

Tufts Simulation Briefing: Hezbollah

Introduction

Our delegation's main concerns will be with maintaining stability in our region of the world. Firstly, we want to make sure that the Syrian conflict causes the least amount of damage to Lebanon possible, notwithstanding the effect it has already had. Our goal is reconciliation between the Syrian government and rebel groups to keep Assad in power because the relationship that Lebanon had with Syria pre-war functioned well. We also want to ensure that we are halting the spread of Sunni extremism in Syria, and keep the sectarian fighting within Lebanese borders to a minimum. Finally, we hope that working with Assad can facilitate an even stronger alliance between Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon than existed pre-war. We want to be aligned politically, ideologically, and militarily, a goal which the conflict has helped realize. This alliance will bring strength and prosperity to the region that will allow us to resist Israel and Western provocations.

Russia we will be able to work with closely, at least for the moment. They have supplied us with an upper hand in the conflict via weapons that has been indispensable. Part of our agenda is to figure out what Lebanon's relationship will be with the Russians for the future, because they could be a valuable partner in terms of weapons supply and power projection against the West. We are also aligned with the agenda of Iran, our main supporter and financier. On the other hand, we are opposed to the aims of the Syrian National Coalition and the Western countries since they would like to see Assad ousted from the government.

Most important issues that our delegation would like addressed at the conference:

- Solidifying our relationship with Iran, Syria, and Iraq after the war -- we want to strengthen our Axis Alliance
- Solidify our relationship with Russia
- Create consensus between the Syrian National Coalition and government so that Assad can stay in power
- Neutralize the effects that Syria's civil war has had on Lebanon

Background of our country:

Lebanon is a Middle Eastern country with a population of about 6.3 million. Its capital city is Beirut, located on the western coast of the country. It is roughly equal to the size of the U.S. state of Connecticut, and is bordered by Syria, Israel, and the Mediterranean Sea.

The Lebanese population is made up of a few different groups, the result of rule by various empires throughout the centuries. The major groups today include Shia Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Maronites, Christians, and Druze.

After the end of World War I and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, France basically claimed what is now Lebanon as a colony under its Mandate of Syria and Lebanon. However in 1926, the Lebanese National Council was able to approve a constitution, meaning that there was a unified Lebanese republic. By 1943 the framework for independence was laid out and finally acquired in 1944. In 1948, Lebanon engaged in war against Israel with its neighboring Arab countries, and about 100,000 Palestinian refugees fled to Lebanon due to the conflict, a number which has grown to about 400,000 today since Israel did not permit the refugees' return after the cease-fire.

By 1958, there was still instability in Lebanon, with a civil unrest breaking out due to opposition against then-President Camille Chamoun. The U.S. actually helped contain the conflict, and after the crisis a new government led by an army general, Fuad Chebab, took power. Chebab was able to unite the country along religious lines as well as provide some economic prosperity. However, by 1975, full-scale civil war was underway due to conflict between the country's Christians and the Muslim-Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). In 1976, Syria sent its troops, the Arab Deterrent Force, to help end the war. Problems with Israel

surfaced again in 1982, when the country invaded Lebanon to dismantle the PLO along with American, French, Italian, and British forces. 1982 also witnessed the formation of Hezbollah, or the “Party of God,” in Lebanon, a group of Lebanese Shiite clerics who wanted to drive Israel out of Lebanon and establish an Islamic state. It received support from Iran, which had recently undergone its Islamic Revolution, and created a radical fighting force which engaged in attacks against Israel and terrorist attacks against Westerners. The conflict ended in 1985, following an attack on the U.S. embassy in Beirut which killed 63 people and finally the withdrawal of Israeli troops.

Following this in 1988, the outgoing President Amine Gemayel appointed an interim military government under the Maronite Leader Michel Aoun in East Beirut while in West Beirut, Muslim Prime-Minister Selim el-Hoss formed a rival administration. This situation of “two Lebanons” was remedied by a meeting of Parliament in 1989 which established the Charter of National Reconciliation. This Charter left more power in the hands of the President’s cabinet and added more Muslim MPs to make the balance of power in the country somewhat more equal. The Civil War was formally ended in 1990 due to an airstrike by the Syrian air force, ousting Aoun, and all thus all militias were ordered to disband -- save the powerful Shia group Hezbollah. Hezbollah emerged as a leading political party by the end of the civil war, continuing to fight against Israel in the south of Lebanon until 2000. Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri was elected by Parliament in 1992, and he was able to put in motion a plan of political and economic recovery as well as social integration for Lebanon after 15 years of civil war.

Lebanon and Syria enjoyed close political, economic, and social ties following the war, however, calls for Syrian army withdrawal were increasing. With the assassination of former

President Hariri in 2005, whom many believed was killed in some part due to the Syrian government, the domestic pressure for Syrian withdrawal in the form of mass protests could not be ignored. The assassination undeniably led to deepening political divisions within the country. By 2007, President Lahoud left office with no successor named due to stalemate within the National Assembly. Added to this difficult political situation was the fact that we, Hezbollah were in direct conflict with government supporters. Our leader, Hassan Nasrallah, took control of parts of Beirut until the organization was given veto power within Parliament. Michel Suleiman was finally elected President in 2008, re-establishing formal diplomatic ties with Syria and bringing general stability to Lebanon. In fact, a “unity government” was established by 2009, but fell apart in 2011 with the withdrawal of Hezbollah, which was implicated in the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri. A new, Hezbollah-endorsed Prime Minister, Najib Mikati, was endorsed in 2011, granting the party a majority of seats in Parliament.

Currently, the Syrian Civil War has increased tensions between Lebanese factions. Hezbollah, namely, does not want to see the loss of its ally Bashar al-Assad, while others are diametrically opposed. The indisputable fact, however, is that the war has effects that spill over into Lebanon, costing the country approximately \$7.5 billion thus far and doubling unemployment to 20%. Additionally, the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon is about 1 million people, combined with increasing poverty. A resolution is in the best interest of all factions involved.

Committee on Governance

Prior to the conflict, our government was officially a presidential republic headed by Bashar al-Assad, who succeeded his father in this position starting in 2000. However, this government was still highly authoritarian, with most of the political power in the hands of the al-Assad family. We, Hezbollah, had a very close relationship with the Syrian government, with which we had important aligning goals. Hezbollah and Syria are both members of the Axis of Resistance along with Iran and Iraq, and an alliance consisting of these members can be an effective counter against Sunni extremism, Israel, and the West.

Ideally, we would like to see a return to an Assad government or something as close to it as possible in order to ensure the continuation of this alliance. We are currently completely allied with the Syrian Arab Republic in the conflict, supplying training and arms to fighters supporting the government. This means that we are also working with Russia, Iranian forces, and Iraqi forces. We are in direct opposition of all Syrian revolutionary forces, including the Free Syrian Army, Syrian National Coalition, and all groups supporting them like the U.S. and France. We are also in opposition of IS.

Hezbollah is not completely opposed to a new constitution for Syria, provided that it allows for the same connections that were enjoyed with Syria pre-conflict to continue. We would like to see the continuation of the presidential republic that allows one figure to retain the most power, since this aligns with the aims for our Axis Alliance. Perhaps something similar to the government which exists in Lebanon might be beneficial to Syria since we have been able to take almost exclusive control of our country's politics. Before the conflict, the military and civilian government were very closely aligned, in fact, one could not exist without the other. The military

is still attached to the Syria government, and we would like to see this relationship continue because use of armed forces will be essential in whatever military strategy our region chooses to follow.

We believe that external, third party forces are definitely important in ending the conflict, but we would rather that the external countries involved be the likes of Russia and others who support al-Assad's regime. Hezbollah is ideologically opposed to the West, and as such, we do not want the U.S. and other European countries involved in re-setting Syria's government. It is important to us that after the conflict ends, the balance of power should be shifted towards us, Iran, and Iraq. Allowing Western countries to determine the fate of Syria leaves the door open for even more involvement in the region, which would be unacceptable.

Committee on Strategic Security

The Regional Command of the Syrian Regional Branch of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party is currently in charge of Syria. They coordinate the work of Syria's intelligence agencies and advise the Regional Secretary. However, in reality, the different branches all are very independent and often report directly to the President, a much more efficient method of governance.

As Hezbollah, we strongly support any actions the Assad regime takes to stabilize the conflict. Iran too supports us in our endeavors to support the Assad regime, as does Russia. Iran has supported President Assad by providing hundreds of military specialists for the purpose of gaining information and training all troops. Along with supplies and equipment from Russia, we are convinced that the Assad regime will win the ongoing conflict. The United States and many other Western Powers who do not understand the proper action needed to be taken for this conflict to end wrongfully and naïvely support the rebels. They do not understand the people, nor do they understand the proper institutions Allah would have wanted.

It is estimated that between 27,000 and 31,000 foreign fighters have been flocking to Iraq and Syria since the breakout of the war in 2011.

Our ally Syria will continue to fight against the wrongful territory of Israel to deliver it back to our Palestinian brothers. Along with the arms they supply us, they are just another consequence of the West involving themselves in affairs they do not belong in, one we must stand against.

We strongly support a cease-fire in the region so that we can lead the way to political and peaceful solutions, and to stop the loss of life in the region. The danger of a collapsed state due

to ISIS has gone, now that Aleppo has been taken back into government control. We must come together to figure out send the refugees back home and work with the Syrian State in any and every way possible. The refugee crisis has endangered Lebanon in many ways, and now that the cities of Syria are safe and under the control of the government once again, we too will be better off.

Syria is a small and densely populated (around 24 million as of 2010) country. With poor and lackluster oil, it is poor. After the significant dust storms in Syria along with the drought, the rebels took control of the regime at its weakest state, as it was trying to repair the country. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the French colony, the people struggled to find their national identity. As a country filled with many different minorities—from Sunni and Shiite Muslims to Christians, Kurds, Druze, and Alawites, it was torn. Very soon, the Assad regime emerged as the rightful family to put the country back on track.

Relations between Turkey and Syria have always been fragile, and have gone from peaceful to militarily tense. Turkey has always been suspicious of Syria's support of Kurdish groups. Before the conflict, Turkey and Syria had a relatively peaceful relationship, but since then, Turkey has supplied the rebels with military equipment. Syria has refused to acknowledge Israel to this day, and only recognizes Palestine. Syria and Jordan have been at odds since the U.S. Iraqi invasion in 2003 when Jordan supported the U.S. occupation of the territory. Now, Jordan supports the opposition in Syria, supplying bombing materials to get rid of ISIS. Syria has always had a dominant influence in Lebanese affairs, but after former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri was assassinated, the U.S. demanded complete withdrawal of Syrian troops in the area and an end to Syrian funding for Hezbollah. Hundreds of thousands of protesters took to the

streets to chant pro-Syrian slogans and carry signs touting the Syrian-Lebanese “brotherhood.”

Today, Lebanon supports the Syrian government.

Recently, Syria has relied on Russia to provide weapons and funding for the Army.

Russia aims to turn the Russian naval base in Tartus into a permanent naval base. Since the war began, the Syrian army has been fighting insurgents.

Committee on Local Security

Before the war, the Syrian Armed Forces were responsible for defense, public health, and public work projects, such as road construction. Law enforcement was generally carried out by police forces and many internal security tasks were carried out by various intelligence agencies. One agency is the Police Security Directorate, led under the guidance of the Ministry of the Interior and protects the Syrian people from internal threats and conducts surveillance to protect the people. There is also special metropolitan police placed in Damascus, overseen by the Director of General of the Public Security and Police. The Gendarmerie is stationed in local areas and the Desert Guard is placed around borders for border control, especially on the borders between Syria and Iraq. Before the war, the local police were mainly protecting the Syrian people against Kurdish demonstrations, that often turned violent because the Kurds were attacking the people and police. The police system in Syria is divided into three sections. The Administrative Police, also known as the Neighborhood Police, is used for general security and non-emergency situations. The Emergency Division is used strictly for emergencies and roving patrols. The Criminal Security Department is for general investigative police duties. Included in this department is the Department of Protection of Public Moralities, which mainly patrols homosexuals and their activities.

Ever since the war began, the Syrian police has been in charge of quelling all demonstrations and have used violence if necessary to put down the rebels. Often times their violence was only in response to the violent rebels, and use violence to protect themselves and the rest of the Syrian people. Despite the hundreds of thousands of rebels, Assad has been able to maintain control and authority in Syria. Assad has been forced to drop barrel bombs in areas

because the opposing forces have become extremely violent. Other countries, such as Iran and Russia, also have been offering support to Assad and the government in the war. After Aleppo was conquered by the Syrian government, Russia reported that they arrived in Aleppo to support the law enforcement and secure peace commissions and train local personnel. Iran has also offered support in police training. We, Hezbollah, have also been extremely active in supporting Assad. Beginning in 2012, we declared our active support and troop deployment in Syria and by 2014 we had deployed thousands of fighters in Syria and supported the Syrian government. In 2015, we lost 1500 fighters in fighting with Assad against the rebels. We, Hezbollah, are also the most active group in fighting the rebel spillover into Lebanon. Russia, Iran, and the Syrian Government fight all together against the Syrian National Coalition, whose motive is to defeat Assad.

There are hundreds of thousands of Syrians fighting in the war on both sides. The Syrian Armed Forces is compiled of 178,000 soldiers. The General Security Directorate has 8,000 men and the National Defense Force is made up of 80,000 Syrians. Hezbollah has 6,000 to 8,000 fighters, many of whom are Syrian. There are over 15,500 Syrians in other allied groups fighting with the Syrian Government. Against Assad, the Free Syrian Army is made up of 40,000 to 50,000 Syrians. The Islamic Front has 40,000 to 70,000 people. Fatah Halab and al-Nusra is made up of 25,000 to 32,000 and 13,000 people respectively. Other groups against Assad are compiled of around 20,000 people.

Before the war began, around 700,000 small arms were in the hands of the Syrian people. After the war began, the amount of small arms has significantly increased. To defend themselves, Syrians of both sides have obtained more small arms. Russia has been providing

arms to Syrian military forces and while the rebels buy their weapons illegally. Often times they have to obtain arms through the black market, improvise factories, and battlefield captures. In some cases foreign governments provide weapons for the rebel groups, such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. While the rebels have a lot of access to small arms, the Syrian government still has a much wider range of weapons, especially with Russia's surface-to-air missile defense systems and short range missile systems.

While the Syrian Government clearly has control over its weaponry, it is struggling with securing its water supply. Global warming has greatly affected the amount of water accessible in Syria. The rising temperatures, severe droughts, drying up of farmland, and diminish of rainfall has limited the amount of water available. Farmers in rebel-held areas have been over-extracting groundwater to irrigate farmland which is having a detrimental impact on water supply in the future. On top of global warming, ISIS and Turkey have taken control of many water access points, which makes it more difficult for the Syrian government to obtain water. ISIS controls much of the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, which is much of what Syria depends on for food and water, but ISIS often gives access to water supply only to specific regions, not including the government. Turkey also has a great amount of control over the water supply that flows to Lake Assad, Syria's largest body of fresh water. It is clear that Turkey has been reducing the amount of water flowing into the lake in order to cut off supplies to Aleppo.

Oil is another issue Syria is struggling with. Beginning in 2014, ISIS was able to take control of most of Syria's oil fields. One of Syria's main oil producing region is in Deir Ezzor, a province in eastern Syria. While the production levels used to be between 34,000 and 40,000 barrels a day, production levels have now been lowered with Russian airstrikes against local

facilities. ISIS' profits greatly come from rebel-held territories of northern Syria, eastern territories held by the Syrian Kurdish militia, and the self-proclaimed caliphate on the border between Syria and Iraq. Oil is becoming a pressing issue in Syria with ISIS control, and Assad is now negotiating with ISIS for more oil supplies. But, they are also successfully being able to obtain oil for cheaper prices with Russia and Iran.

It is clear that the rebel forces have made Syria an unsecure place to live. They have caused over four and a half million people to flee Syria, many of them being women and children. On top of this, another 6 and a half million have been internally displaced. Around 70 percent of the Syrian population has little to no access to clean water, over 30 percent are suffering from malnutrition, more than two million children are not in school, and 80 percent of the population is living in poverty. All of this is caused by the rebels' violence and opposition to Assad. The Syrian government is forced to strengthen airstrikes, with the help of Russia, in order to subdue the atrocities the rebels commit. Many hospitals and health centers have been hit by these airstrikes, and now are not able to be used. All of these issues stem from the rebels and their violent outbreaks, which the Syrian government has to try and fix and put down the rebels.

Committee on Social Reconstruction

Syria's makeup consists of several groups of peoples whose differences from one another have been defined by religious and ethnic terms. This diverse community exists because several of these groups have been leftovers from previous invasions and migrations. This has left Syria stratified to some degree, as class lines tend to coincide with racial differences, and the families of landholders and merchants traditionally occupy the highest social position.

Undoubtedly, the region has experienced tension due to the diversity of the population, however under the Assad Regime, Syria was working its way to become a sanctuary and a safe haven for the wide variety of different cultures. The Assad Regime in our eyes was pointing towards a solution to Syrian disunity, primarily because the Syrian leadership was fighting to preserve and maintain the Palestinian cause. Any threat to the regime's security and survival is a "danger" not only to Syria, but to Palestine and to Lebanon as well. It is for this reason that we are inherently against liberal uprisings which focus their efforts on freeing themselves from an effective state control at the expense of the struggle against US and Israeli colonialism.

Although we support the Assad regime, it is evident that many civilians were not pleased with that governmental rule, for they wanted long-promised economic and political reform to manifest. Unfortunately, we saw a sustained effort by a small group of intellectuals and critics over the past decade to transform the country's political system prior to the conflict. We believe that these (often violent) groups have sought to destabilize the country, by showing an opposition to the government. During that time, we were continuously facilitating access to altruistic social services to provide humanitarian services to the citizens in Syria despite their complaints about the government.

The Syrian constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, the constitution requires that the president be Muslim and stipulates that Islamic jurisprudence is a principal source of legislation. The constitution provides for freedom of faith and religious practice so long as religious rites do not disturb the public order; however, the government restricted full freedom of practice on some religious matters, including proselytizing.

There is no official state religion; however, the constitution requires that the president be Muslim and stipulates that Islamic jurisprudence is a principal source of legislation. All religions and religious orders must register with the government. We, Hezbollah, have never been against religions. As the government does, we support all religions and encourage interfaith dialogue. As previously stated, we consider Zionism to be the enemy, not the Jews as a people. "We respect the Jewish religion just like we do Christianity; The Jews have always lived among us. We have an issue with Israel's occupation of land." Though some have criticized us for being anti semitic, we are not Anti-Jew, we are Anti-injustice.

The Syrian government follows legislation that acknowledges the human rights of its civilians, and makes sure to follow that legislation. Judicial Process: The Syrian legal system declares that investigating magistrates determine whether a case should be sent to trial. Minor cases are handled by peace courts, and more grave cases go to courts of first instance. We support the fact that *Shari'ah* courts apply Islamic law in cases involving personal status. Religion: As stated before, the Syrian Constitution provides for freedom of religion: the constitution provides for freedom of faith and religious practice, provided that the religious rites do not disturb the public order. We support this motion, as we are not against religion in general, but the terrorist Zionist movement. LGBT: The constitution casts homosexuality as carnal, and

incorrect. Therefore, it is illegal in the region. Because we are devout followers of Islam, we support this motion against homosexuality as well. Speech & The Media: Internet censorship in Syria is extensive. Syria bans websites for political reasons and arrests people accessing them, and internet cafes are required to record all the comments users post on chat forums. We thoroughly believe that the government is correct in this decision, as it must protect its citizens from anti-governmental propaganda. Overall, we believe that the Syrian government *does* protect the rights of its citizens, and that the government has done and is doing its job to respect the rights of its beloved citizens.

In addition to basic human rights, the Syrian government prior to the conflict has taken the matter of property rights very seriously. As the ultimate owner of a large portion of the territory, we believe the State played a very important role in land management. Before the crisis, land rights were acquired largely through a form of Prescription. Sharecropping, renting and purchase of land were also common, and were usually effected through extended family or lineage relationships. In rural areas, customary land systems and institutions were prevalent, and played an important role in land dispute resolution, thus complementing the role of the official arbitration committees and courts that existed at national and governorate levels.

In regards to civilian movement, we we believe it was generally easy for Syrian citizens to internally move between cities prior to the war. The Syrian Constitution, in Article 38(3), allows freedom of movement “within the territories of the state unless restricted by a judicial decision or by the implementation of laws of public health and safety.” This is a liberty and a privilege we’d like to restore.

We believe that the Syrian health systems were adequately effective. Given that low public investment access to health services increased dramatically since the 1980s, rural populations have achieved better equity than before. Despite the apparent improved capacity of the health system, we have seen a number of challenges which need to be addressed to reduce inequities in access to health care and to improve the quality of care. This includes addressing validity of the data, overall inequity, lack of transparency, inadequate utilization of capacity, inadequate coordination between providers of health services, uneven distribution of human resources, high turnover of skilled staff and leadership, inadequate number of qualified nurses and allied health professionals.

To aid the government in their health care aspirations, we established a highly organized system of health organizations, known as the Islamic Health Unit, which provides cheap utilities medical care and hospitalization at the health care centers that are distributed in the areas and in private hospitals. In addition to the government's valid efforts, our health NGOs provided a healthy amount of Syrians with adequate mental health assistance.

We believe that The Syrian government has played a central role in the administration, planning, and supervision of education in the region. The Syrian Ministry of Education supervises basic and secondary education, including private schools, and is directly responsible for curriculum and learning materials. The Ministry oversees education policy based on the ruling party's resolutions and regulations. Higher education, on the other hand, is governed by the Ministry of Higher Education, which is also responsible for developing, deciding, implementing, and evaluating higher education policy, laws, and regulations. All public basic and secondary education is free and funded by the government. Public higher education is also free;

however, fees may be charged in some cases, however private institutions do not receive government financial support. Prior to the start of the ongoing conflict, basic education enrollment was close to 93 percent, an excellent and healthy statistic.

In addition to the government's undeniable efforts, we have worked to provide primary and intermediate schooling. We have given access to scholarships for needy children to continue their college schooling plus providing them with scientific orientation, and securing fresh water to the neighborhoods that the public water network do not reach.

Committee on Economic Reconstruction

For many centuries, a Sunni merchant class dominated the Syrian economy. However, that changed when Hafez al-Assad came to power in 1971. The oil boom of 1973 brought in new wealth, much of which went directly to the government along with the revenue from other natural resources to support their programs. Alawite businessmen thrived (Sottimano).

When Bashar al-Assad came to power in 2000, he continued to develop relationships with a new class of rising entrepreneurs in areas such as communications and information technology. Only small businesses and agriculture were not linked to the government (Sottimano). Syria's chief imports continued to be those raw materials needed for industry, manufacturing and agriculture while its exports were crude oil, cotton, clothing, fruits and grains ("Economy of Syria").

The Syrian banking system was also centralized by the government. Prior to 1970, the state had held a monopoly over the banking system which had been nationalized in the 1960's. Bashar al Assad allowed seven new banks to open alongside the six state-owned banks. Although the Commercial Bank of Syria continued to control almost 50% of the total banking assets, the new private banks attracted former politicians and foreign institutional investors because 49% Syrian ownership was initially required for a business license (al-Kattan).

Historically, Syria's government under the two Assad regimes has long invested in a war economy, even in times of peace, as a means of ensuring the continued Shi'a control of the government because the Alawites, who later became Baathists, had long dominated the ranks of the Army (Mai). In 1971, defense spending accounted for 42% of development expenditures. That percentage exceeded 70% by 1986. Given such a build-up, the immediate pre-conflict military

spending in 2007 totaled \$2.23 billion US or 45% of total government spending of \$4.97 billion US (“Syrian Military Budget”). Such allocations as a percentage of GDP are in marked contrast to the 4.9% of GDP which went to the education sector in 2007 (“Syria: Education”) and the 2.9% of GDP which went to the health sector in 2009 (2007 n/a) (“Syria: Health”).

The conflict has affected all parts of the Syrian economy. The overall economy has declined by 62% from 2010 to 2014. The economic sanctions imposed by the United States, the European Union, Turkey, Australia, Canada, and Japan have reversed the start of previous growth in the Syrian economy. This in turn has reduced domestic production and consumption, reduced subsidies and created high inflation which have increased budget and trade deficits. Unemployment continues to rise. Syrian currency has been devalued causing its purchasing power to drop (al-Mahmoud). This economic decline combined with the displacement of the population has put further stress on the government.

Such challenges to the economy have significantly affected access to the factors of production. There is no demand for the low-quality oil Syria used to produce and the increased urbanization of the population as a result of the drought, which reduced the productivity of the agricultural sector, has caused a decline in the number of agricultural workers.

In 2007, the total unemployment rate was 8.4%. Within this figure, total male unemployment was 5.1%, but youth unemployment as measured among young adults 15-24 years old was 19%. By 2014, total unemployment had risen to 10.8% with total male unemployment increasing to 10.8% and youth unemployment increasing by over 50% to 30.1% (“Syria: Unemployment”). The rising figures of youth unemployment are significant because this group represents the young men most likely to be targeted by and receptive to political messages.

Young Sunni men may chose to remain and join the various rebel factions while Christians might join the predominantly Christian Free Syria Army. Unemployed young Shiites, especially the Alawites (Mai), however, may choose to fight alongside Hezbollah for the Syrian government and against the forces of the Islamic State.

In 2007 the services, industrial, and agricultural sectors accounted for 51.8%, 29.1% and 20.7% of Syrian employment, respectively. By 2015, these numbers had changed with increased employment in the service and industrial sectors to 55.3% and 31.4%, respectively while agriculture dropped to 13.2%, due in part to the drought and the increased migration to urban areas as a result. This represents a major change in rural populations from the early 2000's when agriculture employed over 30% of the population ("Syria: Employment in Agriculture").

The division of the Syrian population by age has changed prior to and during the conflict. In 2005, the percentage of the population who were 0-14 years old was 38.6% but that dropped to 34.5% by 2015. Those aged 15-59 represented 56.4% in 2005 but their percentage increased to 58.7% in 2015. It is interesting to note, however, that the subset of those people 15-24 dropped from 22.3% to 19.6% from 2005 to 2015. The oldest segment of the population who were 60 years and older accounted for 5.0% in 2005 but increased to 6.8% in 2015 ("Syria: Population"). The decline among the younger age groups could be attributed to the fact that they are the ones most likely to have fled Syria to other countries.

Committee on Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation

We have led various attacks for the sake of protecting the Assad regime, persecuting Sunni Muslims, and defending the minority community -- Alawites. Moreover, while we recognize the magnitude of deaths in Syria, we also recognize that death is god's "greatest gift" and "civilians die in every war." Despite our justifications, many pro-Assad militias have still been condemned of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Though we have been called for attacking Syrian villages both on foot and through air strikes, this allegation is false. ISIL, along with other rebel forces, however, have led a horrendous amount of indiscriminate attacks on citizens, including use of chemical weapons and indiscriminate attacks on citizens.

We believe that "punitive strikes are not enough to fight those acts [of ISIL], but rather a sweeping war which eradicates ISIL is." Military actions, thus, are the best way to deal with these violations of human rights. Moreover, it is clear that our actions are justified for the aforementioned reasons because no one has formally addressed them.

How accountability in other countries coming out of civil war has been addressed:

Chile: Amnesty Law shielded those suspected of committing human rights violations from facing the courts

Nuremberg: military tribunals held by the Allied forces for the prosecution of members of the Nazi party

Rwanda: international court that judged the people responsible for the genocide and other violations of international law

Bosnia: ongoing prosecution of Serb leaders

South Africa: court-like restorative justice body established after the abolition of apartheid where victims served as witnesses; Rwanda: local based reconciliation efforts

Results:

Chile: ineffective, kept many waiting for justice, trying to be overturned by current Chilean leadership

Nuremberg: effectively recognized international law and prosecuted war crimes from WWII

Bosnia: trials are still in process, but seem to be effective

Rwanda: trials have effectively judged people responsible for Rwandan Genocide and other international law violations, reconciliation efforts are facing more obstacles from government-citizen divide

South Africa: public trials were broadly received

The International Criminal Court has no role in Syria, since Syria is not a member, and should remain this way. We have been unjustly accused of various war crimes and believe that the involvement of the ICC would only further our unjust treatment.

Prior to the conflict, Syria was a horribly mixed society. And so, we have dedicated ourselves to the war through troop deployment and airstrikes of combat this for the sake of promoting the Assad regime and Shiite Muslims over Sunni Arabs. The Assad regime has appropriately denied protection of minority communities and increased the persecution of communities who oppose Shiites. This war is clearly a war of regional hegemony, and in this, we are forced to act as protectors for the minority community. In fact, this is just “an extension of

the ongoing war [with Israel]" -- the enemy is just wearing a "new cloth." We have been forced to target Sunni Muslims in this war in order to save the nation that is now "hemmed in by extremist Sunni militants on one side and by Israel on the other."

Committee on Cross Border Issues

Syria is closely bordered by five countries, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Iraq, and Jordan. Prior to the conflict Turkey and Syria were on great terms, with Assad being the first Syrian president to visit Turkey since World War I. Most recently we, Hezbollah, have been Syria's greatest ally, in 2005, Syria ended its military occupation of Lebanon, which strengthened our already strong relationship. Israel and Syria however have had a complex relationship as they both lay a claim to the same land. In 2003, Israel launched an airstrike on a refugee camp in Syria that was the start of many more unjust airstrikes in Syria on the part of Israel. In addition, Iraq, has been a strong ally of Syria's, after the two countries made the historic decision to resume diplomatic ties in 2006.

During the conflict however, some of these relationships changed. With Iraq continuing to be one of Syria's greatest allies, as well as Lebanon as we have supported Syria through deploying troops and providing the government with supplies. In addition, Turkey's support for Assad's opposition has strongly hurt the two countries short lived peace.

Prior to the conflict there were over 1.3 million refugees living in Syria, about one million of which were Iraqi, we greatly supported this influx of refugees. These refugees while not living in camps, lived mostly in Syrian cities, taking advantage of the many public Services the Syrians had to offer such as access to schools and health care in the case of an emergency. These refugees found Syria attractive for many reasons, one being that they could escape the violence going on in Iraq since 2003, and the other being that Syria practiced open borders so that no visas were required to enter the state.

Before the war Syria practiced a system of open borders like some of its neighbors. During this time the government under the control of Assad had the responsibility of securing Syria's borders which they did very successfully.

Syria which is about the size of Washington state benefits from only 25% arable land and that coupled with Syria's severe drought from 2007-2010 led to a mass migration of peoples from rural populations to more urban city centers. In addition, one of Syria's main water sources the Euphrates River, became less viable as a water source as it both Turkey and Iraq have built large dams to use the river themselves. As a result, of both this influx of people and the influx of Iraqi refugees Syria's cities experienced large population shocks. Syria having sold its strategic reserves in 2006, then had to import enough food into the country in order to feed the country's many citizens. This was not only detrimental to Syria, but us too. Much of this lack of resources contributed to the unrest that grew to create this war and as Syria's neighbors we are weary of the war spilling over into Lebanon.

Syria has long been affected by terrorism, in fact solving terrorism, which has been supported by many western countries throughout the war as a mask of "humanitarian aid," can lead to the end of the bloody Syrian civil war. Assad's regime has been unfairly condemned for war crimes and crimes against humanity, but they are not the real threat. ISIS along with rebel forces pose a large threat to Syria, as these forces have committed many atrocities against civilians. It is clear to us that in order for Syria to ever have a stable democracy, ISIS itself must be removed from the country so that it cannot commit any more atrocities in the country itself. We believe that a cease fire is needed in order to create peaceful and political solutions, but that can only happen if terrorism is no longer a threat.