

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter there is description about the basic information of this thesis. This chapter contains background of thesis, research question, theoretical framework, hypotheses, scope of research, research objective, research methodology, and the outline of thesis.

### **A. Background**

Russia is relatively new state that just emerges in 1991 but Russia has a long history behind its emergence. The Cold War between United State of America (USA) and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was ended with the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989. Many communist states within the USSR regions replaced its government with the noncommunist one and with the end of Cold War the security in European contingent became more stable. USSR officially ceased to exist on 31 December 1991 and like most of former Soviet Republic Russia emerged as independence state (Vodovozov & Medvedkov, 2019).

Russia became the vast country that adjacent with total of 16 countries include North Korea, China, Norway, Finland, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Poland, Georgia, Mongolia, Latvia, Estonia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Lithuania. Since its independent the first president of Russia

is Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin under his presidency Russia was conduct bilateral and multilateral relations with other country including countries in the Middle East namely Syria, Iraq, and Iran.

The relation between Russia with independent Syria was started from the Pre-Soviet Russia. The relations were initiated with a secret agreement signed on February 10, 1946, just before Syria's declaration of independence. That agreement prescribed USSR diplomatic and political support for Syria in the international arena as well as Soviet military assistance for the foundation of that country's national army. Russian–Syrian relations have started after the collapse of the Soviet and Boris Yeltsin's accession to power following a low profile as a result of the new conjuncture. Later the relationship with the Soviet was just a matter of formality. The former USSR's military and economic aid was no longer provided by its successor, i.e. Russia. However, the Russian Tartus submarine base still retained its existence and the Syrian army's military and strategic consultants continued to be Russian generals (Aghayev & Katman, 2012).

Relations between Russia and Iraq were generally part and parcel of their relations with the countries of the Third World and their national liberation movements, especially Arab nationalism, which was particularly important for Moscow for both historical and geostrategic reasons. At the same time, however, especially

between 1958 and 1990, Soviet-Iraqi relations were characterized by certain special features, contrasting them with Soviet ties with other African-Asian nations and even some Arab Middle East states. Post-Soviet Russian foreign policy, including its relations with Iraq, has undergone substantial transformations since its inception in December 1991, up to the first months of 2001, and some of its goals and directions can now be discerned and analyzed. Its first and most striking feature, compared to the Soviet era, is its weakness. The country currently does not have a material basis for supporting its international stature and aspirations. Its population is less than 50% of the former Soviet population and as early as 1995, its Gross National Product (GNP) was already more than 10 times smaller than that of the United States. (Kreutz, *Russian-Iraq Relations A Historical and Political Analysis*, 2001).

The end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1988-89, the death of Khomeini in 1989 and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe led to what was arguably the most friendly decade ever in the relations between Russia and Iran. Moscow started to sell arms to Iran and agreed to complete the nuclear reactor in Bushehr. Moscow greatly appreciated that Tehran in the First Chechen War (1994-96) did not side with fellow Muslims, but expressed support for the Russian Federation's continued territorial integrity. Russia and Iran have also worked together to put an end to the

five-year civil war in Tajik (1992-97) between the former communist allies of Moscow and a democratic / Islamist alliance on favorable terms for the former. Finally, both Moscow and Tehran supported the Taliban's Afghan forces (Katz, Russia and Iran, 2012).

The relation among Russia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran after Cold War continue until now in many dimension including in security and military. In 2015 as a respond to the conflict happened in Syrian-Iraq location emerge the alliance of four states Russia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran that reach agreement to cooperate in collecting information about the terrorist group known as Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) with further option of combat action to eradicate the terrorist group (*CNN, 2015*). ISIS declares its absorption of Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda-backed militant group in Syria. Baghdadi the self-proclaimed leader says his group will now be called the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. In Iraq, Syria, and beyond, ISIS seeks to establish an Islamic state, called a caliphate. The group implements Sharia law, which is rooted in Islam in the eighth century, to create a society which reflects the past of the region (*CNN, 2019*).

The alliance among Russia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran in 2015 is a new phenomenon because before this event the relation among Russia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran is in term of bilateral relations. The emergence of Russia-Syria-Iraq-Iran Alliance is important to be examined because it can give a new insight in term of alliance

studies. Therefore, related to the topic this thesis would like to examine the relation among Russia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran relation before the emergence of the alliance, their relation when the alliance formed, and the factors that caused the emergence of Russia-Syria-Iraq-Iran alliance.

## **B. Research Question**

Based on the background above, proposed research question for this research is: *"Why did the alliance of Russia-Syria-Iraq-Iran emerge?"*

## **C. Theoretical Framework**

### **1. Theory of Alliance**

The balance of threat theory stated by Stephen M. Walt in suggests the alternative to balance of power theory by Morgenthau. According to Walt state balance to threat instead of power alone. Although the distribution of power is important factor, the level of threat is considered by the state to form alliance. The level of threat are affected by geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and perceived intentions (Walt, 1987).

Walt also stated that ideology is less powerful than balancing as a motive for alignment. Apparently ideological alliances are in fact a form of balancing behavior. Ideology can be divisive in term of alliance formation so in other word, states sharing same ideologies are more likely to compete than to form durable alliances (Walt, 1987).

In the case of Russia-Syria-Iraq-Iran alliance formation the level of threat from USA through its intervention considered as the caused. USA has military base in 46 countries and territories that create

faster and easier access to send their military troops and supply to Syrian-Iraqi territory (Lutz, 2009). From the military power that possessed by USA the offensive capability is considerably big and dangerous with only three years of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, \$2 billion in military construction money was expended to build the facility in Iraq, Balad Air Base, 30,000 troops and 10,000 contractors (Lutz, 2009). The USA behavior of intervention in several cases from Nicaragua to the Philippines, from Haiti to Eastern Europe, Southern Africa, and the Middle East, various powers are emerging as a "new world order" fighting to reshape political and economic structures. Under the rubric of "encouraging democracy," the US intervened in the crises, transitions, and energy vacuums that resulted from the break-up of the outdated order to attempt to affect their result (Robinson, 1996).

In term of ideology Russia, Syria, Iraq, Iran is different but despite their differences in ideology they still form and alliance. The alliance formation focuses more on the common threat of USA hegemony.

## **2. Structural Realism Theory**

According to Kenneth Waltz, anarchic structure decentralized between States means no central authority is the fundamental form of the international system. Whatever elements of authority emerge internationally, the ability to create a basis for the appearance of such elements is hardly removed. Specific expression of capabilities quickly reduces authority. The official relations of super-and subordination do not develop in the absence of agents with system-wide authority (Waltz, 2010, p. 81).

The coactions of self-reliance units form international and political systems, such as economic

markets. The main political units of an era, be they city, empire or nation, are defined by the International Structure. The coexistence of States creates structures. No state intends to take part in the formation of a structure that will constrain it and others. International policy systems are individualistic in origin, spontaneous and unintentional, as are economic markets. Structures consist of the coactions of their units in both systems. It is up to them whether these units live, thrive, or die (Waltz, 2010, p. 91).

The States are the units of their core functions in international political systems other than cultural, ideological, constitutional or personal divergences; they perform the same basic tasks like collecting tax, conducting their foreign policy, and keeping their security under control. State is not and was never the only international actors, but structures are then not defined by all the actors who thrive within then but by the major actors. In defining the structure of a system one chooses and defines its structure by choosing one or more of the infinitely many objects comprising the system. In international political systems, as in any system, it is necessary to decide first which units are parts of the system. (Waltz, 2010, p. 93).

Anarchic system units are undifferentiated functionally. In this case, the units of this order are mainly characterized by their greater or lower capacity to carry out the same task. When the distribution of functions across the system units changes, the structure of a system changes. And structural changes change expectations of how the system units comply and the results of their interaction (Waltz, 2010, p. 97).

It is important to understand the international system which states involved because it can give the

perspective to determine the anarchic condition and instead of acting in hierarchical order states coactions as an unit similar like actors in the market. The market emerged naturally because the action from its actor and the units in the market are similar in term of function just distinguished primarily by their capabilities for performing the similar task. So the state's nature is to survive in logic of self-help.

In application to the Russia-Syria-Iran-Iraq alliance formation the structural anarchy theory offer explanation about the logic of international structure that is anarchical structure which mean there are no greater institution above state that can guarantee the stability of security. International structure is similar with market in economy that happen because the coactions from each units which are Russia, Syria, Iran, Iraq. Each unit behaves as self-reliance units that constrain domination of one specific unit. In explaining how the alliance emerge among this units the theory offer the explanation how as an unit they perform similar task like collecting tax, conducting foreign policy, and keeping their security but the differences locate in their capability to do their task. This explains how they can relate to other state because of their different capabilities as units. According to the theory they pursue to maximize their capability in security and avoid domination that caused constrain to each unit.

The hegemony from USA caused the threat of constrain to Russia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran and as an unit that operate in self-help logic they have to make sure that their survival so the international structure stimulate the alliance formation in Russia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran.

#### **D. Hypothesis**



This thesis offers two hypotheses on how Russia-Syria-Iraq-Iran alliance emerges. The alliance of Russia-Syria-Iraq-Iran emerges because of:

1. Alliance formation caused by common threat to USA hegemony.
2. Anarchical international structures stimulate insecurity among Russia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran so that caused the alliance formation.

### **E. Research Methodology**

This thesis use qualitative research method that means that this method will focus on mostly narrative in explaining and analyzing the data. Literature research conducted by using secondary source so instead of using firsthand data that collected in the field this research use the source of printed or electronic literature, such as journal article, printed or online books, printed or online newspaper, and internet sources.

### **F. Scope of Research**

In order to make the research focus and achievable the limitation is needed so the scope of this research will be limited on Russia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran relation from 1991 until alliance formation in 2015. The reason why the research focus on 1991 because it is the year Russia emerged as a independent state apart from USSR and the year of 2015 is the emergence of Russia-Syria-Iraq-Iran Alliance.

### **G. Research Objective**

Objective of this research is to answer the question of why Russia-Syria -Iraq-Iran alliance emerges

with using alliance theories and structural realism. Also this research aims to test the relevancy of those theories to Russia-Syria-Iraq-Iran alliance formation phenomenon. Last but not least this research aims to enrich the data of international relation in general and Russia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran in specific.

## **H. Outline**

Chapter I describes about the basic information of this thesis. This chapter contains background of thesis, research question, theoretical framework, hypotheses, scope of research, research objective, research methodology, and the outline of thesis.

In chapter II there is description about the relations among Russia, Syria, Iraq, and Iran before the alliance formation this chapter describe the relations in term of diplomatic relations and economic relations.

In chapter III there is description about the emergence of Russia-Syria-Iraq-Iran alliance this chapter describes the initiation of alliance formation and the alliance point of agreement.

In chapter IV there is explanation about the factors caused Russia-Syria-Iraq-Iran alliance formation this chapter explains the factors that caused alliance formation which are common threat from United State of America's hegemony and anarchical international structure that caused insecurity.

In chapter V there is conclusion about the undergraduate thesis. The conclusion is restating the hypotheses that related with theoretical framework.

The hypotheses answer the research question of this undergraduate thesis.