



**2015 - 2016**  
**Model Arab League**

**BACKGROUND GUIDE**  
**Joint Defense Council**

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National  
Council  
on US-  
Arab  
Relations



Original draft by Zach Badore, Chair of the Joint Defense Council at the 2016 National University Model Arab League, with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to the 2015-2016 Model Arab League season. My name is Zach Badore and I am privileged to serve as the Chairperson for the Joint Defense Council both at Nationals and the Northeast Regional. I'm a third-year student at Northeastern University studying political science. This will be my third year participating in Model Arab League, and my second traveling to Nationals. Over the last three years I've had the opportunity to learn more about many aspects of the Arab world. The MAL program introduces us to (or continues our experience with) the many aspects of a diverse and important region. Through our participation in these simulations we are able to learn about politics, culture, religion, security threats, world-views, and international relations from a perspective that many of us would never be able to experience otherwise. As a part of my minor in Arabic, I spent two months this summer in Oman, learning the language and politics of a unique and fascinating Arab state. I give credit to my work with the Model Arab League program to prepare me for this trip and allowing me to get the most out of it as possible. I would encourage all of you to take your experiences with Model Arab League and branch out into other areas of study! Go abroad, study languages, make friends from other regions and cultures, do everything you can to broaden your world view.

As delegates many things are expected of you. First of all, preparation is paramount to a successful conference. When researching this committee's topics, use all resources available to you. Google is great, but so are the journals and databases available through your schools. Don't just research your own country's policies, but come in with a general understanding of the positions and viewpoints of the Council's other members. Additionally, if your research is only about the military and security issues and capabilities facing your country and the League, you've missed a large part of what goes into debate. Political structure, economic realities, and current events cannot be ignored in any committee, no matter how specialized.

When you get to your respective conference, be it a regional competition or the National conference in April, you must take on your role in its entirety. When in committee, you are the Defense Minister of Iraq, or Kuwait, or Morocco. You represent that country's interests, expertise, and authority. In order to succeed in this role, you must combine your research with creativity, passion, and persuasion. Have ideas for solutions in mind, but be willing to adapt them to match the flow of debate. Speak often, utilize the rules of procedure, and don't be afraid to take risks or start writing early. Make yourself a necessary part of the decision-making process in the committee room. Be prepared to defend your positions and policies.

Most of all, remember that this is an educational experience as much as it's a competition. Come with an open mind and be ready to learn. Try to relax enough to enjoy the debate and the challenge of representing a viewpoint that you may or may not fully understand or identify with. I know that I'm looking forward to the start of the 2015-16 season, and I hope you are as well.

Good luck!

Zach Badore

## **Topic I: Reviewing progress and defining benchmarks for the unified Arab force specified by the 26th Summit of the League of Arab States**

### **I. Introduction**

#### **A. General Background**

In March of 2015 the League of Arab States (LAS) agreed to create a unified force designed to quickly react to security threats against League members. This force, dubbed “the Arab NATO” by some, is an ambitious one, especially for an organization as diverse as the Arab League. The governments of Egypt and Saudi Arabia are the largest proponents of the joint force. The force will be around 40,000 units strong. Of this total, 500 to 1,000 service members will be designated air commands, 5,000 units will be devoted to naval endeavors, and the remainder will be land forces. Troops will be paid by their respective countries, and the command structure will be funded by the Gulf Cooperation Council.<sup>1</sup> Saudi Arabia and Egypt will contribute the largest number of troops; accordingly, one of these two nations will host the joint force’s headquarters. This topic focuses on “defining benchmarks” for this unified Arab force. Such benchmarks might include agreeing on a timeline for the force’s implementation, settling disputes concerning the unit’s exact powers, and defining the types of threats the force will handle.

Although this arrangement sounds promising, some nations are less enthusiastic than others. Iraq’s foreign minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, has expressed his concerns, arguing that the LAS should not rush through the planning process.<sup>2</sup> Iraq’s hesitance, according to some, stems from fear that Saudi Arabia’s foreign policy interests will dictate the force’s actions. Baghdad worries that the joint force’s Sunni majority will ignore Shi’a interests.<sup>3</sup> Other potential problems include poor interoperability between nations, political distrust among LAS member states, and inadequate training standards.<sup>4</sup>

#### **B. History in the Arab World**

The Joint Defense Council was created in 1950 after five Arab states failed to cooperate and were subsequently defeated in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Established by the Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation, this Council is responsible for the defense of all member states. In 1964, the first Arab summit document produced by the Joint Defense Council laid out a plan for a United Arab Command (UAC). This proposal never came to fruition, as members hesitated to allow foreign troops into their countries; additionally, standardizing structures and

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<sup>1</sup>Salama, Samir. "Nato-like Alliance a Must to Combat Threats Facing Arab Countries, Says Experts." Gulf News, 6 Aug. 2015. Web. <<http://m.gulfnews.com/news/uae/government/nato-like-alliance-a-must-to-combat-threats-facing-arab-countries-says-experts-1.1562457>>.

<sup>2</sup>Hendawi, Hamza. “Arab States Are on the Cusp of Creating an Elite Joint Military Force.” Business Insider, 28 Mar. 2015. Web. <<http://www.businessinsider.com/arab-states-are-on-the-cusp-of-creating-an-elite-joint-military-force-2015-3>>.

<sup>3</sup>Bröning, Michael. “Why the Arab League’s New Force Spells Trouble.” *Foreign Affairs*: 7 Apr. 2015. Web. <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/persian-gulf/2015-04-07/all-arab-army>>.

<sup>4</sup>(2015), EGYPT / ARAB LEAGUE: Joint Force. Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series, 52: 20549A–20550A. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-825X.2015.06372.x

tactics proved difficult among the diverse nations.<sup>5</sup> The UAC did seem to make headway in 1967 when the Command, made up of Saudi Arabian, Lebanese, Egyptian and Jordanian troops, went to war with Israel. However, the united Arab force was dealt a decisive blow when Israel seized control of West Jerusalem and the West Bank in under a week<sup>6</sup>. The UAC has not been active since.

Although cooperation among all Middle Eastern countries has been unsuccessful as of yet, the Gulf region made considerable progress by establishing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). In 1981 the GCC created the Peninsula Shield Force, tasked with protecting GCC members from territorial threats. This force was too slow to react to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait during the Gulf War, but the united force did successfully stabilize Bahrain's monarchy during the 2011 Arab Spring.<sup>7</sup> Recently, Oman's decision to opt out of a joint aerial operation in Yemen suggested that the GCC is still not a completely cohesive unit.<sup>8</sup> Despite this obstacle, in December of 2014, the GCC agreed to a unified command structure that would create an integrated leadership but not a standing army.<sup>9</sup> The GCC's structure is akin to that of the proposed united Arab force, suggesting that this fledgling force might succeed. However, the Gulf States share similar geographies, cultures, and political structures, while the rest of the LAS members do not.

According to League members, a unified Arab force is needed immediately to combat threats such as Iran and Daesh<sup>10</sup>. Security threats are also present in Libya and Yemen; a joint force, if established and deployed efficiently, could help eradicate such security risks.

### **C. Finding a Solution to the problem: Past, Present, Future**

The most recent example of successful cooperation in the Arab world and the impetus for this new plan is the Saudi-led coalition currently fighting in Yemen. The joint task force, while not exclusively comprised of LAS members, includes nearly half of the League's membership. However, this cooperation has not been without problems. The international community, including the United Nations and the European Union, has criticized the campaign, including the airstrikes that have caused civilian casualties.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Gat, Moshe (2003). Britain and the conflict in the Middle East, 1964 - 1967: the coming of the Six-Day War. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers.

<sup>6</sup>Riedel, Bruce. "Can This Joint Arab Military Force Succeed Where Others Have Failed." Brookings Institution, 30 Mar. 2015. Web. <<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/03/30-riedel-can-joint-arab-military-force-succeed-yemen-saudi-arabia>>.

<sup>7</sup>Asharq Al-Awsat "Peninsula Shield Force: Ensuring the Gulf's Security." Asharq Al-Awsat, 16 Mar. 2011. Web. <<http://english.aawsat.com/2011/03/article55247149/peninsula-shield-force-ensuring-the-gulfs-security>>.

<sup>8</sup>Cafiero, Giorgio. "Oman Breaks From GCC on Yemen Conflict." Al Monitor, 7 May 2015. Web. <<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/05/oman-response-yemen-conflict.html>>.

<sup>9</sup>J.D. ANTHONY, Gulf Cooperation Council Establishes Unprecedented Joint Military Command, National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations, Washington DC, December 11, 2014, p. 2, on: <http://ncusar.org/blog/2014/12/gccjoint-military-command/>

<sup>10</sup> Throughout MAL Background Guides, we have attempted to simplify and clarify word usage in reference to the group known alternately as Islamic State, ISIS, ISIL etc. by consistently labeling it 'Daesh,' a widely used name derived from the group's Arabic acronym and one which the group itself despises.

<sup>11</sup>"U.N., EU Slam Saudi-led Airstrikes in Yemen; Aden Governor Survives Deadly Houthi Attack." *Japan Times*, 21 Aug. 2015. Web. <[http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/21/world/u-n-eu-slam-saudi-led-airstrikes-yemen-aden-governor-survives-deadly-houthi-attack/#.Vds4Q\\_IVhBc](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/21/world/u-n-eu-slam-saudi-led-airstrikes-yemen-aden-governor-survives-deadly-houthi-attack/#.Vds4Q_IVhBc)>.

The unified Arab military force, proposed by the 26th Summit of the League of Arab States, is a possible solution to the above problem. However, the joint force is a work in progress; in order for the force to be effective, the Council should debate and decide upon the program's details. The Council could establish guidelines for implementation and deployment. The Council could also identify why previous proposals have failed and find a way to surmount them. Any plan for a joint Arab force should consider the Arab League's diverse group of members—the Arab League is not built on absolute consensus. A unified Arab military force must take into account the members' political differences, as these can lead to fracturing and instability in the future.

## **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- Which countries are willing to participate, and to what extent?
- What capabilities do Arab militaries currently have? How varied are they?
- Which countries have reservations concerning a joint military force?
- What can the Council do to prevent this force from suffering a similar fate as that of the United Arab Command? What lessons can be learned from past failures?
- How would my country be affected by this force?
- What political effects could this force have on member states?
- Have any other regional organizations attempted similar programs?

## **III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- Is membership optional, or can it be compelled for the greater good of the Arab League?
- How can smaller member states guarantee that their interests are protected if most troops and funds come from other larger member states?
- What situation would lead to the deployment of this force and what permissions are needed?
- Are there certain modernizations necessary for integration? What obstacles might varying command structures face?
- Can sectarian divides be avoided in the creation and implementation of the force?
- How will troops receive training? Will training be standardized?
- Will this force blend with countries' traditional forces or will it work separately?

## **IV. Additional Resources**

- [Arab League Charter](#)
- [Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation \(1950\)](#)
- [Report of the March 2015 Summit Declaration](#)
- [MENWFZ Fact Sheet](#)
- [Middle East Nuclear Paradigm Prospects](#)



## **Topic II: Countering threats and security challenges posed by militant non-state actors, with special attention paid to groups of a transnational nature**

### **I. Introduction to the Topic**

#### **A. General Background**

A militant non-state actor uses violence and other unlawful actions to attain a set goal; these groups, which can operate within one country or throughout many, are common in the Arab world. The following list identifies some of the non-state actors that control large swaths of territory within the Middle East: Al-Qaeda throughout the region, the Houthis in Yemen, Daesh in Iraq and Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Kurdish YPG in Iraq and Syria, the Free Syrian Army in Syria, and the National Liberation Army in Libya. Non-state actors pose a security threat to Arab League nations because of their influence in politics, trade, foreign relations, and military conflicts. These security challenges cannot be ignored by the Council. Each group, especially those of a transnational nature, is highly organized, well-funded, and effective.

#### **B. History in the Arab World**

The two largest non-state actors in the Middle East are Daesh and al-Qaeda. While Daesh is relatively new, al-Qaeda was founded during the Soviet War in Afghanistan in the 1980s. From 1988 to 1998 al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, was based in Sudan and carried out various attacks throughout the region. After the Afghanistan War began in 2001, the group was forced into Pakistan, but remained active. In the following years, the terrorist organization inspired regional affiliates like al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Qaeda in Iraq. The non-state actor's newest branch is al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.<sup>12</sup>

Daesh also originated from al-Qaeda. Originally known as Al-Qaeda of Iraq, the group changed its name to the Islamic State in Iraq, and became its own organization led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, after al-Qaeda condemned the offshoot as exceedingly violent.<sup>13</sup> Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the current leader of Daesh, has expanded the group into Syria to target the Shia regime of Bashar al-Assad.<sup>14</sup> Over the past few years Daesh has spread rapidly into Iraq, but has recently started to lose territory to both Iraqi and Kurdish armies.<sup>15</sup>

Although al-Qaeda and Daesh garner a vast majority of media attention, they are certainly not the only non-state actors in the Arab world. Much of northern Yemen is currently controlled by the Houthis, a group of Zaidi Shia rebels who forced President Hadi out of the capital in February. The Houthis are also in conflict with Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP),

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<sup>12</sup>McCormick, Ty. "Al Qaeda Core: A Short History." *Foreign Policy*, 17 Mar. 2014. Web. <<http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/03/17/al-qaeda-core-a-short-history/>>.

<sup>13</sup>Ghosh, Bobby. "A Short Political History of the Terrorists Who Call Themselves the 'Islamic State.'" Quartz, 13 Aug. 2013. Web. <<http://qz.com/#248787/a-short-political-history-of-the-barbaric-terrorists-who-call-themselves-the-islamic-state/>>.

<sup>14</sup>Ghosh, Bobby. "A Short Political History of the Terrorists Who Call Themselves the 'Islamic State.'" Web.

<sup>15</sup>Koebrich, Sam, and Mohsin Ali. "Map: Rebels' Path Through Iraq." Al Jazeera. Web. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2014/06/map-isil-path-through-iraq-2014617135121336301.html>>.

another influential non-state actor.<sup>16</sup> Lebanon also faces security threats from Hezbollah, a militant organization known to be supporting the Assad regime in Syria.<sup>17</sup> The Council should consider all such groups when drafting a resolution.

### **C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, Future**

The Arab League has acknowledged that it needs to battle threats from militant groups and is already taking steps to do so. The proposed creation of a joint Arab force is one of many steps that the League can take to eradicate non-state militants.

The Council should identify the factors that allow these non-state actors to establish footholds in the region. One cause is surely instability, as weak governments do not have the capacity to keep rebel groups from developing within their borders. Many of these groups also receive funding from countries, other organizations, and individuals in the region. Thirdly, non-state actors use radicalization and extremism to recruit new members. The Council could also continue to identify how non-state militants prosper and could address and develop clear solutions within draft resolutions. These solutions should be broad enough in order to be applicable to all Arab League members.

## **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- What has the Arab League already done regarding this topic?
- How do military non-state actors affect my country?
- Does the Joint Defense Council and/or the Arab League have the authority to engage with countries who are supporting some of these groups?
- Are my citizens being recruited into these organizations? If so, how can my country counteract radicalization?

## **III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- What aspects of this topic can the Council respond to?
- Are there states that need to be responsible for some of these groups? Are some of these states non-Arab?
- How can international involvement play a factor in a solution?
- How can border security be improved to combat recruitment and movement of transnational organizations?

## **IV. Additional Resources**

- [Summer 2015 Background Guide - Council on Combating Militant Non-State Actors](#)
- [Violent Non-State Actors and National and International Security](#)

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<sup>16</sup> “Yemen Crisis: Who is Fighting Whom?” BBC News. 26 Mar. 2015. Web.< <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29319423>>.

<sup>17</sup> “Briefing On the Designation of Hezbollah for Supporting the Syrian Regime.” U.S. Department of State. 10 Aug. 2012. Web. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/08/196335.htm#>.

- [Violent Non-State Actors in the Middle Eastern Region](#)

### **Topic III: Proposing policies to address security threats related to refugees and refugee camps in order to assist those displaced by conflict and instability**

#### **I. Introduction to the Topic**

##### **A. General Background**

The Council should define a “refugee” as an individual living outside his/her country of origin or habitual residence. Refugees have left their home countries due to violent conflict, human rights abuses or racial, religious or political persecution.<sup>18</sup> Displaced by conflict, these individuals usually settle in vast housing complexes, known as “refugee camps,” located in neighboring host countries.

Two years ago, this topic would have mostly applied to the states of the Levant dealing with refugees from the Syrian civil war. However, with conflicts also raging in Iraq, Yemen and Libya, all regions of the League have a vested interest in a unified response to refugees. Yemeni refugees have crossed borders not only into Oman, but also into Djibouti and Somalia. Because of instability in Libya, refugees have relocated to Tunisia, Egypt, and other North African neighbors. Establishing standard policies for refugees is important not only for current conflicts, but also for similar issues the region may face in the future.

As the number of Arab refugees grows, countries have identified two major “security threats” to which refugee camps are vulnerable. The first issue is basic law enforcement of camps, but this is mostly an individual state issue. The second risk, which all camps face, is the threat of radical and extremist activity within the camps. Nearly all refugees living in camps are poor and reliant on others; these factors make refugees vulnerable to radicalization. With the spread of Daesh and other extremist factions throughout the Islamic world, battling extremism is at the forefront of any discussion on Middle Eastern security concerns; refugee camps are new and opportune battlegrounds for confronting radicalization.

Most refugees from recent crises are banned from entering the job market of the country in which they have chosen to seek refuge. Poverty is thus rampant in refugee camps. Crime has also become a serious problem in camps, especially in the Levant. In response, some governments have turned to community policing.<sup>19</sup> Because of these developments, authorities in Jordan are concerned that refugees will join extremist groups in order to protect and provide for their families. Additionally, activities like prostitution, black market sales, and organized crime could quickly develop in camps.<sup>20</sup>

##### **B. History in the Arab World**

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<sup>18</sup>“The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.” Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Web. < <http://www.unhcr.org/4ec262df9.html>>.

<sup>19</sup>“Jordan Hires UK Contractor to Train Refugee Camp Police.” Siren Associates, 15 May 2014. Web. <<http://www.sirenassociates.com/assets/pdf/jordan-hires-uk-contractor-to-train-refugee-camp-police.pdf>>.

<sup>20</sup>Agostinelli, Jessica. “The Security Implications of the Middle East Refugee Crisis.” Glimpse From The Globe, 29 Sept. 2014. Web. <<http://www.glimpsefromtheglobe.com/topics/defense-and-security/security-implications-middle-east-refugee-crisis/>>.

Refugees are not a new phenomenon in the Arab world. Palestinian refugees have lived across the region since leaving the newly created state of Israel in the 1950s.<sup>21</sup> These refugees are still struggling to overcome poverty and to secure political and human rights as many Arab states have refused to adopt these refugees into their economies and societies. In fact, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, the organization responsible for governing Palestinian refugee camps, considers descendants of Palestinian refugees to be refugees as well, even if they themselves have never been forced to relocate.<sup>22</sup>

Recently, the number of refugees in the region has increased dramatically, as Iraqis and Syrians flee under the threat of Daesh and Al-Assad's regime. In April of 2011, Syrian refugees began fleeing to Lebanon. Soon after, large numbers also left for Turkey, Jordan, and even Iraq.<sup>23</sup> As the civil war in Syria worsened, the number of refugees increased. Over time, refugee unrest surged, and camps opened and expanded rapidly. Although camps vary in size, layout, and the degree of services provided, a general trend shows that only a fraction of refugees have access to the resources they need.<sup>24</sup> Lacking basic necessities, refugees become prime targets for radicalization. Similar situations have led to increased extremism in Pakistan and Somalia.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, refugee populations will continue to grow as stability in Yemen and Libya continues to disintegrate.

### **C. Finding a Solution to the problem: Past, Present, Future**

Radicalization of refugees is not unique to Jordan's camps, as mentioned above. It is not unique to the fight against Daesh. Any attempt to solve the Arab refugee problem would be incomplete without consideration of past crises and strategies: Which approaches worked? Which are still working? Which did not work?

Additionally, in order to find a solution to this crisis, the Council and the League should consider all elements of refugee-related security. Unrest is the most pertinent threat to camps: what causes this discontent? As mentioned earlier, unrest often leads to radicalization, especially among young refugees. This extremism threatens both the camp and the host country. How can radicalization be combated and prevented? Although refugee camps are meant to be temporary, many have existed for decades. What can the Council do to establish a plan for long-term refugee security?

## **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

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<sup>21</sup> Khazan, Olga. "Refugee: Palestinians in Arab Countries Have it Bad, Too." *Washington Post*, 30 Nov. 2012. Web. <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2012/11/30/palestinians-israel-settlements-arab-countries-refugees/>>.

<sup>22</sup> Miller, Judith, and David Samuels. "No Way Home: The Tragedy of the Palestinian Diaspora." *Independent*, 22 Oct. 2009. Web. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/no-way-home-the-tragedy-of-the-palestinian-diaspora-1806790.html>>.

<sup>23</sup> "The Syrian Refugee Crisis Begins: Up to 5000 Refugees Flee to Lebanon." Syrian Refugees. Web. <[http://syrianrefugees.eu/?page\\_id=163](http://syrianrefugees.eu/?page_id=163)>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Koser, Khalid. "IDPs, Refugees, and Violent Extremism: From Victims to Vectors of Change." Brookings Institution, 20 Feb. 2015. Web. <<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/order-from-chaos/posts/2015/02/20-cve-displacement-refugees-koser>>.

- What lessons can be learned from past refugee crises?
- What, if any, refugee crises are affecting my country at this time?
- What conflicts might cause a refugee crisis in or near my country?
- What elements of camp/refugee security are most important?
- What partnerships with outside actors/organizations have been successful in combating refugee crises?

### **III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- How can the League and its member states monitor extremist activity in refugee camps?
- Does the League consider substandard camp conditions a serious threat to security?
- What role does state sovereignty play into this discussion?
- Can the League reach consensus on a matter that involves security, politics, and civil rights?

### **IV. Additional Resources**

- [Theories on Camp Security](#)
- [UNHCR - Iraq](#)
- [UNHCR - Syria](#)
- [UNHCR - Libya](#)
- [Legal Status of Refugees](#)

## **Topic IV: Reviewing the Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone to determine a League-wide nuclear policy and a response to developments in the regional nuclear landscape**

### **II. Introduction to the Topic**

#### **A. General Background**

A country's "nuclear policy" encompasses its positions on both nuclear weapons and nuclear energy. No member of the LAS currently possesses nuclear weapons. Many Middle Eastern and North African states have argued that all countries in the region should sign a non-proliferation treaty, creating a Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (MENWFZ). Although Iran first proposed a MENWFZ in 1974, negotiations have made little headway because Iran, along with Israel, now opposes the treaty.<sup>26</sup> Israel has refused to sign the U.N. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and says that she will not agree to a MENWFZ until a comprehensive peace settlement has been reached between Israel and the other Middle Eastern states.<sup>27</sup> Israel is widely believed to possess a significant number of nuclear weapons, although this has not been acknowledged by the state.<sup>28</sup> The Arab League has consistently demanded that Israel give up its nuclear arsenal and sign the NPT.<sup>29</sup>

Iran has signed the NPT, but many suspect the state is pursuing a nuclear weapons program in addition to its peaceful nuclear energy program.<sup>30</sup> Iran's nuclear activity has been at the forefront of world news recently, as the state reached an agreement with the US, Britain, France, Russia, China, and Germany. Iran and the P5+1, as these six countries are often called, agreed to a deal which, if ratified by individual states, will significantly limit Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons. In return for Iran's compliance, the other parties will relieve sanctions that have crippled Tehran's economy.<sup>31</sup> Many members of the Arab League have strained relations with Iran, and believe that Iran cannot be trusted to uphold its side of the deal.

#### **B. History in the Arab World**

Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen have all considered nuclear power programs at some point in the past 50 years. Many of these states were specifically interested in nuclear power for the

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<sup>26</sup>"Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and the Middle East." Monterey Nonproliferation Strategy Group, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies. Aug. 2009. Web. <[http://cns.miis.edu/mnsg/pdfs/0908\\_mnsg\\_mideast\\_nwfz.pdf](http://cns.miis.edu/mnsg/pdfs/0908_mnsg_mideast_nwfz.pdf)>.

<sup>27</sup>"Middle East Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone." Federation of American Scientists. Web. <[http://fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/ArmsControl\\_NEW/nonproliferation/NFZ/NP-NFZ-ME.html](http://fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/ArmsControl_NEW/nonproliferation/NFZ/NP-NFZ-ME.html)>.

<sup>28</sup>Kessler, Glenn. "Iran's Claim that Israel Has 400 Nuclear Weapons." *Washington Post*, 1 May 2015. Web. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/fact-checker/wp/2015/05/01/irans-claim-that-israel-has-400-nuclear-weapons/>>.

<sup>29</sup>Rigg, Bob. "Nuclear Standoff Between the Arab League and the West." *Open Democracy*, 26 Aug. 2014. Web. <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/bob-rigg/nuclear-standoff-between-arab-league-and-west>>.

<sup>30</sup>Dahl, Fredrik, and Sylvia Westall. "U.N. Nuclear Watchdog Board Rebukes Defiant Iran." *Reuters*, 18 Nov. 2011. Web. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/18/us-nuclear-iran-iaea-idUSTRE7AG0RP20111118>>.

<sup>31</sup>"Iran Nuclear Deal: Key Details." *BBC News*, 14 July 2015. Web. <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655>>.

purpose of desalination.<sup>32</sup> However, none of these states ever acquired nuclear weapons and, by signing the NPT in 1970, all agreed not to pursue nuclear activity in the future. It is believed, as referenced above, that Israel possessed nuclear abilities prior to 1970.<sup>33</sup> The most recent development in the attempt to create the MENWFZ took place at the 2015 Review Conference of the NPT.<sup>34</sup> A major goal of this meeting, in which 191 NPT signatories participated, was to pass a final paper that created an outline for the MENWFZ. However, the U.S., Britain, and Canada rejected the final resolution, and the conference ended without a solution.<sup>35</sup> The next NPT review conference will not transpire until 2020.

### **C. Finding a Solution to the problem: Past, Present, Future**

Without any nuclear capabilities, the Arab League is understandably concerned by its adversaries' increasing number of nuclear weapons. Many analysts worry that just one state's nuclear ambition could trigger a regional nuclear arms race. This Council's mission within this topic is to protect its members from existing threats and to establish effective policies to prevent future incidents. Solutions to this topic might include a joint Arab response to regional nuclear aggression, a general policy on the MENWFZ, and established consequences for neighbors with nuclear capabilities.

#### **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- What countries near my state have nuclear weapons/ambitions?
- What is my country's past history with nuclear weapons or energy?
- What effect would a neighbor's increased nuclear abilities have on my country?

#### **III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- Should the LAS respond to the recent Iran nuclear deal?
- Should the League pressure other nations to commit to a MENWFZ?
- What leverage can the league employ to establish a MENWFZ?
- If a member state is found to be producing nuclear weapons, what should be the League's response?
- What can the League do to prevent an arms race in the region?

#### **IV. Additional Resources**

- [Further History of the Topic](#)
- [NPT Full Text](#)

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<sup>32</sup>Craill, Peter, and Jessica Lasky-Fink. "Middle Eastern States Seeking Nuclear Power." Arms Control Association. Web. <[https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008\\_05/MiddleEastEnergy](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_05/MiddleEastEnergy)>.

<sup>33</sup>Kessler, Glenn. "Iran's Claim that Israel Has 400 Nuclear Weapons." *Washington Post*, 1 May 2015. Web. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/fact-checker/wp/2015/05/01/irans-claim-that-israel-has-400-nuclear-weapons/>>.

<sup>34</sup>"NPT Review Conferences." International Atomic Energy Agency. Web. <<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/focus/npt/npr-review-conferences>>.

<sup>35</sup>"Lost Opportunity on Nuclear Disarmament." *New York Times*, 3 June 2015. Web. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/03/opinion/lost-opportunity-on-nuclear-disarmament.html>>

- [2015 NPT Review Conference Documents](#)
- [Iran's Nuclear Capabilities](#)