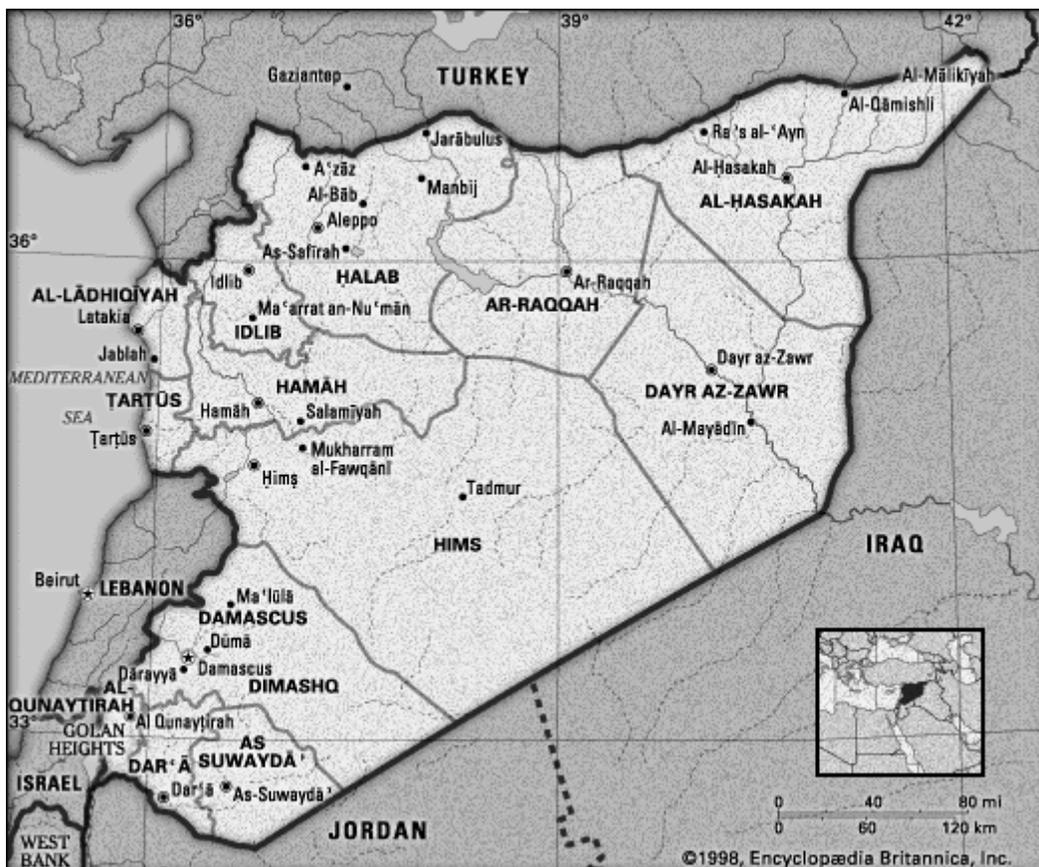


Military intervention in Syria



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Executive Summary

The main question in this report -an advisory framework outlining the possibility of military intervention- is stated as follows:

The Syrian crisis: is foreign military intervention the answer?

The aim is to answer if, and when, could military intervention be an adequate and realistic answer.

“What is the Syrian crisis?” This knowledge is required to analyze how the conflict has evolved and in order to enable an effective proposal for a solution to the Syrian crisis. The circumstances resemble these of a civil war where at least two parties are fighting each other. If military intervention is considered as a realistic solution, evidence must be found that it could be effective in ending the violent conflict and enforcing democratization of Syria.

“Under what circumstances is military intervention possible?” There is still no military intervention resolution under the UN charter that passed the UNSC vote. Alternatives – examples of actors acting without a UN mandate to prevent violations on human rights- have been rejected until now.

Military intervention is therefore not possible under the current circumstances.

“What are the options?” The aim is to compare various solutions with the option of military intervention. The explosive regio-political situation – especially the strong military powers in the region- requires a peaceful solution. Comparing the various alternatives, military intervention does not offer such a solution.

“Why should there be military intervention?” Advocates claim that there should be intervened ‘to protect human rights and prevent war crimes’, however recent history counters this argument. The opponents of military intervention use many arguments: some region-political; some concerning the lack of international consensus; some concerning the lack of unity in the Syrian opposition; some concerning the follow up of military interventions in rebuilding Syria.

The last part of the research are the final conclusions. The research in this report refutes foreign military intervention as the answer to the Syrian crisis.

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Introduction

This report is an advisory framework outlining the possibility of military intervention that the international community is currently considering. The main question is stated as follows:

The Syrian crisis: is foreign military intervention the answer?

There are several solutions that might be considered, the question arises if, and when, military intervention could be an adequate and realistic answer to the problematic situation in Syria.

Before jumping into the research, some basic knowledge about Syria is discussed. A country profile and information on the Assad Government and population is provided.

The first chapter comprises the main events that took place up until recently. This summary of the main events in chronological order tries to give insight into the question: “*What is the Syrian crisis?*” This knowledge is required to analyze how the conflict has evolved and in order to enable an effective proposal for a solution to the Syrian crisis. At the end of each chapter an answer is provided to each sub question.

In the second chapter an answer is given to the question: “*Under what circumstances is military intervention possible?*” The first part outlines what the most common way of decision-making is. The second part will provide additional decisions that might be considered.

In the third chapter several solutions will be discussed. The first part gives solutions that are already being implemented but do not seem effective. The second part offers some alternatives to military intervention that might be considered. Finally the third part offers the military possibilities. This chapter aims to answer: “*What are the options?*”

In the fourth chapter “*Why should there be military intervention?*” tries to answer why the international community should, or should not, feel obliged to act. This chapter is divided into two parts where the first part offers arguments in favor that will be refuted and the second part provides different arguments against foreign military intervention.

At the end of the report there are “*final conclusions*”.

Methodology

A. Literature

As the conflict takes place during the writing of this report, there are no extensive sources outlining the events. Although literary sources have been incorporated in the research, the main part of the information is found in media sources such as online newspapers. Therefore, extra caution towards reliability of the sources is required. The government of Syria has restricted the access of international media in the country. Both sides to the conflict blame one another for using media as a tool to accomplish their objectives. As the Arab TV stations have enthusiastically embraced the Sunni colored revolution, the regime blames a media conspiracy against them. The opposition is also black and white in its judgment, the media is either reporting in favor of them or is siding with the government. As Razek (2012, ¶ 22) describes: *“Journalists covering the opposition side and the armed resistance are smuggled across the borders with Lebanon and Turkey, while those granted a visa from the Syrian authorities ... have to adhere to their rules.”*

After several conflicts media has affected the opinions of many. One should however be careful not to be caught up in propaganda. In the research conducted, the sources should be verified. Their affiliations towards the main interests involved could explain their motives. Especially in Russian reports such as “Role of mass media in Syrian conflict”, Kudashkina (2012) portrays an almost opposing view to what American stations claim is occurring. CNN often quotes LCC, an opposition group, which raises doubts if their reports are truly unbiased.

“Experience shows that decisions made when a humanitarian crisis is developing are usually driven by emotion, the press, and popular sentiment.” (Wagner & Doyle, 2012, ¶ 7) The use of new media, especially blogging gives us yet stronger opinions but prove useful to understand the sentiment behind the parties involved.

B. Case study

A case study is provided comparing the events and circumstances of Libya with these of Syria. A very popular reaction to the problematic situation in Syria was that it should be addressed in the same way as was done in Libya. In an attempt to compare if this is indeed a solution, all type of relevant factors

have been compared. International political situation, sectarian strife, effects on bordering countries, probable casualties, allies, economic advantages, power of military, geographic considerations and type of campaign are amongst the circumstances that are scrutinized. After comparing there should be a clarification if a similar operation might prove successful. See: Chapter 3.3.3

C. Interviews

Qualitative research is conducted to reveal expert analysis. Expert opinions provide a more detailed view than any questionnaire could provide, experts are able to motivate their answers, give alternatives and question solutions, whereas questionnaires tend to give more limited and direct answers. One of the interviewees is Bertus Hendriks, an unbiased expert of the Netherlands Institute for International Relations Clingendael, and the other is Dolf Hogewoning, the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Syria. See Annex 2 and 3.

D. Research period

The research is based on events until the date of June 16, 2012. Every important aspect prior to this date has been incorporated into the research. However, after the end date the situation will remain developing but the deadline of the report requires the author to draw premature conclusions.

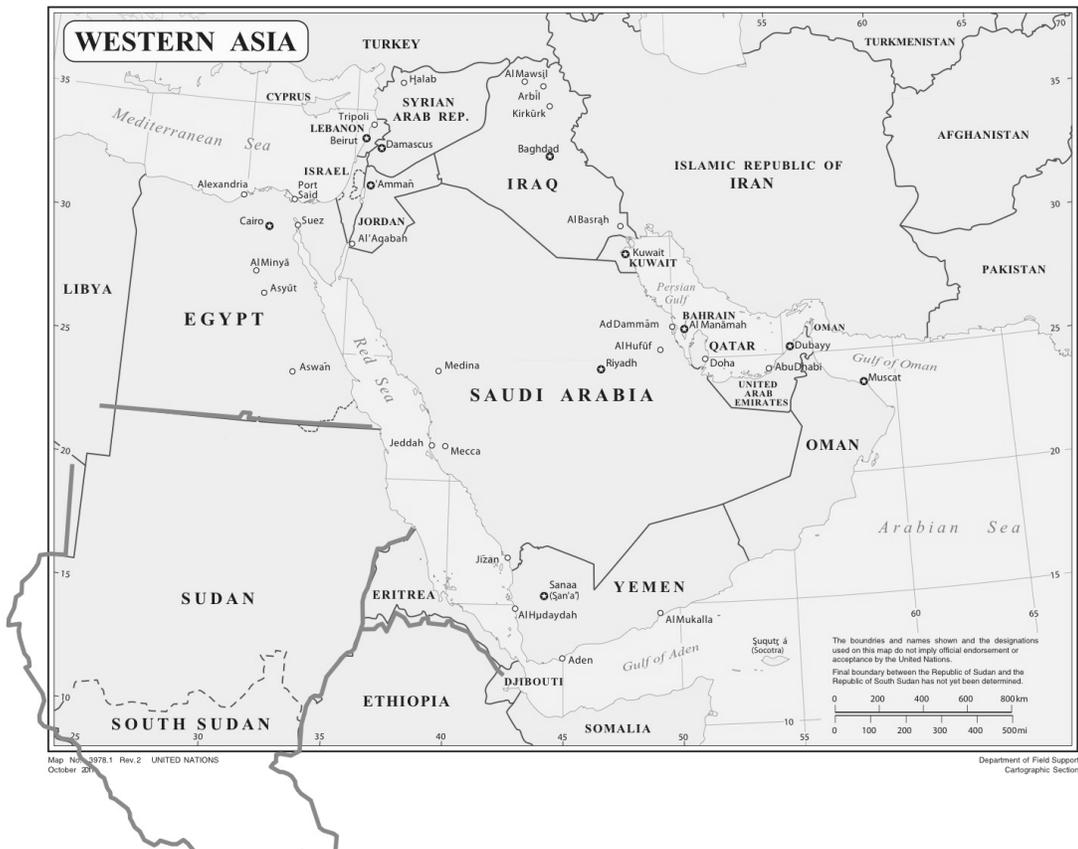
Abbreviations

- UNSC - United Nations Security Council
- SNC - Syrian National Council
- FSA - Free Syrian Army
- LCCS - Local Coordination Committees of Syria
- R2P - Responsibility to Protect

Country profile and main events

Historical Analysis of Syria

Syria is situated in the West-Asian subcontinent or better known as the Middle East, it has borders with Turkey to the North, Iraq to the East, Jordan to the South, and Israel and Lebanon at its Southwest border. The Mediterranean Sea is also part of its western border, having Cyprus at only some 100 kilometers distance. The total Syrian surface is 184,051 square km and it has a population of around 22 million. The country capital is Damascus and the largest cities are: Aleppo, Homs, Latakia and Hama. (The Information Please Database, 2007)



Carter, Dunston and Thomas (2008) and Collelo (1987) describe the modern history of Syria. Syria is

situated in a region where cultures merged, due to the several conquering civilizations that ruled over Syria in the course of history. The first known civilizations were the Phoenicians, colonizing city-states, being independent cities subjected to the many conquerors that would invade the region throughout history. Syria has been conquered by Akkadians, Egyptians, Hittites, Hebrews, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians and by Macedonians. Syria has been part of the Roman Empire until A.D. 661. By this time probably the most important addition to Syria's rich culture came when the Arabs brought Islam to Syria. Damascus was established as the Capital of the Umayyad Empire. An empire that stretched as far west as southern France, including the region of North Africa and the Persian Gulf until the eastern border of Afghanistan, thus being bigger than Rome had once been at its glory days. This ended when the Mongolians afflicted the lands of Syria. From the beginning of the 16th Century until the First World War it has been a province to the Ottoman Empire. After World War I, Syria fell under the rule of France after a mandate by the League of Nations. After several uprisings, Syria was recognized as an independent republic in 1930, it was however still indirectly under France's zone of influence since it was still subject to the French mandate under the League of Nations. When demonstrations broke out in 1939, the Syrian constitution was suspended. After the Invasion of Allied forces, Syria became an Allied base. Syria took matters into its own hands when the allied forces left in 1946. Between 1946 and 1958 there were periods of civilian rule and military coups. From 1958 until 1961 Syria formed the United Arab Republic with Egypt and Yemen. After a failed attempt to form a United Arab Republic together with Egypt, Syria revolted in 1961 and became fully independent.

As the one idealist after the other illegally seized the power in Syria, the coup in 1970 of Defense Minister Hafiz al Assad seemed insignificant at the time being. Nonetheless, Al Assad provided a period of stability that would last until 1987. The domination of Assad's Alawi, Shia minority over the larger Sunni community was the main cause of the internal problems in Syria. Ethnic issues with minorities such as Druze, Kurds, Armenians, and Circassians have also proven to deteriorate the harmony in society. The Sunni fundamentalist movement named the Muslim Brotherhood grew in popularity in the late 70s. This movement mainly opposed the Ba'ath Party Government for its sectarian favoritism with Alawi domination. A series of attacks occurred and Assad's attempts to negotiate failed. When the attacks increased in frequency Assad's government responded by deploying armed forces. In 1981 the Muslim Brotherhood was isolated in Aleppo and Hamah and with no attention for possible civilian casualties the Syrian army carried out attacks in the city of Hamah. Besides the cultural heritage that was destroyed, around 25,000 civilians were killed. Hafez al-Assad

has been praised by many Middle Eastern states for being the only Arab leader to stand up to the Israeli invasion in Lebanon in 1982.

Population

The underlying demographic situation plays a role in the conflict in Syria. Two divisions can be made, one by Religion and one by Ethnicity. The majority of the population, around 74%, is Sunni Muslim. Sunnis followed another heir to prophet Mohammed than the Shi'ites. The big minorities are Alawites, 12%, which is an offshoot of the Shi'ite Muslim faith. Alawites have always suffered persecution under Sunni dynasties. This changed in Syria when the French declared the Alawites as their allies. This way they got entrenched into Syrian national politics providing Hafez al-Assad as an Alawite to take over the rule in Syria. The other large minority are the Christians, who account for around 10% of the population. Furthermore there is a small percentage of Druze, around 3%, yet another Shi'ite separatist religion. Finally, there are a few really small communities of Turkmen, Ishmaelite, Circassians and Jews. Ethnically the population is divided in 91% Arabs and around 9% is Kurdish, mainly living in the Northern part of Syria. Figures provided by the U.S. Department of State (2012).

Government

Both Carter et al. (2008) and "Profile: Syria's Bashar al-Assad" (2011) describe that Bashar al-Assad, Hafez' second born child, was raised to be a surgeon. When his brother Basil died in a car accident in 1994, Bashar had to come back from his ophthalmology studies in London. Expecting to run his own surgery, his fate totally shifted when he was to enter the military academy in Homs. In the last years before his father died, Bashar emerged as an advocate of modernization and introducer of the Internet, also becoming president of the Syrian Computer Society. Another main task to which he was committed was a domestic anti-corruption drive. He has caused some prominent figures of his father's era to be put on trial. In 2000 he assumed power with the death of his father. Wide-ranging reforms were promised, including economic modernization, fight against corruption and most striking the desire to launch a democratic experience. According to Bashar there was a "*dire need for constructive criticism*". The authorities actually released political prisoners and the first independent newspapers came into existence. Some intellectuals who pressed for democratic reform were permitted to advocate their opinions. The "Damascus Spring" was short-lived. Despite all expectations that Bashar al-Assad created by pronouncing his dedication to democratize as demanded by Syrian intellectuals and Western

interests, al-Assad proved to be keeping the same mentality as his father with minor to no reforms politically and towards media freedom in the end. In 2007, Bashar won the Elections with 97,62% with no outstanding other candidates to oppose him. Yan (2012, ¶ 32) describes further family members. The president's younger brother Maher al-Assad is the commander of an elite division within the Syrian army, who has allegedly abused human rights. The richest man in Syria is the president's cousin Rami Makhlouf. The article "Syria 'agrees' to peace plan deadline, Annan tells UN" (2012, ¶ 6-7) points out that president Assad opposes any political change demanded by the opposition. In an interview with ABC news, Walters (2012) states that Assad claims that the majority of the population is in the middle, and not necessarily opposing his rule, by doing so he claims legitimacy. In the same interview Assad denies responsibility in the brutal crackdown that has taken place over the past year claiming that the deaths were individual mistakes. "Syrië: geen dialoog door militie" (2012, ¶ 3-6) describes that the government believes that the blame is with terrorists, supported by a conspiracy abroad. Al-Assad insists the fight is forced upon the government but promises amnesty for those who lay down their weapons. This is also the reason why the Kofi Annan peace plan could not be implemented yet. Internal as well as external powers have thwarted the sincere commitment of the government to implement the Kofi Annan plan, "*because the violence persists, we have not yet arrived at a political dialogue*" says government Spokesman Makdissi.

Almond (2012, ¶ 19) points out that within the country Assad still enjoys support of around 20% to 30% of the population, this means he cannot be discharged as a tyrant without support. A part of the population still buys his fight on terror groups that are backed by international conspiracy theories. Mehrpouya (2012, ¶ 4) points out that the result of the opinion poll conducted by the Qatar based YouGovSiraj, shows us that although a lot of people would like democratization, around 55% of the population is just terrified of the idea of a Sunni Islamist tyranny, preferring the current independent, secular political order. This explains us why Assad still seems to have a considerable support amongst the population. Razek (2012, ¶ 38) claims that the security forces and army are still dedicated as ever in their commitment to the preservation of the current state.

Chapter 1: What is the Syrian crisis?

1.1 The Syrian Uprising

Zisser (2012) differentiates Syria from the other revolutions that took place during the Arab spring. As opposed to the revolutions that took place in Egypt and Tunisia where a young, modern population making use of the social media and belonging to the urban middle and upper class were representing the uprising initially, the popular movement in Syria had a different driving force. To Zisser (2012, ¶3) this determines the still limited success of the revolution. The revolution in Syria was initially marked as a peasant revolution before it reached a wider support. It broke out in the rural periphery, far away from the country's capital. Even members of the Sunni communities in the larger cities are still fence sitters not necessarily out of support for the current president but rather out of fear for the effects of the fall of the Assad regime.

The current uprising in Syria has its origins in the anti-government protest movement also known as the Arabian spring. The article "Mid-East unrest: Syrian protests in Damascus and Aleppo" (2011) reports that on March 15, 2011 citizen protests starting in Aleppo and Damascus demanded: the release of political prisoners, an end to corruption, abolishment of the emergency law existing since 1963 and broader civil rights. ICRtoP (2012, ¶ 2) continues stating that security forces shot a handful of protesters, which triggered unrest throughout the whole country. President Assad organized a referendum to be held 10 days later that would end the single party rule in Syria, on February 16. The international community, as well as the opposition did not believe in the sincerity of the government on the promised political reform. Chulov (2011, ¶1) reports that on March 29, president Assad sacked his cabinet and promised to lift emergency laws and announced a crackdown on corruption. Oweis (2011, ¶1) continues: demonstrations rose massively demanding the resignation of Assad with the police attacks on civilians continuing. Fielder (2011, ¶1) describes that the situation escalated and led the US in May 2011 to impose personal sanctions on Assad and six high-ranking Syrian officials. US officials state that Assad's behavior forced them to stop exempting him from the same sort of sanctions that were earlier applied to dictator Muammar Gaddafi. All of this after long upheld expectations that Assad might have been able to exert influence on Iran, with which the US has friction on nuclear themes. Any assets that those sanctioned had in US jurisdiction would be frozen. It would also become illegal for Americans to do business with the sanctioned. The US had already sanctioned two of Assad's relatives and a top Syrian official a month earlier. Bakri (2011, ¶1) describes that despite the

sanctions, Assad stepped up the battle against the demonstrations in August, deploying tanks, armored vehicles and snipers in Hama, which is known for anti-government sentiment throughout modern history. Haaretz (2011, ¶1) describes that this brutal attack caused the international community to condemn Syria. Arabian countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait, sent back home their ambassadors. McGreal (2011, ¶1-10) further describes that the US demanded the resignation of Assad and increased its sanctions to all Syrian assets. Furthermore, president Obama campaigned for all world leaders to pressure Assad to surrender power. Plans were made for drafting a UN Security Council resolution after negligence of Syria to listen to critics on his human rights violations. Borger and Beaumont (2011, ¶1) describe that the UN acted by releasing a report accusing Syria of crimes against humanity. A list of senior officials was drawn facing investigation to apply additional pressure. The article “Anti-Assad Dissidents Form Syrian National Council” (2011, ¶1) describes that the international pressure motivated the opposition, who previously were not organized in a proper fashion, to form the Syrian National Council. The Syrian National Council consists of different opposition groups sharing the desire of overthrowing Assad. Stack (2011¶1) states that Turkey, once a close ally to Assad, has acknowledged the Syrian National Council and allowed the Free Syrian Army to set up camp within its borders.

The article “Syria unrest: Arab League adopts sanctions in Cairo” (2011, ¶1) describes that Assad broke promises made with the Arab League to start conversation with the opposition, to stop killing civilians and to withdraw the military from the streets. After refusing to allow 500 Arab League monitors into Syria to assess the situation, the Arab League suspended Syrian membership in response, Rawaf (2011, ¶1) does however point out that a minority of the Arab League members abstained from vote i.e. Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon. It was the first time in history that the Arab league sanctioned a former member. Travel bans on senior officials were imposed, Syria’s government assets in Arab countries were frozen and commercial transactions with the Syrian central bank were obstructed. Funding by Arab governments for projects in Syria were also halted. Although not part of the Arab League, Turkey observed the meeting and said it would act in accordance with the sanctions. Al Jazeera (2011, ¶1) describes that the Free Syrian Army, which was slowly growing large in numbers, intensified its attacks on the government troops. The UN commissioner Navi Pillay warned that Syria was heading towards a civil war. Simpson (2011, ¶1) reports that the international communities first formal way of intervention, besides sanctioning and political pressure, was through a monitor mission set up by the Arab league, which arrived in Damascus late-December 2011, to observe if Syria would hold to its agreements with the league's initiative, calling for detained protesters to be released, a halt

on civilian aimed attacks and a withdrawal of troops. Russia, after having vetoed a resolution in October that threatened sanctions against Damascus, surprisingly submitted its own draft condemning all sides but without sanctions. Both Fahmy (2012, ¶1) and Hamilton (2012b, ¶1) describe that the Arab League monitor mission reported early-January 2012 that although the tanks withdrew from the cities, the snipers remain a threat in populated areas, and killings are still occurring. Also good signs were reported; around 3,500 prisoners were released, and the number of monitors would be increased to around 600 despite critics in the Arab league demanding the mission to pull out. Msnbc (2012, ¶1) states that after a month of monitoring the Arab league mission pulled out stating that it had become too dangerous. This was due to an escalation of a crackdown of citizens, in which the US also decided to close its embassy and pull back its entire staff. The UNSC intended to act but it was once more blocked by vetoes from Russia and China. Russia stated that the West was reacting hysterical. Syria believed this to be a green light and started deploying troops in other cities as well. Gladstone (2012a, ¶1) writes that almost directly after these events the General Assembly met and discussed the issue and held an additional vote. Although not binding they voted in favor of a resolution that condemns the Syrian leader and urges him to step down. Even though the resolution is not binding it applies pressure on the Assad regime due to the worldwide recognition of the problem.

The AFP (2012, ¶1) reports that the Syrian army launched a bombardment of 27 days ending in March 2012 claiming around 700 lives in rebel strongholds in Homs. Baba Amr the aimed vicinity in Homs had been an opposition stronghold for a year. But the armed forces attacked indiscriminately and refused to coordinate safe passage for innocent civilians trying to flee the battlefield. Aid workers were also not allowed in the city to help the injured and bring supplies. Cowell (2012, ¶1) states that in late-February 2012, a UN panel again concluded that the Syrian government violated human rights labeled as crimes against humanity. The Free Syrian army was accused of human rights violations as well in this report. However, in comparison with the scale and organization on which the Syrian government committed atrocities it was considered insignificant. Nuseibeh (2012, ¶1-2) describes that around the same time a referendum on a new constitution, allowing multi-party elections and posing limits on presidential terms, was held. Critics rejected the outcome claiming it a farce. The opposition called for a boycott, continuing to beg the international community to respond. According to the regime out of the 57% participators, 90% approved the new constitution.

Gladstone (2012b, ¶1-3) and the article “Syria: UN and Arab League appoint joint envoy to deal with crisis” (2012) state that on February 23, the UNSC finally agreed on a plan designed by Kofi Annan to

end the conflict. In a presidential statement, the 15-member council expressed its concern in a human rights crisis. Even Russia and China were convinced of the necessity of intervening. Some important demands of the six point proposal are: the commitment to working with the UN Envoy, the commitment to cease the armed conflict to protect the civilians, to ensure humanitarian assistance to affected areas including the implementation of a two-hour humanitarian assistance pause, to release in an accelerated pace arbitrarily detained persons, to ensure freedom of movement for journalists and to respect the rights of freedom of association and peaceful demonstration. Most striking is the warning of unspecified further steps if the plan is not carried out. The statement lacks the enforcement muscle that a resolution would have but nonetheless reflects a significant diplomatic bridge of disagreements that had existed between the Western and Arab world against Russia and China. The special UN-Arab League monitor mission deployed April 16, containing 6 light-armed observers to see if the cease-fire would be upheld. But even though the number of casualties was dropping, the official deadline of the cease-fire, which was April 12, was not upheld. The violence seemed to have continued all along. Cease-fire violations were reported from both sides, questioning the wisdom of an increased observer force in Syria. The article “Fresh surge in violence in Syria despite international efforts, 'fragile' cease-fire” (2012, ¶1) describes that even further doubts were drawn after the renewed rising death rate, where many journalists indicated that the regime had continued attacks after the monitor mission had visited. To some it was even claimed that there was no cease-fire at all: the regime kept attacking indiscriminately. Lister (2012a, ¶ 5-10) describes that despite the decrease in heavy artillery against the population, there had been an increase of arrests and torture. In the Northern part near the Turkish border, in the Idlib province, the opposition troops were growing stronger. Government troops avoided certain areas out of fear to be ambushed. The FSA aim is to create a northern "government-free zone". The article “Rising Syria deaths question UN monitoring mission” (2012, ¶4) describes that despite the setbacks the UNSC decided to authorize the deployment of a team of up to 30 unarmed monitors. 281 military observers were on the ground nearing the full deployment on May 27, 2012.

The article “Houla death toll tops 100, U.N. says” (2012, ¶1) describes that only shortly after the near-full deployment of the monitor mission was on the ground, a horrific massacre took place on May 25, in Houla, Homs province. Around 108 civilians were murdered, of which nearly 50 children under the age of 10. The UN blamed the government and the government denied responsibility by accusing rebels. Investigations seem to conclude that many were not victim to artillery shells but rather by summarily execution. Colonel Qasim Saad Eddine of the FSA claims that after these atrocities the cease-fire agreement in place can no longer be abided. This is a strong indication that a peaceful

solution is no longer possible. The total number of victims has surpassed 12.000 according to CNN. The article “Syrian diplomats around the world expelled” (2012, ¶1) shows that in a coordinated move, several countries, among others: France, Germany, Italy and Spain, expelled the Syrian ambassadors on May 29 to apply additional pressure on the regime. Karouny (2012, ¶1) writes that Syria responded by expelling the charge d'affaires of the Netherlands to leave the country within 72 hours, this was one of the last representatives of Western countries in Syria. The article “Ban: waarnemers Syrië beschoten” (2012, ¶1) states that On June 6, in Qubeir another massacre took place. The reactions were exactly the same as to the Houla massacre. When the monitor mission arrived to investigate the scene, they were being shot at.

1.2 Conclusion

The Syrian conflict is marked by the massacres that took place recently. The circumstances resemble these of a civil war where at least two parties are fighting each other. Violations on human rights are committed on large scales. An important part of the international community feels obliged to end the conflict, and wants Assad to step down and face justice. Any solution proposed would first and foremost have to end the violence. The six-point peace plan's main aim was establishing the end of violence and the transition to a more open democratic state, but it is becoming more evident that it is failing to do so. If military intervention is considered as a realistic solution, evidence must be found that it could be effective in ending the violent conflict and enforcing democratization of Syria.

Chapter 2: Under what circumstances is military intervention possible?

2.1 Status Quo Approach

Holzgrefe and Keohane (2003, p.19, ¶2) claim that if intervention is to be considered the most obvious approach is the approach where the source of moral concern should be obeyed. Hereby, actors should adhere to the UNSC authorization and abide to its legality. This means that actors can only act under any UN authorization or under article 51¹ of chapter VII of the UN charter, the principle of self-defense. Any violation to article 2(4)² of the UN charter, refrain from aggression against other states, is thus deemed as an illegal act under international law. The aim of the status quo approach offered by Stromseth (2003) is to uphold state sovereignty and ensures a basic acceptance of military action; especially China and Russia are defenders of this approach. Therefore, most world leaders prefer United Nations authorized interventions. The representation of a worldwide support but more importantly a support, or non-objection, from at least one of the powerful permanent members of the UNSC, guarantees that states will deviate from using force against other states.

The United Nations is the world's political body committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights. The principal organs that are important for maintaining international peace and security are:

The General Assembly, which is the main deliberative assembly with representatives worldwide with the foremost task to make recommendations on any matters within its scope, excluding matters that are under UNSC consideration. Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly are not binding on the members.

The Security Council is the body within the United Nations devoted to the maintenance of international peace and security. It consists of 15 members, where five are permanent members. These permanent members are; the US, Russia, The United Kingdom, France and China. Resolutions adopted by the UNSC are binding to its members.

¹ Annex 1: Treaty Articles

² Annex 1: Treaty Articles

Muravchik (2005, p17-18) claims that in practice the possibility of military intervention is very slim due to several factors. First of all, the UN does not own any army, even though the original intent was to set up a “world army”, it fell to deaf ears among its members. Even if the UN would decide to act with troops under UN-flag, it would still be dependant on other nations and organizations to accomplish their purposes. Second, the composition of its permanent members is problematic. When the members were chosen after the Second World War the composition in itself seemed problematic to solve the world’s conflicts. The main aims of the UNSC, which should resemble that of the police force on a worldwide scale, were therefore only marginally met. According to Muravchik (2012, p17-23) Russia has in the course of history thwarted the US in UNSC decisions, especially during the cold war. This pattern seems to be recurring.

Muravchik (2005, p19) also offers another important indicator when determining the success of intervention of the UNSC is its frequency of action throughout history. Only a few times the UNSC has authorized intervention by using force under chapter VII. In Korea in 1950, in Iraq during the Kuwait invasion of 1990 and very recently in Libya in 2011. The first two of these decisions were not made under the pretense of acting under the articles that include responsibility to uphold peace but rather under article 51³, which states the right of self-defense. This article was framed as an emergency clause, stating that this article can only be invoked until the UNSC has taken measures to maintain peace and security. In the first case: the Korea voting, the Soviet Union was absent because of its intent to boycott the UNSC. In the second case: the Kuwait invasion, the cold war had just ended and Gorbachev brought new hopes to a less bipolarized security council, concerning the representation of China in the UNSC. The UNSC responded quickly and effectively to the invasion of Kuwait. The Kuwait success should be seen as an exception to the rule, Russia’s policy was to be accepted internationally and China was criticized over internal matters that just passed and did not want to attract attention. Abass (2011, ¶5-12) and Doebbler (2011) describe that the third case: the Libya no fly-zone, where under resolution 1973 under paragraph 8 was stated, "*take all necessary measures to enforce compliance with the ban on flights.*" Whereby the words "*all necessary measures*" opened the possibility for the use of force. In other words, the NATO led campaign broadly interpreted the no-fly zone, to include military support for the rebels. Richburg (2011) and Guneev (2011) both describe that this was to great discontent of China and Russia, who now admit to regret ‘abstaining from voting’

³ Annex 1: Treaty Articles

instead of ‘vetoing’ the resolution. Both claim that they did not foresee what implications the passed resolution under chapter VII would have.

Muravchik (2005, p25) also states that the UN learned a valuable lesson in the 90s when a new era for the UN broke out. Focus on breaches of states across borders were set aside and interstate peacekeeping gained momentum; Cambodia, East Timor, El Salvador, Namibia, Mozambique are but a few examples. Even more known are the failures: Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda. These situations led to the conclusion that the UN should never again deploy peacekeepers where a ceasefire or peace agreement is not in place. The UN misses the capacity, mandate, command structure; unity of purpose and military might to do anything but offer support where all parties want peace.

Even though the UNSC has become less strict recently under what it views as internal conflicts, Chulov, Harris, Batty, and Pearse (2012) claim that the former attempts to draft a resolution that could allow military intervention or regime change in Syria, in response to severe atrocities by the Syrian government as a threat to peace and security, were denied by the right of veto that two permanent members casted. The article “UNSMIS: United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria” (2012) and “Syria: UN and Arab League appoint joint envoy to deal with crisis” (2012) state that this has led to the United Nations adopting Resolution 2043, after previously having 2 resolutions rejected by vetoes from China and Russia Charbonneau (2012, ¶ 6) adds. Gladstone (2012b) The Resolution calls for a halt on combatants of all sides, government militias to withdraw from populated areas, for a truce supervised by the UN, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and furthermore for compliance with basic human rights such as the release of arbitrarily detained suspects, more freedom for journalists and freedom for peaceful demonstrations. The Resolution lacks enforcement power since ‘unspecified’ further steps are announced may Syria not comply. A special UN-Arab mission is currently on the ground to monitor if the six-point peace plan is being upheld.

2.2 The Excusable Breach Approach

Holzgrefe and Keohane (2003 p.19, ¶ 3) and Badmus (2009 p.12-15) describe an additional approach whereby states, although technical illegal, act without authorization of the UNSC but can still justify an armed intervention morally or politically. The development in international human rights law had a great impact on international law giving international actors a broader interpretation of how they may act. In such cases the UNSC would probably not condemn the actor in breach. There can be made no

specific rules in this approach to which actors can follow, as “*necessity knows no law*” and it should be interpreted more as an emergency clause. Holzgrefe & Keohane (2003, p.25-28) and Badmus (2009, p. 14) claim this is the explanation given by defenders of the approach: those who find individual human rights to exceed sovereignty of a state, since individual rights create legitimacy for governments, who should in turn safeguard them for its citizens. It is a core principle of the UN as it is stated in article 1(3)⁴. It should be stressed that these types of interventions can only be executed under highly exceptional circumstances. If contemplating to act under this approach the actor should be assured that after acting, the Security Council, and world community will not condemn its actions. This leads to the conclusion that if any actor were to act it should at least have the support of one, or more, permanent UNSC members. Dantiki (2005, p.4, ¶ 4) Besides that, there is also a consensus that humanitarian interventions should be multilateral. Countries should not act alone in such matters since it will cast doubts on the intentions of the interventions.

Oman (2012, ¶ 6-7) offers a path to legalizing intervention on the basis of the R2P⁵ doctrine. The doctrine assumes that it is non-legal in character and is based upon article 2(4)⁶ of the UN Charter. In other words UNSC authorization is the only legal way of using force across state boundaries, take away the principle of self-defense. As article 24(1) points out; the UNSC is charged with ‘primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security’. However, it does not possess a monopoly on the lawful use of force. Undoubtedly the UNSC is regarded as the most solid form of authorization; still there are gaps for interpretation leaving the possibility for other actors to act. If the responsibility to protect is widely recognized in the case, meeting all threshold criteria for intervention, it needs no resolution of the UNSC.

Badmus (2009, p.13, ¶ 3) explains that in the past, there has been an example of actors intervening without a UN mandate to prevent further violations of human rights. The NATO intervention in Kosovo and the discussion concerning legitimacy of action that followed. NAVO (1998, p25) describes that the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization is an alliance, as the name already reveals, of foremost Western States in the northern hemisphere. It was created in the aftermath of the Second World War originally created to protect itself and her members from the increasing threat of the former

⁴ Annex 1: Treaty articles

⁵ Annex 1: Treaty articles

⁶ Annex 1: Treaty articles

Soviet Union. NATO guarantees safety and freedom to its members in agreement with Article 51⁷ of the charter of the United Nations, an important foundation for the legal rights of the NATO. It lies down that self-defense is a legitimate cause of attacking another member state under article 5⁸. Thus delineates the core reason of existence of NATO: when the safety of one of its members is at stake, the NATO may act to ensure that it is not endangered. The safety of the U.S. was hereby attached to that of Europe during the cold war period. Lately there has been a shift from self-defense, its primary focus, towards other aspects. The NATO has proven to be the one of the only alliances, which contains the capacity to perform huge international military operations. Portela (2000, p.1) points out that under the new strategic concept of NATO adopted in April 1999, it stated that, in conformity with article 7⁹ of the NATO Treaty, members should stand ready to contribute to conflict prevention and engage in crisis response operations. This opens the possibility to act without UN authorization. The NATO claimed, *“two-undemocratic permanent members should not block the 16 most democratic nations in the world from pursuing what they believe legitimate.”*(Portela, 2000, p. ii, ¶ 3) Referring to the NATO members at that time. Nevertheless Portela (2000, p.25) concludes that, these actions by NATO could not be considered legal; at the time of Kosovo the Responsibility to protect was not yet in place, dismissing the justification that it was acting under the doctrine of humanitarian intervention. Although now, NATO might be able to justify such a cause under the R2P principle there are still a lot of adversaries to the principle fearing for abuse under international law. Spencer (2012) describes that Turkey offered a legitimate cause for intervening within the framework of NATO; it has threatened Syria that it would consider NATO intervention if Syria kept shooting across the borders. Jones (2012) continues explaining that Turkey has been contemplating different ways of being able to intervene in Syria. Cameron-Moore and Karadeniz (2012, ¶1) explain that despite Turkish ambitions to be a protagonist of NATO, the NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen stated that NATO has no desire at all of intervening not even in the event of a UN mandate.

Besides the NATO intervention in Kosovo, there have been two other noteworthy military interventions that should be taken into consideration. The first was Afghanistan. Cohn (2001) describes that the US bombed and invaded Afghanistan in a reaction to the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The Security Council had passed two resolutions condemning the attacks but both did not authorize military options.

⁷ Annex 1: Treaty articles

⁸ Annex 1: Treaty articles

⁹ Annex 1: Treaty articles

The United States has tried to defend itself claiming that the bombing was required by article 51¹⁰ of the UN Charter. The US failed to legitimize the invasion because the attacks were not committed by the Afghan state, but by individual criminals. Neither could any link between the terrorist and the state be made. Borger and MacAskill (2004) point out that the same case was made for the Iraq war. Kofi Annan stated; "*I have indicated it was not in conformity with the UN Charter. From our point of view, from the Charter point of view, it was illegal.*" (Borger and MacAskill, 2004, ¶2) Iraq was claimed to have weapons of mass destruction and was therefore invaded without UNSC consent. Many condemned these two cases and therefore the possibilities of likewise interpretations will prove more difficult than before.

2.3 Conclusion

Under traditional circumstances any military intervention resolution under chapter VII of the UN charter should pass the UNSC vote. The UNSC has however, up until now not approved any type of military intervention in Syria. Even though there are alternatives, these are still not widely accepted and might face condemnation afterwards. Besides, the only precedent to humanitarian intervention without UNSC mandate was the NATO-intervention in Kosovo and the most obvious actor to do so would therefore be NATO, who has up until now announced that it is not considering any intervention without UNSC consent. If action is to be undertaken, consent or abstention-from-vote in the UNSC is needed. In other words the answer to "Under what circumstances is military intervention possible?" can be answered with: at least not under the current circumstances.

¹⁰ Annex 1: Treaty articles

Chapter 3: What are the options?

3.1 Current Action

3.1.1 The UN-Arab League Monitor Mission

There are serious doubts – The article “Syria conflict: Annan warns 'all-out war' approaching” (2012) names among others Kofi Annan - upon a successful outcome of the monitor mission. The mission has not only greatly come into danger; it is also losing its credibility. In the event that the violence continues, or worse if violence affects the unarmed monitors, the mission will have to withdraw without consequences for the offender. UN reports issued early June said government forces are still shelling despite the monitor mission presence. "*The overall level of violence in the country remains quite high*" (Houla death toll tops 100, U.N. says, 2012, ¶23).

Slim (2012, ¶1-6) continues that more importantly, both parties to the peace plan have interests in the failure of the mission. On the one hand al-Assad would by fully implementing the measures proposed in the six-point plan, eventually end the current regime. A strategy is developed wherein the Al-Assad government will not create conditions that will prevent the peace plan from implemented entirely. If peaceful manifestations were to be admitted Assad's fate would probably resemble that of Mubarak in Egypt. The Syrian army will not implement any measures that require withdrawing military units; this would be the definite downfall of the regime. Instead the government seems to plays along the rules appeasing its international supporters, who are subsequently pressured by world powers to call on Assad to halt the killings. At the same time the violence continues under the guise of a confrontation of an international supported rebellion conspiracy. On the other hand the opposition claims that talks with the government will not lead to improvement of the situation. Besides, any proposal that does not include the removal of the current President from power is unacceptable. The opposition also gains by having a peace agreement for the time being, while a ceasefire is in place, the government officially is not allowed to shoot or arrest activists. They claim to have no desire for military intervention, humanitarian corridors or safe areas. If the cease-fire can be upheld properly, millions will go to the streets demanding the downfall of the regime. The peace agreement is stuck facing a violent stalemate. Both sides see the Annan plan as a tactical move to achieve their own goals, which do not include giving in to the opponent. Besides, giving in would have the effect of facing reprisals on either side.

The opposition fears that stopping now will mean facing punishment in the long term. The government fears that giving in to demands will mean retaliation on the Alawite minority.

Muir (2012a, ¶3) claims that a further setback to the mission is that the US is becoming skeptical about the mission. Warnings are made that support for a renewal of the mission should not be assumed too easily. The mission's mandate has an expiration date of three months. The article "Syria conflict: Annan warns 'all-out war' approaching" (2012, ¶5) stresses that even Annan has expressed negativity over the mission's future: *"Syria is 'at a turning point' ... 'the specter of all-out civil war, with a worrying sectarian dimension, grows by the day.'"* In the article "Rebellen Syrië: Annan-plan voorbij" (2012) the rebel groups state that they will no longer abide by the peace mission after the Houla massacre. This is most probably an indication that the mission is failing.

Muir (2012a, ¶12-22) Positive reactions toward the mission are however not rare. The average level of casualties has dropped lower than it was before the ceasefire. The small advance unit already on the ground has been able to do more work than expected keeping in mind that they also have to organize logistics of the deployment of the full mission. Violence always seems to erupt after the monitors left, monitors have therefore tried to return the next day to verify the events. In Homs a permanent team of two observers monitors the city resulting in the casualty figures no longer exceeding the national figures. This advocates the effect a full deployment of the 300-manned mission will have.

For the time being, the peace mission is considered as the most peaceful solution. As U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice responded to questions about humanitarian corridors and air strikes: *"There is a risk it ends in more violence, which is why the last peaceful game in town is one worth pursuing, even if it's a low-probability game, which we readily admit it is."* (Traub, 2012a, ¶ 3)

3.1.2 Sanctions

The other main type of pressure has been through sanctions. "Syria unrest: Arab League adopts sanctions in Cairo" (2011) and "Turkey imposes economic sanctions on Syria" (2011) describe that the European Union, United States, Turkey, Arab League and others have already sanctioned the government. Especially the sanctions from the EU, Syria's main trade partner, Saudi Arabia, number three-trade partner, and Turkey, number 5-trade partner, greatly affect the economy of Syria. There is still confidence that the economic sanctions will pressure Assad to stop the violence. The US believes

that the al-Assad regime is stumbling because of the sanctions. In the article “Bashar al-Assad: EU sanctions hurt ordinary Syrians, not me” (2012) Al-Assad himself claims that sanctions are only affecting the population and should stop immediately. Almond (2012, ¶ 34) claims this is indirectly part of the aim of the sanctions, if sanctions will affect the population, especially the middle class and the business community, the people will eventually turn against the government not longer accepting the economic difficulties. Within the foreseeable future, the government will have to make difficult decisions to uphold its military costs. It is expected that even though the army is loyal, without the financial means it will not serve Assad. The main argument against sanctions is that it might take too long when people’s lives are at stake. Yang (2012) offers another argument: the sanctions already have a direct influence on the death rate since they are affecting the health conditions throughout the country.

3.2 Other Type of Solutions

3.2.1 Three Models of Miller

Miller (2012b, ¶ 2-4) offers three pathways for regime change, immediately banishing the use of any of these in the case of Syria. In fact he concludes that there are under the current situation no good options at all for the Syrian case.

First, there is the Egyptian model: The problem is solved internally. The military refuses to continue violence on its population and turns against the government. This is how Mubarak was overthrown. The Syrian army has kept supporting the regime and shows no intentions of altering its views. This option is not further discussed since the international community does not intervene directly but rather keeps acting as it did before; the only pressure applied is through media.

Second, there is the Yemeni model: this type of intervention is named after the application in Yemen resulting in the resignation of President Ali Abdullah Saleh. It works as follows: the foreign pressure becomes so big that the regime starts realizing that it cannot stay in power. It will be more prepared to negotiate terms of resignation. Deals of impunity and promises in benefit of those in power will then convince the leader to step down. Miller describes that in this political pressure model, a broker would have to satisfy the Syrian opposition groups but also convince members of Assad's government that they gain something. The most probable outcome would be: the Assad family and their closest

supporters leave the country in return for immunity. Assad however still enjoys the foreign support of major players, besides the same promises of impunity are not easily realizable in the Syrian case where the conflict's death rate is high. Sterling (2012a, ¶ 53-60) writes that Syria is also different than Yemen, which is largely tribal with a mix of Sunnis and Shiites. Yemen's former president Saleh shared power outside his inner circles, whereas Assad does not. The internal dynamics of the population are also distinct because Shi'ites and Sunnis are nearly equal in size in Yemen. This model will also not solve problems concerning the religious and ethnic sectarian issues that exist among parts of the population. Urquhart (2012) poses that another problem to this approach is that Navi Pillay has warned that there will be no amnesty for serious crimes. Any peace broker that would make such an offer would exceed his powers because serious war criminals have to face accountability.

Third is the Libyan model: The UNSC gives a green light for military interference and NATO immediately wages a limited air and sea campaign supporting the opposition movement. This is how Muammar al-Gaddafi was defeated and eventually killed. This model is further explained in chapter 3.3.3.

3.2.2 Reference to a court of Human Rights: The ICC

ICRtoP (2012) contends that throughout the conflict the UN Human Rights Council and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have been investigating the atrocities committed by the parties. Mid-September as well as mid-December, the UNSC was urged by the High Commissioner for human rights, Navi Pillay, to refer the case to the International Criminal Court. Borger & Beaumont (2012) continue stating in February 2012, that accusations on several Syrian senior officers of crimes against humanity were made. Videos where reporters recorded events proving the guilt of the accused were provided as evidence. The names of the regime officials that would be prosecuted would only be released if a human rights court would investigate the crimes. This has not yet been possible since there is still a veto on intervention. It now stays with the UN high commissioner for human rights until it is decided if a court will investigate these incidents.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2000, p 1-5) elaborates: the International Criminal Court is the body of the United Nations set up to try criminals that commit genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity. The court only acts as supplementary court: it only has jurisdiction when the country in question is not willing or not able to convict the criminal. The court has

jurisdiction only over territory or nationals of its member states. An additional way of jurisdiction is if the UNSC refers cases to the court. Both in Sudan and in Libya war criminals including heads of states were referred to the court. Lynch (2012, ¶4-7) explains that Syria is not a member state to the ICC so only through referral from the UNSC would war criminals be able to be tried. A referral seems impossible since China and Russia are still backing president Assad. Despite this, Syria does have obligations since it is a signatory to the Rome Statute. Acknowledging the Rome statute means that one believes that offenders of human rights law should not remain unpunished. This entails that although it did not yet ratify the treaty it does have to act in accordance with it according to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties Article 18¹¹. Gross violations of Human Rights are not in accordance and thus it is breaking its commitment. Another interesting thought offered by Lynch is that if the SNC were recognized as the legitimate representative of Syria by the international community it would not even need signing under article 12(3)¹², applying jurisdiction for the crime in question. This way the UNSC could be circumvented.

Although there are legal possibilities the ICC is still in a struggle to attain legitimacy and international acceptance. Therefore the ICC is not eager to commit itself willingly into a controversial battle where it would probably damage its image; claiming to fight impunity, while al-Assad will not easily, and without protest be captured. Another reason why reference to the court would deteriorate the conflict is that al-Assad will be less willing to step down if he would be awaiting trial. Urquhart (2012) strengthens the argument: more recently in response to the killings in Houla, Navi Pillay has warned that any serious war criminals will not have amnesty. Indicating a possible future role for the ICC if Assad would step down.

3.2.3 Material Support

An option that directly undermines the intentions of the current UN-Arab League mission is to supply arms to the opposition. This option basically means recognizing that civil war will be inevitable. Although not very promising, it seems both sides are already violating the ceasefire in place. What more harm can be done? Besides, there are speculations that Russia¹³ and Iran¹⁴ are also supplying arms to the government.

¹¹ Annex 1: Treaty articles

¹² Annex 1: Treaty articles

¹³ Annex 5: Syria's relation with Russia

For a set of reasons the option of arming the rebels is highly controversial. First, by supplying the opposition heavily with arms, the government will be less prepared to pull back its own troops. Both Traub (2012b, p2, ¶4-5) and Wagner & Doyle (2012, ¶3) offer second, supplying an opposition that is not unified could lead to a blowback. This is more concerning now Al-Qaeda¹⁵ threatening to take role in the conflict. Almond (2012, ¶12-17) offers third, how much control does the FSA actually exert over the opposition fighters? There is no guarantee that supplies, aid and weapons will not be channeled into the wrong hands unfolding a turbulent future for Syria. Sly (2012, ¶7) offers fourth, in a military confrontation, the Assad government would seem to have the upper hand. Despite the fact that rebel forces are gaining confidence and make it hard for government forces to move in several areas in the country. Habash & Snowden (2012, ¶15-16) offer last, the intentions of supplying should be challenged. The money and arm suppliers have political interests, supporting those that defend interests related to their own and not necessarily the interest of the popular movement. Arming the opposition will also make them highly dependant on their supplier. If such a solution would be put forward, one cannot pull back afterwards. Stopping the armament suddenly would mean the death of the opposition that would no longer utilize guerilla strategies. But according to Jawad (2012, ¶25), pulling back is not an option any more either way.

Although RT (2012) –Russia Today- claims that NATO and the US are already behind the armament of the Syrian opposition, Almond (2012, ¶31) quotes the US ambassador to the UN declared: “*Our strong preference is not to fuel what has the potential to become a full-blown civil war*”. The US claims it is committed to impose tougher sanctions, and not arming the opposition. Also the French Foreign Minister Juppe fears a "catastrophic civil war" if the opposition would be armed.

Deyoung & Sly (2012, ¶3) present other sources show that the US is in fact already taking a facilitating role in supplying the opposition with weaponry. Not just the types that were conventionally received but more and better arms. Obama makes it very clear that he is not funding nor supplying weapons to rebel forces but rather tries to assess credibility and provide command-and-control infrastructure. Nonlethal assistance is the terminology used by the US administration. In Idlib, a place in Syria near Turkey, and Zabadani, in Lebanon; arms, ammunition, supplies and anti-tank weaponry are stored. Although most weapons are bought on the black market in the region or are

¹⁴ Annex 6: Syria's relation with Iran

¹⁵ Annex 8: Al-Nusra front

misappropriated from the Syrian army, the flow of weapons has increased significantly. Weapon supply had been low until the Gulf States decided to provide a monthly funding. According to Traub (2012a, ¶5) Saudi Arabia and Qatar have already supplied the rebels with a significant quantity of weapons while Turkey has already provided training and other equipment.

3.3 Intervening Militarily

3.3.1 Creating a Buffer Zone

Habash & Snowden (2012, ¶9-14) write that several analysts and parties of the Syrian opposition have put forth the idea of a buffer zone. This would offer a safe haven for civilians who seek refuge. To create such a zone, international forces should take preemptive measures to secure such an area, which basically means war on the government. This option can only be implemented legally under chapter VII of the UN charter since it is a form of military intervention. This strategy cannot be established without the bombing of military installations in and around major, highly populated cities. Assad tactically placed sections of the Syrian military in near proximity of populated areas. To establish such a buffer zone would infer the loss of more lives in excess of those already lost. A buffer zone, protected from air campaign would also not specifically meet the needs of the population. The Syrian army has not up to now made use of its air forces. In Homs, all the shelling was done from the ground by tanks. Kaim (2012, p3, ¶1) continues, ninety-five thousand have been internally displaced so an option to create humanitarian safe areas within Syria is becoming more urgent. An estimate of 50.000 soldiers is needed to protect an area of eighty by fifty kilometers. Besides, a minimal air surveillance and maybe even air defense. As discussed earlier by Habash & Snowden, Kaim also stresses that the air forces and defense should be heavily weakened, therefore without a no-flyzone such a buffer zone is unrealistic.

3.3.2 Arms Embargo

Kaim (2012, p3, ¶3): An arms embargo by naval forces and ground troops monitoring land borders would weaken Assad's military capabilities. The short-term impact is hard to estimate since Syria could circumvent blockades. More troublesome would be a confrontation with Syria's main arm suppliers; Russia and Iran.

3.3.3 Military Invasion

Kaim (2012, p3, ¶4): Individual NATO states together with Arab League governments and external partners could wage a full-blown conventional war with Syria. Such a campaign would primarily be an air and naval operation to weaken the regime. As discussed in the case study below this would prove very difficult. Dolf Hogewoning¹⁶ explains that there are bad examples like in Iraq that prevent taking this decision. The regime will use this to its benefit; military units on the ground will trigger support for the regime, since the population might feel foreign forces are occupying Syria. Another problem is that the regime has put a lot of artillery in densely populated areas; if you start bombing these installations there will be a lot of collateral damage.

Case Study: Comparison Libya-Syria

Libyan leader Gaddafi was toppled in a rather broadly interpreted UN mandate. The same approach seems to make perfect sense for Syria, with both uprisings having their roots in the Arab spring and both populations are defying an oppressive government. There are some factors that severely differentiate the conditions in Syria from these in Libya. What is so different about Syria? Why can the same methods that took down the government in Libya not be applied to the al-Assad government?

Ewals (2012) poses that first of all, the exact moment of when to act is crucial. Shortly after the death of Gaddafi, the tides have changed. The fate of Syria is related to the outcome of the events in Libya. Some believe that if there had been no intervention in Libya, Syria would stand more chance of being a candidate for international intervention. Almond (2012, ¶8) and Wagner & Doyle (2012, ¶6) believe that the Chinese and Russians don't want another 'misinterpretation of international law'. They are now more careful than before.

Jawad (2012, ¶10) poses that second, Libya seemed a simpler case in comparison; with perceived lesser sectarian movements the majority of the population seemed united in their cause. In Syria, difficult considerations should be made when military intervention is desired. Within the country leaving the opposition, that is not united, in charge could prove

¹⁶ ¹⁶ Annex 2: Interview with Dolf Hogewoning

problematic in the future.

The Guardian (2012, p7) poses that third, not just internally could a war heavily injure the country, but also spillover to its neighboring countries is an undesired but inevitable effect. Signs of spillover are already present in Lebanon, where the influx of refugees and the politics are divided and the tensions are running high. An unstable region with high tensions between different religions and ethnicities will impede an easy solution.

Habash & Snowden (2012, ¶5-6) as well as the Guardian (2012, p1) pose that fourth, the population of Syria is nearly four times higher of that of Libya, the population density is 27,5 times that of Libya. A bombing in Syria would definitely take more lives than the air and sea campaign that was performed in Libya so more lives are at stake if a war would be launched. On the other hand this reasoning can be argued from another point of view as well. If there is no intervention more people are threatened by an oppressive regime than was the case in Libya.

The Guardian (2012, p.6) poses that fifth, Assad enjoys protection of strong allies. Russia and Iran are showing the world military power displays in the Tartus harbor. Russia will make sure no resolution is passed through the Security Council that directly opposes Assad, whereas Gaddafi had managed to isolate himself, leaving him with few allies. Especially in the Arab world he had his share of enemies. News.com (2012) describes that only a few Latin American countries supported Gaddafi in his cause. Especially Chavez made hard objections against intervention; claiming that it was just an oil grab for the West. The only country willing to give Gaddafi safe haven if he stepped down was Zimbabwe.

Jawad (2012, ¶14) and News.com (2012, ¶1) pose that sixth is that Libya possesses vast oil reserves. With a more reliable trading partner than Gaddafi, oil would be made accessible for international trade. In Syria mostly politically motivated goals are at stake. The Guardian (2012, p1-2) illustrates this with figures, just preceding the intervention in Libya, April 2011: Libya's export in barrels per day was ten times higher than that of Syria.

Wagner & Doyle (2012, ¶2) pose that seventh is that the Syrian military accounts for more

than a half million troops. The army as a whole is superior to the Libyan army, which had a lot of hired African militias. More importantly, the Syrian army has more than 10,000 armored vehicles, of which 4,000 surface-to-air missile launchers, and a strong collection of anti-aircraft systems. This would make a Land and Sea operation, as was executed in Libya, more risky. Besides Almond (2012, ¶26) points out that Syria has a smaller, roughly one tenth of Libya's, coastline.

Mathers & Blackburn (2012, ¶3) pose that eighth, a "no fly" zone, as was imposed on Libya to protect the population would be useless in Syria at the present time, as the Syrian air force does not take part in the conflict. Gaddafi on the other hand bombarded rebel towns, and a "no fly" zone was the perfect strategy of suffocating Gaddafi's tactics.

Almond (2012, ¶28) and Lister (2012b, ¶22) pose that ninth topographically Syria is more challenging. Libya largely knows desert landscapes where the fighting was done alongside a highly populated narrow coastal strip. Targets were recognizable in Libya, whereas hard to determine in Syria. The northern border with Turkey is mountainous; this would affect the fighting for ground forces. Only a few major roads are available. Aid as well as military operations would logistically have a hard time.

Almond (2012, ¶24-27) and Lister (2012b, ¶17-21) pose that Finally where the NATO targets in Libya were directed from relatively close air bases in Italy, a search for a base of operations in the region of Syria seems to be more problematic. Most of the neighboring countries will most probably not support supplies, troops nor anything else needed for the same type of mission. Iraq and Lebanon are facing internal trouble overruling the possibility for support. Starr (2012, ¶11-12) Jordan fears that Syria will open up the Jordanian border, where currently there are tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees, creating an economic and political disaster for Jordan. Jordan already greatly suffers financially after years of hosting Iraqi and Palestinian refugees. Another fear is the weapons of mass destruction Assad allegedly possesses. Therefore Jordan won't support a war on Syria either. Almond (2012, ¶27) and Lister (2012, ¶18-21) clarify this: Israel is not likely to get involved while still facing a crisis with Syrian ally Iran. Getting involved would be a provocation to ignite a war with Iran. The most probable remaining staging ground would be Turkey. Turkey does not

lack the will, having lost patience with Assad, nor the military bases (Incirlik, Diyarbakir). As a matter of fact the staging posts satisfy the exact requirements for a theoretical intervention being close to the border. Nonetheless, there are risks for Turkey as well, including a flood of refugees and the threat of Damascus supporting the PKK, a Kurdish sectarian terrorist group in Turkey.

Case study conclusion:

Taking action in Syria is a more difficult call than it was in the Libyan case. More stakes are at risk. The decision to act in Syria will not only be condemned by its allies, it would also prove to be a lot costlier to actually win the conflict. Finding a good military base and a good strategy are more problematic than in Libya. The only reason that could be argued to advocate a Syrian intervention over the Libyan one from last year is the humanitarian cost. Syria now knows more casualties than Libya, at the point when NATO intervened. Although often compared to Libya - because the events in Libya took place recently and both uprisings have their roots in the Arab spring- the author of this report would definitely advise to consider -just as Habash & Snowden warn- before getting drawn into a complex conflict, an additional comparison to wars on Iraq and Afghanistan. Especially taking note of the problems in the aftermath of these invasions. Both countries still struggle to see democracy being upheld. Social justice remains problematic, but even worse there is no stability in these countries as up to today claiming lives of citizens.

3.4 Conclusion

There is not one solution that is advisable for the international community. Bertus Hendriks¹⁷ expects that if there were to be any kind of intervention by western powers it would need American leadership, heavy European and Turkish involvement and (Sunni) Arab cover provided by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Egypt. Syria has a relatively strong army and will not be like Libya, which also proved even more difficult than expected. So more probable is a covered support for the FSA and other fighting forces opposing the regime. There are dangers to this and definitely no guarantees that what comes after will be better. A buffer zone would already be a costly operation; both in financial terms as in human casualties, let alone a full military invasion where costs in rebuilding will arise. See chapter 4.2.4. An

¹⁷ Annex 2: Interview with Bertus Hendriks

arms embargo, besides effectiveness, seems to put forward an additional problem: a direct confrontation with Russia and Iran. The explosive regio-political situation – especially the strong military powers in the region- requires a peaceful solution. Comparing the various alternatives, military intervention does not offer such a solution. In both interviews conducted, the expectation tends towards the international community taking -either openly or covertly- a side in an increasingly realistic scenario of a civil war. This however exceeds the scope of the research, which was aimed at military intervention.

Chapter 4: Should there be military intervention?

4.1 Arguments in favor of intervention

4.1.1 The Responsibility to Protect

Bertus Hendriks¹⁸ says that democracies are dependant upon public opinion. If public opinion would demand an end to the ongoing killings, Western democracies would be left no choice but to act. In the article “McCain calls for airstrikes on Syria” (2012) it is written that US senators are already demanding intervention without UN approval. McCain: *“Providing military assistance to the Free Syrian Army and other opposition groups is necessary, but at this late hour, that alone will not be sufficient to stop the slaughter and save innocent lives,”* (McCain calls for airstrikes on Syria, 2012, ¶2) *“The only realistic way to do so is with foreign air power.”* Kaim (2012, p2, ¶2) points out: this illustrates that even without consent of the UNSC, Western democracies feel that in the trend of the emerging international norm of humanitarian intervention under the R2P¹⁹ it is obliged to act. Oman (2012, ¶3) argues that the interpretation of the R2P is narrow; the principle applies only when possible genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, or crimes against humanity are committed. Borger & Beaumont (2012, ¶1) show statements accusing the Syrian government of human rights violations that are made by the UN Commissioner of human rights, Kaim (2012, p2, ¶2) believes these increase the pressure to act. Miller (2012a, ¶1-3) claims that even though Syria cannot be labeled as Obama’s Rwanda, alluding that the US fails to act in the face of genocide, the halt on the government killings is urgent and acute.

Although R2P²⁰ seems the noble endeavor, it is more often neglected than applied. Asghar (2012, ¶1) presents that there was no response to the slaughter in Sri Lanka and Grono (2006, ¶4) presents the Darfur crises, which yet again showed that the international community failed to act according to the R2P. There were interventions without UNSC consent, as discussed in *chapter 1.2 excusable breach approach* but these were not under the guise of humanitarian interventions. Except, in the case of

¹⁸ Annex 2: Interview with Bertus Hendriks

¹⁹ Annex 1: Treaty Articles

²⁰ Annex1: Treaty Articles

Kosovo. Oman (2012, ¶3) claims that a crucial aspect of the R2P view is the assertion that the principle is moral and political, but strictly seen it does not bear any legal character.

4.2 Arguments against intervention

4.2.1 No International Consensus

Almond (2012, ¶6-7) claims that the most important reason why intervention should not be considered is that it lacks support from permanent members of the UNSC. Cameron-Moore & Karadeniz (2012, ¶6) claim that a NATO operation even with international legitimacy, is not only undesired within NATO, but it might affect its already tense relation with Russia. Russia²¹ and Iran²² will keep backing Assad till the very end.

4.2.2 Divided Opposition

Almond (2012, ¶12) questions the uncertainty that still surrounds the opposition. “Who's in charge? Are they unified? Are they strong enough to mount a serious challenge to al-Assad's regime? Can they be trusted?” Traub (2012b, p.1, ¶2) believes the most likely scenario for foreign involvement is most definitely not an air assault to destroy the air defense of Assad, even though the Pentagon is prepared for such a situation. If an armed intervention campaign were to be made reality according to Traub it would most be multilateral. The US would provide real-time intelligence to help respond to the Syrian army's movements. The Gulf States would provide the finance for weapons and materials and probably also supply them. Jordan could provide Special Forces to assist the rebel forces. Turkey would be active as staging ground for the military forces and be the center for the political section of the opposition. It would most resemble the arming and training of mujahideen in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. Not a positive resemblance if you see that these same mujahideen are now the Taliban: US' number-one enemy. It is a fair warning of unintended consequences by supporting unknown entities such as the FSA. Besides, Traub (2012b) also pushes for a leading role for the Turks and a lesser role for the Saudis²³ who have a sectarian agenda. Even though Dolf Hogewoning²⁴ claims that it is sectarian propaganda of Assad that forwards the argument that it should stay to protect

²¹ Annex 5: Syria's relation with Russia

²² Annex 6: Syria's relation with Iran

²³ Annex 7: Syria's relation to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States

²⁴ Annex 3: Interview with Dolf Hogewoning

minorities that fear the alternative to what might come if Assad falls. These issues should not be discarded too easily. Rosenmöller (2012) presents that Christian minorities display their fear for the fall of the Assad regime in the documentary that Rosenmöller did in Lebanon. In an interview with a Lebanese Christian woman says to feel anxious towards the alternative to the Assad regime. Dow (2012, ¶9) claims that around half of the population still supported Assad prior to the massacres.

4.2.3 Regional tension

In a regional context Bertus Hendriks²⁵ claims that Saudi Arabia and Qatar are taking a role in the conflict as a result of the tense relations between Sunnis and Shi'ites. However, Sunni-Syria could still be part of the Iran-Syria-Hezbollah axis. This is the result of the conflict over Israel and the resistance against the Pax Americana, in which Syria has always felt that it was not getting its fair share. Syria is on the very axis of a regional order, the Iranian-Syrian-Hezbollah alliance and to minor extent Iraq. Action would provoke others to react. Any intervention would destabilize the power balance in the region. Syria is not Lebanon²⁶ either, Hezbollah with Syrian support and Israel and its allies in Lebanon, fought a proxy war in this small coastal country, the stakes in Syria are higher and therefore the options should be weighed out more carefully.

4.2.4 Effects of a Foreign Intervention

Dolf Hogewoning²⁷ claims that there are bad examples like Iraq that prevent the undertaking of any military decision. The regime will use this to its benefit; military units on the ground will trigger support for the regime; the population might feel foreign forces are occupying Syria. Another problem is that the regime has put a lot of artillery in densely populated areas; if you start bombing these installations there will be a lot of collateral damage.

A war with Syria would prove costly for whatever country decides to act. Cohn (2001, ¶4) and Borger and MacAskill (2004) argue the United States still feels the aftermath of missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Shah (2004, ¶3) claims that rebuilding, as is required by the Geneva convention IV article 6, has proven problematic. This should prevent actors from waging a conventional war. Voorhoeve (2012,

²⁵ Annex 2: Interview with Bertus Hendriks

²⁶ Annex 4: Lebanon

²⁷ Annex 3: Interview with Dolf Hogewoning

p19-20) argues that the actors that would engage in a conventional intervention will have to claim full responsibility for the post-conflict stage and make sure that their goals are achieved. Syria should not be left destructed when battle is over. Rebuilding the country and making sure that reconciliation has taken place and good governance is in place to safeguard the country from falling back into a civil war is a must.

4.3 Conclusion

The advocates of military intervention argue that R2P is a valuable motive. Recent history –as in the cases of Sri Lanka and Darfur- counter the argument. The opponents of military intervention use many arguments: some region-political; some concerning the lack of international consensus; some concerning the lack of unity in the Syrian opposition; some concerning the follow up of military interventions in rebuilding Syria.

Final Conclusions

Under traditional circumstances any military intervention resolution under chapter VII of the UN charter should pass the UNSC vote. The UNSC has however, up until now not approved any type of military intervention in Syria. Even though there are alternatives, these are still not widely accepted and might face condemnation afterwards. The contradictions between Russia and the US will obstruct a military intervention on behalf of the side of the opposition. With further developments, especially an escalation of the violence, the situation might change. However, even then it is doubtful -given the current internal and external balance of power- that a UNSC resolution enabling military options will arise. Military interventions that lack UNSC mandates are not desired by the decisive actors and would only increase the heavy burden that one would take by invading a country.

The explosive situation in the Middle East –especially the strong military powers in the region- requires a peaceful solution. Comparing the various alternatives, military intervention does not offer such a solution.

The advocates of military intervention argue that R2P is a valuable motive. Recent history –as in the cases of Sri Lanka and Darfur- counter the argument. The doctrine of R2P demands action against violations on human rights, which are confirmed by UN inquiries. Acting on the sole basis of this doctrine does not seem realistic in the goal that is desired: a cessation of violence and a political process. Maybe even to the contrary: any military intervention could complicate matters by inciting a reaction either internally or by actors still in support of president Assad.

The tension in the region is high and the stakes are bigger than is the case in neighboring country Lebanon. The opponents of military intervention use many arguments: some concerning regional politics; some concerning the lack of international consensus; some concerning the lack of unity in the Syrian opposition; some concerning the follow up of military intervention in the rebuilding of Syria.

Foreign military intervention is therefore at the point in time of writing of this report not an achievable or adequate option. It does not offer a solid solution and should at this point be seen as merely a means of pressuring the government to change its course of action.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Treaty Articles

The UN Charter

Chapter I: Art.1 (3) “To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion”

Art.2 (4) “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.”

Chapter V: Art. 24 (1) “In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf”

Chapter VII: Art. 51” Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.”

The North Atlantic Treaty

Art 5. “The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking

forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.”

Art 7. “This Treaty does not affect, and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations under the Charter of the Parties which are members of the United Nations, or the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.”

Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties

Art. 18 “Obligation not to defeat the object and purpose of a treaty prior to its entry into force
A State is obliged to refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of a treaty when: (a) it has signed the treaty or has exchanged instruments constituting the treaty subject to ratification, acceptance or approval, until it shall have made its intention clear not to become a party to the treaty; or (b) it has expressed its consent to be bound by the treaty, pending the entry into force of the treaty and provided that such entry into force is not unduly delayed. “

The Rome Statute of the International Court of Justice

Art. 12 “Preconditions to the exercise of jurisdiction”

(2)“.... the Court may exercise its jurisdiction if one or more of the following States are Parties to this Statute or have accepted the jurisdiction of the Court in accordance with paragraph 3: (a) The State on the territory of which the conduct in question occurred or, if the crime was committed on board a vessel or aircraft, the State of registration of that vessel or aircraft; (b) The State of which the person accused of the crime is a national.”

(3)“If the acceptance of a State which is not a Party to this Statute is required under paragraph 2, that State may, by declaration lodged with the Registrar, accept the exercise of jurisdiction by the Court with respect to the crime in question. The accepting State shall cooperate with the Court without any delay or exception in accordance with Part 9.“

The Responsibility to Protect:

SYNOPSIS

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT: CORE PRINCIPLES

(1) **BASIC PRINCIPLES**

- A. State sovereignty implies responsibility, and the primary responsibility for the protection of its people lies with the state itself.
- B. Where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect.

(2) **FOUNDATIONS**

The foundations of the responsibility to protect, as a guiding principle for the international community of states, lie in:

- A. obligations inherent in the concept of sovereignty;
- B. the responsibility of the Security Council, under Article 24 of the UN Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security;
- C. specific legal obligations under human rights and human protection declarations, covenants and treaties, international humanitarian law and national law;
- D. the developing practice of states, regional organizations and the Security Council itself.

(3) **ELEMENTS**

The responsibility to protect embraces three specific responsibilities:

- A. **The responsibility to prevent:** to address both the root causes and direct causes of internal conflict and other man-made crises putting populations at risk.
- B. **The responsibility to react:** to respond to situations of compelling human need with appropriate measures, which may include coercive measures like sanctions and international prosecution, and in extreme cases military intervention.
- C. **The responsibility to rebuild:** to provide, particularly after a military intervention, full assistance with recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation, addressing the causes of the harm the intervention was designed to halt or avert.

(4) **PRIORITIES**

- A. **Prevention is the single most important dimension of the responsibility to protect:** prevention options should always be exhausted before intervention is contemplated, and more commitment and resources must be devoted to it.
- B. The exercise of the responsibility to both prevent and react should always involve less intrusive and coercive measures being considered before more coercive and intrusive ones are applied.

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT: PRINCIPLES FOR MILITARY INTERVENTION

(1) THE JUST CAUSE THRESHOLD

Military intervention for human protection purposes is an exceptional and extraordinary measure. To be warranted, there must be serious and irreparable harm occurring to human beings, or imminently likely to occur, of the following kind:

- A. **large scale loss of life**, actual or apprehended, with genocidal intent or not, which is the product either of deliberate state action, or state neglect or inability to act, or a failed state situation; or
- B. **large scale 'ethnic cleansing'**, actual or apprehended, whether carried out by killing, forced expulsion, acts of terror or rape.

(2) THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLES

- A. **Right intention:** The primary purpose of the intervention, whatever other motives intervening states may have, must be to halt or avert human suffering. Right intention is better assured with multilateral operations, clearly supported by regional opinion and the victims concerned.
- B. **Last resort:** Military intervention can only be justified when every non-military option for the prevention or peaceful resolution of the crisis has been explored, with reasonable grounds for believing lesser measures would not have succeeded.
- C. **Proportional means:** The scale, duration and intensity of the planned military intervention should be the minimum necessary to secure the defined human protection objective.
- D. **Reasonable prospects:** There must be a reasonable chance of success in halting or averting the suffering which has justified the intervention, with the consequences of action not likely to be worse than the consequences of inaction.

(3) RIGHT AUTHORITY

- A. There is no better or more appropriate body than the United Nations Security Council to authorize military intervention for human protection purposes. The task is not to find alternatives to the Security Council as a source of authority, but to make the Security Council work better than it has.
- B. Security Council authorization should in all cases be sought prior to any military intervention action being carried out. Those calling for an intervention should formally request such authorization, or have the Council raise the matter on its own initiative, or have the Secretary-General raise it under Article 99 of the UN Charter.
- C. The Security Council should deal promptly with any request for authority to intervene where there are allegations of large scale loss of human life or ethnic cleansing. It should in this context seek adequate verification of facts or conditions on the ground that might support a military intervention.

- D. The Permanent Five members of the Security Council should agree not to apply their veto power, in matters where their vital state interests are not involved, to obstruct the passage of resolutions authorizing military intervention for human protection purposes for which there is otherwise majority support.
- E. If the Security Council rejects a proposal or fails to deal with it in a reasonable time, alternative options are:
 - I. consideration of the matter by the General Assembly in Emergency Special Session under the "Uniting for Peace" procedure; and
 - II. action within area of jurisdiction by regional or sub-regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter, subject to their seeking subsequent authorization from the Security Council.
- F. The Security Council should take into account in all its deliberations that, if it fails to discharge its responsibility to protect in conscience-shocking situations crying out for action, concerned states may not rule out other means to meet the gravity and urgency of that situation – and that the stature and credibility of the United Nations may suffer thereby.

(4) OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- A. Clear objectives; clear and unambiguous mandate at all times; and resources to match.
- B. Common military approach among involved partners; unity of command; clear and unequivocal communications and chain of command.
- C. Acceptance of limitations, incrementalism and gradualism in the application of force, the objective being protection of a population, not defeat of a state.
- D. Rules of engagement which fit the operational concept; are precise; reflect the principle of proportionality; and involve total adherence to international humanitarian law.
- E. Acceptance that force protection cannot become the principal objective.
- F. Maximum possible coordination with humanitarian organizations.

Annex 2: Interview with Bertus Hendriks 4-6-2012

Mr. B. Hendriks works at the Netherlands Institute for international relations Clingendael, with an expertise in Middle Eastern affairs and Islamic movements. This written version of the interview is unauthorized and on request of the interviewee it will not be quoted or be used for other than the academic purposes of this research. The responsibility of any claims made, lie entirely with the author of this report.

I have read a few things about you and you have a lot of experience in democratization efforts in the broader Middle East. What makes the Syrian conflict distinct, or not, to other popular revolts?

Well, when we talk about popular revolts we obviously are mainly speaking about what is known as 'the Arab spring'. If we look at the countries that have been most successful in overthrowing their dictators: Tunisia and Egypt, these are two fairly homogeneous countries, draw Copts and Muslims in Egypt, but Egypt can be seen as the nation par excellence in the Middle East. The same homogeneity applies to Tunisia, where there are regional and tribal differences. There is however, not the kind of Mosaic structure of the population that we have in Syria, which is a very and long established dictatorship, like in Tunisia and Egypt, but a dictatorship that has always played with the fact that Syria is made of a Sunni majority but with a wide array of other minorities. Being itself a minority, the key leaders of the Syrian dictatorship are Alawite, although formally they are all members of the Ba'ath party an allegedly secular party, it was secular in outlook, but they have used their position, after the riots of Hafez al-Assad, to strengthen the very tribal and sectarian tendency in the regime and at the same time posing as the guarantor of the rights of other minorities in Syria. This explains until today why this dictatorship that is criticised from all sides including many Alawites, but are still benefitting from a still considerable measure of support among especially those minorities and Sunni Bourgeoisie that have struck a deal with the regime.

Religious, and to a minor extent ethnic, differences contribute to a large extent to the problematic of the situation. Could you claim that without Assad in power, sectarian strife in the form of a civil war is inevitable?

I am not sure; of course these differences have been in Syria as long as the state exists, which is not very long. As we all know historically after the First World War, the sides of the co-agreement of the

Western powers have carved up Syria. With Lebanon, which historically was part of the greater Syria, being carved out with Jordan and Iraq also being divided among the major powers. In Syria the differences have always been there. In the Ottoman period there was the kind of coexistence between the different communities, which also in that time was Sunni dominant in time of this Sunni dominated area of the Arab world. In the beginning there was more pluralism under the different governments when Syria became independent, after the Second World War when the French had to leave, then there has been after the takeover of the Ba'ath party. During those years, although highly criticised for being instable, one of the things was that it accounted for more pluralism. An example: the Muslim brotherhood, which is now put forward as the big threat of post-Assad Syria, was part of government and had members in parliament. I think if a greater plurality had remained within the Syrian political system, those difficulties and contradictions would have been acted out and found solutions of a more consensual nature that would not have created the type of tension and fear on the side of the minority populations.

Even though you claim that if they would have been more involved more democratically, the minorities are now still afraid that with the fall of Assad an oppressive Sunni government will be in place, also the Sunni Majority is also still divided in its support of the opposition. Is democratization really preferable for the population?

I think so. Everything depends if the current situation would lead to democratization. If a civil war would start, with some people saying that it already has started because of the communal violence that is present in Syria, I mean if with the fall of the Assad regime is the result of a fierce and hideous civil war then of course the conditions for development under a democratic alternative are not so good. You will have a victor and a defeated and everybody who is on the side of the Alawite dictatorship, for truly selfish or for sectarian grievances, because they are afraid and see in the Assad regime a kind of protection for something they fear even more, that would create a different departure situation. Everything depends on how a regime falls: if it would be the result of a long term and consensual massive movement like in Egypt, than the problems between different communities are not solved, like the Copts today in Egypt are worried about their future, but the possibilities for finding a kind of consensual solution are much bigger in Egypt (in Tunisia there are not big minority problems that are interested) than it would be in Syria after a hideous civil war.

The international community is slowly getting weary of the ongoing atrocities in Syria. Several options

beside the Kofi Annan peace mission are now being contemplated. Do you believe any form of intervention would benefit the population?

The pressure amount is increasing upon western countries in particular seconded by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, which are the obvious prime actors in this aspect to do something. There are no easy answers; any kind of intervention by western powers would need American leadership, heavy European and Turkish involvement and Arab cover, which would be a Sunni Arab cover provided by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Egypt. Any kind of intervention would spark a major confrontation; Syria is not Libya! The Syrian army has been in a conflictual war situation with Israel, it has an army that is well equipped, even if it is no match for Western and Israeli power, it will not be a walkover. As I said, it is much more difficult than in Libya, even in Libya it took much more time for the NATO supported insurgency to defeat the Gaddafi regime. That is a major unknown factor. The Support for the Assad regime until now is still more entrenched than it probably was for Gaddafi. On the other hand we have Syria on the very axis of a regional order, any intervention in Syria would provoke intervention by others. Beyond the intra-Syrian struggle there is the regional struggle between a camp headed by Saudi Arabia and other Sunni countries that are basically fighting a proxy war with Iran and the Iranian-Syrian-Hezbollah alliance and Iraq is also playing an important role in this aspect. A majority Shi'ite government now dominates Iraq; although they are a majority in Iraq they are aware that on the regional level Shi'ites are the minority. They are very worried about any destabilization that could result from the fall of an extremely important ally of Iran, which is the same time, an important neighbor of Iraq and in many aspects an important ally of the Shi'ite headed government in Baghdad. How this would work out is difficult to predict, it is hard to say which are the people who would get hurt in this situation.

As you mentioned actors such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar are already taking a role in the conflict? Is this not increasing the problematic of the already tense relations between Sunnis and Shi'ites?

It is a direct result of those complicated relations and it would certainly make it more difficult, although I would like to point out that we tend to formulate these things in terms of Sunni and Shi'ite terms. It is basically a power struggle: who is the major power in the Arab gulf region? Sectarian differences and tensions play into this power play and in terms it is fought out in Syria some would say. Basically, it is a struggle between the two camps. One camp is formed the axis: Iran, Syria and Lebanon, and in fact has nothing, or very little, to do with the Alawites being there, although a

complicated factor we could even imagine that Sunni-Syria would be a member of this axis as well in view of the conflict over Israel and the regional order and their resistance against the pact Americana, in which Syria has always felt that it was not getting its fair share.

With most recently a lot of international attention, what do you think the future prospects might look like?

The 64.000-dollar question! For the moment it does not seem the Annan plan is going to work. The key backer of the Syrian regime: the Russians have not felt that they have sufficient guarantees against a repeat of the Libya scenario, in which they mainly saw a power grab of western nations, as china also sees it. Unless the Russians can be forced to make a choice between their interesting relation with the US and their regional interest of which Syria is a part, I don't see that Russia feels that it has much to loose from its worsening relation with America because of support for the Syrians. As long as the Russians still feel that their interests are best served by trying to help the Syrian regime, I don't see the Annan plan is going to work. Obviously, the regime in Syria is not willing to accept the different points for the simple reason that once the army would withdraw its heavy armored tanks in the cities, once the free access of journalism, once the right of demonstration, and so on would be there the Syrians would come out massively to protest against the regime. Too much blood has flown already to make it probable that negotiated solutions through the Annan plan can come about. A stalemate is for the short-term the most probable outcome. On the other hand the pressure on the Syrians will increase, despite being able to cite hard-evidence due to dependency on fragmentary information still my assessment on the basis of this very incomplete information is: the Assad regime can not salvage itself and in the end it can not be salvaged by the Russians or the Iranians or the help of Hezbollah. Too much blood has flown and too much sectarianism has been at work, especially fostered by the Assad regime. The Assad regime has somehow hijacked the minorities, first of all the Alawites: forcing them to participate in the killings with the Shabiha militias and comparable things, they are with their backs against the wall. My expectation is that gradually turn into a kind of Lebanese scenario where the different communities will fight out a proxy war, with the regional and international actors will repeat this in Syria. The Lebanese civil war has lasted 15 years. Now Syria is of course more important than Lebanon but still it will take a long time and it will be very nasty. In the end I cannot see how the Assad will remain itself in power, after all the changes in the Arab world. Something has happened in the Arab world, during the Arab spring, that is also affecting Syria. This will make it in the end impossible to maintain this completely unaccountable kind of dictatorships that have fallen in Tunisia,

Egypt, and not fallen completely but challenged in Yemen. To think that this can continue in isolation from everything that is happening elsewhere is a kind of illusion from the regime. The minorities that still support it, will question themselves once the economy is getting further down the drains and in the end the minorities will realize that Assad will not be able to protect them either.

It is often argued that there are no good options for the international community to intervene, is it really in the benefit of the international community to intervene? They seem to have a lot to lose if you compare it to the Libyan case. What is your stance on that?

In the UN we have the R2P: the right to protect, as we have seen it is very difficult to make an effective intervention because it would result very quickly into a full-scale civil war. Probably international intervention will be inevitable when the slaughter will go on and when nothing of a kind of intermediate solution appears on the horizon. It will most probably of covered support for the insurgency and if the atrocities become so big it might even create, at least in the west, a kind of Balkan scenario: where the R2P becomes the duty to protect. Public opinion could leave western powers to no choice but to do something about it. As long as this is not yet the case it will take the form of further covered support of struggling, arm smuggling, financial support, intelligence support, satellite images to warn the FSA or other fighting forces against the regime, where military concentrations of the regime troops are. Perhaps a change in the balance of power could result that a gradual erosion of the regimes strength could alter also the calculus for parts of the Sunni bourgeoisie that is still now with the regime. They could decide that their interest is no longer served in the kind of alliance that they enjoyed in the past decades with the regime. It will depend what happens on the ground and how the public opinion in the world will react. It is difficult to make a clear-cut answer on this issue.

About helping the armed resistance, in my studies I have found a comparison that was made with supporting the Afghanistan Mujahideen stating that we do not know the opposition that well and so it could backfire on international support.

There are no iron cast guarantees of what comes after it is better. What is currently happening is the murdering of own citizens; it is something that is difficult to accept. It presents the International community with a big challenge but the amount and the extent of the challenge is well known but the answers are not. There are no easy answers; at least I don't have them.

Annex 3: Interview with Dolf Hogewoning 14-6-2012

Interview Dolf Hogewoning: Netherlands Ambassador to Syria.

You are the Dutch Ambassador to Syria, although highly contested, by the outside world; the government reveals that still a majority of the population supports its cause. Do you believe that any type of intervention is to the benefit of all Syrians, or only to the Sunni majority?

I do not believe that military intervention is in the benefit of the country at this particular point in time. Some say within the opposition that it would, because the threat of military intervention would force the regime into a political process to accept the realities of having to talk with the opposition for a political solution. My government, however is of the opinion that we have to give full support to the six-points plan of Kofi Annan the former secretary general and we have to put a lot of pressure on both sides, but in particular on the regime to implement these six points. (Description of six-point peace plan) First and foremost it should stop the violence and cooperate with the investigations, which have to take place after all the massacres. Full support to the Annan plan in order to try to come to a real cease-fire and political process where the regime would start talks with the opposition. Now of course the opposition has to unify itself, it has to become a credible counterpart for talks. A challenge! We support the SNC but also other groups within the arena: LCCS for example who play an important role locally, we support them to. But our main line is that we have to support the plan of Annan. The Netherlands is part of the friends of Syria group, and we are involved in the activities of this group, there is a working group on sanctions, we are active in this part, sanctions should be implemented as effectively as possible by all friends of Syria, the EU has also decided on 14 packages on sanctions, so we have an elaborate package of sanctioning going on. The US and some other Western allied countries the same. We encourage the Arab League countries to implement their sanctions in a more effective way. We have to put pressure by a way of sanctions to implement the six-point peace plan. If you would qualify sanctions as an intervention, than yes this is necessary and we started this already in the summer of last year.

Are we not intervening for only part of the population without regarding the minorities that according to Assad still represent his 'legitimate' government?

Syria has a very diverse population, Sunnis 70%, within this Sunni part you have differentiation. You have a huge amount of liberal people, and you have the business community and up until a certain point a part of this community was supportive to the regime. You have many Sunni inhabitants who are fence sitters not daring to pick sides. In general terms you can call the insurgency or intifada. There is a discussion on how to qualify the conflict, some people speak of a civil war, but it started as peaceful demonstrations, one can say that normal people, who might have been Sunni, carried these demonstrations but it is difficult to tell. In the Syria I know as ambassador, one didn't talk about denominations, it was highly embarrassing to ask are you Sunni or Alawi? Apart from Sunnis you have the Alawis, to which the president belongs, and some other clans, which have played a leading role in the regime since the excess of power of Hafez al-Assad. But there have also been critical alawis who are part of the opposition, still now they are actively involved in the resistance. It is dangerous to come up with a black and white picture of Sunnis against Alawis; besides these groups you have several type of Christians. Then you have the Druze community. What I wanted to say is that within the Sunni community you have a lot of liberal, secular Muslims that do not even go to the mosques. This is part of the secular culture of the Ba'ath party. This doesn't reduce the importance of the normal people in the streets, who are religious in their role of carrying the insurgency, not Islamists nor Salafist; it is dangerous to make these comparisons. They didn't start these demonstrations on the basis of religious motives, not at all, they did it because they were fed up by corruption, lack of liberty, suffocating power of the secret services. The whole insurgency was triggered by the Arabic spring. In Syria ugly things in Dara'a in the south triggered it, this had a tribal background, apart from religious denominations we also face a tribal component. 8 million people in Syria are part of tribes; these tribal leaders have played important roles. Also clan and family context are immensely important in Syria. Some youth did graffiti provoking the regime, they were taken in and put in prisons and tortured. The regime failed to act to the outrage that this caused in these tribal communities. A lot of blunders were made in the first weeks of the insurgency, March 2011. By the not intelligent reaction and lack of comprehension, there were reactions the governor and head of secret services were dismissed in Dara'a, but it was all too late. In solidarity with the people of Dara'a, around the same time other parts in villages east of Damascus and areas of Hama and Homs peaceful demonstrations arose. The regime started shooting at these people with live bullets! People were killed, and they had to be buried the next day (as is Muslim custom). A lot of people were demonstrating afterwards and were killed so you would have more funerals. Until it escalated so badly, and the violent approach of the regime infected other places, that you saw some 40 places having peaceful demonstrations. The number of people killed was rising –April 30 people, right now the open sources claim 13.000 are killed, personally I

think this is way more. At some point the international community had to intervene not military by supporting arms but by showing our indignation, our grief about what was happening: shooting at peaceful demonstrations.

Maybe the majority of the people killed were Sunni people but there was also the very important role of young people. Political movements during the regime were never admitted political space or the possibility to organize in NGO's as we know. Civil society except heavily controlled ones, but now a very important aspect of the Arab spring was the role of the social media. Young people (60% is younger than 30 years old, same as Tunisia, Libya and Egypt) have been tremendously important and is actively supporting via the social media what is going on, on both sides. Up till quite far in the intifada a lot of people were still sympathetic or at least very frightened by the idea of Assad leaving. There were nightmare scenarios of inter sectarian violence, and the regime played into this with national propaganda: they claimed the role of the secular caretaker of minorities against the radical Islamic threat. This is exactly the card they played and the propaganda to the outside world. It works with those who are one-sidedly informed within Syria, they only see state channels without freedom of expression or free media. The regime couldn't prevent the people from watching Al Jazeera or Al Arayiba. In the beginning one might say that Al Jazeera was very lopsided in its reportages, there was this flow of revolutions taking place in Tunisia Egypt and the next one is Syria. In the beginning they portrayed an impartial and subjective picture of the events but later they corrected themselves. Al Jazeera was stigmatized as very much the voice of Qatar and the international players supporting the armed terrorist groups who were responsible for the violence by the government. It has to a certain extent been a media war. A lot of footage on youtube was doubted but still the violence portrayed caused outrage internationally. The violence showed was barbaric and that even got worse in the last several weeks.

I would like to add that the Russian media's view on the situation is very different than the Western world media is.

Yes indeed, just to finish what I was about the diversity of the society, you also have Kurds, who play quite an important role especially in the north. There is about 2 million Kurds living in Syria, ethnical lines also play a role. The regime under Hafez al-Assad denationalized of 100 of thousands of Kurds, these people were left without a passport. So the regime last year started giving away presents to Turkish leaders they gave money and to the Kurds they gave passports or the possibility to apply for one. This to keep them silent and keep them in line with the regime and they succeeded in that to a

certain extent up until now, now Kurds are more actively involved in the opposition. There are also about half a million Palestinian refugees living in Syria they have taken quite a low profile in the conflict up until now.

The Russian way of approaching the crises; it's a fact that they approach the crisis in a different way. You could philosophize about why they do this, but the fact is that they have this different approach and they point out that in their view, that is based on the input of the regime, it is indeed terrorist groups that right in the beginning were part of the opposition, or at least violent groups, and that the violence comes from both sides. The west, the EU so also my country, would not deny that in this point in time there is no violence coming from the other side. What we point out is that it has been a peaceful movement from the start until at some point, understandably, the opposition decided to defend itself against the violent oppression of the regime. The FSA came up, and claimed a role to defend the people against the violent oppression. In a way they are completely honest in that. Things are murky and it's difficult to get a real military hierarchy in the opposition, so the FSA is more labile than some real organisations. If you look at the barbarity of the violence it's logical that you see retaliation that is also barbaric. One cannot deny that there are also acts that account to violence against human rights from both sides. It has, and still not is of the same scale of the violence practised by the regime. Although it is slowly getting more balanced. Only in the fall of 2011, this reaction started. The majority of the opposition wanted to stick to non-violent demonstrations against what was going on. At some point the SNC had to claim the right to defend their people. This is what we don't understand from the Russian position; that they point a blind eye towards the disproportionality of the violence. Now we are entering a stage where there is a discussion about the qualification, but at least it's an armed conflict in Syria. The term civil war is however contested by the opposition since this would suggest that there is certain equivalence between the two sides, which is a lie. It is still the army that is shelling places with tanks and now helicopters and mortar installations. When they crush these places they move in the army, or worse; militias, secret services and shabihas. The regime has paid shabihas to do the dirty work, who don't have any moral restrictions in showing their allegiance to Assad. The violence against women and children has reached a level that is unspeakable and without a precedent.

The massacres of which you are speaking marked a change in the conflict?

For the public opinion it is unbearable to see pictures, it's been confirmed in reportages by the UN inquiry ordered by the human rights council. Reports on violence against children have left the world

community abhorred by what is happening. The regime would blame the opposition with qualifications they made from the very start. No, not the very start; even the regime accepted that there were peaceful demonstrations but at some point they started their violent approach. There has been a discussion in the nucleus of power within the regime in April: shall we let them go? Go with the flow of the demonstrations? Or shall we stick to military oppression? They opted for the security policy. This was explained by the minister of Foreign Affairs to us when we were still there as ambassadors. “We want to have stability again, before we are going to talk about political process. “, this is the big fall they made. They went for the security policy thinking they could handle the situation within a couple of months, but it went on. There was never a point where a political process was possible; they had this process with “reforms”: a draft for a new law for political parties was introduced and there were even some elections held, a new parliament based on these elections, a new election law. In principle this is an improvement if you compare it to the totalitarian rule of laws, which there were before where the Ba’ath party had the monopoly. The real opposition however, was not participating in the elections, or was not aloud to participate: there was no plural formed parliament. If the west would ask: “why didn’t you start a political process?” they would answer: “we did! The armed terrorist groups or the opposition like the SNC want to split up the country, they did not want to participate in any serious talks.” Of course they don’t want to talk; the regime has to stop its violence, there it all begins. If we were going to talk to a regime that kills our people then we would lose any credibility left in the eyes of the people in Syria. This is a catch 22; the regime says the opposition doesn’t want to talk and continues to call the international community to militarily intervene and support opposition with arms, while the opposition says: how can we start talking to a regime that is shooting our people and doesn’t want to implement the six-point peace plan of Kofi Annan.

So a stalemate position is an often-used term? We are not getting any further with the six-point peace plan. You did however say that the government supports it?

We still hope so, but it is getting very complicated; the massacres have led us to fear that the regime is not going to implement the plan in a credible way. The line of our government was we have to put pressure on the regime by a way of sanctions, we have to pressure the opposition to unify itself, we support the opposition not with arms but with communications, training and material to document the human rights violations: we believe it is important to for transitional justice after the conflict. The perpetrators have to be brought to justice. We are also helping the opposition to prepare for a transitional phase, preparing to build a new Syria based on their ambitions; plural form, democratic

civil state of Syria. Not an Islamic state where the power is divided according to religious divides as in Lebanon. Each individual will not be discriminated on the basis of gender, religion or origin. We have to support them through workshops; the Americans are doing this. Furthermore the French and British are much in Support of the opposition with non-lethal goods and training. Non-militarily!

To come back to the government, is it realistic that they will implement the six-point peace plan? It would mean the end of the regime.

Some people say that you can't ask the regime to implement the peace plan; if you were to let the people demonstrate freely, the whole country would be one big demonstration. The government has agreed to the six points plan and that is where it begins. If you accept something you have to implement it, what we have seen from Bashar al-Assad right from the start is: a lot of intentions, a lot of agreements with the Arab League, and now with Kofi Annan, which he doesn't implement. If some analysts say that you can't implement them because it would be the very end that is for the responsibility of these analysts. We as the international community; our point of departure is an agreement between the government and the international community (this case Kofi Annan). There are six points in it, if these are not implemented we have to force them to, if they still not do so, this means that they are unwilling to abide by the obligations they have accepted.

Do you think the Dutch government, if sanctions were not going fast enough and political pressure will not prove effective enough, would consider military intervention as an option?

The line of the EU and the Netherlands is that military intervention is not an option in this point in time. It is not to be ruled out but it is a highly complicated case not to be compared with Libya. In Libya there was of course an agreement, a resolution of the Arab League asking for action under chapter VII of the UN charter. The UNSC adopted the resolution to implement a no-fly zone. This is one side, for any action under chapter VII, you talk about a variety of actions under chapter VII. The ultimate is possibly military intervention, but you have other possibilities under chapter VII. An international weapon embargo for example. When Kofi Annan will talk to the UNSC and conclude that his plan has failed then the pressure of the UNSC and on Russia and China who have vetoed previous resolutions, will increase to consider action under chapter VII. There is a variety of measures you can propose under chapter VII that wouldn't amount to military intervention or a no-fly zone or creation of a buffer zone. In the Syrian case there is a lot Syrians who don't want the international

community to intervene in a military way. Of course the opposition would like us to do so, but we have to take into account that there is no international mandate neither is there consensus within the country. There are bad examples in Iraq, a completely different situation in a geostrategic sense compared to Libya. The regime will profit of this; boots on the ground will trigger support for the regime, since the feeling of an occupation is triggered. The regime has put a lot of artillery in densely populated areas; if you start bombing these installations you will have a lot of collateral damage. There are also the regional consequences. How would Iran and Hezbollah react? Israel is in a vulnerable place if it escalates then you wouldn't know what Hezbollah would do. So there is a number of reasons why military intervention is not a wise thing to do. It shouldn't be ruled out either in order to keep up pressure towards the regime. Particular game changers can change the opinion of the world community but up until now the West is not considering military intervention. The Turks are important in this aspect, I talked with them and they said: "we have a border of 1000 km with Syria, which is very vulnerable and up until now we gave about 25.000 Syrians hospitality, if there would be a massive influx of refugees it might be forced to take action. Not military but might create as in North Iraq, buffer zones. They are only thinking about this, they are very cautious since they know what kind of Pandora's box they will open if they go into it.

Annex 4: Lebanon

Bouwman (2010) and Thompson (2012) write: the Syrian Ba'ath party has believed in a greater Syria, including Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. In 1976 Syrian troops entered Lebanon to prevent a civil war. In 2004, a UN resolution demanded Syria to withdraw troops from Lebanon. After the murder of Lebanon's former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, of which the Syrian government was suspected, huge protests called for Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon. After pressure of international powers such as the US, the EU, and the UN supported this demand. Syria finally withdrew all its troops, ending a 29-year occupation.

Rossenmöller (2012) tries to point out in his documentary that Lebanon itself is slowly turning into a warzone. In Tripoli a proxy war is being fought between Sunni and Alawite vicinities. Fordham (2012) claims that Lebanon houses a lot of Syrian refugees that still feel the need to fight the Assad regime. The effects of the uprising are tangible with a fractured Sunni population causing the rise of more Sunni extremists. The North of Lebanon and Tripoli know a lot of opposition proponents. This region has a high percentage of Sunni Muslims and has suffered most from the Syrian occupation. It is also known for its anti-Assad and anti-Hezbollah demonstrations. Clawson (2012) states that Hezbollah is a Shi'ite Lebanese, often pictured as terrorist, organization seeking to establish an Islamic state including Israel and Lebanon. Assad has supported the organization and it is feared that with his fall difficult times are ahead. Hezbollah remains the most significant and most heavily armed Lebanese militia making it a powerful entity in Lebanon, often imposing its will upon the government. It is assumed that if there were ever to be a civil war Hezbollah would be most the most probable victor. Hezbollah could not exist in its current form without Iranian arms and Syrian aid and facilitation. They are however aware that the population sees them as a destabilizing therefore they advocate peace during the high tensions currently in the country. Hokayem (2012) argues that the main power in Lebanon is with Prime Minister Mikati, who tries to implement policies of neutrality and dissociation from events in Syria. Nonetheless, the Nation's Shi'ite security forces are more overtly acting against Government aims. Arms are supplied to the Syrian opposition over borders that have always been smuggling grounds.

Annex 5: Syria's relation with Russia

Bouwman (2010) writes that the Soviet Union who has assisted Syria militarily, has not effectively won influence in Syria. Efforts to dominate political and military activities always had minor success. Also the intervention and military presence in Lebanon raised a lot of criticism. Charbonneau (2012) shows that Russia has during the conflict vetoed 2 proposals of the Security Council preventing regime change. Hamilton (2012) claims Syria is a long time ally of Russia and a destination market for their weapon export but Russia also knows investments for broader infrastructural projects and investments for finding oil and gas in the country.

“Russia strikes back amid accusations it's not doing enough about Syria violence” (2012) claims that President Vladimir Putin denies any trading or military connections/support for longtime ally Syria. HRW (2012) on the other hand gives evidence showing that state-owned; Rosoboronexport does still trade and openly admits to do so. As long as there are no international decisions, so it claims, it feels no need to stop the weapon supply.

Bridge (2012) claims that, although highly criticized, the Russians do claim to have reason for casting vetoes on intervention. Russia was in favor of the Annan peace plan and claims that a peaceful solution is their aim. All Syrians must agree and not only the opposition says Lavrov, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Above all Russia fears a repetition of the “Libyan scenario” with NATO taking a political position opposing Libyan leader transgressing the UN mandate to protect civilians. Therefore, Russia is a huge adversary of armed international intervention. Gutterman (2012) finds an initiative like the Friends of Syria to also greatly dissatisfied Russia; it undermines the UN-Arab League envoy, proposing only a one-sided solution to the conflict. Radia & Momtaz (2012) warn that an alarming event is that a Russian military unit has been sent to support Assad in fighting terror. They claim that it consists solely out of military and technical advisors. The event can be perceived as a support to Assad in fighting its self proclaimed “*war on terror*”. Hamilton (2012a) explains that the docking harbor, Tartus, is a navy base within Syria but maintained by Russia granting it access to the Mediterranean, yet another reason for Russia to oppose the fall of the Assad regime. Crawford (2012) believes that Russia will keep casting vetoes, aiming to stop the disintegration of a core UN principle: non-interference in domestic affairs of other states.

Lister (2012c) compares Syria to Serbia. In both conflicts the UN mission stands helpless and cannot

intervene. Russia opposed intervention in 1995 in Serbia, but saw NATO intervening anyway through "Operation Deliberate Force". Lavrov, who was the Russian ambassador to the United Nations, is now the Russian Foreign Minister and will not again see its last ally in the region fall, Serbia was almost Russia's last European ally at that time, as Syria is now in the Middle East. Russians therefore already claim that the West, or the FSA itself, is behind the Houla massacre to create a justification to intervene.

Annex 6: Syria's relation with Iran

"Iran profile" (2012) explains that Iran became a religious state in 1979 after the revolution of shah's ouster. Religious clerics assumed power under supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini. Iran was declared "*axis of evil*" by president Bush in 2002. Ever since, there has been fear of the Iran desire to produce nuclear energy. Abuse could lead Iran to create its own nuclear weapons. The Western world, and especially Israel, has indicated its fear of Iran possessing these nuclear weapons. Current president Ahmadinejad is considered an ultra conservative president. Goodarzi (n.d.) claims that even though politically Syria and Iran have differing ideologies, Syria being strictly secular and socialist, Iran being religious and opposing communism and socialism, the Islamic republic of Iran was almost immediately recognized by Hafez al-Assad. The two countries have strong ties and in the past have shared a common cause and common enemies. Most notably they cooperated to thwart goals of the United States, Israel and Iraq. The mutual support can be explained by Iran's predominantly Shi'ite population, supporting the Alawite, Shi'ite government of Assad. Iran can be seen as Syria's closest partner.

Al Jazeera (2012) offers an often-raised question: is Iran directly participating in the conflict or just supporting the Assad government. February 2012, Iran navy ships have docked at Tartous military harbor to train the Syrian navy. Iran hereby provokes the west showing it stands with its ally in the tumult. Besides, with the power display Iran shows that it is a regional superpower, provoking its rival Israel in the ongoing disagreement between Netanyahu and Ahmadinejad. Iran, just as Syria, faces heavy sanctions and pressure and therefore the two countries feel they are drawn ever closer as allies to defy the tides. Slim (2012) argues that the Iranian regime will not, no matter what events will come, stop supporting al-Assad until the conflict is over.

Annex 7: Syria's relation to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States

Sands (2009) argues that Saudi Arabia is a strict conservative Sunni kingdom, which is known for Shi'ites defining Shi'ites as heretics of the Muslim religion. Saudi Arabia is rich in oil, and has lately become a quite influential political actor. It supported Iraq in the war against Iran hoping to destroy the Shi'ite ideology. This has determined the relation between Syria and Saudi Arabia from then onwards. In 2005, Saudi Arabia and Syria got into a personal vendetta with the assassination the former Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafiq Hariri, possessed a joint Saudi-Lebanese citizenship. Syria was blamed for this murder and therefore tensions rose, which led to the withdrawal of Syria from Lebanon. This worsened in 2006, when Saudi Arabia supported Israel in a conflict. In 2008, the situation reached an all time depth when Saudi Arabia withdrew its ambassador boycotted the annual Arab summit in Damascus. Al-Saadi (2012) continues: although relations have slightly been improving afterwards, during the Syrian uprising relations were back to square one. Saudi Arabia condemned the killings and recalled its ambassador from Damascus once again. King Abdullah bin Abdel Aziz hopes that a new government will break bonds with Iran, isolating the Shi'ite stronghold.

Ali Harissi (2012) claims that the other Gulf States have similar positions on the conflict, all influential Gulf States have Sunni-led governments. Deyoung & Sly (2012) believe that Saudi Arabia is supporting rebels in Syria, while al-Saadi (2012) claims it is at the same time not allowing its own minorities to rise against the government. This became clear when in the Eastern oil-rich region protests were violently contained. The same story goes for the forces of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates that entered Bahrain in 2011 to quell the uprising of the Shi'ite majority in the gulf island.

Annex 8: Al-Nusra Front

“Profile: Syria's al-Nusra Front” (2012) claims the al-Nusra front appeared in January 2012, claiming attacks in well-produced videos. A Jihadist group was thus claiming to be behind several attacks on government forces. Evidence that the group is linked to al-Qaeda, are provided. The al-Nusra claimed that it contained among its members; Syrian jihadists who had returned from fighting on other battlefronts. El Bahi (2012) claims that the release of an important al-Qaeda figure: Mr. Al Suri out of Syria prison preceded several bomb attacks. Abouzeid (2012) explains that the Jabhat Al-Nusra li Ahl Ash-Sham Front is a terror group that claimed suicide attacks in January and March. El Bahi (2012) stresses that a growing involvement of Jihadism is feared to have slipped into the conflict because the right conditions are there for Al-Qaeda to recruit. Even though, it is like the al-Qaeda a Jihadist movement, no direct evidence of any links between the groups could be found. Al-Qaeda sees Syria as a perfect place for their operations in causing havoc, overthrowing a Shi'ite government to set up another Sunni country. However, Syria would prove a difficult base. Besides the government being aware of Jihad extremists threats in the region, Syrians have normally not welcomed them with open arms, since they clash with their established mainstream Islamist groups; Muslim brotherhood. However, if the tides of the war change the Sunnis might turn towards more extreme measures such as al-Qaeda support like in Iraq. Lister (2012) continues: the Syrians have already shown their aversion against these attacks and wave posters indicating there is no al-Qaeda in their midst. Abouzeid (2012) thinks the opposition claims that the government uses this to ruin opposition image portraying them as terrorists.