Human Intervention in the Case of Syria

Modern World War

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Abstract: *The world is having a crisis on international relations because of the Civil War in Syria, which soon enough turned into a Modern World War (MWW). This conflict complexes the whole world and questions the life of limitless innocent people. Drawing the conflict visually, this paper attempts to explain the use of humanitarian intervention in the case of Syria and surveys the main influential countries included in the war and their reasons for doing so. This review explains the exact event - of 15 students killed by the government - that led to the Civil War and precisely how its size became getting bigger day by day. Besides doing research and explaining the reasons of the conflict, it also focuses on possible and realistic solutions to end the war and support the Syrian refugees, on which the whole burden of the war falls. The review incorporates various methods including data collection and their analysis.*

Introduction

I have chosen humanitarian intervention as a controversial topic in the light of globalization, growing international cooperation and interdependence amongst states. I argue that, if justified, humanitarian intervention is a moral obligation that falls upon all able international actors, including individual states as well as intergovernmental or supranational organizations. Initially, I will introduce the topic of humanitarian intervention by giving a broad definition and further analyzing it according to the philosopher Michael Walzer. I will, then, compare the analysis and the intervention guidelines with the real life situation in Syria from 2011 to today, arguing that intervention is not only justifiable, but also necessary. I want to underscore that I believe humanitarian intervention is justified or required only in specific cases and based on certain norms and I will further elaborate them accordingly.

Definition of Humanitarian Intervention According to Two Different Philosophers

Adam Roberts defines humanitarian intervention as follows: "Coercive action by one or more states involving the use of armed force in another state without the consent of its authorities, and with the purpose of preventing of widespread suffering or death among the inhabitants". On the other hand, Michael Walzer discusses humanitarian intervention in four regards. Firstly, he does so by examining the nature of its occasions. Secondly, he discusses the preferred agents of interference, further explaining the ways in which intervention should be applied. Lastly how and when a humanitarian intervention should end.

(1)Walzer clearly defines the cases in which humanitarian intervention is permissible and required. He says that the occasions in which humanitarian intervention is required should be extreme and at a large scale. Only cases such as genocide, extreme brutality and oppression targeted towards a large population can justify an international response. It has to be clear that it does not seem possible or practical to wait for a local response (Rashid, 2012).

(2) When dealing with the question: "Who should be the actor interfering?" Walzer states that interference should come from any actor that has the appropriate means to carry out the humanitarian aid. Simply put: "Who can, should!"Considering the immediacy of the situation, Walzer firmly believes that unilateral action, most commonly coming from neighboring countries, but not only, is the most effective(Walzer, 2002).

(3)Proceeding to the means of pursuing a humanitarian intervention, Walzer says that the use of force is necessary. Controversially to the popular opinion that the use of force should come only after exhausting all other possible ways, and as a last resort, he argues that in such occasions of slaughters the end never comes.

(4)Answering the question of when should the intervention end is trickier than one would expect. Extending stay too much may start looking like an occupation. The intervening state can prove their pure humanitarian motives by moving in and out as quickly as possible. Therefore, the intervening forces, to avoid the risk of resembling an occupation, should retreat as soon as the danger has ceased to exist.

Comparison and Analysis of the Intervention Guidelines with the Real Life Situation in Syria

Syria War Frameworks

In less than four years the war in Syria escalated to the dire situation we have today. I argue that intervention is not only required, but also that it should have already happened. The war in Syria started in March 2011 in a city in southern Syria, where children were arrested and tortured for anti-government propaganda. This act sparked anti-government demonstrations that later developed into an army against Assad called the "Free Syrian Army". The rebels planned to

overthrow the oppressive government but were ineffective; however, their numbers and supporters grew as the country moved towards civil war. Arguably, civil war would not be a fair justification for intervention as it remains an internal issue, but as President al-Assad's regime grew more oppressive, other external forces came into play later during the same year. There are many factors that attributed to the start of this civil war, including economic hardship that came from the drought of 2007-2010, to the ongoing religious conflicts between Sunni Muslims and Alawites. However, it was the harsh response of president al-Assad to the initially peaceful protests that actually escalated the situation and divided the country. Adding to the conflict and taking advantage of the chaotic situation, the self-proclaimed Islamic State or the group better known as ISIS, started invading Syria around 2012. Claiming to follow the religion of Islam, they respond with brutal violence against anyone who doesn't obey. But many Muslims claim that their religion has nothing to do with hatred and violence. Since early 2014, IS has grown quickly attracting recruiter from all over the world using the Internet and social media. They have managed to conquer the majority of Syria and neighboring Iraq, thus leading the region as their own state and punishing anyone who doesn't obey to them.

Crisscrossing of Foreign Actors

Another significant factor to consider is the crisscrossing of foreign intervention and support. The national split has also affected the international split amongst different actors, such as the majority of Shia Iran and Iraq, Lebanon-based Hezbollah, and Sunni-majority states including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and others. An international actor is the US, which since 2014 has been bomb-attacking the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant, ISIL, also known as ISIS. About a year later, on September 2015, Russia targeted a bombing campaign towards rebel groups in Syria supported by western states and groups referred to as terrorists, such as ISIL.

Russia has also allocated military advisors to support Assad's defenses. Numerous Arab States, and Turkey, have supplied rebel groups in Syria with weapons. But the cause of the critical situations there is caused by the armed forces coming from outside Syria or that has nothing to do with the initiation of the conflict. For example, ISIL –having only territorial aims- is responsible for approximately 27,000 to 30,000 recruiters from around the world that have joined the fight (Group, reserved, Site, & Media, 2013). Lebanese members of Hezbollah are supporting Assad, as are Iranian and Afghan fighters. Whereas the US, even if it has claimed to oppose Assad's regime, has hesitated to become an active participant of the conflict. Even when Assad's government allegedly threw chemical weapons targeting Syria in 2013, former president of the US, Barack Obama, stated that in case of bombing, the US would rapidly intervene. However, in October 2015, the US dropped out of the most debatable Syrian training program stating that the training of only 60 fighters cost them $500m.

As President Assad is receiving support from Russia, and the rebel groups are receiving support from Saudi Arabia and the US, each for different agendas, the war has inadvertently grown to a larger scale (Zorthian, 2015). In 2013, there was usage of chemical weapons possibly by the

government during the attack of a rebel base in Damascus. This specific attack ended up killing about 300 Syrians, the majority of which were confirmed to be simply civilians. I would like to argue that at this point in history humanitarian intervention was necessary and undoubtedly justified. The usage of chemical weapons has been considered inhumane even towards militia, let alone towards standing civilians. It is clear that the situation has escalated beyond what would be considered an internal issue, and it is in fact affecting the entire international community. I believe that at this point it would have been the most effective time to intervene by any UN state that could. The lack of intervention from the UN was justified by the international arena by bringing up Russia's unwillingness to act due to Putin's ties with President Assad. However, the US together with Saudi Arabia, tried a mild intervention in 2013. The peacekeeping attempts failed as neither terrorist groups nor the government stopped the violence, as it was expected. The attacks went on for the two years to come and the situation is still unresolved.

Possible Solutions

The population has been and still is an imminent danger from its own government and from outside attacks, such as the Islamic State. The response should have come in 2013 from willing states in this way:

Firstly, a diplomatic effort is needed to secure the removal of President Assad and help the reestablishment of a newly elected government that better represents the diversity of Syria. This would have only been possible with troops on Syrian ground that directly attacked the oppressive government and not only served as peacekeepers.

Secondly, there would be need of a coordinated humanitarian response from the international community in providing aid for the civilians to rebuild their lives and safely return to their home country.

Thirdly, even though ISIS would still be a considerable danger, with a stronger new government and military aid from neighboring countries, it would be possible to minimize said danger or even abolish it completely (depending on the level of cooperation amongst states).
As the danger would have been minimized, the UN would restart their programmer of non-military aid in order to restore the infrastructure of the country and help with the aftermath of war.

Conclusion

I believe that I have fully explained how humanitarian intervention is justified in the case of Syria, and furthermore, is of immediate necessity. So far, the consequences of this war have been terrible, and it still remains in our hands to help ending it. The Syrian government and ISIS are definitely the oppressors and there is more than one state which is able to help. I believe

against holding sovereignty as the main priority, and instead support maintaining international peace and security when deciding that intervention is of absolute international importance.

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