

CHAPTER I

A. BACKGROUND

Syria is a country located in Western Asia, recognized as one of the major powers within the region with recognizable record of history. With their strategic location within the oil resources ring and their influence within the Middle Eastern area, Syria deemed as an important country of the region. Syria was also well known as one of the most historical country within the Middle-Eastern area, Syria offers a lot of carefully maintained heritage and proof of developing civilization in form of 6 city already registered by UNESCO as World Heritage with 12 other site was still in the UNESCO's tentative. (UNESCO, 2011). Syria's tourism sector is essential to the Syrian economics, covering up to 12 percent economics in 2011 with 11 percent of the nation's employments. (An-Nasyri, 2012). Nevertheless, Syria is country that once deemed as one of greatest country in Middle East.

The Arab Spring was a series of pro-democracy uprisings that mostly engulfed many Muslim countries, as well as Republic of Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, Libya, Egypt and Bahrain. However, the political and social impact of those common uprisings remains vital nowadays, years when several of them all over (Peru, 2019). Syria was one of the influenced countries by the Arab Spring. The corrupt reign that rules the country is a major burden and problem that ruined the life of the people. Eventually, the advance media technology encourages the Syrian protester to overthrow the Assad regime. Inspired by the movement of the fighter from neighboring Arab country, the opposition front such as Syrian Interim Government and Syrian Salvation government created to fight for the justice of the people.

Arab Spring struck Syria in early 2011 through a great protest in city of Deraa. The protests were a form of people's opinion and upsets about the current government under President Bashar Al-Assad which was deemed corrupt and failed to bring sovereignty for the people. The government's oppressive responds by shooting and forcing the protester only escalated the protest to an armed protest. Month later, President Assad lifted the Emergency Law, law that has been placed since 1963 to compromise with the protester but the protest demands more reform. President Assad then responded the incoming armed opposition by sending military personal and tanks to secure the city from what he called as "act of terrorism" before he vowed to crush the so called "terrorism" with his "ironfist" in January 2012 (Mamdud, 2017). This has become the start of the fully escalated civil war that runs within the country of Syria.

Arab Spring has struck and hit some other country all over. The problem and the impact of these country post-Arab spring are vary. Some were overthrown, some other leader had to stop on adding more term of service and in some country even a civil war. Nevertheless, despite that the conflict happened and revolt within the country but external influences plays major role as well in this context of Arab Spring. People all over the world including the media itself helps a lot in exchanging information, hyping up and even managing the protest occurred in all of the conflicting country. The catalyst event of the Arab Spring which was the self-immolation by Mohammed Bouazizi put up the braveness of Tunis people that they start the Jasmine Protest. The news broadcasted globally, which eventually influence the neighbor country and the country that had similar problem. In addition, external actor did play major role as well in deciding the country's conflict outcome.

During the Bahrain Uprising, per request of Bahrain's leader, Peninsula Shield Force join the conflicts specifically through Arab Saudi that sent 1000 military troops alongside with 150 vehicles. United Arab Emirates sent 500 of their policemen to help aid the crisis while Kuwait deployed its navy patrol to the border of Bahrain. These supports

clearly helps the ruling government stay afloat as the troop sent managed to out powered and keep them away. This action took various respond from the international world as what seems to be a civil war turn to be some cold war happened in Middle East.

Egypt under Hosni Mubarak faced a great protest in 2011. The protest deemed major reform to be done in the country as they saw the current government has failed, the request included resignation of Hosni Mubarak. Hosni Mubarak as the current president gave a strong respond in this issue as it escalated to armed conflict with the opposition. The Egyptian army were supported by US militarily and economically which was the reason why Hosni Mubarak's regime could hold on for quite much of time. But ever since US swung their support to back the vice president, Omar Suleiman for sooner reform, the regimes weakness was exposed. President Mubarak could not keep pace with the protester without supports from US which made him give up and make the reform happen including the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak.

As seen from example provided, external factors have a very important roles in Arab Spring issue as it could decide what would happen to the country. Egypt and Bahrain were only small example of how external power affect the country exposed to Arab Spring. This paper will discuss about Syria and how the Arab Spring happened within the country were influenced by external power as well.

B. RESEARCH QUESTION:

Based on the background stated above, they research question will be taken, namely:

“How Syrian Government alliances managed to help Syrian Government's survivability during the Arab Spring?”

C. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

In answering the Research Question provided, author has used a theory to answer the research question which is the Alliance Theory. Theory of Alliance will help show the mutual agreement between Syria-Russia, Syria-Iran, and Syria-Iran-Russia as well as showing how the alliances influence both country's interest.

In Alliance theory, alliances are described as an agreement by states to support each other in term of their national interests, varying from Military interest or even economical interest. That being said, alliances act as mean or tool to complement each other's lack of need and to bring greater power in overall member of the alliance. Alliance has several separate types includes bilateral or multilateral, confidential or open in general, simple or heavily organized, for short or long duration, and may be directed at preventing or winning a certain war or conflict (Hillen, 1998). Alliance takes major role in resolving conflict that occurred or more country as Alliance could mean as difference of power which in the end could change the tide of conflict. In the international stage, Alliance is also very important to keep the balance of power in check as an alliance tend to form as respond to another 'power' emerge that could threaten the states interest.

Middle Eastern area has been a region with active alliances movement due to massive amount of interest both economic interest and military interest within the area. Syria as one of the Middle Eastern country itself has also involved in such alliances to cover or achieve their interest. In the study case of this undergraduate thesis, Syria create an Alliance with some country to help themselves achieve their goals in Syrian Civil War following the Arab Spring phenomena. Syria's Alliance with Russia were developed as Al - Assad's main option to regain the control over his country after civil war and the international world pressures. By having one of big country backing them up, Syria could worry less about the backlash of what they're going to do next as Russia has declared would stand for Syria defending their own country from chaos created by the rebellion inside. The practice of this behavior were called as "*omnibalancing*", practice where the weaker state tend to ally with

global power to help respond and counter their own homeland issue or internal threat according to Steven R. David (David, 1991).

The alliances between Syria and Russia was far more than just conditional friendship. Russia has strong bilateral relationship with Russia, even when it was still Soviet Union. Soviet Union (then Russian Federation) and Syrian Arab Republic has established a bilateral relations ever since around mid -40s around the French Colonization on Syria as Soviet Union back then was supporting the Syrian Independent Movement. The relation between both countries became closer ever since President Hafeez Al-Assad allows Soviet Union to build their military naval base in port town of Tartus which are still being used by Modern Russian military nowadays.

On October 8, 1980, Syria and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. It was an important treaty which provides regular advisory on issues regarding bilateral and multilateral interests, the coordination of crisis response, and military joint cooperation which made Syria became one of Russia's key partners in economic, military and political as well in Middle Eastern region. (Lea, 2001). The treaty was still effective between both countries as the signatories that share their idea of necessity between one and another which mean both country actually relying one on another, especially Syria that needed the very help of Russia as the superpower in this agreement. Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation will be one of the key factor to ensure the existence of Syria under the regime of Baath Party with the leader, President Bashar Al-Assad within the current conflict of Syrian Civil War.

Other than Russia, Syria also has one more strategic allies that resides within the same region in the Middle East which is Iran. Syria and Iran have a long history of mutual cooperation and friendly relation towards each other ever since the Iran Islamic Revolution in 1979 during the falls of Pahlavi dynasty; dynasty that supports westernization and pro-western, something that Syria shares common opinion on. Syria saw Iran as one of great ally due to the shared interest of antagonizing westernization as well as mean to control

and balancing the power of common enemies such as Israel (Karadeli, 2019). Iran on the other hand, shared same opinion regarding the alliance with Syria since they were in need of strong and reliable ally to stay stable post-Pahlavi dynasty defeat. Having Syria as an ally during their early phase of new government establishment was very important for Iran that were being challenged by some issues such as limited resources and high exposure from external pressure (Goodarzi, 2013). Though repeatedly challenged and struck by many issues during their alliances, Syria-Iran Alliance has been proven to be solid as to this day.

Some of the examples of how this Alliance handled issue were during the Iraq-Iran war whereas Iraq under Saddam Hussein leadership decided to invade Iran after the Iran Islamic Revolution. The conflict between Iraq and Iran arose not long after the defeat of Shah Pahlavi from the Iran Islamic Revolution. The provocation of Islamic Republic of Iran leader, Ayatollah Rohullah Khomeini to start an Islamic revolution in Iraq forced Iraq to take action and prepare an invasion to Iran. Iran on other hand, was already crippled from the previous revolution which weakened their firepower a lot that Iraq finally dared to take the first step in the war (Murray & Woods, 2014). Despite the fact that the Baath party were on control over Iraq at the moment, Syria decided to aid Iran during the course of Iraq-Iran war by training the Iranian troops about the missile technologies as well as supporting them with sending supplies of missile around 1986-1988. One of Syria most notable support during this war was by shutting down one of Iraqi's pipeline to cripple Iraq's revenue. Iran return the favor to Syria by providing tons of free oil and discounts throughout the 1980s (Millani, 2013).

The ties between both countries deepened when Bashar Al-Assad replaced Hafeez Al-Assad in 2000. Due to recent event such as Iraq War and Lebanon War on which both countries tightened their relation, Syria became significantly dependent to Iran for their military and political supports as Bashar al-Assad was struggling to maintain positive relation with other Arabs power at the moment (Millani, 2013). Syria and Iran signed an

agreement of military cooperation against country they consider as “common threat” such as Israel and United States. The agreement resulted in Syria bought military hardware from Iran while Iran invested billions of dollar in Syria to help developing the country. This agreement is very important to both countries in keeping their security interest when faced by challenges later on. (Swaminathan, 2007)

During Syrian Civil war, Iran-Syria alliances once again showed how strong their relation and supports when one of the countries are facing an issue. Ever since the first uprising in 2011, Iran has already sent military aids and supplies to help Syria facing the war. Iran’s troop were also sent as additional forces for Syrian Army. The troops were tasked in many different sector such as trainer, Special Forces, technician and even as frontline troops. The loss of Iranian general in Syrian Civil War did not stop them to support the Al-Assad’s regime proves how strong the bond between countries (Johnson, 2015).

D. Hypothesis

Based on the concepts and the theoretical framework provided as the basic fundamental of this research, it is argued that the reasons why the Arab Spring considered to be failed within Syria is because **“Supports provided by Russia and Iran through several aspects managed to help Syria in defending Bashar Al Assad regime from losing the throne.”**

Russia and Iran supports Syria in many ways that managed to turn the loosing condition to the winning condition during the Syrian Civil war in several aspect such as:

1. Military Assistance

Both Russia and Iran supported Syria throughout the Syrian Civil War by sending massive firepower support to aid the Syrian Army during their fight with opposition and ISIS.

2. Economical Aids

Russia and Iran also helped Syria in managing and surviving during the sanction time by sending money, making a cooperation and investment to stabilize Syria's economy

3. Political Supports

Both country supported Syria through their political power during the first Arab Spring protest to the very end of the Syrian Civil War such as Russia's role in vetoing draft resolution that against Syria

E. METHODOLOGY

1. Method of Collecting Data

The author uses a qualitative research methods that emphasize library research technique to conduct in this research. The data that will be used in this research is valid data as well as secondary data obtained from article, magazine, book, document, website, video and newspaper. The data will be obtained from various valid sources that are relevant to author's analysis

2. Data Analyzing Method

In analyzing the data the author will be using deductive analysis method. The theory will be used as a research tool starting from selecting and finding problems/issues, building hypotheses, and making observations in the field to test the data. The theory will be used as the basis and prefix in answering the research question proposed before.

F. SCOPE OF RESEARCH

In an effort to conduct an effective research and to prevent this thesis not to widespread too far to avoid any vague result, author decided to limit the research's scope of the research composing the subject of "**Why Arab Spring Failed in Syria**". The scope will be limited to year of **2011– 2020** to maximize the effectiveness of research in answering the research question.

G. OUTLINE

In this thesis, the outline will be written in 5 chapters in total with the following discussion in sub-topics:

CHAPTER I, explains the background about the Syrian Civil War; research question; theoretical framework; hypothesis; research method; the scope of research; and outline.

CHAPTER II, examines about the agreement and cooperation between Syria, Russia and Iran to give a comprehensive picture of how strong and important the alliance within the Syrian government.

CHAPTER III, describe the current condition of Arab Spring in Syria during given timeline to give detailed picture of the current phenomenon for a better understanding to address and examine the issue in this undergraduate thesis.

CHAPTER IV, explains the reason and key factor of why Assad's regime remains sustained against pro-democratic movement (opposition) during the Arab Spring.

CHAPTER V, gives the comprehensive conclusion and summarize the research that has been done.

