

O'Bryant

United States of America

Ravi: Committee on Governance

Maggie: Committee on Strategic Security

Luis: Committee on Local Security

Hei Sin: Committee on Social Reconstruction

Wendy: Committee on Economic Reconstruction

Alsacia: Committee on Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation

Caroline: Committee on Cross-Border Issues

Key Points: In terms of solving the issues of globally helping Syria

- Governance: There is no real solution without other issues appearing. This is an issue because if one thing goes right, something else will always replace it. 4
- Governance is important because we deal with diplomatic issues and government issues. The Committee of Governance also is important because we really have to deal with all of the other committees to truly make a solution.
- Social Reconstruction: Despite the improvement of healthcare and education system in Syria before the conflict, the Syrian government plays such a huge role in restricting the freedom of Syrians in terms of exercising their own political views, religious expressions, and violating gender equality that allied countries must aim to stop the harsh treatments provided by the government to its citizens.

- Civil society groups were often banned or controlled by the government
- Civil society groups were often banned or controlled by the government. Thus, rebuilding social reconstruction in Syria would require the way in which the Syrian government operate to change so that citizens can have a voice in their community and not feel oppressed. More stabilized countries should help Syrian citizens regain their freedom of expression and religion without government interference.
- Economic Reconstruction: Although the Syrian government seems to be winning militarily, the country is in chaos economically. Syrians does not depend on the government for survival thus, allied countries should provide funding and support to rebuild the economy.
- Justice, Peace and Reconciliation: The most ideal solution would to get these human rights violations handled in the international crime court, but that seems like it is not working or being very effective. The only solution would be to rid the toxic government completely.
- Cross-Border Issue: The countries bordering Syria (Iraq, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel) are being impacted negatively as a result the of conflict and refugees due to the the Syrian Civil War.
- Strategic Security: Syria's security paradigm has failed in providing security and it could no longer protect their people or their state. There is a strain being put on the economies of neighboring countries of Syria due to the refugees fleeing.
- Essential Services: Services that are provided (healthcare, etc) should continue to be provided by the rebel groups considering that the Syrian government has historically and currently has been unable to provide such services to its constituents. Until the

government is able to get it's act together, services should continue to be provided and funded by rebel groups because they have proven to have the ability to provide these services to them.

- Currently in Syria there are multiple factions that have been formed because of the Syrian Civil War. These groups are turning into terrorist organization because they are attacking other groups who don't have the same beliefs. ISIS is one of the larger terrorist groups that was formed before the Syrian Civil War and is now taking advantage of the conflict in Syria.

The United States and its diplomats are working to help protect human rights in Syria. Our country has not changed its views from previous administrations on how it will help Syria. We will still aid the opposition against the Syrian government but will do so cautiously as we do not want ISIS (also known as ISIL) or any terrorist group to get ahold of the aid we are providing. Currently, the United States is engaged in bombing ISIS and support for the opposition against the Syrian government. The United States has been conducting airstrikes on ISIS and other jihadist groups in Syria, but it has avoided attacks that might benefit Syrian government's forces or intervening in battles between them and the rebels.

Recently the United States is undergoing a policy change regarding its immigration policy. Since March 6, there has been a new executive order on immigration to the United States other wise known as the "Travel Ban". This order bans immigrants and travelers from Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia. It also puts a temporary blanket ban on all refugees from Syria and also resolves the issue on green card holders and immigrants with visas by allowing people with visas and green card holders to the country without any issues.

The United States is also committed to provide humanitarian aid to those affected by the Syrian civil war. This humanitarian funding will allow the United States to provide emergency food, shelter, medical care, and humanitarian protection services to millions of people suffering. A portion goes to neighboring states who have also been affected by refugees fleeing the conflict. The United States is the largest single humanitarian donor in the Syrian conflict and hopes that this money will convince countries such as Jordan or Lebanon to maintain its open borders and not force refugees back to life-threatening situations.

The United States has traditionally been referred to as a "melting pot," welcoming people from many different countries, races, and religions, all hoping to find freedom, new

opportunities, and a better way of life. American history began with waves of immigrants, bringing their own cultures and traditions to a new country. The arrival of these immigrants, and their varied cultural backgrounds, was essential in molding America's public identity. No other place in the world has such a diverse population. It is this diversity that makes America what it is, and at the same time, creates challenges we face.

In terms of population, the United States is the third largest country in the world and its increasing population is driven by a high level of immigration. The United States population is equivalent to 4.34% of the total world population. As of 2017, United States population is at 326,064,317 people. According to the Census Bureau, the United States population is growing at a rate of 0.9% annually. Despite this growth, whites will no longer be a majority, though it may still be one of the largest racial group in the United States, there have been an increase of Asian and Hispanic populations as the United States continues to welcome people of all races into the country.

Furthermore, the United States has the 6th highest per capita GDP and is the second largest manufacturer in the world, contributing to being a leader in industries like automobiles or telecommunications. The United States is the world's largest national economy and second largest according to purchasing power parity (PPP), representing 22% of global GDP and 17% of gross world product. The United States' GDP was estimated to be \$17.914 trillion as of Q2 2015. Our economic growth is driven by ongoing innovation, research, and development. In fact, the United States' advanced farming technology is what makes it a net exporter of food and one of the largest agricultural exporting country in the world.

The United States also takes a lot of pride in our relationships with other countries. Today, the United States maintains military alliance with as many as 60 countries, including the

NATO military in Europe, Israel and a string of Gulf countries in the Middle East, Japan and South Korea in East Asia, and Australia in the South Pacific. A foreign policy is a set of political goals that outlines how a particular country will interact with the other countries of the world. Foreign policies mainly are created to help protect a country's national interests, national security, ideological goals, and economic prosperity.

Our foreign policy goals is to preserve the national security of the United States, promoting world peace and a secure global environment and maintaining a balance of power among nations, including peacekeeping functions, such as working with allies to assure territorial and international security efforts. The United States covers a range of international economic issues including trade, travel, and business, as well as providing foreign aid and disaster relief.

As a superpower, the United States has also taken a leadership role in peacemaking around the globe by trying to negotiate treaties and agreements to end regional conflicts. Also, as a world leader, the United States has a longstanding role in trying to address international economic and environmental problems. America's foreign policy has changed over time reflecting the change in its national interest. As a new nation after the Revolutionary War, America's prime national interest was to maintain its independence from more powerful European countries.

Our key institutions play a vital part in how our government is run. Institutions such as the executive branch, Secretary of State, Homeland Security, Department of Defense. Our executive branch of government is run by our 45th president, Donald J. Trump. Our president has many roles, such as the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. He contributes to help make foreign affairs by aiding each of these departments. Rex Tillerson, the head of the State Department, aids President Trump in dealing with foreign affairs. The goal of our Homeland

Security and our Department of Defense is to protect the United States against attacks abroad and at home.

There is a wide range of religions in the United States: Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Muslim. Religion is defined as an array of beliefs, thoughts, and values within a society or culture. Although, the United States is fundamentally Christian dominated, it is still a melting pot that welcomes any and all religions. According to a recent poll taken by ABC news, almost 83% of America's population identify as Christian, whether they are Protestant, Baptist, or another group of Christians (Langer). Over the past few years, those who once called themselves Christian, have now switched over to a non-affiliated religion. There has been a rise in the populations of atheists, agnostics, or none in particular.

Oil has been a significant player in the establishment of both foreign and domestic policies. This is highly due to America's dependence on foreign oil, and whether or not this demand has grown is highly debatable. Over the years however, this demand has greatly decreased due to America's finding in new oil extraction technologies. It has been statistically proven that by 2030, America will surpass Saudi Arabia's production of oil and will not find it necessary to import oil from the Middle East. Currently however, the United States imports oil from both Canada and Venezuela, however in the upcoming years this made be redundant considering the above stated information with regards to America's production of oil.

Committee of Governance: (Ravi)

Before the Syrian Civil War began in 2011, Syria was controlled by Hafez al-Assad and then his son, Bashar al-Assad. The Syrian government is not a democracy. In 2011, the Syrian government claimed to have had its first election. The president is the commander-in-chief and has complete control over the armed forces. Prior to the Syrian conflict, the United States

tolerated Syria, but had little involvement. The main people that are involved currently are the Syrian Government and its supporters (Bashar al-Assad, Russia, Iran, and China), the international alliance who support the opposition groups (United States, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan and many European countries), the Syrian people, and ISIS. The United States has connections with the Syrian people, but are fearful to support them because power vacuum can invite it might terrorists taking over. We believe Syria will need a new constitution coming out of the conflict because the current constitution is not working and as we have seen in history, many constitutions need to be revisited. The type of government that we want Syria to create is a democracy. The military and government were connected before the conflict and still is connected by having the president be the commander-in-chief, which controls the armed forces. The president makes all the military decisions in Syria. Many third parties are important to ending the conflict and resetting the government in Syria because without their help, Syria may never have an end to this conflict and may never have peace. Also, we may not see any progress in the the Middle East if we do not have the help of third parties to help resolve the Syrian conflict.

Committee on Strategic Security: (Maggie)

In the Syrian Civil War, those who support the Syrian government are Russia, Iran, and China. The allies of Syria are Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, many European countries, and us, the United States - these are the countries that support neither ISIS or Syria, but support the people of Syrian oppositions. The national security environment is mostly in control by the armed forces of Syria: Syrian Arab Army, Navy, Air Force, Air Defense Force, and other paramilitary forces. The number of foreign fighters in this war exceeds that of any other wars in the past. There are over 5,000 Sunni foreign fighters and more than a thousand from Western lands. The reason for

this massive amount of foreign fighters is that it is just so easy to get there because Syrian rebels are only controlling territory along the Northern Border, and the Syrian side is not guarded by anyone. Security in Syria seems to have collapsed and failed and the authoritarian security paradigm completely fails in providing security.

What started as a popular and peaceful protesting in March 2011 turned into civil war as a result of violent suppression by the government and the armed opposition's response to the suppression. This was the security paradigm's final failure that was so carefully designed and sustained in Syria to suppress internal instability. Their pride and joy, the paradigm, could not protect the people or the state. As representatives of the United States, in the past we have called for military strikes against the Syrian government and greater support for the moderate forces that are fighting the regime. We do desire to end the conflict and ceasefire, but we have not figured out an effective way to do so. President Assad is responsible for these atrocities and he must go, there needs to be a "negotiated settlement to end the war and the formation of a transitional administration" (Syria Crisis).

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Ever since September of 2014, we have been conducting airstrikes on ISIS and other jihadist groups in Syria as a part of an international coalition against the group and terrorism as a whole. Though we conduct these air strikes, we avoid attacks that may benefit Assad's forces. Turkey is a key supporter of the Syrian opposition and has hosted millions of refugees. Luckily, Turkey agreed to let us lead our coalition against IS at their air bases for strikes on Syria after the

IS bomb attack in July 2015. Many refugees flee to their neighboring country, Jordan, which puts a strain on the Jordanian economy. Opportunities lower for the people of Jordan and prices are going up for gas, homes, etc. Jordan is interested in a ceasefire because regime change in Syria eliminates their rival for regional dominance. Though on the other hand, a ceasefire may reduce the number of refugees, and their presence presents a burden on their economy.

Local Security: (Luis)

Security has been a fundamental issue in Syria, considering the historic instability of not only the people, but most importantly; the people. Securing Syria has continued to be an overall struggle because of the lack of a structured police force, which thus has caused Syria to become more unstable overtime. Instead of the Syrian national police taking control of their own country, they have the complete opposite policing large portions of Syria, which would be the militias that the police are attempting to combat. With this being said, it shows that law and order is virtually non-existent considering that Syria's streets are controlled by "terrorist militias".

As stated before, the police force that the Syrian government has formed has proven to be completely ineffective, which has caused militias to become the overall police force in many Syrian communities. Many world leaders including that of the United Nations have accused that Syrian government's law enforcement agencies have committed human rights violations. While these human right violations have been well documented by many independent and international agencies, what is less known to the international public is the current effectiveness of the Syrian national police, which can be corroborated through its absence in communities that have been taken over by such militias. It has been concluded that in predominantly Kurdish areas, the Kurdish Democratic Union has established order in such communities, where on the other hand,

in communities that are rebel held, it has been observed that Local administration councils have been formed to create a “police force” in areas that the Syrian national police tend to be absent.

The most prominent justification as to why civilian groups have dominated in the realm of law and order in the vast amount of communities within Syria’s border is not the government’s ineffectiveness to regain control, but due to its own government attacking its people. “shelling and airstrikes, and the denial of public services” have been prominent throughout most of Syria on behalf of its own government.

Though the international community has condemned external individuals or groups trying to influence government’s policy with regards to law and order, President Assad and the Syrian government have encouraged external forces to help ensure that security within Syria is maintained in places that otherwise would not be possible by the Syrian government alone. “In Kurdish areas of Syria, the PYD has been allowed to form an administration because the Assad government believes the group can be used to secure government objectives.” However, the PYD has certain constraints as to what they can do in favor of security. They undergo “intermittent embargoes imposed by the confluence of conflicts with Turkey and the Iraqi KRG, as well as its fight against ISIS”. Although these constraints are not directly implemented on behalf of the Syrian government, this ensures that the PYD does not undermine the overall scope of local security authority in the areas they control.

Many significant players are involved in the Syrian civil war, and each group plays their own key role. The most prominent players in the civil war in Syria are: The United States, Russia, the Islamic State of Iraq, Turkey and Syria. Each of these countries has a direct influence on the Syrian Civil War, more specifically in the territory that they tend to control within Syria’s borders. On civilian basis, there are approximately 6.3 million that have been displaced

internally, and another 700,000 that are trapped in besieged areas. There have been 4,000-6,000 American soldiers deployed to Syria, while another 30,000 Kurdish fighters that combine Arab, and Turkish fighters.

Considering that as stated before, that armed rebel groups tend to replace the normal functionalities of the Syrian government. With this replacement of functionality comes other essential functions that they play in local communities, such as their control of resources such as oil and water. It has been stated my locals from communities that “electricity from the national grid has halved since the beginning of the crisis and for three months there had been none at all”. On the contrary, “Water supplies, however, are uninterrupted because rebels control a water line supplying government areas.” Alongside from the distribution of natural resources, armed rebel groups also provide essential health services to the communities in which they reside in.

With regards to the civilian armed groups in the Syrian Civil War, there are approximately 80,000 civilians that are fighting in opposition to Assad’s rule. These numbers were also the same give or take prior to the civil war starting.

Committee on Social Reconstruction: (Hei Sin Leung)

The society of Syria were divided into classes based on racial differences, where people of lighter skin toned tend to hold higher economic and political positions than the darker skinned. The highest position held socially and politically are the families of landholders and merchants. Those with a high income were composed of Alawite high ranking officials and Sunni landowners. Those in the middle class were comprised of Alawite and Sunni government officials and farmers. Those in the lower class is comprised of Alawites, peasants, and employees. On the streets, there were strict police and state control, but socially, there were

harmony among all social and religious differences. Tourism started to grow and industries started to expand before the Syrian conflict.

The civil society of Syria consisted of state controlled organizations. Members of the Syrian civil society included lawyers, politicians, and activists who want changes in the way Syria is functioning. They were seen as a threat by the government because it goes against the ruling regimes of the restriction of citizens' freedom in terms of creating a more vocal society, where diversity of sects and religions would be celebrated. Thus, before the war in Syria, civil society groups were either banned or controlled by the government. There were no political or advocacy agendas. However, since the war, Syrians had learned to peacefully protest and encouraged an armed revolution.

According to Syria's constitution, citizens were provided with the freedom of religion and expression, but the Syrian government had imposed restrictions on these rights to the point where citizens would be imprisoned or harassed if they critiqued the government in any way. The same goes for human right activists. Freedom of expression and assembly were strictly controlled by authorities and several Syria's security agencies continued to detain people without arrest warrants. Even Syria's Supreme State Security Court regular sentenced Kurdish activists and Islamists to long prison terms. Syrians did not have much right rights. The government controlled most aspect of their daily lives. From internet censorship of political websites to social media, citizens' rights were violated when they express their own opinion on political and religious matters.

Syria is a party to several human rights treaties, like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Under these treaties, civilians are entitled to the

fundamental rights like the right to a fair trial, non-discrimination, prohibition on torture and inhuman treatments. In events of an armed conflict, both states and non-state armed groups are responsible for complying with the rights under the international humanitarian law.

In terms of property rights, people did not have much of these rights before the conflict in Syria and have only gotten worse since the conflict. Controls are being shifted and the role of law enforcement are becoming more uncertain. In fact, before Syria's conflict, Syria's private land administration had proved to be ineffective. There were only 50% of land in Syria that were registered officially and 40% had unregistered boundaries. Since official registries were paper based, they were not properly stored.

Presently, nearly half of Syria's population had either been displaced or had fled to other countries. Others are still struggling to devise a successful plan to escape the violence in Syria, especially those living in the south or center of Syria because they need to cross dozens of active battle lines and get across several government and armed opposition checkpoints before they can reach their neighboring country that would respect their nationality, Turkey. Before the Syria conflict, leaving the country was not as hard as leaving the country during the war. Although gender equality was promoted in Syria under the Constitution, women were still discriminated and had limited freedom when it comes to traveling abroad. Before women and their children are able to leave the country, they must be able to prove that they had their father's permission, but overall, Syrians are allowed freedom of movement, residence, and employment. Kurds on the other hand would often lack the requisite documents to leave the country.

Before the war that started in 2011, Syria's open borders policy allowed thousands of refugees, mainly from Iraq, to be housed in Syria. These refugees flock to the capital, Damascus, as well as other cities nearby in search of affordable housing. Damascus was a favored settling

place for these refugees due to how close it was to the Iraqi border, the capital have many international agencies, its large Iraqi population, wide range of rental options and its enjoyment of autonomous rule. Due to this large influxion of Iraqi refugees, other religious groups in Damascus and its surrounding cities were forced to move out, being that they can not afford the rents and that Syrian were more willing to rent to the Iraqis settling there. Social welfare programs had been enforced by the government to control rent control laws. Even when young people were married, they still lived with their parents and children were expected to care for their elderly parents.

Before the war in Syria, children were enrolled school and there was up to 95% of kids who knew how to read from the ages of 15-24 years old. Since the eruption of the war, there are almost 3 million children in Syria who are no longer in school, contributing to the factor of Syria having one of the lowest enrollment rates in the world. There are no safe school buildings for children to be in since it's been either destroyed or used as shelters. Furthermore, the health system in Syria started changing during the war. Before the conflict in Syria, healthcare systems had been improving, with the average life expectancy of Syrians to be around 75 years old in comparison to the average of 56 years old in 1970. However, since the Syrian conflict, the health sector had been targeted by the Syrian government, in which it is responsible for 88% of recorded hospital attacks and 97% medical personnel being killed, tortured, or executed. Hospitals are poorly equipped and undersupplied, with only a limited number of staffs available in the medical facilities.

Limited access to mental health assistance is being provided for people in Syria. Currently, Syrians are suffering from mental traumas and emotional disorders, ranging from depression to grief disorders and posttraumatic stress disorder to anxiety disorders. According to

the International Medical Corps, at least 54% of Syrians are faced with emotional disorders and 26.6% of children are faced with intellectual and developmental challenges. These Syrian victims as well as refugees are struggling to find a place to receive help, especially since over half of doctors and medical professions had left the country. Though places like Turkey are granting refugees free basic health care once they register with the government, language remains a barrier for Syrians.

Committee on Economic Reconstruction (Wendy Ho)

The ongoing Syrian conflict that fuelled resentment against the Syrian government over the lack of freedom and economic woes has had a huge impact on the economy. Syria was once a promising economy and even a destination for refugees from other conflicts in the world. Prior to the conflict, Syria's economy was considered stable and diverse. The most important sectors were agriculture, industry, retail, and tourism, but the main pillar of Syria's economy was agriculture and oil which accounted for one-half of the gross domestic product. It also manufactured most of its medicine needs as well as clothings and household items. A large influx of Iraqi refugees and educated young adult population showed promising economic potential along with the expansion of the economy. It helped elevate consumption and investments, and boosted Syrian business and housing market.

After the conflict began, the economy drastically shrank and many new investments had to be halted. Syria's economy was centralized before the war which was under the rule of President Bashar Al-Assad. During the war however, the people of Syria felt that the state was in urgent need for decentralization for a new governance structure as many people began opposing the rules of President Assad. The Syrian conflict has caused humanitarian crises such as a shrinking population and decaying provision of basic necessities of water, gas, and electricity.

Syria's gross domestic product dropped 20.6% and this is due to the fall of Syria's food production and loss of oil sector. Prior to the war, the services sector employed the most people which accounts for 53% of the population. Unemployment rate was about 10% given that many people had a stable job. However, two years after the conflict the unemployment rate rose to 60%. The conflict has cause Syrians to flee to Lebanon and Turkey which affected worked because the arrival of Syrian refugees increased local demands for goods and services, raised in price, and augmented labor supply. This increase intense competition for jobs given that three million Syrians lost their jobs during the conflict. About 12 million people lost their primary source of income and lives in poverty.

Syria is well known for its natural resources such as oil and gas production. Syria is able to have a stable economy based on its import and exports of its natural resources. The government and state used to control Syria's natural resources extraction and sale for the population. Since the start of the war, rebel groups began acquiring control of the resources such as oil. Syria's main import items were machinery and transport equipment, electric power machinery, food and livestock, metal and metal products, chemical and chemical products, plastics, yarn, and paper. Its main import partners include Saudi Arabia, China, Turkey, Egypt, Italy, Russia, Germany, and Lebanon. Syria's chief export items include crude oil, minerals, petroleum products, fruits and vegetables, cotton, fiber, textiles, clothing, meat, live animals, and wheat. Their main export partners are Iraq, Lebanon, Germany, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Since the start of the war, access to factors of product and basic infrastructure became difficult because the government began losing control of its oil fields and productions. Rebel groups have began acquiring control of these productions.

The most crucial sectors of Syria's economy is based primarily on oil, industrial, agricultural, and tourism sectors. The government controls majority of these sectors, mainly agriculture because agriculture is a high priority in economic development. The government seeks to achieve food self-sufficiency, and increase export earnings. The government also controls resources, and service sectors. Private industries mainly runs agriculture and some light industry, retail trade, transport, and communication. Most land in agriculture is privately owned which accounts for the sector's success. Industries and manufacturing used to be state dominated until an economic reform allowed private sector to run it. Syria devoted 5.96% on average of GDP to the military, 2.2% to the health sector, and 4.6 to 5.13% to the education sector. Syria has developed series of banks designed to help local communities endure the hardships they face as a result of the crisis. As tension escalates in Syria, total amount of bank deposits continues to decrease.

Syria's population prior to the conflict consists of 35.61% of people ages 0 to 14 years, 60.86% of people ages to 15-64 years, and 3.53% of people who are 65 and older. This suggests that prior to the conflict, many people had longer life expectancy compared to the aftermath. Syria is considered an unequal society because since before the conflict began, there were many issues regarding gender-based violence, sexual violence, and discriminatory laws. The government and armed groups have used sexual violence as a weapon of war throughout the conflict. There was a lack of physical and mental health care such that ISIS (ISIL) targeted health infrastructure and limit civilians healthcare access.

Committee of Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation: (Alsacia)

The Syrian government has continued a practice of human rights abuses. The government has subjected thousands to unjustified arrests, enforced disappearances, torture and even death.

These acts have been carried out by Syrian Forces, the Shabiha (armed gangs paid off by the Syrian government) and the Mukhabarat (Syrian intelligence). Many of those who have been arrested are peaceful protestors, activists, lawyers and journalists. The majority of political activists have been held in incommunicado detention. The Syrian government has also endangered civilians by forcing them to march in front of its forces during troop movements, arrest operations, and attacks on villages and towns. Additionally, the Syrian government forces have practiced sexual violence and abuse as a war tactic. During raids and military sweeps, children as young as twelve have been raped and sexually abused. The government has exploited its children and subjected them to violence in other ways as well. Many times, the government uses schools as a military base in towns which it is raiding. This then turns the school into a military target and children are held hostage while the gunfire unfolds around them. Teachers and children have reportedly been arrested and beaten when this occurs.

During the Syrian conflict, violence in Syria has escalated amid an absence of meaningful efforts to end the war. The government and its allies carried out deliberate and indiscriminate attacks on civilians. Incommunicado detention and torture remain uncontrolled. Armed groups opposing the government have attacked civilians, used child soldiers, kidnapped, and tortured. The extremist group Islamic State (also known as ISIS), and Al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, Jabhat al-Nusra, were responsible targeting civilians, kidnappings, and executions. According to local Syrian groups, as of October 2015, the conflict's death toll topped 250,000 people, including more than 100,000 civilians. About 7.6 million people are internally displaced, with 4.2 million refugees in neighboring countries. United Nations war crimes investigators called on Tuesday for the establishment of a special tribunal to prosecute cases of mass cruelty in Syria, and said they had begun to share evidence and names of suspects with state and international prosecutors. The

UN commission of inquiry said it would still like the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) to refer the Syrian conflict to the international criminal court for prosecutions. But after four years of war and over 220,000 dead, and in the face of continued Russian and Chinese opposition to an International Criminal Court (ICC) referral, the commission said it was looking at other means to bring a measure of justice for mass crimes committed in Syria.

The ICC, is seen as the last resort for many nations. It is only to be used when national authorities are unable to prosecute. The Court also has many other limitations that can spark the argument toward the opposition of its existence. The court is only limited to dealing with cases or crimes that were committed after July 1, 2002, the court only has jurisdiction in crimes committed in territories which have ratified the treaty, and only by a citizen of such a state. Additionally, the only cases the ICC can take are those that are referred to it by the United Nations Security Council. It is already clear that the cases that can be pursued by the ICC have a potential for bias when not all states are involved.

Prior to the conflict, politically Syria was very much like any other country in the region prior to the so called "Arab spring ". Government control reached all aspects of political life. Socially it was very stable, culturally rich and there was harmony among all social and religious components. Economically it was growing in a steady pace and that growth was reflected on the country in a very clear way.

However, Christians are increasingly being targeted and driven from their homes and districts, the Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin reports. Some 138,000 Christians have fled Homs, where Christians have been terrorized and churches have been looted and occupied by rebel forces. At least 9,000 Christians have fled the neighboring western city of Qusayr after the leaders of a rebel faction issued an ultimatum that was repeated from mosque minarets. "We will

chop you up and feed you to the dogs," Sunni cleric Adnan Arour warned Syrian loyalists in a fatwa -- Christians and Muslims alike. According to Elizabeth Kendal of Religious Liberty Monitoring, "The plight of Christians is being buried under a mountain of propaganda from the jihadists and the U.S.-Saudi-Gulf Arab axis, which is seeking to hurt Iran through regime change in Syria. Please pray for Christians in Syria, including thousands of Assyrian-Chaldean refugees from Iraq."

Committee on Cross-Border Issues: (Caroline)

On earth there is a total of 295 countries. Each one of these countries in one way or another, big or small, can impact all the other countries. The Syrian War is currently an example because multiple countries are being affected by it. Even though most refugees are fleeing to Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Jordan last year the United States took in about 14,400 Syrian refugees. Though as of 2017 our president, Donald J. Trump made an executive order to implement a travel ban on refugees from multiple countries such as Syria. An issue we are concerned about is terrorism attack on the United States from middle eastern countries. Currently because Syria is in the middle of a civil war terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISIS) are taking advantage of this. The United States and our allies want to ensure peace with all countries and that no terrorism will affect us or our allies.

Syria is bordered by Iraq, Turkey, Jordan, Israel, Israel and Lebanon. Efforts by Syrians and Iraqis to unite with each other to create one country have existed in the past. Such unification efforts were to continued under the Ba'ath Party but hostility between Syria and Iraq started in the 1966 when both were under Ba'athist rule. Their relations improved in the early 1970s during the Yom Kippur War, but deteriorated again following Syria's acceptance of the Security Council Resolution 338. Security Council Resolution 338 is when the United Nations sponsored

ceasefire in the Middle East to achieve peace. We ended a war with Iraq in 2011 and currently have very few troops left in Iraq. Turkey has the largest border with Syria. Before 1998, relations between Turkey and Syria were strained. Contentious issues included Syria's claims over Hatay (a Syrian province), disputes over water supply, and Syria supporting the the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) terrorist organization. The signing of the Adana Agreement on October 20, 1998 marked a turning point in these relations. The agreement established cooperation against the PKK terrorist organization and relations soon became better. The signing of Joint Political Declaration on establishing High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) in September 2009 was also a large turning point. This declaration included fifty agreements all together in various areas such as political, security, commerce, culture, health, agriculture, environment, transportation, education, and water. When fighting in Syria erupted, Turkey attempted to tell the government that violently suppressing the people was not going to work but Syria didn't listen. Turkey has opened doors for Syrian refugees. As of June 2016, over 2.7 million Syrian refugees with diverse backgrounds live in Turkey under the "temporary protection status" and it has cost Turkey \$11 Billion dollars. Jordan is the most cautious out of all the countries that border Syria. After the Gulf War Syria and Jordan's relationship improved. Then when the civil war started to emerge in Syria the border between the countries started to get tense. Jordan is worried about the conflict spilling over to their own country and trying to stay out of the conflict. Jordan does not have enough money or resources to host all of the refugees coming into their country. The same issue it happening in Lebanon: up to 1 million refugees which is equal to 20% of the whole country's population have migrated to Lebanon, causing a lack of resources. Syria once had military occupation of Lebanon that ended in 2005. In 2012 Lebanon's top intelligence official was killed by a Syrian car bomb because he publicly opposed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Out of all the bordering countries Lebanon will be the most impacted because Syria maintains influence through Hezbollah, a powerful Shiite political party that has links with the al-Assad government and currently dominates Lebanon's government. Hezbollah is considered a terrorist group by the United States Government. When Israel was created in 1948 Syria refused to acknowledge it. Syria joined five other Arab nations who goal was to destroy the new state. Even though Israel survived the war Syria refuses to recognize Israel's existence. This all lead to a bad relationship between the two countries but the United Nations helped establish the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, which stated that Syria and israel had to cease all fighting and stay on there sides of the border between their countries. Also right before the Syrian Civil War started in 2010 the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad accused Israel of avoiding peace. Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem warned that in the event of a future war, Israeli cities would be targeted by Syrian missiles In 2012 the Disengagement of Forces Agreement was broken because Syria attacked them. Israel is not taking in any Syrian refugees either.

Starting in 2003 and ending in 2011 the Iraq war lead to a lot of refugees from that war to migrate to Syria. Iraqi refugees in Syria by 2007 were between one to three million the majority living in Syria's largest city, Damascus and its surrounding countryside. Starting in 2009 the amount of Iraqi refugees in Syria began to decrease due to the Syrian Civil War beginning. The border between Iraq and Syria use to be controlled by ISIS. The United States does not support terrorist and therefore we support Iraq in fighting against terrorist having control of the border. Before the civil war started the Syrian army controlled the border but would be letting people from Iraq in making the control not as organized as it would be if fewer refugees from Iraq were coming into the country.

Syria's borders are controlled mostly by the countries surrounding them. The Iraqi parliament voted to use the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) to control the Iraqi-Syrian border that stretches from the city of Qaim in western Iraq all the way to Rabia. In 2011 the Syrian army installed landmines along the Lebanon border to prevent people from fleeing there. Another thing Syria is doing is demanding that Lebanon search for people from the Free Syrian Army (A faction that wants to get rid of the Bashar al-Assad government) along the border. The border with Lebanon is under tight security measures because it's controlled by the Syrian government. Jordan has a contract with Raytheon (a major defense contractor). The country uses a border security system that detects the movement of militias before they reach the Jordanian border and it issues warnings to the infiltrators. If the warnings go ignored they are killed. This has not stopped Syrian militias from trying to attack Jordan's borders. Turkey and Syria's border is more complicated because there is a large number of crossings. Armed groups control four crossings and Kurds control one crossing in Turkey. This has controlled the refugees but not the Syrian government. Multiple times Turkey has had to shoot down air crafts and fight off Syrian attempts to invade them along the borders. Israel and Syria's border is a war ground between the two countries. At the beginning of the civil war Palestinian demonstrators attempted to cross the border into Israel causing Israeli army to defend themselves. Israel accused Syria of instigating the incident to draw attention away from Syria's own internal uprising. Throughout the civil war and currently this border has had conflict between the two countries constantly.

Prior to the Syrian Civil War Syria had invested in their country by expanding their industrial base hoping it would bring money into the country to help citizens. This would have benefited the United States because we would have been able to trade and profit off of each other. Since the country is mainly concerned with the war they are not considering the

environmental and health aspects of the people. Resulting in the accumulation of household, medical and industrial waste and the outbreak of communicable diseases. We, the United States try to consider the health of the people unlike some other countries in this issue who drop bombs carelessly which releases chemicals into the environment. With sickness spreading around it does not help that there is also a medical, water and food shortage. Between 2007 and 2010 Syria was hit by a severe drought it was the worst recorded over the last century, it left a million small farmers unemployed and caused the migration of rural population towards cities. Prices of food and basic goods went up by 30% and water consumption has increased by 21% and cost Syria more than \$6.8 million. All aspects of life such as the environment, economy, health and basic needs have decreased because of the conflict with surrounding countries and their own. For example when Syria bombs a neighboring country and the country bombs them back it's hurting the people and land of Syria causing drought and bad farming land for food.

The United States is fighting a war against terrorism and wants to aid Syria to help achieve this. Currently because Syria is fighting within its own country, terrorist groups such as Islamic State of Iraq, Al-Nusra Front, Ahrar ash-Sham, Sham Legion, Ajnad al-Sham Islamic Union, and Jaysh al-Islam are taking advantage of the war. All of the group except for ISIS were caused by the Syrian Civil War. Meaning those groups began from Syrian citizens because of the Syrian Civil War. ISIS is in control of about 30,100 sq miles in Syria. Currently ISIS is taking advantage of the conflictual situation in Syria. ISIS uses Syria as a launchpad to take control of cities in Iraq and raising terror on them. In 1979 we put Syria on the United States State Department's list of State Sponsors of Terrorism because of their past of supporting terrorist. When Iraq was in the midst of their own war ISIS took advantage of that and started taking control and this same pattern is now happening in Syria. ISIS is an enemy to the United States

and a lot of our allies therefore we supported Iraq in striking back against them and we will support Syria by doing the same.

From experience the United States knows first hand about how terrorism can devastate a country. Syria should not be a breeding ground for terrorist organizations. A government that meets the needs of the people needs to be established in Syria and enforced. Millions of refugees are going to countries all over the world by traveling thousands of miles. This is hurting other countries by draining their resources. Especially the countries that border Syria. The war is overflowing into there country.

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