



2016 - 2017
Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE
Joint Defense Council

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National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations



Original draft by Arief bin Johan Alimin, Chair of the Joint Defense Council at the 2017 National University Model Arab League, with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

Honorable Delegates,

It is my honor to welcome you to the 2016-2017 Model Arab League season. My name is Arief bin Johan Alimin and I will be serving as the Chairperson for the Joint Defense Council at the National University Model Arab League conference. I am a Malaysian citizen and a second year student at Northeastern University studying International Affairs and Economics. Although this will only be my second year involved in Model Arab League conferences and second Nationals, I have participated in numerous Model United Nations conferences over the past six years in Asia, Europe and recently the United States. Despite slight differences in subject matter and overall structure, there are many universal qualities that conferences of this nature tend to offer. These conferences are created for you, the delegates, to learn as much as you possibly can about the current affairs surrounding the Arab world as well as how countries might solve issues at a multinational organization such as the League of Arab States (LAS). Therefore, keep as open a mind as possible and try to gain as much as you can from these conferences as it might open up interests and avenues that you may not have previously been aware of.

With that said, there are certain expectations that must be met in order for you to gain the most out of your time at these conferences. The most important thing to remember is to be respectful to all staff and participants of the conference. Debate at this level has a tendency to get intense; however, in order to remain productive during your sessions and to ensure the best experience for everyone, being respectful should never be forgotten. Remember that during the conference, you will be participating as the delegate of your assigned country and therefore you are expected to act as that delegate throughout your time in the Council. Your speeches and caucusing should represent the views and policies of your country and not your personal beliefs. Furthermore, in order to fulfil such an obligation and be an active participant during debate, the research you do will be a major factor in your enjoyment of the conference. It may be wise to know not only about the events about the topics in the JDC, but also about large issues facing the Arab world right now. This expanded view will only complement your expertise on the topics within the JDC and help you write even stronger resolutions. Remember that finding relevant documents, treaties, and specific items to reference will help you and the other delegates around you dig deeper into the issues and come up with more quality solutions.

The primary goal I have when chairing any conference is for all delegates to walk away learning something new they might not have known before. Typically, this takes the form of gaining more knowledge about the League of Arab States or the Arab World. However, I also believe that through the participation in these conferences, you will be able to learn more about how to effectively research, practice diplomacy, work effectively with others and many other skills that should be utilized at these conferences. However, these skills will not develop unless you actively try to use them. No matter if this is your tenth MAL conference or your first, I believe that everyone should step slightly more outside their comfort zone and try new things to gain a vaster experience than before. At the end of the day, the entire conference will be a learning experience for both you and me and we all should make the most out of it.

My last piece of advice is to learn not only from debate but from others around you as well. The community of students, staff and all members within the MAL program is one that is friendly, welcoming and incredibly knowledgeable. So, please use this to your advantage.

I am excited to meet those that will be at Nationals later in the academic year and I hope that you enjoy your experience with MAL during the 2016 – 2017 session!

Regards,
Arief

Topic I: Examining the progress made in combating illicit trafficking of small arms in the region, and preventing the proliferation of such weapons among extremist groups

I. Introduction

A. General Background

With a large influx of arms entering the Arab world in recent years, the movement and flow of small arms has proven to be extremely difficult to manage, as they often fall out of the hands of a nation's military and into the hands of non-state actors. Although there is no universal definition of "small arms," this subset of weaponry has been outlined by the United Nations (UN) to include revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, sub-machine guns and light machine guns.¹ In addition, the UN has classified such armaments as incredibly dangerous due to restriction-free mobility for the user, high firepower, and the capacity for these weapons to be operated by only one individual.² For this reason, the movement of small arms is an issue that has been addressed by numerous regional and international organizations, including the League of Arab States (LAS).

Although the movement of small arms in and around the Arab world begins through legitimate means, the political landscape of the Arab world in recent years has led to the increased acquisition of small arms by non-legitimate parties. Amnesty International claims that extended periods of reckless arms trading in the Arab world have contributed to the rise of non-state actors such as the Islamic State (IS). An example of this can be seen in documents that highlight how arms and ammunition used by IS have been traced back to 25 different countries with some weapons dating back to the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.³ The Islamic State's constant supply of such arms has been a major factor in its acquisition of land and territory in Northern Iraq in 2015.⁴ With that said, organizations such as IS are not the only group gaining from the illicit trade of small arms; The Kurdish YPG, Al-Qaeda, and Houthi rebels in Yemen are a few of the numerous non-state actors that are benefiting from the illicit trade of small arms in the region, proving that this is a concern of all member states.

B. History in the Arab World

In the past, the League of Arab States has attempted to address issues pertaining to the illicit trafficking of small arms in the region. One of the first major documents to be produced by the LAS was the 1998 Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. Although no specific reference to small arms is made, this document highlighted a unified Arab stance on terrorism both at a national and regional level. This document could be seen as a starting point that members of the LAS can use to create proper legislation, promote increased dialogue, further cooperation in intelligence and address elements that might cause or lead to

¹ "Definitions of Small Arms and Light Weapons." *Small Arms Survey - Definitions*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 July 2016. <<http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/weapons-and-markets/definitions.html>>

² "A/52/298." *UN News Center*. UN, n.d. Web. 24 July 2016. <<http://www.un.org/Depts/ddar/Firstcom/SGreport52/a52298.html>>

³ Wilcken, Patrick. "Iraq: 'Islamic State' Atrocities Fueled by Decades of Reckless Arms Trading." *Home*. N.p., 8 Dec. 2015. Web. 20 July 2016. <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/12/islamic-state-atrocities-fuelled-by-decades-of-reckless-arms-trading/>>

⁴ "What Is 'Islamic State'?" *BBC News*. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 July 2016. <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29052144>>

terrorism.⁵

Another document that contributes to further cooperation and a League-wide stance on weapons, including small arms, is the 2002 Arab Model Law on Weapons, Ammunition, Explosives and Hazardous Materials. The main purpose of this document was to further regulate the movement of weapons and ammunition throughout the region.⁶

Most recently, in 2006, Resolution 6625 on Arab Coordination for Combatting the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons was created by the LAS. This was done mostly to adhere to the United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA). The major outcomes of the document include the implementation of Arab National Focal Points once a year with the purpose of submitting reports regarding achievements in combatting the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons from the past five years, as well as potential frameworks for laws and regulations to increase the sharing of expertise amongst member states.⁷

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

A recent report indicates that countries in the Arab world are almost doubling their imports of small arms.⁸ With a growing increase in small arms imports, how can members of the Arab League ensure that the proper management of such arms will be adhered to? Seeing that the relatively unregulated process of controlling the movement of small arms has led to increased capabilities of non-state actors, how do member states keep up with the increased supply of small arms without them being dispersed into non-legitimate channels?

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What specific factors made previous documents by the LAS on the subject effective or ineffective?
- Have efforts from the international community proved useful in assisting the eradication of the illicit trade of small arms?
- What are some of the consequences if the illicit trade of small arms continues in the region?
- What are the root causes of the illicit trade of small arms in the region?

⁵ "Counterterrorism Committee of the League of Arab States (Arab League)." *Harvard Law School Program on International Law and Armed Conflict*. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 July 2016. <<http://pilac.law.harvard.edu/multi-regional-efforts//counterterrorism-committee-of-the-league-of-arab-states-arab-league>>

⁶ First Published By Amnesty International And The International Action Network On Small Arms, (Iansa) 2012, © Amnesty International And The International Action Network On Small Arms 2012, and Index: Act 30/068/2012. *KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ARMS TRADE TREATY* (n.d.): n. pag. *Amnesty International*. Web. 24 July 2016. <<https://www.amnesty.ca/sites/amnesty/files/act300682012en.pdf>>

⁷ "Programme of Action - Implementation Support System." *Programme of Action - Implementation Support System*. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 July 2016. <<http://www.poa-iss.org/RegionalOrganizations/21.aspx>>

⁸ Borger, Julian. "Middle East States Almost Double Small-arms Imports." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 06 June 2016. Web. 25 July 2016. <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/06/arab-states-almost-double-small-arms-imports-report>>

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What methods can foster further cooperation between member states in stopping the movement of illicit small arms between borders?
- Are there any methods that have worked for regions outside the Arab world pertaining to the illicit trade of small arms that could be emulated?
- Are there any methods that have worked between your country and another country at a bilateral level that could be implemented at a regional level?
- Are there ways in which previous documents from the LAS could be improved or added to?
- Is there a solution to the problem that does not involve the decreased imports of small arms in the region through legitimate means?

IV. Additional Resources

[Arab Model Law on Weapons, Ammunitions, Explosives and Hazardous Material](#)

The Arab Model Law on Weapons, Ammunitions, Explosives and Hazardous Material is a document drafted by The Council of Arab Interior Ministers that evolved from efforts to implement the United Nations Plan of Action. The document includes regulations pertaining to the manufacturing of weapons, possession of weapons and other explosives, as well as penalties for those that violate such regulations.

[Small Arms Survey Profile of the League of Arab States](#)

The Small Arms Survey Profile of the League of Arab States provides relevant information regarding the introduction of the LAS and their involvement with small arms issues in the past.

[Report on Small Arms and Light Weapons by the Arms Control Association](#)

This report on Small Arms and Light Weapons will provide delegates with a useful introduction to the topic of Small Arms by highlighting the history of such armaments, definitions, previous international efforts, and main causes as to why they are a major problem in numerous countries around the globe.

[League of Arab States - Resolution 6625 Arab Coordination for Combating the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons](#)

Resolution 6625 on the Arab Coordination for Combating the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons is a document by the LAS from 2006 that highlights their efforts in establishing further methods in agreeing to the UN PoA.

[1998 Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism](#)

The 1998 Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism is a document by the LAS that outlines definitions, relevant terms, and highlights efforts between member states that should be implemented at both a national and regional level in order to further cooperation and have a more unified Arab stance on terrorism.

Topic 2: Identifying risks posed to member states from cyberwarfare, and formulating means to enhance cybersecurity capacity to preserve League-wide interests and resources

I. Introduction

A. General Background

With the rapid growth of internet- and cyber-related activity between citizens, organizations and governments, measures to strengthen cybersecurity are being addressed by numerous countries on a global scale. Correspondingly, there has been a growing sense of importance surrounding cybersecurity in the Arab world in recent years. In the first half of 2016 alone, Saudi Arabia has hosted the second Annual Middle East Cyber Security Summit, the Oman National Computer Emergency Response Team (OCERT) has actively conducted events throughout the country, and the United Arab Emirates' International Exhibition for National Security & Resilience highlighted a workshop by Infosecurity in the Middle East.

The International Telecommunications Union defines cybersecurity as the tools, policies, guidelines, training, technologies and security concepts that can be used to protect a user and their assets within a cyber environment.⁹ On the other hand, cyberwarfare is defined as the activities engaged in by a state or other organization that constitute attacks or otherwise damaging actions against another nation's or organization's cyber environment.¹⁰ It should be noted that the term "cyber environment" pertains to the assets of a user or organization that exist on computers or information networks.

When it comes to non-state actors and their cyberwarfare capabilities, it might seem that they do not have the necessary infrastructure to conduct major cyberwarfare; however, their capabilities should not be underestimated. It has been reported that although cyberattacks conducted by non-state actors such as the Islamic State may not be as advanced as those seen outside the Arab world, their cyberwarfare capabilities have the potential to grow rapidly, as very little equipment and infrastructure are required to cripple critical systems, particularly if they are not well-secured.¹¹ This is not only a concern for those in the Arab world: the commander of the United States Cyber Command has stated that it would not be difficult for IS to conduct cyberwarfare on the United States.¹² But even prior to this revelation, dialogue surrounding the issues of cybersecurity had already been growing among League member states since it was first highlighted at a Gulf Cooperation Council conference in 2007.¹³

B. History in the Arab World

One of the earliest pieces of significant legislation regarding cybersecurity and cyberwarfare was the Cyber-Crime Law no. 2 by the UAE in 2006. The document set forth definitions of relevant terms and described what sorts of attacks on cyber assets would elicit repercussions

⁹ "Cybersecurity." *ITU*. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 July 2016. <<http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/studygroups/com17/Pages/cybersecurity.aspx>>

¹⁰ "Cyber Warfare." *RAND*. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 July 2016. <<http://www.rand.org/topics/cyber-warfare.html>>

¹¹ Mello Jr., John P. "SPOTLIGHT ON SECURITYISIS Cyberthreat: Puny but Gaining Power." *ISIS Cyberthreat: Puny but Gaining Power*. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 July 2016. <<http://www.technewsworld.com/story/83468.html>>

¹² Browne, Ryan. "Top Military Official Warns of ISIS Attacks." *CNN*. Cable News Network, n.d. Web. 27 July 2016. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/05/politics/isis-cyberattacks-michael-rogers/>>

¹³ *Cyber Crime Law*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 July 2016. <<http://www.cybercrimelaw.net/Arab.html>>

from the government of the UAE.¹⁴ Furthermore, in 2013 it was reported that in Dubai alone, there was an 88% increase from the previous year in the number of electronic crimes committed.¹⁵ Since then, numerous conferences have taken place in the region to assist both governments and large corporations of member states in improving their cybersecurity measures.

In addition, it is projected that by 2019, regional governments will have spent more than \$9.5 billion on affairs related to cybersecurity in order to further implement laws and regulations to secure their networks.¹⁶ Other than the numerous conferences that member states are organizing, the LAS created the Arab Information and Communications Technology Organization (AICTO) in 2001 with objectives that include promoting common strategies relating to ICT development in the region, unifying positions for strategic Arab interests within international organizations and providing proper equipment to prepare, upgrade and attract Arab ICT experts within the region.¹⁷

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

With the growing interest and focus on cybersecurity in the Arab world, there is no doubt that cybersecurity issues and cyberwarfare will be the focus of many regional meetings in the years to come. However, what can the LAS do now to prevent the issue from evolving into something unmanageable? The LAS should reinforce its preventative measures to ensure their growing technology-based industries are not compromised by other nations or non-state actors.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What is the future of cybersecurity for members of the Arab League?
- What are methods that can prevent malicious attacks on government assets or large-scale organizations?
- Is there a disparity between the less economically-developed members and the more economically-developed members of the LAS when it comes to cybersecurity? How could they bridge this gap?
- What methods have worked in areas outside the Arab world that have strengthened a nation's or organization's cybersecurity?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What preventative measures could the LAS take in issues pertaining to cyberwarfare for the years ahead?

¹⁴ *The Federal Law No. (2) of 2006 on The Prevention of Information Technology Crimes* (n.d.): n. pag. Web. 25 July 2016. <<http://www.qcert.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/uae-ecrime-the-prevention-of-information-technology-crimes-eng-2006.pdf>>

¹⁵ Flower, David. "Deploying Stronger, More Sophisticated Cyber Security in the Arab World - - ITP.net." *ITP.net*. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 July 2016. <<http://www.itp.net/605750-deploying-stronger,-more-sophisticated-cyber-security-in-the-arab-world>>

¹⁶ "Arab Governments May Spend up to \$9.5 Billion on Cybersecurity." *Al Arbiya Digital*. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 July 2016. <<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/media/digital/2015/07/12/Arab-governments-to-spend-9-5-billion-on-cybersecurity-.html>>

¹⁷ "Objectives." *AICTO*. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 July 2016. <<http://www.aicto.org/about/objectives>>

- What should the relationship be between governments and the private sector in member states regarding cybersecurity?
- What dangers do the cyberwarfare capabilities of non-state actors pose to the LAS?
- Are there laws or bilateral documents that have been agreed to by member states that could be brought to the LAS as a whole?

IV. Additional Resources

[ISIS Cyberthreat: Puny but Gaining Power](#)

This article provides a good introduction to how non-state actors such as ISIS might be growing their cyberwarfare capabilities and the type of cyberwarfare that might be able to be utilized in the near future.

[Arab Information and Communication Technologies Organization \(AICTO\)](#)

The website for the AICTO created by the Arab League with useful links to its action plan for 2016, working groups, activities and principal organs. Although this may not be directly linked with cybersecurity, it may be a useful organization to be familiar with in the case that there are issues that could be resolved by this organization.

[Law on the Prevention of Information Technology Crimes by the UAE \(2006\)](#)

Translated text of the federal law passed by the UAE regarding information technology, its definitions and penalties in 2006. As mentioned before, this is one of the first comprehensive documents created by any member state regarding cybersecurity and could provide ample background on the perception of cybersecurity in the Arab world in 2006.

[Five Cybersecurity Conferences in the Middle East](#)

This website could provide a strong base of information regarding the most prominent cybersecurity conferences that take place in the Arab world. This could be used as a starting point to understand the nature of cybersecurity conferences in the region as well as the differences and outcomes for different nations.

Topic 3: Reviewing the capabilities of League members to combat extremists in the Arab world, including the League's ability to contribute to joint operations in the region

I. Introduction

A. General Background

One of the most prominent issues pertaining to the defense and security of the Arab world today is the presence of strongly-equipped military extremists throughout the region. The notion of extremism is typically characterized by a group organized around an ideology, which will often resort to violence to uphold the tenets of its beliefs. This also includes a subset of religious extremists – whose ideology is that of a particular set of religious views – which has become an increasingly threatening presence in the Arab world in recent decades. As displayed by the global threats posed by Al-Qaeda and IS, extremist groups have proven to jeopardize not only the countries from which they originate, but also nations from outside of the region.

With that said, there are numerous extremist groups that exist in the Arab world today. These include but are not limited to IS, Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, Houthi Rebels, and the military wings of Hezbollah and Hamas.¹⁸ Furthermore, these extremist groups are affecting not only the affairs within the nations that they originate from, but are also causing security issues for neighboring countries, contributing to overall turmoil in the region.

B. History in the Arab World

Though modern technology has made information about them more readily accessible, extremist groups are not new to the Arab world. Early forms of modern militant extremism were present in 1960s Palestine in both the Al Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).¹⁹ From there, groups such as Hezbollah garnered international infamy for the bomb attacks that were conducted in the region throughout the 1980s.²⁰ More recently, groups such as Al-Qaeda and IS have proven that it is critical to stop militant extremism not only for the sake of stability in the Arab world, but also the international community as whole.

Early documents to come out of the LAS on this topic include the Arab Strategy to Combat Terrorism in 1997 and the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism in 1998.²¹ However, more recently, a conference on Regional Security and Challenges Facing the Arab Region was held by the LAS in 2015. The document produced there highlights concerns regarding non-state actors, and called for member states to establish improved tactics in

¹⁸ "Islamist Terror Groups in Africa and Middle East | World | DW.COM | 26.06.2014." *DW.COM*. N.p., 26 June 2014. Web. 27 July 2016. <<http://www.dw.com/en/islamist-terror-groups-in-africa-and-middle-east/a-17739751>>

¹⁹ Moore, John. "The Evolution of Islamic Terrorism." *PBS*. PBS, n.d. Web. 26 July 2016. <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/target/etc/modern.html>>

²⁰ Cotler, Irwin. "Why Hezbollah Is a Terrorist Organization." *The Jerusalem Post*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 July 2016. <<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/Why-Hezbollah-is-a-terrorist-organization-320297>>

²¹ "Counterterrorism Committee of the League of Arab States (Arab League)." *Harvard Law School Program on International Law and Armed Conflict*. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 July 2016. <<http://pilac.law.harvard.edu/multi-regional-efforts//counterterrorism-committee-of-the-league-of-arab-states-arab-league>>

suppressing such threats in the region. Additionally, it highlighted significant documents that have allowed for regional cooperation on the issue in the past.²² In recent years, the LAS has made it apparent that confronting religious extremism is indeed one of the largest issues in the region, and often is at the top of the League's agenda.²³

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

Although the LAS has been attempting to solve the issue of extremism for decades, recent developments demonstrate that there is significant room for improvement. Joint programs between members have been designed in the past, and continue to be reexamined and refined. Although not directly under the LAS, the coordination of the Islamic Military Alliance led by Saudi Arabia is an example in which joint operations amongst both regional and international nations are being implemented to deter the spread and control of extremist groups in the Arab world.²⁴ However, there are issues associated with joint operations, including interoperability and issues with clarity of responsibility and leadership; therefore, any proposed joint solution must make provision to avoid these pitfalls.

Additionally, Saudi Arabia has contributed over \$100m to the United Nations Counter Terrorism Center (UNCCT), an organization dedicated to capacity-building that will combat the ability of terrorist organizations to recruit, garner support, and carry out violence. The projects are organized in global, regional, and national initiatives, which range from border security, youth engagement, and tracking extremist groups' movements and activities. The League should consider whether to support existing structures such as the UNCCT, create its own regional body, or leave responsibility for counterterrorism to individual member states. By building on these initiatives and establishing others, the League can improve its capacity to combat the unique threats posed by violent non-state actors at all levels of governance.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What extremist groups matter most to my country / my neighboring countries?
- How and why are extremist groups posing a threat to both the Arab world and the international community?
- What are the root causes of extremism and the spread of military extremism?
- Are there any actions already being taken by member states and non-member states to combat this issue? How could the LAS use this to their advantage?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Other than typical means of military deployment, are there any alternative methods that the League could consider to tackle the growing threat of extremist groups?
- Should member states that do not have prominent militant groups within their

²² "League of Arab States; Report." *League of Arab States; Report*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 July 2016.

<<http://www.acsis.org/NF/research-and-publications/item/44-league-of-arab-states>>

²³ "Arabs against Extremism." - *Al-Ahram Weekly*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 July 2016.

<<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/10096/17/Arabs-against-extremism.aspx>>

²⁴ VINOGRAD, CASSANDRA. "Is Saudi-Led 'Islamic Military Alliance' a Gamechanger?" *NBC News*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 July 2016. <<http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-uncovered/saudi-arabias-islamic-military-alliance-spin-or-gamechanger-n480886>>

- borders involve themselves in such matters?
- How might the root causes of extremism be addressed to prevent further growth of these groups?
 - Should there be a League-wide policy regarding the involvement of international actors outside of the Arab world that are combatting or intend to combat extremist groups?

IV. Additional Resources

[The Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism](#)

The Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism is a document that was passed by the LAS in 1998, which promotes working within the boundaries of suggestions by other international organizations such as the UN regarding terrorism, as well as mandating further cooperation of member states in relation to this issue. This document could be seen a significant resource in understanding previous efforts the LAS has made to resolve this issue.

[The Evolution of Islamic Terrorism](#)

This article provides a great introduction to the history of violent extremism in the region. It elaborates on the different notable organizations that have existed since the 1960s and can serve as a starting point to understand the different aspects the Arab League would need to consider in order to solve this issue as a whole.

Topic 4: Exploring options to prevent the weaponization of water access and militarization of water infrastructure by non-state actors

I. Introduction

A. General Background

The weaponization of water access and militarization of water infrastructure is a method of unconventional warfare that non-state actors such as IS have recently conducted. Water infrastructure pertains to any and all types of infrastructure that determine the flow and management of water sources within a nation. Although typically controlled by the government, the current geopolitical environment of the Arab world has allowed non-state actors to take control of areas that contain important water infrastructure, and subsequently use it to their advantage.

Controlling the flow of water is one of the many factors that has contributed to the rise in power of non-state actors such as the Islamic State. Many of the areas that the organization has controlled in Iraq and Syria have revolved around existing water infrastructure on the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, including the 2014 capture of the critical Mosul Dam.²⁵ This has allowed the Islamic State to gain traction by flooding villages, closing dam gates, cutting off water to nearby areas and poisoning local water supplies.²⁶ This can be considered a form of environmental warfare, which allows non-state actors to simultaneously damage the environment around the water supply as well as the civilians that depend on it. Because of this added complexity, the militarization of water poses a difficult challenge to the architects of Arab defense policy, as there are many social, economic, and political factors behind the militarization of water access that nations in the region must consider.

B. History in the Arab World

The weaponization of water and water access has been used in many instances in the history of the Arab world. Most notably, Saddam Hussein utilized water as a weapon to flood and displace more than 100,000 Marsh Arabs, a Shia population located in the swamps around the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers that rebelled against his regime.²⁷ Although this highlights the controlled manipulation of water and water resources by a nation, non-state actors have attempted to gain and exploit control of water resources and infrastructure as well.

In a collection of diary entries, residents of Mosul, Iraq describe how IS militants neglected the sanitation of their water sources and therefore caused the wide-spread poisoning of Iraqi citizens. The residents of Mosul describe how the nearby Tigris River was incredibly unclear and how numerous residents were experiencing poisoning due to the water.²⁸ This mismanagement of water access greatly impacted the inhabitants of Mosul and exemplifies

²⁵ Rebecca Collard, "This Fragile Iraqi Dam Could Pose a Bigger Threat Than ISIS," *Time*, 25 March 2016, <<http://time.com/4272242/mosul-dam-iraq-isis-collapse/>>

²⁶ "'Islamic State' Using Water as a Weapon | Middle East | DW.COM | 03.03.2016." *DW.COM*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 July 2016. <<http://www.dw.com/en/islamic-state-using-water-as-a-weapon/a-19093081>>

²⁷ King, Marcus Dubois. "The Weaponization of Water in Syria and Iraq." *The Washington Quarterly* 38.4 (2015): 153-69. The Elliott School of International Affairs. Web. 28 July 2016. <https://twq.elliott.gwu.edu/sites/twq.elliott.gwu.edu/files/downloads/TWQ_Winter2016_King.pdf>

²⁸ "Mosul Diaries: Poisoned by Water." *BBC News*. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 July 2016. <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29600573>>

the importance of water and water management in the Arab world.

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

Although non-state terrorism related to water infrastructure and water sources may be a new concept that members of the LAS have only recently been exposed to, this form of terrorism and infrastructural control should be treated the same as any other form of infrastructure. Since member states may geographically share water resources in the Arab world, it is important to uphold collective or joint efforts to deter non-state actors from impacting their citizens. In addition, the LAS should find methods to effectively combat non-state actors' efforts to control not only water infrastructure, but also food and other necessary components of survival for citizens that might be within their boundaries of control.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What specific methods are non-state actors implementing to gain control of water infrastructure or water sources?
- What are the effects that the manipulation of water can have on your countries population, economy, environment?
- Are there any international organizations that have dealt with similar issues of water weaponization or water manipulation?
- Are there existing forms of security in existing water infrastructure locations in or outside of the Arab world?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Should the Arab League decide on the measures to be taken on a water resource located inside a specific member state? Should state sovereignty apply to such matters?
- If a water source crosses state borders, how will the Arab League determine a solution if both states cannot come to an agreement?
- Should international involvement be considered in solving this issue?
- Are there universal methods in which the LAS could prevent non-state actors from manipulating the management of water?

IV. Additional Resources

[The Weaponization of Water in Syria and Iraq](#)

This document provides an incredible variety of information regarding the weaponization of water and water infrastructure within Syria and Iraq. It also gives historical context about water weaponization while also focusing on the more recent use of water weaponization by non-state actors such as IS.

[Mosul Diaries: Poisoned by Water](#)

This article by the BBC provides first hand accounts from the citizens of Mosul, Iraq and their experience with water poisoning and the effects of water mismanagement by IS in 2014.