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Comparison/Contrasting of Syria and Russia

Syria and Russia may be distanced from each other by physical borders, but they have some issues that are ailing their development and success. Syria is plagued with a war that is diminishing any hope of its economic restoration while Russia is battling an authoritarian that desires to control every aspect of the nation's development to his liking. This paper will attempt to compare and contrast Syria and Russia concerning sustainability (sustainable development), the human rights situation, and peace/conflict.

Sustainability

Due to the constant conflict that has ravaged Syria, it is becoming more difficult to find solutions that can result in the restoration of its sustainable development. Moreover, the nation faces the global challenge that is forced displacement. Since the start of the Syrian conflict in 2001, 4.7 million people have been displaced to adjacent countries (Wahba). A 2015 census conducted by Jordan revealed that there are 1.3 million people displaced from Syria living in Jordan and 630,000 of them as recognized as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Wahba). The number of Syrian's displaced adds to an extra 1.6 million foreigners living in Jordan. When contrasted with Jordan's total population of 6.6 million, the foreign population and refugees have possibly expanded the nation's population by almost 45%, resulting in critical pressure on the nation's public services and labor market (Wahba). The implication is that the economy of Syria is jeopardized even further since there is

a reduction in human capital. Some of the Syrian people that would have established successful medium enterprises are now in Jordan. Additionally, 4 out of 5 refugees in the developing nations are putting enormous pressure on the available resources, thus endangering their efforts in ensuring sustainable development (Wahba). Moreover, 13.7 million persons in Syria require help and are at the risk of becoming refugees (Wahba). This implies that there is a bleak prospect for sustainable development in Syria unless the conflict situation is the country is resolved. However, resolution efforts have not been successful, and there is prevalent belief that the nation will not be able to come back strong from the effects of war on its economy.

On the other hand, unlike Syria, Russia is facing positive prospects of ensuring its sustainable development through its economic crisis. The economic crisis that the country is facing surprisingly provides the nation the opportunity to change and embrace sustainable development. External shocks comprising of oil price reductions and economic bans are compelling the Russian administration to emphasize on domestic affairs and crucial ecological and social difficulties amassed from the time it separated from the Soviet Union (Okorochkova). However, to achieve this, the nation should marshal its strong points such as economic reform, a properly educated public, and the sustainable development of its natural resources. Gas and oil account for half of its national budget allocation (Okorochkova). The country would need to lessen their reliance on oil and gas, thus attempting to change into a service economy and achieve sustainability. Russia has the biggest prospects of shifting to a service economy and putting less focus on sectors such as software production, agriculture, and mechanical engineering. The choices made by the Ministry of Economic Development of Russian Federation demonstrated that there are numerous priority sectors for import alternation and more development of equipment for industries such as electrochemical and cable, food,

electronic industry, food, civil aircraft, power engineering, oil and gas engineering, conventional weapons, heavy engineering, shipbuilding, chemical and petrochemical, machine-tool, medical and pharmaceutical, and engine/transport engineering industries (Okorochkova). Usually, Russia's Ministry of Natural Recourses and Ecology emphasizes greatly on ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, environmental preservation, soil protection, and clear air/water (Okorochkova). However, eco-efficiency and green expertise are currently of more importance.

Human Rights

When it comes to human rights, Syria is facing a crisis due to the numerous violations committed in its conflict. Incidentally, more Russia and U.S. involvement with Syria and attempts to come to a political consensus in 2016 did not considerably lessen shocking infringements of humanitarian policies and human rights that have exemplified the armed conflict being experienced. The Syrian Centre for Policy Research, which is an autonomous Syrian research association, reveals that the number of Syrians that have died from the conflict from February 2016 was 470,000 (Human Rights Watch). The proliferation and amplification of war have resulted in a critical humanitarian crisis. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs states that there are 4.8 million Syrians are looking for refuge in neighboring nations while 6.1 million are internally displaced (Human Rights Watch). In addition, by June 2016, approximately 1 million individuals were residing in regions that are surrounded and were prevented from humanitarian aid and life-saving assistance (Human Rights Watch). Furthermore, the Syrian Network for Human Rights reveals that, since 2011, more than 117,000 Syrians have vanished or been imprisoned, mainly by factions in the government, comprising 4,557 as of June 2016 (Human Rights Watch). Ill-treatment and torture prevail in the detention facilities with more than a thousand Syrians dying in detention. Lastly, Jabhat al-

Nusra (a former Syrian affiliate of Al-Qaeda) which is now known as Jabhat Fath al-Sham, and ISIS (referred to as The Islamic State), committed widespread and systematic breaches, incorporating executions, abductions, and pursuing civilians with weaponry. Moreover, armed factions that are not related to the government conducted grievous cruelties such as abductions, illegally obstructing humanitarian aid, unselective attacks on civilians, torture, and using children as soldiers.

Russia commits separate violations on human rights and freedoms just like Syria. The Kremlin suppression of the internet, civil society, and the media assumed an even more disturbing position in 2015 when the administration additionally augmented the persecution and harassment of independent critics (“Russia”). For the fourth consecutive time, the country’s parliament approved regulations and authorities were involved in tyrannical processes that gradually separated the nation from the rest of the world. Coupled with injunctions against Russia for Crimea and the armed clashes in eastern Ukraine, anti-Western panic has dramatically grown. When December 2015 was approaching, the authorities had applied a 2012 regulation that disparages advocacy organizations that welcome foreign financing to register as foreign agents almost a hundred NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), incorporating the nation’s foremost human rights organizations (“Russia”). More than 12 advocacy groups decided to terminate their operations in the country for fear of being categorized as foreign agents (“Russia”). Furthermore, Russian authorities indicted critics for expressing their views online, restricted access to numerous independent sites, suggested methods that could suppress the freedom of expression and approved new regulations. Additionally, the President modified the country’s formal list of confidential information to incorporate information on military damages in special operations and peacetime that can possibly comprise, for instance, Syrian or

eastern Ukraine operations. Breaches would result in eight years of prison time ("Russia"). Another infringement on human rights is due to the authorities' consistent application of Russia's anti-LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) misinformed regulation to interrupt events championing pro-LGBT freedoms and mistreat LGBT individuals and their followers. In sum, Russia may not be facing internal conflict-related human rights abuses, but its government is one that prefers to suppress any freedom that does not align with its intentions.

Peace/Conflict

When peace/conflict issues are considered in the Syrian context, it can be said that there is a less probability of the country accepting a deal that would end its crisis. With the atrocious Syrian war reaching its seventh year in 2017, peace becomes a political and principled necessity for Syrians and the rest of the world. Although it may be difficult, the warring factions should ensure access to humanitarian aid and support a fragile armistice. In addition, the opposing factions should back UN-directed dialogue. For six years, Syrians have been afflicted by one of the most brutal conflicts of the century. The conflict started in March 2011 when a suppression of massive widespread demonstrations in the country transformed into an armed struggle that has contributed to the displacement of millions of Syrians (UN News Centre). United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced two critical requests to every faction. The first one was to properly utilize the December 2016 armistice instituted by the supporters of the Astana conventions (Iran, Russia, and Turkey), to improve it, and guarantee that humanitarian aid is accessible to all Syrians (UN News Centre). The second appeal made by the UN Secretary to the differing factions was that they conquer their disagreements and cooperate to ensure the halting of the conflict. This would specifically be achieved by participating in the progress of the intra-Syrian arbitrations in Geneva centering on the Geneva Communiqué and appropriate

UN Security Council resolutions. These resolutions comprised resolution 2254 (2015) that authorized a direction for peace in Syria, involving particular language on elections, constitution, and governance (UN News Centre).

Similarly, Russia is facing a conflict with Ukraine, with possibilities of peace and resolution becoming uncertain. Russia's seizure of Crimea and the military activities in eastern Ukraine have reversed the post-Cold War standards that offered development and stability for the former Soviet. Countries adjacent to Russia are reassessing their security and foreign regulations via the perspective of Ukraine, evaluating their conflict and security subtleties by centering on Russia's recently antagonistic procedures and laws in the West and Ukraine's reaction. In a mission to comprehend the new dynamics and trends, USIP (U.S. Institute of Peace) conducted a scenario assessment, assuming a temporary, regional viewpoint to recognize the factors and forces increasing the prospects of more conflict (Metre 2). The assessment generated a sequence of persuasive accounts that offer a useful framework for comprehending arising conflict dynamics in the region. Moreover, Ukraine has become an indicator, as the conflict there resulting in responses across nations on Russia's border. In addition, countries in the region are vigorously investigating the new outlines of Western and Russian associations, engagement, regional conflict dynamics, and regional coalitions and relationships. Under the setting of the region's stalled conflicts, the stress tests are dangerous and could spark more violence. Lastly, the 2008 George-Russia war and the takeover of Crimea are representative conflicts and show a tactical tendency to Putin's involvements. This representative assemblage of dynamics: the occurrence of an ethnic Russian population to validate involvement, a tactical geopolitical location, and an undermining conflict that stops democratic alliance has repercussions for vulnerable regions such as western Kazakhstan and Transdniester (Metre 2).

In sum, the only difference between the conflict in Syria and the Ukraine-Russian conflict is the extent of action (armed or resolved) that has been taken.

Overall, although Syria and Russia are in different contexts, the issues that they face are similar, except for sustainability. Both countries are plagued with difficulties that result from not accepting any proposed way to end the problems. However, only time will tell if the problems they are facing will stop or persist.

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