



**2013 - 2014**

**Model Arab League**  
**BACKGROUND GUIDE**

**Joint Defense Council**

**[ncusar.org/modelarableague](http://ncusar.org/modelarableague)**

National  
Council  
on US-  
Arab  
Relations



Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to the 2013-2014 Model Arab League! My name is Shelby Hall, and it's my absolute privilege to serve as your Chair for the Joint Defense Council at the National University Model Arab League Conference. So you can know a bit more about me, I'm a senior at Mercer University in Georgia wrapping up my majors in Political Science and German. This is only my second year participating in the Model Arab League, and it has taught me a great deal about the Middle Eastern and North African region that I never thought I'd know or understand. I greatly regret that I only discovered the Model Arab League program in my junior year of college, and I strongly encourage every participant to take advantage of their experience here and continue it throughout your college careers! The Model Arab League has so much to offer in terms of study abroad and fellowship opportunities, and is a wonderful way to gain experience in professional presentation and public speaking.

The Joint Defense Council is a critical institution of the Arab League, and handles the responsibility of coordinating policies that seek to maintain regional peace, security and stability. As ministers of this Joint Defense Council, your task is therefore to address the topics brought before you with these goals in mind. Each topic discussed is central to the security of the region, and should be considered carefully. I encourage you all to thoroughly review this guide and in doing so prepare yourselves for a productive and positive experience here at the Model Arab League program.

I look forward to meeting each one of you, and I wish you all the best of luck while researching!

Sincerely,

Shelby Hall

## Joint Defense Council

### Topic I: Proposing initiatives to combat the threat of domestic and international militancy and sectarian conflict to regional security

#### I. Introduction to the Topic

##### A. General Background

It should come as no surprise that various immediate threats in the Middle Eastern and North African region have their roots in either the constant presence of militant groups or in sectarian conflicts and tension. Sectarianism among the Arab League states has come to be understood as religious divides among the peoples of a nation.<sup>1</sup> These divides can be seen in the tension between the Shiite and Sunni sects of Islam, or even amongst the same sect at different levels of analysis. Additionally, it has been a major factor in the lack of nationalism that is generally seen in countries with a great deal of development potential. To be clear, militancy is in itself an issue in the Middle Eastern region. Certain terrorist groups whose influence reaches both in and out of a country's borders may be considered militant, but sectarian political groups who have recently formed out of extremism or a desire for power have been known to develop military branches, such as the Muslim Brotherhood or the Free Syrian Army.<sup>2</sup>

In recent years, the Arab League has been hesitant to firmly present a consistent response to similar conflicts that may further destabilize the region. Unfortunately, creating this consistent response can be difficult, considering the fine line that exists between the breach of sovereignty and peaceful interference and assistance. In this case, it's important to keep in mind the Sunni-Shia tensions in several areas such as Bahrain, who lies between Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia and Shia-ruled Iran. Bahrain has been trying to cope with religious sectarianism of its own amongst the Shia majority and Sunni minority.<sup>3</sup> The Syrian issue and its fragility is another example of a conflict that has become embroiled with sectarian militant struggles, along with the dangerous between Hezbollah, Assad, and Iran, and their alliances with one another.<sup>4</sup> Lastly, the divides erupting from the Arab Spring have formed deepening secular-Islamic divides in countries such as Egypt, Yemen, and Tunisia, which have still not completely stabilized.

##### B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

The strong tensions among militant groups and different sects may have stemmed from the ascent of state nationalism ("wataniyya") over pan-Arab nationalism ("qawmiyya"), the latter of which began developing during the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The feeling of an "Arab fatherland" took shape in the form of nationalist groups like "al-Fatat" during the rule of the Ottoman Empire and were further encouraged by the British in an

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<sup>1</sup> Reese, Aaron. "Sectarian and Regional Conflict in the Middle East." *UnderstandingWar.org*. Institute for the Study of War, 3 July 2013. Web. <<http://www.understandingwar.org/report/sectarian-and-regional-conflict-middle-east>>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Bowen, Jeremy. "Bahrain Tensions a Trigger for Gulf Turmoil." *BBC News*. BBC, 13 Dec. 2012. Web. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20606069>>.

<sup>4</sup> Weinthal, Benjamin. "Syrian Refugees Blame Hezbollah, Syria's Main Allies for Their Plight." *Www.JPost.com*. Jerusalem Post, 29 Sept. 2013. Web. <<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Syrian-refugees-blame-Hezbollah-Syrias-main-allies-for-their-plaint-327419>>.

attempt to overthrow the Turkish.<sup>5</sup> After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, Arab nations, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq began to gain their independence, all of whom eventually united under the Arab League. Fast forward to 1967, when the coalition suffered defeat against Israel in the Six Day War. This defeat slowed the feeling of Arab nationalism, and began the ascent of sectarian division and suspicion amongst various countries and groups.<sup>6</sup> As the feeling of Arab nationalism gave way to sectarian religion and national pride, political groups began to form surrounding these beliefs as opposed to the general idea of Arab unity. Some of these groups, Hezbollah for example, are arguably more militant than political, and yet their religious beliefs form the backbone of their organization.

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

While reviewing sectarianism and the presence of militancy and violence in the MENA region, delegates should keep in mind the proactive approach that needs to be made in pursuing solutions. Tackling the dangers presented by these issues requires firmer ideas and proposals, as opposed to passive suggestions. Militancy and sectarianism need to be considered in terms of how one is created and worsened by the other; ultimately, their relations to each other require that a solution include measures to effect and reduce both. As the sectarian groups become more involved with dangerous transnational organizations and develop more militant structures, care should be taken in forming proposals in order to avoid disagreements over the concept of sovereignty.

Despite not being a member of the League of Arab States, Pakistan is facing issues of sectarian conflict and militancy that closely resemble those of the region on a national scale. That being said, solutions for the violence being experienced can be found in proposals for Pakistan regarding the same problems, such as the equipment of special force units to track and arrest certain members of dangerous sectarian organizations.<sup>7</sup>

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

- What sectarian conflicts is my country experiencing, if any?
- What states surrounding my country are experiencing tension or violence as a product of sectarian or militant conflict? What are the relations with this state?
- Would my country support new initiatives to increase the amount of action the Arab League can take concerning militant groups and conflicts?
- What policies have been proposed by other regional or international organizations in order to address this issue? Do they affect my country?
- How does the threat of militancy relate to the threat of sectarian conflict?

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

- How important is the protection of the principle of sovereignty when approaching new initiatives?

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<sup>5</sup> Khalidi, Rashid. *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*. New York: Columbia UP, 1991. Print.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Yusuf, Huma. "Sectarian Violence: Pakistan's Greatest Security Threat?" *Peacebuilding.no*. Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, July 2012. Web.  
<[http://www.peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow\\_site/storage/original/application/949e7f9b2db9f947c95656e5b54e389e.pdf](http://www.peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/949e7f9b2db9f947c95656e5b54e389e.pdf)>.

- At what point is it appropriate for an organization to involve itself in the issues of member states experiencing these difficulties?
- What steps can be taken to assure states that they need to collaborate and work together in enforcing these initiatives?
- What efforts can the Arab League *realistically* make in order to reduce the militancy and sectarian conflict in the region?

#### **IV. Additional Resources to Review**

##### **Radical Islamism in Egypt**

<http://www.gloria-center.org/meria/1999/09/zeidan.pdf>

##### **Comparison of Sunni and Shia Muslims**

<http://www.ncusar.org/modelarableague/resources/13-mal-bg-jdc.pdf>

##### **Sectarian Conflict in the Middle East**

<http://www.understandingwar.org/report/sectarian-and-regional-conflict-middle-east>

##### **Breakdown of the Conflict in Syria**

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/08/29/9-questions-about-syria-you-were-too-embarrassed-to-ask/?wpisrc=nl\\_monthly](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/08/29/9-questions-about-syria-you-were-too-embarrassed-to-ask/?wpisrc=nl_monthly)

## **Topic II: Exploring the impact of climate change and environmental stresses on Arab security, with particular attention given to access to natural resources and food security**

### **Introduction to the Topic**

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

It isn't difficult to find struggles that range over the entirety of the Arab world with a focus on the precious resources of water and food. The issue of scarcity has undoubtedly been a point of stress, strife and fissure with inter- Arab relations, and has led to a desire to open up awareness about the issue, particularly concerning how climate change may have led to the drastic desertification of the MENA region. With a way of life and crop production that is so dependent on a consistent yearly climate condition, any change in yearly temperature can prove devastating to the area. As a result, droughts can affect income, employment, economic stability, and eventually political stability.

For example, Yemen, a country where 55 percent of the workforce is based in agriculture, is widely considered to be the first country that will run completely out of water, due to its focus on the qat plant, which requires a large amount of water to grow properly.<sup>8</sup> The sheer amount of water required, not to mention the complex irrigation systems needed to grow the plant, has drained a large majority of Yemen's water resources dry. From a perspective of safety and protection, this is worsening tension and levels of violence in the region as armed conflicts rise due to struggles over water supplies.<sup>9</sup> Another people in the Arab world, those that find their homes in Iraqi marshes, have been struggling to preserve their way of life as Turkey and Syria both develop large dams that are, consequently, changing the flow of the Tigris River. For the people of the marshes, this affects how they can fish, hunt, and grow crops every year, and has unintentionally left some of them displaced.<sup>10</sup> The stability of the MENA region is inherently tied to the issues of water supply and the ability to maintain crop production. Additionally, the Arab Spring can find some of its origins in the political instability created by the droughts and lack of resources in several nations; Syria, for example. Herders, farmers, and others were forced to find work in cities as the worst drought in its history continues.<sup>11</sup> The environmental stress applied over recent years has spawned more violent activity as people struggle to gain control over the natural resources they need to survive.

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

Consider the Arab Spring that has created the recent upheaval of stability in the Arab world; the instability of the political world in the MENA region has coincided with the instability of water and food security.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Macleod, Hugh, and John Vidal. "Yemen Threatens to Chew Itself to Death over Thirst for Narcotic Qat Plant." *TheGuardian.com*. The Guardian, 26 Feb. 2010. Web.

<<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/feb/26/yemen-qat-water-drought>>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Harte, Julia. "In Cradle of Civilization, Shrinking Rivers Endanger Unique Marsh Arab Culture." *NewsWatch.NationalGeographic.com*. National Geographic, 24 Apr. 2013. Web.

<<http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2013/04/24/in-cradle-of-civilization-shrinking-rivers-endanger-unique-marsh-arab-culture/>>.

<sup>11</sup> Friedman, Thomas. "The Other Arab Spring." *NYTimes.com*. New York Times: Sunday Review, 7 Apr. 2012. Web. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/08/opinion/sunday/friedman-the-other-arab-spring.html>>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

“From 2006-11, they [Center for Climate and Security] note, up to 60 percent of Syria’s land experienced one of the worst droughts and most severe set of crop failures in its history. ‘According to a special case study from last year’s Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, of the most vulnerable Syrians dependent on agriculture, particularly in the northeast governorate of Hassakeh (but also in the south), ‘nearly 75 percent ... suffered total crop failure.’”<sup>13</sup>

In fact, this is the case with much of the Arab world that has been affected by the Arab Spring. Largely the emphasis on the connection between environmental devastation and political upheaval has been lax. Claims of corruption prominently feature illegal well drilling by politicians, which only serves to incite citizens and create tension. The people understand the grave situation of water scarcity, and yet they see politicians who choose to drill a well in their back yard.<sup>14</sup>

These issues and the environmental stresses of the region are not new; for a long time now climate change has been a cause for lack of precipitation in the region, the deterioration of coastal zones, and a loss in the amount of arable land.<sup>15</sup> Occurrences during the Persian Gulf War such as the complete desolation of Kuwaiti oil fields delivered an environmental and social impact that had and still has massive effects, such as the introduction of new diseases into the region and the poisoning of water supplies.<sup>16</sup> The explosion of Kuwaiti oil barrels left poisonous smoke across the nation, and when coupled with the oil spill that plagued Lebanese shores in 2006, the impact on wildlife and common food sources such as Bluefin tuna has created yet more tension in the region.<sup>17</sup> These man-made impacts of the past combined with the impact that has continued to grow in magnitude from climate change creates a recipe for environmental trouble in the MENA region that is quickly requiring more attention from the standpoint of security.

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

As mentioned prior, the problems presented within this topic are neither new nor easily resolved. Climate change and extreme heat have plagued the MENA region for hundreds of years, and have forced an adaptation to the extreme weather that has inspired technological innovations and a rise in awareness.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately these innovations are not enough to stave off the political unrest, which has resulted from the need to secure necessary natural resources, among local communities. In order to effectively prevent instability as a result of resource insecurity, countries will have to commit wholeheartedly to solutions. This may require incentives on the part of the Arab League.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> "Middle East and North Africa: Environment Sector Brief." *WorldBank.org*. Ed. Najat Yamouri. The World Bank, Sept. 2008. Web. <<http://go.worldbank.org/CUS7GMVHM0>>.

<sup>16</sup> Chilcote, Ryan. "Kuwait Still Recovering from Gulf War Fires." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 3 Jan. 2003. Web. <<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/01/03/sproject.iq.kuwait.oil.fires/>>.

<sup>17</sup> Milstein, Mati. "Lebanon Oil Spill Makes Animals Casualties of War." *National Geographic News*. National Geographic Society, 31 July 2006. Web. <<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/07/060731-lebanon-oil.html>>.

<sup>18</sup> "Adaptation to Climate Change in the Middle East and North Africa Region." *WorldBank.org*. Ed. Raffaello Cervigni and Saliha Dobardzic. The World Bank. Web. <<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/0..contentMDK:21596766~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:256299,00.html>>.

Understandably, there's a clear crossover between solutions that could be provided by the Council on Social Affairs or Environmental Affairs, but delegates should make sure they restrict their proposals to those concerning aspects of security that fall strictly under the control of the Joint Defense Council.

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

- How can access to, or lack of access to water create disparities between member nations?
- What kind of draughts and shortages is my country experiencing? Is anything being done about it? What?
- Does the Arab League recognize the impact of climate change and environmental stress on the region?
- What recent conflicts or tensions in the region have their sources in an effect of climate change?
- What policies does my country currently have in place regarding climate change or food security? What about emissions laws?
- How much international assistance would my country consider appropriate for itself or other members of the Arab League for this topic?

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

- To what extent are climate change and food shortages exacerbating the conflicts in the MENA region?
- What is within the purview of the Joint Defense Council to address concerning water scarcity and food security?
- What methods would be most effective in addressing the sensitive issue of violence as a result of natural resource scarcity?

## **IV. Additional Resources to Review**

### **Briefing on the Environmental Sector of MENA**

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/0,,contentMDK:20525954~pagePK:146736~piPK:226340~theSitePK:256299,00.html>

### **Jordan's Water Crisis**

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8292228.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8292228.stm)

### **Agriculture and Rural Development**

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/0,,contentMDK:20528258~pagePK:146736~piPK:226340~theSitePK:256299,00.html>

### **Topic III: Addressing external threats to Arab security including but not limited to nuclear capabilities, digital and other types of espionage, and foreign involvement in regional conflict**

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

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

The Arab region can be characterized as lacking trust because of the multilateral cases of espionage and the considerable emphasis on checking the nuclear status of countries. The history of the Arab world has proven that the concerns are not without warrant. Despite the efforts of the NPT (Non Proliferation Treaty), originally instated in 1995, the Middle East still faces the ‘nuclear question’ as several powers have not signed the treaty or have been found in noncompliance with the document<sup>19</sup> There are many cases of spies on the ground in several countries— some more legitimate than others. But as technology has developed, digital espionage has escalated in tandem. Digital espionage ranges in possibilities from illegal gathering of information for corporate secrets, to the infiltration of state security systems in order to gain valuable information.<sup>20</sup> While many countries have their hands in the basket of intervention it is a reoccurring trend that Iran has been singled out as overstepping their role in the region.<sup>21</sup> Unlawful intervention is of course a threat to the security of particular countries— even more so though, the growing trust vacuum is detrimental to the security of the region as a whole.

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

In 1953, under the Atoms for Peace program, America helped Iran start their nuclear development agenda under the pretense that they would use it to develop nuclear energy and technology to improve healthcare and medicine.<sup>22</sup> After the shah was toppled in the Islamic revolution and suspicions rose that they, like India, were looking towards acquiring nuclear weapons, the West chose to cut their assistance from Iran’s attempts to develop nuclear facilities.<sup>23</sup> After the retraction of their support from countries such as Germany, France, and the US, Iran’s nuclear program lost almost all of its steam. The program was eventually restarted, albeit under the purview of Russia, and the threat of looming nuclear weapons has become a key issue to the security calculation of the Arab world.<sup>24</sup>

Iran is also often at the center of the problem of espionage. Many countries have made arrests of suspected Iranian spies, with some of the most recent cases centering on spies in both Israel and Saudi Arabia. Iran, not surprisingly, usually denies these types of accusations.<sup>25</sup> They also have leveled their own accusations most recently accusing Azerbaijani nationals of

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<sup>19</sup> Batchoun, Grace. "Nuclear-Weapons-Free Middle East: Dismantling Israel’s Nuclear Arsenal." *GlobalResearch.ca*. Global Research, 16 May 2010. Web. <<http://www.globalresearch.ca/nuclear-weapons-free-middle-east-dismantling-israel-s-nuclear-arsenal/19191>>.

<sup>20</sup> Perloth, Nicole. "Traveling Light in a Time of Digital Thievery." *NYTimes.com*. The New York Times, 10 Feb. 2012. Web. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/11/technology/electronic-security-a-worry-in-an-age-of-digital-espionage.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/11/technology/electronic-security-a-worry-in-an-age-of-digital-espionage.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)>.

<sup>21</sup> Bruno, Greg. "Iran's Nuclear Program." *CFR.org*. Council on Foreign Relations, 10 Mar. 2010. Web. <<http://www.cfr.org/iran/irans-nuclear-program/p16811>>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> "Iran Rejects Saudi Espionage Charges." *AlManar.com.lb*. AlManar News Lebanon, 24 Mar. 2013. Web. <<http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?fromval=1>>.

spying.<sup>26</sup> The validity of the claims leveled both against and by the Iranian government are unconfirmed but the even the leveling of accusations seems to indicate a culture of perceived insecurity because of this issue.

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

Solutions to the problems presented in this topic should address not only ways to resolve the issues with Iran and its interference in the Arab region, but also whether the Arab League should focus on its own capabilities in order to create a more self-sustaining organization in regards to regional security. The Arab League over the past few years has played a more significant role in the events of the Arab Spring, and it's promising that it will continue to grow in its influence and competence to handle complex situations within the member states. The question remains of how much sway other international and regional organizations should have in the MENA region, and whether the Arab League should embrace their involvement, or attempt to remove itself from it. For example, during the protests of Egypt, the League of Arab States strongly condemned Hosni Mubarak, which was considered a significant role because of the boost in morale it provided to protestors and opposition groups, but the solution was ultimately left up to other organizations and Egypt itself.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, delegates should make sure their answers don't reach beyond the scope of what the LAS can influence. Rather, they should look inwards towards improving relations among member states and shrinking the trust gap that has grown from the use of espionage and its largely unknown origins.

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

- What are my country's concerns/thoughts about the Iranian nuclear program?
- Does my country knowingly use digital espionage or has it expressed interest in developing a nuclear program?
- What policies does the Arab League have in place regarding digital espionage, foreign involvement, etc., in member states?
- To what extent is my country willing to interfere in the threatening issues surrounding Iran?

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

- Is policy condoning an intervention in Iranian affairs acceptable?
- Should the Arab League hold regional and global bodies responsible for the inappropriate use of digital espionage?
- At one point does a nuclear program become a threat?
- What methods concerning these threats to regional security will be most conducive to receiving a consensus from the Arab League?

## **IV. Additional Resources to Review**

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<sup>26</sup> RadioFreeEurope/Radio Liberty. "Iran Questioning Azerbaijani Nationals On Espionage Charges." *RFERL.org*. Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, 4 July 2012. Web. <<http://www.rferl.org/content/iran-report-says-two-azerbaijan-nationals-questioned-espionage-charges/24634989.html>>.

<sup>27</sup> Rafizadeh, Majid. "Syria and Iran's Nuclear Program: Rethinking the Arab League and the GCC." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 29 Feb. 2012. Web. <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/majid-rafizadeh/arab-league-syria-b\\_1300182.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/majid-rafizadeh/arab-league-syria-b_1300182.html)>.

**IAEA Safeguard Agreement with Iran**

<http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/Others/infcirc214.pdf>

**Explanation of Digital Espionage**

<http://www.techopedia.com/definition/27159/digital-espionage>

**Iran's Nuclear Program**

<http://www.cfr.org/iran/irans-nuclear-program/p16811>

**Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

<http://www.nti.org/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-on-the-non-proliferation-of-nuclear-weapons/>

## **Topic IV: Discussing the principles and management of military intervention by regional and global actors in member states**

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

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

Foreign involvement in the member states of the Arab League has always been a point of concern and, unfortunately, inconsistency. The need for a dedicated response is one that can be seen in examples such as regime changes and protests associated with the Arab Spring, as well as during crises and recent events in Sudan and Lebanon. This response is needed not only on a global scale from organizations such as the UN, but also on a regional scale from organizations such as the League of Arab States.

The Arab League has been known for its hesitancy to mediate in regional conflicts, particularly when there is a strong local actor or global power involved. Its successes are noted in the cases when the Arab League has used its ideological clout, or its ability to play the role of the “guarantor” for settlements between unstable states.<sup>28</sup> The differentiation between not only the reaction of the Arab League, but the international community in situations such as the crisis in Darfur, or the Libyan civil war, is one that can be helped through a review of policy and law regarding how to intervene in the affairs of member states. Specifically, it should be kept in mind the role of the League in approving the intervention of an outside source, and what it should be.

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

The intervention of global actors, whether they are the United Nations, NATO, or another state, has been a particularly relative subject in the past several years. All of these actors, as well as the Arab League, and their military intervention within member states are under the purview of this topic. Since its creation in 1945, the League of Arab States has remained only a light influence in the conflicts and tension that has permeated both within and across the member countries.<sup>29</sup> Originally, the Arab League was based on the Alexandria Protocol whose initial language was strong in saying “the Council will intervene in every dispute which may lead to war between a member state of the League and any other member state or power”<sup>30</sup>. This, over time, has devolved into a less aggressive stance on the part of the Council’s pact, and has become a policy with very little bite, and a long, drawn out process that requires a unanimous consensus.<sup>31</sup>

A particularly disastrous case, not only on the part of the Arab League but the United Nations as well, can be seen within the Darfur crisis.<sup>32</sup> Upon considering several reasons behind the West’s decision not to interfere (among these being a lack of interest in the Sudanese region, and hesitation after the invasion in Iraq), it’s left up to interpretation why the Arab League

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<sup>28</sup> Pinfari, Marco. "Nothing but Failure? The Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council as Mediators in Middle Eastern Conflicts." *Lse.ac.uk*. London School of Economics and Political Science, Mar. 2009. Web. <<http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/download/wp/wpSeries2/WP452.pdf>>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Williams, Paul D., and Alex J. Bellamy. "The Responsibility To Protect and the Crisis in Darfur." *Sdi.sagepub.com*. Security Dialogue, Mar. 2005. Web. <<http://sdi.sagepub.com/content/36/1/27.short>>.

chose to be so unresponsive to the gross violations of human conduct in the region. Recently, the Arab Spring has shown the need for the Arab League to take a larger role in regulating who can do what among the member states, particularly in the case of Syria. The New York Times reported on September 9, 2013, that short of explicitly requesting a military strike, the Arab League has asked for assistance from the UN in regards to the Syrian government's use of chemical weapons against its people, which is a step in the direction of regulating foreign intervention.<sup>33</sup>

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

The concept of direct military intervention in member states is one that is fairly new for the Arab League, and thus there is little to look for in the past that may provide ideas for solutions. So far, the Arab League has had difficulty developing a standard response or set of guidelines to follow in the case of involvement from regional or global organizations that it may utilize in future issues. What the Arab League should look towards is a solution that takes into account the political instability of the region.

With the recently strong rhetoric of a diplomatic and more political solution, delegates should consider the words of the Secretary General, Nabil al-Araby, "Any solution should meet aspirations for freedom, democracy, social justice and transition of power."<sup>34</sup> This was said in regards to the crisis in Syria, when the US proposed military strikes as retaliation for the use of chemical weapons in the nation. With this statement in mind, answers to the problem of inconsistent responses from the Arab League towards military intervention should be formed around creating firmer, yet more diplomatic responses.

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

- What military interventions has my country experienced in its history, positive or negative? By what actors? Global or regional?
- What steps has my country taken to either prevent or encourage military intervention in another member state or itself?
- Would my country encourage a more open or closed policy about foreign military intervention?
- What stance does my country take on intervention in Syria? Is it within the rights of global actors to interfere?
- What effects can military intervention have on the political stability of a nation?
- What policies are currently in place for the Arab League that speak specifically to the management of military intervention?

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

- Should the Arab League consider revising their protocol and policy to have more "teeth"?

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<sup>33</sup> "Organizations: Arab League." *TopicsNYTimes.com*. The New York Times. Web. <[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/a/arab\\_league/](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/a/arab_league/)>

<sup>34</sup> Al-Masry Al-Youm. "Military Intervention in Syria Will Only Deepen Crisis, Says Arab League Chief." *EgyptIndependent.com*. Trans. Egypt Independent. Egypt Independent, 12 Sept. 2013. Web. <<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/military-intervention-syria-will-only-deepen-crisis-says-arab-league-chief/>>.

- Are there steps that other regional or international bodies have taken that the Arab League could look towards as a model?
- What consistent standards can the Arab League put into place?
- Should foreign states and actors require the Arab League's approval before taking action?

#### **IV. Additional Resources to Review**

##### **Overview of Military and Humanitarian Intervention**

<http://www.merip.org/mer/mer187/can-military-intervention-be-humanitarian>

##### **Western Influence and Intervention in the MENA Region**

<http://www.cipi-network.org/strat-eu-columns/item/513-mid-summer-strategic-outlook-mena-region>

##### **Arab League Charter**

<http://www.mideastweb.org/arableague.htm>

##### **United Nations Rule of Law**

<http://www.un.org/en/ruleoflaw/index.shtml>