

CHAPTER IV

THE UNITED STATES' FAILURE IN IMPLEMENTING '*RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT*' IN THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

This chapter explains the main substance of this research. This chapter analyzes the domestic factors behind United States' failure in implementing RtoP: Congress of the United States as bureaucratic influencer did not support Barack Obama to intervene in Syria, US citizens as mass influencer criticized Obama's action, and the limited situation of the United States' economy and military resources. In addition, based on the foreign policy decision-making theory, it is stated that international context could be seen as another factor behind US failure in implementing RtoP, including Russia and China's involvement in the Syrian Civil War. This chapter also compares some successful countries with US failures in the implementation of RtoP.

A. CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES THAT INTERVENING IN THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE UNITED STATES' INTERNATIONAL CREDIBILITY.

Basically, the United States Congress is the bicameral legislature of the United States' federal government and consists of two chambers, such as the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Congress was established in 1789 by the United States Constitution. Although not legally mandated, in practice since the 19th century, members of the Congress were usually affiliated with the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. United States Senate consists of 100 senators and the United States House of Representatives consists of 435 members of the House.

However, Article One of the United States Constitution established that the United States Congress was most of the power in the legislative branch of the federal government. Section 1: Legislative power vested in Congress, stated that:

“All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.” (U.S Constitution, 2011)

Congress's legislative powers are enumerated in Section Eight, such as Congress has a big role in national defense, including an exclusive power for declaring war, raising and sustaining the armed forces, and creating rules for the military. (Zernike, 2006)

The Power of Congress needs to be highlighted where this will be discussed in this chapter. The hypothesis stated that the Congress of the United States did not support intervention in Syria. In fact, some critics argue that the executive branch has used the right of Congress to declare war or even intervention. (Nelson, 2009)

Historically, president-initiated war processes, they requested and received formal war declarations from Congress for the War of 1812, the Mexican American War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II. According to Time magazine in 1970, the US President had acted in declaring war such as ordering or sending troops into positions, without an official congress declaration 149 times. Disagreements about the extent to which the power of the congress versus president regarding war has been present periodically throughout the history of this country. (TIME USA, 1970)

In fact, the US will not become involved in foreign wars of choice without the consent of the American people through their representatives. Congress is a central mandate of the US Constitution, not some enlightened, progressive innovation of the 21st century. Basically, George Bush also sought Congressional approval for the war in Iraq.

August 31, 2013 was the day when Barack Obama announced his policy decision to intervene directly in Syria. Barack Obama officially announced at Rose Garden for and spoke with Americans and the policy was made at his discretion with the support of the United Kingdom, France, Turkey, and Germany. Barack Obama has decided that the United States must act on the use of chemical weapons by Bashar Al-Assad to his people. What took even longtime politicians by surprise, however, was what the president said next:

“But having made my decision as Commander-in-Chief based on what I am convinced is our national security interests, I’m also mindful that I’m the President of the world’s oldest constitutional democracy. I’ve long believed that our power is rooted not just in our military might, but in our example as a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. And that’s why I’ve made a second decision: I will seek authorization for the use of force from the American people’s representatives in Congress.” (McGregor, 2013)

For example, an NBC News poll conducted on the eve of President Obama’s surprise announcement asked, “Do you think that President Obama should or should not be required to receive approval from Congress before taking military action in Syria?”

Almost 80% of Americans said yes.¹ Similarly, in September 2002, only one year removed from the 9/11 terrorist attacks, almost two-thirds of Americans agreed that President George W. Bush “should have to get the approval of Congress before taking military action against Iraq.” (CBS News, 2013)

By contrast, those in the congressional criticism treatment were given the following view attributed to Senator John McCain:

Senator McCain: President Obama is abdicating his responsibility as commander-in-chief and undermining the authority of future presidents. The President does not need Congress to authorize a strike on Syria. The President doesn't need 535 Members of Congress to enforce his own red line.²

Basically, the original survey experiment showed that seeking authorization could increase support for the president and his foreign policy, especially if the decision was supported by congressional leaders.

Finally, members of Congress were also increasingly demanding a voice in the Syrian policy. As of August 29, 140 members, including 21 Democrats, had signed a letter calling on Obama to seek congressional authorization before ordering a military

¹NBC News Poll conducted by the polling organizations of Peter Hart (D) and Bill McInturff (R). August 28-29, 2013. N = 700 adults nationwide. Another question asked, “In your view, who should have final authority for deciding whether the United States should conduct military air strikes against Syria: Congress or President Obama?” 61% said Congress versus only 30% saying that the decision should rest with President Obama. Pew Research Center/USA Today, September 4-8, 2013.

² This quotation was actually taken from Peter King (R-NY); Senator McCain would express similar sentiments the following day. Subjects were informed of this in a debriefing at the conclusion of the survey. The statement was attributed to Senator McCain so that both congressional cues would come from prominent members of the U.S. Senate.

strike; to do otherwise, the letter claimed, would be unconstitutional. (Shabad, 2013)

However, members of Congress have considered President Obama's request to authorize military power in Syria, with evidence from the United Nations about the use of chemical weapons by the Assad government that killed more than 1,400 people. A vote in the House is not expected until next week at the earliest. Based on data from HuffPost, using data compiled by ThinkProgress, 39 members voted "Yes/Leans Yes", they will definitely or likely vote in favor of the resolution, while there were 243 members voted "No/Lean No", they have either decisively ruled out supporting the measure or say they are unlikely to back it. Also, there were 151 members did not vote or "Undecided/Unknown."

Figure 4.1.1
Voting of Congress Members to Intervene in the Syrian Civil War

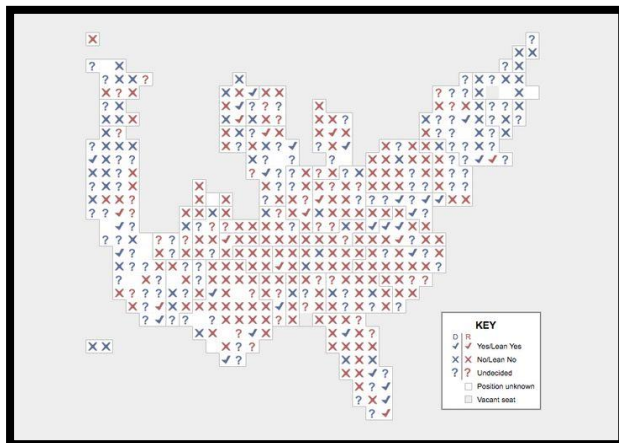
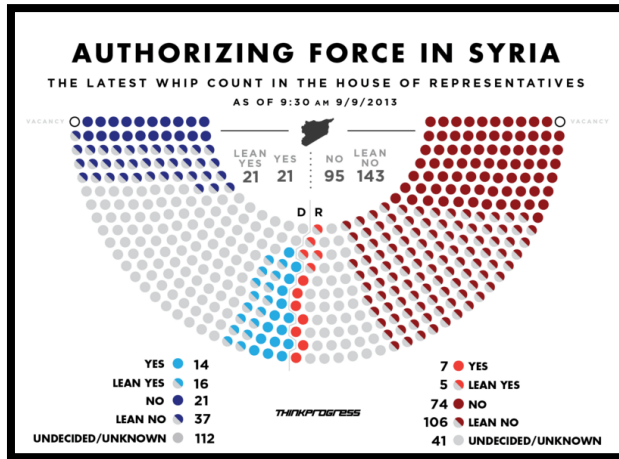


Figure 4.1.2
 Voting of the House of Representatives



Source: Adam Peck and Andrew Breiner. (2013). *Will Congress Support Military Action in Syria? A ThinkProgress Whip Count [UPDATED]*. <https://thinkprogress.org/will-congress-support-military-action-in-syria-a-%20%20%20thinkprogress-whip-count-updated-1b79275ecf5b/>

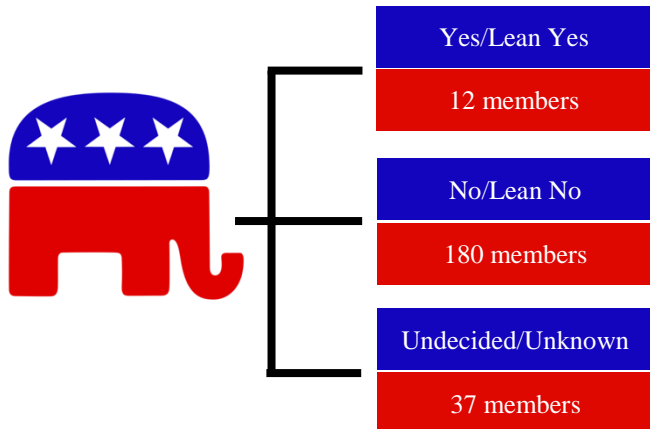
The data depicts red as Republicans and blue as Democrats, and the rest, they did not vote in the approval. We can see through the infographics below that Republicans are more opposed to intervening and sending military forces to Syria. In fact, Barack Obama needs votes at least 217 of the 435 members to intervene officially supported by Congress.

Congress in support of military action argued that the United States has a “moral imperative” to deter Assad from further use of chemical weapons and maintained that military consequences would deter bad actors like Iran and North Korea from using similar tactics in the future. Conversely, opponents of the resolution maintained that the nation could scarcely

afford getting entangled in another conflict in the Middle East, following the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and questioned whether or not limited action would be effective in deterring Assad or lead to greater American military involvement. No members supported putting American boots on the ground in Syria.

According to graphic (figure 4.1.3), the majority of Republicans oppose Barack Obama to intervene in Syria. Only 12 Republicans agreed, as many as 180 Republicans opposed it, and 37 Republicans did not vote. In the past, Trump appeared as an anti-interventionist, criticizing Obama’s choice to use force in Syria: “*What will we get for bombing Syria besides more debt and a possible long-term conflict? Obama needs Congressional approval.*” Also, Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) was one of the members of Congress who was against Obama’s plan. (Asia News Monitor, 2013)

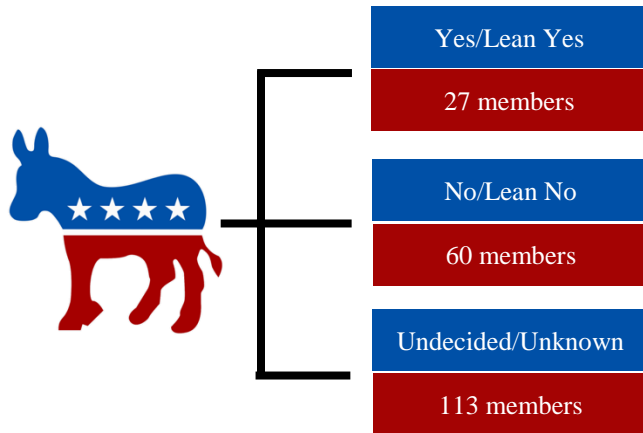
Figure 4.1.3
The Voting Results of Republicans



The majority of Republicans who oppose Barack Obama to intervene argue that the United States should not make other mistakes such as the intervention in Libya and they argue that this intervention is not good for the US national interests.

In addition, there are 27 votes from Democrats who are supporting Barack Obama to intervene in the Syrian Civil War, while 60 votes disagreed with it. It is interesting that there are 113 members did not decide to vote within support or oppose Barack Obama.

Figure 4.1.4
The Voting Results of Democrats



We can see from the graph above that Democrats prefer silence compared to Democrats who oppose Barack Obama. This becomes interesting what is the reason behind Democrats who choose to remain silent and not vote in the approval. According to Democratic Council members such as Steve Cohen and Rick Nolan openly said they were tired of fighting or “War-Weary”. They prefer to spend money and focus

on their own country. Besides, they say they want to avoid casualties after more than a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Monsivais, 2013)

During a hearing of the House Armed Forces Committee, Representative Christopher Smith asked Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dempsey about the possibility of a missile strike causing a larger, more prolonged military action. (Landler, Weisman, & Gordon, 2013)

The reason the Congress opposed Barack Obama to intervene in Syria; *First*, the United States has no national interest in Syria. Indeed, intervening in Syria could make matters worse and harm US interests by creating a failed state and igniting a struggle for power among competing for sectarian factions, some of which are deeply hostile to America and sympathetic to Al-Qaeda, U.S. intervention could help bring some worst enemies to power.

Second, the involvement of the United States in Syria will worsen the situation, and foreign involvement tends to increase the killing of civilians and will prolong the war. Therefore, the Congress suggested to focus on helping refugees only and that was done by the United States in collaboration with Turkey to build a “safe zone area.” *Third*, Congress rebuts the argument that it is necessary to go to war over the use of chemical weapons by Assad government, particularly when other regimes that used chemical weapons in the past were not then punished by the United States.

Fourth, Congress argues that intervention is not necessary to maintain the credibility of the United States. Congress prefers not to get involved and only

that can maintain the credibility of the United States and minimize damage and casualties. Harvard University international relations professor Stephen Walt said, “*wise leaders do not go to war without robust international and domestic support,*” which President Obama does not have. (Walt, An Open Letter to My Congressman About Syria, 2013)

However, when Barack Obama wants to send US troops to Syria directly, Obama also needs to get approval from Congress. But Barack Obama ignored the declaration from Congress and there was no official agreement to intervene in Syria. It is true that the Syrian Civil War is a war between the Assad government and opposition groups or civilians in Syria and has nothing to do with the United States. The desire to declare war or make an intervention must remain with the approval of Congress.

But in the end, Obama acted to intervene directly by asking for support from Germany, the United Kingdom, and Turkey. Then, the United States Senate allowed President Barack Obama to use the military in the ongoing Syrian Civil War bypassing the Joint Resolution “The Authorization for the Use of Military Force against the Government of Syria to Respond to Use of Chemical Weapons (S.J. Res 21)”. On September 6, 2013, the bill was submitted by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid during a specially scheduled pro forma Senate session that took place during the last week of the August recess. The bill will only authorize 60 days of military action, with a possible extension of 30 days. The bill specifically will prohibit the use of ground troops. (Menendez, 2013)

However, this bill never received votes in the House of Representatives or the Senate. Congress still

criticized that intervening in the Syrian Civil War would detrimental the United States' international credibility, also, intervening in Syria was not only against Assad and his supporters but against the majority of Americans. (Catalini & Bell, 2013)

B. THE UNITED STATES' CITIZENS CRITICIZE BARACK OBAMA'S ACTION

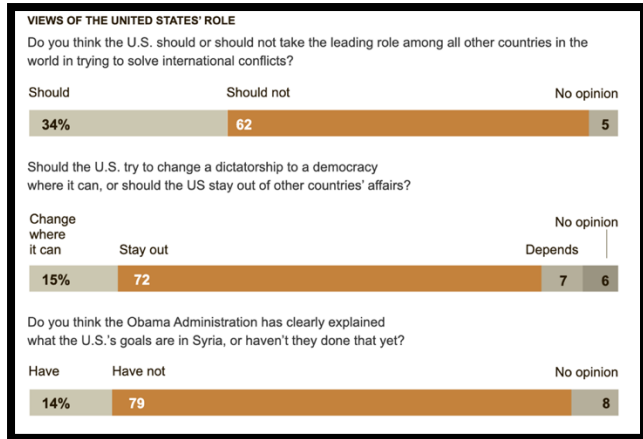
Public opinion as a *mass influencer* has an important role and impact on the formulation of Barack Obama in making US foreign policy. Public opinion and mass media play this role through their contributions as *observers, participants, and catalysts*. (Ali, Khalid, & Khan, 2008) In other words, the American mass media has covered international affairs from the perspective of the United States which is considered as the interests and priorities of foreign policy. Several case studies highlight that the US mass media were very patriotic and nationalistic during the crisis, and they observed policies made by the President.

The United States mass media has adopted a policy of submission and served the White House agenda related to Iraq, Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and especially the war against ISIS, Al-Qaeda, or terrorism after 9/11 attacks.

Based on nationwide telephone interviews conducted September 6-8, 2013, by The New York Times with 1,011 adults, most of Americans viewed that US should not take the leading role among all other countries in trying to solve international conflicts. However, some of them said they would support US involvement in Syria if the use of chemical weapons by

the Assad Government was confirmed. Some of them are also concerned about military action in Syria and some are optimistic that carrying out a US military attack on Syria will be effective.

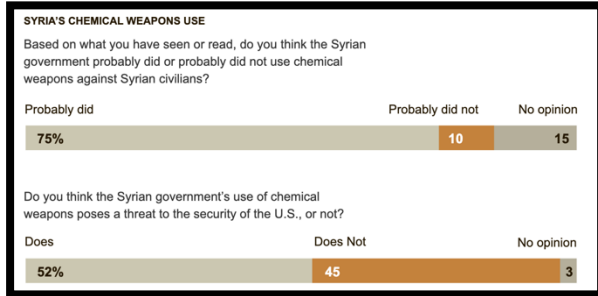
Figure 4.2.1
Americans Views of the United States' Role
on Intervention in Syria



Source: The New York Times. (2013). *American Views on Intervention in Syria*.
<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/09/10/world/middleeast/american-views-on-intervention-in-syria.html>

Meanwhile, about 75 percent Americans believed that Syrian government probably used chemical weapons against Syrian civilians. And they believed about 52 percent that Syrian government's use of chemical weapons poses a threat to the security of the United States. The United States and the international community are prepared to do about it because of what happened to those people, to those children, is not only a violation of international law, it is also a danger to the US security.

Figure 4.2.2
Americans Views on Syria's Chemical Weapons Use



Source: The New York Times. (2013). *American Views on Intervention in Syria*.
<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/09/10/world/middleeast/american-views-on-intervention-in-syria.html>

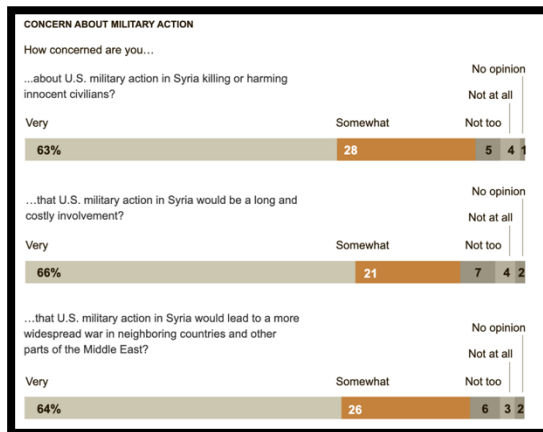
Another statement from Americans believes that the United States is still recovering from its involvement in Iraq. They openly say that this nation is sick and tired of war. But, after the use of chemical weapons by Assad was confirmed, three-quarters of them believe that the US airstrikes on Syria are likely to make a backlash against the United States and its allies in the region and they think these actions will tend to lead to long-term U.S. military commitments in Syria. In the United States, 62 percent of those surveyed in a separate tracking poll agreed with a statement that said, ***“The problems of Syria are none of our business.”***

Just as Congress argues, Americans require Barack Obama to stay focused on his own country. They stressed how Obama wants to interfere in their conflict affairs even though there is still much to do in his own country.

About 79 percent, Americans stated that Obama Administration have not clearly explained what the U.S.’s goals are in Syria. They added that there was no point in intervening in Syria. The United States should not be the world police; it is not the job of the President of the United States to solve every problem in the Middle East. They attacked Barack Obama and said to surrender this intervention to another country.

This made Barack Obama comment on in “Full text of U.S President Barack Obama’s television post-speech a Congress vote on military action in Syria”, Obama stressed during the last two years the U.S government tried diplomacy and sanctions, warnings, even negotiations. But chemical weapons are still used by the Assad regime.

Figure 4.2.3
Americans Concern about Military Action

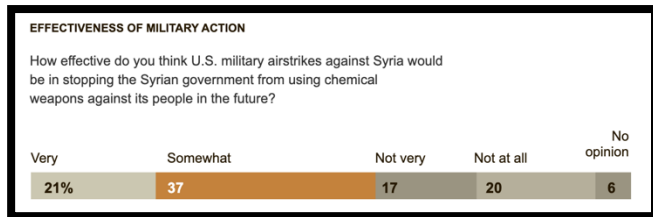


Source: The New York Times. (2013). *American Views on Intervention in Syria*.
<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/09/10/world/middleeast/american-views-on-intervention-in-syria.html>

According to the graph (figure 4.2.3), Americans were more concerned about the U.S. military action in Syria. They believed that U.S. military action would kill or harm innocent civilians, would be a long and costly involvement, and would lead to a more widespread war in neighboring countries and other parts of the Middle East.

Men are twice as likely as women to favor U.S. military airstrikes against Syria. Among men, nearly as many favors (39%) as oppose (46%) the proposed military action. Among women, just 19% support airstrikes, while 49% are opposed. Women are more uncertain about what to do at this point – 31% offer no opinion compared with just 15% of men. (Pew Research Center: U.S. Politics & Policy, 2013)

Figure 4.2.4
The Effectiveness of Military Action



Source: The New York Times. (2013). *American Views on Intervention in Syria*.
<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/09/10/world/middleeast/american-views-on-intervention-in-syria.html>

Meanwhile, Americans still worried that U.S. military airstrikes against Syria might be effective in stopping the Syrian government from using chemical weapons against its people in the future. But in fact, despite various efforts to make the Assad Government withdraw military forces from civilian territory, these changes did not also bring about a political transition in

Syria. Gun battles between the military and opposition groups continue even as the number of victims continues to increase day by day.

Furthermore, in Barack Obama's speech, he considered American's opinions and thought of solutions to resolve the conflict in Syria, but also solutions for his own country. He was forced to withdraw troops in Syria for the United States' security and a greater counterattack from Bashar Al-Assad and his allies.

C. THE SCARCITY OF THE UNITED STATES' ECONOMY AND MILITARY RESOURCES

“While the military went to war, the country went into debt, with tax cuts and budget deficits. Consumers borrowed far more than they should have. America spent while our soldiers fought.” (Stettler, 2014)

The military and economy are the two biggest powers in the United States. Now, the United States has been at war for more than seventeen years. The United States is also still fighting active warfare in Afghanistan, completely defeating ISIS in Syria and Iraq, building a high-security country, and playing a role in low-level conflicts against extremists and terrorists in many other countries.

Military spending was included in the budget. The biggest expense was the Department of Defense base budget at \$576 billion. Overseas Contingency Operations were estimated to cost approximately \$174 billion. That pays for the war on terror costs triggered by the 9/11 attacks. These include ongoing costs from

the war in Iraq and the Afghanistan war. Military spending included \$212.9 billion for defense-related departments. These include Homeland Security, the State Department, and Veterans Affairs. These departments also receive emergency funding of \$26.1 billion. Add it up, and the total U.S. spending on defense is \$989 billion. (Amadeo, 2019)

President Barack Obama has the biggest deficit during his presidency in the United States. FY 2017 is the end of the last budget whose deficit reached \$ 6.785 trillion. Barack Obama served during the Great Recession. During his tenure as President, Barack Obama increased defense spending, which amounted to \$ 800 billion annually. Federal income has declined due to lower tax revenues from the 2008 financial crisis. (Buono, 2011)

In fact, the United States government has never developed a convincing method for reporting war costs and estimates, it has become a confusing heap of various Ministries, and other government reporting that left large gaps in key areas during FY 2001 – FY 2019, especially in FY 2011 – FY 2016 in the President Barack Obama era. In the Barack Obama era, the United States had failed to find a useful way to tie the estimated costs incurred to the level of military and civil activity in a conflict or find a way to measure the effectiveness of its expenditure or tie it with a credible strategy. As a result, the Executive Branch and Congress failed to produce transparency.

Basically, intervention in Syria does not affect the United States budget. However, in response to the 9/11 Al-Qaeda terrorist attack, the United States budget has a deficit from the "War on Terror" military campaign launched by President George W. Bush. The

War on Terror includes the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, this adds \$ 2.4 trillion to debt in the FY 2020 budget. Barack Obama served during the Great Recession, so Barack Obama seeks to reduce or minimize the foreign budget because basically the budget for Afghanistan and Iraq has exceeded the limit. According to FY 2011 - FY 2016, the main budgets in defense are in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The FY 2016 President's budget request includes \$50.9 billion for overseas contingency operations (OCO) to conduct Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL (OFS) and other missions outside of Afghanistan (e.g., Horn of Africa (HOA), Philippines), Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR), and post Operation NEW DAWN (OND) activities. The FY 2016 OCO budget request also funds Iraqi and Syrian opposition forces training and equipment, provide support to European partners, and supports responses to terrorist threats. (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) Chief Financial Officer, 2015)

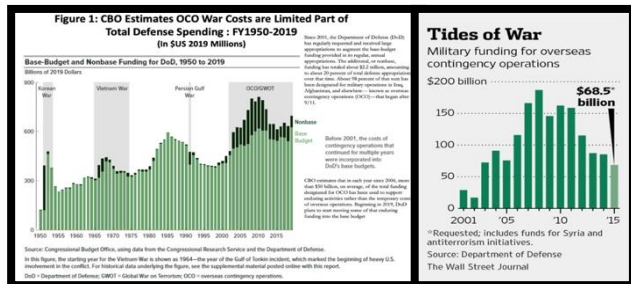
The request supports activities including sustaining personnel forward-deployed to the Middle East to conduct a range of operations including ongoing operations and to provide training, advice, and assistance to partner security forces engaged in the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and building the capacity of the Iraqi and Syrian opposition forces to degrade and defeat ISIL capability in Iraq and Syria in support of the United States comprehensive regional strategy. (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) Chief Financial Officer, 2015)

The portion shown for war-related costs – or Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) – is also

somewhat inflated since it includes some costs that involved low-level operations and because the Congress allowed some non-war related costs to be included to avoid the limits on regular defense spending imposed by the Budget Control Act. (Cordesman, America’s Military Spending and the Uncertain Costs of its Wars: The Need for Transparent Reporting, 2019)

In January 2016, reports emerged that the Obama administration was rethinking its troop drawdown in Afghanistan, given the deteriorating security situation there, and considering sending more troops to Iraq and Syria.

Figure 4. 3. 1
 CBO Estimates OCO War Costs are Limited Part of Total Defense Spending: FY 1950 – FY 2019 and US Military Spending Includes for Syria



Source: CBO. (2018). *Funding for Overseas Contingency Operations and Its Impact on Defense Spending*, p. 2

A survey published on Monday by the Eurasia Group Foundation gauging the foreign policy preferences of US voters found that "more than twice as many Americans want to decrease" US defense spending than those who want to increase it, while half of those surveyed said the government should maintain its current level of military spending. (Piven, 2015)

Furthermore, the United States was forced to reduce the budget in Syria. If the United States does not add troops in Syria, US intervention in Syria will not be successful in achieving its targets. However, the United States cannot finance the assistance of troops and cannot add those troops sent to Syria. That is because the US economic and military capacity does not support Obama's policy of sending military forces to Syria.

In the end, the budget for Syria was reduced, the allocation for foreign military forces was reduced and forced to downsize. So, military spending in Syria does not affect the US economy. However, there is no compensation where funds are returned in Syria, so the United States must save or reduce the existing budget to prevent a sustainable deficit. Besides, there is no strategic interest or value in Syria that leaves the United States with no other reason to increase the budget and send military forces to Syria, because it will spend the budget without the potential for additional budget.

Also, the United States seeks to give up some responsibility for resolving conflicts in Syria by working with Turkey and Saudi Arabia, such as creating a "safe zone area" and military bases on the Turkish-Syrian border. So, the budget is not fully covered by the United States, but other countries are also involved. This was done to reduce US military power in Syria.

In fact, the United States is the country with the largest military expenditure. This is four times greater than China's military budget, and 10 times greater than Russia's defense spending. The United States is struggling to reduce the budget deficit without cutting military spending.

The U.S. government should not repeat these failures again in the course of debating the FY 2020 budget, its future strategy, and the levels of force and civil aid it should continue to deploy. Since the United States first intervened in Afghanistan in 2001, this has had a major impact on the burden that US defense spending places on the United States economy.

The president has no control over the mandatory budget or its deficit. The acts of Congress that created the programs also mandate the spending. Therefore, opposing Obama to intervene in Syria by Congress was a form of action to save the US economy and military.

D. RUSSIA AND CHINA INVOLVEMENT IN THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

The number of victims and the consequences that have arisen from this conflict did not dampen the actors in this conflict thinking about ending the conflict. In fact, this conflict is increasingly fierce because of the presence of foreign parties involved. They were not only influenced but directly participated in the war. Moreover, the presence of major actors such as the United States and Russia in this conflict made the situation worse. They tend to show strength in Syria. Two significant countries support two opposing parties; Russia supports the Assad regime while the United States supports the Syria's opposition. They also provide military assistance and funds to the parties they support.

Since the Syrian conflict in 2011, Russia and Syria have been working together in the military field with a military contract between the two countries.

Relations between Russia and Syria have existed since the Cold War until now. This is evidenced by the construction of a Russian military camp at the Port of Tartus in 1963. Russia's involvement in Syria is to protect its interests, especially in the political and economic fields. In 2011 the Russian military contract against Syria reached US\$ 4 billion and is likely to increase in accordance with the development of the crisis.

Arms exports made by Russia to Syria get criticism from the West because with this action it will only complicate the West's position in Syria. This commodity has more potential after Russia has added its military forces to the Tartus Base. The addition of troops in the Port of Tartus is seen by the US as seriousness from the Russian side in supporting Syria not only through diplomacy but also descending directly into conflict areas.

Russia is a country that supports Syria in facing intervention from other countries, especially the United States, and the UN Security Council in resolving this conflict. Russia is the first country to defend Syria by rejecting all forms of economic and political sanctions that burden Syria. On the other hand, China also helps Russia in protecting the Syrian Government by agreeing to free Syria from the intervention of the UN Security Council.

The UN Security Council seeks to issue resolutions on Syria, and a third draft submitted by Britain in July 2012 calling for economic sanctions against the Syrian Government based on chapter 7, basically allows other countries to intervene militarily. However, the UN resolutions failed because of consecutive vetoes by Russia and China.

Table 4.4.1
Overview of the 12 Vetoes Exercised in the UNSC with Respect
to the Syrian Conflict

Table 1. Overview of the 12 vetoes exercised in the UNSC with respect to the Syrian conflict				
Date	Draft resolution	Vote	Vetoing part(ies)	Ch VII?
4 Oct 2011	S/2011/612	9-2-4	Russia & China	No
4 Feb 2012	S/2012/77	13-2-0	Russia & China	No
19 July 2012	S/2012/538	11-2-2	Russia & China	Yes
22 May 2014	S/2014/348	13-2-0	Russia & China	Yes
8 Oct 2016	S/2016/846	11-2-2	Russia	No
5 Dec 2016	S/2016/1026	11-3-1	Russia & China	No
28 Feb 2017	S/2017/172	9-3-3	Russia & China	Yes
12 Apr 2017	S/2017/315	10-2-3	Russia	No
24 Oct 2017	S/2017/884	11-2-2	Russia	No
16 Nov 2017	S/2017/962	11-2-2	Russia	No
17 Nov 2017	S/2017/970	12-2-1	Russia	No
10 Apr 2018	S/2018/321	12-2-1	Russia	No

Source: Yasmine Nahlawi. (2019). *Overcoming Russian and Chinese Vetoes on Syria through Uniting for Peace*. Journal of Conflict & Security Law, Oxford University, p. 124.

From 2011 to 2016 Russia fully protected Syria from international pressure. The veto contains three resolutions; the *first* was to reject sanctions given from European countries. *Second*, Russia and China were protected Bashar Al Assad from descending from the Syrian President. *Third*, Russia and China were vetoing the results of the UN General Assembly on condemning the actions of the Syrian government regime.

Fourth, S/2014/348 draft resolution was the French draft resolution referring Syria to the ICC. *Fifth*, S/2016/846 was the vote on the draft resolution tabled by France and Spain that called for an end to all military flights over Aleppo was 11-2-2. It had 43 co-sponsors. Russia cast its fifth veto on a Syria draft resolution and China abstained, the first time it has not vetoed a Syria draft resolution alongside Russia. The *last* was the vetoed draft resolution submitted by Egypt, New

Zealand and Spain that called for end-all attacks in Aleppo for seven days. (Nahlawi, 2019)

In addition to vetoing the Resolution in July 2012, Russia and China have several times vetoed the UN Security Council resolutions, including the UN Security Council resolution calling for the Syrian President to resign and the draft resolution in October 2011.

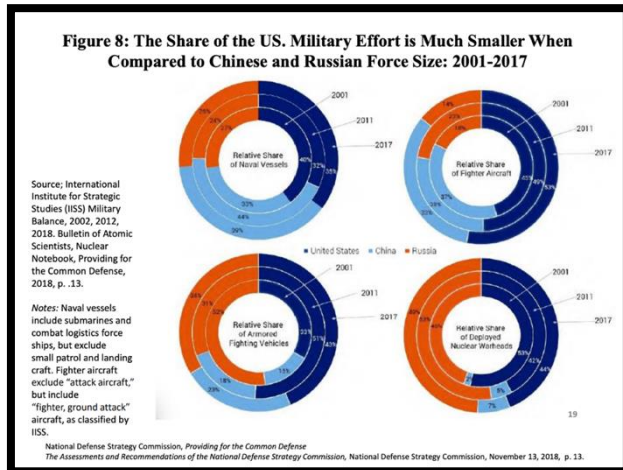
Russia and China remain committed to the principle of sovereignty and state-centric views on security, but they are very careful to accept the idea of RtoP in international affairs. The two countries did not question RtoP, but the different roles played by international actors in the crisis and who played the role of 'adjudicator'. In other words, who, when, how, and whose agreement the RtoP norms are practiced. And the two countries chose the roles of 'permission givers' and 'norm makers.' (Snetkov & Lanteigne, 2014)

Stephen Biddle as Professor of International Affairs said that the United States rarely uses military force for purely humanitarian interests. (Biddle, Friedman, & Long, 2012) And when Russia and China vetoed resolutions issued by the United Nations, it made the UN fail to stop the use of chemical weapons in Syria, failed to protect the people in Syria, and the resolution failed. And that makes the United States fails in implementing the Responsibility to Protect in Syria.

The figure below (figure 4.4.1) proves that the efforts made by the United States in intervention in Syria are very small compared to Russia and China. One of Russia's efforts to help the Syrian Government is sending two Nikolai Filchenkov and Tsezar Kunikov ships to the Port of Tartus in 2012. The shipments are

aimed at maintaining the safety of Russian citizens residing in Syria. The two ships carried military personnel and several combat weapons, weapons to help the Syrian military. Also, Russia also sent 10 additional ships to Syria, bringing the total of ships sent by Russia to 12 ships including warships and aircraft carriers. Operation of the ships is considered as a show of strength to fight Western military hegemony in the world, especially in the Middle East.

Figure 4.4.1
The Share of the U.S. Military Effort is Much Smaller When Compared to Chinese and Russian Force Size: 2001 – 2017



Sources: International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Military Balance. Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Nuclear Notebook, Providing for the Common Defense, 2018, p. 13.

Russia, assisted by China and Iran, helped protect Syria from the start of the conflict. Before this conflict took place, China itself assisted in the form of arms supply to Syria. In a 2011 US Congressional Research Service report, Russia and China are the main suppliers of military weapons to Syria. The sale of

weapons to Syria provides huge benefits for China and Russia. it is known that Russia has a profit of \$ 2.9 billion. Whereas China got \$ 300 million between 2003 and 2010 from arms supplies to Syria. (Kounalakis, 2016)

The Syrian government considers that without the assistance of Russia, China and Iran, Syria has received pressure from various parties including sanctions from the UN Security Council. Especially foreign pressure and aggression from the United States as a reaction to a chemical attack that occurred in August 2013 near Damascus which killed hundreds of civilians. This assistance was seen as a diplomatic victory coming from Russia and allies so that Syria failed to accept foreign military aggression.

In practice, based on data from the International Coalition for Responsibility to Protect, RtoP was used as a basis for resolving mass atrocity crimes cases. For example, in Libya, Rwanda, Central Africa, and now the Syrian Civil War. But the implementation of RtoP in Rwanda was succeeded. It was because there was no Russian involvement in Rwanda.

However, this analysis can be compared with US intervention in the Vietnam War. Vietnam War was the biggest mistake of the United States at that time. The conflict was caused by the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union and North Korea. More than 3 million people including 58,000 American soldiers were killed in the war and the rest are Vietnamese civilians. Perhaps, if Russia is not involved in the Syrian conflict, there is a possibility that the United States will succeed in implementing RtoP in Syria.

This is why the Assad Government is not compliant with '*Responsibility to Protect*'. Therefore, Russian and Chinese involvement in Syria makes America find it difficult to resolve the conflict. In 2016, Barack Obama before resigning as President forced US military forces to return from Syria.

However, the United Nations has permanent members, including China, France, Russia, Britain, and the United States. If one or two permanent members veto a resolution to intervene in Syria, nothing can be done without their consent because their veto power expresses a country's political will. There was no international consensus, where the United Nations provided resolutions or other alternative solutions to stop the conflict between the Assad government and opposition groups in Syria. This was the most obvious obstacle.

Basically, in the previous Libyan war, the United Nations Security Council imposed a no-fly zone in Libya and used "all necessary measures" to protect its people from Moammar Gadhafi. Those vetoes from Russia and China made UNSC members did not unite for Syria. Fareed Zakaria in CNN said, "So it couldn't happen through the United Nations. There would be effectively a kind of unilateral or NATO operation with no international legitimacy." (Almond, 2012) The latest ceasefire agreement between the U.S. and Russia only lasted a week before being violated by opposition groups on the ground. With veto power, nothing can be done from the United Nations.

Therefore, with vetoes from Russia and China that made the UN could not provide a resolution to continue interventions or other solutions, the United States could not do anything without the approval of the

United Nations Security Council. The United States along with coalition leaders including Turkey and Saudi Arabia who support several opposition groups and try to stop the conflict in Syria cannot be achieved because Russia and China are supporting the Bashar Al-Assad regime.