



Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

MASTER THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Master

In English Language

Option/ Civilization and Literature

U.S. Foreign Policy in Syria: Balancing between Counterterrorism and Regional Alliances

Supervised by:

KAMEL HARHOURA

Submitted and Defended by:

MADOUNI ZINEB

Board of Examiners:

Mrs. Bougofa Zineb	MCB University of Biskra	Examiner
Mrs. Cheriet Asmaa	MAA University of Biskra	Examiner
Mrs. Haddad Maymouna	MAA University of Biskra	Chair Person
Mr. Harhoura Kamel	MAA University of Biskra	Supervisor

Academic Year: 2023/2024

Dedication

To My Precious father

To My beloved mother

To My Brother and Sisters

To my nephews

To my supportive Friends, Ryma, Lina, Fadoua and for being with all along

And Lastly To Me Myself and I

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank **Allah**, for letting me through all the difficulties and for giving me strength and patience through this path.

I would like to acknowledge and give my warmest thanks to my supervisor **Mr. Harhoura Kamel** who made this work possible. His guidance and advice carried me through all the stages for writing my Dissertation. I would also like to express my appreciation to the jury members **Mrs Bougofa Zineb**, **Mrs Chereit Asma**, and **Mrs Haddad Mimouna** for accepting to read and evaluate my work.

Finally, I am grateful to my supportive parents for their endless love and encouragement, as they have always believed in me.

Abstract

In this dissertation, the balance between regional alliances and counterterrorism strategies is examined in the context of U.S. foreign policy in Syria. It investigates the emergence of the terror factor in Syria, and the growing effect of the Syrian civil war. Moreover, Strategies such as training opposition forces and establishing global coalitions are employed to achieve U.S. objectives, which include the eradication of terrorism, the promotion of peace, and the promotion of stability. Nevertheless, there are numerous obstacles, such as the intricate geopolitics, resilient terrorist organizations, and tensions with regional allies such as Turkey. This research underscores the significance of regional alliances in the context of growing U.S. counterterrorism efforts and addressing broader implications for stability and diplomacy through the examination of diplomatic communications and policy statements. In summary, the continued effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy in Syria is dependent upon a balance of diplomacy and flexibility.

Key Terms: Counterterrorism, ISIS, Regional alliances, Major Powers, U.S Foreign Policy, Terrorism

List of Abbreviations

YPG: People Protection Unit

SDF: Syrian democratic forces

WMD: Weapons of mass distraction

GCC: Gulf Council Coalition

FSA: Free Syrian Army

ISIS: Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

JN: Jabhat Al Nusra

CVE: Countering violent Extremism

UNHCR: United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees

ISWAP: Islamic States West Africa Province

NACTSO: National counterterrorism Security Office

SNC: Syrian National Coalition

LCC: Local Coordination Committees

UN: United Nation

HTS: Hayat Tahrir Al Sham

US: United States

SSG Syrian Salvation Government

PKK: Kurdish Workers Party

PYD: Democratic Union Party

KRG: Kurdistan Regional Government

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

CJTF-OIR: combined joint task force-Operation Inherent Resolve

JFS/Jabhat Fatah Al Sham

Table of Content

Dedication	1
Acknowledgment	2
Abstract	3
List of Abbreviations	4
General Introduction.....	8
Chapter one: Historical Background: The Evolution of U.S involvement in Syria	11
Introduction.....	12
1.1The Background of the Syrian conflict	13
1.2 The emergence of terrorism in Syria.....	17
1.2.1 Emergence of ISIS IN Syria.....	17
1.2.2 Emergence of Jab hat Al Nusra in Syria	19
1.2.3 Impact of terrorism on Syria and The Middle East	20
1.3 Understanding Counterterrorism	22
1.4. Involvement and Interests of the U.S in Syria.....	23
1.5 Evolution of U.S Foreign policy In Syria.....	25
1.4.2During Obama Administration.....	26
1.4.3During Trump Administration	28
Conclusion	29
Chapter 2:.....	31
Analysing U.S. Counterterrorism strategies In Syria.....	31
Introduction.....	32
2.1 U.S Counterterrorism Strategies:.....	33
2.1.1 Pre 9/11 attacks	33
2.1.2 Post 9/11.....	34
2.2 U.S strategies to Counterterrorism (ISIS) in Syria.....	36
2.2.2 Training opposition	37
2.2.3 Cutting ISIS Source	38
2.2.4 Global coalition	40
2.2.5 Operation Inherent Resolve	41
2.3 Challenges and Obstacles in Defeating Terrorism and Extremist Groups	43
Conclusion:	46

Chapter 3: The U.S Engagement with Regional Actors in Syria	47
Introduction	48
3.1 Regional Dynamics in Syria	48
3.2 U.S relationship with regional alliances in Syria	51
3.2.1 Relations with Israel	51
3.2.2 Relations with Jordan	53
3.2.3 Relations with Golf Countries	56
3.3 U.S Engagement with Syrian Kurdish Forces (YPG/SDF)	59
3.4 U.S-turkey tensions over conflicting interest	61
3.5 Influence of Regional Powers on U.S Policy in Syria:	63
3.5.1 Presence of Iran	64
3.5.2 presence of Russia	66
Conclusion	68
General conclusion:	69
Work Cited:	72
ملخص	81

General Introduction

Understanding the complexities of the Syrian conflict and the US foreign policy in the region requires a deep understanding to explore its roots and evolution. In the beginning of 2011, the Arab world witnessed a civil war marked at first by peaceful protests against their dysfunctional government demanding freedom, political reforms and social justice. It started in Tunisia, and outspread to Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen. Unlike other conflicts, the Syrian civil war evolved from a domestic confrontation between rebel groups and Syrian government to a proxy war with the involvement of major power such as Russia Iran and Turkey. Each party involved in the conflict seeks to promote its own interests in the region. Often by supporting local factions and exacerbating the violence and often by promoting peace and stability in the region. .As a result, the conflict became geopolitical dilemma and nuanced landscape. The emergence of ISIS and other extremist groups in 2013/ 2014 escalated the conflict to its pick. As these groups took advantage of the power vacuum and the sectarian division within Syria as a base to promote terroristic act. Seeking to control land and forming their own state capturing cities like (AL Raqqa, Dair Al Zour and Daraa) under the name of Caliphate.

Furthermore, in the context of interventions. The United States did not considered Syria as a primary foreign policy, as it sought to prioritize other countries the Middle East such as Iraq and Turkey. However, shifting the prioritization is due to the escalating intensity of the conflict, corresponding to reports of using chemical weapons by the Assad regime against opposition fighters, this act called by the president Obama “A Red Line” and a direct reason for the U.S. intervention in Syria. The attack of 9/11 is the factor leading to the adaption of countering terrorism policy .To reinforce freedom, democracy, and protecting human rights worldwide. Based on these principles, the United States sought to intervene in Syria. In order to implement

its foreign policy and strategies to proceed the outbreaks of the conflict, and to end terrorism. Navigating the multifaceted complexities of the Syrian civil war requires from the U.S to take measures rationally to ensure stability and peace in the Middle East within the authority granted by the international law.

Within the light of this contextualized above, US foreign policy in Syria navigating regional alliances and counterterrorism attempt to reveal the goals behind the leading interest in Syria. Additionally, to explore the strategies operated by the US to counterterrorism as well as the challenges encountered to assess the effectiveness of this policy in Syria to promote stability and reaching a delicate balance between counterterrorism effort and maintenance of alliances. Through this investigation, this proposal strive to provide and to gain a more extensive comprehension of the complexity that holds U.S foreign policy in Syria to balance counterterrorism and alliances.

Within the multifaceted challenges set by the Syrian war and the threat posed by terrorist organizations and the destabilization of the Middle East. The central aim of this study is to understand how the United States has balanced its counter-terrorism goals with the need to navigate regional alliances in Syria. The following sub-questions will guide the investigation:

What are the primary goal of United States Foreign Policy in Syria? What strategies does the United States implement to address terrorism in Syria, and how they affected regional alliance? What challenges and obstacles does the United States face to defeat terrorism and other extremist groups? What is the importance of regional allies for the United State to counterterrorism? In addition, how they affect the stability of the region?

The overarching goal of this research is to undertake a comprehensive review of U.S. foreign policy in Syria, focusing on how counterterrorism efforts interact with regional alliances dynamics. It aims to identify the motive and goals shaping US foreign policy decisions in Syria.

Additionally to analyse the effectiveness of U.S. strategies in addressing the threat of terrorism while considering regional geopolitical dynamics. Examine the challenges faced by the US to eradicate terrorist groups. Moreover, to assess the importance of regional alliance in us policy and their effect on of U.S. actions on regional stability and diplomatic relations with key allies and collaborates.

The study will adopt qualitative method in collecting and analysing data on U.S foreign policy in Syria to counterterrorism and navigating regional alliances. An examination of policy statements, official document and diplomatic communications will enhance understanding the process of decision-making in the matter of countering terrorism and the reason behind forming alliances.

Chapter one: Historical Background: The Evolution of U.S involvement in Syria

Introduction

More than twelve million people have been forced to leave from their homes because of the Syrian War, which has been going on for thirteen years now. Additionally, thousands of lives have been lost, and the economy has collapsed completely. Because of the complexity of the crisis in Syria, these features reflect the essence of the conflict, which makes it very important to both the Middle East and worldwide politics. During the civil war, there was a shift from an internal to an external conflict, which attracted extremists and regional players who wanted to take advantage of the power vacuum to further their goals in the area. As a result, the conflict destabilized the region, which was already quite unstable.

In order to have a better understanding of the origins of the Syrian issue and its influence on world politics, this chapter will delve into the historical backdrop of the situation. An investigation into the spread of terrorist organizations in Syria will be carried out, with a specific emphasis on the formation of extremist organizations such as ISIS and Jab ah Al Nusra. Their growth in the area and the causes that contributed to their emergence will also be evaluated. Along with their impact on the regional stability and the threat, it had on neighbouring countries and on Syria itself. Understanding Counterterrorism is essential to grasp why it is necessary to conduct operations and create strategies to ensure the global peace from terroristic horror.

Additionally, it is essential to know the complicated nature of the conflict and the critical importance of developing effective strategies to reduce its influence on global peace and security by understanding counterterrorism. The study will also, investigate on what basis and what interests that led the United States to act and make decisions on the crisis in Syria. Subsequently, it will provide light on the approach in which each government managed the decision-making process within the complex framework of the Syrian Civil War.

1.1 The Background of the Syrian conflict

A wave of demonstrations that started in December 2010 spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa, eventually resulting in the fall of many long-standing authoritarian regimes. Six major hotspots saw a variety of political, social, and economic upheavals because of these protests, which are collectively referred to as the Arab Spring: Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. Looking back, these events have had a lasting effect that has resulted in both beneficial and negative outcomes, such as increasing repression in some areas, violence, and relocation. (Robinson & Merrow)

In Syria, The Alawite regime started to rule when defence minister named Hafez al Assad overthrew the Baath party in 1970 marked the start of more than three decades of authoritarian regime. The regime severity was made apparent by his violent response to the 1982 Sunni Muslim Brotherhood rebellion in Hama, which resulted in the deaths of nearly 30,000 individuals. Following the death of Hafez in 2000, his son Bashar al-Assad maintained this authoritarian system of governance. The policies of Bashar al-Assad to open up the economy made social injustice worse by raising unemployment and poverty, especially among young people. Syria was further destabilized by hundreds of thousands of farmers who had to flee from a terrible drought that struck between 2006 and 2010. As individuals connected to the dictatorship gained wealth and influence over important economic areas, corruption increased. The year of 2011 saw large-scale demonstrations pushed on by years of political persecution, corruption, and economic suffering. The Syrian Civil War, a devastating conflict that continues to this day, began by these demonstrations. (Heath 2022)

On March 15, 2011, the peaceful protest has grown into significant revolution. A key scene that happened in Deraa, southern Syria, when demonstrations erupted following the kidnapping and torture of young activists sparked this shift. Demands for President Assad's resignation

increased because of the security forces brutal handling of the protests, which included shooting people and killing them. The use of force by the authorities did not put an end to the demonstrations; rather, it made the protesters more determined. As violence escalated, rebel groups emerged with the goal of overthrowing the government and gaining control of cities, towns, and villages. By 2012, the conflict had spread to major cities like Aleppo and the capital Damascus, marking the onset of a civil war in Syria. (ZUBER & MOUSSA 248)

In July 2011, former soldiers of Assad's military established the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and fled refuge in Turkey. Nevertheless, the FSA had difficulties in terms of cooperation and shortage of resources. Additionally, the Syrian National Coalition (SNC) emerged in Istanbul, declaring its representation of a government-in-exile but fails to gain any international backing. Opposing parties emerged as disagreement with the Assad regime increased. Several FSA fighters joined Islamist terrorist groups with the help of Gulf funders, and these groups demonstrated to be very effective in fighting Assad's soldiers. (Laub, 2023)

The sides supporting and opposing Assad's administration have influenced the course of the civil war in Syria. The Syrian army and loyalist support Assad, along with important allies like Iran and Russia. Russia's military engagement, which it claimed was against terrorist organizations but really targeted Syrian rebels often, has been crucial, while Iran has contributed significantly with troops and weaponry. On the other hand, resistance to Assad centres on organizations like the Free Syrian Army (FSA), which is supported by Western countries including the US. Furthermore, jihadist groups including Al Qaida's Nusra Front and its affiliates contest Assad's administration. Despite its primary focus on the Islamic State, the United States has been covertly aiding Syrian rebels in their opposition to President Assad; this has caused a conflict of interest with Russia. In an effort to remove Assad, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf nations have all taken part in the conflict by supporting different rebel groups. (Cass The Syrian Crisis Simplified: Who is fighting whom and why?)

The conflict had a sectarian divide foundation for the current, sectarian divided conflict in Syria was created by the Assad family's decades-long and autocratic reign. Both Hafez and Bashar al-Assad used security forces to exploit the human rights of dissidents in order to crush political opposition to the Ba'ath Party. Many opposition groups emerged because of this persecution, including the Syrian National Coalition, which advocates democratic reform, and al-Nusra Front, which the United States has labelled as a terrorist organization. These groups, which are made up of both foreigners and Syrians, have different goals, which makes it difficult for them to work together and complicates the situation for religious freedom and human rights in Syria. Conflict has worsened due to sectarian tensions. Both Hafez and Bashar al-Assad selectively tolerated or limited religious liberty before 2011. Smaller religious minority groups, such as Christians, were free to practice their religion as long as they did not challenge the government, while Sunni Muslims were under limitations, such as government oversight of the imam-selection process and restricted political engagement. (JASSER 62)

The complexity of the civil war can be seen through the complicated ethnic geography of Syria, which was formed by historical circumstances, is a central reason that fuelled the civil war. During the colonial era in the Middle East defined the present borders of the Arab world, including those of Syria, without getting an extensive understanding of the complex ethno-religious combination that constitutes the region. Due to that circumstances, a region with a diversity of ethno-religious and linguistic groups was forced to adopt a nation-state model similar to that of Europe. The variety can be seen in Syria, where the majority of people are Sunni Muslims, yet there are also several Shi'a communities, including the Allawi, Druze, Christians, and Turkmens, as well as fewer ethnic groups like Kurds, Armenians, Circassians, and Turkmen. When defining borders, these challenges were not taken into consideration, which worsened sectarian division and sparked the Syrian civil war. (Mariwala)

However Unlike other authoritarian regimes in the region like Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya, the Syrian governance kept control over its citizens while confronting insurrection for more than a year. Assad's persistence might be attributed to a number of things. First, with several intelligence services monitoring the populace, the armed forces, and one another, the dictatorship was built to withstand coup attempts. Due to that reason, there have been no internal military conflicts like in Egypt and Tunisia. Furthermore, the dictatorship continues to have considerable support from some sections of the population, notably middle-class Sunnis, especially in economically successful places like Aleppo, and minority groups like Christians, Alawis, and Druze. The government took advantage from the opposition's weakness as well. Though initially local efforts like the Local Coordination Committees (LCC) showed success in coordinating demonstrations in spite of a central authority, the establishment of the Syrian National Council (SNC) in exile failed to come with proper locally backing. In the face of countless arrests, the LCC continue to plan nonviolent demonstrations on the ground. However, the SNC's usefulness has been hindered by its failure to gain control over a large number of people. (Phillips 39)

The war resulted a Humanitarian crisis leading to the displacement of over a million civilians had left Syria due to the conflict by the beginning of 2013, with the report of UN Refugee Agency seeking shelter in neighbouring countries including Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq, among others. Some countries, like Turkey, are finding it difficult to provide for the quick resettlement of refugees, therefore they have created temporary "tent cities" to house the increasing number of refugees. As these regional camps become close to full, many nations have stepped in to help by providing financial support and taking in refugees for resettlement. With more than \$2.4 billion in aid, the European Union is by far the biggest donor. Furthermore, nations like the United States, Sweden, and the United Kingdom have allowed refugees to be permanently resettled inside their borders. (Mariwala)

1.2 The emergence of terrorism in Syria

Stability and democracy were hoped for when authoritarian governments in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen were overthrown during the 2011 Arab Spring. However, the emergence of Islamist militants at this time also raised the prospect of new military or authoritarian governments persecuting these organizations, which would have fuelled chaos by extremists such as Ansar Bait Al Maqdis in Egypt and Ansar Al Sharia in Libya and Tunisia. Like in Afghanistan in the 1980s, Syria became a center for foreign radicals as ISIS and the Al Nusra Front expanded violence there, attracting fighters from all over the world. Even after the Arab Spring, years after desires for democracy, Arab countries continue face terrorism, extremism, and instability. (Styszynski 10)

President Bashar Al Assad has stated that the Syrian uprising is a creation of extremist fundamentalists and terrorists, who are supported by foreign powers. He utilized this argument to justify the oppression of his opponents. Radical Islamism has developed within the resistance over time, which has encouraged the fighting. While Islamic opposition organizations have historically taken part in uprisings against the Assad government, including as the Islamic Uprising of 1976–1982, their effects were different. Radical organizations have in the past-reduced popular support for the opposition. Secularists and moderate Islamists have joined radicals in this crisis because the government is becoming more violent, which has caused a split in the resistance. The rebels got help from Islamist groups in 2012. These organizations greatly influenced the revolution by contributing tactical and operational expertise. The existence of these radicals has been used by the administration to describe the uprising as being carried out by extremists. (O'Bagy)

1.2.1 Emergence of ISIS IN Syria

The extremist group known as ISIS (Islamic States of Iraq and Syria), which emerged from Al Qaeda affiliate. ISIS was founded in 2013 as Sunni movement with the objective creating an international empire called caliphate. It has spread to control Syria, Iraq, and other different countries. It gained strength during the Syrian civil war attracting fighters from all around the world and striving to exert power on all Muslims. It officially declared the caliphate in 2014, and accelerated the tension in the Middle East under the leadership of Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi. (Counter extremism project p1)

ISIS is presenting itself as a protector of Sunni Muslim communities and wants to fight the West over several years in the Middle East. They claim to be the only Sunni terrorist organization that can overthrow of governments in Syria and Iraq as well as throughout in the world, and they intentionally create regional conflict and sectarian tensions to their benefit. ISIS primarily focused on directly seizing and governing territory, in contrast with al-Qaeda. In order to form a caliphate, ISIS have set out a strategic plan in its Dabiq magazine, stressing the value of gathering members, building bases in fragile areas, and causing destruction. Even while it has been partly successful in forcing loyalty from some Sunni tribal groups, ISIS frequently operates on its own and has few major ties with other armed organizations in the area. (The jihadi threat)

ISIS expanded in areas with fragile or ineffective government, mostly in Iraq and Syria. ISIS gained control while Syrian leaders dealt with the consequences from the Arab Spring and Iraqi authorities were focused on creating a state. The group accomplished this by acquiring weapons and money through a variety of means, such as controlling financial institutions, gaining control of oil and gas resources, and taking advantage of the breakdown of the Iraqi army. ISIS has sought to spread its authority by creating wilayat, or satellite territories, in other weak spots around the world. For example, ISIS used the moniker Wilayat Khorasan to gain

ground in Afghanistan by taking advantage of weak government, security flaws, and internal Taliban rivalries. (Gunaratna 7)

1.2.2 Emergence of Jab hat Al Nusra in Syria

Abu Muhammad al Jawlani established Jabhat al Nusra (JN) in late 2011 at on behalf of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the commander of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). In the beginning, JN sought to bring together different Salafi jihadi forces in order to remove the Syrian government and create an Islamic state. Its members comprised Islamist inmates freed by the Assad administration, recruits from the Syrian networks of al-Qaeda and ISIS, and ideological backers. Because of (JN) victories against Syrian regime forces, al-Baghdadi was able to declare that ISI now known as ISIS was expanding into Syria, which caused JN to disintegrate. However, al Jawlani refused to comply, and as a result, JN and ISIS cut their relations in public. Later in the Syrian crisis, (JN) therefore successfully started a mission to reduce ISIS's influence in northwest Syria. (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project 2023)

For two key reasons, JN broke away from al-Qaeda in July 2016 and changed its name to Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (JFS). First, out of mistrust for al-Jawlani and to avoid being designated as terrorist groups by the United States, other opposition groups were reluctant to come together under a single military umbrella. Second, as the US-led Global Coalition against ISIS expanded its bombardment campaign against ISIS to Syria in September 2014, JN commanders found themselves as targets. (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (2023)

By 2012, HTS continued to be operationally present in a number of Syrian provinces, including Aleppo, Hama, Lattakia, and Idlib. HTS commanded a sizable portion of northwest Syria at its greatest strength in January 2017, however the regime's attacks supported by Russia have subsequently reduced its area holdings. At now, HTS holds the last remaining base of

rebel groups in northwest Syria, which includes areas of the countryside in Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, and a limited territory in Lattakia's northern countryside. In addition to conducting acts of violence against people in regions under its control, the organization also engages in armed conflicts and attacks against government forces on the conflict's front line (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (2023))

After dissolving its connections to al-Qaeda in 2016 and eradicating Ahrar al-Sham in 2017, HTS has set its sights on expanding its military rule over the Greater Idlib region and establishing itself as the main political force within the territories it controls. HTS has attempted to establish local acceptability by describing itself as a vital part of the Syrian revolution with an eye on local concerns, in opposition to global jihadist organizations like al-Qaeda. An example of this attempt is the creation of the Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) in 2017, which was formed up of officials who are both autonomous and connected to HTS. Ninety percent of the population in northwest Syria depends on supplies from humanitarian organizations reaching Bab al-Hawa, a border crossing controlled by HTS with Turkey. Also under their control are the ports at Dorriyeh and Ghazawiyah. Citizens and Turkish soldiers resisted (HTS) attempts to rebuild crossings with the regime. However, reports of violations of human rights, involving as attacks on innocent citizens and unfair detentions, have limited HTS's attempts to earn trust. According to reports, HTS carried out around 60 attacks on civilians between 2020 and 2022, creating demonstrations and violent conflict in Idleb. (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project 2023)

1.2.3 Impact of terrorism on Syria and The Middle East

The rise of the Islamic State has destabilized the Middle East long-standing political and social institutions. It raises doubt on the legitimacy of the existing governments, a replacement ethnic difference for nationality, and rejects republican government in the Western tradition in

favour of a theocratic monarchy. It also threatens action against Arab governments in the area and casts doubt on the legitimacy of the United Nations and US-dominated regional security structures. The Islamic State advocates for a new world order while operating in the traditionally conflictual regions of Syria and Iraq. (Strachota 15)

Beyond Syria and Iraq, ISIS now controls parts of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Once Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown in Libya in 2011, organizations like Majlis Shura Shabab Al Islam and Ansar Al Sharia declared affiliation to ISIS and created provinces like Wilayat Al Tarabulus and Wilayat Al Barqah. Key operational bases now include cities like Sirte. Along with renaming Boko Haram in Nigeria as the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP), ISIS also established branches in Algeria, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. ISIS has carried out devastating operations in Yemen and intends to strike Israel's Al Aqsa Mosque as well as Saudi Arabia, including Mecca and Medina. This growth and the group's demands for overthrowing the Saudi royal family emphasize how seriously ISIS puts the stability of the region. (Gunaratna 8)

The Syrian war became more intense during its first five years, with serious humanitarian ramifications involving limitations assisting individuals in the middle of shifting rebel control and battle lines. With ISIS's military advances forcing further displacement, the humanitarian situation became worsened by the efforts of almost half of the Syrian population to escape the fighting. Because of the rise of ISIS, many people had to leave areas that they controlled because they were being brutally ruled and other armed forces were threatening to bomb them. Due to the atrocities carried out by ISIS against minority groups like Christians and Yazidis, including executions and enslavement, millions of people had to flee Iraq. Massive displacement and resource constraints in Iraq would put severe pressure on humanitarian efforts, the UN warned. (Ferris & Kirişci 24)

Tensions in the region have been increased by the Islamic State's influence, which goes beyond the regions it controls. Through attacks in Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Turkey are reprisals against rival regimes or factions, including as Hezbollah, which backs Assad. The aims of the Islamic State are achieved by these activities, which are meant to create up sectarianism and affect regional politics. The group's brutality fuels extremism, increases concerns about instability, and exacerbate already existing sectarianism. Stability in the area is threatened by this unrest, which increases the possibility of political unrest and civil wars. (Byman)

1.3 Understanding Counterterrorism

Counterterrorism is the effort to eliminate terrorism and all of its effects. It includes the military, individuals, nations, and groups like INTERPOL. The efforts are either defensive or attacking. Attacks on targets are made harder or less likely by defensive measures like sending out terrorism alerts, making emergency reaction more effectively, and storing medical supplies in case of chemical or biological attacks. These strategies continue to evolve to deal with new threats. Offensive tactics are used to prevent terrorist groups or the people who back them from doing their mission. This include eliminating their resources and personnel, using drone attacks, and pursuing retribution against governments that support terrorists. Pre-emptive strikes, like the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, are intended to make it difficult for terrorist groups to launch future attacks. (T. SANDLER 13)

The attacks on governments and institutions by terrorist groups led to a widespread of violence, property damage, casualties, there for violating international law. International counterterrorism associations, including the US Bureau of Counterterrorism, the UK's (NACTSO), and Russia's revised constitutional statute on counterterrorism, have been established to protect minorities and vulnerable groups and fight against human rights

violations. In an effort to enhance counterterrorism and ensure safety, nations emphasize the importance of information sharing and coordinated global action. The global security risks posed by unhindered terrorism is proven by the conflict in Syria. International relations and territorial integrity are at risk by ISIS presence in several nations, and the international community is dealing with significant challenges in developing strategies that are effective in combating these risks. (Sanusi & Adu-Gyamfi 38)

1.4. Involvement and Interests of the U.S in Syria

According to U.S department of state, the United States Foreign Policy is driven by a set of principles: spreading democracy and freedom securing human rights worldwide. It seeks to assists the people to have the right to live under a democratic government and enjoying their completely human right .It seeks to achieve these aims and principles by settling means and devote efforts. Therefore, the state department constantly enhances Democracy by emphasizing on the crucial role to live under peace, advancement and protection on a global basis. It fosters those in favour for democracy to set up an effective democratic system in their own country recently formed nation to achieve fundamental principles of democracy. In addition, it exposes and rejects rulers whom restrict and limit their own people from the right to elect independently and freely their rulers. In parallel, the State Department strives to protect Human rights by ensuring that all nations fellow international commitment to worldwide human rights principles. Additionally, it supports accountability, the rule of law, and the destruction of cultures that tolerate impunity while simultaneously working to improve and fortify the UN Commission on Human Rights' institutional capabilities.(Diplomacy: The U.S. Department of State at Work)

The United States gained widespread recognition as a worldwide leader since the end of World War II. It has led by example in recognizing and resolving international concerns,

managing cooperative efforts to overcome global difficulties, and setting an example over other countries. Because of this leadership, the United States remains exceptionally active in world affairs; this participation is referred to as "global engagement," "liberal order building," or "interventionist foreign policy." Globally, the United States has endeavoured to advance stability, collaboration, and conformity to international. (U.S. Role in the World: Background and Issues for Congress, 2)

In the case of Syria, the U.S sought to intervene due to several key reasons most importantly is to Prevent Syria's total collapse, which is a top priority for the White House, given the critical need for stability in the area. The violence has taken an enormous toll on human life as well as property, and should Syria collapse, it might turn into a safe haven for terrorists and criminals. Syria will experience ongoing instability and reconstruction regardless of the result of the war, including whether or not the Assad regime is overthrown. A significant military involvement by the United States is unlikely to be successful because of the conflict's wide-ranging character and the variety of reasons behind it, including religious factors. Although the United States has a moral duty to handle the problem, US decision-makers seem to prioritize keeping the conflict within reasonable bounds. (Sorenson 6)

Preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), with a particular focus on nuclear weapons rather than chemical or biological ones is another primary priority for the United States in the area. Even after Israel demolished Syria's purported nuclear development site in 2007, Syria continues to own chemical weapons. Regarding the transfer and application of these chemical weapons, the US has expressed concern Syria repeatedly. The United States declared in June 2013 that it owned convincing evidence of Syria launching chemical weapons upon rebels opposing the regime; further strikes in August underlined these worries. The Obama administration initially responded to the June attack by aiding rebel groups with lethal military arms, even though it had stated that the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime

would cross a "red line." A mixture of military threats and diplomatic initiatives were launched in response to the second use of chemical weapons, although the possibility of chemical weapon proliferation outside of Syria was not specifically addressed by these measures. (Sorenson 7)

Syria has existed in the centre of US national security interests throughout much of its history as an independent nation, mostly given its relationship to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Unlike many other Arab countries, Syria's leadership has continuously expressed rivalry against Israel, backed its enemies and refusing to engage in peace talks with the Israeli government. However, Syria has also often served as a stabilizing influence in the Middle East, which illustrates why Israel and the US may not necessarily gain from the overthrow of the present Syrian leadership. (Moyar)

1.5 Evolution of U.S Foreign policy In Syria

The United States foreign Policy towards Syria has undergone several phases from the 20th century to present day. In 1944, the United States recognized Syria's independence from French rule and established diplomatic connections with the country. However, when Syria terminated relations with Israel in 1967 following the Arab-Israeli War, the situation deteriorated. However, after a period of strain, diplomatic ties were retained in 1974. Due to a number of factors, including its use of chemical weapons, former occupation of Lebanon, funding terrorist organizations, and pursuit of WMD, Syria has been listed as a state supporter of terrorism since 1979. Legislative penalties, such as export prohibitions and limitations on obtaining military hardware or help from the United States, are also imposed on Syria. More Executive Orders have been issued in reaction to the crisis and human rights abuses that have occurred in Syria since 2011. (U.S. Relations with Syria Bilateral Relations Fact Sheet Bureau 2023)

Syria and the United States cooperated closely on several regional concerns from 1990 to 2001. However, in response to a number of issues on the part of the United States, relations declined between 2003 and early 2009. These involved Syria's human rights violations, the acquisition of chemical weapons, its involvement in Lebanese affairs, its inability to put an end to the entry of foreign fighters into Iraq, its refusal to hand over previous members of the Iraqi regime who backed the uprising, and its harbouring of leaders of Palestinian rejectionist groups. The United States started looking at its Syria policy in early 2009 with the goal of working with Syria to uncover areas of shared interest, reduce tensions within the region, and assist efforts toward peace in the Middle East. (U.S. Relations with Syria Bilateral Relations Fact Sheet Bureau 2023)

1.4.2 During Obama Administration

There were signs through the Obama presidency that regime replacement was the U.S foreign policy goal in Syria. During his administration, the Syrian crisis escalated and received a lot of international and popular attention. There was a general expectation that the President would use US power to settle the dispute or help with mediation. Obama's calls for Assad's resignation, the formulation of his "red line" concept, and his consideration of military operations all suggested that he was in favour of a regime change. However, in spite of these indications and the existence of powerful voices inside his government calling for the collapse of the dictatorship, not much happened. Although the Obama administration sought severe actions against the regime for violating human rights, it only lightly intervened militarily in Syria. (Mazza–Hilway 19)

Barack Obama first requested the resignation of Syrian President Assad in 2011, with the persuasion of foreign leaders such as David Cameron and Angela Merkel. In 2012, Obama established a clear limit, sometimes defined as a "red line," and warned that if Assad managed

to use chemical weapons, it would result in military intervention by the United States. Nevertheless, Congress denied Obama's proposal for a restricted military response in the wake of the 2013 chemical attacks in Damascus, which prompted him to prioritize diplomatic solutions over military intervention. Throughout his administration, Obama provided the Free Syrian Army (FSA) with armament, financial assistance, and training in an effort to remove Assad. The Obama administration did not adopt any additional measures to accomplish regime change in Syria, despite these efforts. (Mazza–Hilway 20)

The experiences of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had a major effect on President Obama's strategy for military involvement and regime change in Syria. The long hostilities and significant military engagement in these nations had a significant and long-lasting impact on the United States, influencing its foreign policy choices and general position. Obama recognized these effects in his statement about possible military strikes in Syria, mentioning his reluctance to use force to interfere in another country's civil war. He realized the limitations and possible repercussions of military action in the Middle East and came to this view after considering the results of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Based on the lessons learned from past wars, Obama was concerned about seeing similar situations played out again in Syria. (Mazza–Hilway 21)

The strategy of Barack Obama for Syria was influenced by his intention to avoid the long-lasting disputes and unilateral decisions that were the features of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He maintained a non-interventionist position, focusing on diplomacy over military intervention, in line with his underlying liberal foreign policy beliefs. The introduction of Obama's "red line" policy in response to Assad's use of chemical weapons resulted in airstrikes, but it did not develop into a direct military engagement. On the other hand, he selected for diplomatic approaches, such as the "Framework for the Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons," which was established in 2013 through an agreement with Russian

President Putin. This framework obliged Assad to remove Syria's chemical weapons by mid-2014. This strategy emphasized Obama's commitment to resolving the Syrian situation by means of international collaboration and diplomacy, rather than turning to military intervention. (Mazza Hilway 22)

1.4.3 During Trump Administration

President Trump's realism has caused a change in the liberal foreign policy doctrine of President Obama, which placed a premium on non-interventionism. Trump's embrace of realism principles is consistent with his denial of liberal values, such as non-interventionism. Realists maintain a strong emphasis on the value of nations, national interests, and military power in international relations. Trump's foreign policy is centred on military power, state sovereignty, and rejection of global organizations. Obama's liberalism and Trump's realism stand in stark contrast to one another, yet the approaches taken by both governments to the Syrian problem are surprisingly similar. (Mazza–Hilway 23)

Regarding the Syrian war, the Trump administration has come under pressure for lacking short and straightforward policies. Observers have pointed out a number of foreign policy shifts that seem to indicate an absence of a comprehensive plan, especially in the Middle East. President Trump's "America First" goal, which puts home issues ahead of foreign involvement, is to blame for the lack of a clear plan. The "America First" strategy emphasizes the idea that the U.S should prioritize strengthening its own economy before taking a significant role in international issues. This emphasis on strengthening America's home power is reflected in the focus that President Trump placed on domestic concerns throughout the first years of his term, especially in sectors like trade and economics. Trump's constant insistence on putting "America First" and "Make America Great Again" would be expected to lead to an increasingly isolationist foreign policy, but his commitment to reality has moderated these impulses.

Essentially, the Trump administration's attitude to the Syrian crisis is determined by a cautious realism that avoids a pure isolationist posture and a priority of domestic concerns over a well-defined strategy. (Mazza–Hilway 23)

The primary goals of the Trump administration's foreign policy in Syria are to combat and eliminate ISIS and address the Assad regime's chemical weapons crimes. While prioritizing counterterrorism efforts, the administration places less emphasis on regime change. Trump's foreign policy aligns with realist principles, emphasizing the use of force and military dominance to establish authority. He advocates for a robust military and increased spending to bolster America's global standing, particularly in confronting threats like ISIS. The escalated military activities in Syria under the administration of President Trump highlight his emphasis on creating and maintaining power. Called as "annihilation tactics," these operations have the objective of eliminating ISIS by means of significant drone and conventional bombing attacks. Under Trump's leadership, there has been a significant increase of airstrikes, particularly in April of 2017 and 2018. Which highlights the contentious nature of Trump's plan to achieve underlined objectives in Syria. (Mazza–Hilway 24)

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter offers a comprehensive understanding of the Syrian conflict, exposing its profound origins and extensive consequences. We have investigated the factors that are responsible for the conflict, which have led to increased tensions and uncertainty in the region. The complexity and gravity of the situation are underscored by the emergence of extremist terrorist organizations such as Jabhat Al-Nusra and ISIS within the conflict's context. We have examined the fundamental factors that contributed to their growth, such as the collapse of Syrian governance, sectarian divisions, and power vacuums.

Moreover, the chapter emphasizes the multifaceted interests that have influenced U.S. involvement in Syria, with a particular emphasis on maintaining of regional stability and the elimination of terrorism. It is essential to comprehend these drivers in order to navigate the complicated nature of the conflict and develop effective strategies. The significance of adaptive decision-making processes in the context of the unpredictable conflict landscape is emphasized by the analysis of U.S. strategies for confronting the challenges posed by the Syrian civil war.

Chapter 2:
Analysing U.S. Counterterrorism
strategies In Syria

Introduction

The emergence of terrorist groups, notably ISIS, in Syria has posed a substantial threat to both regional and global security. The United States has a lengthy history of implementing counterterrorism techniques, which have undergone substantial changes since the September 11th attacks. Before the September 11th attacks, the United States largely prioritized diplomatic efforts and information collection to detect and prevent future terrorist threats. The objective of this method was to mitigate assaults by implementing pre-emptive measures and fostering international collaboration. However, the terrorist assaults of September 11th forced a change in the United States' approach to counterterrorism. The focus is shifting towards a proactive and versatile strategy, which involves increased military action and the establishment of strong foreign alliances. This novel strategy acknowledges the need of not only preventing attacks, but also effectively eradicating terrorist groups and their operational capacities.

This chapter explores the adoption of these United States counterterrorism measures within the specific circumstances of Syria. In this analysis, we will explore the precise tactics used to counter ISIS and evaluate their efficacy. Operation Inherent Resolve, a multinational military operation initiated in 2014, is a key component of the US strategy. This campaign employs air attacks, providing training and funding to local troops, and destroying the financial networks of terrorists in order to undermine ISIS and eradicate their geographical dominance. In addition, the United States has maintained collaboration with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), also called as the YPG, a Kurdish-dominated force engaged in combat against ISIS. This cooperation has played a vital role in achieving territorial advancements and countering ISIS's dominance in the area. Despite these achievements, the effort to combat terrorism in Syria remains complex and varied. The continuous problems are caused by the changing nature of alliances, the enduring strength of terrorist groups, and the complex geopolitical environment.

This chapter will examine these problems and highlight the need for ongoing attention, cooperation, and adaptability in tackling this worldwide menace.

2.1 The Evolution of U.S Counterterrorism Strategies:

The United States had undergone several strategies changes to address the threat of international terrorism. These changes were before and after the incident of 9/11 that destabilized U.S internal security. Some of these strategies were effective and some were ineffective. However, these attempts shows the U.S dedication to eliminate the presence of terrorist and contain their activities across the globe.

2.1.1 Pre 9/11 attacks

In September 1970, President Nixon Placed efforts to combat terrorism by demanding tighter security in the commercial aviation sector, which led to the establishment of a Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism. This campaign highlighted how important it is to take security measures as well as react rapidly to any acts of terrorism involving US citizens. Following the killing of diplomats held hostages in Sudan, the United States followed with a policy of non-negotiation with terrorists, emphasizing the U.S is against engaging in negotiations with terrorist groups. (Barrick 22)

The Nuclear Emergency Search Team was established by the Ford administration in 1974 in response to a nuclear device fabrication, which emphasized the significant terrorist threat that the United States faced. Initially, the Tehran hostage crisis was resolved by the Carter administration through economic and diplomatic sanctions. Nevertheless, the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act, which substantially reformed military counterterrorism capabilities, was the result of the rescue mission's failure. Additionally, the 1976 International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act, which was implemented during Carter administration, restricted the sale of dual-use technology to governments that supported terrorism. This policy listed Libya,

Iraq, Syria, and South Yemen as state sponsors of terrorism. Iran, Cuba, North Korea, and Sudan were included in the list during the administrations of Reagan and Clinton. This highlights a key component of American counterterrorism policy that reject the countries who support or fund of terrorism. (Barrick 23)

In the early 1980s, there was a rise in foreign terrorism that killed many Americans. In response, President Reagan asked Congress to pass laws to fight terrorism and make it official that they would not negotiate with terrorists. The 1983 attack that led to the Long Commission report made the danger of terrorism supported by the government more clear and pushed for an aggressive approach to fighting terrorism. The State Department's main goals were to prosecute terrorism as a crime and encourage countries to work together. They also worked to improve safety steps like securing embassies. (Barrick 24)

At a G7 conference in 1996, President Clinton advocated the world to act against terrorism. He offered eliminating the terrorists financial sources, securing borders more effectively and stopping the improper use of advanced technologies. Particularly after the bombings of the East African embassies, his government gave greater emphasis to terrorism in National Security Strategy documents. Clinton raised the issue of terrorism by comparing it to wars like World War II and the Cold War, showing out how it affects ties between countries and the public's worry. (Barrick 26)

2.1.2 Post 9/11

Following the events of 9/11, the United States changed its counterterrorism strategy. They established the Patriot Act to enhance investigations and law enforcement. The 9/11 Commission Report, which recommended enhancements, was initiated by President Bush, who ordered a comprehensive investigation. Subsequently, they established the National

Counterterrorism Centre and a cabinet-level agency to help with intelligence sharing and cooperation. (Barrick 31)

The 2003 National Strategy brought about a major change in U.S. policy for Combating Terrorism, which placed an emphasis on a comprehensive strategy that would use all available national resources to destroy terror networks. It focused on international collaboration while aiming to disrupt terrorist activities by going after their financial, coordination, and communication capabilities. This included taking out terrorist leadership and havens, severing financial ties, dealing with underlying social and political problems, and fighting off attacks from both inside and outside the country. (Barrick 31)

Following 9/11, counterterrorism posed obstacles for the United States. Their main sources of security and counterterrorism activities were the military, law enforcement, and national security agencies; efforts to build peace were abandoned. Efforts to establish effective strategies were a source of difficulty for governments, which alternated between delicate and forceful approaches. Just after 9/11, President Bush issued his approval for military action in Afghanistan to fight the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Nevertheless, the subsequent invasion of Iraq in 2003, which was predicated on defective intelligence regarding WMD, has been widely criticized. The Iraqi government was weakened by this invasion, which also encouraged the emergence of extremist organizations fighting against the United States and its allies. (Gunaratna ,1)

In response to the rising threat of terrorism, the US implemented the CVE (Countering Violent Extremism) policy during the Obama Administration (2009–2017). In contrast, to the Bush Administration's more forceful strategy, the Obama Administration saw the significance of building relationships with Muslim communities in order to deter radicalization. Muslim groups and leaders were actively involved in President Obama's efforts to counter extremism

and terrorism. Similar accomplishments were rare within the US, even if the US sponsored counterterrorism operations abroad through programs for community participation and rehabilitation. Notably, no attempts were made to create a rehabilitation program for prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay. The US continued to prioritize military might and strategic counterterrorism capabilities in spite of these more moderate methods. (Gunaratna 2)

Parallel to the Bush Administration's strategy, the Trump Administration has refocused on tactical and operational counterterrorism. Under President Trump's new counterterrorism strategy, the term "radical Islamic extremism" will take the place of CVE, and the CVE program will be completely discontinued. This change implies a conviction that prior CVE efforts had little impact and that ideology is not a major cause of terrorism. Rather, the government gives priority on kinetic strategies. President Trump and his group are steadfast in their resolve to undermine CVE initiatives in spite of resistance. This enemy-centric strategy, however, ignores other extremist organizations and singles out Islam as the exclusive source of radicalization, potentially escalating extremism and terrorism in the future. (Gunaratna 2)

2.2 U.S strategies to Counterterrorism (ISIS) in Syria

During the U.S. counter-ISIS campaign in Iraq and Syria, the "by, with, and through" approach was elevated to greater prominence. In June 2014, President Obama, who was initially hesitant to intervene militarily, modified his posture as ISIS advanced across the Syrian border into Iraq. Obama, who was widely recognized for his opposition to the 2003 Iraq invasion, had pledged to disengage the United States from protracted conflicts in the Middle East in order to concentrate on strategic objectives in Asia. Nevertheless, the menace necessitated a re-evaluation due to the accelerated advancements of ISIS. (Vickery 2015)

Four pillars supported the US approach against the "Islamic State." In the first, systematic air campaigns were carried out to support Iraqi security forces on the ground, with the potential

to expand attacks into Syria. The second pillar was on strengthening assistance for ground troops against the terrorists, which included sending about 500 US advisors to the area to give Iraqi and Kurdish forces intelligence, instruction, and equipment. Enhancing international collaboration in counterterrorism operations was the objective of the third pillar. This included coping with challenges like halting ISIS's income via enhanced information sharing and stopping the arrival of foreign applicants, some of whom go to the Middle East to join the group before coming back to the West to plot terrorist strikes. The fourth pillar was centred on helping residents who had been displaced from regions controlled by jihadists using humanitarian means. (Waśko-Owsiejczuk 327)

2.2.2 Training opposition

Since the beginning of the Syrian uprising in 2011, Congress and the President have been debating whether to give U.S. help to the Syrian opposition. Regarding the goals, dangers, and efficacy of this kind of assistance, which has included both overt non-lethal support, and covert assistance various viewpoints have been expressed. Up until the middle of 2014, when UN backed negotiations failed and ISIS emerged, President Obama openly opposed giving military training or weaponry to opposition fighters. This prompted a request for financing and legislative approval to launch an overt "train and equip" program that would protect Syrians, combat terrorist threats, and assist in a diplomatic resolution of the Syrian war. (Train and Equip Program for Syria: Authorities, Funding, and Issues for Congress p2)

In October 2015, the Obama Administration made changes to a Department of Defence program aimed at providing instruction and armaments to confirmed members of the Syrian opposition. Originally authorized by Congress in 2014 in order to fight ISIS and solve the Syrian civil war, the program has shown limited effectiveness by September 2015. This caused debates in Congress over expanding the number of civilian protection missions and the reaction

to Russian military intervention in Syria. President Obama declared the departure of around fifty specialized military units to northern Syria in order to provide assistance in the battle against ISIS. Josh Earnest, the spokesperson for the White House, said that there might be a potential rise in the number of Special Forces troops in response to changing policy requirements. (Blanchard & Humud 25)

The train and equip initiative supports Syrian commanders and their units in their fight against ISIS, instead of creating new soldiers. The equipment confiscated in 2015 is used to provide approved commanders with vetted troops and groups. This involves conducting airstrikes in the north western region of Syria and supplying military resources to the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the northern part of the country. The program continues in training competent Syrian officials to assist in overseeing U.S. operations, but it has ceased the training of fresh soldiers. The initiatives are currently supported based on their efficacy and their conformity with U.S. goals. (Blanchard & Humud 25)

Another critical component of the U.S. military strategy is the training and equipping of Iraqi and Kurdish security forces with powerful arms and ammunition. Through this approach, the terrorists are to be gradually defeated, seized territory and hostages would be released. The international coalition has trained more than thirty thousand Iraqi army, Peshmerga fighters, police, border guards, and local fighters. In Iraq, around 3,700 American troops provide guidance or training. The U.S. also uses Special Forces to help with information collecting, hostage rescues, and the capture of important ISIS leaders in Syria and Iraq. (Waśko-Owsiejczuk 328)

2.2.3 Cutting ISIS Source

ISIS to continue its military operations in Syria and Iraq and supply assistance to its international branches has used local resources from occupied regions. This terrorist

organization is well funded. Counterterrorism measures are further complicated by their reliance on local income sources, which diminishes its susceptibility to foreign financial sanctions. Although kidnappings and bank robberies make immediate profits, ISIS's ongoing revenue is derived through the control of public resources, including oil and antiquities. However, these approaches may not be sustainable in the long term. Furthermore destabilising the area is the fact that ISIS's hold over these resources makes it more difficult for the governments of Syria and Iraq to provide their people with fundamental necessities. (Blanchard & Humud 27)

One major factor hindering ISIS's financial capability has been the coalition's counter-finance measures. The alliance has hampered ISIS's cash streams by exchanging information and working together on financial intelligence, especially when it comes to eliminating key financiers and targeting energy assets. ISIS's capacity to impose unlawful taxes is weakened as the amount of area under its control decreases, further impairing its financial standing. In addition, the coalition has worked closely with the Iraqi government to stop ISIS from taking advantage of the country's banking system. This entails locating covert ISIS assets and stopping the transfer of cash reserves via reputable companies. (Office of the Spokesperson Washington, DC February 6, 2019)

Through designations of UN Security Council sanctions and regional fusion centres, coalition members worldwide coordinate their operations. With 54 members and observers, the Counter-ISIS Finance Group (CIFG) is leading attempts to follow changing income streams, improve information exchange, and offer technical support to sabotage ISIS's financial channels. In addition, CIFG leads international campaigns to uphold resolutions from the UN Security Council that forbid assisting ISIS. (Office of the Spokesperson Washington, DC February 6, 2019)

2.2.4 Global coalition

The U.S. Department of State restated its commitment to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS at the Global Coalition Washington Ministerial on February 6. Since 2014, an alliance including 79 nations has greatly reduced the military ability, geographical rule, financial leadership, and internet influence of ISIS using coordinated operations. These efforts include military campaigns with neighbouring nations, stabilization actions, international cooperation in counter-terrorism strategies, and humanitarian assistance. The alliance has effectively liberated almost all of the land that was formerly under the authority of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, eradicated important commanders, and carried out countless airstrikes on ISIS sites. Currently, the main objective is to reinforce these achievements, guarantee the complete collapse of ISIS, and provide assistance for ongoing efforts to establish stability in the area. (Office of the Spokesperson, Washington, DC February 6, 2019)

Since 2014, the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS has been actively involved in bringing economic, humanitarian, and stabilizing support to both Iraq and Syria. Supporting stabilization operations in regions recovered from ISIS, this assistance more than \$20 billion donated by coalition members aims to stop the group from resurrecting. Large commitments have been made for stabilization initiatives in north eastern Syria and Iraq, which are essential for safeguarding military victories and tackling the root causes of terrorism. With significant contributions from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the alliance has obtained over \$325 million in funding from 15 partners since April 2018 for stability and early recovery projects in northeast Syria. (Office of the Spokesperson, Washington, DC February 6, 2019)

Furthermore, the United States has contributed more than \$9.1 billion in humanitarian aid to individuals impacted by the Syrian conflict, making it the greatest single country contributor. Along with educating Syrian nationals to international standards and removing approximately

25,500 explosive risks from liberated regions, the coalition has also been instrumental in the removal of explosive dangers. In order to enable the safe return of displaced communities, stabilization efforts have concentrated on the repair of vital infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, and water facilities. Going ahead, the coalition is still dedicated to helping international initiatives aimed at re-establishing vital services, eliminating explosive risks, and offering humanitarian aid to individuals impacted by the fighting. For stabilization, efforts in northeast Syria to be successful, cooperation with local governing bodies and ongoing support from foreign partners are crucial. (Office of the Spokesperson, Washington, DC February 6, 2019)

2.2.5 Operation Inherent Resolve

Coalition planners developed operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) in late 2014 as a three-phase campaign with the objective of degrading and eventually eliminating ISIS. The initial phase consisted of a strategic defence in Iraq, which was strengthened by coalition airstrikes to hinder ISIS's progress and initiatives to train and equip new Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Peshmerga brigades. The campaign will change to a counteroffensive during the second phase, with the objective of isolating and liberating major strategic positions in Iraq, particularly Mosul, with a final goal of expelling ISIS from major Iraqi population centers. The third and final phase addressed Syria, where coalition-backed ground forces would target the remaining ISIS strongholds. Stabilization efforts were also implemented to prevent the return of the conflict. (W. Watson, The conflict with ISIS: Operation Inherent Resolve)

However, ISIS did not remain absent. In mid-September 2014, ISIS launched a significant attack on Kobani, a Kurdish-majority town in northern Syria. The attack involved a group of approximately 4,000 militants and numerous armoured vehicles. The Kurdish militia, the YPG, which was defending Kobani, was unable to compete and overpowered. The coalition reacted by increasing its air campaign to assist the YPG, therefore removing airpower from Iraq. In January 2015, ISIS abandoned its attacks after coalition airstrikes caused significant casualties on ISIS and supported Kurdish defenders over a period of four months. The battle for Kobani resulted in significant losses for ISIS and showed the

effectiveness of U.S. air travel support for the YPG, despite diplomatic obstacles imposed by the YPG's connection with the PKK, a terrorist organization designated by the U.S. Department of State. (W. Watson, The conflict with ISIS: Operation Inherent Resolve)

CJTF-OIR stressed the rebuilding of the ISF in conjunction with the battle for Kobani, establishing training facilities at Al Assad Air Base and Camp Taji by the conclusion of 2014. Initially, U.S. forces were crucial in the training process; however, by early 2015, other coalition members, including Spain and France, began to assume principal responsibility for the training mission. The conflict in Iraq continued to be controlled, despite the support of the coalition. ISIS continued to threaten coalition forces and challenge various regions, as shown by the confrontations near Al Assad Air Base and following installation of U.S. weapons for counterbattery fire. (W. Watson, The conflict with ISIS: Operation Inherent Resolve)

ISIS had been considered by U.S. leaders to be in a defensive position by mid-2015. The successful Iraqi operation of regaining Tikrit, which emphasized the potential and challenges of Iraqi self-reliance in defeating ISIS, strengthened this view. Nevertheless, the coalition's strategies had to be revised in response to obstacles in Al Anbar Province, particularly the fall of AR Ramadi to ISIS in May 2015. Additional advisors and U.S troops arrived to provide assistance to Iraqi forces as the coalition shifted its focus to the liberation of Al Anbar. Iraqi forces made initial progress in the campaign to liberate AR Ramadi, which commenced in July 2015. Nevertheless, the extreme summer heat and ISIS's active defence impeded the offensive. The coalition's efforts in 2015 were successful in substantially reducing ISIS territory and causing serious casualties on its militants, including many commanders, despite these challenges. Thousands of ISF and Kurdish fighters had been trained by the coalition, which had liberated substantial territories in Iraq and Syria by October 2015. This established the foundation for future victories against ISIS. (W. Watson, The conflict with ISIS: Operation Inherent Resolve)

The U.S.-led coalition and its partners in Syria achieved considerable victories in the anti-ISIS campaign because of their military operations. The territorial control of ISIS in Syria has significantly

decreased because of the Syrian Democratic Forces' (SDF) extensive air support and ground operations, notably in the final phase, which targeted the Hajin area. The coalition accomplished a significant milestone in the disintegration of ISIS's caliphate with the collapse of Hajin in December 2018. The success of these efforts was underlined by President Trump's declaration in March 2019 that all ISIS-controlled territory in Syria had been cleared. Despite efforts, ISIS continued to pose a substantial threat in Syria, despite its territorial defeat. The group's capacity to commit acts of terrorism was demonstrated by numerous suicide bombs in Syria, despite the loss of its territorial stronghold. The incident emphasized the necessity of ongoing surveillance and counterterrorism initiatives in Syria to prevent the return of ISIS and resolve other security challenges in the region. (W. Watson, The conflict with ISIS: Operation Inherent Resolve)

2.3 Challenges and Obstacles in Defeating Terrorism and Extremist Groups

Despite U.S. effort to eradicate terrorist shelter in Syria and Iraq, The Islamic State (IS) is still a serious worldwide danger even after losing a significant amount of its territory. IS established a network of secret operations in Europe that was undetected until the strikes in Paris. This network, controlled by the Amn al Kharji unit, works separately from the falling forces of IS. Although it is losing ground in Syria and Iraq, IS has already sent hundreds of fighters to Europe and Turkey to ensure sure it remains able to attack. (Hoffman 2016)

Additionally, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the commander of the Islamic State (IS), has recommended the possibility that combatants join other IS branches if they are unable to access the key areas in Syria or Iraq. This action could trigger these branches to grow into independent violence groups. The risk is further exacerbated by the potential return of European combatants who have acquired battlefield expertise with IS. U.S. intelligence officials have noted that IS has gathered an extensive army of well-trained radicals by attracting more foreign militants than al-Qaida did in the 1980s and 1990s. (Hoffman 2016)

IS leader Abu Muhammad al-Adnani encouraging followers to commit separate acts of terror. This appeal has been remarkably successful, resulting in hundreds of attacks across the globe and demonstrating IS's capacity to promote violence with greater efficacy than al-Qaida. The continuous and growing threat posed by the Islamic State is further illustrated by this decentralized approach to terrorism. (Hoffman 2016)

A violent scene that occurred in January 2020, where ISIS militants aggressively attacked al-Sinaa jail close to Hasaka, northeast Syria. U.S. military troops assisted the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic troops (SDF) finally take back control of the facility. However many IS captives managed to escape into the barren borders between Syria and Iraq during the jail violation. Shortly afterwards, close to the Syrian-Turkish border, U.S. troops managed to kill IS Commander Abu Ibrahim al Hashimi al Qurayshi. (Heydemann 2022)

The above events illustrate the continuous danger that IS poses and point out serious obstacles in the way of American counterterrorism operations in Syria. The U.S. has changed its approach in Syria since 2015, changing from extensive military involvement to a more focused counterterrorism effort. This adjustment was a part of a larger revising of American foreign policy sought to establish more reasonable and capable goals, as National Security Council Middle East Coordinator Brett McGurk expressed out. (Heydemann 2022)

Although the United States has shown that it is capable of carrying out successful high-risk operations, including the attack on al-Qurayshi, these steps have not been enough to defeat IS. Considerable difficulties arise in the larger setting of eastern Syria. A complicated and unstable environment is created in this area by fierce rivalry between different state and non-state players. Profiting from local complaints and the disjointed political environment of the region, IS has taken advantage of this instability. Although the U.S. collaboration with the Kurdish-led SDF has been successful, it has increased hostilities in Arab-majority regions where the

SDF is seen as an authoritarian and illegitimate force. Undermining the U.S. goal of long-term stability, this has produced an atmosphere conducive to IS recruitment and operations. (Heydemann 2022)

Moreover, the absence of means for local government and stability hindered initiatives to cope with the fundamental causes of IS insistence. Other players in the region, like the Assad government, Russia, and Iran, have been working harder and with more resources to improve governance and solve local issues. The United States will need an overall strategy that extends beyond weakening IS's forces if it hopes to defeat IS forever. The main goal of this approach needs to be to promote local government that resolves complaints and gives authority to respectable local players. A change from state building to governance building may provide the framework for a more long-lasting response to the IS menace. This method would be in line with the "root causes strategy" of the Biden administration for resolving the Central American migration issue, which seeks to enhance government, human rights, security, and economic circumstances. (Heydemann 2022)

U.S. counterterrorism efforts have been successful in some military operations, their long-term effectiveness is hindered by a more focused emphasis that ignores the larger socio-political factors that support IS. In areas of Syria impacted by IS, long-term peace and stability need a more comprehensive strategy that combines counterterrorism with solid backing for local government and stabilizing initiatives. (Heydemann 2022)

Conclusion:

In summary, the examination of U.S. counterterrorism strategies in Syria demonstrates a dynamic and multifaceted strategy that is designed to mitigate the threat posed by terrorist organizations, with a particular emphasis on ISIS. Strategies that were implemented prior to 9/11 prioritized diplomatic initiatives and intelligence gathering, while those implemented subsequent to 9/11 prioritized military interventions and international alliances. In Syria, specific strategies, including the training of opposition forces, the solitary existence of ISIS funding sources, and the coordination with a global coalition, have been instrumental in the reduction of ISIS's capabilities. Operation Inherent Resolve, in particular, has been instrumental in the recovery of territory from ISIS's control.

However, the chapter also emphasizes the substantial difficulties and obstacles that must be overcome in order to defeat terrorism and extremist groups in Syria. The complex geopolitical landscape, shifting alliances, and the resilience of terrorist organizations in adapting to countermeasures are among the challenges. The ongoing struggle against terrorism in Syria is made clear by the necessity of ongoing surveillance, collaboration, and adaptation in addressing this global danger, despite notable successes.

Chapter 3: The U.S Engagement with Regional Actors in Syria

Introduction

The complex network of regional alliances in the Middle East has a substantial impact on the progression of the Syrian conflict. Syria's geostrategic location holds a great importance, attracting the attention of both regional powers and large global players that want to impose their influence and shape the country's identity. The United States, as a prominent global power, has established alliances in order to control the violence and manage the repercussions of the Syrian crisis. The interdependence of its strategic aims and alliances with major regional allies, such as the GCC, Jordan, Israel, and Turkey, poses both possibilities and problems for U.S. foreign policy.

Nevertheless, the involvement of Iran and Russia has hindered the United States efforts to maintain stability in Syria. The nation has emerged as a central location for political conflicts and a battleground for proxy warfare, therefore facilitating the proliferation of terrorists. Turkey's concerns over U.S. backing of the Syrian Kurdish groups, seen as crucial allies in the battle against ISIS, have been shaped by the U.S. approach to counter terrorism. The offering of this assistance has generated friction between the United States and Turkey, posing a dilemma for the United States in its pursuit of its objectives and execution of operations in the region. While the United States has formed important relationships in the area, the intricate dynamics involving Iran and Russia, together with tensions with Turkey, persistently hinder its efforts to foster peace and combat terrorism in Syria.

3.1 Regional Dynamics in Syria

Syria exemplifies a failed state subjected to the ambitions of foreign powers, transforming into a battleground of shifting alliances among the US, Russia, and Turkey. The competition centers on the strategic routes of natural gas pipelines from the Persian Gulf to global markets. A potential Kurdish state in northern Syria and Iraq, through which these pipelines would pass,

adds another layer of complexity. This new state could engage in territorial conflicts with Turkey and possibly Iran, altering regional power dynamics and alliance possibilities, impacting the entire international system. The dynamic nature of the Syrian crisis creates uncertainty about alliances. Despite being partners in NATO, the United States and Turkey have opposing opinions of assisting Syrian Kurds in their fight against ISIS. There has been a transition from hostility to cooperation between Russia and Turkey. Additionally, the United States and Russia, although being competitors in the oil sector, both support the Syrian Kurds, which is putting a pressure on their relationship with Turkey. The dynamic nature of these coalitions adds complexity and unpredictability to the war. (Güner & Koç)

International actors changing interests affect the complicated dynamics of the area around Syria. By the middle of 2013, the opposition in Syria was having losses, and Western countries were hesitant to get directly involved militarily. This made things worse between opposition allies, especially the Gulf States and Turkey. In 2011, Western countries were the first to help the Syrian resistance. Later, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey joined them. Iran and Russia, on the other hand, stuck with backing the Assad government. (The Syria Conflict and the Geopolitics of the Region Jane Kinninmont)

The civil war in Syria caused profound impacts on the rest of the area. Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, and Iraq, which are all closed by, have had challenges handling the large number of Syrian refugees, which has caused concerns with the local people. Sectarian tensions have grown because worse violence has spread to Lebanon and Iraq. Concerns about Kurdish independence and Turkey's backing for Syrian fighters have made things worse. In terms of politics, the situation has made things harder between Iran, Turkey, and Israel. Because Iran backs the Syrian government, relations with Turkey and Hamas have become tense. Turkey's strategy of "zero problems" has failed, and its relationship with Israel is still tense. The war in

Syria has made the area less stable and raised security concerns for Israel. (The Syria Conflict and the Geopolitics of the Region Jane Kinninmont)

The unrest in North Africa and the Middle East has changed Syria's geopolitical environment in a big way. Major players' policies and tactics have changed because of the fall of autocratic governments in nearby countries and the rise of Islamist groups. This has affected how they deal with Damascus. The revolution's spread to Syria has made things even more difficult from a military point of view, making it harder for people with different goals to work together. (Demir & Rijnoveanu)

Major parts of Syria's north, east, and south are not under government control, and the country's infrastructure has been destroyed on a big scale. Moscow and Tehran's backing is the Syrian regime's sole chance of remaining in power. Russia wants to build a security force in Syria that can keep the country stable without outside help. However, this will be hard to do once the Russians leave because command and control will be weaker. On the other hand, Iran wants to keep things unstable so that it continues to receive help and build up its weapons near Israel. Large-scale interference from other countries has badly weakened Syria's authority, making it unlikely that the country will return to the way it was before the war. The area that Damascus used to rule has shrunk, and now different groups and foreign forces control different areas. In the north, there are attacks by Turkey; in the northeast, there is an area of insurgents; and in the south, there are U.S. troops around the Al Tanf base. This breaking up shows how far Syria has collapsed and how several issues remaining it has to face. (Magruder JR. & Mchaty, 2020)

The United States' policy in Syria has not yielded any positive outcomes since 2011, which has prompted a change in course. Regardless the United States' efforts to combat ISIS, eliminate terrorist threats, prevent the use of chemical weapons, and alleviate civilian suffering;

the involvement of several external actors has presented significant challenges. The United States, Russia, Iran, Turkey, and Israel, as well as U.S.-supported Kurdish forces, have all found Syria to be a flashpoint for conflicts between regional and extra-regional powers. The situation is further complicated by the external involvement of these actors, who have adopted a stance in the conflict, supporting either the Assad regime or the opposition. Syria's dependency on Russia and Iran has been exacerbated by the sanctions policy, which has further marginalized U.S. influence. The U.S. is faced with a decision between continuing a failed diplomatic strategy or adopting a new one, as the Establishment of these regional powers hindered U.N.-led diplomatic efforts and exacerbated the humanitarian crisis. Although the suggested plan intends to provide the Syrian government with targeted assistance and progressive sanctions relief, it fails to address the more extensive strategic challenge of Syria's cooperation with Russia and Iran. (Feltman & Balian 2021)

3.2 U.S relationship with regional alliances in Syria

The United States engagement in the Middle East is closely linked to its ties with other regional allies. These partnerships are essential for the United States as a matter of security cooperation, economic interests, and geopolitical strategy. Gaining insight into these linkages is essential for examining how the United States strategically manages the intricate network of regional factors in the Syrian war. The following sections explore the United States' connections with significant regional players, emphasizing the strategic significance and difficulties involved with each partnership.

3.2.1 Relations with Israel

Israel is an important partner of the US in its Middle Eastern power expansion. Not like previous U.S. allies, Israel is not dependent on American forces operating on its front lines. However, the cooperation is centred on strengthening common security interests, with the

United States protecting Israel's ability to self-defence. The U.S. attempts to reduce down on its worldwide responsibilities and Iran's growing influence make this in particular notable. In their National Security and Defence Strategies, the Trump Administration underlined this and the need for friends to bear some of the collective security cost. (Stavridis 2018)

The Syrian civil war, which started in 2011, ended many decades of continuous dispute and diplomatic talks between Israel and Syria. Through U.S. mediators, Israel conducted indirect peace negotiations with Assad before the outbreak of the conflict. Nevertheless, the conflict dissolved any possibility of a peace agreement without effect, forcing Israel to pursue new strategies to resolve the Syrian crisis. Israel had a choice between actively assisting the moderate opposition and refraining from involvement in order to save its own interests. Israel selected for the second option considering of the instabilities of the opposition and the presence of Islamist organizations. Responding to strikes, stopping the transfer of advanced weapons to Hezbollah, and stopping WMD from getting to terrorists were the criteria for involvement. (Rabinovich, The United States and Israel vs. the Syria of Bashar al-Assad)

Particularly against the growing Iranian threat, especially in Syria, Israel's aggressive defensive posture is consistent with US strategy. Having fought Iran and its allies directly, Israel has amassed a great deal of operational expertise in intelligence, cyberwarfare, and missile defence. For the United States, this expertise is priceless since Israeli actions test American capabilities against those of Iran, Hezbollah, and even Russia. In addition, Israel shields important Middle Eastern locations including American bases from Iranian missile threats with its sophisticated missile defence network, most of which was co-developed with the United States. (Stavridis 2018)

Israel's strategy evolved throughout time to address emerging challenges such as ISIS, heightened Iranian and Hezbollah engagement, and the growing military presence of Russia.

In an effort to prevent conflicts, Israel provided covert humanitarian aid, supported opposition forces in the Golan Heights, and collaborated with Russia. The presence of Iranian and Hezbollah soldiers close to Israel's border presented additional challenges after Assad's victory with Russian and Iranian assistance. Israel launched airstrikes against Iranian military bases in Syria with the aim of preventing the construction of military outposts that have the capability to launch attacks on Israel. Despite occasional challenges with Russia, Israel maintained in its efforts to oppose Iranian influence with the assistance of the United States. (Rabinovich, *The United States and Israel vs. the Syria of Bashar al-Assad*)

As Arab allies of the United States come to understand the common danger posed by Iran, ISIS, and the Muslim Brotherhood, regional dynamics are changing. As the Houthi rebels launch missiles toward Saudi Arabia, the country now perceives the Iranian danger more clearly, just as Israel has always been concerned about Hezbollah. Though formal coordination is missing because Israel and Arab governments do not have diplomatic links, this convergence of interests has resulted in comparable strategies among U.S. allies. Notwithstanding its diminished involvement, the United States will have to take the initiative in enabling these regional allies to coordinate covertly against the Iranian threat. Driven by mutual commitment to regional security and similar dangers, this developing alliance marks a major change in Middle Eastern geopolitics. (Stavridis 2018)

3.2.2 Relations with Jordan

Being more concerned with maintaining its own security than with Bashar al-Assad's future, Jordan has taken a cautious strategy to the Syrian civil war. Jordan, worried about the spread of instability, has been determined to find a diplomatic solution to the war while slowly establishing a stand against Assad. The Royal Palace has experienced some benefit from the crisis, as it has been able to reinforce its domestic and international support in the face of

danger. Fears of political and security impact, especially from the over half a million refugees arriving and the potential to encourage Assad, have shaped Jordan's approach. Considering the doubts surrounding Assad's future, his existing authority continues to pose a danger to Jordan, forcing Amman to preserve diplomatic relations with Damascus. (Julien Barnes-Dacey, Jordan: Stability at all costs)

As a result for the highly dangers unrest posed by Syria, the Jordanian military has reinforced its border with enhanced Western support, and establishing Local militias to safeguard against any Syrian invasions. Internally speaking, the violence has exacerbated Jordan's political and economic problems, which have been festering since the Arab upheavals of 2011. Jordan has not faced as much turmoil as some of the other nations in the area, but there has been an increase in dissatisfaction among both traditional opposition groups and previously loyal supporters, who are now standing up for change. The Hashemite palace is very worried about the increasing influence of Sunni Islamist forces, since this may potentially strengthen similar organizations in Jordan, posing a danger to the authority of the monarchy and perhaps triggering a strong reaction that can lead to a conflict. (Julien Barnes-Dacey, Jordan: Stability at all costs)

Regarding U.S.-Jordanian relations, the United States has a primary objective of maintaining Jordan's security and stability among the difficulties caused by the emergence of ISIL, continuous conflicts in neighbouring Syria, and economic limitations. The United States' departments work together to provide aid that is consistent with strategic objectives, addressing security, development, and humanitarian needs, through the coordinated efforts defined in the Integrated Country Strategy (ICS). Averaging \$1.4 billion a year, this funding helps Jordan play a crucial role in the anti-ISIL alliance, promotes economic development and employment opportunities, and provides refugees and host communities with important assistance. U.S. initiatives also prioritize military collaboration, financing for counterterrorism, and attempts to

undermine radical beliefs, therefore strengthening Jordan's ability to fight terrorism and maintain regional security. (U.S assistance to Jordan 2017)

Against its previous diplomatic planning, Jordan has joined the U.S.-led coalition against ISIS. Previously refusing to mention ISIS by name, the nation now recognizes the danger the organization poses. Having an extensive border with Syria and Iraq and roughly 1,800–2,000 Jordanians fighting alongside ISIS and JN, Jordan is wary of possible security threats, such as the existence of "sleeper cells" among Syrian refugees. Though Jordan opposes Bashar al-Assad's government, it stays silent to prevent penalties. King Abdullah has stressed Jordan's need to use intelligence and logistical cooperation with the goal of sending soldiers overseas to fight terrorism. Jordanian authorities are boosting up their domestic campaign against ISIS followers, holding individuals as well as banning extreme ideas in the name of moderate Islam. (Omari 2014)

Violent Salafism and ISIS, as well as a chance for extremists to spread among Syrian refugees cause significant risks to Jordan. Jordan closed its northern and eastern borders in response to this worry after a suicide attack in June 2016 that claimed the lives of many border guards. With up to 2,500 Jordanians reported had joined Sunni extremist organizations in Syria and Iraq, Jordan is one of the primary sources of fighters to ISIL. Once back home. These warriors become a threat to national security, as shown by the increase in assaults on tourist destinations and security personnel, like as the December 2016 incident in Karak that claimed 17 lives. Particularly concerned by the ideology of ISIL spreading among Jordan's monarchy supporting tribes, Jordanian government worry that assaults on the Christian minority could spark religious conflict. Jordan's tourist industry has also been affected by this instability; visitor numbers have been falling yearly since 2010, which has made the nation's economic problems worse. Therefore, reflecting the instability bought by the Syrian civil war (Immenkamp, Syrian crisis: Impact on Jordan: Think-tank: European parliament)

3.2.3 Relations with Golf Countries

Arab identity and unity are still strong, even though Arab nationalism is on the decline. Many Arabs see a military operation on any one of the 22 Arab nations as an attack on all 22 Arab states. This perspective of view, along with rooted anti-American sentiment and mistrust of American objectives, results in an assumption that U.S. activities eventually help Israel. Consequently, without specific UN approval, any military action spearheaded by the US or NATO would be seen as illegal and unacceptable. Clear UN approval and international legitimacy are essential for the acceptance of a military campaign against Assad intended to reduce hardship in Syria. Despite the lack of public support for such operations, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries are probably going to back U.S. actions. In order to secure support and legitimacy for its actions, Washington sees the importance of handling the Syrian crisis and realizes the importance of following to international standards. (Abdulla 2013)

The US and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have strategic reasons for enhancing their defences. For the US, it provides a cost-effective means to preserve its influence in the area without sending soldiers or setting up permanent facilities. This strategy corresponds to home worries about "overexposure" and "American retrenchment" in the Middle East. It also minimizes the impact of military equipment from outside the West in the Gulf and reinforces the GCC's defence autonomy goal. Without forcing GCC governments to break up current international alliances, cooperation gives them access to modern technology and enhances relations with Western military systems. Defence cooperation encourages, every aspect taken into account, enhanced security cooperation, technical progress, and cooperation with Western security goals in the region. (Ardemagni, Defence integration refashions the US-GCC alliance)

Effective integration of US-GCC military faces substantial hurdles despite a favourable background, especially because of internal rivalry and mistrust within Gulf rulers. Developing

genuine partnerships among these states, especially regarding the exchange of intelligence and surveillance information to resolve common security concerns, is the main challenge. Defence cooperation goals faced obstacles by the ongoing conflicts among the GCC, which were highlighted by the 2017 Gulf crisis involving Qatar. Currently, Gulf governing bodies prioritize bilateral cooperation over multilateral engagement with the United States and other foreign partners, requiring a major shift in a broader context. As stressed in previous talks, adopting a multilateral approach might be essential to assessing the efficiency of collaboration within the GCC framework, especially on military issues. (Ardemagni, Defence integration refashions the US-GCC alliance)

However, As GCC nations continue their efforts to combat ISIL; the U.S. military saw a greater opportunities to gain insight from GCC capabilities and potential future contributions to regional security. Therefor enhancing their air defence, special operations, and command and control capabilities. Additionally, there are also risks that cannot be avoided, such as the fact that different GCC countries may have different political goals and may act in ways that affect Israel's security worries. It will need consistent U.S. leadership and strategic planning that balance support for GCC allies with overall regional objectives to preserve unity and address these issues. (Dalton 2014)

Saudi Arabia and Qatar were among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations that manifested major involvement in the Syrian civil conflict, which started in March 2011. Both nations provided assistance to opposition forces against the Assad government, with Saudi Arabia's contribution driven by its rivalry with Iran, which supported Assad. Saudi Arabia first engaged with restraint; however, it ultimately adopted a more assertive approach toward Assad. In order to balance out extremist elements backed by Qatar, Saudi Arabia provided early assistance by assisting organizations like Jaysh al Islam. Meanwhile, Qatar offered significant financial and logistical assistance to opposition troops, contributing a total of \$3 billion by

2013. The purpose of this significant funding was to expand Qatar's influence and challenge the dominant position of Saudi Arabia. (Mason2023)

In 2012, U.S. authorities saw that Qatar and Saudi Arabia were providing substantial weapons support to hard-line Islamist militants. This factor exacerbated the division among the Syrian opposition and escalated regional conflicts, ultimately resulting in the wider Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) crisis extending from 2017 to 2021. The war dynamics took a substantial change with the emergence of ISIS and the participation of the Russian military in 2015. Saudi Arabia considered the deployment of ground forces, but encountered a stronger Assad government. (Mason2023)

Starting in 2018, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other countries in the Gulf region shifted their attention towards providing humanitarian assistance and engaging in diplomatic initiatives, which ultimately resulted in the establishment of normalized relations with Syria. The adjustment in strategy was motivated by a practical consideration for maintaining peace in the area and the acknowledgement that Assad was expected to remain his position of authority. (Mason2023)

In 2023, Saudi Arabia engaged in diplomatic efforts with Iran and intended to restore relations with Syria. They presented economic proposals and requirements for Syria's reinstatement into the Arab League, along with UAE, Bahrain, and Oman. The objective of this policy was to diminish Iranian influence and highlighting a practical approach to diplomacy and regional stability. Overall, the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) approach to Syria shifted from actively supporting opposition troops to prioritizing diplomatic and humanitarian initiatives. This development is a result of intricate regional dynamics and a wider geopolitical environment, which includes factors such as U.S. policy, Russian participation, and ties within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). (Mason2023)

3.3 U.S Engagement with Syrian Kurdish Forces (YPG/SDF)

Under the Obama administration, there was a strong partnership between the United States and the PYD/YPG with the goal of strengthening the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in their fight against ISIL. This cooperation resulted in notable advancements. The cooperation between the U.S. and the Kurds was established based on distinct regional interests that warranted their alignment. The PYD/YPG, driven by a strong political goal of establishing a Kurdish state in northeastern Syria, had to make a critical choice: either maintain control of Rojava with the backing of the United States or relinquish power to the Syrian government in return for Russian safeguarding against Turkey. Choosing the first option, the Kurds had a newfound feeling of determination after the liberation of Kobane sparked their desire for their own homeland. (Aziz 12)

The war against ISIL helped the U.S. and YPG work together more closely, which strengthened the PYD's credibility and its Rojava agenda. As a result, the Kurds were able to establish themselves as crucial partners to the United States, exerting substantial influence in the area. The PYD intentionally used their anti-ISIL endeavours to acquire notoriety in the area, similar to the approach taken by the Iraqi Kurds in 2003 when they supported the U.S. occupation in Iraq. This strategy shown its effectiveness, as Western media often depicted the PYD/YPG as the United States' most efficient indigenous ally in the fight against ISIL. Although the PYD has connections to the PKK, it managed to escape being officially designated as a terrorist organization by the United States. However, secret talks between the United States, PYD, and Turkey highlighted their strategic cooperation. As a result, the United States began providing direct military assistance to the People's Protection Units (YPG) in 2015. The Syrian Kurds strongly sought American attention, recognizing the crucial role of the United States in the battle. The PYD, positioning itself as democratic organizations, actively

pursued foreign support, with a special focus on obtaining the assistance of the United States. The PYD sought to solidify its status as a dependable U.S. ally by creating an image of inclusiveness and democracy, by embracing other Kurdish factions, as well as other ethnic and religious groups in Syria. (Aziz 12)

Although the United States of America is officially opposed to the establishment of a Kurdish state, its actual position is unclear. At first, there was hesitation to become involved with Syrian Kurds, particularly the PYD/YPG, because of worries about the previous engagement of Kurds in Iraq. Even though there were cautions about Kurdish ambitions to achieve autonomy and their participation in violence, the United States acknowledged them as essential partners in the fight against ISIS. The hesitancy may be attributed, in part, to the Obama administration's prioritization on settling the Syrian war. Nevertheless, the start of conflict caused the United States to explicitly state its stance on the goals of the Kurdish people, regardless of the absence of a formalized plan due to the Kurds' dispersion across many nations. (Aziz 13)

In addition to the efforts of the United States and its coalition allies, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were important in the struggle against ISIS. The strategic location and stronger defences of Al Raqqa made its capture very difficult. With these obstacles, the SDF that consists of around 45,000 men from the Syrian Arab Coalition and the Kurdish YPG showed to be quite successful in battle. Having minimal heavy military equipment and protective gear, the SDF proved incredible strength and tactical skill. The SDF's performance on the battlefield was crucial in eliminating ISIS's hold on the region, despite the alliance's ability to provide provisions and training to only a small portion of the organization by the end of 2016. (W. Watson 63)

Under the Trump administration, the United States changed its emphasis in Syria from only destroying ISIS to also limiting Iran's influence and encouraging a political change in the Syrian government. Though the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were subsequently formed from the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), the United States lacked a political plan to include the YPG into Syria. The YPG therefore remained exposed to outside attacks, and the United States got into the conflict militarily without any interest in Syria's political destiny. The US started arming and training the YPG/SDF to fight ISIS since 2014. After a military alliance lasting four years, the YPG established a system of government in northeast Syria and captured an important part of the border between Turkey and Syria. (Haenni Iran, Syria, Iraq. contradictions and paradoxes of American politics)

After ISIS was defeated, Turkish concerns increased because of remaining U.S. military assistance for the YPG/SDF, which led to a rise in Turkish military presence on the border. This in turn caused the United States to establish up observation points and engage out cooperative patrols with the SDF in order to protect (YPG/SDF) controlled areas. These actions affirmed Turkey's fears that the United States was supporting the PKK's forces and therefore creating an environment of scepticism and a growing military that hindered efforts to find a diplomatic settlement in Syria. (Haenni Iran, Syria, Iraq. contradictions and paradoxes of American politics)

3.4 U.S-turkey tensions over conflicting interest

The Sèvres Treaty of 1920, which endangered Turkey's territorial integrity by proposing the creation of an autonomous Kurdish nation, is associated with triggering the historical struggle over Kurdish self-governance in Turkey. This historical context has created a deep-seated apprehension, known as "Sèvres Syndrome," among Turkey about foreign challenges to its sovereignty, especially from Western countries. Turkey's ongoing opposition to any

indications of Kurdish identity or demands for self-governance, particularly in areas such as the southeast, has been caused by these concerns. The current emphasis has been on the United States' involvement in the area, namely in Iraq. American assistance has strengthened Kurdish troops and played a part in the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Therefore, the recognition of Kurdish self-governance, together with the possibility of Syrian Kurds gaining similar acknowledgment with the help of the United States, creates concerns in Turkey on the possible threat to its territorial unity posed by Kurdish aspirations. Consequently, the internal dynamics of Turkey are closely connected to the developing situation in the Syrian crisis, as the way Kurdish autonomy is seen and the assistance received from foreign sources influence Turkish policies and reactions. (Meoni)

Turkey is mostly concerned about the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), who are the main U.S. ally in the war against IS. Turkey sees the Democratic Syrian Union Party (PYD), the largest Syrian Kurdish political party, and the YPG as branches of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), which has been labelled as a terrorist organization by the US, EU, and other allies. Turkey has maintained that a connection with the YPG would undermine broader US-Turkish relationships and that the US should choose between Turkey and the YPG. In order to manage the tensions with Turkey, the US administration has chosen to classify several Kurdish factions that are not affiliated with the YPG as the primary force in Syria. These groups will get training and resources to carry out joint operations against the Islamic State. The lack of success may be attributed, among other reasons, to the fact that Kurds from different political factions often joined the ranks of the YPG because to the superior weaponry and assistance they get. This further intensified the already existing political conflicts among non-YPG Kurds. (Akyeşilmen et al., 2020)

Turkey's involvement in the Syrian civil war has had a substantial impact on its relationship with the United States. In the beginning, Turkey maintained stable relations with the United

States by opposing the Assad regime and supporting opposition groups. However, tensions heightened when the United States started supporting the YPG, views as a significant security risk. Relations worsened significantly after Russia's intervention in Syria and the Turkish government's accusation that Fethullah Gülen, a US-based preacher, was responsible for the failed coup attempt in Turkey in 2016. To address these issues, Turkey implemented a more proactive foreign policy, carrying out many military actions. Although Turkey managed to establish control over some areas in Syria, it was unsuccessful in forcing the United States to end its assistance for the YPG. In addition, Turkey's aspirations to become a regional mediator were blocked by a regional order centred on the Gulf, which sought to restrict the influence of both Iran and Turkey. These events demonstrate the complex link between Turkey's national security concerns, regional goals, and its growing relationship with the United States. (Gocer 2023)

The United States long history of engaging in military interventions and counter-terrorism operations in the Middle East, often depending on local partners such as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The significance of this relationship is underscored by recent accomplishments, such as the eradication of prominent ISIS figures. Nevertheless, Turkey's objectives present challenges to this cooperation, since prospective Turkish military actions have the potential to disrupt the alliance between the Kurdish and American troops, thereby hindering counterterrorism activities. The intensification of Russian military activities in close proximity to Turkish targets could lead the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to seek stronger partnerships with Russia, so adding complexity to the relationship between the United States and Russia. These modifications have the potential to impact counter-terrorism efforts and need more cooperation between the two countries. (Vugteveen & Farrell-Molloy 2022)

3.5 Influence of Regional Powers on U.S Policy in Syria:

The presence of major powers the U.S, had created a complicated situation in Syria, and this has undermined U.S effort to stabilize Syria and counter terroristic acts. Aside from shaping the global environment, these regional players also have a direct effect on U.S. policy and strategic choices. To understand what the U.S. participation in Syria, it is important to know the roles and goals of major regional forces like Iran and Russia. Iran and Russia, in particular, have an effect on U.S. policy and what that means for the security of the area and American strategic goals. These attempts were hard to achieve as each actor is promoting and shaping the course of the conflict therefor creating a power vacuum and unending conflict.

3.5.1 Presence of Iran

Iran has greatly increased its presence in Syria since 2012 by providing armed organizations with weapons, funding, and training. The influence of these militias supported by Iran has significantly altered the distribution of power in favour of the Assad government and its Iranian backers. Iran has successfully increased its influence in the area by using a strategy that capitalizes on conflict and the vulnerability of states. This approach, which Iran evolved over a period of forty years, involves providing assistance to armed organizations such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and different Shiite militias in Iraq. The civil conflicts that occurred after the Arab revolutions presented Tehran with favourable circumstances to build and fortify its proxy groups. The Middle East's weakened state structures resulted in the transformation of these auxiliaries into dominant forces, despite their initial limits against conventional armies. Due to its extensive experience in proxy warfare, Iran has a clear edge in the unstable regional environment that exists now. (Alaaldin 2017)

Iran's objective is to establish a Syria that is a hybrid of Iraq and Lebanon, allowing it to influence the state's identity without undermining its stability. This include promoting the development of inadequate military institutions, exacerbating sectarian differences, and

cultivating divided political strategies in order to hinder the formation of a unified national identity. Iran's strategy is influenced by its historical conflicts and geopolitical position, which have influenced its approach to Syria and Iraq. (Alaaldin 2017)

Iran began providing further assistance to Bashar al-Assad in 2013 and the beginning of 2014, sending Revolutionary Guards to train pro-regime groups. Their justification was to fight al-Qaeda in Syria and hinder its expansion into Iran. Hezbollah also intervened in the fighting to back Assad. With a primary emphasis on establishing a land corridor to supply Hezbollah with armaments, Iran's objectives in Syria are essentially geopolitical. Syria plays a crucial role in the ongoing competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Iran is concerned that the potential downfall of Assad might empower enemies to attack the Iranian-aligned government in Iraq. (The Syria Conflict and the Geopolitics of the Region, Jane Kinninmont)

The United States has faced challenges in limiting Iran's influence in the area, mostly because of unexpected political changes in the Middle East. The actions of Kataib Hezbollah, which may have occurred without direct Iranian sanction, demonstrate that Iranian proxy organizations, which operate mainly independently, pose a challenge to US efforts. Although US bombings have shown their air dominance, Iran-backed militias in Iraq, who are linked with Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al Sudani's administration, have earned public support by presenting themselves as opposing the US and Israel, mirroring Hezbollah's tactics during the 2006 conflict. Iran and its allies, such as Hezbollah, Kataib Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Hashd al Shaabi, are united in their objective to expelling US troops from the region, which significantly complicates containment efforts. Even economic sanctions have been challenging to implement. Iran's emphasis on air defense suggests a deliberate strategy to counter Israeli attacks and strengthen its allies. Given the internal political pressures and regional hostility toward its support for Israel, the United States is faced with the challenge of justifying large-scale military responses. Therefore many actors surround the U.S. (Moonakal 2024)

In Syria, the United States faces substantial challenges in its efforts to advance its interests in the face of the increasing influence of Iranian proxies. A comprehensive revision of its strategy is necessary to address this challenge. The continuing risks to stability are a result of the adept manipulation of regional conflicts and the enduring connections between Iran and its proxy groups. The credibility and support of organizations such as Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis, and Hashd al Shaabi within the contexts they operate in are indirectly increased by U.S. actions. A complex approach that navigates the intricate dynamics of the Syrian conflict is required for successfully tackling these challenges. (Moonakal 2024)

3.5.2 presence of Russia

Russia's involvement in Syria was motivated by major shifts on the battlefield in 2015. From the beginning of the crisis in 2011, Russia first provided assistance to the Assad government. However, in the spring of 2015, Russia made the decision to use military action. The takeover of Palmyra by ISIS and an attack by Jab hat al-Nusra in northwest Syria served as the turning point, exposing Moscow to the approaching downfall of Assad's government. The Russian government thought that if they had not stepped in, the state would have fallen within months, enabling ISIS take over Syria. Russia's military intervention was primarily motivated by the desire to prevent this type of situation. Initially, Russia sought a political resolution and avoided direct involvement. Nevertheless, the potential downfall of Assad's government, which might have strengthened transnational terrorism and justified Western-supported regime change, presented significant risks to Russia's national security. As a result, Moscow determined that military intervention was necessary to avoid these adverse consequences. (Charap & Treyger & Geist)

The primary motive for Russia's participation in the Syrian concern comes from its hostility to the United States' worldwide dominance and its primary goal of preventing Islamist

terrorists, whom Moscow considers as substantial dangers. Syria, a significant importer of Russian weaponry and an important strategic location in the Middle East, has retained a strong partnership with Russia since the Cold War. To improve its diplomatic position and regional influence, Russia seeks to intervene in Syria. Moscow rejects the U.S. approach in Syria for its lack of specific instructions and its excessive interference and inefficiency in military operations. Russia aims to enhance its geopolitical influence and counterbalance the powerful position of the United States in a setting of complex global dynamics. (Trenin 2014)

The US worries about Russia internally and internationally. Russia's influence in politics and attacks have originated harmful domestically. Russia's disruptive activities in Europe and hostility against neighbours have raised international tensions. America sees Russia as a worldwide rival, especially in the Middle East, and its activities as a threat to the post-Cold War international system that has supported it's a worldwide rival, especially in the Middle East, and its activities as a threat to the post-Cold War international system that has supported its interests. (Russia in the Middle East: National Security Challenges for the United States and Israel in the Biden Era)

Russia's engagement has been defined by providing tactical military assistance while maintaining a restricted direct role. Russia has shown strategic restraint in order to prevent the war from growing, despite its participation. This limitation was apparent regardless of the U.S. airstrikes aimed against Wagner Group operatives. Russia's objective is to sustain its influence and gradually undermine the power of the United States without arousing rapid and severe responses by preventing from further escalation. By taking a measured approach, Russia is able to balance its engagement and help the Syrian government without drawing more confrontation with the United States. (Daniel L. Magruder JR. & RODRICK H. MCHATY 2020 page n 4)

The rivalry between the United States and Russia in Syria is reflective of a wider rivalry for regional and global power. The United States attempts to keep its dominant influence through the use of economic sanctions and the mobilization of military forces, while Russia attempts to build an international system characterized by various centres of power and strengthen its place as a major world power. The continuing war possesses major consequences for the future of Syria, the regional power dynamics, and the global geopolitical landscape. (Hinnebusch , The New Struggle for Syria)

Conclusion

The study of regional relationships and what they present for the Syrian civil war, shows how complicated the U.S.'s situation in the Middle East is. The U.S. needs to work together with Jordan, Israel, and the GCC to fight terrorism, keep the area safe, and keep the government system stable. These ties show a balance between cooperation and strategic alignment. However, there are some challenges, like the issues with Turkey and the presence of Iran and Russia play important parts. Their involvement in the arena not only affect the Syrian war but also U.S. policy and tactics in the region as a whole. To reach its long-term goals in Syria and the Middle East, the U.S. needs to be able to handle these relationships and conflicts with a flexible strategy.

General conclusion:

The Primary objective of doing this research was to examine U.S foreign Policy in Syria emphasizing on how it balanced counterterrorism strategies and maintained regional alliances. The research went through an examination of the Syrian Conflict, as it revealed its significant challenge and threat. This include the presence of terrorist organization, notably ISIS and JN, and how they developed, and contributed to the chaos of Syria and the region as a whole. The research revealed that the U.S foreign policy in Syria went through substantial changes during two major administration. The administration of barrack Obama implemented a cautious approach, Favouring to support the local forces and avoiding a military engagement. Whereas trump administration favoured a direct extensive military presence to control and contain terrorist organization while controlling the complex structure of regional alliances.

A set of interest guided the U.S foreign policy in Syria, promoting stability and peace; as well and most importantly eliminate the presence of Terrorism. To achieve this potential, the U.S implemented different strategies include training opposition, Cutting of ISIS resources and forming global coalition. It was also essential to engage with Syrian Kurdish Forces (YPG/SDF), as they are considered one of the main non-state actor in the fight against ISIS. They have proven to be effective despite the political complexities in Syria.

During its effort to achieve its planned goals, The U.S confronted an extensive range of challenges such as the opposing goals between different regional powers, the complicated regional politics and the enduring strength of terrorism who are resilience and flexible and they find the way to rise again despite the effort to eliminate them. Furthermore, the importance of regional allies such as Israel, Jordan, and GCC, was highlighted, stressing the importance they played in assisting the U.S effort to counterterrorism and assess stability. Yet, tensions arose between Turkey and U.S. over the cooperation with Syrian Kurdish forces known as YPG.

Turkey criticized this cooperation, and viewed it as a threat to its national security. Therefore opposing any attempt to the creation of Kurdish state in Syria or Iraq. This tension hindered the U.S effort to perceive its objective in Syria, which exacerbated destabilization in an already unstable area.

Nevertheless, the path to attaining these goals was characterized by numerous obstacles and challenges. The U.S. faced significant obstacles due to the resilient character of terrorist organizations, the intricate dynamics of regional politics, and the opposing objectives of various regional powers. Moreover, the landscape was further complicated and progress toward stability was impeded by tensions with key regional allies, particularly Turkey, regarding the cooperation with Kurdish forces. The significance of regional allies like the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Israel, and Jordan is invaluable in the face of these obstacles. These allies were instrumental in the promotion of stability in the Middle East and the support of U.S. counterterrorism initiatives. Conversely, the necessity for strategic foresight and nuanced diplomacy was underscored by the unstable stability of maintaining these alliances while simultaneously pursuing counterterrorism objectives.

The study points out the vital importance of maintaining a state of alertness and adaptability in order to effectively navigate the complicated structure of global diplomacy and regional dynamics in light of these nuances. It emphasizes the necessity of long-term strategic development and cooperation with regional partners to effectively address the underlying causes of terrorism and promote enduring stability in Syria and the broader Middle East region.

In summary, the analysis provides important perspectives into the underlying opportunities and challenges of U.S. foreign policy in Syria. The U.S. can seek to achieve its objectives of maintaining solid ties with key regional allies, promoting stability, and countering terrorism by handling these complexities with careful consideration and planning. The United States has the

ability to significantly influence the development of a more secure and peaceful future for Syria and the broader Middle East region with the help of strategic cooperation and long-term involvement.

Work Cited:

- “Diplomacy: The U.S. Department of State at Work.” U.S Department of State, U.S Department of State, June 2008, 2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/107330.htm.
- “Isis.” Counter Extremism Project, www.counterextremism.com/threat/isis. Accessed 10 Apr. 2024.
- “Jihadi Threat: Isis, Al Qaeda & Beyond.” United States Institution of Peace, United States Institution of Peace- Wilson Center, 2017, www.usip.org/sites/default/files/The-Jihadi-Threat-ISIS-Al-Qaeda-and-Beyond.pdf.
- “Report: Russia in the Middle East: National Security Challenges for the United States and Israel in the Biden Era.” Wilson Center, www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/report-russia-middle-east-national-security-challenges-united-states-and-israel-biden. Accessed 22 May 2024.
- “Strengthening u.s.-Israel Strategic Cooperation.” ATLAS SUPPORTED, May 2018, jinsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ATLAS-SUPPORTED-Strengthening-U.S.-Israel-Security-Cooperation_web-3.pdf.
- “Train and Equip Program for Syria: Authorities, Funding, and Issues for Congress.” EveryCRSReport.Com, Congressional Research Service, 9 June 2015, www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R43727.html.
- “U.S. Relations with Syria - United States Department of State.” State.Gov, state.gov, 17 Oct. 2023, www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-syria/.
- “U.S. Role in the World: Background and Issues for Congress.” Congressional Research Service, Congressional research service, 6 Apr. 2020, crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44891/47.

- “US Assistance to Jordan.” Aclu.Org, 28 Feb. 2017, www.aclu.org/wp-content/uploads/legal-documents/Summary-US-Assistance-to-Jordan-C06138428.pdf.
- Abdulla, Abdulkhaleq. “GCC Will Back US Action on Syria.” Op-Eds – Gulf News, Gulf News, 29 Oct. 2018, gulfnews.com/opinion/op-eds/gcc-will-back-us-action-on-syria-1.1227414.
- Akyesilmen, Nezir & Tinker, Vanessa & Mohammed, Ishmeal. (2020). Turkey-US Relations in the Context of the Syrian Conflict: from Cooperation to Confrontation. *Przegląd Strategiczny*. 79-96. 10.14746/ps.2020.1.5.
- Alaaldin, Ranj. “Iran’s Complicated but Resistible Influence in Syria.” Brookings, 19 May 2017, www.brookings.edu/articles/irans-complicated-but-resistible-influence-in-syria/.
- Ardemagni, Eleonora. “Defense Integration Refashions the US-GCC Alliance.” ISPI, 1 Mar. 2023, www.ispionline.it/en/publication/defense-integration-refashions-the-us-gcc-alliance-118338.
- Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project. Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS): Actor Profile. Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2023. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep52274>. Accessed 11 Apr 2024.
- Aziz, Lara. “The Syrian Kurds in the US Foreign Policy: Long-Term Strategy ...” *Cecrilouvain*, Jan. 2020, cecrilouvain.be/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Note-danalyse_LaraAziz_Version-finale.pdf.
- Balian, Hrair, and Jeffrey Feltman. “The United States Needs a New Syria Policy.” *Responsible Statecraft*, 20 Jan. 2021, responsiblestatecraft.org/2021/01/20/the-united-states-needs-a-new-syria-policy/.

- Barrick, Nathan. “Countering Transregional Terrorism , Chapter 2. Counterterrorism in U.S. National Security Strategy Nathan Barrick.” Defense Technical Information Center, 1 Aug. 2018, apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/AD1131119.
- Blanchard, Christopher M., and Carla E. Humud. “The Islamic State and U.S. Policy.” Congressional Research Service, 25 Sept. 2018, sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/R43612.pdf.
- Byman, Daniel. (2016). US counterterrorism intelligence cooperation with the developing world and its limits. *Intelligence and National Security*. 32. 1-16. 10.1080/02684527.2016.1235379.
- Cass, Connie. “The Syrian Crisis Simplified: Who’s Fighting Whom and Why?” PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, 18 Dec. 2015, www.pbs.org/newshour/world/the-syrian-crisis-simplified-whos-fighting-whom-and-why.
- Charap, Samuel, et al. “Understanding Russia’s Intervention in Syria | Rand.” RAND, 31 Oct. 2019, www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3180.html.
- Dacey, Julien Barnes, and Daniel Levy. “The Regional Struggle for Syria - Syrian Arab Republic.” ReliefWeb, 29 July 2013, reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/regional-struggle-syria.
- Dalton, Melissa G. “How the US Can Turn the GCC into a Lasting Military Alliance.” *Defense One*, Defense One, 6 Nov. 2014, www.defenseone.com/ideas/2014/11/how-us-can-turn-gcc-lasting-military-alliance/98405/.
- DEMİR, Sertif, and Carmen RIJNOVEANU. “The Impact of the Syria Crisis.” *Dergipark.Org*, 2013, dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/406909.
- FERRIS, ELIZABETH, and KEMAL KIRIŞCI. “The Context, Causes, and Consequences of Syrian Displacement.” *The Consequences of Chaos: Syria’s Humanitarian Crisis and the Failure to Protect*, Brookings Institution Press, 2016, pp.

- 1–32. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt1c2cqws.6>. Accessed 31 May 2024.
- Gocer, Derya. “US-Turkey Relations in the Context of Syria: Crossroads for New Bilateral and Regional Alignments - Derya Göçer.” *Panorama*, 18 Mar. 2023, www.uikpanorama.com/blog/2023/03/18/dg/.
 - Gunaratna, Rohan. “Global Threat Forecast The Rise of ISIS.” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2015, pp. 6–11. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26369557>. Accessed 14 Apr 2024.
 - Gunaratna, Rohan. “Strategic Counter-Terrorism: A Game Changer in Fighting Terrorism?” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, vol. 9, no. 6, 2017, pp. 1–5. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26351525>. Accessed 10 Apr 2024.
 - Güner , Serdar, and Dilan Koç. “Shifting Balances of Power in the Syrian Conflict.” *Center for European Neighborhood Studies* , 2017, cens.ceu.edu/sites/cens.ceu.edu/files/attachment/article/720/shifting-balances-power-syrian-conflicten9949.pdf.
 - Haenni, Patrick. “Iran, Syria, Iraq. Contradictions and Paradoxes of American Politics.” *Orient XXI*, 14 June 2019, orientxxi.info/magazine/iran-syria-iraq-contradictions-and-paradoxes-of-american-politics,3146.
 - Heath, Sydney. “A Critical Analysis of American Foreign Policy in the Syrian Civil War.” *Scholarship @ Claremont*, 2022, scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/2977/.
 - Heydemann, Steven. “Not by Counterterrorism Alone: Root Causes and the Defeat of the Islamic State Group.” *Brookings*, 9 Mar. 2022, www.brookings.edu/articles/not-by-counterterrorism-alone-root-causes-and-the-defeat-of-the-islamic-state-group/.

- Hinnebusch, Raymond. "Great Power Competition in Syria: From Proxy War to Sanctions War." *Syria Studies*, 26 July 2023, ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/syria/article/view/2632.
- HOFFMAN, BRUCE. "The Global Terror Threat and Counterterrorism Challenges Facing the next Administration." *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, 11 Dec. 2016, ctc.westpoint.edu/the-global-terror-threat-and-counterterrorism-challenges-facing-the-next-administration/.
- Immenkamp, Beatrix. "Syrian Crisis: Impact on Jordan: Think Tank: European Parliament." *Think Tank | European Parliament*, 2017, [www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2017\)599258](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2017)599258).
- JASSER, M. ZUHDI. "Sectarian Conflict in Syria." *PRISM*, vol. 4, 2014, pp. 58–67. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26469777>. Accessed 31 May 2024.
- Kinninmont, Jane. "The Syria Conflict and the Geopolitics of the Region." *IEMed*, 2014, www.iemed.org/publication/the-syria-conflict-and-the-geopolitics-of-the-region/.
- Laub, Zachary. "Syria's War and the Descent into Horror." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 14 Feb. 2023, www.cfr.org/article/syrias-civil-war.
- MAGRUDER JR, DANIEL, and RODRICK MCHATY. "Reframing U.S. Syria Policy: The Road to Damascus Runs ...". *Brookings.edu*, Dec. 2020, www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FP_20201230_syria_mchaty_magruder_v2.pdf.
- Malmvig, Helle, et al., editors. "Wars within Wars: REGIONAL ACTORS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE BATTLE FOR SYRIA." *NEW CONFLICT DYNAMICS: Between Regional Autonomy and Intervention in the Middle East and North Africa*,

Danish Institute for International Studies, 2017, pp. 67–79. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep30718.8>. Accessed 26 May 2024.

- Mariwala , Arnav. “The Syrian Civil War.” Stanford University, STANFORD MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE 2014 , 2017, web.stanford.edu/group/sias/cgi-bin/smunc/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Syria-Govt.pdf.
- Mason, Robert. “From the ‘Grey Zone’ to the End Zone: GCC State Influence and Prospects for Syria’s Reintegration into the Arab World.” Grc, 11 Apr. 2023, www.grc.net/single-commentary/85.
- Mazza–Hilway, Rosa. “Regime Change, Deferred: Regarding United States’ Foreign Policy in Syria.” eRepository @ Seton Hall, 2019, scholarship.shu.edu/pa/vol20/iss1/2/.
- Meoni, Brandi. CREATING THE SYRIAN DEMOCRATIC FORCES: THE US CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISIS IN SYRIA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS. Middle East Technical University, 0 2022.
- Moonakal, Nadeem Ahmed. “Iran’s Regional Proxies: Reshaping the Middle East and Testing U.S. Policy.” Institute for Security and Development Policy, 27 Feb. 2024, www.isdp.eu/irans-regional-proxies-reshaping-the-middle-east-and-testing-u-s-policy/.
- Moyar, Mark. “U.S. Interests in Syria, Past and Present.” Hoover Institution, Hoover Institution, 1 Apr. 2013, www.hoover.org/research/us-interests-syria-past-and-present.
- O’Bagy, Elizabeth. “JIHAD IN SYRIA.” JIHAD IN SYRIA, Institute for the Study of War, 2012, pp. 1–43. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep07910.1>. Accessed 07 Apr 2024.

- Office of the Spokesperson Washington, DC. “Fact Sheets: The Global Coalition – Working to Defeat ISIS.” United States of America, Department of State U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Canada, 6 Feb. 2019, ca.usembassy.gov/fact-sheets-the-global-coalition-working-to-defeat-isis/.
- Omari, Raed. “On Jordan’s True Role in the Anti-ISIS Alliance - al Arabiya English.” Al-Arabiya News, 2014, english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2014/09/20/Jordan-s-role-in-the-anti-ISIS-alliance.html.
- Phillips, Christopher. “After the Arab Spring - Power Shift.” LSE IDEAS, LSE IDEAS, May 2012, www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/Assets/Documents/reports/LSE-IDEAS-After-the-Arab-Spring.pdf.
- Rabinovich, Itamar. “The United States and Israel vs. the Syria of Bashar al-Assad: Challenges, Dilemmas, and Options.” Inss.Org.II, Oct. 2020, www.inss.org.il/strategic_assessment/the-united-states-and-israel-vs-the-syria-of-bashar-al-assad-challenges-dilemmas-and-options/.
- Robinson, Kali, and Will Merrow. “The Arab Spring at Ten Years: What’s the Legacy of the Uprisings?” Council on Foreign Relations, Council on Foreign Relations, 3 Dec. 2020, www.cfr.org/article/arab-spring-ten-years-whats-legacy-uprisings.
- Sandler, Todd. “Terrorism and Counterterrorism: An Overview.” OUP Academic, Oxford University Press, 5 Nov. 2014, doi.org/10.1093/oeq/gpu039.
- Sanusi, Hajj & Adu-Gyamfi, Samuel. (2016). Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: The Conundrum between Russia and the US in Syria et al. 1.
- Sorenson, David S. “US Options in Syria.” USAWC Press, USAWC Press, 9 Jan. 2013, press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol43/iss3/2/.
- Strachota, Krzysztof. “The Middle East in the Shadow of the Islamic State.” OSW Centre for Eastern Studies, OSW Centre for Eastern Studies, 6 Dec. 2018,

www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/point-view/2015-08-11/middle-east-shadow-islamic-state.

- Styszynski, Marcin. “ISIS and Al Qaeda: Expanding the Jihadist Discourse.” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, vol. 6, no. 8, 2014, pp. 9–14. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26351276>. Accessed 10 Apr 2024.
- Trenin, Dmitri. “Russia’s Interests in Syria - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.” *CARNEGIE RUSSIA EURASIA CENTER*, 9 June 2019, carnegiemoscow.org/2014/06/09/russia-s-interests-in-syria-pub-55831.
- Vickery, Scott. “Operation Inherent Resolve: An Interim Assessment.” *The Washington Institute*, 13 Jan. 2015, www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/operation-inherent-resolve-interim-assessment.
- Vugteveen, Martijn, and Joshua Farrell Molloy. “Turkish Military Offensive in Syria: Consequences for Counter-Terrorism Operations.” *ICCT*, 28 June 2022, www.icct.nl/publication/turkish-military-offensive-syria-consequences-counter-terrorism-operations.
- Waśko-Owsiejczuk, Ewelina. “The American military strategy to combat the ‘Islamic State’ in Iraq and Syria: Assumptions, tactics and effectiveness.” *Polish Political Science Yearbook*, vol. 45, no. 1, 31 Mar. 2016, pp. 317–336, <https://doi.org/10.15804/ppsy2016024>.
- Watson, Mason.W. “The Conflict with ISIS: Operation Inherent Resolve, June 2014–January 2020.” *The Conflict with ISIS | U.S. Army Center of Military History*, 2021, history.army.mil/html/books/078/78-2/index.html.
- ŻUBER, Marian, and Samuel Sahel MOUSSA. “(PDF) Arab Spring as a Background of Civil War in Syria.” *Research Gate, International Conference KNOWLEDGE-*

BASED

ORGANIZATION,

2018,

www.researchgate.net/publication/326653652 Arab Spring as a Background of Civil War in Syria.

ملخص

في هذا البحث، يُنظر في التوازن بين التحالفات الإقليمية واستراتيجيات مكافحة الإرهاب في سياق السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة في سوريا. وعن محاولاتها وهي تحقق في ظهور عامل الإرهاب في سوريا، والأثر المتزايد للحرب الأهلية السورية. وعلاوة على ذلك، تستخدم الولايات المتحدة استراتيجيات مثل تدريب قوات المعارضة وإنشاء تحالفات عالمية لتحقيق أهدافها في المنطقة، التي تشمل القضاء على الإرهاب، وتعزيز السلام، وتعزيز الاستقرار. ومع ذلك، هناك العديد من العقبات، مثل الجغرافيا السياسية المعقدة، والمنظمات الإرهابية القادرة على التكيف، والتوترات مع حلفاء إقليميين مثل تركيا. ويؤكد هذا البحث أهمية التحالفات الإقليمية في سياق الجهود المتزايدة التي تبذلها الولايات المتحدة لمكافحة الإرهاب ومعالجة الآثار الأوسع نطاقا على الاستقرار والدبلوماسية من خلال دراسة الاتصالات الدبلوماسية وبيانات السياسة العامة. وخلاصة القول إن استمرار فعالية السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة في سوريا يتوقف على توازن الدبلوماسية والمرونة.