Forum: Arab League

Issue: Evaluating the Role of Foreign Intervention and its Effects on Arab Countries

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Introduction:

Foreign intervention no matter the type, diplomatic, economic, or in terms of the military, has been a major force in shaping the politics and issues of the Arab nations. These effects from external involvement go beyond just national borders, as well as influencing government structures, regional stability, and so much more. Understanding the factors and effects of foreign intervention is crucial for addressing the challenges in the area, creating regional cooperation, and working towards a sustainable future. Foreign intervention in the Arab states has increased since the 19th century. Many people believe that the increase in foreign intervention is to blame for the escalating tensions between local powers and affected countries' internal affairs. In the Arab world, foreign intervention has evolved from colonial dominance to Cold War rivalries, regional conflicts, and counterterrorism efforts. The motives and parties that are involved have changed, however, the overarching issues remain constant. The region is still one that attracts a lot of global interest. This is a matter that requires immediate attention, due to the rising tensions between nations and a worsening humanitarian crisis, as well as the political issues that are causing it. All solutions proposed must help to solve and propel the issue in the right direction.

Definition of Key Terms:

1. **Foreign Intervention:** The involvement of external parties, such as states or international organizations, in the affairs of another country. this can happen in many ways, including diplomatic, economic, or military intervention.
2. **Diplomatic Intervention**: Involvement by diplomats or diplomatic entities to mediate or resolve conflicts through negotiation and dialogue.

3. **Arab Countries:** Nations that are part of the Arab world, characterized by a shared linguistic, cultural, and historical heritage. The Arab world includes countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

4. **Geopolitical Dynamics:** The interactions and power relations between countries on a global scale, especially concerning political, economic, and military influence.

5. **ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria):** A militant group that emerged in the early 2000s, aiming to establish a caliphate in Iraq and Syria.

6. **The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO):** A political and representative organization that was established in 1964. It was created to represent the Palestinian people and their national aspirations, particularly in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Background Information

During the period of the 1900s, Arab nations were working hard to become independent after the colonial era. They were trying to break free from the control of colonial powers previously had on them and were dealing with the long-lasting effects we expect to see from colonialism. In 1916, the Sykes-Picot Agreement drew lines on the map, deciding who controlled what parts of the Middle East, and this led to the borders that shaped the Arab nations we see today. Important conflicts like the Six-Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973 had a lot of outside involvement, changing alliances and how the conflicts went. After the Cold War, events like the Madrid Conference and the Gulf War continued to shape how countries worked together or against each other. These events in history help us to understand the effects of foreign intervention today in the Arab world, showing how it's connected and has a significant effect.

Post-colonial era

The mid-20th century marked the start of the postcolonial era for the Arab States, as nations wanted to establish their independence from the colonial powers that once ruled them. The post-colonial era was also the end of many empires, such as the Ottoman Empire, which paved the way for the emergence of new states. However, the

effects of colonialism lingered, impacting state structures, borders, and political dynamics.

Sykes-Picot Agreement and Mandates

The Sykes-Picot Agreement which was established in 1916 was a significant movement that shaped the modern Middle East. The Sykes-Picot Agreement set forth the influence of Britain and France in the region. This agreement, along with the League of Nations mandates, contributed to the artificial drawing of borders and the establishment of separate entities that would later become Arab nations.

Details of the agreement

The Sykes-Picot Agreement was a secret agreement between Britain and France in 1916. This was also known as the Asia Minor Agreement. The agreement divided the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire into British and French influences. The specifics of this included; the UK gaining control of southern Israel and Palestine, Jordan, and southern Iraq. And France gained control of southeastern Turkey, the Kurdistan Region, Syria, and Lebanon.

Arab-Israeli conflicts

The start of the State of Israel in 1948 and the wars that followed, including the Six-Day War (1967) and the Yom Kippur War (1973), led to a lot of foreign intervention. Big nations such as the United States and the Soviet Union became key players in the region, influencing the trajectory of future conflicts and shaping alliances in the region.

Six-Day War (1967)

This war was about Israel and a coalition of Arab states, including Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The main causes of the conflict were long-standing political tensions, territorial disputes, and military buildups in the region. Israel's winning resulted in significant territorial gains for them, including the capture of East

Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, the war also led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and the creation of new refugee populations around the area.

Yom Kippur War (1973)

This began with a surprise attack by Egypt and Syria against Israel during one of the holiest days in the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur. The war prompted renewed diplomatic efforts, including the U.S.-brokered Kissinger Shuttle Diplomacy, which laid the groundwork for peace talks between Israel and its Arab neighbours. The conflict had global implications, leading to an oil embargo imposed by Arab oil-producing nations against countries perceived as supporting Israel. This resulted in an energy crisis with significant economic repercussions. In 1979, Egypt became the first Arab state to officially recognize Israel by signing something called the Camp David Accords, leading to the return of captured territory by Ireasel (the Sinai Peninsula) to Egypt.

Post Cold-War Dynamics

The end of the Cold War also brought a new era in the Arab world. The collapse of the Soviet Union moved power balances, and the United States took over as the dominant force in the region. These nations saw moments of hope, such as the Madrid Conference (1991) and the Oslo Accords, and increased external involvement, notably during the Gulf War (1990-1991).

Madrid Conference (1991) and The Oslo Accords

The Madrid Conference was the first international conference to bring together the key nations in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It aimed to bring clarity about multiple aspects of the conflict, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Israeli-Syrian conflict, and the Israeli-Lebanese conflict. The conference had representatives from Israel, Arab states, and Palestine. The main Arab

participants were Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and Syria. The talks organized in Madrid contributed to the later breakthroughs, including the secret negotiations in Oslo, Norway. This led to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and marked a significant step toward the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Gulf War (1990-1991)

Also known as the Persian Gulf War. The particular war took place from August 2nd, 1990 to February 28th, 1991. The war was triggered by the invasion of Iraq into Kuwait, annexing Kuwait and leading to Iraq's international condemnation. The Arab League saw this as a threat, making it clear that the invasion was a threat to Arab sovereignty.

Current Situation

Regional Conflicts and Foreign Involvement:

The persistence of conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Libya continues to draw foreign intervention, shaping the course of these crises. In Syria, the involvement of Russia and Iran on one side and the United States and its allies on the other. This situation makes the geopolitical situation even worse and increases the suffering of people on both sides of the conflict. The conflict in Yemen, highlighted by the Saudi-led coalition and Iranian support for Houthi rebels, tells us about the broader struggle for influence in the Arabian Peninsula. In Libya, the involvement of Turkey, Russia, and regional powers adds more complexity to a nation already facing internal divisions.

Non-State Actors and Extremism

The rise of non-state actors, which includes extremist groups, has added a layer of unpredictability to the current situation. Groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda carry forward violence and instability. The influence of such groups even goes beyond national borders which prompts problems in addressing security and lasting stability.

Economic Interests and Resource Competition

The biggest interest in this intervention is the oil industry. The pursuit of energy security and economic advantage motivated the actions of both regional and global players. This economic drive from many nations, continues to impact geopolitical considerations with the need for resources, influencing the strategies of involved nations to benefit themselves more.

Public Perceptions and Domestic Challenges

The public perception within Arab countries is a crucial aspect of the current situation. The populations of these nations are forced to face the consequences of foreign intervention such as displacement, economic hardships, and security concerns. Governments and organizations have to face the dual challenge of responding to domestic expectations while navigating the geopolitical realities that influence their policy choices.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Government (supported by Russia and Iran) in Syria

The government in Syria believes that support is crucial for combating terrorism, preserving sovereignty, and maintaining stability. They see intervention as a necessary measure to protect the existing state structure. Syria has faced significant challenges from various extremist groups, including ISIS and al-Qaeda-driven groups. Regarding the principle of sovereignty, the government states that foreign assistance is necessary to protect Syria's autonomy and protect it from external interference. Moreover, creating and maintaining strategic alliances with powerful nations such as Russia and Iran are key aspects of this stance. These alliances would contribute to Syria's reinforcement of its ability to resist external pressures.

Government of National Accord (Supported by Turkey) in Libya:

Foreign support is necessary for the building of national unity. The internal divisions in Libya, further strained by competing interests and external interference, bring about a significant challenge to the goal of achieving a unified and stable nation. Foreign intervention is seen as a means to address these divisions and build a sense of unified purpose. Moreover, Libya has experienced extended conflict and political instability, leading to humanitarian crises and displacement. With this strategic partnerships with supportive nations, such as Turkey could be made. These alliances are viewed as critical for pushing up the Government of National Accords (GNA) position, both diplomatically and militarily.

Global Powers (United States, Russia)

For both countries, geopolitical interests come into play, to boost both nations. Geopolitical considerations include creating strategic alliances, gaining influence over key regions, and ensuring access to vital resources. Both powers additionally view that in conflicts, it is essential to combat extremist groups and terrorist organizations that pose a threat not only to the region in question but also to international security. This emphasizes the need to prevent the spread of dangerous ideologies. Other reasons include; creating a more secure global environment, bringing about diplomatic solutions, and protecting civilian populations from violence, displacement, and human rights abuses.

Houthi Rebels (supported by Iran) in Yemen

The rebels hold strong by saying that their fight is a response to perceived infringements on Yemen's sovereignty by regional and global powers. The rebels specifically demonstrate their cause as a need for self-determination. The military

intervention led by the Saudi-led coalition, supports the internationally recognized government. This is considered, by the Houthi rebels, as an unnecessary and unreasonable intrusion into Yemen's internal affairs. The rebels consider foreign intervention as a force that complicates efforts to address economic disparities, political marginalization, and social inequality. It perpetuates the socio-political challenges facing Yemen. Through the eyes of the rebels, Yemenis should be allowed to resolve their issues without external interference. The rebels directly reject any external influence and Yemen's internal affairs, in particular from powers with differing political agendas.

Non-State Actors (Extremist Groups)

They exploit political instability as a means to spread their causes across countries such as ISIS and groups driven by the same mindsets as those of Al-Quaeda. They thrive in environments with weak governing structures, and social unrest. The presence of conflicts provides extremist groups with opportunities to establish their dominance and advance their ideological agendas.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) was established in 2012 in response to the Syrian Civil War, and its main purpose was to monitor the conflict and try to implement a six-point plan to end the conflict. The mission was originally intended to last 90 days and was made up of 300 unarmed military observers plus a civilian component. The United Nations also built the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in 1973 to work to maintain a ceasefire in Syria. This mandate was eventually extended to 2021 in 2020. The UN also works with over 200 humanitarian partners to assist vulnerable people in Syria.

In 2018, the UN-sponsored peace talks in Geneva between the internationally recognized Yemeni government and Houthi rebels fell apart after the Houthis failed to

appear. The Yemeni foreign minister criticized UN diplomats for not forcing the Houthis to attend the peace talks.

The United Nations (UN) provides humanitarian aid to Libya through the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). In 2023, UNICEF requested $28.6 million to provide humanitarian assistance to children and families in Libya. This helps provide for thousands and thousands of children and women, and the UN also provides safe and reliable air transport services to facilitate the humanitarian response to the crisis in Libya.

On October 27, 2023, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations in Gaza. There were however 10 votes against which were: Austria, Czech Republic, Guatemala, Israel, Liberia, Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, United States.

- Arab League Summit in Light of Regional and Global in Jeddah (May 19th, 2023)
    - o The summit aimed to address the following issues; primarily the Palestinian issue, the armed clashes in Sudan, and the readmission of Syria into the Arab League after a 12-year absence.
    - o It produced significant outcomes. The summit adopted the Jeddah Declaration, which emphasizes the importance of unity, solidarity, and cooperation for maintaining security and stability in the region.
- The Abraham Accords facilitated by the US Administration between August and December 2020
    - o A series of treaties that normalized diplomatic relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco
    - o The Accords ensured that both Egypt and Israel achieved their primary goals: Egypt regained the Sinai Peninsula that Israel had captured during the Six-Day War in 1967, while Israel received its first formal recognition from an Arab state

- Resolution 2254 (2015) by The United Nations Security Council passed on December 18, 2015.
  - Calls for a political settlement and ceasefire in Syria, and as of 2023, there has been little progress in implementing the resolution
  - As of 2023, there has been not much progress in implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015)
  - The conflict is highly internationalized, with five foreign armies active in Syria. They call for more serious and cooperative international diplomacy.

Possible Solutions

1. **Promotion of Media Literacy:** Acknowledge the role of media in shaping perceptions, delegates should advocate for media literacy programs that help individuals critically analyze information.

2. **Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Systems:** Explore strategies to prevent conflicts and detect early warning signs. Proposing the establishment of regional mechanisms for conflict prevention and advocating for the development of early warning systems to identify potential crises are crucial steps

3. **Promotion of Youth Engagement and Diplomacy:** Consider the youth in shaping future diplomatic solutions, delegates are encouraged to discuss initiatives that empower young people to engage in conflict resolution. Youth participation in diplomacy and international relations should be emphasized.

4. **Disarmament and Arms Control:** Support international efforts for disarmament and arms control in the region. Limiting the flow of weapons into conflict zones can help de-escalate tensions and reduce the severity of conflicts, making space for peaceful resolutions.

5. **International Accountability Mechanisms**: Advocate for the establishment and reinforcement of international accountability mechanisms to scrutinize foreign interventions. This may include mechanisms to assess the impact of interventions on human rights, humanitarian conditions, and regional stability.

Bibliography

Useful Links

[Foreign Intervention in Middle East Geopolitics](#) (forward to specific information, it's a long video)

[Can Foreign Intervention Stop the Conflicts in the Middle East? (2012)](#)

[The Middle East without foreign interventions](#)

[Foreign Intervention in Middle East Geopolitics](#)

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