted from. Before the blooming of "Arab Spring," much of the Arab world had been tightly controlled by their governments who had declared emergency rule decades earlier. Up to this point, most of the remaining governments have given concessions with the dismissal of cabinet members, the ending of emergency rule, or other changes in political policy. Other nations have experienced revolution, as in the case of Tunisia and Egypt. Libya is unique as the demonstrations changed into civil war when both sides refused to give in.

Other than Libya, Syria and Bahrain have been two of the most violent cases during this "Arab Spring" and both are growing more unstable. The unrest in both countries began with minor, peaceful demonstrations drawing inspiration from the rest of the Arab world. By February, the situation in Bahrain began to grow violent. Halfway through March, the minor Syrian protests transformed into major demonstrations nationwide which led to violent military/police response.

Background

Syria has been a shifting state from its inception. Immediately after its independence from France, Syria had gone through a multitude of major leadership changes over the span of two decades. Until the recent events earlier this year, the Syrian government had maintained emergency rule since 1963. The Syrian government has remained under the control of the al-Assad family and the Baath Party for 40 years starting from the current leader Bashar al-Assad's father, Hafez al-Assad. The elder al-Assad ruled from the end of the 1970 Revolution until his son took over following his death in 2000. During the first couple of decades, Hafez managed to intricately intertwine the military and police while including many loyal Alawites as key officials (the al-Assad family is part of a sect of Shia Islam known as Alawi Islam). In 2000, Hafez died and the leadership passed to his son. For the first year after he first came to power, Bashar appeared to allow the possibility of reform. Intellectual elites discussed political progressiveness with much enthusiasm. However, this quickly changed when Bashar ended the so-called "Damascus Spring" with widespread arrests. The government maintained its emergency rule and

non-governmental organizations determined recently that the human rights conditions have not improved since the change in leadership.

The modern state of Bahrain arose out of the emirate that had been under the informal control of the United Kingdom. While Iran had originally included Bahrain as one of its own provinces, many countries objected and the UK attempted to lower the proportion of the population that was of Iranian descent by importing Arabs and British workers. Thus in 1971, the United Nations recognized a referendum that declared Bahrain its own sovereign state not under the governance of the UK or Iran. Over the next couple of decades, Bahrain went through a failed coup in 1981 by Bahraini Shia extremists and a period of political protests from 1994-1999, among other instances of unrest. In 1999, the current leader Hamad Al-Khalifa replaced his deceased father as Emir of the state. His liberal reforms in allowing parliamentary elections, women's suffrage, and the release of political prisoners were the resolution of the 1990s uprising. In 2002, the Emirate of Bahrain officially became the current Kingdom of Bahrain. In 2006, the Islamic political parties seemed to be poised to gain foothold in the previously more secular Bahrain. This in turn led to the development of liberal parties trying to fend off the rise of religious parties. While Bahrain has had a considerably clean human rights reputation, the government has also been known to treat the Shia majority unfairly, especially in terms of equality in political representation. This would become the major motivation for the protests that would develop in 2011.

Current Status

"Arab Spring" came to Syria with the self-immolation of Hasan Ali Akleh on 26 January 2011. Throughout February, Syrian dissenters grew active on social media websites and held various small-scale demonstrations. Midway through March, there was a sudden explosion of protest throughout Syria. The government responded with violent military action. By the end of March, there were an estimated over 150 fatalities. Protests had taken place in Daraa, Homs, Hama, Baniyas, Jassem, Damascus, and Latakia. On 6 June, the government began a deadly operation in Jisr al-Shaghur as retribution for the deaths of 120 military/police officers who protestors claimed were killed as a result of conflict between defecting soldiers and the loyal military. As Syria and the rest of the Muslim world entered the holy month of Ramadan in August, the army intensified its operations with the "Ramadan Massacre." By the second week of August, the Syrian Navy had joined the military response.

In terms of political actions, President accepted resignations from his cabinet early on, but failed to declare any change. During April, emergency rule was ended, but violence force continued. In response, two members of Parliament and hundreds of Baath Party members resigned in objection to the military action. The President proposed a "national dialogue" between the government and the opposition, but this was boycotted by the protestors. A law to expand and liberalize the political system was drafted in mid-August, but protestors rejected this as well and the military continued to quell demonstrators with violent force.

The international community showed the first signs of intervention when the European Union and the US imposed sanctions on Syria. With the total death toll at over 1,300 civilians and continued violence, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared in mid-July that Bashar al-Assad had lost his legitimacy to rule. After months of inaction, other Arabian countries broke the silence in August by condemning the actions of the Syrian government.

The current path of the Syrian uprising could be better understood by evaluating the unique situation in Syria and comparing it with the movements in other Arab countries. The power and loyalty of the ruling Alawite minority is a significant factor in considering possible outcomes. While the Alawite dominance may have held off sectarian violence between the Shiites and Sunnis in the past, it has recently become another motivation for political protests. The government also has the *shabiha*, pro-government gangs which have become a terror for protestors.

As "Arab Spring" affected more countries throughout the region, the Bahraini government tried to prevent any similar action in Bahrain. On 11 February 2011, King Hamad ordered the distribution of 1,000 Bahraini dinars to every family. Meanwhile, Despite the King's actions, young dissenters continued with their plans for a peaceful demonstration three days later. The Bahraini situation grew violent with a bloody military raid on the Manama protests in Pearl Roundabout. Suddenly, citizens were not just calling for democratization, but also an end to the monarchy. In March, military forces from the Gulf Cooperation Council, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates arrived in Bahrain to control the protests. King Hamad then quickly declared emergency rule and the Sunni-dominated government began breaking apart the opposition with arrests and other legal action against dissenting political coalitions. On the last day of May, King Hamad tried to stabilize his country by calling for a national dialogue. The next day, martial law was ended and major protests followed. In the second half of June, the Bahraini court system continued trying dozens of people linked to the demonstrations, from medical professionals who treated injured protestors to key opposition leaders. The Secretary-General has directly addressed some of these arrests and urged the Bahraini government to try them justly. In late June, the King formed the Royal Independent Investigation Commission to evaluate the unrest. The release of 137 prisoners was reported by this body in mid-August.

The key motivation behind the Bahraini protests were not economic, but political. The Shia majority felt that they had been treated unfairly for years and wished to gain greater political equality. Most protestors, regardless of their religious affiliation, sought greater political freedoms and a reduction in institutional corruption. While historically human rights have not been as great of issue in Bahrain when compared to Syria, there is still a history of censorship, repression of most dissent, and restrictions on democracy. The first demonstrators also wished to alter the constitution in order to correct the corrupt economic and political processes of the government.

Possible Blocs

There are 15 members in the Security Council including the "Big Five" permanent members and 10 other members who are elected for two-year terms. Because the 5 permanent members have the power to veto decisions, fundamental disagreements almost always lead to deadlocks.

United States and Western Europe: This is a traditional bloc that is generally composed of the veto-wielding powers of the United States, United Kingdom, France, and other western European nations. Other developed countries, particularly those of the "Anglosphere" (for example Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), may also take similar positions. Current Security Council members who may fit in this bloc include Germany, Portugal, and possibly South Africa. Currently, France is a strong supporter of interventional action from the UN in Syria and is leading the bloc in this direction.

Russia and China: While this bloc is not always as stable as the "Western European Bloc," these two countries often take similar stances on a variety of issues. Both are allies of the current Syrian government. Given the history between Syria and Lebanon, the latter may join these powers in defense of the Damascus government.

Questions to Consider

1. Have the governments of Syria and/or Bahrain lost the legitimacy to rule? How should this "legitimacy to rule" be determined?
2. How effective have international actions been up until this point?
3. Is it possible to address multiple countries experiencing "Arab Spring" in a single resolution? Consider the advantages and limitations.
4. What actions should be taken by the Security Council and the UN in general?
5. What human rights concerns are there?
6. What threats to international security does the instability in the Arab world pose?

Recommended Sources

- <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/>
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Topic B: The Ongoing Situation in Sudan

Background

For the over two decades, Sudan was in a civil war which devastated the local citizens.

The second civil war in Sudan began in 1983 with a plethora of causes. One cause was the racial and religious tensions with the Arabic Muslims in northern Sudan and the African Christians in the south. Sudan's second civil war in some cases is a continuation of the first one which was halted by a peace treaty in 1972. When the British granted Sudan with its independence, they left the north to govern the whole nation. President Nimeiri made Arabic the official language in the south (instead of English), and in 1983, he enforced traditional punishments from the Shari'a for any crime even for non-Muslims. This caused much controversy among the Catholics and animists in the south and even some Muslims. The Muslim dominated government also exploited the south when oil was discovered. In 1985, Nimeiri's socialist government was overthrown by civilians angered by the falling economy, political repression, and violence in the south. Although a civilian government gained power via the 1986 elections, General Umar al-Bashir organized a coup and installed the National Islamic Front. Throughout the 1990s, Bashir's government supported various radical Islamic groups and campaigns. For example, they supported radical Islamic groups in Algeria, championed Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and established Khartoum, the nation's capital, as a base for several terrorist groups such as al Qaida.

The conflict lasted twenty-two years killing over two million people and left more than four million homeless. In 2004, the United Nations Security Council held a special session in Nairobi, Kenya where the council passed resolution 1574 which called for the Sudanese government, the belligerents of the north, and Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), the rebel group from the south, to reach a peace agreement by the end of the year. The two belligerents reached a peace agreement on January 9, 2005 when they signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Current Situation

As the CPA had called for, a referendum was held to decide whether or not the south should remain part of Sudan or not. This referendum was held on January 9th, 2011 and Southern Sudan voted an overwhelming 99% in favor of seceding and creating a sovereign nation. On July 9th, 2011, South Sudan gained full independence from Sudan. Also, many South Sudanese civilians fled conflict areas and now after independence, citizenship for the estimated two million South Sudanese living in the north has caused major complications.

Though the initial referendum gained South Sudan independence, twenty percent of the northern border has not been agreed upon. Abyei is a major area of border dispute between the North and the South. The CPA called for a referendum to decide the fate of this area but it has been delayed because the two sides could not agree on the provisions of the referendum. Before the South gained independence the North took Abyei by force. After long negotiations, it was agreed to have the region demilitarized with the deployment of 4,200 Ethiopian peacekeeping troops to oversee the area.

Another area of concern is the oil rich South Kordofan. The North ordered all former Southern fighters living north of the border to give up their weapons, and violence erupted. Negotiations for a ceasefire have repeatedly failed and many fear that the violence could spread to neighboring areas like the Blue Nile.

Questions to Consider

1. How will the young country overcome their abundance of problems, which include illiteracy, poor health care, lack of infrastructure, and human rights abuses by the southern military?
 - a. Where should the government start in addressing these problems?
2. Being an oil rich country, how can South Sudan avoid corruption in the upcoming oil industry?
3. Seeing as the over 90% of the country's revenue comes from oil, how can the country become less oil dependent?
 - a. How will these oil revenues be wisely spent?

Security Council-Topic 3: The Role of Drug Trafficking in Financing Terrorism.

Background

Although the idea of terrorism has been a part of the international community for decades, the attacks on the United States on September 11 caught the attention of governments around the world. No longer was terrorism seen as a compilation of empty threats and unsystematic organizations. What was more shocking was that the terrorist attack caught one of the most powerful nations in the world off guard and led to a state of panic not only among the millions of Americans, but also the billions of people around the world. The devastation that occurred on American soil not only was calculated and meticulously planned but it soon became clear that the September 11 attacks were not carried out by a renegade band of extremists but rather a network of militant terrorists groups called al-Qaeda. It has been the highest priority of the United States to seek out and destroy terrorist threats across the world.

In particular government agencies have directed their attention at the way in which terrorist organizations are able to fund their illegal and corrupt activities. In terms of terrorist organizations, it is a very diverse group. There are numerous differences in structure, location, size and purposes, it is clear that all terrorist organizations all require money to function. One of the most common types of financing is illicit activities. Other forms of fundraising typically include state sponsorship, popular support like donations and money from charities, entrepreneurial ventures, and cyber financing—by means of which money is acquired and shifted around using the internet. Terrorists engage in illicit pursuits of profits on many levels, “terrorists break into financing criminal ventures, such as narco-trafficking, human smuggling, extortion,

protection rackets, and credit card frauds...there is almost no method that terrorists have not used to raise money.” Crime is a popular option for terrorists because criminal activities do not require high levels of training or education. Terrorist groups, along with the criminal organizations they collaborate with, often rely on drug trafficking as a central source of income.

One prominent example of drug trade financing terrorism is within Afghanistan. During the last decade, Afghanistan has been the most important opium producing country in the world. It was under Taliban rule in 1999 that opium production reached its height with a 4,5812 ton yield. At the same time Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda found refuge in Afghanistan with the protection of the Taliban after the organization was expelled from Sudan. After Bin Laden found safe haven within Afghanistan it was a concern of the international community that there could be a possible emergence of a more global and pernicious alliance between drug traffickers and terrorists. Opium is incredibly popular because it is used to chemically manufacture heroin. Heroin is one of the most valuable commodities of today, costing between \$360 million and \$900 million in New York. Compare that to the cost of one ton of crude oil at \$290 and it clear that drug money offers terrorists a huge reward compared to a relatively low risk of drug enforcement, particularly in destabilized reasons such as Afghanistan.

Lastly we must consider the relationship between terrorist groups and organized crime. The interaction between the two parties is often mutualistic. When the terrorists involve themselves with drug organizations it allows them access to more available funds. Often times these are funds are used towards operational expenses and expanding political influence. With more available funds, terrorist outfits are no as dependent on a sponsor state. This means these organizations can devote more of their efforts to their own agenda, instead of tethering

themselves to a state actor. In regards to illicit drug trade operations, the benefits from working from terrorist outfits often include expansion of political influence and security.

In Committee

Regarding resolving with the role of drug trafficking in financing terrorism there are many viable solutions. Nations and their delegates will suggest plans to eradicate crops at the source of their production. These often include herbicides or eradication programs that in terms of success are hit and miss. At the same time often illicit drug cultivation dominants are portion of the economy of destabilized nations, for example in Afghanistan the opium production accounts for 97% of the country's per-capita annual GDP. Crop eradication could be have devastating effects on countries that are highly dependent on the drug trade. Other delegates will consider strengthening drug enforcement in nations in order to disrupt the actual soliciting of illicit drugs. Lastly some will address not the supply for the drugs but instead the need. Programs that include education reform show promise in decreasing the demand of drugs. It is your job as a delegate of the Security Council to weight the costs and benefits of each of these solutions and decide which one, combination or even propose an entirely different program of action which will be the most efficient and pragmatic. Remember to address not only drug trafficking and terrorism in the Middle East, but also around the world (Latin America, Russia and Southeast Asia). In the cabinet setting, the strongest resolutions and directives include a large majority of the member nations so always be open to compromise. On behalf of myself and the dais staff we wish you good luck and are excited to see what new ideas you will bring to the table in regards to the role of drug trafficking in financing terrorism.

Sources:

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- http://www.forbes.com/2009/02/26/drug-trade-afghanistan-opinions-contributors_terrorism_mycoherbicides.html
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