

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### *a) Background*

The United States, which is a country with Liberal government system has influence wide area, as well as during the Cold War era which occurred after the end of World War II, America and the Soviets with communist ideology fighting over each other domination in the international world, until the Cold War between the West Block and the East Block ended in 1990 with the victory of the Western Bloc after the end of the War Cold begins a new chapter for the United States in expand its influence and importance. How's that generally understood, the term "national interest" it indirectly shows that geopolitical and economic advantages of a country without cares about morality, law, or welfare others, except only as a means of obtaining advantage of a country (Tillman, 1982).

In the era of President Obama, the United States had significant influence in the world political constellation including Middle East, with that status America has many interests that must be met such as the interests of economy, and the spread of democratic ideology through its foreign policy, the U.S. foreign policy is made to maintain its existence in a region, the interests of its allies and the rulers of U.S. allies in the Middle East and to ensure ease of exploration and transportation of oil throughout corner of the world (Jatmika, 2014).

In President Obama's foreign policy has the same approach as the Nixon Era President in taking foreign policy, especially in the region Middle East which both Presidents use Detente policy, this policy is used to reduce the escalation of American troop adventurism in the East Middle. America comes to the Middle East with motivation to spread its ideology that is democracy, America considers himself as "the champion of"

democracy” and “the guardian of democracy” this is then that became the motivation of the U.S. to do intervention in conflicts in the Middle East America wants its position to be the only dominating power in the Middle East region, it is based on the fact that the East Middle has strategic value in world politics, values This strategic position makes the Middle East region a place of struggle for influence and interests for the big powers. The U.S. seeks to prevent the rise of political power leaning towards Islam and trying to overthrow the country's leader Islam, which still adheres to a binding traditional system, such as the government of Absolute Monarchy, for example that is Arab Spring waves that hit countries in the East Middle in 2011.

One of the countries affected by the Arab wave Spring is Syria, people demand Bashar al-Assad step down from the chair of leadership because it is considered undemocratic and fair to the people so that the Syrian people demand restoration of civil rights. Bashar al-Assad regime claiming himself as the legitimate leader where he get full legitimacy from the people so that all kinds of attempts to coup his regime are considered illegal and contrary to applicable law. President Obama in the Syrian Crisis has another strategy because The Syrian Crisis begins with the Arab Spring which shocked not only America but the whole World which is where the Arab countries with the Monarchy system Absolute dropped by the people who support a more democratic government, of course this incident is not wasted by America by sending its troops to One of the ravaged Arab countries is Syria. Other countries are starting to show their will to involve himself in this conflict in Syria, which where two major countries are involved, namely; Russia through his foreign minister Serge Lavrov, supports regime that is currently still in the hands of Bashar al-Assad and The United States is with Saudi Arabia and Israel who oppose the current authority of Bashar al-Assad.

America is one of the parties that supports democratization efforts in Syria by supporting party's opposition, this is evidenced by announcement that America will send aid

weapons to rebel/opposition groups after The United States believes and has evidence that the President Assad uses chemical weapons against opposition groups. In addition to arming the opposition, President Obama also tried a limited military strike against Syria as a form of punishment for the use of chemical weapons against its people, which resulted in the Syrian people the victim himself ( UN chief opposes US arms to Syria rebels, 2013).

America supports the Opposition from the Assad Regime FSA (Free Syrian Army) as well as funding of \$60 million in 2013 to continue to fight to make it happen democratic government, while on the other hand Russia and Iran supports the Bashar al-Assad Regime to continue maintain his position as leader of Syria, Russia has a military base in the Syrian territory in Tartus thus easily mobilizing his military if America and its allies launched an attack on Syria. America announced that America gave additional humanitarian aid to Syria of USD 364 Million, if in total from 2011 to September 2016 then \$6 billion in funding has been disbursed for emergency response in Syria, including to provide food reserves, medicines, clean drinking water and supplies others to help the affected Syrian community by war. America also accepts Syrian refugees as many as 10,000 people per year but that number continues to increase from 2011 to 2016 as many as 12,500 refugees ( Crisis in Syria, n.d.).

America's business is not easy because of the lack of support by allies unlike where it used to support the United States military aggression in Afghanistan, there is a strong Russian presence behind it the Bashar al-Assad regime so that the Syrian conflict became prolonged conflict without a bright spot of resolution peace, in October 2011 and July 2012 the Americans who support a draft resolution condemning the Regime Assad failed because Russia and China vetoed the resolution, this of course destroyed hopes that the conflict in Syria would subside. Various opinions were expressed regarding the problems that became the source of the conflict in

Syria.

First, domestic social, economic and political problems experienced by Syria such as the high number of unemployed, high inflation, limited opportunities for social mobility, restrictions on political rights and repressive security forces. Second, the demands of the Syrian population for reforms and the replacement of the Assad family regime that has been in power since 1970 until today. It is normal if there is a demo that demanding a change of regime that has been in power for 46 years in Syria, especially when viewed in terms of performance unsatisfactory for the people who should be the government work to improve people's lives, if only The performance of the government is in accordance with the expectations of the people then there will be no protests that lead to the emergence civil war between the government and its opposition so escalating the war is getting bigger and longer. Syria's attitude that always fights against the Arab countries and their allies America, Saudi, Qatar and Turkey give their support to the opposition who are trying to overthrow the Assad regime even though the support was given because there are interests of America and its allies in the East Middle.

The United Nations in this case is a forum for countries which veto holders are these countries is a permanent member of the Security Council, United States make the United Nations a place to distribute interests and seek the support of other countries that useful in carrying out a strategy to intervene in the conflict in Syria based on the Humanitarian Crisis to serve its interests and those of its allies. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council are seen as the country with the main power when the United Nations was founded and granted a veto on the basis of the view that if the state with great power is not given a special place in the United Nations will not work in the ongoing crisis in Syria which is the successive effect of the Arab Spring events which started at the end of 2010 (A.M, 2014). The number of fatalities in this crisis makes America is trying to solve it with help UN, this is because this incident has

entered the realm of The Humanitarian Crisis in which the Bashar al-Assad regime attacking his own people using chemical weapons so that the death toll fell from the civilians, hundreds thousands of Syrians fled to survive from attack (Prabowo, 2020).

**Table 1.1 International Actors  
Pros and Cons of the Syrian  
Government.**

No.	<b>The Syrian Government</b>	<b>Syrian Government Opposition</b>
1	Russia (conducts air strikes and provides political support at the United Nations)	United States (provides arms, training, and military assistance to "Opposition" groups)
2	Iran (providing arms, credit, military adviser and reported combat troops)	Turkey (providing arms, military and political support)
3	Hezbollah (Lebanese Shia movement has sent thousands of fighters)	Arab Gulf States (providing money and weapons)

4	Shia Muslim Militia (recruited by Iran from Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen)	Jordan (providing logistical support and training)
5		Israel (Fulfill the US national interest by protecting the oil routes)

Although it only involves the government and rebel groups, now the conflict has divided the Syrian territory which is divided into areas controlled by the Assad Regime, opposition groups, as well as the presence of terrorist groups who involve themselves to create chaos by taking advantage of the hot situation in Syria. The emergence of insecurity and fear among the Syrian people worsens the political situation and stability of the Middle East region. Seeing this, the United States immediately took action in dealing with terrorist cases in Syria. Regional and international actors involved in the Syrian conflict are divided into supporters of the Assad regime and supporters of the opposition. The United States, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Jordan have sided with opposition groups planning to overthrow Assad. Meanwhile Russia, Iran and Hezbollah provided political and military support to keep Assad in power.

Since the beginning of the conflict, the United States wanted Bashar Al-Assad to step down from the Syrian government. On the other hand, Russia continues to provide support for the Assad regime. This condition shows that the Syrian conflict situation is strongly influenced by Russia, which is an ally of the Syrian government. This is a challenge for the United States in its efforts to maintain the stability of the Middle

East, thus the efforts that can be made to deal with these challenges needs to be considered. Until now, Russia and Syria have continued to strengthen their cooperation in the political, economic and military fields. Within Syria, Russia can still operate and develop its military bases. In exchange, Russia continues to send supplies of weapons to the Assad Regime to fight the opposition groups. The United States strives to militarily strengthen rebel groups with the aim of fighting terrorist groups as well as fighting the Assad regime. This shows that the United States also remains willing to overthrow Assad from the Syrian government.

***b) Research Question:***

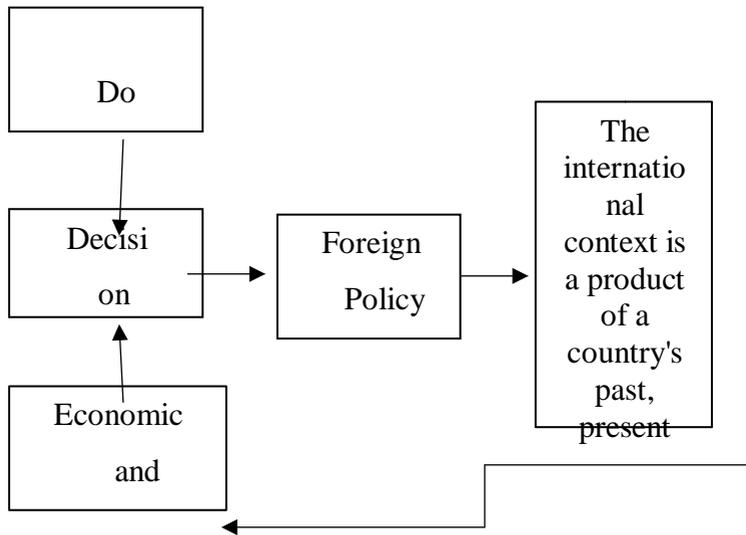
- Based on the background above, the formulation of the problem what can be asked is why did America get involved in the conflict in Syria?

***c) Theoretical Framework***

Decision Making Theory (William D. Coplin). In this paper, to explain about decision making by the American government, the author will use the approach Policy Making Theory according to William D. Coplin in his book entitled "Introduction of International Politics".

Picture 1.1. Foreign Policy Making Flow





Source: (Marbun, 2003)

According to Coplin, to explain the role of domestic politics in foreign decision-making, there are fundamental assumptions about cross-national differences. In other words, foreign decisions are the result of a domestic political process involving various actors under certain conditions. There is an interaction between foreign policy makers and domestic political actors who seek to influence foreign policy or in Coplin's discussion called "policy influencers". These interactions are strung together in a policy influence system. Economic and military capabilities and the last is the international context, namely the special position of a country in relation to other countries.

### ➤ **Domestic Political Condition**

According to Coplin, to explain the role of domestic politics in foreign decision-making, there are fundamental assumptions about cross-national differences. In other words, foreign decisions are the result of a domestic political process involving various

actors under certain conditions. There is an interaction between foreign policy makers and domestic political actors who seek to influence foreign policy or in Coplin's discussion called "policy influencers". These interactions are strung together in a policy influence system. Furthermore, Coplin added, in the policy influence system there is a reciprocal relationship between decision makers and policy influencers. Policy influencers are a source of support for strengthening certain regimes in a country. This applies to all systems of government, both democratic and autocratic. The country's leaders rely heavily on the willingness of their people to provide support. Support can be in the form of loyalty to the armed forces, finance from businessmen, popular support in elections, etc. The governing regime really needs this support to make its position more certain and the policies taken are right on target so as to strengthen its legitimacy. In this case there is an interaction between Congress (foreign and domestic policy makers) and President Obama where Syria has become one of the countries that have been hit by a crisis since 2011 and President Obama as a Policy Influencer is trying to convince Congress to help the Syrian people and the Assad Regime opposition to resolve the crisis. This is because one of America's main interests since 1973 has been to maintain the stability of the Middle East region and the involvement of Russia, which has a naval base in Tartus, made President Obama try to get Congress to immediately approve Obama's proposal to get involved in the Syrian Crisis.

### ➤ **Economic and Military Capability**

Coplin's analysis of economic and military factors in influencing decision making departs from the behavior of

medieval European kings. Economy and military are two variables that are interrelated with each other. When military capability increases, it will increase the economic prosperity of the kings. And conversely, when the economic capacity is getting stronger, it will have an impact on increasing its military strength. These two variables, according to Coplin, became the main capital for European countries to colonize Asia and Europe. European trading companies came not only carrying economic missions, but more to conquer territories with the support of a stronger military force. In the modern industrial era, if the economy is able to mass produce goods, it also has the ability to destroy mass through an increasingly destructive weapons industry. If land and gold are the benchmarks in the feudal age, then industrial progress occupies an important position in this modern era. Coplin exemplifies the United States and the Soviet Union, both of which at that time were involved in an arms race in the Cold War. Both countries are economically prosperous countries. The country's economy is supported by a modern industrial sector, so that it is able to produce more sophisticated military equipment compared to countries that still rely on the domestic agricultural sector to support their national economy. With strong economic and military capabilities, certain countries will be more active in the "stage" of international politics. Specifically for the military, Coplin explained it with 3 main criteria, namely; the number of troops, the level of training and the nature of the military equipment. These three criteria are the differentiating forces of a country's military. By referring to these three criteria, foreign decision makers can see how effective it will be. For example, the United States, after the Cold War, has been increasingly aggressive in using military force to support its national interests and has a strong influence on changing the international political system. In other words, the economic and military capabilities of a country can affect the bargaining position in the eyes of other countries. So that it will determine the attitude of other countries towards a country's foreign policy. Economic and Military Strength are two important

elements that affect a country's capability to exert pressure on other countries. The economy and the military are one of the capabilities needed by the state to ensure the realization of national interests. In short, the better the economy and the military of a country, the more capable it will be to balance its national interests with its capabilities. The United States' political policy towards Syria is supported by nationaleconomic and military forces. With the fact that the United States is the richest country in the world, which automatically increases the budget for funding the development of the armed forces, making the American armed forces a highly respected armed force due to the advances in weapons technology and combat equipment, this is also supported by the weapons industry which very popular in America itself, where almost everyone is given the freedom to own weapons individually so that the development of weapons technology is a thing that naturally occurs in the country, so that American defense equipment technology is becoming more advanced and respected by other countries, this is can support and make it easier for America to appear on the international political stagebecause of its high bargaining position. Its diplomatic relationswith countries in the Middle East make it easy for the United States to get access to oil resources, this can be seen from the many US oil mining companies operating in the Middle East and in other regions around the world, where oil is urgently needed to meet the need for energy that drives the United Stateseconomy, so that its economy can grow and run well and be ableto generate profits that become state income to be used as a means of military development which is considered important

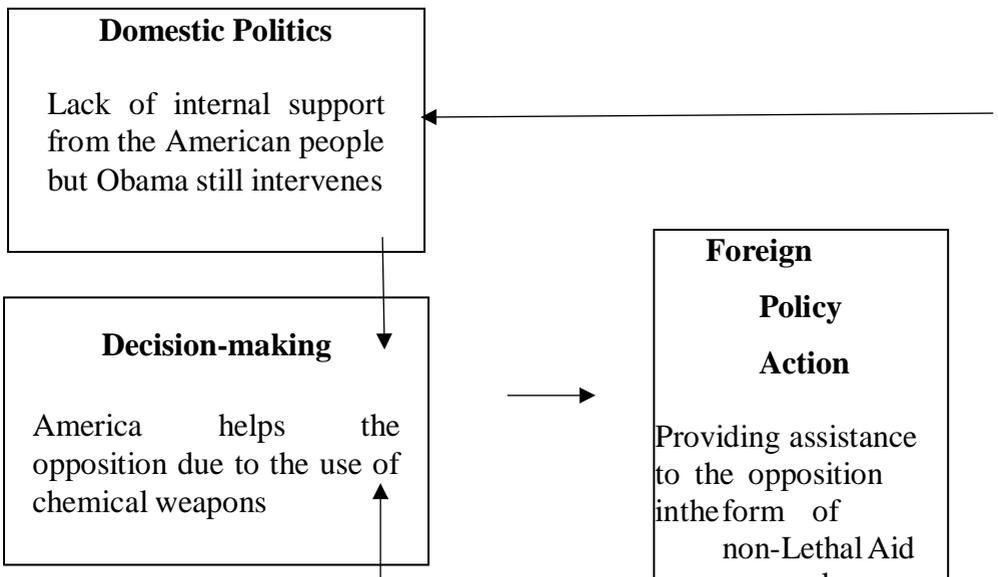
in order to maintain the peace and security of its own country and world peace.

### ➤ **International Context**

The international context explains why a country behaves in a

certain way towards other countries. This international context relates to the geopolitics of a country and realist scientists have provided an explanation. Hans J. Morgenthau argues that every state has a certain relationship with the international environment which he defines as a set of objective national interests. This national interest is considered to determine the foreign policy of a country. The international context can also be used to map which countries are friend and foe. According to Coplin, there are 3 basic elements in explaining the impact of the international context on a country's foreign policy, namely geographical, economic and political. The international environment of each country is the territory it occupies with respect to its location and its relationship to other countries in an international political system. These linkages include the economic and political fields. But geography plays an important role, although not the most important. Geographical factors are the main ones in the creation of cross-country organizations such as the European Union, NATO, and ASEAN etc. So that political and economic relations between member countries are created.

Picture 1.2. William D.Coplin's Theory Application Diagram



## **Economic and Military Conditions**

America as the country with the strongest economy and military in the world helped the opposition



In addition the author also uses the concept of **National Interest**, National interest is a basis in explaining foreign policy behavior country. In the book Perwita and Yani say that national interest is state efforts to obtain and chasing power, which one is power is a tool to control other countries. The national interest can defined as the basic goal and determinant that makes the country's decision to formulate its foreign policy. In a concept of national interest, the state is an actor main. The national interest of a the state is an element that shape the country's needs such as like military, defense, security and also the economy to explain the United States' Foreign Policy in combating terrorism and against the government in Syria. (Yani, 2005) The conflict in Syria is a problem reform of the people and events began because of the Arab Spring with the same goal to take down the government. As a Superpower country, the United States participated in the conflict in Syria. As for the reason The United States participates is to achieve its national interests. This shows that the United States has economic and political interests and the efforts that the United States has made in fighting crime in Syria and overthrowing the government that assist by Russia, by supporting the opposition.

**d) Hypothesis**

From the explanation above, there are several reasons why United States was involved in the proxy war and supports the opposition in the Syrian conflict, namely:

- Material interests in the economic field, United States is trying to protect the Syrian territory's oil routes, as well as supporting the government opposition in Syria with military, medical, and other assistances to support the opposition.
- Non-material interests, The United States support the process of political democratization in Syria.

**e) Research Purpose**

This research is conducted with the aim to explain why the United States entered the proxy war in the Syrian Conflict, and to prove that the United States as a rational actor has economic interests in the Middle East Region through the Syrian Opposition.

**f) Research Methodology**

The type of research compiled by the author is a qualitative method. Qualitative Method (Descriptive Analytic) is a writing method that describes the situation that occurs in a matter being discussed. This type of method aims to compile a systematic and accurate description of the explanation in accordance with the facts related to the subject matter.

**g) Data Collection Techniques**

The data collection technique used by the researcher is literature study. Sources of data used to compile this research include various literatures related to research problems such as: books, scientific journals, newspapers, media reports, official government reports, reports from non-governmental organizations, and official reports from international institutions.

### *h) Writing Systematics*

CHAPTER I: This chapter contains an introduction to research consisting of Background, Research Question, Theoretical Framework, Hypothesis, Research Methodology, Research Methods, and Writing Systematics.

CHAPTER 2, explains the chronology of the Syrian conflict so that America can get involved in the conflict, and what are the interests of America itself.

CHAPTER 3, will contain a summary of each chapter (Conclusion)