The Dynamics of the Syrian Crisis

World Geography

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The Syrian crisis is a humanitarian problem caused by an ongoing civil war within Syria. Beginning earlier in this decade, pro-democratic demonstrations were occurring throughout the middle east. This happened because many people wanted freedom from the authoritative dictatorships that ruled throughout the region. Known as the Arab Spring, people resulted to violence to gain their freedom the from authoritative rule of these middle eastern dictatorships. In Syria, the scene was the same as the rest of the middle east, but the results were different. The leader of Syria, Bashar Al-Assad, began the execution and imprisonment for demonstrators who opposed his rule. With immediate response the people of Syria chose violence and now resulted in a brutal civil war that has displaced over 5 million Syrian people and caused another 6 million to become refugees. The Syrian refugee crisis is a direct result of a now decade long conflict between various rebellions and Bashar Al-Assad’s power. From this conflict many healthcare, housing, and utility facilities have been destroyed. Leaving the world in question on how to respond to this tragic event.

The major causes of the Syrian crisis are from a political, social, and cultural point of view. The French and the British established the borders in the middle east after World War One and mixed many ethnic groups and religions in the same territory. The Alawites took control over the region in the 1970’s and has ruled since, even though only twelve percent of the population in Syria is Alawite (Manfreda, 2019). This is a major cultural cause because only twelve percent of Syria’s population supports government policies, with most Syrians belonging to different religions other than to the Alawite religion. Another cause is the political policies set forth by Bashar Al-Assad’s father, Hafiz Al Assad. Hafiz Al-Assad and the Alawites came to power through a military led coup throughout the early 1960’s (Sicherman, 2011). Hafiz Al-Assad’s regime focused on the unification of the middle east but by his own terms. Thus, forcing Alawite domination over the Sunni majority which created political turmoil within Syria, later encompassing Syria into totalitarian state. Hafiz Al-Assad’s political influence was carried on to his son Bashar Al-Assad, in which under his son’s rule the civil war began. Social factors influence Syria’s issues as well, this crisis has led to a severe decline in social cooperation among the people in Syria. With armed forces penetrating local communities, citizens have turned to informal authorities as mechanisms of conflict resolution. This leads to a new social construct within Syria where human capital is produced by joining militias or participating in protests (Neep, 2018). Creating a birthplace for rebel groups who oppose government forces and warlords who develop political careers.

The conflict in Syria has ruined the lives of many, forcing the displacement of millions of people. Currently there are 12 million Syrians that need humanitarian assistance, and about half of them are children (Reid, 2020). These Syrian children are robbed of their childhoods and are living life in a state of fear. Many have experienced physical and psychological trauma due to the loss of their loved ones, lack of nutrition, and child abuse. Other consequences have risen from the violence as well. The crumbling infrastructure of Syria has forced masses of refugees to travel to the neighboring countries of Lebanon and Turkey. These neighboring countries have agreed to provide aid to the Syrian refugees, but many of the refugee camps that were created have reached maximum capacity. In result, thousands have poured into these neighboring countries without being registered as a refugee (Duval, 2014). The continuous influx of refugees into these countries has put stress on their own infrastructure, but amazingly have kept their borders open to anyone who can make it out. The long-term effects of the civil war may keep Syria handicapped even until after the war is over. The fact that 9 million Syrians are not working will have dramatic consequences post war (Cordesman, 2018). With conflict reaching its tenth year, it is expected that only thirteen percent of Syria’s economy can be recovered four years post war. The deterioration of the country’s human capital will cause a collective shortage in vital skills needed to rebuild the country (Jha, 2018). The consequences of this war are grim and the longer it continues the longer it will take for Syria to recover.

The future of Syria can be determined by the prospects of the civil war. The United States, Russia, and Iran have now implemented their own footprint in the country trying to influence postwar Syria with their own interests. This leaves the future of Syria to remain unclear as the foreign powers have a stake within the country (Meyer et al., 2017). The democratic prospect of Syria has been eroded due to the destructive effects of the civil war, and even after the Arab spring there is still religious turmoil that prevents democracy from being implemented. Islamist movements are more concerned with questions of Islamic identity and religious ethics rather than constitutionalism (Coleman et al., 2014). The prospect of current political power to remain post war is also a possibility. So far Bashar Al-Assad’s regime has adapted their power through authoritarian restructuring and doing everything possible to keep Syria in authoritative state. The authoritarian restructuring has increased the regime’s ability to survive mass protests, repress armed uprisings, and resist international sanctions (Heydemann, 2013). Although the outcome of the civil war is unknown, the reconfiguration of the authoritative state in Syria can influence how the country is governed once fighting ends.

In conclusion, the Arab spring was a major cultural, political, and social reconfiguration if the middle east. The cry for democracy within the region reached its peak when massive protests occurred with the demands of political reform. In Syria, these demands were met with violence committed by Bashar Al-Assad’s regime resulting in a civil war with the Syrian government and its people. The decade long civil war has negatively impacted the lives of millions as the citizens of the country are displaced and seek any means of survival. Syria’s economy will take numerous years to rebuild alongside the unknown prospect of government rule. The prospect of democracy in Syria is slim and the reconfiguration of Assad’s authoritative regime allows further durability of the regime. The true future of Syria resides on the outcome of the civil war and the foreign politics involved in rebuilding the region.

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