

# SPECIAL SUMMIT ON SYRIA

## CHAIRPERSONS ADDRESS

Dear Delegates,

I am indescribably excited to welcome you all to the Special Summit on Syria(SSS) of La Martiniere Calcutta Model United Nations 2013! To the seasoned Model UN veterans amongst you all I hope LMCMUN 2013 will be an academically challenging experience for you and the Special Summit on Syria will be one of your most enlightening experiences so far and to all those and to all those newcomers I am honoured to be the one to welcome you to this thought-provoking style of debate. Up until and right throughout the conference I will be there beside you to try and make LMCMUN 2013 an unforgettable experience.

Now to introduce myself, I am a class 11 student pursuing commerce and I plan on concentrating on Criminal Law in the future. My hobbies include debating , reading up on political issues and so on and I also enjoy playing football , tennis and like pretty much every other Indian , cricket. However to be perfectly honest with you I am the farthest thing from an artistic person you'll ever meet since I can't sing or dance to save my life!

The Director of this committee will be Proneet De, who is a class 11 student studying science and looking to pursue engineering in the future. He is an avid reader, a passionate MUNer and is trained in Indian classical music. The Assistant Director of our committee is Tanuj Luthra, a class 10 student, is passionate about world politics as well as Manchester United along with being a promising debater. Akash Singhal, the Rapporteur of the committee, is also a class 11 science student concentrating on computer science and not unlike the rest of the board he also enjoys playing football. Last, but not the least, the Assistant Rapporteur of our committee is Devdeep Dutta Gupta. A class 10 student, Devdeep is a creature of the sea being an ardent rower and swimmer.

As LMCMUN 2013 slowly but surely approaches I hope that you all are excited to delve into diplomatic business as we have a thrilling topic lined up for you! This topic

encompasses the global phenomena that is the Arab Spring and it will force you as delegates to once again look into the impact of this colossal revolution and debate the right to intervention in this scenario.

Delegates as this is a constantly evolving topic , I would urge you to look for sources beyond the study guide I prepare for you as well as online articles because it is highly likely that the situation will be very different in a few month's time . I would also urge you to examine the deeper philosophical questions concerning this inter- national conflict. I am confident that our committee will be the best at this conference not only because of the quality of debate but also the quality of the delegates! If you have any concerns or questions(which I am sure you will) please feel free to contact me via phone or e-mail.I absolutely cannot wait to meet you all and I can't wait to make what i am sure will be unforgettable memories at LMCMUN 2013!

Regards,

RishabhBajoria

Chairperson of the Special Summit on Syria(SSS)

## TOPIC AREA SUMMARY

I am sure all of you are aware of the revolutionary Arab Spring which has changed the face of the middle east. Across middle eastern countries tyrannical dictators have been overthrown to setup democratic governments. However, in Syria, the situation remain unique as the president of 13 years , Bashar-Al-Assad , is still in power. Since 1971 , Syria has been ruled by the Assad family, first by the powerful ex-military officer , Hafiz-Al-Assad , who was succeeded by his son Bashar in 2000 after his death.The ruling party in Syria presently, the Ba'ath party was formed in 1947 and throughout the late 1940s and the entire 1950s the Ba'th party grew in power as Syria went through a number of changes in government due to military coups. But it was in 1963 that the Ba'th party formally came to power after yet another military coup. A decade later , the constitution of Syria was adopted which ,amongst other things , stated that the President must be a muslim(which was later removed leading to public outcry) and that The National Progressive Front(the alliance led by the Ba'ath party) would have 167 out of 250 seats reserved for itself in the National Legislative Council.

Syria has technically been at war with Israel since 1963 when the state of emergency

was imposed which lasted 48 years. There have also been volatile relations between Syria and countries like Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Jordan, United States of America and Russia. More recently a number of rebel groups have emerged, all of whom have varying demands. Whereas some want democratic reforms, some want a change in leadership but the same system of government but there are also groups that want Assad to continue as President but just to mend his ways. Also, due to the Assad leadership and rumoured ties of the Syrian government to known terrorist organizations, the United States of America along with the European Union have imposed harsh sanctions on Syria thereby crippling its economy.

As a result of growing instability and violence two resolutions have been tabled in the UNSC stating that the UN will intervene in Syria but both these resolutions have been vetoed by Russia and China.

As you can see Syria has multiple complex issues to deal with which affect not only Syria itself but also the global community as a whole due to volatility and gravity of the situation. So, as delegates it will be your job to decide what the next step of the UN should be. You will have to answer a number of tough questions like: Should the UN intervene in Syria or is Russia and China's policy of non-intervention justified? As a result this committee will, to say the least, pose a massive challenge to its delegates. However I am confident by the third day of the conference we will be able to solve this colossal crisis.

## HISTORY OF SYRIA



Michel Aflaq and Salah-al-din-al-Bitr, two Syrian politicians educated in France, formed the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party in 1947; which plays a major role in Syrian politics ever since. In 1949 there were three military coups, each concerning Adib-al-shishakli's rise in power. The high ranked army officer officially becomes head of state in 1953 and within this time successfully dissolves all political parties (including the Baath party). Army officers regain power in another coup in 1954 but a civilian government is restored. The new president Shukri al-Quwatli seeks better relations with Egypt throughout his rule and is successful in unifying the two countries as the UAR (United Arab Republic). Syria said UN didn't intervene in the first place when the crisis started in 1948. Being a member state of the UN Syria should be aware of the fact that in the UNSC decision for intervention has long procedures. In 1958 the United Arab Republic (UAR) was formed. The UAR between Egypt and Syria which was short lived. The Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser headed the new state. One of his orders after becoming head of UAR was the dissolution of political parties in Syria. The Baath party was not happy with the decision. In 1961 the UAR was dissolved as Syrian army officers believed that Egypt was dominating the UAR and were gaining control over Syria. In 1963 there was a major coup in Syria also referred to as the 8 March Revolution or the 1963 March Revolution. Although the coup was organised by the military faction of the Ba'ath Party and not the civilian faction, Michel Aflaq, the leader of the party agreed to it. As a result of the coup

a Baathist cabinet was appointed and Amin al-Hafez was elected as President. In April 1964 riots broke out in Hama between the newly appointed Ba'ath party and the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria. The riot started with the killing of a Baathist military personnel. This eventually resulted in widespread destruction in the city of Hama. In 1966 Salah Jadid led an internal coup in the Ba'ath party which resulted in the overthrowing of President Amin al-Hafez and the arresting of Salah al-Din al-Bitar and Michel Aflaq. Another outcome was that Hafez al-Assad became the Defence Minister. In 1967 Israeli forces seized the Golan Heights from Syria and destroyed majority of Syria's air force in the Six Day War with Egypt, Jordan and Syria. This period is one of the most important sections, in Syria's long and tumultuous history, mainly due to the rise of Hafez al-Assad, who was the President of Syria for almost 3 decades. This mercurial ascent to power began, when Israeli forces seized a part of Syria's territory-The Golan Heights, a strategically important region on the Syrian-Israeli border, as part of the Six Day War. The ruling government was not able to reclaim the territory, and this dented the populace's faith in the administration. In the next three years, a number of internal coups take place in Syria, with Hafez al Assad involved in most. He rose from the rank of defence minister to a part of the core of the Ba'ath party. In 1970, al Assad overthrows the president Nureddin al Atassi, and imprisons one of the most powerful politicians at the time- Salah Jadid, and in March, next year, he is elected for a seven year term as President, by a referendum. However, the significance of the term is negligible, as Syria was still, officially, in a state of emergency, since the Six Day War. In 1973, Egypt and Syria go to war with Israel, in order to reclaim the land lost in the Six Day War. This war, known as the Yom Kippur War, was entirely unsuccessful on Egypt and Syria's part, as they did not manage to reclaim their territories, but actually lost a little more to the Israelis. This war severely damaged the two countries' reputations, in front of the Arab world. Over the next two years, al Assad shows that he is ready to call a truce with Israel, on the condition that it withdraws from all occupied Arab territories, however, this does not come to fruition. In 1976, the Syrian army intervenes in Lebanon, to ensure status quo is maintained and the government stays in power. Over the next fifteen years, the Syrians in Lebanon strongly influence everything which takes place there. 1978 onwards, after a peace agreement is signed between Egypt and Israel, Syria sets out to gain diplomatic parity with Israel. The Muslim Brotherhood cause numerous rebellions over the next few years, along with an attempt on Assad's life, and they are all strongly dealt with, almost eradicating all members of the Brotherhood. In 1981, Israel effectively annexes the Golan Heights, making a peace agreement near-impossible. The next year sees skirmishes between the Syrian military in Lebanon and the invading Israelis, which end by the 1983. In the same year, Assad suffers a heart attack, in lieu of which, his brother, Rifaat al-Assad is promoted to the post of vice-president. In 1990, Iraq invades Kuwait, and this is opposed by Syria, which joins the anti-Iraq, US-led Coalition, leading to improved relations between Syria and the USA. In 1994, Assad's elder son, Basil, is killed in a car accident. Basil was expected to succeed his father, when Hafez no longer held power. In 1998, Assad's brother is "relieved" of his post of vice-president, following an unsuccessful coup. In 2000, Hafez al-Assad dies, with his second son, Bashar, succeeding him. In the first year of his reign, his policies remain

liberal, sparking what is now known as the Damascus Spring. However, this liberal movement is soon shut down, with Bashar's policies becoming increasingly similar to his father's. Outlawed Muslim Brotherhood says it will resume political activity. Syrian troops evacuate Beirut, redeploy in other parts of Lebanon, following pressure from Lebanese critics. MPs and other pro-reform activists are then detained by the president. British PM Tony Blair visited Syria to gain support for the campaign against terror, but failed to agree with Assad. Senior US official includes Syria in a list of states comprising an "axis of evil". Undersecretary for State John Bolton says Damascus is acquiring WMDs. US threatens sanctions if Syria fails to take the "right decisions". Syria denies US allegations that it is developing chemical weapons and helping fugitive Iraqis. Syria terms the Israeli air strike against Palestinian militant camp near Damascus as an act of "military aggression". Assad visits Turkey, ending decades of frosty relations. US impose economic sanctions on Syria for what it calls its support for terrorism and failure to stop militants from entering Iraq. UN Security Council calls for all foreign forces to leave Lebanon. Tensions with the US escalate after the killing of former Lebanese PM Hariri in Beirut. Syria is urged to withdraw its forces from Lebanon, which it does. Interior Minister and Syria's former head of intelligence in Lebanon, Ghazi Kannan, dies in what officials say is suicide. UN inquiry into assassination of Hariri implicates senior Syrian officials.

US embassy is then attacked in Damascus by four gunmen. Syria and Iraq restore diplomatic relations. US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi meets Assad in Damascus. Israel carries out an aerial strike against a site in northern Syria that it said was a nuclear facility under construction. Syria hosts an Arab League Summit. Many pro-Western states send lower-level delegations in protest at Syria's stance on Lebanon. US accuses North Korea of having helped Syria build a secret nuclear reactor at the site bombed by Israel in 2007. Assad meets French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Paris, while there he also meets Lebanese President Michel Suleiman. The two agree to work towards establishing diplomatic relations between Lebanon and Syria. Damascus hosts a summit between Syria, France, Turkey and Qatar to boost efforts towards Middle East peace. Explosions kill 17 on the outskirts of Damascus, Government blames Islamist militants. Syria establishes diplomatic relations with Lebanon. IAEA says traces of undeclared man-made uranium have been found at a second site in Syria—a reactor in Damascus. US special envoy George Mitchell visits for talks with Assad on Middle East peace. US posts first ambassador to Syria after a five year gap. US renews sanctions against Syria, saying that it supports terrorist groups, seeks WMDs and has provided Hezbollah with missiles in violation of UN resolutions.

## HISTORY OF THE BA'ATH PARTY

In Arabic, baath means renaissance or resurrection. The Baath Arab Socialist Party, to give the organisation its formal title, is the original secular Arab nationalist movement, founded in Damascus in the 1940s to combat Western colonial rule. But since then the



Ba'ath Party has gone through many twists and turns. Even the young men in Iraq right now would be amazed at the party's real origin. Those beginnings lie thousands of miles to the west, in the leafy streets and pavement cafes of the left bank of the Seine in Paris. Here in the 1930's the two founders of the Ba'ath party were educated at the Sorbonne University. They were Michael Aflaq and Salah al- Din Bitar. Michael Aflaq was a Greek Orthodox Christian and would become the main ideologue of Baathism, preaching freedom from Western colonialism, Arab unity and socialism. And Salah al-Din Bitar, born of a Muslim family in Damascus, would be the practical politician, later becoming prime minister of an independent Syria.

The movement was based on classless racial unity, hence the strong anti-Marxism, and on national socialism in the scientific sense of the word, such as nationalised industry and an autarkic economy serving the needs of the nation. Hence, the antipathy towards Western capitalism. But the rise of German fascism also played a role. Many in the Arab world saw Hitler as an ally. In 1941, the Arab world was electrified by a pro-Axis coup in Baghdad.

In 1947, the Baath Party was set up as a single party covering all the Arab counties, under a National Command (actually a pan-national body). In each Arab nation, a Regional Command - ostensibly the leadership of the local Baath Party - was created. The Iraqi branch of the Baath party was established in 1954. In the post-war period, the restored Iraqi monarchy was stoutly pro-Western, but it was overthrown in a military coup in 1958.

The new Iraqi strongman was Abdel Karim Qassim. He disappointed pan-Arabists like the Baath by rejecting joining a United Arab Republic with Syria and Egypt. On 8 February, 1963, the Baath Party staged a bloody coup against Qassim, killing thousands of communists. Many believe that the CIA was involved in the coup as a way of destroying communist influence in the region. Ali Saleh Al-Sa'adi, the Baath Party secretary general, said: "We came to power on a CIA train."

The Baath would not remain in power long. In November of 1963, there was an army counter-coup. But the humiliation of the Arab leaderships in the Seven Day War with Israel in 1967 finally gave the Baathists their moment, and the movement definitively seized power in 1968. The Syrian Baath had already grabbed power in 1963.

Once in power, the nature of Baathism changed. Both in Syria and Iraq, economic and military necessity required an alliance with the Soviet Union, eroding the old anti-communism. The attractions of power resulted in personal corruption.

The Ba'athists became extremely influential in the years following the Suez War and its influence spread from Syria to Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan.

In 1973, the Syrian constitution was amended to give the Ba'ath party a unique status as the "leader of the state and society", ushering it into all areas of public life. Its main role was to issue directives from the central government to regional representatives, mobilize the masses for public activities and gauge the "mood" of the general population.

The 1966 coup was led by the two major Alawis in the military wing, Salah Jadid and Hafez al-Assad. This was the official split between the Ba'ath Party. In 1970, Hafez al-Assad officially threw Salah Jadid to gain control of the Ba'ath party. Now comes the reign of the Assad Family.

Over the next two decades, the Ba'ath party remained hugely influential, but real power was increasingly collected in the hands of President Assad, his family, close advisors, the military and security services. Despite this, in the eyes of many Syrians the party embodied the corruption, nepotism and stagnation that became so widespread.

His son Bashar took over the role of the President after his father Hafez al-Assad died. The constitution of Syria was amended so that Bashar al-Assad could become the President. The age limit was decreased. The Ba'ath Party has this much power in Syria. They can change the constitution whenever they want to. In 2011 the Syrian civilians started to go against the Ba'ath Party. This led to what is now called "The Syrian civil war". The war has been going on for almost two years and it has still not ended. The Ba'ath party is literally hanging on a thread. It has been a long messy, bloody two years in Syria. Endless number of innocent civilians have died due to this war. Let's just hope this war comes to an end soon and something good arises from it.

## GOLAN HEIGHTS (ISRAEL-SYRIAN CONFLICT)

Being the cause of dispute between four countries and over sixty years of conflict, the territory of Golan Heights seems to be closing in on a permanent resolution. In the 16th century, the area came under control of the Ottomans, where it remained until dissolution of the Empire after World War I. French-mandated Syria gained control of the area which was included within its newly defined borders.

After the establishment of the state of Israel and the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-49, the Golan heights became a site of heavy border clashes. Syria saw the benefits of the mountainous terrain and high vantage points to shell the Israeli border below while Israel wanted to occupy and control the demilitarized areas and divert the Golan heights' freshwater supply from the Jordan River for its own uses.

Finally, Golan heights fell in the hands of Israel, who also controlled Egypt's Sinai Peninsula as well as the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza during the Six-Day War of 1967. Approximately 100,000 heights' Druze inhabitants were forced out as Israel rushed to tap the water resources, build settlements and use the advantageous high-ground to monitor Syrian activities down below.

Syria attempted several times to regain the Golan Heights and sparked a disastrous war as well as numerous negotiations – all of which failed. The issue over this area severed ties between Israel and Syria which pushed Syria to ally itself with other nations and factions hostile to Israel, such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran.



However, in recent years peace talks have gained momentum after the two countries agreed to closed-door discussions mediated by Turkey. Israel's advanced intelligence abilities have almost wiped out the necessity of watch posts in the mountains. A peace treaty at this point in time would remove the threat of a Syrian blockade of water supply. As talks have reopened and continue to take place, the Golan Heights may as well change hands once again.

## HAFEZ AL-ASSAD



Hafez Al-Assad, born 6<sup>th</sup> October 19, served as President of Syria from 1971 to 2000. Born an Alawite, Assad joined the Syrian wing of the Ba'ath Party in 1946. In 1952,

he was taken into the Homs Military Academy, where he graduated as a pilot in three years. He was now appointed as a lieutenant in the Syrian Air Force. However, Assad was not satisfied with a professional military career. He regarded it as a gateway into politics. During the existence of the UAR, Muhammad Umran, Salah Jadid and Assad established the Military Committee. During 1957-58, Assad held a dominant position in the Military Committee. However, Assad and other Ba'athist officers and generals were removed from the military by the new regime after Syria left the UAR in 1961. He was given a minor clerical position in the Ministry of Transport. In 1962, Assad was jailed in Lebanon for having played a minor role in the failed 1962 military coup. That very year, Alfaq convened the National Congress of the Ba'ath Party for the 5<sup>th</sup> time, and was reelected as the Secretary General of the National Command and ordered the re-establishment of the party's Syrian branch. At the Congress, the Military Committee established contacts with Alfaq, and asked to seize power through forceful means. Alfaq agreed to this conspiracy. The Military Committee planned to launch a Ba'athist military coup in March 1963 against President Nazim al-Kudsi. Assad played an important role in the planning. The coup was successful. After the coup was over, Assad was first promoted to major, and then went on to be lieutenant-colonel. By the end of 1963 he was put in charge of the Syrian Air Force. He was named commander of the Air Force with a rank of major general by the end of 1964. The Military Committee now gradually began to seize political power of the Ba'ath Party by weakening the base of the party's civilian leadership, headed by Alfaq. Special privileges were given by Assad to his Air Force officers. He appointed his confidants to higher and sensitive positions and set up an efficient intelligence network. The Air Force Intelligence was thus an independent intelligence organization. This allowed Assad to assign it with projects beyond the Air Force. From 1963 to 1970, Hafez Al-Assad demonstrated will-power, patience and immense manipulative capability. When Umran, the senior member of the Military Committee, changed his allegiance to Alfaq and the civilian leadership in 1965, the power struggle which was taking place since reestablishment of the Party, took a sudden turn. The remaining members of the Military Committee launched the 1966 Syrian Coup D'etat and successfully overthrew the civilian Ba'athist leadership. This led to a permanent division in the Ba'ath movement, with two centres – one in Iraq, and the other in Syria.

Hafez Al-Assad now became appointed as the Defense Minister of Syria, and was the second most influential person in the Ba'athist government after President Salah Jadid. He now began conspiring against the President in order to gain complete political power. In 1970, Syria supported Palestine in the war against Jordan. President Hadid sent an armored force to aid the Palestinians. However, Syria's intervention was opposed by Assad, and he refused to send the Air Force. This allowed the Royal

Jordanian Air Force to crush the Syrian forces who were unopposed, and lead to the invasion turning into an absolute disaster. This was known as the Black September. Syria's defeat in the Black September as well as her defeat in the War of Attrition against Israel in 1967, were used by Assad to criticize Salah Jadid and strengthen his control over the Armed Forces of the Ba'ath Party. Assad carried out two military coups – one in February 1969 and the other in November 1970 – and arrested and overthrew Jadid and his senior followers, and gained unchallenged complete control over the country. He derived his authority from the people and hence became a popular leader.

Assad was Prime Minister from 1970-71. In 1971, he introduced a “corrective movement” at the Eleventh National Congress of the Ba'ath Party. This was a general change in national policy, which he undertook to strengthen and consolidate his rule. The Syrian Constitution allowed only Sunnis to become President. The Sunnis were the orthodox mainstream of Islam in Syria. Although an Alawite, Assad presented himself as a religious Muslim and prayed in Muslim mosques in order to gain support of the ‘ulama’ – the educated Muslim class. His other measures in order to gain the support of the Sunnis included appointment of a Sunni Muslim teacher, Ahmad al-Khatib, as Head of State and well as appointment of an ‘alim’ as minister of religious functionaries and construction of mosques. Sunnis were also given senior positions in the government, the military and the party. All of Assad's topmost government officials were Sunnis. Once having gained enough power, Assad focused on becoming the leader of the party. He ordered the discharge of the incumbent party leaders and replaced them by his own supporters in the Ba'ath Regional Command. The Regional Command appointed a new People's Assembly, which in 1971 nominated Assad for presidency as the only candidate. During his tenure as Syrian President, Assad ruled under the terms of a state of emergency. The press was only limited to three Ba'ath controlled newspapers. Every seven years, Assad was the only candidate to be nominated for President by the People's Council. He was re-elected four times, gaining over 99 percent of the votes each time. The main landmarks of Assad's life had to do with the struggle against Israel. During the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, Syrian troops attacked Israel on the Golan Heights, while Egypt struck along the Suez Canal. After early Syrian gains, Israel drove the Syrian forces off the Golan Heights. In 1975, as Egypt edged towards a bilateral agreement with Israel, Syria forged closer ties with Jordan. Israel successfully annexed the Golan Heights in 1981. In 1982, Syria rallied his allies and fought back against Israel who invaded Lebanon. This was a notable success in Assad's tenure. In 1980, Syria also signed a twenty-year treaty of friendship and cooperation with the USSR. Domestically, Assad's regime faced growing civil disturbances. An extremist group called the Muslim Brotherhood was accused of several assassinations. In 1982 government suppressed a full-scale rebellion by the brotherhood in Hama. In 1986 the United Kingdom broke

diplomatic relations with Syria and the United States imposed sanctions, both accusing Syria of sponsoring international terrorism. In 1991 Syria along with other Arab nations entered into U.S sponsored peace negotiations with Israel. Syria's chief concern was ownership of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. However, little progress was made.

Summing up, we see that Hafez Al-Assad's achievements were threefold: he gave Syria years of much-needed stability; he turned the relatively small country into a major regional player whose views could not be ignored; and, with consistency, he fought to prevent Israel from imposing its will on the Arab world. Al-Assad passed away on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2000, at the age of 69 suffering a heart attack

## BASHAR AL-ASSAD



He is the younger son of Hafez al-Assad. Born on September 11, 1965, Bashar had no intentions of entering politics. It was his brother Basil who was groomed to be the

successor of his father. He graduated from school in 1982 and went on to study medicine in the University of Damascus. He specialized in ophthalmology and later went to England where he stayed for two years. In 1994, Basil died in an accident and Bashar was called back to Damascus. Bashar entered the military academy at Homs and quickly reached the ranks of colonel in just five years. During this time he served as an advisor to his father and led campaigns against corruption. As a result, he was to remove any potential rivals.

After Hafez al-Assad's death on June 10, 2000 the Syrian Parliament quickly amended the constitution reducing the mandatory age from 40 to 34 years so that Bashar could become a legal nominee for the ruling Ba'ath Party. On July 10, 2000 Bashar was elected as the President of Syria by a referendum in which he got 97.2 percent of the votes for a 7-year term. He was also selected leader of the Ba'ath Party and the commander in chief of the military. On May 27, 2007 Bashar was re-elected by referendum for another 7-year term with 97.6 percents of the votes.

Bashar was considered a new a kind of a leader, a younger-generation Arab leader who was well educated and influenced by his western education. When Bashar took over, the economy of Syria was in a terrible shape and Syria had lost its support from the USSR after its collapse in 1991 A serious recession in the mid-1990s was made worse by Syria wasting its oil revenues on its. Bashar was eager to improve Syria and push Syria into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and by 2001 Syria showed signs of modernity with better communication, infrastructure and civic facilities.

In International affairs, Bashar had to face the same problems his Father faced: a volatile relation with Israel, military occupancy in Lebanon and fights with Turkey over water rights. Most analysts believe that Bashar continued his father's foreign policy, providing direct support to militant groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad, though Syria officially denied this. Though a gradual withdrawal from Lebanon began in 2000, it was quickly hastened after Syria was accused of being directly involved in the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. The accusation led to a public uprising in Lebanon, as well as international pressure to remove all troops. Since then, relations with the West and many Arab states have deteriorated.

Despite promising of human rights reforms, nothing much changed since Bashar took office. Bashar was able to suppress internal dissensions because of the close relationship between the Syrian military and the Government. In 2006, Syria expanded its travel bans against dissidents, preventing many from entering or leaving the country. In 2007, the Syrian Parliament passed a law requiring all comments on chat forums to be posted

publicly. In 2008, and again in 2011, social media sites such as YouTube and Facebook were blocked. Human rights groups have reported that political opponents of Bashar al-Assad are routinely tortured, imprisoned and killed.

After seeing the successful regime change in Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon, the Syrian people began protests against the government on January 26, 2011, demanding political and social reforms, a reinstatement of civil rights and an end to the state of emergency, which had been placed since 1963. Furious after seeing the government's inaction, the protests spread and became larger and more violent..

On May 2011, the Syrian military responded with violent means against the protests in the town of Homs and suburbs of Damascus. In June, Bashar promised new parliamentary elections, but no change came, and the protests continued, growing more violent. That same month, opposition activists established a "National Council" to lead a Syrian revolution.

## FACTIONS

### SYRIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL

#### **Background :**

Since the beginning of the Syrian Revolution, the opposition has worked to unite its efforts to create an all-inclusive representative body for the nation. The goal of this body is to support the Syrian people's revolution and their struggle for freedom, dignity, and democracy. Over the course of six months, the concept of a political umbrella organization, which encompasses the youth of the revolution, the nation's political forces, and national figures emerged. This organization would deliver the message of the Syrian people in the field of international diplomacy, with the aim to overthrow the regime, its figureheads, and the pillars on which it stands in order to establish a democratic, multi-party, and civil state.

#### **Basic Principles :**

The SNC is committed to the achievement of its objectives within the following basic principles:

- 1- Working to overthrow the regime using all legal means.



- 2- Affirming national unity among all components of Syrian society (Arabs and Kurds, as well as ethnic, religious and sectarian groups) and rejecting all calls for ethnic strife.
- 3- Safeguarding the non-violent character of the Syrian Revolution.
- 4- Protecting national independence and sovereignty, and rejecting foreign intervention.

**SNC Offices:**

- 1- Foreign Relations Bureau
- 2- Policy and Planning Bureau
- 3- Media Bureau
- 4- Logistical Support Bureau
- 5- Revolution Support Bureau
- 6- Legal Affairs and Human Rights Bureau
- 7- Finance Bureau
- 8- Relief and Development Bureau

**SNC Membership:**

- ☐ Fifty two percent of SNC members belong to the new grassroots movements that sprouted from the revolution.
- ☐ Sixty percent of SNC members are inside Syria and forty percent are abroad.
- ☐ Damascus Declaration selected its representatives outside Syria and is in the process of selecting inside members
- ☐ Syrian Muslim Brotherhood will name its representatives to the council
- ☐ Kurdish National Bloc will name its members inside Syria
- ☐ SNC membership is open to political groups and prominent figures
- ☐ SNC currently has 140 members.

The SNC is headed by a Secretariat General composed of representatives nominated from the various opposition groups. The Secretariat General elects a smaller and representative Executive Committee made of 8 people with a presidency seat that is elected for a renewable term of three months.

## NATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

The National Coordination Body is a coalition of non-armed opposition parties based in Syria. It was established in June 2011 to unite the demands of the oppositions organize political dialogue and peaceful anti-regime protests.

Hassan Abdul Azim is the chairman of the Party and Haytham Manna is the deputy chairman. The Party was formed in Damascus in 2011 with the help of

BurhanGhalioun Michel Kilo, Hussein al-Awdat, ArefDalila, HabibIssa, Abdul-Aziz al-Khair, and HazemNahar .

The Party called for peaceful protests to secure its demands, before it could engage in any dialogue with the government. Its demand being : Release of political prisoners, Withdrawal of the army from cities, Ending the rule of Baath Party's rule and to allow other parties to compete for public office , Lifting the state of emergency, Allowing foreign journalists to enter Syria, and Prosecuting those responsible for violence. It also wanted a interim government and the introduction of key reforms. These included the drafting a new constitution, compensation for victims of the revolution, and addressing the Kurdish issue. It is completely against any foreign military intervention and violence and militarization of the Revolution.

The opposition figures met to form a coalition of different political blocs. Some had already engaged in similar initiatives in the past, notably in 2005 when the Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change gathered the largest number to date of signatories calling for the establishment of a democratic state. The 2005 coalition did not last long. Internal rifts led to the 2006 withdrawal of the Muslim Brotherhood, which suspended opposition activities following the start of an indirect dialogue with the Assad regime in 2008.

Turkey had recognized the Syrian National Council (another Opposition Party) as a representative of the opposition. Saudi Arabia and Qatar had called for the arming of the Free Syrian Army , this move was opposed by the National Coordination Body. The National Coordination Body joined the Syrian National Council at a conference in Cairo on July 2-3 of 2012. The results of the meeting were that a Joint Political Plan and a National pact were set out. They agreed to support the Free Syrian Army, dissolve the Ba'ath Party. The president and Bashar Al-Assad and other Senior Officers were denied a role in the transition. The two parties were still not able to unify and form a single an Opposition.

On September 23,2012 the National Coordination Body organized the "Syria Salvation Conference" which concluded with them deciding to topple the Government and establish a democratic state.

The Party accepts that the Free Syrian Army is an integral part of the revolution as it protects the society but it fears that by providing arms to it, the violence in the state will increase. After Kofi Anan's peace plan in 2012, the chairman extended his support for an intervention and hence improving its relations with the Syrian National Council.

In January and April 2012, a delegation from the National Coordination Body visited Russia, which supports political dialogue between the Syrian government and

opposition and rejects a military solution to the crisis. In January 2012 a National Coordination Body delegation headed to Iran, a visit allegedly organized in coordination with the Syrian government, and in February 2012 another delegation visited China. The National Coordination Body has also engaged in discussions with several Arab countries such as Egypt and Tunisia in addition to meeting ambassadors from European Union countries, the United States, South Africa, and Japan. Relations have been less than cordial with the Gulf Cooperation Council member states in general, and with Saudi Arabia and Qatar in particular, given disagreement over whether to engage in dialogue with the Syrian regime and over arming the opposition. Ties with Turkey have been no better, given the country's undisguised preference for the Syrian National Council

## FREE SYRIAN ARMY

The Free Syrian Army in its policy statement announced that it wanted to work hand in hand with the people to achieve freedom and dignity and to topple the regime, protect the demonstrators and the resources of the country. Their aim is to stand up to the biased and exploitative military machine that is protecting the Assad-Regime.

The exact strength of the F.S.A cannot be confirmed. It was said to be over 15,000 in 2011, just after the protests broke out. It admits that it cannot directly stand up to the Syrian army(which comprises over 200,000 soldiers). Soldiers and officers are switching alliances daily in rather large numbers and are being organized and admitted to the F.S.A.

They control no specific territory in Syria. They mainly occupy a refugee camp in Turkey's Southern Hatay province, near the Syrian border. The F.S.A claims to have 22 battalions in Syria, and have their major areas of operations around Deraa and Homs.

The F.S.A attacks military units that themselves plan to attack demonstrators and protestors and used guerrilla warfare through retreat operations. It also targets other security forces like the Mukhabarat secret police and pro-regime militias. Their means of communication are mainly the internet.

They plead for a UN no-fly zone over the Syria-Turkey border, in order to give defecting soldiers an area for refuge. However, they stand against the idea of foreign military intervention. The F.S.A are currently on course to gather intelligence rather than arms.

The Free Syrian Army has denied political affiliation of any sort. However the Syrian National Coalition expresses sympathy with the F.S.A while warning them not to take any rash actions against the regime.

## TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

The Syrian Revolution has been directly or indirectly, influenced by “armed organisations”. These organisations have been called ‘terrorists’ by some countries, while some have objected to this point.

The following are the names of certain organisations in the Middle East, and the role they play in the Syrian Revolution.

1. HEZBOLLAH – the word means ‘Party of God’ in Arabic. Hezbollah is an umbrella organisation, formed of Shia Muslims, with Hassan Nasrallah as their leader.

It has been termed as a terrorist organisation by the United States of America, Israel and Canada. However, certain countries like Russia has refused to call it a terrorist organisation.

*Origin* – In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon, to eliminate the Palestinian Liberation Organisation’s base of operations. Hezbollah’s formation was directly due to this point. Hezbollah gets its main financial aid from Iran and Syria. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps operating in Lebanon provide training, weaponry and funding to the organisation.

*Objectives* – Hezbollah wants to establish a Shi’ite theocracy in Lebanon. They declared the destruction of Israel as their main objective and want to eliminate any sort of foreign intervention, from the Middle East. Hezbollah holds 14 seats in the Lebanese Parliament and has 2 cabinet Ministers as well. Their political wing also runs various social programmes, providing schooling, medical care and welfare to Lebanese Shias. Hezbollah has been confirmed to have directly involvement in the Syrian Revolution. It has supported the Syrian regime, and has provided it with artillery, rockets, helicopters, etc. and have themselves, also, taken part in the Revolution. Their intervention has also led to the providing of chemical weapons to the government. This has posed as a threat to Syria, as a nation, as it would lead to mass destruction and deadly consequences.

2. HAMAS – the Hamas is the largest of several Palestinian military Islamist groups, and governs the Gaza Strip(east coast of Mediterranean Sea), and is headed by KhaladMeeshal. It has been recognised as a terrorist group by the United States of America, Israel and the European Union. They have carried out two major military campaigns in Gaza(2008, 2012). *Origin* – the Hamas was founded in 1987 after the Palestinian uprising – revolts against Israel’s occupation of West Bank of Gaza. *Objectives* – the Hamas regards the demolition of Israel and developing social welfare programmes as their main objectives. In 2006, Hamas won the Palestinian Parliamentary Elections, creating bitter relations with their rival ‘Fatah’. This conflict led

to deadly clashes and both parties remain politically and geographically divided. The Hamas are funded by Iran. Ever since the Syrian Crisis took place, the Hamas have never been involved directly, but have supported the Syrian government. They have expressed their desire to distant themselves from Syria. However, Iran have threatened to stop providing funds to the Hamas , if they back out of Syria.

3.AL-NUSRA: The Jabhat al-Nusra is a Syrian Jihadist group which is a branch of the Al-Qaeda in Syria. It is fighting against Bashar Al-Assad's Ba'athist regime, with the aim of establishing an Islamist state in Syria. Though it only has a strength of about 5000 militants it is the most effective terrorist group in the country.

The Al-Nusra emerged in 2011 after the beginning of the Arab Spring along with many other such religious factions. It is a rebel group fighting in the revolution on ideological, jihadist, grounds. The Al-Nusra and other terrorist groups have gradually gathered support from the public as they are seen as an effective force which may one day be able to end the 'tyrannical' regime of Bashar Al-Assad. The Al-Nusra is strictly against international intervention and they believe this would lead to 'Western Imperialism' and also subvert their plan to make Syria an Islamist state.

Most of the members of the Al-Nusra come from the jihadist network of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The leader of the Al-Nusra is a man known as Abu Mohammad al-Julani who had escaped to Iraq and returned to Syria in 2011.

The sole objectives of the Al-Nusra as decided in a number of meetings were as follows :-

1. To establish a group including many existing jihadists, linking them together into one coherent entity.
2. To reinforce and strengthen the consciousness of the Islamist nature of the conflict.
3. To build military capacity for the group, seizing opportunities to collect weapons and train recruits, and to create safe havens by controlling physical places upon which to exercise their power.
4. To create an Islamist state in Syria.
5. To establish a 'Caliphate' in Bilad al-Sham.

The Al-Nusra is in a state of war with Bashar al-Assad's government as they believe that any leader who does not enforce the sharia law upon his people is illegitimate. It is composed of many knowledgeable, skilful and experienced people with a clear plan, unlike the chaotic mixture prevalent in the Free Syrian Army. It tries it's best to reduce the civilian casualty count

and restricts itself to military targets. They operate with an urban-rural warfare strategy.

Recently it has secured the military base 111 belonging to the Al-Assad Government also many regions near the cities of Aleppo and DeirEzzor. It often teams up with other groups such as the FSA to fight their wars.

The Al-Nusra has its own media network, al-Manara al-Bayda (The White Minaret) which they use to make their documentary style propaganda videos, often featuring car bomb attacks and interviews with potential suicide bombers. It is used to publicize the message to the outside world.

It has a mixed relationship with the Free Syrian Army. There are times when they come together to fight against the Government and sometimes they have quarrels amongst themselves due to egoistical and ideological differences.

Qatar used to support the Al-Nusra but has slowly withdrawn their support from here and have started supporting the national coalition instead. The Al-Nusra has a lack of engagement with the international community but has popular level of support among the citizens of Syria who believe that the Al-Nusra will be effective in ridding them of Bashar al-Assad and his Ba'athist regime.

4 .PLO: The Palestinian Liberation Organisation is an internationally recognised terrorist organisation that was set up in May, 1964 during a meeting known as the Palestinian Congress. It was built with the aim of aiding and supporting the large number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, but by 1967 it was decided that its main objective was the destruction of the state of Israel. The PLO, as it is also known, was founded by Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas and Gamal Abdel Nasser. Eventually the PLO soon broke up into different factions such as the Al-Fatah, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command. Though it broke up into these factions, they always came under the PLO and never strayed away from it.

10 years since its initiation, the PLO spent a lot of money by waging war on Israel but this was a very unsuccessful attempt. There were heavy casualties on both sides but there was nothing to show for it in the end. Therefore in 1974 it was decided that instead of being a completely terrorist organization the PLO would also add a political element in its administration so as to enable some dialogue. This created some resentment amongst the factions in the PLO and soon another splinter group known as the Rejectionist Front came into being.

Soon the PLO was recognized by the United Nations and also at the Rabat Conference



by the Arabs. Arafat realized that he would not be able to achieve anything by only resorting to means of terror and slowly tried to convert the image of the PLO from a terrorist organization into a movement which had a legitimate purpose. He was successful in doing so and when Israel realized this they decided to try and wipe out the PLO altogether. In 1982 the Israel army stormed into Beirut and opened fire on the PLO forcing them to flee. Arafat agreed to peace talks but this was another futile attempt.

In 1988, Arafat took a major step in diplomacy by announcing that the state of Israel had a right to exist and also renounced PLO terrorism. Some members of the PLO did not agree to this decision and soon deserted Arafat and joined other terrorist organizations such as the Hamas and the Hezbollah. On 9<sup>th</sup> September, 1993, PLO chairman Arafat sent letters to Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and Norwegian Foreign Minister Holst that PLO had completely renounced violence and terrorism.

Finally on the 13<sup>th</sup> September, 1993 a Declaration of Principles was signed between Israelis and Palestinians. Between this day and 31<sup>st</sup> December the factions loyal to Arafat committed to this agreement but few factions such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine-Hawatmeh Faction (DELP-H) separated themselves and resumed their campaign of violence.

Apart from the aforementioned factions there are also various other organizations operating in Syria right now like the kurdish militia, local coordination committees, syrian revolution general commission (SRGC), Palestinian islamic jihad, shabiha and Jaysh Al Shabi (which support the government).

## ARAB LEAGUE'S STANCE ON SYRIA

The Arab league was formed in 1945 and since it's inception Syria has been a part of the Arab league. However in November 2011, in light of the violent repressions taking place in Syria, Syria was suspended from the Arab League. By doing this the Arab League violated Article 8 which says that any action taken towards a country undergoing a regime change must be unanimous. Since Lebanon, Yemen and Syria voted against this plan and Iraq abstained. The Syrian Government's response to this was that this plan was influenced by the Americans. Enraged by this decision, the people attacked the Saudi, Qatari and Turkish embassies in Damascus. Initially the Arab League allowed it's member states to supply only humanitarian aid to the rebels but recently the Arab

League said that it's member states have the right to arm the Syrian rebels. Several countries have criticized this move. Russia is one of those against this move. The Russian Foreign Minister stated that this move by the Arab League means that the Arab League is refusing to allow a peaceful settlement of Syria. He also stated that this move to arm the Syrian rebels is not against international law but will ensure that this war comes to a bitter end. The Arab League believes that the supply of arms will balance the forces in the Revolution. Another highly controversial decision taken by the Arab League is to give Syria's spot in the Arab League to the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition forces. Again several countries have criticized this move predominantly Russia and Iran. Iran stated that this move to hand Syria's place in the Arab League to the National Coalition is improper and highly dangerous. Russia has also criticized this move and said that this move rejects a peaceful settlement in Syria. Once again the main force behind the introduction of the National Coalition was Qatar. A member of the opposition in Syria has criticized this move undertaken by the Arab League. The Syrian National Coordination Body has criticized this move and said that this will only create more gaps in the opposition and jeopardises the unity of the opposition. The Syrian opposition opened its first embassy in Qatar in March and this embassy is recognized by the Arab League as the sole representative of Syria. In Moaz-al-Khatib's first speech at the Arab League summit in Doha he asked for US and NATO for military intervention in Syria. The Arab League has also imposed a number of sanctions on Syria. These sanctions include an asset freeze and an embargo on investments. The Assad government responded to these sanctions by calling this a betrayal of Arab solidarity. These sanctions were imposed after the Assad regime failed to meet a deadline to stop the violence in Syria. Thus the Arab League supports the rebels and encourages its member states to supply arms to the rebels.

## PAST INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

The following are the draft resolutions tabled in the UN with regards to Syria:

**UNSC 4 October 2011 (S/2011/612)**

**Voting: 9-2-4**

**For** – USA, UK, France, Germany, Portugal, Nigeria, Colombia, Gabon, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Against** – Russia, China

**Abstained** – India, South Africa, Brazil, Lebanon

Resolution drafted by France, Germany, Portugal, UK, Northern Ireland.  
Vetoed again by Russia and China. More abstentions, as the revolt had barely started, and the body count was not as high.

Condemned Syria, demanding an immediate end to all violence. Demands that Syria stops all human rights violations and cease use of force against civilians. Encouraged efforts of Arab League to end violence in Syria. Called for elections, fair and free in nature, encouraging Syrian Opposition to take part.

### **UNSC 4 February 2012 (S/2012/77)**

**Voting: 13-2-0**

**For** - USA, UK, France, Germany, India, Portugal, Guatemala, Morocco, Colombia, Azerbaijan, Togo, South Africa, Pakistan

**Against** – Russia, China

**Abstained** - None

Proposed by Bahrain, Colombia, Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE, UK, Northern Ireland, and USA

It condemned widespread gross violations of human rights and “all violence, irrespective of where it comes from”, while demanding that the Syrian Government implement, “without delay”, the elements of a plan set out by the League of Arab States on 22 January.

### **UNSC 19 July 2012 (S/2012/538)**

**Voting: 11-2-2**

**For** – USA, UK, France, Germany, India, Portugal, Guatemala, Morocco, Colombia, Azerbaijan, Togo

**Against** – Russia, China

**Abstained** – South Africa, Pakistan

Resolution drafted by France with the co-operation of Britain, Germany and Portugal.

Vetoed despite the fact that the text had been changed three times by the European allies, who had tried to accommodate Russia and China's objections.

## Proposals

Acting under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations – falls under recommendations.

Basically condemned Syria and asks for an end to all violence, irrespective of the source and calls for a formation of a “national unity government” also decided to renew the mandate of the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) for a period of 45 days.

### **GA 3 August 2012 (GA/11266)**

#### **Voting: 137-12-17**

**Against** – Belarus, Bolivia, China, Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Russia, Syria, Venezuela, Zimbabwe

Draft was presented by Egypt, on behalf of the Arab League.

Strongly condemned continued widespread and systematic human rights violations by the Syrian authorities expressed grave concern at the deteriorating situation in Syria, and condemned a raft of violations carried out by the authorities, such as the use of force against civilians, the killing and persecution of protestors and journalists, and sexual violence and ill-treatment, including against children. By other terms of the text adopted today, the Assembly expressed its full support for the Arab League’s decision to facilitate a Syrian-led political transition to a democratic, pluralistic political system, including through a “serious political dialogue between the [Syrian Government] and the whole spectrum of the Syrian opposition”. Reaffirming its strong commitment to Syria’s sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, it further reaffirmed that all Member States “should refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State”

The stance of some other international bodies towards Syria are:.

## **EU**

The EU, Syria's biggest trading partner, has imposed travel bans and asset freezes on more than 120 individuals and 40 companies. These include President Assad and most of his close family, the Syrian Central Bank and senior officials, including seven ministers.

In 2011, the EU banned crude oil imports from Syria and in February it expanded sanctions to block trade in gold, precious metals and diamonds with Syrian public bodies and the central bank. This will seriously affect Syrian economy, as they have not been able to get new buyers (China and India, are said to have been interested)

Also, there is an arms embargo in place over Syria. Talks had occurred to lift it in order to supply arms to the rebels, mainly supported by Russia and France. However, this had not taken place. But the UK has promised to veto any extension to the embargo when the issue of its renewal comes up in May.

## **African Union**

The African Union has not been very concerned with the Syrian crisis, with the exception of possibly South Africa. South Africa has abstained from voting in the UNSC resolutions against Syria. South Africa's official reason was that the resolution was tilted in favour of the rebels. Apart from this, no African Union country has any severe reaction against the Syrian resolution.

## **FOREIGN INTERVENTION**

Syria is still in the grip of a bloody revolt, started almost two and a half years earlier, with next to no signs of coming to an end. The number of deaths so far has been quoted as low as 70,000 and as high as 300,000. Assad's regime has been under scrutiny for a very long time now, and according to nearly all major powers, he has miserably failed at his job (definitely an exaggeration). However, this has been enough to bring about the issue of foreign intervention in the Syrian crisis, and that in itself is an almighty debate.

Foreign Intervention has been discussed more than once in the UN, and to that effect, two draft resolutions have been created (by, the USA) and have been put to vote in the Security Council. Unsurprisingly, Russia has vetoed the resolutions, which is not surprising as Russia is Syria's largest arms exporter. Surprisingly, however, China has vetoed these draft resolutions as well.

Most countries are in favour of an intervention, most citing humanitarian reasons – talking about the refugee crisis and the inhuman acts of violence carried out by the Syrian military. In a poll taken by the UN, there were 137 countries in favour of an intervention, with only 12 against it. The chief proprietors of the idea of foreign intervention have been the US, UK and France. Also largely in favour of this idea has been several major Middle Eastern countries, especially Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

### **Pros:**

- ☐ Possible ending of the Syrian crisis, with the saving of civilian life

- Chance to enforce democracy – with free and fair elections
- Break Syrian-Iran alliance – Palestinian groups lose their source of arms

**Cons:**

- Possible loss in more civilian life
- Takeover by a terrorist group disguised as a rebel group
- Loss of UN soldiers as the Syrian troops are well armed and trained, US would not want another Iraq
- Ruination of Syria's economy, having a ripple effect on the Middle Eastern economy, which in turn will affect the world's
- Regional destabilization – Lebanon would be seriously affected, because of clashes between the Hezbollah and the Opposition

As can be seen, the cons far outweigh the pros. However, given the current scenario, it is not only those 12 countries clamouring against foreign intervention. Recently, the chief of NATO has gone on record stating that there are no intentions of an intervention. Kofi Annan has also said that it is now too late for a military intervention, stating that peace is now the only way out. On top of that, Iran has promised that if there is an intervention in Syria, countries such as Lebanon, Jordan – even Israel would be heavily affected. Add to this the fact that no country has taken any serious step towards intervention, and it can be clearly seen that Syria is safe from a foreign intervention.

There are many reasons given for this non-intervention by all countries. Some of them are as follows:

- Situation is very different from any other intervention – say, Libya – because the Syrian troops are well organized, and as such, ready for battle – Syria's air defences are better
- Possible ripple effect in the Arab world, unlike Libya, because Syria is a major player in Middle Eastern politics
- Legal problem, as the SC conundrum seems to be headed for a stalemate – although this has never seemed to affect forces such as the NATO before
- US might be waiting for Middle Eastern countries like Turkey or Qatar to take the initiative – similarly, Qatar may expect the NATO to take charge

In conclusion, it can easily be said that foreign intervention is the worst option in a country like



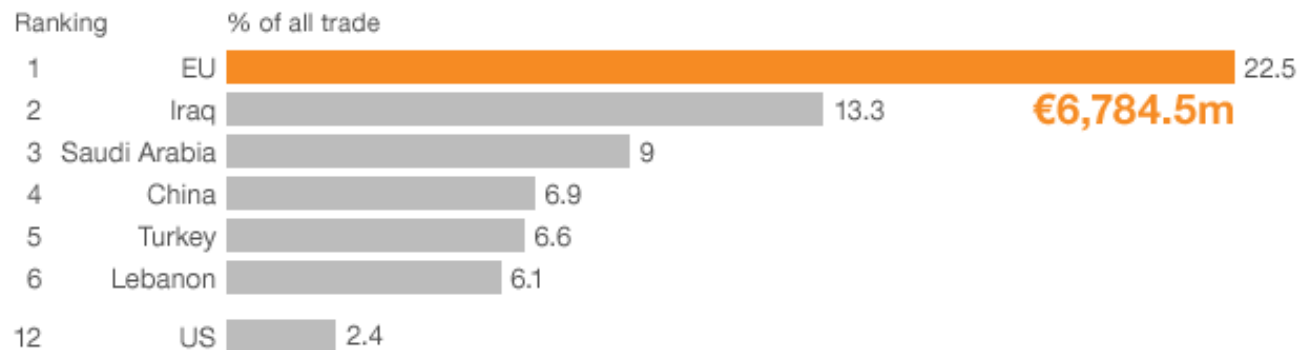
Syria, at the moment. It may have been a good idea earlier, but is undoubtedly a bad idea now. March was said to be the month of the heaviest casualties in the 2 and a half-year campaign. Foreign intervention now would only increase the body count. The only solution now is for peace talks between the Assad government and the Opposition. Or maybe if Assad steps down – an unlikely situation in itself. However, whatever the case, the Syrian crisis definitely has no easy solution.

## ECONOMIC SANCTIONS

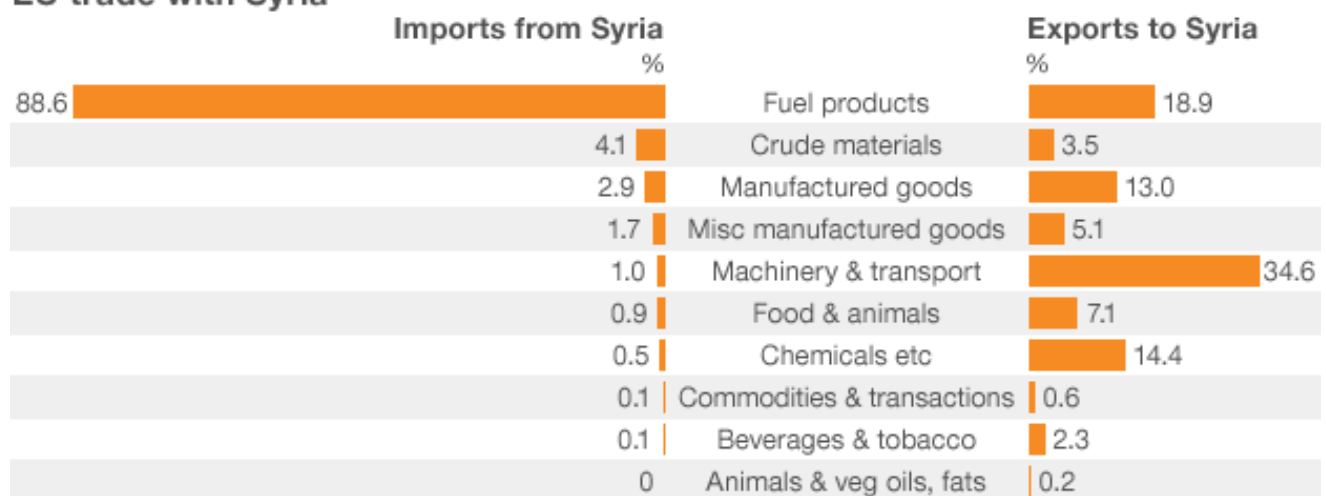
The US, EU and the Arab League have imposed sanctions on Syria. Syria is subject to UN sanctions as Syria is under investigation for its role in the murder of Lebanese PM Rafic Hariri in 2005. The UN passed a resolution 1636 that called on its member countries to freeze all funds, financial assets and economic resources of the countries involved in the assassination. Since the revolution began the members of the UNSC have attempted to pass a resolution condemning the violence in Syria. This resolution called for the end of violence in Syria and would have given the foundation for imposing sanctions towards the Syrian regime. However, Russia and China vetoed this resolution. Another resolution that was brought up in the UNSC by the Arab League was vetoed by Russia and China. The EU has also imposed a number of sanctions on the Syrian regime. The EU has imposed an arms embargo on its member states that prevents them from supplying arms to the Syrian rebels. However this embargo was amended recently and member states can now give body armour and armoured vehicles to the rebels. The countries of the EU can also supply non-lethal and technical assistance to the rebels in Syria. The EU has also imposed sanctions on Assad and a number of officials in his government. The EU imposed sanctions on Syria that stated that all member countries are banned from importing oil from Syria. The EU has also imposed sanctions on major corporations that support the Assad regime. These sanctions have been aimed primarily at Syria's energy and financial sectors. The EU has frozen the assets of several people and companies who

support the Assad regime. The Arab League had granted the Assad regime a deadline to end the violence in the country. When the Syrian Government failed to do so the Arab League imposed economic sanctions against Syria, the toughest against a member state. All dealings with the Syrian Central Bank and Commercial Bank of Syria were suspended. The Arab League also proposed a travel ban on 17 members of Assad's inner circle. This includes the Syrian head of military intelligence, the foreign minister and the interior minister. The Arab League currently allows its member states to provide arms to the Syrian rebels. The US has also imposed sanctions on Syria. Syria has been subject to US sanctions for a long time due to its relation with terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. Activities such as Syria's occupation of Lebanon and Syria's attempt to acquire WMD's has resulted in additional sanctions. The US sanctions aim to stop the Syrian Government's weapons aid, terrorist relations and stop the attacks against the civilians. The US sanctions prohibit any foreign assistance to the country's government and does not allow financial transaction with the Syrian Government. The Obama administration attempted to pass a resolution to ban the sale of arms to the Syrian rebels. However this resolution failed. In Executive Orders 13572, 13573 and 13582 President Obama blocked all assets of people involved in the human rights abuse taking place in Syria. Obama also signed an executive order which authorized a new set of targeted sanctions towards those who assist the government through information technology. The US government said that this allowed them to sanction the companies that enable the Syrian Government with technology that allows them to abuse human rights.

## Syria's top trade partners



## EU trade with Syria



Source: European Commission

## REFUGEES

The Syrian crisis has escalated to such a situation that in August alone 100,000 Syrians headed for the safety of neighbouring countries. The current number of refugees are 1.25 million according to the UNHCR. Unregistered refugees mean the numbers are much more.

Even after crossing the borders the refugees continue to face problems as Syria's Arab neighbours – Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq – are poorly equipped to handle the crisis and most refugees find themselves in temporary camps, or with families struggling to support themselves. Resources, shelter and work are all scarce for the refugees, and the

international community has been slow in responding.

Not only are the refugees facing problems but also the countries which give them refuge have taken a huge toll due to this crisis.

#### Jordan

Jordan has taken in many Syrian refugees. Deraa, where protesters first clashed with the forces of President Bashar al-Assad in March 2011, is barely 6 kilometres from the border.

Jordan is one of the most water-stressed countries in the world, due to an ongoing drought that has devastated agricultural prospects in the country's northern areas for nearly a decade. The large and rapid influx of Syrian refugees into the border cities of Ramtha and Mafraq, has strained water supplies— for two weeks in February, parts of Mafraq town had no water whatsoever.

#### Turkey

Turkey's response to the Syria crisis has been better organized than Jordan's, being wealthier and better placed to cope with the refugees. In Turkey, Syrians are allowed to rent private accommodation, though they are not given the right to work. As most are from poor backgrounds, they live in official camps. Turkey sought to control the situation early on, building four refugee camps in the towns of Gaziantep, Kilis and Urfa. Until now, Turkey has largely been able to fund its response to the crisis itself; with the government controlled Turkish Red Crescent and AFAD disaster agency taking the lead rather than UNHCR.

#### Lebanon

Lebanon has experienced an influx of refugees because of the Syrian crisis which started nearly two years ago. Unlike in Turkey and Jordan, where Syrian refugees find shelter in camps, most Syrians in Lebanon live with host families.

Nearly 100,000 Syrians have registered with U.N. refugee agency in Lebanon, although the registration does not grant them legal status in the country, that is they risk detention and deportation. Given the influence Syria has wielded in the country over past decades, many Syrians, particularly those who support the opposition feel insecure in Lebanon.

#### Egypt

While the focus has been on the suffering of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey as well in Lebanon, in Egypt a growing community of Syrian refugees increased rapidly in a country that seems to be safer than others in terms of ethnic and geographic conditions.



## SECURITY OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

According to UN reports, from the initiation of the civil war in Syria 2 years back in March 2011, around 4390 children as well as 2726 women have been mercilessly killed in the country. Apart from this there are thousands of other woman and children who are being tortured every day. An official report stated that 400 children are being kept captive and are being tortured everyday in the Syrian prisons by the Government forces.

The Syrian Opposition claims that these attacks are being undertaken by the Syrian Government. But it is also true that many of these women and children were victims of collateral damage during rebellions and protests that soon turned violent, between the Government and the Opposition forces.

Trafficking has become a major issue of concern for the women and children in Syria and there is potential need for their social security. They are also being subjected to sexual assault everyday.

During the course of the civil war in Syria, there has been an emergence of “Ghost” killer thugs. They wield AK-47’s and machetes and carry out most of the Government’s dirty work. They are

proving key to keeping Syria's President in power. They are also known as the "Shabiha" militia. In May 2012, in the city of Houla, these Shabiha fighters ruthlessly killed 108 civilians of which 49 were children. These Shabiha fighters have also reportedly sexually abused women, and girls as young as 12 during home raids and military sweeps of civilian houses.

One of the most shocking pieces of news that came out, was that, during the Houla massacre the "Shabiha" were instructed to kill children by the Government. The Syrian dictator is trying to restore a balance of fear, perhaps the most powerful weapon in the hands of tyrants throughout history. Killing children is supposed to intimidate the opposition.

It is clear that innocent women and children are suffering the most and the war has taken its heaviest toll on them. The horrific violence has created a desperate humanitarian situation. This has led to over a million Syrians, mostly women and children, registering as refugees in neighbouring countries like Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. These women and children, along with those that are present in the country are fighting to stay alive, and are in dire need of assistance and aid. According to the UNFPA reports, some 200,000 women will likely be pregnant this year. The UNFPA and its partners are trying their best to provide these women with clean delivery kits and reproductive health services, including emergency obstetric care and psychosocial support within Syria. The UNFPA has also distributed dignity kits, trained medical personnel, and equipped clinics and hospitals with equipment in neighbouring countries where these women and children have fled to.

There are some organisations which have been fighting their way through the civil war in order to provide these innocent women and children with the peace and sanctity they crave. Humanitarian aid in the country is grossly underfunded but organisations like the NGO – Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and the UNFPA are trying their best to provide these civilians with food and shelter and protecting them from the bloody civil war raging in the country.

The UNICEF is also present in the country and continues to deliver key humanitarian assistance in Syria. It has provided the food and medical assistance to more than 25000 children and families. 280000 children have been vaccinated till date, and the UNICEF has provided the national immunization programme with much needed logistical support and cold chain equipment. Nearly 27000 children in the rural cities of Damascus, Daraa and Latakia have been reached through a combination of key partners and public services. The UNICEF has provided much needed support to these families and helped them survive the atrocities of the war.

Other organizations like Save The Children also continue to fight their battle in securing the lives of the innocent woman and children in the war torn Syria.



# WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

## CHEMICAL WEAPONS

The inception of chemical and biological weaponry in Syria began in the early 1980s after their defeat at the hands of Israel in the Yom Kippur War. The Syrians had come to terms with the fact that Israel had a potent array of chemical weapons at its disposal and that Syria would be left defenceless if they were used in war. Thus, they started a Chemical Weapons program of their own, along with a lot of assistance from other countries, especially Russia and Iran. Israel's presumed acquisition of nuclear weapons, provided impetus for Syria to pursue a strategic deterrent against the conventional and nuclear Israeli threats. Syria has neither signed nor acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and has officially stated that while it supports a region-wide ban on WMDs it, cannot unilaterally renounce chemical weapons for as long as Israel continues to pose a threat to its security. In spite of the damage to its international reputation and the rising costs of evading international export controls on chemical weapons materials, Syria continued an extensive chemical weapons program. Since embarking on a CW program, Syria has obtained both chemical agents and CW-capable missiles from foreign suppliers. Currently, Syria's ability to produce CW agents and delivery systems appears to remain heavily dependent on foreign support for materials and expertise. Since 2005, there were reports of alleged Iranian assistance to Syria in upgrading and enhancing its CW production infrastructure. Information about the exact location of Syria's CW assets, from stockpiles to production sites, remains vague. The ongoing civil war raises questions about the physical security of these sites. Furthermore, many in the international community have become increasingly concerned as the conflict worsens that the Assad regime might choose to use chemical weapons against its own people.

Sources indicate that Syria first obtained chemical weapons from Egypt on the eve of the attack on Israel in October 1973. Reports that Israeli troops captured stockpiles of Syrian chemical weapons support the view that Syrian combat troops received these weapons during the Yom Kippur war. Allegedly, personal protective equipment was distributed to individual Syrian soldiers during the same period. Syria is known to have purchased more than 11,000 Chinese MF-11 protective masks. According to Israeli media, Syria began developing an indigenous chemical production capability in 1971 at the Centre D'Etudes et de Recherches Scientifiques (CERS) – a facility in Damascus that today administers Syria's CW

program while also contributing directly to research and development efforts. Both U.S. and Israeli sources claimed that Syria's CW program, under the administration of CERS, included production facilities in Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo and could produce sarin, mustard, and potentially VX.

Syria is currently believed to possess Scud-class missiles and SS-21 missiles that can carry chemical warheads. [In addition, Syria is believed to possess sarin nerve agents and mustard agents, and may also possess VX nerve agents. Syria also probably possesses chemical-capable artillery shells and air-dropped munitions. Reports of CW-related infrastructure investments and of new international collaborations suggest that Syria remains interested in enhancing its CW arsenal.

## BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

The world community tend to downplay the sophistication of the Syrian biological programs, they are very advanced. Syria has always had the most advanced biological weapons program in the Middle East. Syria's biological weapons capability today is closely tied to the former and current Soviet and Russian programs respectively, the DPRK, Iran and the former Iraq regime. A major concern is their strategic concept of use – these potent weapons have been placed in the 'conventional weapons' section of Syrian arms instead of the post of 'special weapons' which they formerly occupied.

The Syrians run their biological programs out of the Syrian Scientific Research Council (SSRC) in Damascus. They have separate wings for separate pathogens. They also have a number of programs running in Aleppo. Syria has extensive expertise in the industrial cultivation of germs and viruses for the civilian production of anthrax (and smallpox) vaccines. It also noted that Russian experts, contracted by Syria, are apparently helping them to cultivate a highly virulent anthrax germ for installation in missile warheads.

Several West European nations (Germany, the UK, Holland, France), the US and Russia were trading partners of Syria and supplied technologies which could and were used for offensive programs.

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Syria is a signatory to the Non Proliferation Treaty since 1969 and a proponent of a nuclear weapon free zone in the middle-east. Formally, Syria is a non-nuclear state however Syria has been suspected of possessing nuclear weapons after an Israeli airstrike on DairAlzour in 2007. An IAEA investigation into this airstrike found traces of

undeclared man made uranium particles at the SRR-1 in 2008 and 2009. Syria's adversarial relationship with Israel has been one of the most important factors in directing Syria's nuclear program. Syria had declared that the building which was bombed was an unused military building however, IAEA found it otherwise. After the Israeli bombing, the IAEA was finally allowed into Syria to investigate after three years of being denied access.

Suspected Nuclear base in Syria -



## PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

### A CONTINUATION OF DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE

Realizing that the United Nations' efforts to upbraid Syria's government for its harsh retaliation against its people have been vetoed by China and Russia in the Security Council in the past, the General Assembly as well as the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) together provide perhaps the best medium through which a diplomatic solution to the crisis in Syria can be reached. On 25 March 2012 United Nations/League of Arab States Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan proposed a six-point plan calling for a total cessation of troop movements, a cease to the violence, and an allowance for humanitarian measures to be taken within Syrian borders. The Syrian government acquiesced to the plan and allowed a 30 man U.N. Supervision team to

enter into Syria on 14 April 2012 in order to promote peace and assess the country's need for humanitarian efforts. Despite the United Nations' presence in the area the violence and bloodshed continued unabated and the U.N. on 21 April 2012 sent an additional 270 monitors into Syria to increase peacekeeping operation capabilities. However the additional numbers (granted however small in addition they may be) have proved diplomatically impotent against the growing violence. As efforts to monitor the situation and apply the appropriate means to alleviate the situation for the Syrian people fall short of what is needed diplomacy as a viable solution also weakens. The failure of President Assad to authenticate his claims of ratifying the six-point plan with an actual cease to the violence communicates a message of silent refusal to cooperate with the international community. As such the international community henceforth will perhaps look askance at any solution involving diplomacy on behalf of the Syrian government.

## **SPECIFICALLY INVOLVE IRAN IN ANY DIPLOMATIC TALKS AND NEGOTIATIONS**

U.N. and Arab League joint envoy Kofi Annan has recently suggested the involvement of the Iranian government in the search of a viable and diplomatic solution to the crisis in Syria has been recently. The involvement of Iran in any solution creating process is something that Russia has strongly pressured for and is simultaneously something that the United States has vehemently opposed. Iran would represent a diplomatic bridge between Syria's isolated government and the international community, a nation that Annan perhaps believes to be better suited towards opening negotiations regarding humanitarian relief with the Syrian government. Annan warned against "competing with each other" would only lead to "destructive competition and everyone will pay the price."<sup>160</sup> Annan further urged the international community to act recognizing that "the longer we wait, the darker Syria's future becomes....we cannot just step back and do nothing."<sup>161</sup> The involvement of the Iranian delegation in the conflict with Syria is obviously something for the Iranian delegation to decide based on the country's policy of the time of conference. Those policies and all of the aforementioned solutions are subject to change and review at the conference based on events that succeed the publishing of this study guide. Therefore a logical extension of these solutions written in the light of early summer 2012 must be taken into account when looking through these solutions as a guide to solving what is perhaps an entirely different situation in our conference.

## **OTHER SUGGESTIONS**

There are few solutions to the Syrian crisis. None are easy. Foreign intervention is definitely the worst, not only as it is too late (as pointed out by Kofi Annan), but also as it would affect too many things adversely.

First and foremost, is the option of making the army switch its allegiance. Not easy, but

it has been done before, most effectively in Iraq.

Second, is the option of providing the rebels with arms, and non-military aid. This has probably been on for some time, and has the disadvantage of directly supplying to terrorist factions within the rebels.

Third, which is probably the toughest to implement, is to limit the amount of arms going into Syria. This would be on shaky legal ground, as it would have to be a UN sanctioned activity, and Russia is Syria's largest arms supplier.

Fourth, implementation of a no-fly zone in order to protect the civilians from any possible chemical or biological attacks as well as airstrikes as seen in the First Persian Gulf War.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Delegates I cannot express to you how much I wanted to make the study guide a truly comprehensive document on the Syrian crisis, but when we set out to make the study guide we realized that the Syrian crisis is just too complicated and multi-dimensional to cover in 35 pages. Hence I would urge all of you to look at a variety of sources beyond the study guide, especially when it comes to the factions operating in Syria because there are more than 20 different factions operating in Syria along with religious and racial discrimination occurring in Syria, all of which we could not include in the study guide. I would also urge all of you'll to keep yourself updated using the different forms of media such as newspapers, TV media, etc. It is very important that you derive your information from a variety of sources so as to gain fresh perspectives on issues.

Lastly, with respect to your research it might be tempting for you to put off research until the last week thinking that since this is a constantly evolving topic, reading up on the latest updates regarding the topics will be enough, but this is not true. Due to the complexity of Syria's social, cultural and religious history, and its impact on the current Syrian revolution, to understand the functioning of Syria's civil society today, you as delegates must delve into Syria's tumultuous history. I would urge you to start from the formation of the Ba'ath party in 1949 and progress from there.

## QARMA (QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER)

- How, if in any way, will the United Nations, involve itself in Syria?
- What are the motives for involvement and how, according to the sponsors, are those

motives justifiably sufficient for the measures that the resolutions takes. .

- How will the United Nations justify its action, or inaction, in the Syrian Uprisings?
- Will this resolution involve any investigations in the proceedings and inner workings of the Syrian government?
- Will this resolution only deal with humanitarian aid or will it take action in other fields including but not limited to political, military, economically etc.
- How will this resolution involve the use of present NGO's to make use of all the resources available to the U.N..
- If this resolution condones a policy of action in the borders of Syria in anyway how does it justify that invasion of Syria's sovereignty
- How if in anyway will the U.N. monitor the situation in Syria as it develops?
- What is the time frame for dispense/amount of humanitarian aid in Syria (if humanitarian aid is decided to be given).
- How will the U.N. use the uprisings in Syria to develop a more concrete understanding of sovereignty/an invasion of sovereignty?
- How, if in any way will the United Nations justify any action beyond humanitarian aid be taken if the resolution in question condones such action be taken?