



Topic Synopsis

Ad Hoc on Terror, Terrorism During the Arab Spring

I. Background of Topic

On December 18, 2010, a revolt against an oppressive government in Tunisia sparked revolution all around North Africa and the Arab Peninsula. Following the revolution in Tunisia, revolutions in countries such as Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain occurred. Most of the revolutions happened due to civil unrest and were an attempt to overtake unrepresentative, dictatorship type governments that had ruled the region for many years. The governments that were being opposed did not take the revolutions lightly. The rebellions were met with oppressive force, and regardless of this, the rebels persistently and perseveringly fought for their cause. Al Qaeda, a terrorist group with a presence in many of the countries undergoing revolutions, is specifically not pleased with the imminent changes. Being opposed to The United States, and, thus, democratic governments, Al Qaeda is not in support of the rebels' plight for achieving democracy. It is speculated that if economic and political change does occur, Al Qaeda will become angered and possibly rebel. Because Al Qaeda previously relied on corrupted governments in order to recruit estranged youth, their regime will ultimately be weakened if democracies begin to arise. However, due to the democratic policy of freedom of expression, Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups are allowed more operational freedom in democratic type governments. Because economic reform is expected to happen, the citizens of the rebelling nations will be angered if reform does not occur, kindling more revolutions. In the past, people joined terrorist groups due to ideology. Today, people are joining terrorist groups because they are angry about poverty and the Jihad gives them



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justification for violence. In conclusion, whether or not economic reform occurs, there will be a people group that is angered. It is important that a solution is found that does not favor the terrorist groups, and instead favors the citizens that are fighting for freedom.

II. UN Involvement

Countries around the world that were in support of the revolutions offered aid either financially or via military to the rebelling countries. For example, the United States provided military aid to Libya as well as performed an air strike. The United States Security Council adopted many resolutions in support of the Libyan Revolution, such as the authorization of military force and the protection of civilians. The United Nations Security Council approved a no-fly zone over Libya under Resolution 1973. This resolution had a purpose of protecting the Libyan citizens. The resolution also included an assets freeze and arms embargo. The United Nations has played a major role in authorizing international intervention, but, other than that, the United Nations has not offered much support. Many people in the international community are angered by the United Nations' lack of participation. It is evident that the Arab countries in revolt have made it clear what they want to accomplish, and the United Nations has neither hindered nor helped these people achieve these accomplishments. Some say that the United Nations has a responsibility to stand up against regimes that persecute their people, but, at the same time, the United Nations must be careful due to that fact that national sovereignty is at hand.

III. Possible Solutions



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As Al Qaeda faces devastating strikes against its leadership in the Arab region, it is likely that they will become more aggressive. Because of this, steps must be taken in order to prevent an attack. The United Nations needs to be more aggressive in taking steps to assist the rebels who are being oppressed, rather than being passive. The United Nations can place peacekeeping troops in areas in which violence is prevalent. Furthermore, countries that are opposed to the oppressive governments and in support of the revolutions should impose economic sanctions upon the oppressive governments. In the area of combating terrorism, strict regulations should be enforced in order to keep citizens in line. The newly instituted governments need to make it clear to the public that economic reform will occur in the future. Economic improvements and job opportunities are also incredibly important in limiting extremism. If economic reform does not occur, the citizens will be angered and more likely to perform extreme acts of violence in rebellion. Job opportunities will give people a chance to achieve success rather than join an extremist group. However, if economic reform fails or if the corrupted regimes continue to stay in power, Al Qaeda will have an opportunity to win favor. Thus, the most important thing is that nations and the United Nations support democracy. All nations should also endorse the International Criminal Court and extend the Court's pligh to cover terrorism.

IV. Bloc Positions

Asian: The Asian bloc does not have specific ties to combating terrorism in the area of Arab Spring. However, depending upon what type of government each country in this region supports should dictate whether or not they support the Arab revolutions. Most countries in this region are opposed to terrorism, but some countries, such as China,



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would probably favor terrorism over democracy due to their extreme favor of communism and their policy against democracy.

Latin: Similar to the Asian bloc, the Latin bloc does not have major ties to the revolutions occurring in the Arab region. Because the Latin American region has experienced revolutions in the past against aggressive regimes, the Latin American bloc should be in support of the revolutions and democracy. The Latin American bloc should understand the plight of the rebels due to their past experience with rebellion and should provide support to the countries trying to achieve democracy.

European: The European Union has just recently begun developing an answer to the political, economic, and social challenges the possible terrorism in the Arab region poses. Other than the countries in Europe that do not favor democracy, such as Russia, the countries of Europe should, on the whole, support the rebels and oppose terrorism. NATO has taken a strong stance against terrorism and is in favor of the air strikes that have occurred.

African: Because Africa has many countries that have undergone rebellions, most African countries should be opposed to terrorism and in support of democracy. However, if the leaders in the United Nations are in favor of the previous dictatorship regimes, then these countries should be in favor of the dictators over democracy, while opposing terrorism if it is a threat to their government. Egypt and Libya went through revolutions, and, because of this, most African countries should be empathetic to the plight of the rebels.

Middle Eastern: The Middle Eastern region has had more rebellions and revolutions in this time period than any of the other regions. Most democratic leaning Middle Eastern governments should favor democracy and oppose terrorism due to the fact that it is a



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threat to their people and their democratic allies around the world. However, countries with more extreme, anti-western policies should favor terrorism (although they would not call it terrorism) due to ideology and religious obligations.

V. Guiding Questions

1. Are there any solutions that could please both the rebels and the terrorists?
2. What are some specific economic reforms that would benefit the citizens of the countries going through revolutions in order to keep them from rebelling again?
3. Is terrorism an actual threat in the scheme of these revolutions or should most of the United Nations’ focus be placed on the welfare of the people and the newly established governments?
4. Will democracy help or hinder the growth of Al Qaeda (due to its policy of freedom of expression)?