

HSMUN 2012

Security Council-The Question of Fostering a Lasting and Tenable Peace Settlement for Arab Spring States.

The Problem

The past year has been an important one for international relations scholars. Not since the early parts of the twentieth century has the world seen the degree of revolution and state rebuilding that is currently in progress in Africa and the Middle East. The end of Canada's combat role in Afghanistan as well as the recent death of long time Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi is observed to be the end of the revolutionary stage in the Arab Spring states, and the beginning of the rebuilding phase that inevitably follows. Other examples of this trend can be witnessed in the states of Egypt and Tunisia (where the first of the revolution attempts began). The rebuilding will most likely centre around the idea that state-initiated violence against citizens should not only be stopped, but should be prevented in the future.

The states in which revolution has occurred have been under the plague of theocratic dictatorship for decades. With the authoritarian era in the region coming to an end, the presence of peace is starting to become an ever present desire of the local population. A major reason that peace has been difficult to achieve thus far is that while the dictators have been removed from power, many loyalists remain in the country. In Egypt, the military was given power after leader Mubarak stepped down, however, violence has still occurred between Mubarak's supporters and those who favor the implementation of a new political system where people's human rights are respected. For stable peace in the country, the population will have to come to a consensus, or it is quite possible the existing tensions will continue to grow and expand the level of violence.

Possible Solutions

One common suggestion to resolve the ongoing issues is for a coalition of states to intervene in the process to ensure a peaceful transition. This idea was originally proposed by the Canadian government under the title "Responsibility to Protect" (more commonly referred to as R2P). Simply put, all countries have a responsibility to intervene in a crisis where human rights violations have occurred regardless of the self-interest of the intervening state. This suggestion has strong potential in Africa because the continental body, the African Union, is the only international organization to adopt this policy in practice. The United Nations has adopted it as well, but only in principle. One problem with this option, however, is

that the policy has been abused in the past, as seen in the United States' intervention of Iraq where they had committed acts of human rights violations themselves. This could result in a negative response in the Arab Spring states as an intervention by western states would likely not be welcome. Contrarily, if R2P is used properly there could be a willingness from the states to welcome foreign assistance. Do states have a responsibility to intervene in non-domestic affairs? Also, is intervention solely a self-interested action?

An alternative solution is the implementation of a western-style liberal democracy in the rebuilding states. This is generally the purpose of an international intervention, however, many feel that if the revolutionized states come to this conclusion themselves that they may better be able to accommodate the western system. Not surprisingly, this has not been the most popular suggestion. A common counter argument to this motion is that a political system is not reducible to a "one size fits all" formula. This is because different regions have different needs that have to be accommodated by their governments. Is the international pressure for the implementation of a western democracy legitimate? Advocates of this idea suggest that in order to create a more peaceful international society, it would be beneficial to try and universalize the international political environment. It would result in less conflict between states due to a shared political ideology and would allow for better communication between countries. If the atmosphere is right in the Arab states there could be a potential for the adoption of a liberal democracy but there is a strong possibility that the newly revolutionized states will choose to create their own system that is better tailored to the needs of the country.

The fostering of peace in the Arab Spring states is not a goal that will likely be solved in a short period of time. It could take anywhere from a few years to several decades so it is essential to examine both the long term and short term goals of creating a tenable peace settlement. With the presence of change comes the possibility of improvements to society. It will be important for the rebuilding states to determine the route they feel will best establish a perpetual presence of peace and it will be important for the international community to decide whether they will respect the decisions of the states or if they will intervene

Resources

You should start your research with your country's foreign policy regarding R2P and their support (or lack of) for the old regimes in the Arab Spring states. This informs you of your country's position on this issue. Do they support the idea of intervention or isolationism? From there try to expand on your research by examining your country's alliances in relation to this topic. For example, do they

support the African Union's efforts and policies or do they feel the United Nations is a better vehicle for change. Here are some other sources that may help in your research. Do not forget to read the blog as it will provide useful information that could help in debates.