The Legitimacy of the Intervention in Syria

A critical review regarding the intervention in Syria in 2018 executed by the United States of America, Great Britain and France

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Abstract
The aim of this study is to examine the legitimacy of cross-national interventions. To achieve this, the paper will conduct an enquiry on the intervention executed by the United States, Great Britain and France in Syria the night to the 14th of April 2018. The paper will examine this intervention in relation to the Just War Theory as phrased by the medieval philosopher Thomas Aquinas. The materials used in this study are speeches made by the heads of governments from two of these three countries, namely the United States and Great Britain, as well as official documents. The method used to conduct this study is a critical review of the arguments that they presented in their speeches. Furthermore, the thesis will provide an analysis by applying the Just War Theory to critically review speeches and official documents from the states and its heads of governments. The result will show that the question of legitimacy and warfare is a difficult question. In this specific case, it was a legitimate operation to intervene in Syria.
Table of Contents

1. Introduction............................................................................................................. 4
   1.1 Question and aim.......................................................................................... 4
   1.2 Outline ........................................................................................................... 5
   1.3 Delimitations ................................................................................................. 5
2. Background ........................................................................................................... 7
   2.1 The case .......................................................................................................... 7
   2.2 Previous research ......................................................................................... 8
3. Theoretical Framework ......................................................................................... 15
   3.1 Legitimacy as a concept .............................................................................. 15
   3.2 Jus ad Bellum ............................................................................................... 16
       3.2.1 Legitimate Authority ........................................................................... 17
       3.2.2 Just Cause ........................................................................................... 18
       3.2.3 Right Intention .................................................................................... 19
4. Method of Analysis ............................................................................................. 20
   4.1 Operationalization of Theoretical Concepts .............................................. 20
   4.2 Material and Design .................................................................................... 21
5. Analysis .............................................................................................................. 23
   5.1 The United States of America .................................................................... 23
       5.1.1 Legitimate Authority ......................................................................... 23
       5.1.2 Just Cause ........................................................................................... 24
       5.1.3 Right Intention .................................................................................... 25
   5.2 Great Britain ................................................................................................. 27
       5.2.1 Legitimate Authority ......................................................................... 27
       5.2.2 Just Cause ........................................................................................... 28
       5.2.3 Right Intention .................................................................................... 30
6. Discussion ........................................................................................................... 32
7. Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 34
   7.1 Suggestion for further studies .................................................................... 34
References .............................................................................................................. 35
1. Introduction

Today, wars and conflicts are taking place in major parts of the world. One of these is the Syrian conflict that is a complex conflict without simple solutions. In April 2018, the United States, Great Britain and France chose to intervene in Syria, as a response to a chemical attack suspected to have been executed by the Syrian regime. The intervention was both supported and criticized by the international community. The question of when it is right to intervene is debated. History has shown cases where it has been interpreted as legitimate to enter another country, while there are other cases where it has been strongly questioned.1

The Syrian conflict is one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, where the population is suffering from famine and extreme poverty.2 The people of Syria are fleeing to other countries in order to get help while the Syrian regime is involved in a civil war, fighting opposition groups, like ISIS and the Al-nusra Front.3 The war is currently ongoing and there is no sight of settlement. The world needs a greater understanding of this conflict as it has disrupted thousands of lives and created an immigrant crisis throughout the world. Therefore it is as important to understand the intervention, and the motives behind it. This then begs the question of when it is legitimate to intervene in another country. Is there a certain framework that decides when a intervention is legitimate? To understand how interventions function in today’s society is therefore crucial in order to gain broader understanding of legitimacy and how it relates to international politics.

1.1 Question and aim

Intervention has repeatedly been an important topic throughout history. For as long as humans have talked about war, they have talked about it in terms of right and wrong, and the theoretical framework of this topic started with the Just War Theory. The action taken by the three countries led to contradictions within the debate regarding military warfare. International law might be interpreted in different ways when debating this matter regarding when it is acceptable to intervene in another country. There is a tension between the interpretation of legality and legitimacy when debating the dilemma of interventions. In this essay, moral legitimacy refers to when “organizations are accepted on grounds of conscious


2 Forsberg, Ulrika. Kriget i Syrien: 7 fakta - 7 år. Sverige för UNHCR, March 14, 2018. Available at: https://sverigeforunhcr.se/blogg/kriget-i-syrien-7-ar-7-fakta (accessed 10/12-18)

moral judgements based on justifying reasons”. In order to understand the phenomena of political interventions, it is vital to analyse the framework of legitimacy of war actions. Therefore, the research question of this paper is:

*Based on the Just War Theory, was it legitimate for the United States and Great Britain to intervene in Syria?*

To answer this research question this paper will use the Just War Theory and its premises as a basis. In order to get an understanding of the phenomena, there will be a discussion regarding the tension between the judicial and the moral aspects of the matter. The principles of the chosen theory, together with arguments from speeches from the studied case, will be critically analyzed in the context of legitimate warfare.

### 1.2 Outline

The study is divided into seven different parts. After this introduction, the next part is devoted to the background. The background part will give the reader a brief summon of the specific case, the missile attack that the three countries launched toward two Syrian cities, as well as information about previous research conducted on this sort of topic. Previous research will be the base for this enquiry’s analysis which will lead the reader into the part related to the theoretical framework. The following part presents the selected methodology, which is a critical review of the arguments. This section also include a discussion about the chosen material. After that, the main analysis will be performed, in order to examine the quality and strength of the arguments with the jus ad bellum as a base. After, a discussion will be conducted to understand the results from the analysis and comparing the result to the research field. The final part will provide answers to the research question with suggestions for further investigation on the topic.

### 1.3 Delimitations

The intervention in Syria was a joint operation conducted by the United States, Great Britain and France. This thesis will only be reviewing speeches made from the President of the United States, Donald Trump, and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Theresa May, and not

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from the President of France, Emmanuel Macron. This selection was made due to the perceived similarities in statements made by Macron and May regarding this intervention. Including both heads of government would therefore be excessive. Another reason is that Macron’s announcement was short when comparing to the other leaders’ announcements.\(^5\)

Another delimitation in this essay is the definition of the concept *legitimacy*. The concept is used in different contexts and therefore have many different definitions. The concept of legitimacy can be used when discussing lawfulness, equality or fair allocation of resources.\(^6\) However, in this study it is about the moral legitimacy in warfare, and therefore, the chosen conceptualization of moral legitimacy is when “organizations are accepted on grounds of conscious moral judgements based on justifying reasons”.\(^7\) However, this will be discussed further on. The chosen case gives the reader a chance to get information of both the intervention, and therefore the Syrian conflict, and the justification of these sort of operations, as general for many similar cases. It must be declared that the focus will lay on the problem of moral legitimacy in the international community, and not on the Syrian conflict.

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\(^7\) Willke, Willke, 2008, 28.
2. Background

In order to understand the incident that led to the intervention in focus of this study, a summary of the empirical case will be presented. The paper will then continue to apply previous research on the debated subject of legitimate interventions, with the aim to understand how this essay can contribute to the research field.

2.1 The case

During the night to the 14th of April 2018 a joint operation to Attack Syria was conducted by the United States, Britain and France. The armed forces of the states launched 105 missiles to the Syrian cities Damascus and Homs. The air strikes was intended as a response to the chemical attack suspected to have been executed by the Syrian regime govern by the president Bashar al-Assad. The air strikes dismantled different facilities thought to be connected to chemical productions and chemical equipment storages.\(^8\)

The chemical attack occurred the 7th of April in the Syrian city of Douma. According to hospital staff and rescue workers there were about 500 people injured and around 40 persons been killed. The Syrian government denied that they were responsible for the execution of the attack. Instead, President al-Assad argued that the incident was staged by opposition activists of the Syrian regime, with help from the United States, Great Britain and France.\(^9\)

As a response to this, Great Britain, the United States and France chose to conduct air strikes towards Syria. The aim was to show zero tolerance regarding the use of chemical weapons. They stated that this was in reaction to the country’s regime murdering its own people.\(^10\) The action was not grounded in a United Nations Security Council decision which means that these countries actions were not supported by the international community. In the Security Council this incident quickly became a debated question whether or not this was a legitimate

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\(^9\) ibid.

action made by the three states. After the attack happened, a majority of the states gave their support for the intervention, while some other did not, due to feeling of being threatened.\footnote{Grönlund, Erik, Makar, Maria. \textit{USA anfaller Syrien tillsammans med Frankrike och Storbritannien}. SVT, April 14, 2018. Available at: https://www.svt.se/nyheter/utrikes/trump-vantas-halla-tal-om-syrien (accessed 8/11-18)}

The European Union and NATO were two of the actors who argued that this was an acceptable action. Jens Stoltenberg, the Secretary General of NATO, stated that NATO favored this reaction since the humanitarian tragedy must end. He also argued that Syria and its allies Russia and Iran are the responsible for this tragedy. In contrast, Russia and China thought that this was an unacceptable operation. Russia’s President Putin meant that it was breaking the principles of international law.\footnote{ibid.} This points to the questions on whether the Syrian government indeed used chemical weapons, whether this intervention broke the principles of international law and whether it was justified for the United States, Britain and France to intervene in Syria at all?

2.1 Previous research

The question about legitimacy of war action has been a debated subject for a number of years. The phenomena is seen as a dilemma since there is no clear answer and it puts principles of the customary international law in conflict with each other.\footnote{ICISS. \textit{Responsibility to Protect}. Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. December 2001. Available at: http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf (accessed 24/11-18)} When interventions occur, there is always some political actor who is feeling threatened or limited. To get a broader comprehension of the research field, a presentation of the cases of Kosovo and Libya will be performed.

External humanitarian interventions have been a controversial subject both when it has happened and when it has not happened, due to the fact that the main purpose is human protection. The intervention in Kosovo is a clear example of this, since it was criticized of the way in which the NATO allies executed the operation.\footnote{ibid.} Many scholars have discussed this operation, and one of them is Nicholas J. Wheeler. The author reflected on the legality and legitimacy of NATO’s intervention in Kosovo. He considered whether or not NATO’s action attempted to promote justice for the civilians or if it set the foundation of international order
in danger. To examine this question Wheeler used three models for examining the legitimacy of the humanitarian intervention, called “the posse”, “the vigilante” and “the norm entrepreneur”.\textsuperscript{15}

The posse model stated that the Security Council authorize member-states to use “all necessary means” to reach global humanitarian norms, if there are threats to the international security. Under these circumstances, the intervention will be justified.\textsuperscript{16} The Security Council has the primary responsibility as stated in Article 24 of the UN Charter, which says that “in order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Member confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.”\textsuperscript{17} NATO’s intervention of Kosovo was not legal according to the posse model because the lack of unanimity among the permanent members. However, the intervention could be argued to be legitimate on moral grounds instead.\textsuperscript{18}

The vigilante model explained the actions of individuals who enforce law in the absence of legal constitutions. This on behalf of the society. Even if the Security Council failed to act and NATO stepped in, and according to the author, it was still not a justified action due to the fact that there was no basis in existing law.\textsuperscript{19}

The norm entrepreneur had its ground in Martha Finnemores arguments about states who are acting as norm entrepreneurs that convinces other states to adopt the concerned norm. In the Kosovo case, NATO refused to acknowledge that they were challenging the customary international law, in other words, the existing norms in the international politics arena. According to the author, this intervention might have led to a new rule of customary international law.\textsuperscript{20}


\textsuperscript{16} ibid.


\textsuperscript{18} Wheeler, 2000, 146.

\textsuperscript{19} ibid. 147.

\textsuperscript{20} ibid.
Wheeler stressed that states that decided to use force with intentions to end atrocities without the authorisation from the Security Council or the General Assembly, must justify their actions in terms of a new legal right of interventions in customary international law. The states do this in hope that their actions triggers a “norm cascade” in the society of states.\(^2^1\) He also said that the need for legitimacy is a powerful constraining force on state actions and that the Kosovo intervention did secure widespread approval in the international community. His conclusion was that the field requires additional cases where “opinio juris” (i.e. customary international law) support this norm before a judgement can be made about how far Kosovo marks a turning point in legitimizing the practice of humanitarian intervention.\(^2^2\)

The Syria case, that this thesis is focusing on, can be argued to be similar to the Kosovo intervention in some aspects. There was no approval from the Security Council, anyhow, influential actors in the international community argued that the operation still was a success, which can be seen as a norm change in the international law.

Another scholar, named James Pattison, debated about the ethics of the humanitarian intervention in Libya. He stressed that the moral permissibility of the humanitarian intervention in Libya turns on two assessments, the first being whether the situation was serious at the time the intervention was launched, and the second questioning what the dominant purpose of the intervention was.\(^2^3\) When debating these two questions, he discussed the possibilities and the constraints when analyzing this specific case applied on the Just War Theory.\(^2^4\) According to the author, there were three potential problems with the situation. The first problem was that it was doubtable if the intervention was executed in hope for regime change, rather than to protect civilians.\(^2^5\) Another problem of concern is the unsurety in assessing long-term consequences of this kind of intervention.\(^2^6\) And the last problem is regarding the moral problems due to the fact that the NATO-led coalition failed to act in similar situations in other states. This showed the inconsistent moral standards and the dominance of the self-interest in decisions about where to execute interventions.\(^2^7\) The result

\(^ {21}\) Wheeler, 2000, 147.
\(^ {22}\) ibid. 161.
\(^ {24}\) ibid. 274.
\(^ {25}\) ibid.
\(^ {26}\) ibid. 275.
\(^ {27}\) ibid. 276.
he presented was that it was a difficult question whether the actions taken was morally permissible. If the intervention in Libya was deemed as “rightful”, it would consequently mean that not intervening in other cases similar to it would have to be deemed as “wrongful”. His conclusion was that all humanitarian interventions can be viewed as legitimate, since saving some lives will always be superior to saving none.\textsuperscript{28}

The article and its result can also be compared to the Syria case due to the fact that the American and British armed forces do not act in all similar cases. Were there other reasons for intervening than humanitarian reasons? There might be a cases where self-interest is a influencing factor.

Another article regarding the issue with humanitarian interventions was written by Alex J. Bellamy. In his article he discussed the Responsibility to Protect principle and the interventions that has occured after the Iraqi case.\textsuperscript{29} Bellamy examined what international engagement with Darfur told us about the norm of interventions after the war in Iraq in the year of 2003. The aim of his study was to gain information whether or not there was a global consensus on armed responses to humanitarian emergencies. He discussed whether or not states and organizations felt that they had a responsibility to protect, which the ICISS pointed out, or if it rather was an opportunity that powerful states use to legitimize their interferences in the affairs of the weaker states. To answer his research question he conducted an overview of the norms of humanitarian intervention and analyze the impact that “the war on terror” had on the debate.\textsuperscript{30} Bellamy pointed out that the Security Council, thanks to the Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, has a legal right to authorize humanitarian interventions, since Article 39 address that “the Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measure shall be taken in accordance with Article 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security.”\textsuperscript{31}

However, according to Bellamy there was a consensus among liberal states in the world community that there was a moral right to intervene without the authorization of the Security

\textsuperscript{28} Pattison, 2011, 277.

\textsuperscript{29} Bellamy, Alex J. Responsibility to Protect or Trojan Horse? The Crisis in Darfur and Humanitarian Intervention after Iraq. Ethics and International Affairs. Vol. 19. no. 2. pp. 31-54, 2005, 32.

\textsuperscript{30} ibid.

Council in extreme situations. The moral consensus in the matter of humanitarian intervention has developed since the Kosovo case, and in 2001. The author showed this by giving an example of when Kofi Annan used his nobel lecture to stress that the “sovereignty of states must no longer be used as a shield for gross violations of human rights”. When debating the impact of the war on terror on the consensus of the norm of humanitarian intervention, there are according to the author three positions: the optimists, the “sun has set” perspective, and the ones who suggests that the ICISS criteria for intervention should be seen as constraints in order to limit states.

The optimists accept that states intervene when there is a humanitarian crisis, if vital national interests are at stake. The author stressed that since September 11, interests and humanitarianism have merged for many states in the Western. In Afghanistan there was a clear linkage between terrorism and state failure, and in this case, the optimists argue that Western states are more likely to respond to humanitarian crisis and state failures than they were prior to the September 2011. The persons who agrees with the second perspective, means that the “sun has set” on the humanitarian intervention agenda. Some of them highlights that American and British militaries are unlikely to be used in frontlines roles, and that the considerations regarding the “war on terror” are likely to outdo the humanitarian concerns. They also stresses that the world previously have failed in similar cases, like the people in the Balkans or in Rwanda. The last perspective argues that the ICISS criteria for intervention should be seen as constraints that limits states’ ability to abuse humanitarian justification, rather than as enablers for intervention. They mean that the principle of the responsibility to protect can be used to oppose interventions which are legitimate. A moral consensus on the criteria will make it more, not less, difficult for states to claim that their purpose of the intervention is justified on humanitarian grounds. There was a general consensus about the necessity of intervention due to humanitarian emergencies, when approved by the Security Council, and a consensus among liberal states that an unapproved intervention may be legitimate as well.

32 Bellamy, 2005, 34.
33 ibid. 35.
34 ibid. 37.
35 ibid. 38.
36 ibid. 40.
The conclusion in this article is that ICISS should be concerned about the fact that states might abuse humanitarian justifications to legitimate unjust war, due to the Responsibility to Protect.\textsuperscript{37} This issue can be compared to the intervention that this essay is focusing on. States can execute interventions and argue that they have power to do it, when referring to the principle of Responsibility to Protect.

It is clear that there are many different rules and norms in the political field when discussing intervention or warfare overall. One author who is discussing this is Martha Finnemore, in her article “Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention”. In this research contribution, she focuses on justification since it speaks directly to normative context. She means that states justify their interventions when they are drawing on shared values and expectations held by other decision makers.\textsuperscript{38} Which is very similar to the idea of legitimacy that is used in this essay.

Finnemore argues that humanitarian interventions must be multilateral to be legitimate. She discusses the problems with the UN Charter, since it has provided the framework of the normative contestation over interventions. The problem is that the charter enshrines two principles that are in conflict, due to the fact that the principles are in conflict with each other. These two principles are Article 1, which stresses the importance of human rights, and article 2, which address that states are sovereign. According to the author, abuses made by states against their own people brings these two central principles into conflict.\textsuperscript{39} Finnemore states that multilateralism requires extensive joint planning. UN norms say that interventions must be composed by troops from different states, and preferably, not states who are characterized as great powers. She also discusses previous cases, where the intervention can not be conceptualized as multilateral since the need for involvement of other states was for strategic reasons. An example of this is the US-led intervention in Somalia. According to the author, to fulfill the criterias of a multilateral intervention, the motives behind it must be based on morality, it is unacceptable if it is strategic.\textsuperscript{40}

The ethics of war and the customary international law of war often overlap each other. In the

\textsuperscript{37} Bellamy, 2005, 53.
\textsuperscript{39} ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} Finnemore, 1996.
international law the UN Charter is an important component. However, it is vital to remember that ethic and morality is much more than the judicial aspect of it. While international law addresses the judicial viewpoint, it does not argue as to why one action is rightful opposed to others that are not. It might also be argued that the law allows certain actions that are morally and ethically wrongful.\footnote{Syse, 2004, 15.} When reading the previous research that has been done on this specific topic, there is a distinct issue regarding the authorization from the Security Council in almost every one of the articles. This shows that the United Nations and its principles are the fundamental rules of today’s society, which can be seen as the legal rights that exists in the international community. But in contrast, you can also see that morality often is about the accepted values in the political arena, which may differ from the principles in the UN Charter. There are many ways of examining this type of questions, often there is a use of selected criterias which need to be fulfilled, or it may just be different perspectives on how the political field should see the phenomena of humanitarian intervention.

As written, a lot of scholars have made studies in the topic of just and unjust war. In this enquiry, an analysis regarding the Just War Theory will be conducted. The reason behind this decision was, when taking earlier research in consideration, is that this theory is the original idea that started the discussion for the topic of legitimate warfare. Scholars have previously used other type of theories when debating legitimacy of war, however, in this study a choice was made to focus on the classical idea of legitimate warfare. Many discussions within this certain field ends with questions about normative aspects, like morality and rightful thinking. Even if Saint Augustines and Thomas Aquinas thoughts and ideas have been previously debated, there has not been systematic research of how well the theory of just war applies on the Syrian situation. The research contribution of this thesis is therefore to apply the Just War Theory to examine the legitimacy of the intervention in Syria, and in doing so, fill an existing research gap.
3. Theoretical Framework

This section will declare the chosen conceptualization of legitimacy. Later on, a discussion about the Just War Theory and the selected premises will be performed. This chapter is significant when discussing the meaning of legitimacy in the international community and the morality of the choices being made.

3.1 Legitimacy as a concept

Legitimacy can be understood and conceptualized differently, depending on purpose, perspective and procedure. Political and moral legitimacy are two different concepts used in different situations. One definition of political legitimacy was made by Carl J. Friedrich, who stated that the question of legitimacy is “the question of fact whether a given rulership is believed to be based on good title by most men to subject to it”. However, “subject to it” means that it is only the persons who are under the rulership is considered, not persons who have another ruler. That is the reason for why this definition is unuseful in this certain case, since the Syrian population does not have President Trump nor Prime Minister May as chiefs of state. Another definition is stated by Ian Hurd who says that legitimacy “refers to the normative belief that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed”. This definition shows the problem regarding that legitimacy may be political or moral. In this study, a choice was made to focus on the moral legitimacy of political decisions, and therefore, this conceptualization will not be useful either, since it is about to comply with the institutions.

The definition of legitimacy in this study will be the following, presented by Springer who says that moral legitimacy means that “organizations are accepted on grounds of conscious moral judgements based on justifying reasons”. This concept is satisfactory since the research question is whether or not the intervention was legitimate, when applying the case and the arguments presented on certain justified premises.

The core of legitimacy lies in some form of agreement that an entity or organization is justified and therefore has the right to act in the international arena. Legitimacy becomes the

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43 ibid.
very basis on which the international community relies. Without legitimacy, it can not exist. Within the international community, the various actors are constantly trying to legitimize their actions. The legitimacy itself is based on both principles and composition of norms within the political field.

The meeting place for legitimacy and legality is in the political arena. It converges norms, power distribution and the search for consensus. There are three interacting areas, which are the following; the legitimacy of the international community, legitimacy in practice, and its actors’ strategies to achieve legitimacy of their actions.\[46\] For the political philosopher, power is legitimate where the laws that control it are justified in accordance with rationally defensible normative principles. The philosopher does not engage in solving legal disputes but is rather concerned with moral dilemmas about who is entitled to power.\[47\]

3.2 Jus ad Bellum
The Just War Theory is a christian doctrine of military ethics. The purpose of the theory is to ensure that war is morally justified. A war and its circumstances must fulfill a series of criterias in order to be justified. This theory includes two sets of criterias, *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. The jus ad bellum principle can be defined as “the morally acceptable limits within which a sovereign could and even should go to war”. Jus in bello can be said to “set limits to the conduct of war”.\[48\] Justified warfare has been discussed since Plato’s era, but the first person who established systematic terms of when a war should be judged as just, was Saint Augustine. After that, the moral argumentation was developed by the catholic philosopher Thomas Aquinas, who can be seen as one of the fathers of the Just War Theory, since he was the one who formed the criterias of jus ad bellum and jus in bello that is still used in today’s society.\[49\]

The Just War Theory is a theory made up by the following principles: *Legitimate Authority, Just Cause, Right Intention, Proportionality, Last Resort and Reasonable Hope for Success*.\[50\] The fundamental principles in this theory are the three first mentioned. The last three has

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47 ibid. 6.
50 Syse, 2004, 63.
been aimed as a complement to the theory for fitting more situations. Anyhow, since this study is examining the applicability of the traditional doctrine of the theory, the analyze will only include the three first principles, in other words, Legitimate Authority, Just Cause and Right Intention.

Opponents of the just war theory may be either pacifists or political realists. The ones that belongs to the pacifist category believe that there never will be a justifiable basis of war. On the other hand, the political realists argue that war is impossible to avoid, but the armament is non-moral. Even if the pacifists and political realists can be seen as two complete opposites, they both agree that moral and war have nothing to do with each other. The theory that this study focuses on, the Just War Theory, can be seen as a midpoint between the other two positions.

In order to narrow down the study a choice was made to only focus on the jus ad bellum principle of the Just War Theory. These premises are the most adaptable since the weapon that the countries used were missiles, which does not fit the jus in bello. The specific case can be characterized as a war on distance, and therefore is the jus ad bellum the most adaptable. Another reason for not using the jus in bello criterias, is since I believe that they can be characterized as practical rather than theoretical. In the Syrian case, it will not be possible to examine if the proportionality was correct, or if it was the last resort or a reasonable hope for success. To examine these question, more empirical evidence would be required. Also, due to the fact that the fundamental idea of just war, according to Aquinas, contained the first three criterias this is more useful in order to answer the research question. Since Thomas Aquinas is a great and well known medieval philosopher, there is a lot of material regarding his thoughts and ideas. However, Henrik Syse describes Aquinas criterias well, and therefore, a choice was made to use Syse’s interpretations of the doctrine.

3.1.1 Legitimate Authority

Earlier in history, the question regarding the legitimate authority was problematic since the society was built upon a feudal system with no distinct polity. The matter is still important in today’s society. Decisions regarding when to use weapon, and to ensure minimum abuse of

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52 ibid. 24.
53 ibid. 44.
power, is factors that need its considerations before choosing where the authority should be placed.\textsuperscript{54} The authority criteria has two head aspects, a procedural and a substantial. The procedural aspects means that the decisions regarding serious matters, like warfare and interventions, must be safeguarded by procedures that are both predictable and where there is a chance for reconsideration. It must be clarified how the decision was taken and why.\textsuperscript{55} Both in the international law and in modern theory of military warfare, it is important that the power of military effort should not be held in the hands of the military forces. The military forces shall not be interpreted as a political decision apparatus.\textsuperscript{56} Anyhow, it is the political authority’s duty to take advice from the military and experts from the field.\textsuperscript{57}

The other aspect of legitimate authority, the substantial, is a classic idea from the medieval philosopher Aristoteles. He argues that the difference between the good and the bad regimes are that the bad ones prioritize their own best, meanwhile the good regimes wants the best for the whole society. In this idea, the legitimate authority is the one who serves the society.\textsuperscript{58} A problem with this substantial aspect is the question about “the society’s best”. Does it only mean its own population of the state or does it mean the population of the world? According to the Just War Theory, each political leader have the main responsibility for its own people. It is doubtful that every leader could ensure every single persons safety in the world, especially since this theory is grounded in ideas and thoughts about war, where the leader always should prioritize its own population’s interests and health.\textsuperscript{59}

\textbf{3.1.2 Just Cause}

The most obvious reason for warfare is self-defence. In addition to self-defence, according to the medieval philosophers, the other justified reasons are; intervention in order to help humans from abuses executed by the state, punishment for unjustified attacks on themselves or others, and fight for faith or religious reasons.\textsuperscript{60} The last cause, war for religious reasons, have been criticized due to the argumentation regarding that differences of beliefs does not threaten peace on earth.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{54} Syse, 2004, 65.
\textsuperscript{55} ibid.
\textsuperscript{56} ibid. 68.
\textsuperscript{57} ibid. 72.
\textsuperscript{58} ibid. 68.
\textsuperscript{59} ibid. 69.
\textsuperscript{60} Syse, 2004, 84.
\textsuperscript{61} ibid. 85.
When discussing humanitarian intervention the following situations has been accepted as just causes for deciding when to enter another country; when there are clear signs that a regime is planning to commit genocide, when there are enormous disasters which the local regime will not do anything about, and when there is a situation regarding “failed states”. The signs, in a matter where there is a belief that a regime is planning a genocide on its own people, must be substantial and trustworthy. Furthermore, these signs need to be compared with the general expectations on the debated state. If there is a disaster, like famine for example, and the government of the state won’t help its own population, there might not be necessary to use military action. However, if the helping country enters the country and encounter military opposition, it can be justified to use military actions. The states called “failed states” are states with no functional political system, which therefore have situations like civil war. In such disturbances, there is a just cause for choosing to intervene.

3.1.3 Right Intention

According to the Just War Theory, war can only be justified if there is respect for both sides of the conflict and if the conflict results in peace for all concerned actors. Medieval political philosopher mean that war action should be motivated by revenge, hate, greed or lust for power. Instead, the motives should be about love, even towards the enemy. The motives behind a warfare cannot be sinful and unworthy, because if they are, they will never be justified. The right intention criteria has two important components, that fits today’s sorts of war as well. First of all, respect for the enemy since it also has rights in war, no matter what the cause of war is. Second, the understanding that the people you are fighting not are identical with the atrocities that you are trying to get rid of. Right intention is about the purpose of the war but also the motivation. The most important factor of this criteria is that the aim with the action must be rightful. The goal with the action must be morally justified. As long as peace is the goal, the criteria will be fulfilled.

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63 ibid.
64 ibid. 95.
65 ibid. 97.
4. Method of Analysis

The aim of this section is to present the choices that have been made throughout the research regarding methodology. Further on there will be a presentation of the material used in this essay in order to answer the research question. The chapter will also include a critical discussion about the chosen material. The discussions are closely connected to the overall purpose in this enquiry.

In order to answer the research question, a critical review will be performed. The purpose is to critically examine the arguments being used as justification when the actors engaged in cross-national interventions. The strategy is qualitative with the aim to test the durability of the political messages in the international community. According to Beckman, the scientific study of political messages is an idea analysis.67 The intention with an idea analysis is to describe, explain or take a stand regarding a material.68 This essay is going to take a stand on the durability of the political arguments, and therefore you can argue that it is a type of idea analysis. The overall purpose is to subject the arguments against the normative premises of the jus ad bellum doctrine, and in doing this, get an understanding regarding the legitimacy of political actions.

4.1 Operationalization of Theoretical Concepts

To begin with, Legitimate Authority will be understood as whether or not the political leader that ordered the intervention has the authority to decide over their state’s military actions. If the political leader was acting within their authority, this thesis will judge this leader to have legitimate authority. Since the responsibility should not be laid in the hands of the military, it is important that the concerned actor is a politician who only gets recommendations from the military experts. Regarding the problematic aspects of the “society’s best”, this will not be considered in the analysis.

The second concept, Just Cause, will be understood as the empirical “evidence” to which the States’ intervention responded to. To examine whether or not the states had Just Cause for the intervention, the concept will be operationalized using the definition from Henrik Syse. A Just Cause would, according to Syse, be: self defence, intervention to assist people subject to

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68 ibid. 14.
illegal assaults, punishment of those who have assaulted others in an unjustified manner, or faith as a cause for battle as well as religious wars.\textsuperscript{69}

The third concept, \textit{Right Intention}, will be defined and understood as the motivation of the states to intervene. Syse wrote that for the Right Intention to exist, the actions of states must not be motivated by greed, revenge or power, but essentially motivated by love towards the society in which the intervention is occurring.\textsuperscript{70} Right Intention will therefore be operationalized as how the political leader who commanded the intervention motivated the intervention, i.e. whether it was to help the citizens of the affected zone, or if it was motivated with ill intent. If the motivation behind the intervention was to help the people affected, this thesis will attribute the concept of Right Intention to the action.

\subsection*{4.2 Material and Design}

In the analysis, the chosen material is the speeches presented by the heads of governments of the United States and Great Britain. These speeches was selected by their relevance. The announcements are relevant in this topic since it is the arguments and intentions that is aimed to be analyzed, and therefore speeches will give us the information that we need to conduct the analysis. With this a base, a discussion of the arguments’ applicability to the criterias Just Cause and Right Intention will be conducted. The criteria Legitimate Authority will be discussed from the United States’ Constitution and official documents from Great Britain, because this information will not be acknowledged in the specific announcements. The reason behind excluding the speech by President Macron of France, is the length and the quality of the statement. It was not as informative as the other leaders’ speeches.

In order to answer the research question, an analysis of the two speeches will be conducted. One of the speeches was made by the U.S. President Donald Trump and the other is made by Britain’s Prime Minister Theresa May. These speeches was chosen because they gave a direct view of the two countries conception of the attack. Both speeches aimed to inform the listener why the countries armed forces attacked Syria. I believe that the speeches give a broad possibility to interpret each of these jus ad bellum criteria in a satisfactory manner since the material gives information about arguments for justification of warfare. The presentations that are used as material in this study are trustworthy since the sources are direct transcripts.

\textsuperscript{69} Syse, 2004, 84.
\textsuperscript{70} ibid. 97.
To ensure that the full transcripts are accurate, a recorded version of the speeches have been looked upon as well. The acquisition of the speech made by Theresa May was taken from the UK government’s own website under their publications. It might therefore be assumed to be in line with the government’s view. The announcement by President Trump was also found on the White House’s own website. These websites offers full transcripts of the held statements. Both May and Trump held their statements in a press release which means indirectly to their people of the nations. May’s speech was held the 14th of April 2018, which means that the speech was held after the missile attack had occurred. Trump gave his speech the same evening that the attack happened, in other words the 13th of April. The decision to operate was already taken, so even if the speech was held before the attack happened, he did not open up for discussion.

The purpose with this essay is to examine the legitimacy of the intervention with the Just War Theory as a base. Since the doctrine’s principles, the jus ad bellum, are highlighting the intentions and reasons for entering another country, speeches are the most sufficient material to base the enquiry on. The first criteria, Legitimate Authority, will be analyzed from official documents, not the chosen speeches, since the needed information will not be found in the speeches. The disadvantages with the chosen material is that potential underlying motives not will be analyzed. Anyhow, that will not be necessary in order to answer the specific question of this study. This thesis has attempted to be transparent in its operationalization in an attempt to accurately concur with the research question.
5. Analysis

In this section the thesis will interpret how the decision to execute the missile attack was legitimate on the basis of the three conditions Legitimate Authority, Just Cause and Right Intention. It will begin with a critical review of the arguments presented by the United States and after that a critical review of the arguments of Great Britain.

An essential difficulty in writing this analysis is that it is in this capacity impossible to know whether or not political leaders are telling the truth. Al-Assad’s account and the other two political leaders’ account may differ greatly, and it is not within the capacity of this thesis to determine what statements that are factually accurate or not. Therefore, this analysis will proceed from a hypothetical standpoint, i.e. whether or not this intervention was legitimate, where the political leaders are being truthful. Another note is that the aim of this thesis is not to examine the factual accuracy of these statements, but to examine the argument’s legitimacy with the foundation of Just War Theory.

5.1 The United States of America

In order to understand the legitimacy of the intervention, the first section will discuss the Legitimate Authority, second the Just Cause and third the Right Intention.

5.1.1 Legitimate Authority

According to the Just War Theory, the procedural aspect of the Legitimate Authority criteria requires a process of political decisions that are safeguarded by procedures that are both predictable and where there is a chance for reconsideration. The theory outlines that it is vital that the power of military should be put in the hands of politicians, not in the hands of the military forces. The politician who ordered the operation must be have the authority to decide over the military actions. These principles are stated in the U.S. Constitution, in the Article 2 (2), which informs the following:

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject
relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offices against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.\textsuperscript{71}

Following the constitution, Trump would be fulfilling the criteria for Legitimate Authority, since he is granted the status of Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces by being the President of the United States. However, it might also be argued that Trump can be considered to be a Legitimate Authority only in the territory of the United States, designated by its constitution. He might not be interpreted as a Legitimate Authority on behalf of another country. This opens up for the discussion about international actors who interferes in another state’s internal affairs. In this case, if the President of the United States orders an operation in Syria, is he still fulfilling the principle of Legitimate Authority, although he is acting outside his own jurisdiction? The President has executive power of employing the armed forces of the United States, but no such authority has been given to him by the Syrian population, or the Syrian regime. However, if this would imply that the president was not acting with Legitimate Authority, this would annul the criteria about Legitimate Authority on any cross-border operation, making international warfare impossible to legitimate.

5.1.2 Just Cause

This thesis will interpret the Just Cause criteria to be met if some of the situations that Henrik Syse presented are the main reason for executing the intervention. This would include situations in which the states’ actions were motivated by 1) self-defence, 2) intervention to assist people subject to illegal assaults executed by the state, 3) punishment of those who have assaulted others in an unjustifying manner, or 4) assaults on religious grounds.

President Donald Trump argued in a statement that the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime was not a new phenomena. To back up his argument he stated that:

\begin{quote}
[...] last Saturday, the Assad regime again deployed chemical weapons to slaughter innocent civilians - this time, in the town of Douma, near the Syrian capital of Damascus. This massacre was a significant escalation in a pattern of chemical weapons use by that very terrible regime.\textsuperscript{72}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{72} The White House. *Statement by President Trump on Syria*. April 13, 2018. Available at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-syria/ (accessed 18/12-18)
In the same statement, Trump said that the actions of the Syrian regime were not “the actions of a man; [but the] crimes of a monster”.\textsuperscript{73} He referred to the time following World War 1 and stated that it was after this period that “civilized nations joined together to ban chemical warfare”.\textsuperscript{74} Proceeding, he argued that the use of chemical weapons are dangerous of a unique magnitude due to that they not only inflict gruesome suffering upon those whom are affected, but because small amounts can unleash a widespread devastation.\textsuperscript{75}

Trump’s assumptions can be compared to the situation where it is judged as a Just Cause since the action that was taken to assist the population who was assaulted by the Syrian state. However, in his statement he said that it was the Syrian regime who did conduct this chemical attack, but he did not inform the audience what evidence he had on this.

Trump stresses that it was the Syrian government who “deployed chemical weapons to slaughter innocent civilians”.\textsuperscript{76} This would perhaps seem as an extreme statement without clear evidence to support it. So the question is whether or not it is acceptable to execute a missile attack without clear evidence. Furthermore, it will be impossible to examine the sources of Trump’s statements and therefore will this thesis assume that Trump’s arguments are factually correct, since the purpose of this analysis is to analyze the leaders’ arguments.

Presuming that the arguments Donald Trump are factually correct, the arguments presented would fulfill the criteria of Just Cause. He ordered this operation in order to save a population who was being assaulted by its regime, and therefore it would meet the principle of Just Cause.

5.1.3 Right Intention

According to Trump, the purpose was to stop the Syrian regime from using chemical attacks, which he stated in the following statement:

\begin{quote}
The purpose of our actions tonight is to establish a strong deterrent against the production, spread and use of chemical weapons. (…...) The combined American, British and French response to these atrocities will integrate all instruments of our national power - military, economic and diplomatic. We
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{73} The White House, \textit{Statement by President Trump on Syria}, April 13, 2018.
\textsuperscript{74} ibid.
\textsuperscript{75} ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} ibid.
are prepared to sustain this response until the Syrian regime stops its use of prohibited chemical agents.\textsuperscript{77}

Following this statement, it seems clear that the intention of this attack was to establish a deterrent against the production of chemical weapons. He also said that the three countries used “their righteous power against barbarism and brutality.”\textsuperscript{78} This argument is also questionable since he still did not inform his listeners of his sources. According to this, the main intention with this intervention seemed to be to stop the production of chemical weapons. Further on in his speech, this intention might not be the main purpose after all. Since he was stated the following:

\begin{quote}
I have a message tonight for the two governments most responsible for supporting, equipping and financing the criminal Assad regime. To Iran and Russia, I ask: What kind of a nation wants to be associated with the mass murder of innocent men, women and children?\textsuperscript{79}
\end{quote}

In the same statement, Trump stated that:

\begin{quote}
In 2013, President Putin and his government promised the world that they would guarantee the elimination of Syria’s chemical weapons. Assad’s recent attack - and today’s response - are the direct result of Russia’s failure to keep that promise. Russia must decide if it will continue down this dark path, or if it will join with civilized nations as a force for stability and peace. Hopefully, someday we’ll get along with Russia, and maybe even Iran - but maybe not.\textsuperscript{80}
\end{quote}

So, the President of the U.S. did not only condemned the Syrian regime, he also condemned Iran and Russia. Therefore, the question is if the real intention of the intervention was to stop the production of chemical weapons, or to show America’s power to the world. He pushes Russia to make a decision whether or not Putin and his government wants to support Syria and Iran, or to join with other nations for stability in the world politics. On this statement, he focuses on blaming Russia for being, together with Iran and the Syrian government, responsible for this happening. The question is what the main intention truly was. If it was to stop the production of these sorts of weapons, due to the consequences for the affected population, it might meet the criteria of Right Intention since this is love for the society. But, the intention might be to show his political power in order to threat other countries, which would mean that the reason is based on lust for power. However, this is

\textsuperscript{77} The White House, \textit{Statement by President Trump on Syria}, April 13, 2018.  
\textsuperscript{78} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{79} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{80} ibid.
underlying motives and therefore it will not be analyzed in this thesis, since there is not enough material to understand the actual motives of the leaders.

Since the purpose of this analysis is to examine the quality and strength of the arguments, when using the jus ad bellum as a basis, it is not possible to analyze the president’s underlying motives. He might execute this intervention with other reasons than the ones he mentioned in his statement. Anyhow, according to his statement regarding the purpose of the air strike, Trump says that it was to show a strong deterrent against the production of chemical weapons. Therefore, the reason is on humanitarian grounds, which can be seen as love for the society, and the criteria of Right Intention will be met.

5.2 Great Britain
In this part of the critical review, Theresa May’s arguments will be analyzed. The aim is to get an understanding regarding what arguments May presented and how these answer on the question whether or not the operation can be judged as legitimate.

5.2.1 Legitimate Authority
In order for Theresa May to meet the criteria Legitimate Authority, she needs to have the authority for deciding whether or not Britain’s Armed Forces shall use military warfare. As in the case of the United States, the requirement is that the executive power of the military is laid in the hands of a politician, not the military. Great Britain is a constitutional monarchy, which means that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is the Sovereign. As Sovereign, The Queen is the Head of the Armed Forces.81 In the state’s constitution, there is the Royal Prerogative which is a significant element of the constitution. The concept of prerogative powers stems from the medieval king in his role as head of the kingdom. Nowadays, the prerogative “enables Ministers, among many other things, to deploy armed forces, make and unmake international treaties and to grant honours”82. The Public Administration Select Committee presented the concept of Prerogative Executive Power and defined the concept as

81 The Royal Household Website. The Queen and the Armed Forces. Available at: https://www.royal.uk/queen-and-armed-forces-0 (accessed 18/12-12)
of international treaties; the conduct of diplomacy; the governance of overseas territories; and the deployment of the armed forces.  

In other words, the prerogative powers are appointed to the Government Ministers, with the Prime Minister as head of government, as the primary executor. This being said, the Monarch still remains constitutionally empowered to exercise the prerogative and therefore is the Commander in chief of the British Armed Forces. However, in practice it is the Prime Minister who is having the main responsibility of the military forces of the state, with consultation with the Sovereign. The prerogative executive power would only be allowed to the government, acting in the Sovereign’s name. This would make the executive actions of Theresa May, as head of government, legitimate, according to the Just War Theory.

The same concern could be applied in this case as was present with the United States, regarding the where and to who the political leader is authorized to execute their given power. Since May has only been authorized by Great Britain to employ their armed forces, questions could be raised on whether or not May is authorized to employ the armed forces in a place where this authority was not given. However, since this is the case of most international warfare, and since war or interventions in general would not be possible from a legitimate standpoint were this to apply, this will not be discussed further.

### 5.2.2 Just Cause

As written in the U.S. case, the Just Cause criteria will be fulfilled if some of the situations that Syse presented are the main reason for ordering the operation.

In the announcement, Theresa May condemned those responsible for the chemical attack in the Syrian city of Douma. As the Just Cause principle focuses on the possible evidence leading up to the intervention, this could be viewed as the Just Cause for May.

Theresa May, in the announcement from the 14th of April, stated the following:

I cannot tell you everything. But let me give an example of some of the evidence that leads us to this conclusion. Open source accounts allege that a barrel bomb was used to deliver the chemicals. Multiple open source reports claim that a regime helicopter was observed above the city of Douma on the

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83 Bartlett, Everett, *The Royal Prerogative*, House of Commons Library.  
84 ibid.
evening of 7 April. The opposition does not operate helicopters or use barrel bombs. And reliable intelligence indicates that Syrian military officials coordinated what appears to be the use of chlorine in Douma on 7 April. No other group could have carried out this attack.\textsuperscript{85}

In this statement, May stressed that multiple open sources had claimed that a regime helicopter was observed above the city of Douma. Returning to the Just Cause principle, it opens up for questions whether or not it is acceptable to use alleged sources as Just Cause for interventions. Due to the fact that the Prime Minister did not observe the attack herself, nor accounts for the validity of her sources, it is critical whether or not this could be argued to be a Just Cause for the intervention that followed.

Furthermore, May stated that it is unlikely that these attacks were carried out by the opposition of the Syrian regime, since the opposition does not use helicopters of this sort, nor barrel bombs. This could also raise questions regarding the basis on which May made these assumptions. Nevertheless, May seemed adamant in her argument.

Another assumption upon which she made this argument was that the Syrian regime allegedly is partaking in the use of chlorine, and are known to use chemical weapons. She further stresses this argument in the following statement:

We know that the Syrian regime has an utterly abhorrent record of using chemical weapons against its own people. On 21 August 2013 over 800 people were killed and thousands more injured in a chemical attack also in Ghouta. There were 14 further smaller scale chemical attacks prior to that summer. At Khan Shaykhun on 4 April last year, the Syrian regime used sarin against its people killing around 100 with a further 500 casualties. And based on the regime’s persistent pattern of behaviour and the cumulative analysis of specific incidents we judge is highly likely both that the Syrian regime has continued to use chemical weapons since then, and will continue to do so.\textsuperscript{86}

In the statement, May argued that the Syrian regime, previous to this attack, had occasionally used chemical weapons on its own population. This argument could be argued as Just Cause for the following intervention, since it could be argued that the Syrian regime assaults its own people. However, since it is difficult to know the validity of May’s sources, and this solely would be based on May’s own account, determining whether or not this instance had Just Cause, is difficult.


\textsuperscript{86} ibid.
Following the statement made of May, Bashar al-Assad denied any involvement in the attack that was allegedly conducted by his regime. It is impossible to determine which political leader that is telling the truth without having empirical evidence. Presuming that May’s sources were factually correct, this could be argued as a Just Cause for the intervention, since it does fulfill the criteria regarding a state’s assault on its own population.

5.2.3 Right Intention

In order for Britain to meet the criteria for Right Intention as presented by Aquinas, the actions of May would have to be motivated by what Henrik Syse has deemed righteous. The primary argument that May presented, was that politicians like herself, can not allow the use of chemical weapons to be normalized. In the speech made by May, she stated:

This was not about interfering in a civil war. And it was not about regime change. As I discussed with President Trump and President Macron, it was a limited, targeted and effective strike with clear boundaries that expressly sought to avoid escalation and did everything possible to prevent civilian casualties.87

The announcement of May stated that she did not order the operation to involve Britain in the civil war, or to implement a regime change. Although, it is important to note that even though May addressed the operation as a collective intervention, nor be sure, of the intentions of the other political leaders. When talking about the cooperation between the three countries, May stated the following:

[... ] we agreed that it was both right and legal to take military action, together with our closest allies, to alleviate further humanitarian suffering by degrading the Syrian regime’s chemical weapons capability and deterring their use.88

This statement from May seemed to indicate that the purpose of the intervention was to end human suffering, which would align with the Right Intention principle. In the same statement, May motivated the attack by stating the following:

As collective action sends a clear message that the international community will not stand by and tolerate the use of chemical weapons.89

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88 ibid.
89 ibid.
This as well as the previous statement, shows that May’s intention is on humanitarian grounds. Subsequently, the overall purpose from her arguments is to stop the production of chemical weapons since it causes tremendous human suffering. This could be argued as a Right Intention on the basis of the Just War Theory since the operation seemed to be with an intention for love of the society, although, since this is only May’s opinion we can not be sure about her underlying motives.
6. Discussion

This section of the thesis will present a discussion regarding the results of the analysis. This will be reviewed in relation to the previous research on the topic. The aim of this section is to provide an understanding of the research contribution of this thesis.

Intervention is a political phenomena with no clear answer. It can be based on legal grounds through international law. Interventions might be understood as morally correct if the concerned actor is acting on morally rightful grounds. However, no intervention is completely rightful in the eyes of everyone. There is always a risk that someone will feel threatened, assaulted or limited. The previous research on this topic has shown that there are several ways of interpreting the problem.

The case that this thesis focused on, the intervention in Syria, can be comparable with the models that the previous research introduced to us. Like the vigilante model, discussed by Wheeler, who said that actors enforce law in the absence of legal constitutions. This may be likened to this case. Great Britain and the U.S. made clear that they believed that the international community should have shown resistance to the chemical attack. When this did not happen, the countries made a joint decision to show their deterrent instead. The intervention may not be legally justified since it did not have an approval from the Security Council, but it might be morally right due to the fact that the actors believed that it was the right thing to do. This is a clear example of the difference between legality and legitimacy in this type of foreign policy.

Wheeler also stressed the norm entrepreneur model. This model meant that the actors wanted to create a norm cascade, and this is applicable to this certain case. Both May and Trump are arguing that the world needs to show a deterrent against chemical weapons, and therefore one could argue that they wanted to create a new norm in the political arena. Even if the intervention was not authorized by the Security Council, an amount of influential politicians and organizations did show their support and accepted the taken action. However, just like Pattison discusses in his article, the question regarding legitimacy in warfare is about the intention of the political leaders. It is seen as legitimate if the intervention was executed in order to protect civilians, not in a hope for a regime change or self-interest. May announced in her speech that it was not to change the regime. Trump however, mentioned that Russia
and Iran would be glad if they could join the “good side” of the politics again. So, the question is if his true intention was to show power or help citizens of Syria. Just like Finnemore discussed, when she stated that an intervention is legitimate if it is based on moral grounds, and not strategic. Did Trump really have moral grounds for intervening in Syria? Or did he make this choice due to strategic reasons, and by that, abused the Responsibility to Protect principle? There is a difference between Britain’s arguments and America’s. May only stressed humanitarian reasons for legitimizing the intervention. Trump focused on humanitarian questions as well, however, he also started to blame Russia and Iran for being allied with “wrong” countries. This leads to a question if there might be a difference between the legitimacy of the two countries decisions. Due to the fact that this thesis only can use arguments as a base, and not underlying motives, it can be concluded that both Trump and May conducted the operation legitimately.
7. Conclusion

In this thesis I have critically reviewed arguments presented by political leaders when discussing military warfare. By doing this, an examination of the quality of the arguments have been conducted. Since the purpose was to examine the arguments and not the factual situation, the air strike that hit the Syrian cities is legitimate with the Just War Theory as a base. The principles of Legitimate Authority, Just Cause and Right Intention was met by the presented announcement of Theresa May and Donald Trump, and therefore can the intervention in the Syrian cities of Damascus and Homs be judged as legitimate. The arguments from the United States of America and Great Britain was similar in some aspects, but different in other. The main similarity was that both Theresa May and Donald Trump argued that the use and production of chemical weapons needs to stop. However, the difference was that Trump took the chance to give a message to Russia and Iran, May did not do this in her statement. Even if Trump gave this message, the arguments he presented in his speech met the criterias of the jus ad bellum.

It must be noted that the normative basis of the chosen theory, the Just War Theory, have good grounds. However it is left open for individual interpretation. This study has shown one possible interpretation of the Just War Theory and the principle of the jus ad bellum. There might be several other interpretation of the chosen criterias, which indicates how complex the matter of legitimate warfare is. There are many theories and ideas regarding this type of issue, and therefore will this topic always be relevant in the society. The field requires a more structured framework in which legitimized interventions can be analyzed.

7.1 Suggestion for further studies

With the result from the analysis of this thesis, a basis have been created that can be used in further studies. As mentioned, intervention and other warfare will always be relevant in the society, and therefore can this enquiry’s result be seen as an influence to other questions and cases within this debate. The scope of this thesis does not allow further discussion on this specific case, but on other similar cases. The presented principles of the Just War Theory have been used as a base in earlier studies, and will continue to be a good base for further discussions. To critically review the arguments of political statements together with the jus ad bellum can lead to a changed framework in the context of legitimate warfare.
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