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**Dissecting the Russian Military Intervention in Syria:
Offense-Defense Perspective**

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2017330132

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Universitas Katolik Parahyangan
Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik
Program Studi Ilmu Hubungan Internasional

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**Membedah Intervensi Militer Rusia di Suriah:
Perspektif Offense-Defense**

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Hereby declare that this research titled “Dissecting the Russian Military Intervention in Syria: Offense-Defense Perspective” is a product of my intellectual work and is itself unique from others that were previously proposed to gain an academic degree. Ideas, statements, and information acquired from various sources are officially cited in this research per the generally agreed scientific writing method.

I declare this statement with full responsibility and I am willing to take any consequences under academic rules in case this statement is proven to be false.

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Abstract

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There exist a popular belief that Russia is striving to rebuild its Soviet-era ambition and influence. This supposition is not entirely false; there exists an overall pattern towards an increase in Russia's military activity outside its territory. However, Russia has never extensively interfered in a conflict outside of its near-abroad until they did so in Syria in 2015. Russia's use of overt military power in Syria is unprecedented and unconventional. Furthermore, despite briefly announcing withdrawal in 2017, Russia's military presence in Syria hasn't decreased nor declining. Instead, Russia keeps on assuming an increasingly important role in the conflict and constitutes a major player in the region. The circumstance suggests a more pivotal matter at stake. This begs the question, what, then, causes Russia's continued military intervention in Syria? Assisted by Robert Jervis' Offense-defense theory, this research analyzed the intensity of security dilemmas within and around the situation. Through the analysis, several key findings were found; that preserving what is perceived as the legitimate Syrian government constitute a fundamental interest for Russia; that Russia's response towards a security dilemma tends to be associated with the use of force and preemptive move, and that in the Syrian situation, security dilemma exists and persist, therefore motivating Russia's continued presence.

Keywords: security dilemma, offense-defense theory, military intervention, Syrian civil war, Russian security

Abstrak

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Ada kepercayaan populer bahwa Rusia sedang berusaha untuk membangun kembali ambisi dan pengaruh era Sovietnya. Asumsi ini tidak sepenuhnya salah; ada kecenderungan umum menuju peningkatan yang cukup besar dalam aktivitas militer Rusia di luar wilayahnya. Namun, Rusia tidak pernah secara ekstensif ikut campur dalam konflik di luar negerinya hingga mereka melakukannya di Suriah sejak 2015. Penggunaan kekuatan militer secara langsung Rusia di Suriah belum pernah terjadi sebelumnya dan tidak konvensional. Selain itu, meskipun secara singkat mengumumkan penarikan pasukan pada tahun 2017, kehadiran militer Rusia di Suriah tidak berkurang atau menurun. Sebaliknya, Rusia terus memainkan peran yang semakin penting dalam konflik dan menjelma menjadi pemain utama di kawasan Timur Tengah. Keadaan ini mengindikasikan adanya masalah yang lebih penting yang dipertaruhkan bagi Rusia. Ini menimbulkan pertanyaan, lalu, apa yang menyebabkan intervensi militer Rusia terus berlanjut di Suriah? Dibantu oleh teori Offense-defense Robert Jervis, penelitian ini menganalisis intensitas security dilemma di dalam dan di sekitar situasi Suriah. Melalui analisis, terdapat beberapa penemuan; bahwa melestarikan pemerintahan Suriah yang sah merupakan kepentingan mendasar Rusia; bahwa tanggapan Rusia terhadap security dilemma cenderung menggunakan kekuatan dalam meresponnya, dan bahwa dalam situasi Suriah, security dilemma terjadi dan terus terjadi, sehingga memotivasi kehadiran Rusia yang berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: security dilemma, teori offense-defense, intervensi militer, perang saudara Suriah, keamanan Rusia

Acknowledgments

I always thought that this thesis would be my best work; a *magnum opus*, the culmination of 4 years of study. Reality then slapped me in the face when I realized how complicated international relations really are. The existing conceptions of theories, frameworks, and discourses that must be observed. The very dynamic developments of states relations, global events, and incidents in which we must pay attention to. Sometimes, states, peoples, institutions, or entities act irrationally. Arguably, humans are irrational beings. A simple browse through Twitter in 2021 would have showcased how irrational people can be. Sometimes, things just don't make sense.

What makes no less sense is how I, a child born to an average family, who was raised most of his life by a single parent, can stand at this point and look back with joy and gratitude. While this sets the foundation for my career, it is, however, a privilege. In 2017, the OECD estimates that only 16% of Indonesian young adults received higher education. To be among the privileged 16 percent may mean nothing; but it should, and to me, means something.

This thesis is a product not only of my academic work; but also the product of a journey. And in that journey, there have been plenty of people that helped me reach the finish line. And to those people, I am beyond grateful;

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List of Abbreviations

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CJTF-OIR	Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
GIUK	Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ODB	Offense-Defense Balance
ODT	Offense-Defense Theory
PMC	Private Military Contractor
SAM	Surface-to-Air-Missiles
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SOSUS	Sound Surveillance System
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
VKS	Vozdushno-Kosmicheskiye Sily

CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1. Background

There exist a popular belief that the political entity in Russia, in particular after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, has been scrambling to restore its Soviet-era influence. The Soviet Union was one of the two world's hegemonic power, with ideological, economic, and political influence reaching all corners of the globe. The country was the second most powerful country in the world by all measures—both in soft and hard power—sharing a hegemonic status in the bipolar world system with the United States. They enjoyed spheres of influence extending beyond their immediate geographic limitations.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the new successive political entity of the Russian state is merely a shadow of its former defining history. Not only were they struggling with outward power projection, but they were also experiencing massive problems internally—with insurgency and political turmoil to outright secessionism happening throughout Northern Caucasus, such as the case for Dagestan and Chechnya.¹ Throughout the 1990s to early 2000s, the

¹ Tanya Lee. “The Longstanding Struggle between Russia’s Territorial Integrity and North Caucasus’ Secessionism”. Thesis. (Parahyangan Catholic University, 2018), pp. 1-7, <https://repository.unpar.ac.id/handle/123456789/8398>.

state was struggling to maintain its internal socio-political stability (Graham 2010).²

The situation underwent rapid changes in the late 2000s to the decades that followed. From military intervention in Georgia to the annexation of Crimea, several things have become clear in recent history: Russia has now greater confidence in conducting military intervention in foreign nations and is more proactively involved in socio-political issues in its areas of interest. The Russian military intervention in the Syrian civil war in 2015 marks the first time the country extensively interfere on issues situated in a region outside of its post-Soviet sphere. Meddling in foreign affairs isn't completely new for the leadership in Moscow. However, in terms of **large-scale military intervention**, the countries in which Russia previously interfered—such as Moldova, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia, and Azerbaijan—are all former Soviet states.

In 2017, after two years of intervention, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the withdrawal of a significant portion of the Russian military presence from Syria.³ This announcement led to several speculations.⁴ However, four years since then, Russia's military presence in Syria hasn't decreased nor declining. Instead, Russia continues to play an increasingly important role in the conflict and

² Thomas Graham, "Russia's Decline and Uncertain Recovery," *SAIS Review* 30, no. 1 (2010): pp. 26-37,

https://doi.org/http://muse.jhu.edu/content/crossref/journals/sais_review/v030/30.1.trenin.html.

³ Rosenberg, Steve. 2017. "Putin Announces Russian Troop Withdrawal From Syria During Visit". *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42307365>.

⁴ Souleimanov, Emil A. 2017. "Mission Accomplished? Making Sense Of Russia's Withdrawal From Syria". *Middle East Policy Council*. <https://mepc.org/commentary/mission-accomplished-making-sense-russias-withdrawal-syria>.

is a major player in the region. This circumstance suggests a more pivotal matter at stake. Russia maintained a continued military presence up to the present day. There's also no reduction in the intensity of the intervention; in fact, arguably, their presence has intensified.

It should be emphasized, however, that until Syria–Moscow has never intervened militarily in conflict in other countries outside of its post-Soviet sphere, not to the extent it has conducted in Syria. Russia did not intervene in the other political revolutions of the Arab Spring. They did not intervene in the Yemeni civil war or the Taliban insurgency. The Syrian civil war then becomes an exception, an anomaly within the normative. With this context in mind, what then, pushes the Russian state to extensively involve itself in the Syrian conflict and continue to do so to the present day? This study examines Russia's geopolitical motivations that led to this decision.

International relations study has always been designed to answer the question: how to attain and preserve peace. One of the fundamentals of our study has been primarily how to prevent war and conflict. With this research, the author sought to rationalize Russia's decision to intervene in the Syrian civil war through an international relations theoretical perspective. It desired to create an understanding of the underlying factors and the thought processes of military intervention. By identifying the factors and analyzing the causal relationship between them, we may be able to build a case in the likelihood of Russian intervention in other conflicts outside of the post-Soviet sphere, like Afghanistan,

Libya, Yemen, or Ethiopia. Surely, as per the academic code of conduct, this paper isn't predictive in nature. But it has the potential in giving insights into how the Russian state might intervene in a conflict outside of their own territory or their perceived sphere of influence.

1.2. Problem Identification

1.2.1. Problem Description

Russia's military intervention in Syria is the first time the country extensively intervene in a foreign conflict in the Middle East. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia has been actively involved in its near-abroad or post-Soviet spheres. Hence, their military action in Syria raises questions. Additionally, despite announcing withdrawal in 2017, Russia continued its military presence in the country. There's also no reduction in the intensity of the intervention or substantial military forces. What, then, warrants this continued military presence in the conflict?

What has been the cost of this unorthodox move for Moscow? Aside from the obvious loss of lives⁵, military assets⁶, and financial burden to fund the

⁵ "Russia Lost 112 Servicemen Over Three Years Of Counter-Terror Operation In Syria - MP". 2018. *Russian News Agency TASS*. <https://tass.com/defense/1023714>.

⁶ "Russian Helicopter Downed In Syria - Agencies Quoting Russia's Defence Ministry". 2016. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-helicopter-idUKKBN12Y2R9?edition-redirect=uk>.

logistics required—the country has also received negative media coverages⁷, allegations of war crimes, and use of lethal force against civilians both by international non-governmental organizations⁸ and the United Nations⁹, as well as economic sanctions for their involvement in Syria.¹⁰ It is this compromise made by Russia that strengthens the significance of this research.

The Russian military intervention in Syria could be a symptom of a larger problem: a more aggressive Russian posturing and power projection into areas and territories from which they were previously absent from. It portrays the confidence of the Kremlin in conducting intervention outside of its Soviet sphere and poses a dangerous precedent for Moscow's increasingly interventionist nature.

1.2.2. Research Limitations

This research focuses on several aspects which are crucial to limit the scope of research to be able to answer the research question that is presented effectively through international relations study perspective. The research is limited based on specific actors, time frames, and issues.

⁷ Smith, Hannah, Catherine Philp, and Tom Parfitt. 2016. "Russia Unleashes Lethal Aerial Arsenal On Aleppo". *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/russia-unleashes-lethal-aerial-arsenal-on-aleppo-q73c8dl13>.

⁸ "Russia/Syria: Extensive Recent Use Of Cluster Munitions". 2015. *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/20/russia/syria-extensive-recent-use-cluster-munitions>.

⁹ Borger, Julian, and Kareem Shaheen. 2016. "Russia Accused Of War Crimes In Syria At UN Security Council Session". *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/25/russia-accused-war-crimes-syria-un-security-council-aleppo>.

¹⁰ "US Sanctions Against Russia Over Ukraine And Syria To Remain". 2017. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40551042>; Congressional Research Service. 2019. "U.S. Sanctions on Russia". Pp. 8-11.

This research primarily focuses on Russia as a unitary actor. The importance of other state and relevant non-state actors are acknowledged though is not be the main focus of this research—this means that the author identifies, discuss, and examine existing groups within the Syrian civil war and the international network backing those groups; from the Gulf states of Arabia, the United States, Turkey, Iran, and other relevant state actors. Non-state actors to be discussed include (but are not limited to) the Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), and other relevant groups.

Regarding the time frame of the research, research begins in 2015, the first year Russia began formally intervening in the Syrian civil war. The research concludes in 2021, the year the thesis is being written with all available information being updated to reap relevant results. Lastly, the paper put focuses on the Russian military intervention in the Syrian civil war. This means the author excludes cases where the military is not directly involved such as regarding Russia's moral, humanitarian, or other supports to Syria. This research also excludes neighboring spill-over conflicts such as the war in Iraq.

Lastly, although Offense-defense theory emphasizes military technology and technical specifications, as is relevant with this author's background, this research place more emphasis on policies and political implications. This limitation is not based solely on the author's incapacity, but also stands for reasons to be elaborated on in Chapter IV.

1.2.3. Research Question

Two primary problems compose the research question of this paper; first, Russia typically involves itself militarily in its near-abroad. Their military intervention in Syria was the first time the country did so outside of its post-Soviet sphere. Secondly, despite the losses, they have continued their military presence up to the present day.

Therefore, utilizing international relations theory and approaches, the author seeks to resolve the research question; “**What causes Russia’s continued military intervention in Syria?**”

1.3. Research Objective and Research Contribution

1.3.1. Objective of Research

This study aims to contextualize and explain Russia's military intervention in the Syrian civil war, especially the motives that drove Russia to involve itself in this conflict. The research would also discuss the roles the Russian state played in the conflict and the lasting effects it has in the region. In its primary **hypothesis**, the author argues that Russia’s intervention in Syria is a response to Moscow’s perception of security dilemma—there is a strategic geopolitical advantage in the operation for the Russian state. All of the corresponding analyses will be elaborated on further in Chapter III. In doing so, readers gain insight that broadens their understanding of why Russia militarily intervened in the Syrian civil war through the Offense-defense perspective.

1.3.2. Contribution of Research

This may allow for future research and studies regarding the topic to analyze Russia's behavior and approach when engaging in a foreign conflict, including but not limited to her geopolitical considerations, technological factors, and generally how it views the security dilemma. To a further extent, the author hoped that identifying and analyzing this specific topic might give insights into possible future Russian military intervention in other places.

1.4. Literature Review

This author examines several key pieces of works of literature to review existing literary discourse and debates within the context of Russia's involvement in Syria. This will contextualize the existing discourse on the topic ranging from Russia's geopolitical perspectives, analysis of Russia's motives and intentions on foreign interventions, to the proclaimed Russia's historical interest in warm water ports relating to power projection.

There are recurrent themes in Russian foreign policy. According to Gurganus and Rumer, there's an indisputable presence of three centuries-old drivers of Moscow's stance on the current world stage. They argued that Russia's foreign policy has always been primarily driven by the following¹¹:

¹¹ Julia Gurganus and Eugene Rumer, "Russia's Global Ambitions in Perspectives", Washington DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Working Paper (2019): p.3-7.

1. Securing buffers and strategic depth to counter external threats, considering the country's lack of natural protective barriers and geography;
2. Recognition as a great power, of which the Kremlin has long deemed necessary to legitimize its geographic conquest and geopolitical ambitions;
3. Complicated relationship with the West, which entails competition with the necessity of cooperation.

There's a compelling argument for each of those driving factors, but nearly all of it ties to the factor of Russian geography. Despite being humongous in size, Russia has been a country prone to external threats, especially from its neighbors. This is due to their lack of natural geographical barriers to protect them from enemy incursions. The physical insecurity of the Russian state also meant that they are limited in terms of their ability to project power beyond their geographic limitations.

These claims are not completely unheard of, there's been a similar conception regarding the importance of geography to Russia's security predating the Soviet era. According to Tanvi Chauhan, **warm-water ports** play an important role in Russian security. Chauhan defines the scope of Russian security in relation to ports. His findings suggest that warm-water ports are important to Russian security because they allow Russia to control the sea, project power, maintain

order and adhere to maritime interests. Each of these categorical reasons is then analyzed in the context of Crimea and Syria. The results were compared from a regional perspective, followed by conclusions about what the findings suggest regarding retrospect on Russian foreign policy, as well as Russia's security prospects. Chauhan then argues that the Russian naval facility in Syria, in particular, has enabled Moscow to maintain a naval presence in the Mediterranean Sea, which it uses for various purposes: among which, power projection in the Mediterranean Sea, securing its economic interest, and leverage its political interests on the West's "favorite" regional playground.¹²

Through those suggestions, it can easily be argued that the Russian military intervention in Syria is happening mainly or in part, to maintain a military foothold in the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea. This need for regional security thus highlights the importance of securing a friendly regime in power.

Despite that, these motivations still fail to explain what justifies a large-scale military intervention such as that taking place in Syria. In a designated research report from *The Rand Corporation*, Samuel Charap, Elina Treyger, and Edward Geist¹³ examine thoroughly all the factors motivating a large-scale military intervention in the Syrian civil war. They identified the existence of extraordinary circumstances which motivated Russia to intervene militarily in Syria. From all available literature, their findings elaborated comprehensively on

¹² Chauhan, Tanvi. 2020. "Why Are Warm-Water Ports Important To Russian Security? The Cases Of Sevastopol And Tartus Compared". *JEMEEA* 2 (1): pp. 57-75.

¹³ Charap, Samuel, Elina Treyger, and Edward Geist. 2019. "Understanding Russia's Intervention In Syria". *Rand Research Report*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.7249/RR3180>.

the matter. They argued, that an intervention more than mere diplomacy—utilizing the use of military force to the extent that we have seen in Syria—requires the conflict in question to present a high level of threat, promise significant geopolitical benefits, or demonstrate moderate levels of both. The lack of a direct threat and minimal geopolitical payoffs thus explains why Russia’s involvement in other conflict situations (e.g. Afghanistan, Yemen) has been limited to diplomacy. In this case, Syria fits the criteria of demonstrating both a moderate level of threat and promising significant geopolitical benefits to Russia.

Lastly, coming from the field of International Relations, Babak Rezvani¹⁴ argued that Russia’s foreign policy can best be explained by applying both neorealist and constructivist approaches. Having reviewed contemporary conflicts, Rezvani suggests that the Russian behavior outside of its post-Soviet sphere is guided primarily by neorealist rational actor perspective. He differentiated this approach with how Russia behaved within its post-Soviet sphere, where he stated that Russia’s approach is also guided by its historical ‘imperial’ context “which colors the Russian geopolitical interests with a layer of moral obligation and blends it with either altruism or expansionism, or with both at the same time.”

Previous literary sources provide insight on the topic and highlight how this thesis in particular will provide an alternative understanding to the issue. Generally speaking, the author agrees with the primary hypotheses delivered by each piece of literature. These works of literature serve as an important tool for

¹⁴ Babak Rezvani (2019) Russian Interventions in the Post-Soviet and Syrian Conflicts, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 31:6, 1376-1380, doi: 10.1080/09546553.2019.1648062.

contextualizing Russia's interests and behavior. However, through this research this author would like to argue that Russia's decision to intervene in Syria is in part, pushed by the existing situation of *security dilemma*—utilizing Offense-defense theory as a tool for analyzing the existing security dilemma in the Syrian civil war in a larger geopolitical context.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

The author utilizes the theoretical approach known as *offense-defense theory* (ODT) by Robert Jervis—which is a theory used to determine the severity of *security dilemma* perceived by security-seeking states—as well as for the purpose of defining the role of military technology in international politics for international relations scholars. The theory serves as the main instrument, tool, and theoretical perspective in analyzing the issue. The theory argues that when a certain nation's offensive capability exceeded surrounding nations' defensive capabilities it would create tension, and a '*security dilemma*' became apparent and therefore making the possibility of conflict more likely.¹⁵

According to Robert Jervis, the theory works under two key variables; (1) the *offense-defense balance* (ODB)—whether it is more advantageous to be on an offensive or a defensive position, and (2) *offense-defense differentiation*—whether the forces that support offensive capabilities are distinguishable from those that

¹⁵ Charles L. Glaser and Chaim Kaufmann, "What is the Offense-Defense Balance and Can We Measure It? (Offense, Defense, and International Politics)", *Stanford's International Security* 22, no. 4 (Spring 1998), <https://web.stanford.edu/class/polisci211z/2.1/Glaser%20%26%20Kaufmann%20IS%201988.pdf>

support defensive capabilities. The basic hypotheses regarding the offense-defense balance are that as the advantages for offense increase, then consequentially, the security dilemma becomes more severe, arms races become more intense, and war becomes more likely. An offensive advantage makes use of force more likely for a variety of reasons, one being the capability of the aggressor to attain a decisive and profitable victory.¹⁶

In its essence, the offense-defense theory helps decide the intensity of the security dilemma. The security dilemma is one of the most crucial concepts in international relations theory, especially among realist scholars to construe how security-seeking states can end up in conflict. According to John H. Herz, who coined the term, security dilemma is a situation that arose out of the condition of anarchic society. Individuals or entities—in this context, states—must be worried about being targeted, subjected, conquered, or annihilated by other groups and individuals, and they typically are. To gain security in an anarchic society, they are encouraged to accumulate more power to avoid the influence of others' power. As a result, the others feel more insecure and are forced to prepare for the worst. Since no one can ever feel completely secure in a world of competition, power rivalry ensues, and the vicious cycle of security and power accumulation begins.¹⁷

To form an understanding of the issue, the author will utilize offense-defense theory in deciding the intensity of the security dilemma. After which, the author will deduce how the existing geopolitical situations factor into the decision

¹⁶ Ibid, 44-82.

¹⁷ "Idealist Internationalism And The Security Dilemma". 1950. *World Politics* 2 (2): p.157-180.

leading up to the conflict. The author will analyze by first determining the *offense-defense balance* in this particular context. Does the existence of the existing offense-defense balance create a situation that tends to favor offensive or defensive capabilities? This is mainly determined by factors of military technology and advantageous geographical factors. Then, the author will define the existing *offense-defense differentiation*. This variable is mainly determined by whether the weapons and policies intended for the states' security also provide the capability to attack. From these two variables, the writer will then integrate this case study in Jervis's Four Worlds Model.¹⁸

According to Jervis, the two variables in ODT can be combined to yield four possible worlds. The **first world** is the worst in terms of security dilemma intensity. With the inability to differentiate offensive and defensive postures, there is no way for a state to get security without menacing others. And with offense being advantageous over defense, attacking thus becomes the best route to protect what you have; there's an incentive for states to behave like aggressors.

In the **second world**, a security dilemma exists and operates, but it does not operate as strongly as in the first category. Offensive and defensive postures cannot be distinguished, and that presents a security dilemma problem. But since defense has the advantage, states can arrange compatible security policies. There's no incentive to commit first-strike or behave as aggressors.

¹⁸ Jervis, Robert. 1978. "Cooperation Under The Security Dilemma". *World Politics* 30 (2): p.211.

In the **third world**, there may be no security dilemma. There are, however, security problems. The dilemma is kept to a minimum because states can acquire systems that do not threaten others. But because offense has the advantage, there is thus still the incentive for aggression.

In the **fourth world**, the situation is doubly safe. Because offensive and defensive postures can be differentiated, there is no need for an arms race or competition, since both sides can discern the intentions of each other. And since defense has the advantage, there is no reason for states to commit to aggression. The world under this category would exercise and utilize more non-military means to settle differences.

Jervis Four Worlds Model configure a situation based on the two key variables from ODT. It helps determines the intensity of security dilemma, whether the situation represents a high level of security dilemma or a safer environment. From these conclusions, the authors will then deduce why these reasons thus encouraged a state to carry out direct military intervention with overt use of force that puts them at odds with their perceived adversaries.

1.6. Research Method and Data Collection Technique

The author adopts a qualitative method of research which include a set of an analytical and naturalistic approach that pursuit to depict phenomena in term of

the essence delivered.¹⁹ This method is also defined as any category of inquiry that generates discovery not appeared as statistical procedures or other means of quantification.²⁰ Correspondingly, the term “qualitative research” means an approach in which the society enacts and discerns their social reality as the central motifs.²¹

Qualitative research commenced along with the adoption of interpretive or theoretical frameworks that apprise the study of research problems describing the connotation of individuals or groups attributed to social problems.²² To examine this problem, the author will use a qualitative approach to inquiry and data analysis videlicet inductive and deductive. The written report will combine the point of view of participants, the reflexivity of the author, characterization, and perception of the problem, and its input to the research. Qualitative research is often carried out in a small scope but still depends on field conditions in conducting research.²³

This research will be conducted using a case study approach of qualitative method that comprises of a study within the contemporary background.²⁴ The case study is empirical research that examines a contemporary circumstance in its real-world situation notably when the line implicates important contextual conditions

¹⁹ Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (SAGE Publications, 2011), p.3.

²⁰ Anselm Strauss & Juliet Corbin, *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (SAGE Publications, 1998), p.11

²¹ Alan Bryman, *Quantity and quality in social research* (New York: Routledge, 1988), p.8

²² John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2013), p. 44.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Robert Yin, *Case Study Research Design and method* (SAGE Publications, 2014).

related to the case. This approach is delineated as a method in which the researcher explores current cases through in-depth data compilations connected with numerous sources of information such as books, journal articles, news articles, observations, interviews, audiovisual material, documents, and reports. Furthermore, the central propensity of case study tries to define a decision or set of decisions in why they were held, how they were enforced, and with what outcomes. The unit of analysis in this approach might be multiple cases or a single case. Moreover, the writer wishes to describe the phenomenon being studied and resolve the research questions, by using this approach.²⁵

The writer aims to utilize secondary research as a fundamental approach that uses existing data for ways of understanding that might be contrasting from the data's initial objective.²⁶ This is a research strategy that makes use of pre-existing quantitative or qualitative research data to investigate new questions or verify previous studies.²⁷ The similarity of past problems to the present problem is insignificant as long as the data are appropriate in regards to population and situation, researcher may rework the data according to particular contemporary issues and take the data to its limit for their objective.²⁸ Various sources ranging from academic sources to news articles will support the arguments presented in the paper. Academic sources may include journal articles, books, or any other form of

²⁵ Umar Suryadi Bakry, *Metode Penelitian Hubungan Internasional* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2017), pp. 18-19.

²⁶ Qualitative Secondary Research. Claire Largan, Theresa Morris · 2019. SAGE Publications, p 15-20

²⁷ Janet Heaton, *Reworking Qualitative Data* (SAGE Publications, 2004), p.1-16

²⁸ Barney Glaser, "Secondary analysis: A strategy for the use of knowledge from research elsewhere," *Social Problems*, no. 10 (1962): 70-74.


literature such as government publications, policy recommendations, think-tank policy reviews, and other credible sources. Whilst news publications will be used to support more contemporary data relevant to the study.

1.7. Research Outline

- ✚ **Chapter 1:** aims to introduce readers to the research topic; the significance of this research and its relevance, the background of the topic, aims of the research, literature review, the theoretical frameworks used in the research, and research methodology.
- ✚ **Chapter 2:** provides the prelude leading up to the decision of the Russian military intervention in Syria—this means the chapter will elaborate and discuss events that the author believes to be setting a precedent for a stronger case for the nation to intervene in Syria. Specifically, concerning Russia’s perception of the security dilemma.
- ✚ **Chapter 3:** presents all the necessary and relevant information regarding Russia’s military intervention in Syria, including the dynamics of the intervention, Russia’s possible interests in the country, and the behavior of its adversaries in the conflict.
- ✚ **Chapter 4:** analyzes Russia’s military intervention in Syria and the roles the Russian state plays in the country through the perspective of offense-defense theory by Robert Jervis. This chapter provides the analytical process to determine the existing offense-defense balance, offense-defense

differentiation and categorizes the phenomenon into Jervis's Four Worlds

Model to measure the severity of the security dilemma.

 **Chapter 5:** provides the conclusion of the research.