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Model Arab League
BACKGROUND GUIDE

Joint Defense Council

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National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations



Original draft by Kate Boggess, Program Fellow at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations, with contributions from additional staff and volunteers

Topic I: Assessing means member states can employ to neutralize armed extremist groups that threaten the territorial integrity of member states

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Extremism comes in many forms, and is defined by the circumstances. The classic adage ‘one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter’ is a simple way of displaying this dichotomy. Extremism in League member states is no different – delegates may struggle as “the labeling of activities, people, and groups as “extremist”, and the defining of what is “ordinary” in any setting is always a subjective and political matter.”¹

The League of Arab States defined terrorism in the 1998 Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism as “Any act or threat of violence, whatever its motives or purposes, that occurs for the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda, causing terror among people, causing fear by harming them, or placing their lives, liberty or security in danger, or aiming to cause damage to the environment or to public or private installations or property or to occupy or to seize them, or aiming to jeopardize a national resource”.² Again, much of this language is subjective, and delegates will have to discover their own countries views as well as navigate other member states’ views.

A breakdown of the topic language, however, should help define the scope of the Joint Defense Council’s discussion. First, the topic leads with “Assessing means of member states,” which does not call for outright military action, but does not rule it out. Also, the Council should be assessing individual member state capacities, not necessarily joint action. The word “neutralize” is essential; some might take this as ‘destroy’ while others might think ‘contain’ or ‘subvert’ or ‘appease.’ Finally, the exact type of extremist group to discuss is narrowly defined – the group must be armed and must threaten the territorial integrity of a member state. This rules out a great many groups, although perhaps a wider definition of the terms could include more. Also, keep in mind that any country that promotes the disruption of territorial integrity is in violation of international law.³

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

It is important to put into context recent current events as well as consider various groups which may fall into the variety of categories mentioned above. The most obvious target of this topic is the Islamic State, aka ISIS/ISIL with a close runner-up as Al-Qaeda and its affiliates. However, some member states may also want to include Hamas, Hezbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood, the

¹ Bartoli, Dr. Andrea, and Coleman, Dr. Peter T. International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution. “Addressing Extremism”. http://www.tc.columbia.edu/i/a/document/9386_WhitePaper_2_Extremism_030809.pdf

² UNODC. *The Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism*. 22 April 1998. https://www.unodc.org/tldb/pdf/conv_arab_terrorism.en.pdf

³ Charter of the United Nations. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml>

Nusra Front and other factions fighting in Syria, Libyan militia groups, Al-Shabaab, and many others.⁴

Delegates should keep in mind the complex nature of alliances and regional support structures which may make discussion and debate over these groups less straightforward. By accessing the means of intervention it is clear that violent intervention is not the only option in trying to neutralize extremist groups. A variety of tactics may be taken in order for a resolution to achieve this goal. Extremist groups can grow rapidly and expand the territory in which they operate swiftly.⁵ It is also important for delegates to understand which groups threaten the territorial integrity of their country.

The history of the region gives needed background to the growth of extremist groups in the region. Wars with Israel and the subsequent defeat of Arab forces in 1949 and 1967 led to a surge of extremist groups in Palestine⁶. The PFLP, PFLP-GC, and ANO would become models for extremist groups that wanted to make significant impact and further their philosophy. The 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution is another seminal moment. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan the same year, and Iran and Iraq entered a devastating war soon after from 1980-1988. In the chaos that ensued, terrorism was seen as the weapon of choice as Iraq and Iran ground to a deadlock, the United States sought to arm the mujahideen in Afghanistan, and Palestinians saw no other way of resistance.

This complicated soup of wars, foreign intervention, exacerbating poverty, and growing sectarian distrust has only continued into the present. Hezbollah, formed in 1982, is likely responsible for the 1983 bombing in Beirut, Lebanon that killed around 241 US marines⁷. The Palestinians rose up in 1987-91 and again in 2000 in what have been termed *intifada*. State failure in Somalia, Afghanistan and elsewhere has opened up terrorist havens. The new phase of militant groups, including Al-Qaeda, GIA, AAIA, HUM, Army of Mohammed, and Army of the Righteous are considered violent and a threat to the security of the Arab world and international community. Al-Qaeda has become one of the most infamous terrorist groups since and is considered a major threat to the west as well as the Arab world since it serves as an umbrella for many extremist groups including EIJ, IG, and HUM.⁸

Finally, the issue of extremism cannot be examined without also considering religion. According to RAND in 1980 two out of 64 extremist groups were considered to be motivated by religion. In 1995 the figures were revisited and 26 out of 56 were considered to be motivated by religion.⁹ In recent years religion has become a larger part of the philosophy of extremist groups in the Arab world. Many explain the phenomenon of these extremist groups going from largely secular to

⁴US Department of State. "Foreign Terrorist Organizations". <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>.

⁵ CBS News. "Amid ISIS violence, Saudi King Warns of Threat to US". 30 August 2014. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/amid-isis-violence-saudi-arabia-king-abdullah-warns-of-threat-to-us/>

⁶ Moore, John. PBS. Frontline. "The Evolution of Islamic Terrorism: An Overview". <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/target/etc/modern.html>

⁷ Moore, John. PBS. Frontline. "The Evolution of Islamic Terrorism: An Overview".

⁸ Moore, John. PBS. Frontline. "The Evolution of Islamic Terrorism: An Overview".

⁹ Moore, John. PBS. Frontline. "The Evolution of Islamic Terrorism: An Overview".

majority religious on the failure of nationalism in the Arab world¹⁰. These groups often fill a void the governments could not by offering improvement of social welfare and education which helped these groups gain community support and increased their numbers¹¹.

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

In order to find a solution one must first explore how extremist groups came to be, what their philosophies are, and what remedies have been successful in the past. Many argue that the most practical way to reduce extremism is to alleviate the conditions that make their ideology so attractive. Without a philosophy these groups would have no cause to fight for. However, this is much easier said than done. Prevention means a dedicated effort in a variety of areas including social, economic, political, and environmental arenas. This means a collective effort between councils of the Arab League and dedication to unity among Arab states.

It may be wise to explore allies outside the Arab League (both western and non-western) in order to address what is not only an Arab problem but an international problem. Understanding how other countries have remedied the issue of extremist groups is essential in understanding what has been effective under certain scenarios and what has not. Special committees for emergency and high security breach situations may be one way to attempt to manage extremists who are attempting compromise territorial integrity. A focus on cyber security could be useful in prevention, as well as a focus on intelligence.

Please keep in mind the Arab League charter in which you agreed to as a member of the Arab League states “Any resort to force in order to resolve disputes between two or more member-states of the League is prohibited”. The charter also states that “The Council shall mediate in all differences which threaten to lead to war between two member-states, or a member-state and a third state, with a view to bringing about their reconciliation”.¹² Please revisit the Arab League Charter and pay special attention to article five in the event that tensions arise between member states while dealing with this topic or any other in which it may be relevant.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Is there a difference between extremist groups, terrorist organizations, political parties, and militant groups? If so what are those differences?
- What has been established by the Arab League already in terms of neutralizing extremist groups?
- How would the Arab League as a whole feel about having assistance from the Western world in combating terrorism and securing border?
- What current extremists groups pose the largest threat to the security of the Arab world?
- What might be the potential consequences of intervention?
- How might border security be strengthened?

¹⁰ Moore, John. PBS. Frontline. “The Evolution of Islamic Terrorism: An Overview”.

¹¹ Moore, John. PBS. Frontline. “The Evolution of Islamic Terrorism: An Overview”.

¹² UN Refugee Agency. RefWorld. *Charter of the Arab League*.

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3ab18.html>

- How might your country increase security at airports, train stations, and ports?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- At what point is military intervention necessary?
- What military actions is the Arab League capable of executing?
- What Arab countries have similar interests in neutralizing extremist groups that pose a threat to the country you are representing? What common interests do you have?
- How can you protect the resources of the Arab world in the event of military intervention, civil war, revolution, etc.?
- What preventative measures can *realistically* be taken to reduce the influence and appeal of extremist groups?
- How would your country negotiate, if at all, with these groups to attempt come to a peaceful resolution before more extreme measures are taken and who might you involve to make negotiations run smoother?

IV. Additional Resources to Review

Arab League Charter

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3ab18.html>

League of Arab States

http://www.lasportal.org/wps/portal/las_en/home_page!/ut/p/c5/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3gXy8CgMJMgYwOLYFdLA08jF09_X28jIwN_E6B8JG55C3MCuoNT8_TDQXbiNwMkb4ADOBro-3nk56bqF-RGVHjqOioCAKQoUKM!/dl3/d3/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/

Al Jazeera English

<http://america.aljazeera.com/>

Foreign Policy

<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/>

Global Focus- International Terrorism: Cause, Effect, and the Search for Solutions

<http://www.globalfocus.org/GF-Terrorism.htm>

Constitutional Rights Foundation- Terrorism: How Have Other Countries handled it? How Should we?

<http://www.crf-usa.org/america-responds-to-terrorism/terrorism-how-have-other-countries-handled-it.html>

Topic II: Establishing annual joint military exercises, weapons development, and research initiatives between member states to increase military-to-military ties, improve readiness, and demonstrate determination and unity

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Collaboration between militaries around the world is a common way to achieve efficiency, support allies, improve efficacy, and show political support. The topic, then, is fairly straightforward in what it is asking the Joint Defense Council to consider. The question is not ‘whether’ more collaboration is a good thing or ‘what’ should be done or even ‘why’ it should be done, as those things are named in the topic language, but instead ‘how’ it will be achieved.

The chief question is, of course, funding. How will such endeavors be paid for? Wealthier nations and those with more developed and sophisticated militaries will have an easier job of this topic, though they may be reticent to pay for smaller countries to be involved despite the benefits of including them.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

Collaborative efforts between the League of Arab States and their allies are not uncommon. In recent years many countries including Saudi Arabia, for example, have started to focus on a collaborative approach to military training. It is important to remember that not all members of the Arab League have strong militaries; however, there are a variety of skill sets which have benefited the region as whole. Consider recent collaborations to protect trade routes that deliver goods to ports within the Arab world. Collaborative efforts can vary vastly including anything from training seminars on cyber security to war games. In general, improving military ties can lead to improved political and economic ties.

In April of 2014 Iran and Oman joined together to perform joint military exercises in the form of naval drills.¹³ In March of 2014 Egyptian and UAE forces joined together to carry out military drills¹⁴. These drills included marine, air, and ground exercises. In 2013 Jordan hosted thousands of US troops in joint military exercises¹⁵ Djibouti often works closely with the US and France due to the presence of the US and French cooperative drone base and receives training, military equipment, air and ground support from this drone base. Morocco has also participated in joint exercises with the US in the past including in March of 2014. Most recently Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia teamed up with France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, and Spain for military drills in August of 2014. These drills were conducted in cooperation with the United

¹³ Middle East Eye. “Iran and Oman Hold Joint Naval Exercises”. 8 April 2014.

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iran-and-oman-hold-joint-naval-exercises-493167941>

¹⁴ Middle East Monitor. “Egyptian and UAE Forces Carry Out Joint Military Drills”. 3 March 2014.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/africa/10070-egyptian-and-uae-forces-carry-out-joint-military-drills>

¹⁵ Alalam. “Thousands of US Troops Leave for War Games in Jordan”. 22 May 2014.

<http://en.alalam.ir/news/1596267>

States and mimicked the use of civilian or military planes carrying out attacks.¹⁶ The Joint Defense Council should focus on collaboration between member states, though it would not be out of the question to include foreign countries for funding, logistics, or support.

Currently, weapons development in the Middle East and North Africa is nearly non-existent. A majority of weapons are actually purchased through the United States with the top buyers in the Middle East being Saudi Arabia and the UAE.¹⁷

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

In order for the League of Arab States to increase preparedness and unity through these defense initiatives, delegates will have to navigate disagreements between member states on geopolitical goals and interests as they discuss the technical aspects of the topic. While the ‘who’ of the topic, who might be the reason for improved militaries, is not named and isn’t the focus of the topic, collaboration on any level between countries with competing interests will shape the debate.

Expansion of more inclusive joint exercises may improve war games and simulations currently taking place. Weapons development would require a unified focus and negotiated efforts between member states, and research would need to be conducted on the latest technology and tactics by those who hold strength in this field. Problems that arise are related to funding, development, and mutual interests. In order to find a solution all member states must truly understand their strengths and what they are able to contribute while negotiating with other members of the Arab League to contribute.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Which Arab League member states have the best resources to fit your country’s needs?
- If you lack material resources what might you be able to contribute to the goal of strengthening military alliances between member states?
- What types of military exercises would benefit all Arab League member states?
- Should cyber security be a concern of the Arab league and how might member states improve cyber security?
- Which countries have the strongest militaries? What are their strengths? Weaknesses?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How might weapons development be expanded on?
- What types of training or drills would be beneficial?
- How might intelligence play a role in increasing military to military ties?
- What countries might be in the best position to organize such drills or training?
- Where might funding come from for such endeavors?

¹⁶ Matthew Vella. Malta Today. “Mediterranean Countries Plan Joint Military Drills Over Libya”. 18 August 2014. http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/world/42411/mediterranean_countries_plan_joint_military_drills_over_libya_unrest#.U_zefEAfLZg

¹⁷ Anup Shah. Global Issues. “The Arms Trade is Big Business”. 15 January 2013.

<http://www.globalissues.org/article/74/the-arms-trade-is-big-business#Developingnationsaretopprecipients>

V. Additional Resources to Review

Global Firepower's (GFP) - ranking of Middle East military powers
<http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing-middle-east.asp>

Global Firepower (GFP) - country by country comparison
<http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-comparison.asp>

Cyber Security
<http://www.thawte.com/about/news/?story=380073>

5+5 Military Initiative
http://www.ieee.es/en/Galerias/fichero/docs_marco/2012/DIEEEM07-2012_5x5_SegMed_RomeoNunez_ENGLISH.pdf

Conventional Arms Transfers to developing Nations
<http://fas.org/sgp/crs/weapons/R42678.pdf>

Arab Security Sector
<http://www.ssrresourcecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Barak-and-David-The-Arab-Security-Sector-A-new-research-agenda-for-a-neglected-topic.pdf>

Topic III: Exploring the effectiveness and political feasibility of utilizing Arab League military assistance to aid regional states in transition

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

At face value, this topic is simple and perhaps innocuous sounding. However, the issue at hand is rather contentious and controversial. A breakdown of its language can help navigate what exactly is being discussed here.

The phrase “utilizing Arab League military assistance” is terribly vague. The League itself does not have a military, so delegates will need to interpret from where said assistance is actually coming. “Assistance” itself is also open for interpretation, and could be seen as anything from increased border security, humanitarian aid, or direct military intervention. It is fair to say that several countries will reject this idea outright as an affront to their national self-determination and sovereignty.

The Council will further need to consider what it means to be a state in transition. In the post-Arab Spring world, this has typically meant Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Iraq, and Syria with possible inclusions of Lebanon, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, or even Palestine. However, the political situation on the ground in these countries has developed a great deal since 2011, and some might be considered ‘post-transition’ or would not wish to have been considered ‘in transition’ at all. The inclusion of the word “regional” further allows for the consideration of nearby non-member states.

Finally, the opening, ‘exploring,’ is passive. It does not say ‘implementing’ or the like because the possible actions involved could be seen as provocative. The goal of the topic is simply to find out if such proposals would be effective and feasible with the given circumstances.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

It is not unusual for military forces to assist member states by offering and distributing humanitarian aid as is done in Syria and a variety of other countries during times of transition.¹⁸ In 2012, many efforts were made collectively between the League of Arab States and other organizations to try to ease the suffering of the Syrian people. The Action Group was formed as a collaborative effort between the Secretaries General of the UN and Arab League, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the Turkish Foreign Minister, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, as well as the Foreign

¹⁸ Cuny, Frederick. Frontline. “Use of Military in Humanitarian Relief”.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cuny/laptop/humanrelief.html>

Ministers of Iraq, Kuwait, and Qatar.¹⁹ Collectively this group aimed to discuss the end of violence, increased security, and increased media access among other important issues.²⁰

The situation is much more complicated when other forms of ‘assistance’ have been offered over the past several years. Several wealthy Gulf countries have provided a great deal of assistance to different Syrian²¹ and Libyan²² factions, in addition to the Egyptian²³ and Yemeni²⁴ governments among others. While this support has not necessarily been a disadvantage to the receiving countries, it can be seen as an aspect of a larger, regional game of geopolitical chess as strategic interests fuel proxy conflicts between secularists and Islamists, among Islamists of various persuasions, and between various governments jockeying for advantageous outcomes and influence.

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

In order to resolve attitudes about this topic among members, the League will need to identify what types of military assistance is considered appropriate and under what circumstances it is considered acceptable by those offering and accepting that assistance. It is appropriate for delegates to consider past failures and current attitudes about military assistance in these instances.

The Joint Defense Council may begin by outlining what it feels are the most appropriate responses under a variety of situations which meet certain criteria as set by the Council. It must also keep in mind past failures, current complications, and future implications of any intervention. A successful resolution would maintain sovereignty while keeping in mind the best interest of the Arab world.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What has the Arab League already done to address this agenda topic in the past?
- What hesitations does your country have about receiving humanitarian aid during crisis?
- Has the country you represent ever experienced a transitional government and if so what improvements were needed, if any, in how the situation was handled?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What might military assistance look like?
- How would a member state offer military assistance?

¹⁹ UN News Center. “Syria: UN-Arab League envoy calls on Security Council to agree on resolution to help end crisis”. 15 November 2012. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43419#.VA3mkkAkXXo>

²⁰ UN News Center. “Syria: UN-Arab League envoy calls on Security Council to agree on resolution to help end crisis”. 15 November 2012.

²¹ http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/syrian-rebels-get-influx-of-arms-with-gulf-neighbors-money-us-coordination/2012/05/15/gIQAds2TSU_story.html

²² <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/08/27/here-are-the-key-players-fighting-the-war-for-libya-all-over-again/>

²³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/27/us-egypt-emirates-army-insight-idUSBREA2Q0X320140327>

²⁴ <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2013/01/21/261697.html>

- What specific rules might you apply to a cease fire that is specially fitted for the Arab world or a specific conflict?
- Under what circumstances might you offer resources to a military acting as an interim government? What might these resources be?

VI. Additional Resources to Review

Arab Spring Military Intervention

http://d26e8pvoto2x3r.cloudfront.net/uploadImages/systemFiles/INSS2012Balance_ENG_Brom.pdf

The Telegraph- Arab League Calls for Transitional Government in Syria

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/9419582/Arab-League-calls-for-transitional-government-in-Syria.html>

Al Jazeera- Syria Rejects Arab League Transitional Plan

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/01/201212305618873831.html>

Harvard Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy- Purifying Transitional Governments of Authoritarian Bureaucracies: Lessons from Eastern Europe for the Arab World

<http://hksjmepp.com/purifying-transitional-governments-of-authoritarian-bureaucracies-lessons-from-eastern-europe-for-the-arab-world/>

FRIDE European Think Tank- Transition Challenges in the Arab World: Lessons from the Past

http://www.fride.org/download/PB_144_Transition_challenges_in_the_Arab_world.pdf

Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue- Power Sharing, Transitional Governments and the Role of Mediation

http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx_news/60Powersharingfinal.pdf

Topic IV: Considering the possibility of water disputes evolving into war and endeavoring to preemptively solve them through diplomacy

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Water has long been a prized resource in the Arab world. With climate change becoming an increasingly alarming problem globally and populations rapidly increasing, water has become an even more critical resource.²⁵ While this topic has significant components which might seem to fit in other councils, the Joint Defense Council is tasked with examining the security and defense components of water insecurity.

The topic is not specific on the type of water dispute to consider – included might be international disputes over shared river and groundwater resources, local disputes, or even internal national-level conflicts that could spill over borders or otherwise affect neighboring countries. The Council might begin by identifying water shortage stress points, the likelihood or direct conflict in each, and enumerating recommendations to avoid worst case scenarios.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

International tension over water is not difficult to envision as “shortages could threaten food production and energy supply and put additional stress on governments struggling with poverty and social tensions.”²⁶ When basic resources like water and food become scarce, internal political turmoil becomes more likely; the Arab Spring is commonly accepted as a result of economic insecurity. These disputes can often spiral out of control quickly when disagreements cannot be resolved diplomatically. It is important for delegates to consider how these disputes can be avoided in the short, medium, and long terms.

Some Arab countries are highly dependent on agriculture as a source of income creating a dire situation. Climate change had led to further complications in the Arab world. The region is already considered water scarce, but with changing climate water is becoming scarcer. Some countries are on the verge of losing their access to clean water within the next 10 years for example Yemen, which is expected to ‘run out’ of water in its capital by 2025.²⁷ Other countries have seen development projects like dams alter water allocation, resulting in tensions with countries that share the same water source, such as Egypt’s opposition to Ethiopia’s Grand Renaissance Dam.²⁸

²⁵ Ministry of Earth and Science. CAD Institute of Development Studies. “Water Security and Climate Change”. 2011. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full%20Report_621.pdf

²⁶ Goldenberg, Suzanne. The Observer. “Why global water shortages pose threat of terror and war.” 8 February 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/feb/09/global-water-shortages-threat-terror-war>

²⁷ Naje, Omar. SciDev. “Yemen’s Capital will run out of Water by 2025”. <http://www.scidev.net/global/policy/news/yemen-s-capital-will-run-out-of-water-by-2025-.html>

²⁸ Kingsley, Patrick. The Guardian. “Nile Dam Study Fails to Stem the Tide of Egyptian Indignation Towards Ethiopia”. <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2014/apr/16/nile-dam-study-egyptian-indignation-ethiopia>

To explore the complexity of water security in the region, consider Tunisia as an example. It has been suffering droughts that are documented as far back as 870 CE according to The World Bank²⁹. Tunisia has advanced greatly through water management due to its history of droughts. Tunisia relies heavily on water management which includes the storage and movement of water that is invested in by the government. Tunisia manages both ground and surface stocks of water. Tunisia has been using desalination as a technique for creating consumable water since 1983.³⁰

However, many countries face more political challenges to water access – Palestinians have been denied access to water by Israel who rations the supply in the Occupied Territories and prevents the development of a suitable water infrastructure.³¹ Egypt and Ethiopia have had a dispute over the dam that has been being built and sought out Saudi Arabia’s help in mediating the conflict. Egypt asked that an agreement be made on how much water they are entitled to and how much will be released from the dam that Ethiopia will control. Negotiations broke down between the two countries which is why Saudi Arabia was asked to step in as a mediator.³²

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

Short term solutions to increase the supply of water include drilling wells to tap underground water reserves, building desalination facilities, and building dams on surface waters.³³ While desalination offers the strongest glimmer of hope when it comes to solving the lack of water, it is an expensive solution. For those countries who are struggling economically, as many are within the Arab league, desalination may not be as reasonable or affordable of a solution without outside funding. Increasing water use efficiency is also something to consider.

Still, as the Joint Defense Council, the primary focus of the topic is preempting military conflicts arising from water disputes. “What is needed is a revised management of the supply and demand of water in the region or the competition may lead to violent confrontations in the Middle East”.³⁴ In order for proper resolution to be made delegates may consider how to preemptively construct plans to better build access to water poor countries before more conflict ensues. Looking into how countries might strike agreements in exchange for resources, or how they can agree to certain guidelines of what is considered acceptable behavior when a source of water is shared are on the table.

²⁹ Middle East and North Africa Region the World Bank. Water in the Arab World: Management Perspectives and Innovations. 2009. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMENA/Resources/Water_Arab_World_full.pdf

³⁰ Middle East and North Africa Region the World Bank. “Water in the Arab World: Management Perspectives and Innovations”.

³¹ Amnesty International. “Israel Rations Palestinians to a Trickle of Water.” 27 October 2009. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/israel-rations-palestinians-trickle-water-20091027>

³² Ayah Aman. Al-Monitor. Egypt Pulse. “Egypt Seeks Saudi Help on Ethiopia Water Dispute”. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/03/egypt-ethiopia-renaissance-dam-nile-saudi-pressure.html#>

³³ Trade and Environment Database. ICE Case Studies. “The Jordan River Dispute”. <http://www1.american.edu/ted/ice/westbank.htm#r1>

³⁴ Trade and Environment Database. ICE Case Studies. “The Jordan River Dispute”.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What countries have experience in mediating conflicts between Arab countries in the Arab League? Who might be most qualified to help mediate a dispute between countries concerning water?
- Who is currently having the most devastating effects of a lack of water?
- Who has access to clean water or technology like desalination plants?
- If your country lacks access to water what countries within the Arab League (including observer states) might be willing to help establish a reliable source of water?
- What countries are currently involved in water disputes?
- What resources do you have that may make it easier to negotiate in the event of a dispute that is on the verge of war?
- How has access to water been improved in recent years? How have these improvements been made and where?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How will the Arab League handle water disputes between member states?
- Where might member states get water when resources dry up in their own country?
- How will clean water be guarded in the event there is a war between countries over resources?
- What preventative measures might the League of Arab States take to prevent a war over water as a resource?
- Who might be best suited to mediate a dispute over water?

V. Additional Resources to Review

Water War Threatens Syria Lifeline

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/07/water-war-syria-euphrates-2014757640320663.html>

The National UAE- Arab League's Water Concerns

<http://www.thenational.ae/uae/environment/arab-region-atlas-shows-need-for-concerted-water-efforts>

Bloomberg- World's Largest Desalination Plant

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-04-23/saudis-start-production-at-world-s-biggest-desalination-plant.html>

The Water Project- Water Crisis in the Middle East

<http://thewaterproject.org/water-in-crisis-middle-east>

The Water Crisis in Yemen: Causes, Consequences, and Solutions

http://www.american.edu/cas/economics/ejournal/upload/global_majority_e_journal_1-1_glass.pdf

Water Diplomacy

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