



# Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy

A Harvard Kennedy School of Government Student Publication

## *Staff*

### ***EDITOR-IN-CHIEF***

Kristin A. Wagner

### ***MANAGING EDITORS***

Ryan Gardiner

Kevin Moss

John Powell

### ***ASSOCIATE EDITORS***

Basma Alloush

Alen Amini

Joseph Ataman

Laura Cuellar

Satgin Hamrah

Dana Hansen

Ahmed Izzidien

Mahmoud Jabari

Morgan McDaniel

## *Acknowledgments*

The Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy would like to thank a number of individuals and institutions whose support proved invaluable to the production of this fifth edition. These include Martha Foley, publisher; Richard Parker, faculty advisor; and the HKS Journals Office, without whose patient guidance none of this would have been possible. Additionally, we would like to thank Hilary Rantisi, Krysten Hartman, Chris Mawhorter, and the entire Middle East Initiative staff for their generous contributions to the journal's long-term sustainability and strategic vision; as well as the Wiener Center and all those who participated in this year's editors' workshops. We would especially like to thank our staff for its commitment, hard work, and attentiveness to detail, consistently demonstrated throughout the editing process.

Donations provided in support of the Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy are tax deductible as a nonprofit gift under Harvard University's IRS 501 (c) (3) status. Contributions should specify "for use only by the Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy" in order to facilitate the required accounting procedures.

All views expressed in the Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy are those of the authors or interviewees only and do not represent the views of Harvard University, the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, the staff of the Harvard Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy, the executive advisory board of the Harvard Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy, or any associates of the journal.

© 2016 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. All rights reserved. Except as otherwise specified, no article or portion herein is to be reproduced or adapted to other works without the expressed written consent of the editors of the Harvard Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy.

Cover photo by Kristin A. Wagner.

ISSN: 2165-9117

## Contents

1. **Letter from the Editor**  
By Kristin A. Wagner
- INTERVIEWS
2. ***Iraq, Daesh, and Security Implications: Interview with Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament Salim al-Jabouri***  
Interview conducted by Satgin Hamrah
5. ***Tunisia in Transition: An Exclusive Interview with Former Tunisian Minister of Economic Infrastructure and Sustainable Development Hedi Larbi***  
Interview conducted by Kristin A. Wagner
- ARTICLES
8. ***Two Strategies for Diffusing Tension in the Middle East***  
By Benjamen Franklen Gussen
12. ***Caution Gives Way to Increasingly Assertive Policies in Saudi Arabia, But to What End?***  
By Robert Mason
18. ***Looking to Syria: No-Fly-Zones and Political Stability in Iraq and Libya***  
By Dylan MaGuire
23. ***Energy and Politics in the Eastern Mediterranean: Ramifications of Cypriot Peace Talks***  
By Serhat S. Çubukçuoğlu
27. ***Women in the Men's House: The Integration of Women in the Algerian Military***  
By Dr. Dalia Ghanem-Yazbeck
- COMMENTARIES
32. ***The Kurdish Divide: Reshaping of Interests and Actors in Syria's War***  
By Joseph Sadek
37. ***Radicalization in Context: Understanding and Addressing the Path Toward Violent Extremism***  
By Lauren Fisher
- REVIEWS
42. ***Against Apartheid: The Case for Boycotting Israeli Universities Book Review***  
By Adi Saleem Bharat

## Letter from the Editor

We are pleased to present the fifth edition of the Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy (JMEPP). JMEPP's mission is to provide cutting-edge analysis on issues of policy relevance in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Our Spring 2016 volume encapsulates the dangerous developments in MENA over the course of the past year. While the international community hoped for a resolution to the five-year Syrian Civil War, the conflict has further divided the region into a sectarian split, pitting Shia Iran and the Sunni gulf states on opposing sides. Additionally, Russia's brief military intervention, finally winding down as of March 2016, has further destabilized the country and significantly increased the flow of refugees into the heartland of Europe. With the November 2015 Paris attacks, the threat of the so-called Islamic State (Daesh) to the west was finally realized, calling into question ongoing efforts to counter violent extremism, as well as to resolve the Syrian Civil War. Meanwhile, Turkey's increasing two-front war against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Daesh has resulted in a series of deadly terrorist attacks throughout the country, putting further pressure on Turkish leadership to both find a solution to the Kurdish question and stem the refugee flow transiting northward from Syria. It is through this lens that the Spring 2016 edition has been crafted.

With conflict and instability abound, we present first an exclusive interview with Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament **Salim al-Jabouri**. On a more positive note, JMEPP also interviewed Tunisia's Minister of Economic Infrastructure and Sustainable Development, **Hedi Larbi**, on Tunisia's relative stability and success in its post-Jasmine Revolution transition. This year's featured articles include **Robert Mason's** assessment of the Saudi leadership and the perilous position it now finds itself in, both geopolitically and domestically; and **Serhat S. Çubukçuoğlu's** eyes on Turkey's natural gas ambitions as being linked to settling the Cypriot peace talks, as well as re-establishing partnerships with its regional neighbors in the eastern Mediterranean.

**Benjamen Franklen Gussen** creates a new picture of a geographically reoriented Middle East, while **Dylan MaGuire** analyzes the no-fly zone option in Syria, with a look back to previous operations in Iraq and Libya. Focusing on gender, **Dr. Dalia Ghanem-Yazbeck** looks at integration and inclusion of women in Algeria's military, yet pres-

ents a critique on its superficiality. With an eye on Turkey's destabilized southern border region, **Joseph Sadek** provides commentary on the political and geostrategic jostling between Turkey and its Kurdish population, as well as the complex relationships between Turkey, the PKK, and Syrian People's Protection Units (YPG) rebels. Turning to terrorism, **Lauren Fisher** presents an argument against the stovepipe methodology of countering violent extremism by exploring the complexities behind the topic. Finally, we conclude with a literature review by **Adi Saleem Bharat** on the Boycott, Divest, Sanction (BDS) movement as it pertains to academia.

With the increasingly growing list of challenges faced by the Middle East today, we at JMEPP understand and embrace the opportunity to view both geopolitical and policy hurdles from dynamic perspectives. We invite you to read, comment, and contribute in the coming weeks, months, and years. Only through discussion, criticism, and focused engagement will the international community be able to counteract the forces pulling the region apart, and we invite you to join the conversation. If you like the content contained herein, please subscribe to future editions through our website at [www.hksjmepp.com](http://www.hksjmepp.com).

**Kristin A. Wagner**  
*Editor-in-Chief*  
Cambridge, MA, April 2016

# Iraq, Daesh, and Security Implications: Interview with Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament Salim al-Jabouri

Interviewed by Satgin Hamrah

**JMEPP: What factors in Iraq's modern history do you think led to the creation of Daesh?**

**AL-JABOURI:** Policies of oppression, discrimination, partisanship, the sectarian interests of the ruling elite, and the gross negligence of the demands of important parts of the Iraqi people are among the main factors that helped facilitate the creation and growth of Daesh, and provided the permissive environment to promote it. Some international players have also facilitated and helped in exporting such ideas to Iraq. Religious extremism is not part of the Iraqi culture, but the continuous support for such ideas through media and social media have led to the polarization of some of the young and fervent people who have found themselves in in this aforementioned environment.

**JMEPP: Who or what are the contributing factors that are leading to Daesh losing territory?**

**AL-JABOURI:** Daesh is suffering from internal problems. These problems stem from the fact that some of the Daesh members are ex-Ba'athists—remnants of the previous regime's intelligence apparatus—as well as opportunistic fighters. The differences in approach definitely lead to such internal problems. Daesh also has become increasingly obsessed with financial gains, which, in turn, has become another source of internal tensions, and as well as constituting a conflict of interest. Another main factor that has led to the loss of Daesh territory is the participation of Sunnis in liberating their own areas. It is well-known that the Sunnis have an expertise in challenging extremists, a skill they acquired throughout the war against Al-Qaeda about ten years ago, especially in [the] Al Anbar province. We also cannot discount the role of the international coalition, which has been a source of support and aid through its effective airstrikes, special consultancy and information sharing. This is in addition to the international coalition's recent efforts in providing weapons, equipment, training, and logistical support.

**JMEPP: Do you think Daesh's loss of territory in the Middle East will translate to an increase in attacks in the west?**

**AL-JABOURI:** We cannot rule out that a desperate Daesh will find new land on which to continue its attacks. There is a difference, however, between finding an alternative battleground and waging attacks on additional areas. In all cases, Daesh will not give up on threatening the west whether it loses in Iraq or not. We have consequently discussed at great length the importance of eliminating Daesh instead of just defeating it. This is crucial to prevent it from resurfacing again in other areas promoting its bloody atrocities. We have called for the world to support us, so that Iraq can provide a model and serve as a success story on how to face and eliminate extremism. We have explained that this battle relies on various tools, including the security solution, our final option. A package of real steps toward reform, in tandem with an awareness campaign against extremism, are sufficient in limiting Daesh's influence and capabilities.

**JMEPP: What are the challenges with fighting Daesh?**

**AL-JABOURI:** One of the most important challenges we are facing in the fight against Daesh is the challenge of including local fighters in the battle. This is in addition to the obstacles associated with security [and] the required logistical needs, i.e. weapons, training, information, and aid. Furthermore, it is important to use the concept "hold on" to the newly liberated territories as one of the main tools in this fight. Daesh is still capable of regaining territories it loses if we don't utilize the potential of the local people themselves in maintaining control of their respective territories. Another instrumental factor in providing the manpower for this fight could be the recruitment of internally displaced peoples (IDPs) within Iraq. Daesh knows that those who have been expelled and suffered a great deal

from being IDPs will fight and fiercely defend their land against future incursions into their territories.

**JMEPP: How is Daesh being used as a tool to advance foreign interests?**

**AL-JABOURI:** Daesh is a militarized organization that is based on an idea and interest. When Policies of oppression, discrimination, partisanship, the sectarian interests of the ruling elite, and the gross negligence of the demands of important parts of the Iraqi people are among the main factors that helped facilitate the creation and growth of Daesh.

its interests match with the interests of some other countries, then Daesh and these countries will not hesitate to strike a deal to fulfill these interests with mutual help. In addition, some of these countries have been determined to be sending some of their intelligence members as fighters with Daesh and they might already have reached senior positions in this terrorist organization.

**JMEPP: What were some of the lessons learned in recapturing Ramadi and the other areas that have been liberated from Daesh?**

I fear that even a decade from now, we will be financially incapable of rebuilding the areas destroyed in the conflict, not to mention affording areas not touched by the conflict the opportunity to develop.

**AL-JABOURI:** One of the most valuable lessons we have learned from the liberation of Ramadi is the importance of depending on the tribes to liberate their own areas, and the importance of effective cooperation between them and the Iraqi army. This model has proven to be successful and has achieved major results. Thus, we call for repeating the same model in Nineveh (Mosul) and in liberating the rest of Salahaddin areas, which have not yet been liberated. In the same regard, it is important to include the local people, who may otherwise feel ashamed when they are prevented from participating in the liberation battles. The local people request the honor of participating in the liberation

effort and look forward to avenging.

**JMEPP: How do you think violence can be stemmed?**

**AL-JABOURI:** Violence happens for various reasons. Two of the main reasons are the feelings of despair and oppression. I think one of the tools necessary to eliminate violence and extremism is to unite our efforts to achieve social justice and political reform. This is not to forget the important and critical role the media plays in society, raising the awareness about the danger and wrongdoing of ISIS.

**JMEPP: How will Iraq be governed after Daesh is completely eliminated?**

**AL-JABOURI:** It will be imperative for the Iraqi government to achieve the principle of decentralization as one of the most important tools that helps in getting rid of authoritarianism by affording societies and communities the opportunity to govern themselves. A post-Daesh Iraq will yield a key lesson for our people about the necessity of standing against extremist ideas. I expect that the areas that will be liberated will have a huge opportunity to develop and progress, and will consequently be immune to the return of terrorism. For the question of partitioning Iraq, I rule that option out and stand firmly against it. However, there will need to be a definite decentralization in the next phase of Iraq's history. As previously mentioned, I don't rule out that some of the governorates will request regional status, and I don't see a problem with such requests, as long as they are within the constitutional limits and within the governorate framework as opposed to rooted in sectarianism.

**JMEPP: What are some of the challenges associated with the rebuilding of Iraq and its administration?**

**AL-JABOURI:** One of the principal challenges is the economic hardship that Iraq is facing. I fear that even a decade from now, we will be financially incapable of rebuilding the areas destroyed in the conflict, not to mention affording areas not touched by the conflict the opportunity to develop. However, we rely on international support, as well as seizing the opportunity of a reconstruction process that is based on international investment. This process will primarily depend on the government's flexibility in its investment regulations and procedures, in addition to the extent of its efforts to convince international companies of the bene-

fits of investing. We are also awaiting the World Bank's direct support to the local governments in their respective efforts to rebuild their areas by providing grants and loans. We consider this to be one of the most effective tools to expedite the reconstruction effort. We also cannot neglect the crucial impact of the security situation on the process of reconstruction. Without a permissive and stable security situation it will be difficult for any international player to enter the area, to initiate a reconstruction process, or to invest.

**JMEPP: What challenges do you see in recruiting, expanding, and strengthening the Iraqi military?**

**AL-JABOURI:** The biggest challenge is certainly political, as some parties would like to see the army represented by only one faction of Iraqi society. This is detrimental for the army and for the Iraqi people. The second challenge is the lack of a relationship between the people and the army in some areas. It is crucial that people feel that the security apparatus is there to serve them, not to suppress them. Only then they will be cooperative and the mission will certainly succeed. In addition to these factors, the economic challenges hinder the expansion and development of the army. For example, the current budget for the Ministry of Defense and Interior does not represent a war budget. It is limited and small.

**JMEPP: Do you think tribal loyalties have an adverse impact on the Iraqi military?**

**AL-JABOURI:** In general, tribal loyalties do not conflict with, or stand against, military doctrine and performance. Actually, it is sectarian loyalties that have affected the military institution, and I think the experience of including the tribes in the fights and battles proved how developed the tribes' vision and the relation with the state are. The tribes no longer stand against government authority or the rule of law. There remains limited tribal unrest in Basra, which has affected the security apparatus.

**Satgin Hamrah** has a master of international relations from Boston University and a master of public administration from the University of Southern California. Satgin is a PhD student in history at Tufts University. She is also a PhD fellow at the Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, a fellow at the South Asia Democratic Forum, an editor-at-large at E-International Relations, and an associate editor for Harvard University's Journal of

Middle Eastern Politics and Policy.

**Dr. Salim Al-Jabouri** was elected as the speaker of the Iraqi Parliament on 15 July 2014. He holds a doctorate in law and previously worked as a law professor at Nahrain University in Baghdad. In this interview he answers questions about ISIS and the challenges associated with the rebuilding of Iraq and its military.

## **Tunisia in Transition: An Exclusive Interview with Former Tunisian Minister of Economic Infrastructure and Sustainable Development Hedi Larbi**

Interviewed by Kristin A. Wagner

**JMEPP:** Thank you for meeting with us, Your Excellency Larbi. Many outsiders have commended Tunisia for what is described as a successful transition to democracy, post-revolution. Is this an accurate claim, to say that Tunisia has been the most successful of the countries that have faced unrest in the region? In what capacity can Tunisia be a role model for its neighbors?

**LARBI:** It's difficult to say that Tunisia is a model, because, scientifically, a model is something that is replicable and for which you have definite analysis to measure definitive elements of it.

That said, using the indicators of peacefully going through a process of political transformation and eventually obtaining institutions that are progressive in entrenching democratic regimes, as well as hosting free and democratic elections, it can be said that any type of transition, as measured by these metrics, is successful. Tunisia is a good example that can inspire the rest of the [MENA] region. Tunisia is an example of a transformation where varied political actors unite and agree on a transitional process. By striving for agreement through dialogue and consensus building, we can avoid what is happening in most of the countries in the region.

**JMEPP:** How would you characterize the state of the Tunisian economy and its development since the revolution, and what actual impact have political and security issues had on the economy?

**LARBI:** The political transition process has been tumultuous, and regrettably, the economic and social dimensions have been overlooked; hence, the economic situation is difficult, particularly when examining public finance balances, external accounts, economic growth, and unemployment rates. I don't think that we can find an example of a transition where there were not major costs of this nature; the problem for Tunisia and the rest of the Arab world is that the transition took longer than

it should have. We must work on ameliorating economic and social issues inherited from the past and exacerbated and aggravated during this transition.

**JMEPP:** What have been the consequences of the security issues Tunisia has faced in the past year, such as the attacks in Sousse and at the Bardo?

**LARBI:** The security issues are not only issues for Tunisia, but also issues for the region. Just after the Arab uprising, this relatively unknown "wild card" appeared very quickly: political Islam and radical groups wanted to have a role to play in politics. Unfortunately, this went far in terms of disturbing the security arrangements in these countries, and today, insecurity is a serious problem for the whole region, and even moving across borders to Europe and beyond. The consequences are in the form of negative impacts on the tourism sector, which is especially important for Tunisia, constituting seven to eight percent of the GDP. Similarly, they are also in the form of raising the risk profile for potential investors.

**JMEPP:** Have you seen an actual drop in FDI and investor confidence?

**LARBI:** There is currently some movement in addressing investment and economic issues in the country. In addition to the security issues, we also have to implement structural and fiscal reforms to create the business environment that is expected by investors and which inspire hope in the public. The political regime is equally as important as the economic regime, which includes a development model and the new approach to governance in Tunisia via transparency and accountability, as well as eliminating rigidity and bureaucracy in the system.

**JMEPP:** Are the interior regions of Tunisia indeed marginalized, as some Tunisians claim, and if so, to what extent is this a direct result of an imbalance in the government budget allocation?



**LARBI:** This is one of the issues that people think contributed to the uprising. Again, taking economic and social indicators into account, it's true that these regions, which are approximately 200 miles from the coast, are lagging behind in terms of having much higher unemployment, poverty, and less access. Perhaps they didn't get the budget allocation they needed, but when I look at the issue, I find that they got almost equal the amount as any

We must work on ameliorating economic and social issues inherited from the past and exacerbated and aggravated during this transition.

of Tunisia's other regions, and sometimes even higher in terms of public allocation in investments. The problem lies in that public investment didn't take place in these regions to the extent it should have. [We] need the right diagnosis to have the right policies for this. We should revisit the business environment in this region and why this didn't improve as it did in the coastal areas. This is attributed to two factors—the first is institutional. If you consider the local and regional institutions, they are extremely poor in terms of decision-making capacity. Tunisia is a highly centralized country and hence the decision-making process has not been developed at local and regional levels. Therefore, when investors go there, they go to identify their project and talk to the various authorities, but then they have to come back to the capital, Tunis, to make and execute these decisions [and] receive the proper authorization and deal with the bureaucracy that comes with it. Therefore, we don't need to wait until we have a decentralization policy; we can now begin devolving some of the authority for decision-making to the regional level.

The second key is to simplify the different procedures and bureaucracy at the regional level so the investor can be more motivated and afforded incentives. The incentives that are there should suffice if they are delivered in a timely and proper manner.

**JMEPP:** What is your opinion of President Beji Caïd Essebsi's economic reconciliation bill, which called for "an amnesty in favor of civil servants, public officials, and the like, regarding acts related to financial corruption and embezzlement of public funds, as long as such acts did not seek to achieve personal gain?" How will it affect the Tunisian economy, if passed?

**LARBI:** Why didn't the justice system address this issue since it was identified at least three years ago? This brings to light the real issue, which is the low functional capacity of our institutions, including the justice system. For those who embezzled public money and who are corrupt, the justice system should be permitted to deal with them accordingly. Whatever needs to be addressed should be addressed through the law. In terms of how it will impact the Tunisian economy if it is passed, I don't know the specific amounts being discussed, but overall, we need to do serious reforms so as to inspire major investments. Unless we conduct sufficient reforms and reform the public sector, dealing with the bureaucratic procedures impeding investment in Tunisia [and] attaining the investment Tunisia needs will be a challenge.

**JMEPP:** What do you see as the role of international monetary institutions—some of which for whom you worked, such as the IMF and the World Bank—in promoting or hindering a democratic transition? How do you feel their policies toward, and expectations of, Tunisia have changed since Ben Ali, or have they?

**LARBI:** The international institutions do play a role and have tried to help Tunisia as much as possible in the process. Particularly responsible of them was to not be pushy in terms of implementing reforms during the political transition, as doing so would have added to the political tension at the time. Such institutions have been helping provide policy advice and reform programs; however, because of the difficulties of the political transition, Tunisia wasn't able to deliver all of the reforms that it should have.

This brings to light the real issue, which is the low functional capacity of our institutions, including the justice system. For those who embezzled public money and who are corrupt, the justice system should be permitted to deal with them accordingly.

In terms of changing their policies, they definitely learned their lesson and have since attached much greater importance to good governance, transparency, fighting corruption, and attempting to implement institutional reforms. They've also focused on inclusive growth, equity, redistribution, and creating the jobs that Tunisians need, while being cognizant of the necessity of helping Tunisian

institutions embed and tailor policy suggestions to the Tunisian context, as opposed to taking them as external recommendations that are imposed.

**Kristin A. Wagner** is a master of international business candidate at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy*.

**Hedi Larbi** served as both the Minister of Economic Infrastructure and Sustainable Development and the Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister, Tunisia, between 2014 and 2015. Larbi has over thirty-five years of professional experience in economic and social development as both a policy advisor and policy maker, with more than two decades of high level work in the World Bank group, the private sector, and the Tunisian transitional government.

# Two Strategies for Diffusing Tension in the Middle East

By Benjamin Franklen Gussen

## Abstract

This paper argues that the Middle East as an analytical or geopolitical concept has become too problematic. The prophylactic measures proposed here center on two strategies. The first is the dissolution of the Middle East based on differentiated continental association. This would see Turkey and Iran become part of Europe and Asia, respectively, while the rest of the Middle East—including Israel—would become part of a “Greater Africa.” The reclassification would ensure the accentuation of the differences between different parts of the Middle East, to the end of reducing tension between them. The second strategy is based on polycentricism. The paper argues for greater emphasis on polycentric constitutional orders in the spirit of philosopher Baruch Spinoza’s understanding of sovereignty. This vision necessitates international treaties to underwrite charter cities as the dominant governance structure in the Middle East. Sovereignty, as envisaged by Spinoza, is the key proposition for peace in the Middle East, given this sovereignty’s subsidiarity between different organizational scales (local, national, and global). The Middle East is made up of a rich mosaic of religions and ethnicities that is especially amenable to such orders. A lasting peace in the Middle East requires relinquishing the nation-state model in favor of small, non-contiguous jurisdictions connected in loose confederal structures within the cultural milieu of different continents. Syria and Iraq are ideal for implementing this new subsidiarity approach.

## The Tension Induced by the Middle East Mosaic

Demographically, the Middle East is one of the richest regions in the world. This cradle of civilization continues to be home to ethnicities as diverse as Arabs, Armenians, Assyrians, Azeris, Circassians, Copts, Druze, Jews, Persians, Kurds, Maronites, Somalis, Turks, and other denominations from less numerically significant minorities. The region is also home to many religions, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and smaller faiths such as the Baha’i Faith, Druze, Yezidism, and Zoroastrianism. However, this beautiful diversity—the signifier of evolution over millennia—is consistently under threat from geopolitical frictions, most notably from the larger polities in the region, and/or the relatively small size of many of these ethnicities and religions. The norm in this region is for such diversity to be grouped into political states, dominated by the largest ethnicities and religions, resulting in tensions that threaten the stability of the region.

We have seen a trend toward relieving some of this tension since World War I, more often than not unsuccessfully, exemplified by Lebanon’s conciliation system. In particular, the distribution of

power based on the demographic balance of the country’s religious groups in 1932 was not able to provide a sustainable solution. Another case in point is Turkey, which underwent a process of territorial sorting of ethnicities though the treaties of Sèvres and Lausanne.

The problem is, first and foremost, one of scale. The usual prognosis follows the options of more integration and regime change. However, there are islands of alternative analyses where crises result from scale distortion (organizational structures of states that are too large or too small) and scale entanglement (strong rather than weak ties between different scales such as the local, national, and global). This article enlists this scale problem to elucidate its thesis that the moribund nation state needs to be relegated to a subsidiary. Loosely coupled (fiscally and monetarily) autonomous city-regions should be the “eyes” of socioeconomic action.

## Prophylactic Intervention 1: Continental Differentiation

The first proposed strategy to ensure a détente in

the Middle East is to systematically reorient the cultural, social, and political compass of some parts of the Middle East towards Africa. In particular, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Yemen, and the Levant (including Israel) would benefit from a reorientation away from Asia. As a long-term strategy, this would see a drifting away from the influences exerted by Turkey and Iran on these countries.

This approach is no stranger in the long history of these countries. Both Hebrews and Arabs have strong ties to North and East Africa. The story of the Exodus is in one sense an affirmation of the influences flowing between the Levant and Egypt. Even the early days of Islam provide insight into the first point of security for the Arabian Peninsula.

The Middle East needs to move to an Olympic future, as opposed to its current World Cup model.”

After all, it was Ethiopia that was the first haven of security for Prophet Mohammed and his followers.

This neuaustrichtung, or realignment, would see these parts of the Middle East join African organizations ranging from the African Union to the Confederation of African Football. The forging of formal ties with Africa would provide an employment symbiosis where supply and demand for labor could be matched through immigration and direct foreign investment—diverting most immigrants away from Europe in the process. Perhaps most importantly, from a geopolitical perspective, African military forces would bolster those of Middle Eastern nations, both in manpower (i.e. Nigeria) and know-how (i.e. Ethiopia), beyond the role played by the historically military-centric Egypt. The combined armed forces of the African Union with those in the Arabian peninsula and Levant would prove as a counterweight to Iran and Turkey militarily.

The positive outcomes from the proposed “Greater Africa” could be understood through evolutionary game theory, notably the Hawk-Dove game. This is an anti-coordination game where players choose to follow either a hawk strategy of aggressive behavior or a dove strategy of backing down in the face of aggression. The idea of a “Greater Africa” increases the cost of conflict from a hawk strategy. It does so by recalibrating the military power of Israel, the Levant, and the GCC vis-à-vis Turkey and Iran, through the human reserves that could be produced by countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, or even Ethiopia. Now all parties follow a hawk strategy—an evolutionary stable strategy. This solution to the game would involve “ritual fighting,” rather than actual fighting.

## Prophylactic Intervention 2: Sovereignty à la Spinoza

The Middle East needs to move to an Olympic future, as opposed to its current World Cup model. In an Olympics competition, one city hosts a multitude of sports, all happening in a central place under the auspices of the locale. The city thus becomes a showcase for the whole world. During the World Cup, however, a single nation organizes games for one sport across its geographic extent. In the case of the 2015 World Cup, England hosted the tournament in no less than eleven cities. The World Cup model showcases a nation rather than a particular city. In a region like the Middle East, with its rich mosaic of cultures, religions, and ethnicities, the nation model will always be problematic, even if at a scale similar to that of Bahrain (less than 1,000 square kilometers). I hence argue for governance structures based on autonomous cities, or the Olympics model.

Today, the nation state is obsolete and no longer the optimal unit for organizing economic activity. A new conception of the nation state has emerged: the state as a network, which “signals the end of . . . sovereignty based on a territorial unit.” Today, the contiguous and non-perforated state principle is being challenged by new conceptions of the state, as well as its sovereignty.

Such non-contiguous states are at the center of Spinoza’s discourse. Spinozistic sovereignty provides a model in which powers are shared between sovereign bodies . . . which reaffirm their separateness . . . In federal systems such as the United States or in Australia, legislative, judicial and executive powers are distributed between federal and different state governments . . . under [Spinozistic sovereignty], however, “confederal” powers . . . were extremely closely restricted . . . Rather than attempting to harmonize differences . . . [it upholds] the constructiveness of difference . . .

City power is again on the ascendancy, as we can currently discern a move toward empowering cities on two fronts. The first front is domestic where there is constitutional recognition under co-operative models of federalism, of the local governments of city-regions as co-equal to federal and state governments, and the development of what is known as the “doctrine of usurpation of jurisdiction.” This approach does not emphasize political autonomy, but rather the idea of subsidiarity where general competence powers are extended to city-regions.

The second front is international, where there is an emerging field of law that acknowledges city-regions as independent international actors. While international law has long had an indirect impact on cities, it is now enlarging the nation state club that has historically dominated its institutions in order to admit subnational governance structures,

most notably city-regions, mainly through regulating the relationship between cities and their nation states. International instruments such as the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), among others, are altering the relationship between cities and nation states. City-regions are becoming “nodal points for radically distinct governance projects that have their common goal to transform cities from mere subdivisions of sovereign states into legally empowered entities, able to advance goals and values that are different from their states.”

Given its rich cultural mosaic, the Middle East is a prime candidate for empowering cities as polities. To be precise, countries like Syria and Iraq, inter alia, would be best constituted as confederations of charter cities. For example, in Syria, the largest

“A lasting peace in the Middle East requires relinquishing the nation-state model in favor of small, non-contiguous jurisdictions connected in loose confederal structures within the cultural milieu of different continents.

cities (Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Latakia, Hama, Ar-Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Al-Hasakah, Qamishli, and Sayyidah Zaynab) would be reconstituted as charter cities under the protection of multilateral international treaties. These charter cities would possess a level of autonomy similar to that seen in cities such as Hong Kong and Macau, subjected to self rule by their own populations under their own “basic law.” They would then share natural resources, which would be managed by neutral international corporations, based on geographic proximity. Territories outside these cities would be governed by international instruments that allow for these cities to form loose confederations for this purpose. A similar approach would move Iraq away from its current federal system, based on provinces, and towards a confederal arrangement, bringing together largely autonomous charter cities. A similar approach could also be implemented in Israel instead of one- or two-state solutions.

To envisage the positive outcomes from charter cities in the Middle East, we can look at the example of the Free City of Danzig (1920 to 1939), which covered an area of around 2,000 square kilometers and had a predominantly German population of around 400,000. A senate elected from its own inhabitants governed the city. The city was semi-autonomous under an international treaty that

brought an end to World War I. The then League of Nations was entrusted with protecting the city, but failed to prevent Nazi Germany from abolishing the free city in 1939. During this period of nineteen years, Danzig emerged as a vibrant center for civic life, including for minority communities such as Jews. It stood as the only free city in the region. Yet, surrounded by much larger and stronger polities, its demise was only a matter of time. The approach was of course based on Danzig’s long history of independence, a characteristic also resonant in the Middle East since the period of Sumerian city-states. What is needed for this approach to work today is to begin by focusing on the African portion of the Middle East, and to ensure international underwriting of this arrangement.

This proposition for charter cities centers on the evasion of large scale, societal collapse, which we’ve seen throughout the Middle East. Elsewhere, I have elaborated on the “complexity ansatz,” which suggests that societies should be reorganized as sovereign city-regions that mimic the functionality of complex attractors. This provides the only insurance against global collapse. According to Jane Jacobs, the logic for charter cities is in our ability to evade collapse. In advocating a return to locality, Jacobs explains that there are no remedies at a city’s or a nation’s command, short of separation in the pattern of, for example, Singapore.

### Conclusion

Shifting the cultural and political orientation of the GCC countries, Yemen, and the Levant toward Africa, while limiting the jurisdictional footprints of these states within a polycentric constitutional framework based on autonomous cities, is critical for a stable future of the Middle East. One must acknowledge that Spinoza’s notion of sovereignty does not remain a simple fix in the contemporary context of the Middle East. However, normative constitutional design has thought little of the potential of these realignments. Emphasizing them can only be of relevance to today’s Middle East as civil wars and societal instability continue to plague the region post-Arab Spring.

**Benjamin Gussen** is a lecturer in law at the University of Southern Queensland in Australia. His research focuses mainly on law and economics, especially areas of overlap between constitutional law and constitutional economics. Gussen’s PhD was on the application of the principle of subsidiarity in New Zealand. Other areas of research Gussen is active in include charter cities and complexity economics.

### Endnotes

1. See Faleh A. Jabar, *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* (London: Saqi Books, 2002) and Esman, Milton J., and Itamar Rabinovich, *Ethnicity, Pluralism, and the State in the Middle East* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1988).
2. See Gerard Russell, *Heirs to Forgotten Kingdoms: Journeys into the Disappearing Religions of the Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).
3. For a complete analysis, see Benjamin F. Gussen, “On the Problem of Scale: Hayek, Kohr, Jacobs and the Reinvention of the Political State,” *Constitutional Political Economy* Vol. 27, Issue 1 (New York: Springer International Publishing: 2013), 19.
4. James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
5. For an example, see M. A. Cook, *Muhammed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
6. For a background on the game, see Smith, J. Maynard, and G.R. Price, “The Logic of Animal Conflict,” *Nature* 146 (London: Nature Publishing Group, 02 November 1973), 15.
7. See for example, Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of the Regional Economics* (Washington, DC: Free Press, 1996). See also Jean-Marie Guéhenno, *The End of The Nation-State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); Daniel Chernilo, *A Social Theory of The Nation-State: The Political Forms of Modernity Beyond Methodological Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 2007); and Smith, David A., Dorothy J. Solinger, and Steven C. Topik, eds., *States and Sovereignty in the Global Economy* (London: Routledge, 1999).
8. Agnew, John, and Stuart Corbridge, *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory, and International Political Economy* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 89. Cited in Andrew Herod, *Scale* (London: Routledge, 2011), 200; and Martin Loughlin, “Ten Tenets of Sovereignty,” *Relocating Sovereignty* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), 108-109.
9. Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard, “Opting-Out: The Constitutional Economics of Exit,” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* Vol. 61, Issue 1 (New York: Wiley, 2002), 146.
10. Raia Prokhovnik, *Sovereignties: Contemporary Theory and Practice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 300-301. Refer to Benedict de Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise and a Political Treatise* (New York: Dover Publications, 2004), 347-348, 356-357, 370, 383, and 384. Note that according to Spinoza’s definition of democracy, modern representative democracy should be regarded as a modality of aristocracy “because our legislative bodies are, like his definition of aristocracy, ‘composed of certain chosen persons.’” See Raia Prokhovnik, “From Democracy to Aristocracy: Spinoza, Reason and Politics,” *History of European Ideas* Vol. 23, Issues 2-4 (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 1997), 105-107. See also George M. Gross, “Spinoza and the Federal Polity,” *Publius* Vol. 26, Issues 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 117; and Raia Prokhovnik, *Spinoza and Republicanism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Jonathan Havercroft, “The Fickle Multitude: Spinoza and the Problem of Global Democracy,” *Constellations* Vol. 17, Issue 1 (New York: Wiley, 2010), 120; Balibar, Etienne, Ted Stolze, and Emilia Giancotti, “Spinoza, the Anti-Orwell: the Fear of the Masses,” *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society* Vol. 2, Issue 3 (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 1989), 104.
11. Prokhovnik, *Sovereignties*, 228.
12. T. Humby “Maccsand: Intergovernmental Relations and the Doctrine of Usurpation,” *South African Public Law Journal* Vol. 27, Issue 2 (Unisa, South Africa: Unisa Press, 2012), 628-638.
13. Caulfield, Janice, and Helge O. Larsen, eds., *Local Government at the Millennium* (New York: Springer International Publishing, 2002).
14. Yishai Blank, “The City and the World,” *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* Vol. 44, No. 3 (New York: Columbia

University Press, 2005-2006), 875-899.

15. See generally, John Brown Mason, *The Danzig Dilemma: A Study in Peacemaking by Compromise* (Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1946).

16. See Gussen, “On the Problem of Scale,” 9; Benjamin F. Gussen, “Is Subsidiarity a *Conditio Sine Qua Non* for Sustainability?,” *Policy Studies* Vol. 36, No. 4 (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 2015), 384; Benjamin Franklen Gussen, “The State is the Fiduciary of the People,” *Public Law* (New York: Thomson Reuters, 2015), 440; Benjamin F. Gussen, “On the Problem of Scale: Spinozistic Sovereignty as the Logical Foundation of Constitutional Economics,” *The Journal of Philosophical Economics* Vol. 7, Issue 1 (Toowoomba, Australia: University Southern Queensland, 2013), 1-19; and Benjamin F. Gussen, “On the Problem of Scale: A General Theory of Morphogenesis and Normative Policy Signals for Economic Evolution,” *Evolutionary and Institutional Economics Review* Vol. 12, Issue 1 (New York: Springer International Publishing, 2015), 81.

17. Jane Jacobs, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations* (Ringwood, Australia: Penguin Books, 1984), 180-181.

18. Prokhovnik, *Sovereignties*, 231.



# Caution Gives Way to Increasingly Assertive Policies in Saudi Arabia, But to What End?

By Robert Mason

## Abstract

Since King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud assumed the Saudi Arabian throne on 23 January 2015, there have been clear continuities in both Saudi domestic and foreign policies to maintain regime security and stability for the ruling elite; however, significant change is also evident on a number of levels. These shifts primarily reflect differences in leadership styles of the late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and King Salman, dynamics within the royal family, and state relations with the ulema (recognized Islamic scholars and authorities) and the broader population. The onset and consequences of the Arab Spring have raised questions about the legitimacy of the Al Saud family rule, which are being met by the Saudi government with a steadfast neutralization and counter policy. This article will focus on the issue of succession in Saudi leadership, the Saudi military's involvement in the current war in Yemen, the Saudi role in the new Sunni-dominated military alliance, and the execution of Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr. Finally, the article will analyze whether a more assertive policy stance will support the Al Saud regime or ultimately undermine its stability.

## Succession in Saudi Leadership

As Rob Sobhani discusses in *King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia: A Leader of Consequence*, the late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who ruled Saudi Arabia from 2005 until his death in 2015, was considered by his supporters to be a reformist and by the United States as a close ally and someone who brought stability to the kingdom. He focused on increasing access to Saudi education through 200,000 scholarships that enable Saudis (of both sexes) to study at foreign universities or to study at the growing number of universities across the kingdom. He additionally spent considerable effort improving the status of women in Saudi society, granting women the right to vote for the first time in 2011. He addressed extremism and issues surrounding religion and the economy and oil, seeking to make advances within a conservative rubric.

## A Shift in Policy

Similarly, since the succession of Abdullah's half-brother, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to the throne following King Abdullah's death in January 2015, King Salman has been labeled "focused," "astute," and "austere" by Khaled Almacena, editor-in-chief of Arab News, a mainstream Arab news agency. Furthermore, CNN agrees that King Salman is viewed as "a pragmatic and cautious reformer." These features are particularly relevant

in an oil-rich state where various royals have been involved in money-making schemes, and where, as early as 1986, the US government was concerned about a backlash against them. Resentment over economic disparities still exists and has become part of a range of economic challenges linked to the Arab Spring (such as jobs, economic diversification, and development), social marginalization, sectarianism, and terrorism.

However, traditional caution of King Salman and the Al Saud rulers before him appears to have given way in the advent of the Syrian conflict in 2011 to more assertive foreign policies in an effort to address an increasingly insecure and unstable gulf region and wider Middle East. In the first weeks of his tenure as king, Salman issued decrees that promoted Prince Mohammad bin Nayef to Deputy Crown Prince and Prince Mohammad bin Salman to Minister of Defense. In similar fashion, he promoted individuals from his own Sudairi branch of the royal family to higher rankings within the government. The risk of the unprecedented move to promote Prince Mohammad bin Salman to Ministry of Defense is that he lacks relative experience and could therefore compromise the external security of the kingdom.

King Salman's son, Prince Mohammad bin Salman, thirty-four, had not held a government

posting prior to assuming the high-profile position of Minister of Defense. In addition, he is widely viewed as a driving force behind the Saudi intervention in Yemen, garnering accusations from the Bundesnachrichtendienst (Germany's intelligence agency, BND) of destabilizing the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region through a policy that prioritizes regional leadership and utilizes a strong military component. Therefore, King Salman's personnel decisions have resulted in controversy surrounding Saudi policies.

## Problems Within Saudi Leadership Circles

Saudi Arabia's controversial military campaign in Yemen has forced Saudi leadership into a tight position in which it cannot afford to make policy missteps. Yemen's civil war has become regionalized, involving other member countries of the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC), such as Qatar and the UAE, as well as the use of foreign mercenaries from states as far away as Colombia. If the ground offensive objectives in Yemen are not realized, Prince Mohammad bin Salman may become marginalized from the defense portfolio. This could happen through a number of possible scenarios, including a prolonged Saudi military campaign without resolution or further condemnation from the US or the UN for alleged breaches of human rights and international law. The precedence for such ostracism already exists; Prince Bandar bin Sultan was relieved from his two positions as secretary-general of the now defunct National Security Council and as special envoy of the king with responsibility for Syria policy due to the contribution of his decisions

Resentment over economic disparities still exists and has become part of a range of economic challenges linked to the Arab Spring (such as jobs, economic diversification, and development), social marginalization, sectarianism and terrorism.

to growing tensions with the US.

In this case, it is clear how Prince Mohammad bin Nayef's profile and popularity, at age fifty-five, would be elevated. His role as Minister of the Interior since his father, former Crown Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, passed away in 2012 demonstrates his high standing within the Saudi family. Importantly, US officials have positively viewed Prince Mohammad bin Nayef, specifically during an enhanced period of US-Saudi counter-terrorism cooperation that took place when he

oversaw his country's campaign against Al-Qaeda in the mid-to-late 2000s. He is therefore more experienced and is well placed to deal with any significant spillover effects from the Yemen conflict, such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which is using its growing base in Yemen to once again challenge the Saudi state.

## The Influence of Yemen's Civil War on Saudi Foreign Policy

Given the high stakes in Yemen, it is surprising that Saudi Arabia has consented to UN-backed peace talks. Nevertheless, Riyadh knows that the US is supportive of its conflict against the Houthis, which the Saudis perceive to be an Iranian-backed insurgency. It will consequently take time for any potential UN resolution to be approved and implemented. However, there are signs that growing civilian casualties in the conflict are drawing in greater US participation in vetting military targets and searching vessels bound for Yemen. Time is an important factor in this calculation because in the interim period, Saudi forces can try to implement changes on the ground and better shape the outcome to benefit Saudi policy goals. Thus, peace talks are unlikely to succeed until Saudi Arabia has secured a military advantage on the battlefield; continued fighting on both sides has compromised previously negotiated cease-fires in May, July, and December 2015. The death of the head of the Saudi Special Forces, Colonel Abdullah al-Sayhan, who was killed in December 2015 in Taiz province, has only contributed to the sense that the war must go on until Saudi Arabia has demonstrated its ability to impose its will in Yemen and vis-à-vis Iran by defeating the Houthis.

Riyadh continues to insist that Iran is the destabilizing power in the region through its support of "insurgencies" in Bahrain, as well as in Yemen, where Iran is said to support the Shiite Houthi rebels. The notion that Iran was an integral part of Saudi Arabia's Yemen intervention was personally delivered by King Salman to President Obama during their September 2015 meeting in Washington D.C. The clear and direct conversation demonstrates the extent to which the Saudis are trying to keep the Obama administration on board. This has become all the more necessary as the Saudi-led Yemen conflict has been described as "traumatizing to its [Yemen's] civilian population." Western support has since come under more intense pressure after the UN stated in January 2016 that the use of indiscriminate cluster munitions "may amount to a war crime." Thus, another Saudi lobbying effort was underway, targeting the European parliament in February 2016, just before the European Union (EU) implemented an

arms embargo on Saudi Arabia linked directly to the heavy civilian casualties due to its conduct in Yemen.

### Additional Foreign Policy Issues

Saudi Arabia has, for decades, maintained a policy of limiting Shi'ite influence and expanding its own Sunni influence through the heavy funding of mosques and madrassas (Islamic religious schools), Islamic associations, and training centers across the Islamic and developing world, as well as in states of strategic interest, including China. Such foreign policy forays are increasingly drawing criticism from Europe, which is claiming that such programs may fund jihadi causes. Additionally, these efforts have exacted a heavy financial burden on Saudi Arabia. Conventional military expansion alone amounted to \$100 billion over the last five years, and will amount to another \$50 billion over the

...Traditional caution of King Salman and the Al Saud rulers before him appears to have given way in the advent of the Syrian conflict in 2011 to more assertive foreign policies in an effort to address an increasingly insecure and unstable gulf region and wider Middle East.

next two. The cumulative outlay is contributing to increasing financial pressure, which has been further exacerbated by \$130 billion of government largesse to the Sunni-dominated population distributed during 2012 and which lasted until the oil price collapse in 2015.

A sustained low international oil price has forced the Saudi government to cut back on typical spending in order to save billions of dollars. Fiscal restraint has come late to the kingdom, but is necessary in order for the central bank to stop burning through financial reserves. In April 2015, central bank reserves dropped by \$36 billion—the equivalent of 5 percent—in just two months, and foreign reserves fell by \$16 billion in March 2015, further illustrating the kingdom's decreasing wealth.

### Saudi Domestic Policy

As governor of Riyadh for fifty years prior to his current appointment, King Salman transformed the cityscape from desert land into skyscrapers. As King, he presides over a period of continued and rapid growth in infrastructure projects, despite the financial difficulties that the kingdom has recently

incurred. Kingdom Tower, owned by Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal, already dominates the skyline in Riyadh, and other Saudi cities are emulating their own grand infrastructure projects. In Jeddah, Saudi Arabia's commercial center, Jeddah Tower is set to mark a new record as the world's tallest building in 2018, and, in conjunction with the Kingdom City project in Riyadh, cost \$20 billion to build. In Mecca, the holiest city for Muslims, Saudi authorities started building a \$3.2 billion mega-hotel with five helipads and five floors specifically for use by Saudi royalty, along with 10,000 rooms, in 2015. However, such rapid development has not come without costs. For example, the estimated death toll of 2,411 from the Hajj stampede in Mecca in September 2015 called into question the competency of the Saudi government as the authority of the "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques." Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has continued to struggle, similar to other GCC states, with migrant labor issues created by a growing economy exacerbating the kafala system of sponsorship (which makes migrants dependent on employers and can be open to abuse) and the mass exportations that took place between 2013 and 2015. The economic boom and subsequent austerity could play into the hands of violent Islamists as the social and economic gap between the elite and the marginalized section of the population widens.

### A New Sunni Military Alliance

Apart from efforts to unite the country on the Yemen campaign by improving relations with the Muslim Brotherhood, Saudi Arabia has focused on addressing the growing violent threats in the Islamic world. It is tackling this issue foremost through a new Sunni military alliance consisting primarily of existing allies across the Islamic world, with a joint operations center in Riyadh. Additionally, the Saudis have begun publicly voicing their willingness to send in ground troops (likely special forces) to Syria as part of a US-led coalition to help combat the Islamic State. These steps serve multiple purposes, including:

- Addressing international concerns that Saudi Arabia is not making sufficient efforts to tackle the so-called Islamic State in the post-2015 Paris attacks era to degrade and destroy it;
- Confronting those who accuse Saudi Arabia of promoting violent Islam through its promotion of Wahhabism, a radical, exclusionist and, puritanical branch of Sunni Islam;
- Tackling national concerns that the Islamic State (and other violent Islamic factions) pose a growing threat to the kingdom;

- Drawing states from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East into a closer orbit with Saudi Arabia and therefore influencing them in accordance with Saudi policies vis-à-vis Iran; and
- Demonstrating a continued commitment to US objectives (particularly important in the context of remarks made by President Obama in March 2016 in which he labeled Saudi Arabia, along with some others in the gulf and in Europe, as "free riders") and encouraging Washington to lead a more effective coalition in areas that are deemed vital to Saudi national security interests.

Despite these efforts, there are a number of troubling features inherent to the new Sunni military alliance. First, certain members such as Pakistan have expressed surprise at their inclusion in the alliance without prior consultation. A Pakistani army spokesman confirmed that "we are not looking for any involvement outside our region." Second, activities of the alliance will include everything from efforts in counter-terrorist ideology and terrorist financing to military intervention where it is deemed necessary (mandated by the UN or the Arab League). The new Saudi-led coalition could thus be considered too broad in scope, challenging in application, and dependent on the political will of others to be truly effective. The likelihood of the alliance reverting back to a unified military command in the style of the GCC could therefore be quite high. Third, by focusing exclusively on the Houthis in Yemen, Saudi Arabia has demonstrated that a broader intervention targeting terror groups such as AQAP is not currently on the agenda, to the point where the Saudi-led coalition continuously avoids attacking AQAP positions. This has resulted in substantial territorial gains for AQAP in Yemen, whereas just over a decade ago the Saudi interior ministry was fighting a counter-terrorism campaign against AQAP on the streets of Riyadh.

### The Execution of Nimr al-Nimr

Domestically, Riyadh perceives the Muslim Brotherhood, Syrian jihadists, and human rights activists as active threats to national security. A case that exemplifies this challenge is that of Raif Badawi, a blogger who was sentenced in June 2015 to 1,000 lashes for criticizing Saudi Arabia's religious police, which the authorities equated with blasphemy. His sentencing received harsh criticism from Europe and he subsequently received the 2015 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

The execution of senior Shi'a cleric Nimr al-Nimr is further evidence of the Saudi struggle for control of its internal affairs, and in particular

the restive Eastern province—especially in Qatif where al-Nimr was a driving force behind violent protests that broke out in 2011, and where he called for secession and the formation of a Shiite state. Al-Nimr was also renowned for his hostile, anti-government speeches, which began in 2002, and indirectly caused police casualties.

### Al-Nimr's Execution: A Ripple Effect

Instead, the Saudi political calculations behind al-Nimr's execution seek to avoid domestic attention on what Bruce Riedel, a former CIA officer, calls a "perfect storm" of "low oil income, open-ended war in Yemen, terrorist threats from mul-

The success of the kingdom's efforts in maintaining a relevant military alliance that is able to defeat the Islamic State and assist allies diplomatically in resolving other conflicts in the region will determine the direction of future Saudi foreign policy.

iple directions, and an intensifying regional rivalry with its nemesis, Iran." In private, several US officials have been more forthright about expressing their anger over the poor timing of the Nimr al-Nimr execution, as it risks undermining US policy in the wider region. Specifically, the actions have complicated efforts, through rising sectarian confrontation and proxy conflict for a peaceful resolution in both Yemen and Syria, which requires both Iranian and Saudi diplomatic support.

### Exacerbation of Sunni-Shia Tensions

Rather than enhancing cooperation, al-Nimr's execution has escalated Saudi Arabian tensions with Iran. These tensions were further exacerbated by the Iranian authorities' unwillingness to stop the Saudi embassy in Tehran from being stormed by Iranian protestors in the immediate aftermath of the execution in January 2016. Adding to the hostility, Ali Larijani, the speaker of Iran's parliament, said on 2 January 2016 that "Saudi will not pass through this maelstrom." The event plays to the hands of political opponents of the Al Saud family, such as President Assad of Syria, and reinforces comments made in early 2015 by Syria's ambassador to the UN, Bashar Jaafari, stating that the Saudis are "cultivating a culture of sectarian bloodshed in the region."

The execution has put additional pressure on social and sectarian divisions in states such as Bahrain and Iraq—both Bahrain and Sudan have

severed ties with Iran over its response to the execution. Former Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki called the execution a “crime . . . [which] will topple the Saudi regime . . .” The execution of Nimr al-Nimr reveals a much wider conflict taking place throughout the region, pitting Saudi Arabia against its Shiite rivals.

### Execution and Religions Interpretation

The Saudi elite insist that the constitution of the kingdom rests on the Qur’an and Shari’a law, and that al-Bay’ah (a contract or pledge of allegiance), exists to ensure that the ruler act in accordance to the will of God and the people. Although the execution of Nimr al-Nimr was deemed to be in accordance with the Wahhabi interpretation of Shari’a law, Shari’a is a huge body of literature with four bodies of jurisprudence. The sentencing could therefore have been interpreted differently in Wahhabi tradition, with a greater emphasis on the broader interests of the ummah (the whole community of Muslims bound together by religious ties), such as reducing sectarian conflict, not only in the kingdom, but also across the region and the Islamic world.

### Conclusion

The undercurrent of discontent in Saudi society among its youth and reformists—especially those who call for a written constitution, and particularly the Shi’a population—as well as factions within the royal family, pose a different but persistent threat to regime stability. These threats will be magnified if the current political policies such as escalating sectarian tensions with Iran, military policies such as engagement in Yemen, and economic policies such as austerity, diversification, and jobs, fail to achieve their objectives.

The changes in Saudi leadership and succession planning have raised the stakes for King Salman. His appointment of his relatively inexperienced son, Prince Mohammad bin Salman, from the third generation of princes when other experienced candidates could have been promoted to head the Ministry of Defense, means a lack of experience in frontline politics. Miscalculations or mistakes may very well occur in policy implementation and could have serious consequences within and beyond the Saudi border.

Assertiveness in safeguarding tangible benefits for the nation differs from risking the Islamic credentials through a power-sharing arrangement with the Wahhabi clerics or established ulama upon which the Al Saud ruling elite still depends for its legitimacy. Without a greater sense of restraint, caution, and focus, the Saudi government may be playing into the hands of its adversaries who seek

to discredit the Sunni monarchical model as being reactive, illegitimate, and un-Islamic.

The success of the kingdom’s efforts in maintaining a relevant military alliance that is able to defeat the Islamic State and assist allies diplomatically in resolving other conflicts in the region will determine the direction of future Saudi foreign policy. In particular, it will reveal to what extent Saudi Arabia can leverage its agenda when there is a growing discrepancy between its foreign policy objectives and those of its longstanding and most powerful ally, the United States. It will also hold clues about the efficacy of its foreign policy strategy during a period of low oil prices and budget constraints, which will determine if the kingdom can sustain its muscular response to insecurity. Will Riyal Politik (buying influence through the distribution of oil revenues) continue to be effective in securing alliances as the risks of escalation with Iran rise? The recent withdrawal of aid to Lebanon could prove problematic to this established model, especially where Iranian proxy groups such as Hezbollah gain sway over national politics. Riyadh must continue to tread carefully when advancing its national interests within a set of domestic, regional, and global circumstances, many of its own making, but also within an evolving global agenda set by Washington.

**Robert Mason** is lecturer in political science at the British University in Egypt. His works include *International Politics of the Arab Spring: Popular Unrest and Foreign Policy* (Palgrave, 2014) and *Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia: Economics and Diplomacy in the Middle East* (I. B. Tauris, 2015). He is a contributing author to a newly edited volume of *Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: Conflict and Cooperation* (I. B. Tauris, 2016).

### Endnotes

1. Shoichet, Catherine E., and Nic Robertson, “Amid Turmoil, Saudi King Abdullah Brought Stability, Pushed Reforms,” CNN, 23 January 2015.
2. Afshin Molavi, “King Abdullah: A Saudi Education Revolutionary,” *Al Arabiya*, 23 January 2015.
3. Glen Carey, “King Abdullah Gives Saudi Women Right to Vote for First Time,” Bloomberg News, 26 September 2011.
4. “How Will the New King Salman Change Saudi Arabia,” BBC News, 11 February 2015.
5. Jethro Mullen, “Who is Saudi Arabia’s New King Salman?,” CNN, 4 February 2015.
6. “Special Report: U.S. Cables Detail Saudi Royal Welfare Program,” Thomson Reuters, 28 February 2011.
7. Mohamed Al-Saud Idris, “Saudi Succession and the GCC,” *Al-Ahram*, 29 January 2015.
8. For more on the Al Sudairi Clan see “Al Sudairi Clan or Sudairi Seven,” Saudi-US Relations Information Service, n.d. The Al Sudairi wing, including the “Sudairi Seven” (full brothers within the House of Saud), was established by Hassa bint Ahmed al-Sudairi with King Abdulaziz, the founder

- of Saudi Arabia. The clan is from Najd, the same part of the Arabian Peninsula as the Al Saud. See Hussein Ibish, “Royal Reshuffle: Saudi Shakeup Consolidates King’s Power,” *The Arab Gulf States Institute* in Washington, 30 April 2015.
9. Greg Gause, “Saudi Arabia’s Game of Thrones,” *Foreign Affairs*, 2 February 2015.
10. Including hegemonic status in the Gulf Cooperation Council and across the Islamic world through its guardianship of the two holy places (Mecca and Medina), and through influence primarily derived from Salafism. See Robert Mason, “Introduction,” *Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia: Economics and Diplomacy in the Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015), 2; and Justin Huggler, “Saudi Arabia ‘Destabilising Arab World,’ German Intelligence Warns,” *The Telegraph*, 2 December 2015.
11. Hager, Emily B., and Mark Mazzetti, “Emirates Secretly Sends Colombian Mercenaries to Yemen Fight,” *The New York Times*, 25 November 2015.
12. Ian Black, “End of an Era as Prince Bandar Departs Saudi Intelligence Post,” *The Guardian*, 16 April 2014.
13. Bruce Riedel, “The Prince of Counterterrorism,” *Brookings*, 29 September 2015.
14. “Houthis and Saudis in Yemen Peace Talks,” *The Guardian*, 8 March 2016.
15. Abi-Habib, Maria, and Mohammed Al-Kibsi, “Al Qaeda Fights on Same Side as Saudi-Backed Militias in Yemen,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 16 July 2016.
16. “Two Senior Gulf Commanders Killed in Yemen,” *Al-Arabiya*, 14 December 2015.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Nawaf Obaid, “What Will US-Saudi Summit Mean for Iranian Policy in the Middle East?,” *Al-Monitor*, 6 September 2015.
19. *Ibid.*
20. One of many discussions held at the official level on Saudi Arabia’s response to Iran in the advent of the U.S.-Iran nuclear agreement and regional turmoil. See Jonathan Border, “The Loser of the Cold War Between Iran and Saudi Arabia May be Obama,” *Newsweek*, 11 January 2016.
21. Stephen Seche, “Yemen’s Destruction is One Cost of the US-Saudi Alliance,” *The Boston Globe*, 6 March 2015.
22. “Use of Cluster Bombs in Yemen May be a War Crime: U.N. Chief,” Thomson Reuters, 8 January 2016.
23. Jennifer Rankin, “EU Parliament Votes for Embargo on Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia,” *The Guardian*, 25 February 2016.
24. Hubbard, Ben, and Mayy El Sheikh, “Wikileaks Shows a Saudi Obsession with Iran,” *The New York Times*, 16 July 2015.
25. Rowena Mason, “PM Should Order Inquiry into Funding of Jihadism, Paddy Ashdown Says,” *The Guardian*, 24 November 2015.
26. Obaid, “What Will US-Saudi Summit Mean for Iranian Policy in the Middle East?”
27. Aimed at creating more jobs, building subsidized housing, and providing more support to the Ulema that backed the government position on banning protests. See Donna Abu-Nasr, “Saudis Skip Arab Spring as Nation Pours Money into Jobs,” *Bloomberg News*, 2 April 2012.
28. Khalaf, Roul, Lionel Barber, and Simeon Kerr, “Saudi Arabia: The Wake-Up Call,” *The Financial Times*, 23 November 2015.
29. Kerr, Simeon, “Saudi Arabia Burns Through Foreign Reserves,” *The Financial Times*, 30 April 2015.
30. Herbert Wright, “Jeddah’s Kingdom Tower: How Much Higher Can Skyscrapers Go? A History of Cities in 50 Buildings, Day 50,” *The Guardian*, 4 June 2015.
31. Oliver Wainwright, “City in the Sky: World’s Biggest Hotel to Open in Mecca,” *The Guardian*, 22 May 2015.
32. Rick Gladstone, “Death Toll from Hajj Stampede Reaches 2,411 in New Estimate,” *The New York Times*, 10 December 2015.
33. “Saudi Arabia: Mass Expulsions of Migrant Workers: Abuses During Detention, Deportation,” *Human Rights Watch*, 9 May 2015.

34. Analysts noted this as early as 2007. See “Riyadh is Boom Town as Saudis Enjoy Oil Bonanza,” Thomson Reuters, 16 November 2007.
35. “Saudi Arabia Forms Muslim ‘Anti-Terrorism’ Coalition,” *Al Jazeera*, 15 December 2015.
36. BB“Saudis Announce Islamic Anti-Terrorism Coalition,” BBC News, 15 December 2015.
37. Stancati, Margherita, and Ahmed Al Omran, “Saudi Offer on Syria Reflects Heightened Anxiety Over Outcome,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 9 February 2016; “Saudi Arabia Willing to Send Ground Troops to Syria to Fight ISIS: AP,” Thomson Reuters, 4 February 2016.
38. “Is Saudi Arabia Next Target of Islamic State?,” *Al-Monitor*, 3 January 2016.
39. Mark Lander, “Obama Criticizes the ‘Free Riders’ Among America’s Allies,” *The New York Times*, 10 March 2016.
40. Baqir Sajjad Syed, “Pakistan’s Surprised by Its Inclusion in 34-Nation Military Alliance,” *Dawn*, 16 December 2015.
41. Hussein Ibish, “What to Expect from Riyadh’s New Islamic Counterterrorism Alliance,” *The Arab Gulf States Institute* in Washington, 17 December 2015.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Cafiero, Giorgio, and Daniel Wagner, “Saudi Arabia and al-Qaeda Unite in Yemen,” *The Huffington Post*, 24 September 2015.
44. Maria Abi-Habib and Mohammed Al-Kibsi, “Al Qaeda Fights on Same Side as Saudi-Backed Militias in Yemen,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 16 July 2015; Lori Plotkin Boghardt, “Saudi Arabia’s Shifting War on Terror,” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 18 August 2014.
45. “Saudi Supreme Court Upholds Verdict Against Blogger Raif Badawi,” *The Guardian*, 7 June 2015.
46. Susannah Cullinane, “Saudi Blogger Awarded European Human Rights Prize,” CNN, 30 October 2015.
47. Sultan Al-Sughair, “Crimes That Led to Al-Nimr’s Execution,” *Arab News*, 4 January 2016.
48. *Ibid.*
49. David E. Sanger, “U.S. in a Bind as Saudi Actions Test a Durable Alliance,” *The New York Times*, 4 January 2016.
50. *Ibid.*
51. “Iranian Protestors Storm Saudi Embassy, Foreign Ministry Calls for Calm,” Thomson Reuters, 2 January 2016.
52. Slawson, “Execution of Shia cleric sparks international outrage - as it Nicola Slawson, “Execution of Shia Cleric Sparks International Outrage - As it Happened,” *The Guardian*, 2 January 2015.
53. Aron Lund, “Are Saudi Arabia and Turkey About to Intervene in Syria?,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 24 April 2015.
54. Kerr, Simeon, and John Aglionby, “Bahrain and Sudan Sever Diplomatic Ties with Iran,” *The Financial Times*, 4 January 2016.
55. Harriet Sinclair, “Nimr al-Nimr Execution: Former Iraq PM al-Maliki Says Death Will ‘Topple’ Saudi Regime,” *The Guardian*, 2 January 2016.
56. “The Basic Law of Governance,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 20 September 2011; Al Bay’ah was established by the Shari’ah and sanctioned by tradition. See Abdullah Ansary, “A Brief Overview of the Saudi Arabian Legal System,” *Hauser Global Law School Program*, New York University, July 2008.
57. “Saudi Arabia Executes 47 People, Including Prominent Shiite Cleric, on Terror Charges,” *Russia Today*, 2 January 2016.
58. “Saudi Arabia Executes 47, Including Shi’ite Cleric,” *The Australian*, 3 January 2016.
59. Aarts, Paul, and Carolien Roelants, “The Two-Edged Sword of Islam: The Holy Alliance Under Fire,” *Saudi Arabia: A Kingdom in Peril* (London: Hurst Publications, 2015), 15.
60. As discussed in Mason, *Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia*.
61. Anne Barnard, “Saudi Arabia Cuts Billions in Aid to Lebanon, Opening Door for Iran,” *The New York Times*, 2 March 2016.



# Looking to Syria: No-Fly-Zones and Political Stability in Iraq and Libya

By Dylan MaGuire

## Abstract

The ongoing civil war in Syria has reignited interest in no-fly zones as policy options for halting violence against civilians and maintaining stability in conflict-ridden regions. In order to evaluate the success of this policy option, this article will survey a portion of relevant literature to establish the components of no-fly-zone operations, followed by an examination of US-led Operation Provide Comfort in northern Iraq and Unified Protector in Libya to answer the following questions: 1) What goals did policymakers hope to achieve with these operations?, and 2) Did these operations produce the desired political outcomes? While the number of implemented no-fly zones is limited, these particular cases were chosen due to their similarity with the situation in Syria. Operational and political goals will be measured using relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and presidential statements, as these best capture the strategic thinking at the time of implementation. Outcomes will be measured through an analysis of the security and political situations on the ground shortly after the cessation of operations. Though subject to interpretation, this metric provides estimates for the performance of the no-fly zones in question and insights as to their overall success. Finally, this piece will discuss the findings from the case study analysis and make brief policy recommendations for a no-fly zone in Syria.

Due to its infrequent use, the literature on no-fly zones remains limited but suggests a three-category typology, developed by Alexander Benard, for classifying operations (see Table 1). Type 1 features air assets providing air cover for ground troops deployed in combat or otherwise hostile environments; Type 2 presents air assets as the sole means of influencing the situation on the ground; and Type 3 employs air assets as a deterrent for creating a buffer space between combatants on the ground. All three types prioritize establishing air supremacy in the designated zone and also seek to collect intelligence to monitor developments on the ground. The discriminating factor between types is the amount of risk assumed by the military forces responsible for maintaining the zone. Yet, this typology remains weak when differentiating between desired political outcomes. While Types 1 and 2 could describe classic military operations between belligerent parties, only Type 3 specifically seeks to de-conflict and potentially create humanitarian safe zones, thus resembling the common understanding of the no-fly zone.

## Conceptual Definitions

Many military analysts broadly define no-fly zones as the restriction of airspace to unauthorized aircrafts. These analysts narrowly define success and focus almost exclusively on military objectives to inform future operations. This approach could misrepresent to policymakers the often unanticipated political outcomes that result from establishing no-fly zones. While the no-fly zone is one of many variables (including domestic political calculations and the uncertainty of military operations, for example) that can explain these outcomes, this article focuses on it as the primary means through which policymakers are engaged on the ground.

Political destabilization is an alternative theoretical approach that frames coercive airpower as a means of undermining a regime. This perspective better captures the political implications of

constraining sovereignty and exhibiting a regime's weakness vis-à-vis domestic opposition. This case study reveals that far from merely restricting airspace, the two no-fly zones examined severely eroded regime control, leading to soft partition in northern Iraq and regime change in Libya.

## Introduction

American policymakers from across the ideological spectrum have repeatedly called for the establishment of a no-fly zone over besieged areas of Syria in order to protect civilians. Advocates of humanitarian intervention rightly concentrate on the near-term goal of establishing safe zones in which to provide much needed relief. Yet, the implications for political stability have not, thus far, received sufficient consideration when discussing no-fly

zone options. Historically, two no-fly zones established under similar circumstances provide data for analyzing the potential outcomes of such a policy. US-led Operation Provide Comfort and Unified Protector, occurring in 1991 and 2011, respectively, enforced no-fly zones over northern Iraq and Libya and were implemented to halt regime violence against civilian populations. The current debate surrounding the efficacy of no-fly zones typically cite at least one of these cases as evidence of success; however, success has been measured in terms

If no-fly zone advocates seek to use these cases as evidence for implementing a no-fly zone in Syria, the implications of implementing them for political stability must also be considered.

of military, as opposed to political, outcomes. If no-fly zone advocates seek to use these cases as evidence for implementing a no-fly zone in Syria, the implications of implementing them for political stability must also be considered.

Political stability in the context of third party intervention in local military conflicts is difficult to measure. What time frame should be examined? What constitutes a desirable outcome? What circumstances differentiate between successes and failures? Some policymakers look to no-fly zones as a course of limited military intervention through which to provide humanitarian relief and meet the responsibility to protect innocent life, but the use of limited military power produces potentially destabilizing outcomes that go beyond the capabilities of humanitarian relief operations. The proliferation of authoritarian regimes that rely on force to maintain order, coupled with policymakers searching for options to influence events, has led to the current demand for no-fly zones in Syria. The outcome of implementing no-fly zones as they per-

tain to political stability must be taken into account when measuring the efficacy of the approach.

## Operation Provide Comfort: Northern Iraq, 1991 to 1996

### Background

In response to the Iraqi invasion and consequent occupation of Kuwait in 1990, a US-led coalition pushed the Iraqi government forces that were occupying Kuwait back into southern Iraq, leading to the 28 February 1991 ceasefire and ending Operation Desert Storm. The coalition quickly routed much of the regular Iraqi army. However, most of the praetorian Republican Guard had withdrawn in good order, leaving the regime with a diminished, albeit capable, military. Shortly before declaring the ceasefire, President H.W. Bush called on "the Iraqi military and the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands and force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside." Kurdish and Shi'a rebellions soon broke out in the north and south of the country with fighting, producing civilian casualties and severe food shortages among populations deemed sympathetic to the rebels.

During formal negotiations with Iraqi generals over the terms of the ceasefire, US General Norman Schwarzkopf granted Iraq permission to fly helicopters, but not fixed-wing aircrafts. This resulted in the Iraqi army using helicopters against the rebels. The US-led coalition strictly enforced its decision to ban Iraqi use of fixed-wing aircrafts, to which the regime largely complied. The Republican Guard instead relied on armored ground units, artillery, and helicopters in their campaign that ended in April 1991 with the defeat of the rebels. The defeat sparked fear among Kurdish civilians that the regime would make use of its chemical weapons stockpiles, as it had done in 1988 during the Iran-Iraq War. Soon thereafter, over two million Kurdish refugees were scattered across the mountainous border region between Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. On 5 April 1998, the UNSC acknowledged

Table 1. Benard's No-fly Zone Typology

Type	Activity
(1) Air Cover	Provide close air support and overwatch for ground troops
(2) Air Occupation	Exert force without deploying ground troops
(3) Air Deterrent	Create buffer zone between hostile groups

Table 2. Summary of Findings

Case	Operational/Political Goal	Outcome
Operation Provide Comfort	Humanitarian relief, territorial integrity	Soft partition, civil war
Operation Unified Protector	Civilian protection, national unity	Regime change, civil war



the crisis and adopted Resolution 688 in response.

### Operational and Political Goals

Under the authority provided by UNSC 688, President H.W. Bush ordered the start of Operation Provide Comfort, a military humanitarian relief effort and no-fly zone. The operation included ground elements and humanitarian relief on the Iraqi-Turkish border with a no-fly zone enforced against “Iraqi fixed- or rotary-wing aircraft flying north of the 36th parallel.” The first phase of the operation saw a Type 1 no-fly zone, but with the withdrawal of ground troops in mid-July of that year, it shifted to a Type 2. When asked about US commitment toward the protected enclaves, President H.W. Bush responded that “I don’t think it has to be long-term . . . and now this is a logical step to get it [humanitarian relief] done much more sanitarily . . .” While recognizing the plight of Iraqi-Kurdish refugees, President H.W. Bush made it clear that the United States did not wish “to see a fractured, destabilized Iraq,” that the U.S. was not going to “interfere in Iraq’s civil war,” and that the “Iraqi people must decide their own political future.” According to these stipulations, Operation Provide Comfort was a temporary solution to a humanitarian crisis and was not intended to lead to Iraq’s fracture.

### Outcome

Under coalition air cover, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) formed the autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and held their first elections in May 1992, after which they formed a unity government. During this process the US never officially recognized the KRG, a redline for its ally Turkey, but rather provided assistance for the elections. However, significant economic pressure from internally displaced Kurds, a lack of reliable funding, and former guerrilla fighters not accustomed to governing led to a breakdown in the unity government, negatively impacting any political progress that had been achieved up to that point.

In May 1994, less than two years after the election, internal divisions in the Kurdish coalition government erupted into open fighting; by June, casualties numbered in the hundreds. What eventually became known as the Kurdish Civil War saw both sides seek assistance from external sources with the PUK favoring Iran and the KDP looking to Baghdad for support. In early August 1996, the Iraqi army advanced north on the Kurdish capital despite meager US objections. One US official at the time remarked that “overall, the administration was positively disgusted with the Kurds.” Operation Provide Comfort had successfully delivered

much needed humanitarian relief but had also provided space for the rekindling of hostilities.

### Operation Unified Protector: Libya, 2011

In February 2011, Libyans in the city of Benghazi—inspired by public displays of dissatisfaction with authoritarian rule in neighboring states—held a “day of rage” demonstration that quickly spread

...a no-fly zone requires that both the regime and rebel factions are roughly equally degraded, so as to prevent the balance of power from shifting drastically to one side’s advantage with a negotiated settlement being the only real conflict termination strategy short of all-out victory by one side.

to other eastern cities as regime control collapsed in the face of public protest. Armed opposition to the government was fueled in part by regional affiliations that pitted Muammar al-Qadhafi’s regime and its supporters in the west against its traditional rivals in the east. Reports at the time indicated that government forces responded to the initial protests with live ammunition; however, more recent scholarship suggests that government forces “refrained from deadly force until the protesters’ violence escalated.” While many security personnel and civil servants remained loyal to the regime, “a number of military officers, their units, and civilian officials” deserted the regime and joined the opposition, either as individuals or en masse.

On February 26, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1970 expressing concern over the “the use of force against civilians,” identifying the refugee crisis in the making caused by the violence, and “reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and national unity” of the Libyan state. Despite the armed opposition’s initial gains, by early March they were losing ground and government forces were approaching Benghazi. In response, the UN drafted a new resolution to implement a no-fly zone and NATO began planning for the operation. On March 17, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1973 and one day later, France, the United Kingdom, and the US began military action against Qadhafi forces until NATO’s Operation Unified Protector assumed formal control on March 29.

### Operational and Political Goals

Resolution 1973 specifically authorized a no-fly zone to “establish a ban on all flight . . . in order

to help protect civilians.” In order to provide such protection, the document authorized “all necessary measures . . . to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack...” The Security Council again reaffirmed its “strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and national unity” of the Libyan state. From the outset of Unified Protection, the no-fly zone was a Type 2 with coalition forces also taking direct action against regime ground forces. Therefore, the UN sought to protect civilians from attack by regime forces while maintaining the integrity of the Libyan state.

On March 18, following the adoption of the resolution, President Barack Obama outlined his plans for the ongoing air campaign. He stated that the “focus has been clear: to protect innocent civilians within Libya” and to hold “the Qadhafi regime accountable” with the use of force not going “beyond . . . [that] well-defined goal . . .” He recognized that “the change in the region will not and cannot be imposed by the United States or any foreign power . . .” Before NATO assumed control, President Obama clarified the nature of operations, saying, “there is no question that Libya and the world would be better off with Qadhafi out of power . . . but broadening our military mission to include regime change would be a mistake.” The speed at which the operation was authorized and implemented reveals that the US and its coalition partners believed a great loss of life was imminent and took action to prevent it. The political plans following the implementation of the no-fly zone were less well defined, and the Security Council Resolution did not specifically authorize regime change.

### Outcome

Operation Unified Protector officially ended on October 31, just eleven days after opposition forces executed Colonel Qadhafi. President Obama expressed his congratulations, saying that a “dark shadow of tyranny has been lifted. With this promise, the Libyan people now have a great responsibility: to build an inclusive and tolerant and democratic Libya . . .” On 16 September 2011, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2009, which stated that the international community “looks forward to stability in Libya” and hopes to “ensure a consultative, inclusive political process with a view to agreement on a constitution and the holding of free and fair elections.” The resolution also established the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to aid the newly empowered National Transition Council (NTC) in its efforts to restore order, undertake political dialogue, extend state authority, and promote human rights. Following

the end of the operation and the announcement of the NTC as the official Libyan representative in the post-Qadhafi order, NATO ended the no-fly zone.

Despite the NTC holding nominal control of the government, on the ground the situation appeared far more fluid. Many of the anti-Qadhafi opposition groups now refused to disarm and demobilize. The NTC, lacking the requisite manpower, was in no position to force compliance from the diverse militias with which it had recently been allied. Several centers of power quickly developed within and outside of the NTC. In addition, Islamist militias that had been affiliated with the NTC began issuing demands and stockpiling arms. On 7 July 2012, elections were held for the General National Congress charged with appointing a Constituent Assembly to draw up Libya’s new constitution. While this constituted a significant achievement, its success would prove to be short lived.

On 11 September 2012, militants under the guise of an anti-US protest outside the US consulate in Benghazi assaulted the compound and killed US Ambassador Christopher Stevens and several of his colleagues. The US quickly pulled out all remaining personnel, followed closely by their European counterparts. At the time of this article’s writing, Libya is roughly divided between two warring camps, each with external sponsors and both composed of an assortment of armed groups controlling territory. Operation Unified Protector had successfully averted the regime’s efforts to put down the rebellion, but in doing so also significantly contributed to creating the conditions that allowed for the overthrowing of the Libyan government.

### Findings

The use of no-fly zones as a policy for providing immediate humanitarian relief and civilian protection is strongly supported in the aforementioned data. Operation Provide Comfort and Operation Unified Protector identified imminent humanitarian catastrophes and were able to successfully avert them. Short-term goals articulated by the authorizing documents and statements made by Presidents H.W. Bush and Barack Obama were clear, concise, and met without difficulty. However, the data does not support the successful achievement of long-term political stability (see Table 2). In fact, the data reveals the exact opposite of the stated policy preference for the maintenance of territorial integrity and national unity. At the start of Operation Provide Comfort, President H.W. Bush stated that the US military would not get involved in Iraq’s domestic politics. Yet, the US no-fly zone provided protection for the formation of a politically autonomous region that then experienced a civil war where the former dictator was

invited back in to aid one of the belligerent parties. Operation Unified Protector was in direct response to the fear that the Qadhafi regime was about to massacre its own civilians. President Obama specifically stated his intention was not to initiate regime change. Despite these statements, the coalition air campaign drastically changed the domestic balance of power allowing a loose alliance of opposition groups to depose the government.

The data correlates no-fly zones and political instability, but does not show a causal relationship. No-fly zones were established to address humanitarian crises that were themselves the byproducts of civil war. In both cases civil wars were already underway at the start of the respective no-fly zones, and in both cases there were brief moments of stability after the completion of operations, followed by relapses into conflict. This study has not discussed the changing policy goals as policymakers reacted to facts on the ground, but instead focuses on strategic goals at the time of implementation as a baseline for measuring outcomes. Furthermore, this study reveals that Benard's typology for categorizing no-fly zones does not adequately capture the true nature of the conflicts. Operation Provide Comfort deterred regime airpower and posited in all three types, but was unable to prevent the outbreak of Kurdish fighting, as demonstrated in Type 3. Operation Unified Protector not only deterred regime airpower, again captured by all three Types, but also destroyed regime ground assets. It simultaneously provided close air support, as demonstrated in Type 1, but for rebel forces as opposed to coalition troops. The two cases examined in this piece do not fit neatly into any of the types, but rather draw from elements of each.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

A no-fly zone in Syria will only weaken Bashar al-Assad's regime and may not be possible given Russia's current deployment. As the US hopes to empower democratic opposition elements, a no-fly zone is likely to aid the Islamic extremist groups it opposes. A successful no-fly zone in Syria requires the deployment of ground troops to guarantee that protected enclaves are not continuously targeted by militant groups. Furthermore, a no-fly zone requires that both the regime and rebel factions are roughly equally degraded, so as to prevent the balance of power from shifting drastically to one side's advantage with a negotiated settlement being the only real conflict termination strategy short of all-out victory by one side. Pursuing this strategy has become significantly more challenging given Russian intervention in direct support of the regime. While the US and international community have made real progress in negotiating a tem-

porary "cessation of hostilities," they will need to take a long-term approach to managing relations within the diverse opposition to prevent future conflict.

The no-fly zones examined in Iraq and Libya weakened regime power and allowed opposition groups to gain political control. While the no-fly zones were successfully established to protect innocent lives, they may have caused or extended conflict, leading to further suffering and destabilization. Policymakers must take these long-term outcomes into consideration when advocating for any future use of no-fly zones as intervention strategies.

**Dylan MaGuire** is a doctoral student in political science at Northeastern University where he focuses on security issues in the Middle East. Previously, he worked on USAID-funded political development projects in Jordan and Morocco.

# Energy and Politics in the Eastern Mediterranean: Ramifications of Cypriot Peace Talks

By Serhat S. Çubukçuoğlu

### Abstract

The discovery of offshore natural gas in the eastern Mediterranean Sea added a new dimension to long-standing confrontations over the Cyprus problem. Competing claims over rights to exploit rich offshore energy resources and to exert political influence for furtherance of national interests heightened Cyprus's importance and underscored its crucial strategic position. On the geopolitical dimension, Russia's intervention in the Syrian civil war and the attempt to monopolize energy supply routes to Europe has led consumers of the industrialized world finally to become serious about hydrocarbon alternatives. These developments reveal not only that the dispute surrounding Cyprus is inextricably linked to its geographical context, but also that energy-related conflict and diplomacy shapes the shifting power play of partnerships in the new global geopolitical environment surrounding the Middle East.

### Introduction

In May 2015, leaders of the divided island of Cyprus resumed peace talks for re-unification under a federal government, visibly raising new hopes to catalyze a resolution to its decades-old dispute. In 2014, unilateral pursuit by Greek, and subsequently Turkish, Cypriots for offshore natural gas in the eastern Mediterranean Sea heightened competition over the delimitation of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and legal rights to exploit rich energy resources beneath the seabed. Notably, the proven combined reserves of recoverable hydrocarbons in the Levantine basin could meet the region's demand for the next 100 years. Furthermore, the Arab Spring that began in 2011 emphasizes the importance of natural gas and the power struggle over energy resources around the Fertile Crescent (Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan). The politically motivated unrest in the region coincided with an economic slowdown in Europe, creating diverging push and pull dimensions to interregional relationships and further complicating negotiations in the Cyprus dispute.

### Natural Gas and Regional Dynamics

In addition to this tectonic shift in energy geopolitics, Turkey, with a projected use of 70 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas per year by 2020, has sought to diversify its energy resources geographically, also furthering economic and foreign policy gains. In this context, special attention was

given to the visit of Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu to Athens in December 2014. Optimism remained high that an interim agreement between Greece and Turkey to jointly search for and produce hydrocarbons could serve as a confidence-building measure, providing the perception that time was ripe to revive UN-led peace talks in Cyprus. Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras's reciprocal visit to Ankara in November 2015 furthered the notion that a regional benchmark in energy politics had been bestowed upon the Eastern Mediterranean.

The resumption and progression of talks was easier said than done, however. Ensuing political and financial crises in southeastern Europe, on top of deep divisions between Greek and Turkish views of the problem and long-term interests, have rendered a quick and immediate solution unlikely. First, despite the momentum of the ongoing peace talks, national pride is an important psychological factor that influences decisions of the Cypriot polity. Greek Cypriots perceive a creative solution to be a reduction in power that could negatively impact their negotiating position in the recognition and sovereignty of northern Cyprus. Secondly, Cyprus does not have sufficient power to exert influence on Turkey by acting alone, and relies on closer interaction, cooperation, and coalition with Greece, Egypt, and Israel to mitigate this power asymmetry. In December 2015 and January 2016, the group issued declarations in two separate tri-

partite summits backing the Greek Cypriot position to continue engaging in natural gas extraction, production, and exporting activities without a negotiated settlement of the maritime delimitation dispute. The uniting factor between these parties to develop a common position and enhance their partnership on energy security counters Turkish interests. Nevertheless, “groupthink” around cooperation in making use of hydrocarbons involves overestimation of the quadripartite coalition’s power, reinforces cognitive biases of the Greek Cypriot polity, and contributes entrenchment in its own position.

Since the Greek Cypriot government framed prospects of the negotiation with Turkey as gains and became risk-averse, it is inadvertently more comfortable and much less willing to take risks vis-à-vis Turkish Cypriots. Turkey was therefore left with its next best course of action in 2014: to conduct seismic research and hydrocarbon exploration activities on behalf of northern Cyprus in seven EEZ areas that overlap with those demarcated by the Greek Cypriot government. However, since then, Turkey has ended the hydrocarbon research activity and withdrawn its seismic vessel, Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa, as a political gesture to end the standoff prior to the re-launch of peace talks between the two communities in May 2015.

### The Israeli-Egyptian Connection

Concurrently, 2015 witnessed another geopolitical event that would further alter regional dynamics: Italian gas company Eni’s discovery of 850 bcm of a natural gas reserve in Egypt’s Zohr field 120 miles ashore amounted to the largest to date in the Mediterranean Sea and added a new dimension to regional energy geopolitics. Historically, Egypt had suffered from supply shortage due to expansion of gas-fired power generation capacity and strong growth in electricity demand. If production in Zohr field starts in 2017 as estimated, it will not only fill up underutilized capacity and fulfill soaring demand in Egypt for at least a decade, but also avail a portion of the disposable volume for export to European markets via LNG terminals. This puts Israel’s plans to export gas from future startup Leviathan field to Egypt into uncertainty, delaying it beyond 2018, and makes a potential agreement to send resultant gas via undersea pipeline to Egypt’s LNG plants commercially unviable. Likewise, and despite political rhetoric, the Greek Cypriot government will find it difficult to justify infrastructure investment to transport gas to Egypt for LNG export. This strategic opportunity ironically seems to elevate Turkey’s position, as alternative options of monetization are eliminated in favor of exporting Israeli and Cypriot gas to the

ever-growing Turkish market.

### Turkey’s Geostrategic Position

Turkey remains an important player in energy geopolitics, acting first and foremost as a transit route between central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. In December 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin’s announcement to drop the decade-old South Stream pipeline project in favor of Turkey as its preferred partner, for an alternative route, was perceived with joy in some circles. This positive climate hovering on tactical cooperation in large-scale energy projects quickly shifted to a political crisis following Turkey’s downing of

As a key actor, Turkey should realign its strategy and pursue value-creating maritime negotiations with all littoral states in the region.

a Russian warplane in November 2015. The incident brought Turkey closer to the Euro-Atlantic alliance and reinvigorated its relations with the European Union (EU), enabling intensified dialogue to ensure commitment to common policy objectives and border protection against the flow of Syrian refugees. Turkey’s reconciliation with Israel and expanding relations from Qatar to the Turkic states of central Asia further underscored Ankara’s tactical maneuverability and keen interest to consolidate its influence as an economic hub in the Eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, the normalization of relations with Israel could reinvigorate construction of the proposed 550 km pipeline along the seabed, which could supply an estimated 10 bcm of natural gas to Turkey, or 20 percent of its annual demand, by figures of 2015. Turkey would then gain access to an alternative gas supplier that would partially alleviate dependence on Russia and Iran, which collectively supplies 73 percent of the country’s annual imports of gas. This is contingent upon a political breakthrough in Cyprus, whose endorsement is a pre-requisite for the laying of an Israeli-Turkish pipeline on its EEZ, furthering the notion that energy will continue to shape the geopolitical dynamics of the region.

### Cypriot Maritime Dispute

Natural gas now stands as the most important pillar in Turkey’s demand for energy; as the world’s energy supply and demand cartography changes, Turkey emerges both as a major conduit and a heavy importer. Since Turkey is Gazprom’s second largest export destination after Germany, access to alternative sources of energy in the Eastern Medi-

terranean would decrease its excessive dependence on a friend-turned-foe at a time of heightened tensions. Safe access to high seas and the underlying resources of the seabed are of key significance to sustain its formidable economic growth, and therefore Turkey tries to reap the lion’s share of natural gas trade in order to become a regional powerhouse, energy supplier, and transit hub.

### Greek Cypriot Position

For Cyprus, the viability and security of international energy supply projects depends on a just and equitable resolution of the EEZ delimitation dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Greek Cypriot position is essentially based on the claim that the maritime delimitation between mainland Turkey and Cyprus must be done exclusively by the adoption of the equidistance principle irrespective of any “special circumstances” that may exist. According to this view, Cyprus has sovereign right to exercise jurisdiction over its 200-mile wide EEZ around the entire island as per Article 121:2 of the UN Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Greek Cypriot EEZ overlaps the area Turkey claims in five of the thirteen offshore research blocks in the Mediterranean Sea. Furthermore, Greece would like to see Cypriot and Israeli natural gas exported via LNG terminals or pipelines across the seabed to mainland Greece, then linked with Greek natural gas to the south of Crete and the Ionian Sea, ultimately becoming the energy transit hub for Europe. This is, by and large, contingent upon Greek and Greek Cypriot EEZs having a common maritime boundary. According to Greece, Turkey is the only potential rival actor that can impede such a project because consent of the coastal state with jurisdiction over the EEZ is required for the delineation of the course for laying pipelines on the continental shelf.

### Turkey’s Position

Turkey, contrarily, is a non-signatory to UNCLOS and does not recognize Greek Cypriot EEZ delimitation agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, and Israel. Ankara claims that as a de facto divided island, the “Republic of Cyprus” (the Greek Cypriot government) cannot represent the interests of northern Cyprus unless the island is reunified with a single EEZ. Ankara’s position is based on the equity principle that calls for the consideration of “special circumstances” to respect proportionality and non-encroachment rules, as Turkey’s coastal length is over twenty times that of Cyprus. Due to conflicting claims by Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities on maritime delimitation within the wider context of bi-communal talks and reconciliation on the island, Turkey holds the view that the exploitation of natural resources should

be deferred until a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem is reached. Stressing future gains, Israel calls on Cyprus and Turkey to settle their differences and agree on a roadmap to the most commercially viable option to deliver Eastern Mediterranean gas to demand centers of Europe. Lebanon, on the other hand, has not ratified the 2007 delimitation of EEZs with Cyprus, partly to avoid upsetting Turkey, and furthermore protested the 2010 Cypriot–Israeli bilateral delimitation agreement as an extension of its own maritime dispute

In an escalating contest for power and strategic influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, undeniably an impasse between Turkey and Cyprus over EEZs would be a lose-lose outcome not only for both countries, but also for the entire region.

with Israel. The sensitivity arises from Lebanese and Israeli unsettled counter-claims that overlap on a surface area of 850 km<sup>2</sup>, to which a lack of diplomatic recognition poses a major obstacle to solving the dispute. All of these push-and-pull relationships further complicate matters regionally, as geopolitical interests harden.

### Recommendation

As a key actor, Turkey should realign its strategy and pursue value-creating maritime negotiations with all littoral states in the region. Polemic discourse, demagoguery, and stereotyping toward key stakeholders will only lessen the chances of reaching a resolution. Since sovereign rights for researching and developing the underwater resources belong to the entire island of Cyprus, not exclusively to Greek or Turkish Cypriots, Turkey should continue to foster a constructive dialogue whereby parties are able to more easily invent options for mutual gains and dismiss the assumption of a fixed pie. If Turkey can be part of a brokered peace deal in Cyprus this would strengthen the EU-NATO partnership, decrease political risk, and increase the affordability of a Cypriot Turkish pipeline project that could be linked with the southern corridor from Azerbaijan to Europe, bypassing Russia. This would present an alternative route over conflict-prone energy corridors such as Kivrkuk-Ceyhan, North Africa, and Persian Gulf LNG supplies that face risks from regional instability.

Turkey’s core interest is not in controlling a particular sea area, but to diversify its energy supplies, fuel its expanding economy, have safe access to marine fisheries, and ensure security of Turkish



Cypriots. Likewise, Greek Cypriots' core interest is not in controlling a particular sea area, but rather to economize on energy resources of the region more efficiently, to sustain the political reconciliation process on the island for a just solution, and to alleviate the perceived threat of Turkey's military intervention.

### Conclusion

International pipeline projects over the Eastern Mediterranean compete to gain feasibility and security appraisals in finding the most cost-effective energy supply route to consumer markets of Europe. This situation has underscored Cyprus's crucial strategic position and heightened its importance in a power struggle between Qatar, the US, the EU, Turkey, Russia, and Iran to control energy supply routes from east to west. While Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and Egypt have committed to increase efforts to mark out their maritime zones, the tendency in Ankara has been to downplay such maneuvers on the assumption that what states do matters a lot more than what they say, and that multilateral negotiations may proceed slowly before a conclusive agreement may take place. In light of the new political context, it is crucial for Turkey to change this bilateral negotiation geometry and address the complex and multipartite nature of the maritime dispute, utilizing overall patterns of deference and influence. In an escalating contest for power and strategic influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, undeniably an impasse between Turkey and Cyprus over EEZs would be a lose-lose outcome not only for both countries, but also for the entire region. It would increase regional political risk and decrease affordability of potential projects for energy exploitation. Time will tell if Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey can avoid brinkmanship during the negotiation process in reaching a consensus, while at the same time, work with Israel and Egypt to ensure maximum utilization of opportunities for offshore gas exploitation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

**Serhat S. Çubukçuoğlu** is a freelance researcher in global development and politics. With an MA in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, his areas of interest are energy diplomacy and conflict resolution in the developing world. Çubukçuoğlu's most recent research is about energy geopolitics in the Middle East and the application of international law to maritime delimitation disputes for exploitation of hydrocarbons in the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

### Endnotes

1. "Overview of Oil and Natural Gas in the Eastern Mediterranean Region," U.S. Energy Information Administration, 15 August 2013.
2. Colombo, Silvia, Kristian Coates-Ulrichsen, et. al., "The GCC in the Mediterranean in Light of the Arab Spring," The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 21 December 2012.
3. Mehmet Ögütçü, "Rivalry in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Turkish Dimension," The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 11 June 2012; Ebru Ogurlu, "Turkey Amidst the Shifting Geopolitics in the Eastern Mediterranean," Rethink Institute, 9 May 2013.
4. Serhat S. Çubukçuoğlu, "The EEZ Delimitation Dispute Between Cyprus and Turkey – Part II," Tufts University, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1 December 2014.
5. Ibid.
6. Ahmed Fouad, "Is Turkey the Odd Man Out as Egypt, Greece, Cyprus Cozy Up?," Al-Monitor, 31 January 2016; "Trilateral Meeting Between Israel, Greece and Cyprus," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 January 2016.
7. "Greece, Cyprus and Israel Eye Tripartite Talks," Ekathimerini, 10 November 2014.
8. Norlen, Anders, and Kerri Maddock, "Giant Gas Field Discovery in Egypt Likely to Impact Global Gas Markets," McKinsey Solutions, September 2015.
9. Ibid.
10. Simon Henderson, "Egyptian Offshore Gas Find Curtails Israel's Options," The Washington Institute, 31 August 2015.
11. "Turkish Stream Talks Will Get Boost After Elections Says Energy Minister," Natural Gas Europe, 3 October 2015.
12. Necdet Pamir, "Deniz Dibi Enerji Kaynakları: Durum Tespiti," KOÇ ÜNİVERSİTESİ DENİZCİLİK FORUMU, 9 February 2016.
13. "Turkey Plans to Build a Pipeline from Israel," Natural Gas Europe, 21 December 2015.
14. David J. Bederman, *International Law Frameworks* (New York: Thomson Reuters/Foundation Press, 2010), 135.
15. "Regime of Islands," United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Part VIII, Article 121, 63.
16. Tullio Treves, "ITLOS and the Oil and Gas Industry," Second International Oil and Gas Conference, London, 20 September 2007.
17. David J. Bederman, *International Law Frameworks*.
18. Daniel Meier, "Lebanon's Maritime Boundaries: Between Economic Opportunities and Military Confrontation," Center for Lebanese Studies, St. Anthony's College, June 2013.

# Women in the Men's House: The Integration of Women in the Algerian Military

By Dr. Dalia Ghanem-Yazbeck

### Abstract

There are many studies on women in the military (gender, cultural, feminist social studies, etc.), but research on women in the Algerian military is in an embryonic state. In fact, it is fair enough to say that to date no study has been conducted regarding this topic, at least to the best of the author's knowledge. To be specific, quite little information exists about the Algerian army as a whole. This is due to the culture of secrecy that surrounds the institution—dubbed by the Algerian press "La grande muette"—despite its efforts to open up and communicate more information with the public, as demonstrated by the Communication Division of Information and Guidance within the Algerian Ministry of Defense. Integrating women into the military has become an issue of increasing importance that deserves further attention from military decision-makers and researchers, particularly because the number of women joining the Algerian army has increased dramatically between 1978 and 2015.

This article is centered on the narrative and discourse about females as they appear in the official monthly magazine of the Algerian People's National Army (PNA), *El Djeich*. Focus is placed on linguistic and visual elements of the publication. These aspects are further strengthened through information gained from interviews with former PNA officials. As a caveat, this piece is not about the technicalities (e.g., the number of women enlisting, how they are treated, and what opportunities they can enjoy). For practical reasons, in particular the institution's lack of cooperation and transparency, the original purpose of the study—which was to observe this technical dimension—shifted to an angle that would not force the author to undertake an in-depth ethnographic fieldwork assignment. In addition, it should be noted that interviews were conducted only with men because all women contacted were nervous and concerned about the research. Thus, this piece can be perceived as the beginning of a more ambitious ethnographic study on women and the military in Algeria.

Since 2009, five women have been promoted to general in the PNA, one of the first and only armies in the Arab world to enable women to reach such a ranking. This decision was based on the presidential decree 06-02 of 28 February 2006, which made the status of women in the military legally equal to that of their male counterparts. However,

the legislation on equality does not represent a fundamental shift in the PNA's approach; rather, it is a public relations move for the PNA to portray itself as liberal, equal, and open to all segments of society it claims to represent. Despite its numeric advantage over other Arab armies in integrating women, findings indicate that the PNA still has a long way to go in fostering a truly equal environment for women in the military.

In an effort to implement the aforementioned decree, the Algerian army established a formal policy framework in 2006 for equal opportunities in the army. The PNA has also made efforts toward recruiting women and acknowledging their right to work within the institution. Practical measures such as maternity leave, retirement, night duties, and extended leave for specific cases



Military intervention after an earthquake. Image taken from *Al Djeich Magazine*.



(such as raising a child under the age of three, taking care of a disabled family member, or for academic pursuits), as well as the construction of new facilities were taken to implement the new statute and facilitate women's participation in the army. Consequently, women have a more robust presence in the army than ever before; there are currently thirty times more women in service than there were in 1978. Today, women are also admitted in several military institutions, such as Algeria's Cadet Academy, in which they accounted for 18 percent of all recruits in 2013. Women are also accepted in the Naval Academy, in which they represented 31.5 percent of 2013 recruits. They are similarly admitted into the National Gendarmerie Academy, the National Academy of Military Health, the Academy of Military Administration, the Special Military Academy, and the Regional School of Maintenance of Transmission Material.

Yet, running counter to the equality decree, there are attitudes featuring a "combination of inclusion and exclusion" exhibited towards women in the Algerian army. Based on research that involved an analysis of the official PNA magazine *El Djeich* (Algerian for "army") and interviews with former military personnel, women are neither fully integrated nor completely excluded. This unfinished integration is due to three main factors: the ways in which women are represented in the PNA, a traditional gender-based division of labor in the military, and the prevalence of "protective paternalism" towards them.

### A Sexualized and Contradictory Representation of Military Women

A corpus of forty issues from 2011 to 2014 of *El Djeich* was analyzed in an interpretative textual approach. This includes an examination of what was said about women and the manner in which it was said. Additionally, careful attention was given to the pictures of women.

From this research I found the military institution draws a sharp line between males and females, reinforcing gender divisions. It also links masculinity and war.

From this research I found that the military institution draws a sharp line between males and females, reinforcing gender divisions. It also links between masculinity and war.

linity and war. Depictions of male soldiers dominate *El Djeich*. For every one hundred pages, there are, on average, two pictures of women. Pictures of women are smaller than those of men, and do not have the same visual focus: women are consistently feminized in their appearance (i.e. wearing makeup), while men are often portrayed with camouflage or dirt on their clothes and faces. Women are never (with one or two exceptions) pictured in non-combat positions and are always represented in passive, but technical, positions, such as operating a computer, being lead or instructed, and appearing in what are considered traditionally "female positions" like nursing and teaching. They are almost never depicted near a weapon or using one. This shows that the army is still ruled by masculine culture. As David H. J. Morgan notes, "Of all the sites where masculinities are constructed, reproduced, and deployed, those associated with war and the military are some of the most direct."

An exception was found in a special April 2013 issue for women's day titled "PNA: History and Memory of the Fiftieth Anniversary." There is a woman in military fatigues (land army) from behind. She is standing up, wearing a helmet, with her long hair visible and tied back. She is holding a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG7). In another picture, titled "Algerian Women: More Than 50 Years of Sacrifices and Abnegation," there is a woman clothed in black and white, most likely a picture from the struggle of independence era. She has a determined look, is seemingly very focused, and is lying on her stomach, holding what looks to be a Vickers-Berthier (VB MKI) machine gun. The main narrative of these rare pictures is to show the ability of women as fighters within the PNA: they can fight, use weapons, and have special skills like men. These representations help negate the army's male-forward, but similarly, emphasize the "hyper-virile" character of the military institution that is and remains primarily male and martial. A contradiction also exists here, as women are attributed certain qualities in the magazine traditionally associated with men, such as bravery, courage, determination, strength, and stamina.



Women working on switchboards. Image taken from *El Djeich* Magazine.

One has to acknowledge the PNA's efforts to offer women the same chance to work in the army and be equal with their male counterparts. However, by displaying women less often than men, feminizing them, continuously representing them in passive positions, and eluding imagery of women and warfare, the PNA only reinforces gender division and strengthens the associations between virility, masculinity, and war.

### The Traditional Sexual Division of Labor

In the Algerian military, women are recruited based on an equality policy. However, they suffer from a traditional sexual division of labor and a resistance to their full participation in the PNA. According to interview with former military officials, the majority of women occupy subordinate positions. Today, as during the Algerian War of Independence (1954 to 1962), women are still the "aid" of their male counterparts. Indeed, during the War of independence, the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) and its armed wing, the *Armée de Libération Nationale* (NLA), advertised heroic images of *les poseuses de bombes* (roughly translated to the installers of bombs)—a term used to describe leading female combatants such as Djamila Bouhired, Hassiba Ben Bouali, and Zohra Drif—in order to present itself as an *avant-garde* for a progressive audience. Images of combatant women, however, were not the rule, but rather, the exception. Algerian women posing with military outfits and a gun constituted the face of the FLN/NLA to the outside world, a way of saying "our women are heroes of the revolution against colonialism, and they are not victims of any kind of dominant patriarchy."

Today, as before, women are only recruited to the army for what are considered "suitable" positions. As explained by a former male lieutenant-colonel explains, "Women do work in different sectors and there is no segregation against them, not at all . . . They have access to all sectors, they can work wherever they want . . . even if they remain localized in female jobs that are more suitable for their nature, you know, like administration, the secretariat or social services or interpretation, also the judicial service . . . but this is their choice."

Based on interviews with former military personnel it can be discerned that the majority of women in the Algerian army are concentrated in the communications department. Some work as switchboard operators, while others serve as map-makers, translators, or data entry personnel. Figures from *El Djeich* confirm this trend: the army's information and communications department employs 17 percent of women enlisted in the military and 51 of the civilian women assimilated in

Men in Combat. Image taken from *El Djeich* Magazine.



the military. The health department employs 17 percent of enlisted women. A substantial portion of enlisted women also work in educational roles as instructors, researchers, or scientists.

As M. Wechsler Segal explains, "The degree of

The combat ban reflects traditional, paternalistic attitudes toward women who are excluded from full participation in the military. This paternalism deprives women of the treatment their male counterparts receive, therefore undermining their training and capacities as female soldiers."

gender segregation in the civilian occupational structure also affects women's military participation, although the relationship is not linear." The pattern of minimal women's participation in the PNA mirrors the trends in the gendered division of the national labor force. Indeed, out of 10.7 million employed people in Algeria, 1.9 million are women, or only 18.6 percent. To put that into context, in 2014, women made up 49.7 percent of the country's total population.

Despite women's open access to the workplace—as a result of mass education with a female youth literacy rate of 80 percent in 2014—their access to decision-making positions is inconsequential. The

Women doing computer work. Image taken from Al Djeich Magazine.

military echoes this trend; however, data showing the number of women occupying senior ranks is not available. Nevertheless, it is highly revealing that, on the day when Fatma-Zohra Arjoun became the first woman promoted to general on 5 July 2009, fifty-one men also achieved the same rank.

Women are still over-represented in lower paying positions and concentrated in a few sectors traditionally seen as “feminine.” As such, there is a high proportion of women in health. More than 50 percent of medical *maîtres-assistants* (assistant professors) are women, and more than forty-eight of paramedics are female. Women constitute even higher proportions in the education sector. In 2011 they accounted for 74.3 percent of those working in pre-primary education, 54.9 percent in primary education, and 39.2 percent in higher education. In the same year, women accounted for 67.94 percent of the employees of the National Radio Staff.

They also constitute lower proportions in positions of higher status: there are only 11.4 percent of senior positions (in ministries, as secretary-generals, director generals, chiefs of ministries, ambassadors, and executives in central government institutions, public bodies, and local authorities) that are occupied by women. In the judiciary sector, women constitute only 24 percent of the Supreme Court, and there is only one female general prosecutor who was appointed in 2014.

### “Even in the Military, a Woman is Still a Woman . . . and a Mother Above All”

Based on interviews conducted for this research, another illustration of women’s limited integration in the army is the inequality in training, though the institution leaves it to the women’s discretion to decide which physical exercises to partake in. As one former male PNA colonel states, “If a military woman wants to do the same drills as men, she can do so, but only if she wants to . . . but it is useless . . . because she does not need it. It is up to her. It is also up to the instructor’s personality—if he considers women equal to men, he will ask her to perform the training exactly like the men . . . but he cannot oblige her. Women have the right to decline participation in a drill because they are women. A man cannot have any excuse.”

According to interviews, in addition to segregation in field exercise, women cannot serve in the infantry, armor, or field artillery branches slated for direct ground combat. One former lieutenant-colonel states, “Women don’t go into combat. It is well-known but not written down because it is bad publicity . . . [Women] don’t participate in combat missions; it is useless to make them do these exercises that they are never going to execute.”

This exclusion is also true in the air force, as

women are trained to become pilots, but generally work in transportation units or in flight training. Physiological differences (body composition, strength, and endurance) remain the most cited justification for the segregation. As a male lieutenant colonel states, “Let’s face it, we are not made the same, it is Mother Nature who decided . . . but this does not mean that there is no equality. There is total equality in the institution, but women have to be protected, so the institution protects them.”

The combat ban reflects traditional, paternalistic attitudes toward women who are excluded from full participation in the military. This paternalism deprives women of the treatment their male counterparts receive, therefore undermining their training and capacities as female soldiers. It also leads to female exclusion from prestigious military positions for which combat experience is the key. There are no explicit regulations governing the field exercise segregation because it would damage the PNA’s projected image of equality. However, according to all interviewees, there are “special arrangements” made for female soldiers.

All interviewees supported the view that women cannot go through the same military training as men because of physical inadequacies, explaining that because of their “delicate nature” women need to be protected. As a retired commandant concludes, “Even in the military, a woman is still a woman . . . and a mother above all.”

### Conclusion

Despite the unfinished integration, women’s recruitment to the PNA remains a positive accomplishment, specifically in comparison with the army’s previous stance on the issue and when viewing alongside other regional militaries. The PNA has made important and valuable efforts in recruiting women and acknowledging their rights, but their integration into the military remains incomplete. In order to overcome the gap between the discourse of equality and the reality for women in the military, the PNA needs to start regarding and treating women as full-fledged soldiers and equal members of its institution.



El Djeich, no. 601. p. 8

Note: A longer version of this study was published by the Carnegie Middle East Center, as part of the 2014–2015 “Renegotiating Civil-Military Relations in Arab States: Political and Economic Governance in Transition” Project.

**Dr. Dalia Ghanem-Yazbeck** is a research analyst at the Carnegie Middle East Center (CMEC) in Lebanon. Ghanem-Yazbeck is an expert on political violence, terrorism, and the radicalization process, with a focus on Jihadism in Algeria. She has published pieces on political and extremist violence, including work on Islam in Algeria, on the Islamic State organization, and the participation of women in jihadi groups. She has been a regular commentator on such issues in different Arab and international print and audio-visual media. She holds a PhD from the University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-En-Yvelines (France) and a master’s degree in political science from the University of La Sorbonne (France).

### Endnotes

1. “Ordonnance n° 06-02 du 29 Moharram 1427 Correspondant au 28 février 2006 portant statut général des personnels militaires,” *Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne* N° 12, 1 March 2016.
2. Steven A. Cook, *Ruling But Not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, Turkey* (Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), El Djeich, No. 601.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Robbins, Joyce, and Uri Ben-Eliezer, “New Roles or ‘New Times?’ Gender Inequality and Militarism in Israel’s Nation-in-Arms,” *Social Politics* Vol. 7, Issue 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 309–342.
6. Glick, Peter, and Susan T. Fiske, “Hostile and Benevolent Sexism: Measuring Ambivalent Sexist Attitudes Toward Women,” *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, March 1997), 119–135.
7. Melissa T. Brown, “A Woman in the Army Is Still a Woman: Representations of Women in US Military Recruiting Advertisements for the All-Volunteer Force,” *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* Vol. 33, Issue 2 (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 2012), 151–175.
8. David H. Morgan, “Theater of War: Combat, the Military, and Masculinities,” *Theorizing Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 1994), 166–182.
9. Sasson-Levy, Orna, and Edna Lomsky-Feder, “Genre et Violence dans les Paroles de Soldates: Le Cas d’Israël” *Critique Internationale* Vol. 60, No. 3 (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2013), 71–88.
10. Hähnel-Mesnard, Carola, Marie Liénard-Yeterian, and Cristina Marinas, C. (2008). *Culture et Mémoire: Représentations Contemporaines de la Mémoire dans les Espaces Mémoires, les Arts du Visuel, la Littérature et le Théâtre* (Palaiseau, France: Ecole Polytechnique, 2013).
11. “Hier...aujourd’hui et demain,” dir. Yamina Bachir Chouikh, 2010.
12. Retired Algerian lieutenant colonel, interview with author, 12 May 2015.
13. “ANP: Histoire et Mémoire du Cinquantenaire,” El Djeich,

Vol. 3., No. 25, 2012.

14. Ibid.

15. Mady Wechsler Segal, “Women’s Military Roles Cross-Nationally: Past, Present, and Future,” *Gender & Society* Vol. 9, No. 6 (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 1995), 757–775.

16. It should be noted that “labor force” mentioned here describes those working for an industry or company where employment is structured and paid in a formal way.

17. *Femme Algérienne en Chiffres* (Sidi M’Hamed, Algeria: Centre d’Information et de Documentation sur les Droits de l’Enfant de la Femme, 2014).

18. Donald G. Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres, and Extreme Violence: why Normal People Come to Commit Atrocities* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2007).

19. “Rapport de la République Algérienne Démocratique Populaire Beijing + 20,” Republic of Algeria, 2014, 30.

20. “Percentage of Female Teachers by Teaching Level of Education,” UNESCO Institute of Statistics, n.d.

21. “Ministre de la Solidarité National, de la Famille et de la Condition de la Femme,” Republic of Algeria, 2014.

22. Ibid.

23. Retired Algerian colonel, interview with author, 14 May 2015.

24. Retired Algerian lieutenant colonel, interview with author, 12 May 2015.

25. Algerian lieutenant colonel, interview with author, 13 May 2015.

26. Retired Algerian commandant, interview with author, 14 May 2015.

# The Kurdish Divide: Reshaping of Interests and Actors in Syria's War

By Joseph Sadek

## Abstract

The war in Syria has devastated the country and the violence has bled into neighboring states. As a result, hundreds of thousands have died and millions have fled the country. The forces fueling this conflict come from many sources, each having their own complexities while intertwining with one another. Kurdish armed groups are no exception. Today, while violence between Turkey and its Kurdish population escalates, so too does Kurdish involvement in the war in Syria. The diverse political and military objectives of the Kurds in the region are not conducive for cooperation. The Turkish-based Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Syrian-based Democratic Union Party (PYD) are one example of the growing divide. As the war in Syria goes on, inter-group objectives and international alliances will produce greater competition and division between Kurdish armed groups.

## Introduction

When Kurdish armed groups captured Tel Abyad in June 2015 many feared Kurdish militias were undertaking an ethnic cleansing of Arabs in the Syrian border town. The Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its paramilitary wing, the People's Protection Units (YPG), with assistance from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), were coordinating with the US-led Combined Joint Task Force to retake an important Daesh supply route in a region the Kurds call Rojava in northeastern Syria. By mid-June, the Kurdish militias had captured a strip of land on Syria's northern border from Kobani (also known as Ain al-Arab) to the Iraqi border (see Figure 1).

While recapturing Tel Abyad was a strategic victory against Daesh, the new reality reveals something much grimmer for Ankara: Turkey now faces a formidable Syrian-Kurdish presence along its southern border. Soon after the Kurdish gains, it became clear that Ankara was doing more than fighting the so-called Islamic State: Turkey's air campaign was targeting Kurdish armed groups—primarily the PKK, and to an extent, the YPG/PYD. The air campaign ended the possibility of a return to the Kurdish–Turkish peace process that had been stalled since 2013. Turkey's thirty-year conflict with the PKK, a designated terrorist organization in Turkey, the United States, and the European Union (EU), again reached violent confrontation, calling into question the viability of any future peace.

While the war in Syria is indeed a tragedy for

the Syrian people, its consequences reverberate far beyond its borders. The terrorist attacks in Ankara and Istanbul in the summer of 2015 are no exception. For Turkey, the war in Syria has reignited tensions between the PKK and Ankara especially in its east. Beyond rebuffing the PKK inside the country, Turkey's domestic fight and Syrian policy caused a divergence of priorities between the PYD-YPG and the PKK. For the Kurds, internal division makes the possibility of an autonomous Kurdish government, cohesive political strategy, and an independent state, increasingly uncertain.

## History

One cannot accurately assess Turkey's relationship with its Kurdish population unless the history of Turkey's founding moment is examined. It was the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres that first sought to answer the Kurdish question, which was designed to evaluate the Kurdish people's merits of self-determination by the victors of World War I. This took place among the disassembling of the Ottoman Empire into mandates by Britain and France. It was within this political context that the father of the emergent Turkish state, Mustafa Kemal, and his Republican elite were operating. This elite class ultimately ignored the treaty and defined the terms of the Turkish nation, effectively neutralizing what would have been the establishment of a Kurdish State.

## Syrian Civil War: PKK, PYD, and Turkey's Policies and Decisions

In 2013, Ankara began to take a much more active role in the Syrian War. While the Erdogan government called for Syrian President Bashar al Assad to step down in 2011, it has only recently begun ramping up support to opposition groups—primarily the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and Ahrar al-Sham. Ankara's support for the Syrian opposition was consistent with its 2011 statements, its policy having second-order effects for Syria's Kurds.

On a number of occasions, the emboldened and predominately Arab Ahrar al Sham and FSA clashed with the PKK and the PYD—especially throughout 2012 and 2013. Although this may not have been the intended consequence of Ankara's policies, it surely saw Arab-Kurdish clashes in the Turkish state's interest. Turkey's intervention on its southern border, amid clashes in northern Syria, only increased over the next two years.

After a series of terrorist attacks in the summer of 2015, Turkish policymakers signaled that it would cooperate evermore closely with the US-led mission to degrade and destroy Daesh. Turkey's granting of access to Incirlik Air Base was an important contribution to the air campaign. However, it soon became clear that Ankara's military involvement focused largely on targeting Kurdish-held positions in Tal Abyad and Kobani. By targeting its Kurdish enemies on the ground, Turkey's joint air campaign threatened the undoing of US efforts a month earlier that allowed the same Kurdish groups to recapture the two key cities.

## The 2015 Turkish Elections

Further contributing to the devolution of Turkish-Kurdish relations, as a result of the aforementioned military campaign, is the political fallout after the electoral losses of the Justice Development Party (AKP) in Turkey's 2015 parliamentary election. The elections gave the liberal, Kurdish-led People's Democratic Party (HDP) thirteen percent of the vote and admittance into the Turkish Parliament (admittance requires a ten percent minimum). After the election, AKP, the country's largest bloc, led by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was forced to form a coalition government in parliament. The AKP leadership was unable to negotiate a coalition with the Republican People's Party within the constitutionally mandated forty-five-day time period. Optimists believed that an AKP-HDP coalition might coalesce, but hardliners and political jockeying on both sides made any agreement unlikely. In fact, many believed Erdogan's party actively campaigned to undermine the HDP, reflecting the deep-seated mistrust that HDP has for the ruling AKP. Most recently, this is reflected in AKP's campaign to lift immunity from HDP parliamentarians.

The summer 2015 terrorist attacks during the election cycle initially heightened electoral antagonism as AKP and HDP both seized the opportunity to blame the other for inciting the violence. While HDP leadership put the blame on Erdogan's administration, top figures in AKP blamed Daesh, the PKK, and radical leftists. Many wonder if the leftists the AKP was referring to was the HDP. HDP argued that AKP had let the reigns loose on terrorists and thugs operating inside Turkey. HDP and many media outlets believed this to be especially true for the Kurdish Communist center bombing in July 2015. In October, when the investigation of the Ankara peace rally bombing was underway, the PKK publicly announced a ceasefire. The PKK seemed to realize that HDP's political support was tenuous, which could explain its willingness to initiate a ceasefire.

Erdogan's party knew the renewed violence would work in AKP's favor, as his government took steps to harden its position against terrorism, which included more air strikes on Kurdish-held

Turkey's participation in the Syrian war and the strong-arm politics by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the face of the Syrian war has made addressing Kurdish grievances a tertiary priority.

positions in Syria and Iraq. In the November 2015 snap elections, AKP was counting on the Turkish electorate voting for safety and stability to be ushered in by AKP instead of HDP, which had been labeled as a destabilizing force. AKP won back a majority in Parliament. HDP lost almost three percentage points, but remained above the parliamentary threshold of ten percent.

The Turkish political mainstream response to the 2015 elections initiated a second front of engagement between Turkey and its Kurdish citizens. For forty years Ankara has dealt with a PKK insurgency, but as Turkey has democratized, political space has opened for Kurdish participation in national politics. The 2015 national parliamentary elections were a crucial moment for that engagement. It was especially important for internal Kurdish politics in Turkey; HDP's rise will require the reshaping of the political calculations and operational strategies the PKK pursues. While the PKK may not want to undermine the legitimate political capital HDP has garnered, it presumably desires to maintain its centrality to the Kurdish narrative in Turkey. However, HDP leadership and the party's popularity repositions the Kurdish narrative in the mainstream political process from that of violence



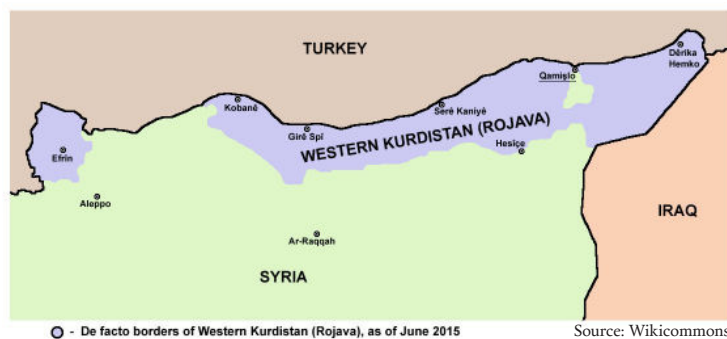


Figure 1

to a one that is more politically centered.

### An Untenable Approach

The International Crisis Group (ICG) has rightly argued that addressing the Kurdish insurgency requires separating the conflict with the PKK from addressing the legitimate concerns of Turkey's Kurdish citizens. The ICG also argues that conferring more social and political rights to Kurds is a human rights issue and addressing Kurdish grievances would yield Ankara a better relationship with all of its citizens. Doing so would signal to the Kurds that Ankara is willing to offer real concessions for peace, undermining PKK violence. However, Turkey's participation in the Syrian war and the strong-arm politics by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the face of the Syrian war has made addressing Kurdish grievances a tertiary priority. Similarly, Kurdish militia participation in the war in Syria makes peaceful negotiations more complex.

### The PKK and PYD: Two Distinct Geographies

As the Syrian war continues unabated, PKK and PYD interests, as well as their operational objectives, will diverge. The PYD primary focus remains protecting the Syrian-Kurdish populations from external threats. In the opening stages of the war in Syria, the PYD maintained a cold peace with the Assad regime, but numerous clashes with regime forces (and opposition groups) have exemplified the Kurds' resolve in protecting territories under its control. While it has mainly focused on fighting Daesh militants in Syria, it is important to address how the PYD, and its armed YPG wing, will respond to the Turkish military, which has increased its presence on the Turkish-Syrian border. With Turkish air strikes against Syrian-Kurdish positions, the question to ask is: will YPG forces extend operations into Turkey? Most likely, the answer

will be no. This is where PKK-YPG divergence becomes clear. The PYD/YPG will remain focused in Syria, while the PKK continues its insurgency in eastern Turkey due to separate priorities and goals.

In late summer 2015, it became clear that Turkey would constitute the PKK's sphere of operations for four reasons. First, the PKK has been embedded historically in the insurgency against the Turkish State and can easily operate in eastern Turkey from its bases in Iraq and Turkey. Additionally, the PYD/

Today's Turkey must contend with a profound duality in its relationship with the Kurds, a relationship with both a political and military dimension.

YPG risks damaging its crucial alliance with US coalition forces by extending into Turkey, America's NATO ally. External geopolitical alliances play an important role in the PYD's continued arms and logistical support. Washington does (even if superficially) make a distinction between the PYD/YPG and the PKK; one that strengthens the PYD's position in the war in Syria vis-à-vis the PKK's is this distinction. The PYD carefully words its statements regarding regional actors, often claiming that it is not necessarily at war with Turkey, but rather warding off hostile actors. Third, conditions on the ground make the PYD's focus on Syria more urgent as the expanding threat of Daesh continues to threaten many parts of Kurdish-held territory. Yet, as the US-led coalition helped the YPG recapture Kobani, a day later Daesh cells attacked returning Kurdish-Syrian refugees. Therefore, the threat Turkey poses is not the immediate danger facing the YPG/PYD. Lastly, the priorities of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq influence the PYD's actions. PKK and PYD forces have been the only effective fighting force in Iraq against Daesh,

as Peshmerga forces have become overstretched and exhausted through continuous fighting. With this in mind, the PYD knows that it will only continue to get support from the KRG if it takes the fight to Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

### The Divergence

Many consider the PYD and the PKK as one Kurdish entity fighting two fronts in Syria and Turkey, respectively. This analysis will regard them as distinct, though the arguments that support the two groups as a unitary actor are addressed first. If the Syrian war continues, and Daesh remains a legitimate threat to the Kurds, then the operational objectives of the Kurdish groups will uniformly focus on Syria and northern Iraq. Kurdish fighters would likely superficially ascribe to the PYD label and shift resources to solely fighting the Islamic State. This argument neglects Turkey's role in the Syrian war, as well as who is patronizing the Kurds' from a resource perspective. Therefore, it makes analytical sense to distinguish the PKK and PYD. The argument, however, forgets that the Turkish military's shift to addressing the Kurdish insurgency in the eastern part of the country has taken center stage. Policymakers in Washington and Brussels clearly prioritize the Daesh threat over any other immediate threats Turkey faces. As a result, NATO will distribute resources and aid to groups fighting the Islamic state, demonstrating that Western objectives favor the PYD's goals over those of the PKK. As the West and Russia prioritize supporting the PYD over other armed groups, these actions will ostracize the PKK, whose political base demands and comparative advantage favors the insurgency in Turkey. This asymmetry in resources will only deepen between the groups and may cause a faster schism between the two.

This shift in symmetry will affect the PKK insurgency in several ways. With less resources, the PKK may utilize more crude methods of violence against the Turkish state, including terrorist attacks in the form of suicide bombings, mass shootings, and/or improvised explosive devices (IEDs), as proven by 2016 attacks in Ankara. Participation in the Syrian civil war remains another option for PKK operations. However, such a scenario remains doubtful. As stated earlier, the prioritization of positioning PYD forces in Syria means that giving up operational control to the PKK will be unlikely and also unwise. What results as a consequence is a distinct and growing divide between the PKK and the PYD/YPG.

### Conclusion

The nature of Turkey's relationship with Kurdish armed groups has significantly evolved over the last forty years. The birth of the Turkish Republic

brought with it the ideals of a dominant Turkish identity, as defined by Kemal Mustafa and the Republican elite. These ideals excluded the opportunity of Kurdish cultural and linguistic expression and cannibalized hopes for Kurdish autonomy. The subsequent rise of the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK) was a result of Turkey's policies towards its Kurdish citizens while the PKK insurgency provoked military coups throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, the PKK was able to outlast contemporary groups by moving to Syria and establishing coalitions with Syrian and Iraqi Kurds. The growth of the PKK insurgency led to the formation of the Democratic Union Party (PYD)—the Syrian manifestation of the PKK, which has, today, consolidated itself as a legitimate force combatting Daesh and playing a key role in the American-led coalition.

Today's Turkey must contend with a profound duality in its relationship with the Kurds, a relationship with both a political and military dimension. Turkey will surely respond to the insurgent threat that the PKK poses to its population, but the nature of Turkish-Kurdish relations requires more than merely a military solution. Engagement with the Kurds on the political stage will require mutual respect and cooperation. Militarily, earnest efforts to defeat the so-called Islamic State will require cooperation in Syria. It is already clear that the war in Syria has caused a greater division in internal Kurdish politics. As PYD and US-led forces' objectives continue to gel in Syria, the PKK becomes further isolated. This will lead to a division in resources and widen the gap between the two Kurdish armed groups. These groups were once much closer, but they may become operationally divided in the future. As this division grows, one hopes it does not create further chaos in the region.

**Joseph Sadek** is a second-year graduate student focusing on public international law and political systems and theories at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Prior to Fletcher, Sadek worked for Ohio State's John Glenn School of Public Affairs in its Washington office. He served as program coordinator, then manager, of the Washington Academic Internship Program. Joseph holds a BA in international studies from the Ohio State University.

### Endnotes

1. Zeina Karam, "Kurds Strongly Deny Ethnic Cleansing Accusations In Syria," *The Huffington Post*, 15 June 2015.
2. Elizabeth Prodromou, "Session 5: The Democratization Experience in the Middle East," 12 October 2015.



3. Philip Robins, "The Overlord State: Turkish Policy and the Kurdish Issue," *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) Vol. 64, No. 4 (1993): 657-76.
4. Jonathon Burch, "Turkish PM calls on Syria's Assad to Quit," *Reuters*, 22 November 2011; C.J. Chivers and Eric Schmitt, "Arms Airlift to Syria Rebels Expands, With Aid from C.I.A.," *The New York Times*, 24 March 2013.
5. Wladimir van Wilgenburg, "Syrian Rebels Clash with Kurdish Militias," *Al-Monitor*, 9 June 2013.
6. Ceylan Yeginsu and Helene Cooper, "U.S. Jets to Use Turkish Bases in War on ISIS," *The New York Times*, 23 July 2015.
7. Nissenbaum, Dion, and Ayla Albayrak, "Turkey Says It Struck Kurdish Forces in Syria," *The Wall Street Journal*, 27 October 2015.
8. "Turkey's PM Fails to Form Coalition Government," *The Huffington Post*, 18 August 2015.
9. Cansu Camibel, "Analyst: Both PKK and AKP Want HDP Weakened," *Hurriyet Daily News*, 16 September 2015.
10. Shaheen, Kareem, and Constanaze Letsch, "Turkey Bomb Blast: Government Blamed as Thousands Take to the Streets in Ankara," *The Guardian*, 11 October 2015.
11. Emre Peker, "Turkey's President Calls Snap Elections: Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Move Risks Political Uncertainty," *The Wall Street Journal*, 24 August 2015.
12. John Caves, "Syrian Kurds and the Democratic Union Party (PYD)," *The Institute for the Study of War*, 6 December 2012.

# Radicalization in Context: Understanding and Addressing the Path Toward Violent Extremism

By Lauren Fisher

## Abstract

Research on violent extremism often conflates two common phrases: X factor is the cause of radicalization in Y country, and X factor is the primary cause of radicalization in Y country. The latter recognizes radicalization as a fusion of multiple factors, while the former incorrectly suggests that individuals follow a fixed path toward extremism. As radicalization increasingly threatens communities across the globe, security officials have created formulas to help identify the individuals most likely to carry out acts of violent extremism. However, such models are destined fail if they do not contextualize the process of radicalization from the vantage point of the radical individual. The following think piece reviews existing individual-centered models put forth by leading political scientists Marc Sageman, Tore Bjørgo, Tinka Veldhuis, John Horgan, and Jorgen Staun. It also explores a variety of factors at the micro- and macro-levels that can influence an individual's process of radicalization.

## Introduction

In order to understand how individuals become extremists, scholars must consider the process of radicalization from the vantage point of the radical, examining the interplay between multiple layers of influence at the micro- and macro-levels. This requires exploring the degree to which psychological, social, economic, and political factors affect an individual's perception of the world. Failure to use an individual-centered approach to understand radicalization has led policymakers to work backward, projecting false generalizations about extremism onto an entire identity group. Such generalizations may explain why some individuals radicalize, but they fail to explain why the majority of individuals—under the same circumstances—do not.

This work functions as both a think piece and a literature review. It explores how leading theories of radicalization can function in concert with one other to illuminate the complexity of radicalization amid a public discourse that often attempts to simplify the subject. To do this, I will examine some elements on the micro- and macro-levels that could affect an individual's process of radicalization, referred to in this piece as "drivers of radicalization." Because the path toward extremism is unique to each individual, the drivers of radicalization explored in this work are neither exclusive nor exhaustive.

## Micro-Level Drivers of Radicalization

### *Social Networks*

One of the oft-cited theories of radicalization is that social networks drive individuals to join extremist groups. Such is the case in the theory put forth by Marc Sageman in his book *Leaderless Jihad*. Sageman notes that interpersonal drivers of radicalization typically fall into one of two subcategories: collective radicalization with friends into an extremist group, or individual radicalization because of a friend already in an extremist group. Sageman terms the first type of social radicalization the "Bunches of Guys" theory, which argues that entire groups of friends can undergo a gradual process of radicalization if they isolate themselves from the mainstream and reinforce each other's radical opinions. Al-Qaeda's Hamburg cell, which ultimately helped carry out the September 11 terrorist attacks, is an example of this process. Al-Qaeda's Hamburg cell consisted of four Middle Eastern students studying in Hamburg, Germany who sought comfort in their shared cultural background. As the group spent less time in the mainstream student community, they began intensifying and reinforcing each other's radical beliefs. Eventually, when the group traveled to Afghanistan to join Al-Qaeda, it was not "the path of a lone individual, as often portrayed in the press; it [was]

a group adventure.”

The second type of social network radicalization refers to individuals who radicalize because of personal connections with existing members of extremist groups. Within diaspora communities immigrants tend to drift toward acquaintances, friends, or family members from their own countries of origin. If these acquaintances are already involved in a radical network, they can sway newcomers into said groups. Such is the case with those who carried out the Madrid bombings: five of the seven bombers had been childhood friends in Morocco before moving to Europe. This particular case challenges the common misconception that individuals become involved in radical networks because of a lack of interpersonal relationships. If social networks are primary drivers to radical groups then radicals are not strangers united by ideological worldviews; instead, they are teammates, neighbors, and family friends.

In order to understand how individuals become extremists, scholars must consider the process of radicalization from the vantage point of the radical, examining the interplay between multiple layers of influence at the micro- and macro-levels.

### Psychological Perceptions

Authors John Horgan and Tore Bjørgo believe radicalization is more influenced by psychological factors than by social ones. In his book *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, Bjørgo advocates for the rational choice model, which argues that individuals undergo a subconscious cost-benefit analysis when deciding whether or not to join extremist groups. Because radical groups are characteristically intimate communities, individuals may be pushed toward radicalization if they are in search of identity status, interpersonal connections, or “substitute families.” For example, Kerry Noble, former member of the left-wing cult the Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord (CSA), told Harvard University professor Jessica Stern that “outside the cult, [Kerry] felt weak and repeatedly humiliated. Inside, Ellison [the cult leader] made him feel needed and strong.” Thus, rather than joining extremist groups because of social networks, individuals may also radicalize due to a perceived lack of them.

If the process of radicalization emerges from a cost-benefit analysis, individuals may also consider a variety of “pull factors” that deter them from

joining radical groups. These factors may include fear of isolation from the mainstream, concerns that joining a radical group may affect future job prospects, or a desire to marry someone in the moderate world. In this way, social networks may still play a role in affecting an individual’s path to radicalization; however, they function more so as deterrents than as incentives.

One of the largest problems with psychological-based theories, though, is data put forth by authors such as Horgan and Bjørgo relies heavily on personal testimony from radicals themselves. This is dangerous, as extremists might think they have joined a group for a certain reason and then, retrospectively, believe something different. Thus, while the psychological state of the individual undoubtedly plays a significant role in the process of radicalization, it is the most difficult variable to quantify.

### Concurrent Factors at the Micro-Level

Although authors tend to emphasize either social or psychological paradigms for understanding radicalization, the Laghriss twins’ 2003 suicide attack plot in Rabat, Morocco, demonstrates the concurrent presence of both models. Sanae Laghriss, one of the twins, began radicalizing after witnessing a TV report citing the death of Palestinian Mohamed al-Dura, who was allegedly shot by Israeli soldiers. Sanae’s reaction to the event is an example of political grievance: a severe psychological association with someone else’s suffering. Individuals who experience political grievance often feel the other’s suffering as if it were his or her own and are thus susceptible to vigilantism. For Sanae, political grievance led her to seek out radical leaders who validated her extreme political outrage.

Conversely, Sanae’s sister, Imane, felt no psychological affinity for al-Dura. However, because she was so closely connected to her sister, Imane joined in meeting with Hassan Chaouni, a radical leader, at a community mosque. Through her relationship with her sister, Imane also radicalized, joining a plotted suicide attack against the Moroccan Parliament, even though she lacked the same political ideology that inspired her sister to turn toward violent extremism. Sanae’s primary driver—political grievance—was thus primarily psychological, while her sister’s was primarily social.

It is important to remember that primary drivers alone do not turn everyday people into radicals. This is the difference between claiming that X causes radicalization and claiming that X is the primary cause of radicalization. The former incorrectly assumes that radicalization is the result of a single factor. The latter acknowledges that a primary driver represents the most salient of multiple

micro- and macro-level factors that lead an individual to radicalize. Social networks and political grievances functioned as Sanae’s and Imane’s primary drivers of radicalization. However, the two teenagers chose to engage in violent extremism because those primary drivers were compounded by a variety of secondary drivers at both the macro- and micro-levels, mostly centered on their family structure.

At the micro-level, the Laghriss twins suffered from a broken family structure and cyclical poverty. They had no father figure and regularly moved homes because their mother was unable to care for them. This likely created a psychological search for stable, family-like relationships that they found in Chaouni. Sanae also grew up reading Arabic newspapers from the Middle East with her aunt and uncle, whom she loved; this may have created a positive psychological connotation that resonated with the radical teachings at the Al Wahda mosque. Understanding the broader context of the Laghriss twins helps reveal why these two girls were susceptible to violent extremism, while other teens living under similar conditions remained impervious.

### Macro-Level Factors in the Individual-Centered Model

An individual-centered model should not be one that focuses exclusively on micro-level factors. Disproportionately focusing on drivers at the micro-level is arguably the biggest downfall of existing individualist models. The works of Sageman, Horgan, Bjørgo, Veldhuis, and Staun—all leading proponents of the individualist approach—imply that macro-level factors play a smaller role in radicalization because these factors are less directly related to the individual. For example, Staun and Veldhuis argue that poverty, underemployment, and regional politics can only be preconditions for radicalization rather than drivers themselves. However, downplaying macro-level conditions inhibits our ability to fully contextualize an individual’s reality.

In the case of the Laghriss twins, for instance, macro-level contextualization is pivotal in understanding why the twins were drawn to the Al Wahda mosque. Nordic authors Tinka Veldhuis and Jørgen Staun note that systemic socioeconomic exclusion of immigrant families at the macro-level can create perceptions of personal victimization and discrimination. The Laghriss family commented the twins couldn’t find work because “nobody wanted to hire veiled girls,” indicating that macro-level issues of poverty among immigrant communities could motivate individuals to stray away from the mainstream and work outside the traditional sociopolitical infrastructure. After

her release from prison, Sanae confessed that she used to visit Chouani because he would always give her small amounts of money when she begged outside the mosque. In this way, macro-level issues such as poverty helped facilitate Sanae’s departure from the mainstream.

The case of the Laghriss twins demonstrates how radicalization is a product of multiple factors at both the micro- and macro-levels, rather than a consequence of any one single condition. While the secondary drivers, namely poverty and unstable family structures, were the same for both twins, Sanae and Imane illuminate how it is necessary to contextualize the process of radicalization from the vantage point of the individual in order to understand how the process is unique to each person.

### Macro-Level Drivers: The Afghanistan Case

While proponents of individualist models tend to focus primarily on drivers at the micro-level, conditions at the macro-level can also serve as primary drivers in an individual’s path to radicalization. Such is the case in Afghanistan’s tribal regions. The case of Afghanistan demonstrates a phenomenon that counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen calls the “accidental guerrilla,” a situation in which military intervention intended to curb violent extremism ultimately causes it to flourish. The phenomenon occurs in a multi-stage cycle in which radical extremists embed themselves in local communities, incite US intervention, and then exploit the backlash to generate supporters. Following US intervention in Afghanistan, moderate community members began “fighting alongside extremist forces not because they support[ed] takfiri [religious Muslims who accuse other Muslims of apostasy] ideology, but because they oppose[d] outside interference in their affairs.” Individuals often joined radical groups because they believed that doing so was the most effective way to resist US intervention. In other words, foreign military intervention was a macro-level factor that pushed individuals to radicalize into extremist groups for secular political objectives independent of radical Islamic ideology.

Within the macro-lens, one must again remember to distinguish between primary and singular drivers. US military presence alone did not cause a rise of violent extremism in Afghanistan. If that were the case, the global community should expect to see proliferation of terrorism in all regions where the United States stations troops. However, this is not the case. The rise of radicalization in Afghanistan, therefore, must be contextualized with the secondary drivers at play in order to fully understand why American intervention there

pushed individuals to join radical groups. First and foremost, extremist groups like the Taliban already had strong footholds in tribal areas of Afghanistan prior to American intervention, rendering the area particularly vulnerable to radicalization.

In order to most effectively combat the growing threat of terror, policymakers and academics must maintain a flexible approach to violent extremism. Instead of trying to create a one-size-fits-all formula for understanding radicalization, they should grow their understandings of what factors at the micro- and macro-levels can be formative in moving individuals away from mainstream society.

Furthermore, poor governance, rapidly expanding narcotics trade, and a weak economy—all macro-level factors—functioned as secondary drivers. In ungoverned areas with limited public goods, groups like the Taliban provide education where the state does not. Afghans living in rural areas may have therefore been more receptive to the Taliban because it filled an economic need in the absence of basic government services.

On the micro-level, radicals embedded themselves in host communities by setting up small business, forming friendships with community members, and marrying locals. This interpersonal infiltration likely facilitated group membership through the social network theories discussed earlier. On the psychological level, personal experiences with death and violence, especially those at the hands of American troops, helped facilitate radicalization among the affected population. While socioeconomic interests and personal connections to radical groups were not decisive in the rise of Afghanistan's Taliban, they contextualize the driving variable in a way that may help to explain why US military presence fueled extremism in Afghanistan but not necessarily in other nations.

### The Age of the Internet

Since the rise of the Internet, online platforms have created virtual spaces where individuals can radicalize from the comfort of their own homes. Though the Internet itself is not a driver of radicalization, it plays a key role in facilitating contemporary radicalization through two primary channels: it creates virtual social networks through chat rooms and makes information available on how to

carry out acts of violence without ever having to join an extremist group.

Online radical communities, often in the form of semi-private chat rooms, represent a fusion of the social networks and rational choice theories discussed earlier in this piece. Individuals who feel isolated from their “RL” (real life) communities may join chat rooms seeking a sense of belonging. Such is the case with a twenty-three-year-old American woman who spent hours each day chatting online with ISIS members because she was frequently by herself, and “they [ISIS members] were online all the time.” Once inside chat forums, individuals may succumb to Sageman’s “Bunches of Guys” theory: chat room members can reinforce and validate each other’s thoughts, creating an echo chamber where existing radicals (who can serve as forum moderators) remotely inject radical ideas.

In addition to creating virtual social spheres, the Internet allows individuals interested in carrying out acts of violence to do so in the name of radical ideology without necessarily believing in the ideology or having actual membership in a radical group. Such is the case of the Tsarnaev brothers, who planted two bombs at the Boston Marathon in April 2013. The attack followed explicit instructions in an article titled “How to Build a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom” from Al-Qaeda’s Inspire magazine. Though the Tsarnaev brothers had no consent, approval, or direct contact with Al-Qaeda leadership, they were able to download propaganda from the Internet to carry out their attack.

While the Internet plays an integral role in understanding the contemporary threat of extremism, it alone is unlikely to be a primary driver of radicalization. The Internet functions more to facilitate the radicalization process than to begin it. As such, the Internet should be regarded as a dangerous vehicle that is making radicalization both more accessible for potential extremists to join, and more difficult for security officials to detect.

### Conclusion

Conventional understanding consistently and mistakenly labels radicals as irrational, ideological aberrations. This is often because people are reluctant to confront the reality that radicals can be, and often are, average citizens one might encounter in daily life. In order to understand how people become extremists, scholars and security professionals must contextualize the path to extremism from the vantage point of the radical. Failing to do so may lead policymakers to continue building one-size-fits all models that have consistently failed in framing violent extremism. Such fixed models are inherently flawed because they work backwards using common threads between people who have

already carried out acts of violence to paint an over-generalized and inaccurate picture of what radicalization looks like.

Furthermore, fixed models can undermine counter-radicalization efforts and serve as drivers themselves if they further entrench systemic socio-cultural exclusion from mainstream society. Such is the case in the 2007 report from the New York Police Department (NYPD) titled “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat.” The NYPD claims that individuals who became more “active” in their religious communities, grew beards, or attended mosques were on the path towards Islamic radicalization. While many Muslim extremists have exhibited these behaviors prior to carrying out an attack, the majority of bearded Muslims who attended mosque in 2007 had no connection to extremist communities. Yet, as a result of the NYPD report, these non-violent Muslims were being “othered” by a governmental structure that was supposed to protect them. This is the greatest downfall of fixed models: while they may appear to explain why some individuals become extremists, they do not account for the thousands of people who fit the “extremist prototype” yet remain moderate.

In order to most effectively combat the growing threat of terror, policymakers and academics must maintain a flexible approach to violent extremism. Instead of trying to create a one-size-fits-all formula for understanding radicalization, they should grow their understandings of what factors at the micro- and macro-levels can be formative in moving individuals away from mainstream society. In doing so, security officials and policymakers can better identify periods of time, people, and communities who may be particularly susceptible to the radicalization process without assuming that everyone who fits a certain mold must be on the path to violence.

Lauren Fisher began studying political science at Colby College, where she received her BA in government. During her time at Colby, she published an article about Jewish violent extremism in the Pi Sigma Alpha Journal of Political Science. After receiving her BA, Fisher went on to complete her MA in security and diplomacy at Tel Aviv University in Israel. Throughout her graduate coursework, Fisher focused much of her research on Al-Qaeda and Islamic radicalization. Fisher served as a research assistant at the International Institute of Counterterrorism (ICT) in Herzliya, Israel. Her research with the ICT culminated in a published report analyzing the threat of Islamic radicaliza-

tion in the state of Maine. After living in Israel for two years, Fisher has returned to her hometown of Boston, Massachusetts, working as an educator in teen leadership.

### Endnotes

1. For the purpose of this work, the term “primary driver” will refer to the most decisive condition in an individual’s path towards extremism. The term “secondary driver” will refer to any complimentary factor that contributes to the radicalization process, though it may not be the most pivotal.
2. Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008), 66.
3. For more information on the Hamburg cell, see: “5.3 The Hamburg Contingent,” National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, United States government, 21 August 2004.
4. Serhat S. Çubukçuoğlu, “The EEZ Delimitation Dispute Between Cyprus and Turkey – Part II,” Tufts University, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1 December 2014.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Ahmed Fouad, “Is Turkey the Odd Man Out as Egypt, Greece, Cyprus Cozy Up?,” *Al-Monitor*, 31 January 2016; “Trilateral Meeting Between Israel, Greece and Cyprus,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 January 2016.
7. “Greece, Cyprus and Israel Eye Tripartite Talks,” *Ekathimerini*, 10 November 2014.
8. Norlen, Anders, and Kerri Maddock, “Giant Gas Field Discovery in Egypt Likely to Impact Global Gas Markets,” McKinsey Solutions, September 2015.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Simon Henderson, “Egyptian Offshore Gas Find Curtails Israel’s Options,” *The Washington Institute*, 31 August 2015.
11. “Turkish Stream Talks Will Get Boost After Elections Says Energy Minister,” *Natural Gas Europe*, 3 October 2015.
12. Necdet Pamir, “Deniz Dibi Enerji Kaynakları: Durum Tespiti,” *KOÇ ÜNİVERSİTESİ DENİZCİLİK FORUMU*, 9 February 2016.
13. “Turkey Plans to Build a Pipeline from Israel,” *Natural Gas Europe*, 21 December 2015.
14. David J. Bederman, *International Law Frameworks* (New York: Thomson Reuters/Foundation Press, 2010), 135.
15. “Regime of Islands,” United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Part VIII, Article 121, 63.
16. Tullio Treves, “ITLOS and the Oil and Gas Industry,” Second International Oil and Gas Conference, London, 20 September 2007.
17. David J. Bederman, *International Law Frameworks*.
18. Daniel Meier, “Lebanon’s Maritime Boundaries: Between Economic Opportunities and Military Confrontation,” Center for Lebanese Studies, St. Anthony’s College, June 2013.



# Against Apartheid: The Case for Boycotting Israeli Universities Book Review

By Adi Saleem Bharat

**Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid: The Case for Boycotting Israeli Universities*, (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015).**

Ashley Dawson and Bill Mullen's edited essay collection is a timely contribution to the ongoing debate surrounding academic boycott of Israeli universities. *Against Apartheid* opens with a foreword by Ali Abuminah, followed by an introduction by the editors. The book is then divided into five sections. In his foreword, Abuminah states, "the battle for freedom of conscience and action over Palestine has highlighted a bigger existential crisis at universities." This existential crisis, according to Abuminah, is over whether universities can remain "sites for dissent, critical scholarship, and innovation." In their introduction, Ashley Dawson and Bill Mullen describe the book as "a tool, a guidebook, and a living chronicle [of the BDS movement]." For Dawson and Mullen, like Abuminah, there is a larger project beyond challenging Israeli apartheid, namely, "building a wider left resistance in our neoliberal times." They also explain the use of the term "apartheid" as applied to Israel. While they "analogize the conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel to those in South Africa during the apartheid era," they do not mean to imply that the situations are similar. The editors admit significant differences between apartheid South Africa and Israel, but insist that "these differences should not obscure their fundamental similarities." Dawson and Mullen then briefly describe the complicity of Israeli academic institutions with the actions of their government, before charting the trajectory of academic boycotts since 2004.

In the first section of *Against Apartheid*, "From the Front Lines: Palestinian Scholars Make the Case for Academic Boycott," four Palestinian scholars describe firsthand the limitations and restrictions imposed upon Palestinian academics, as well as the complicity of Israeli universities in this and in the occupation.

The second section, "Taking on the Settler-Colonial University: Academic Boycott and Academic

Freedom," comprises chapters that attempt to demonstrate the efficacy of boycott and to further explain the reasons for "singling out" Israel. David Lloyd and Malini Johar Schueller, for example, write in "The Israeli State of Exception and the Case of Academic Boycott" that "it is because Israel is constantly distinguished or singled out from other nations, particularly in the United States, that a BDS campaign is justified." Additionally, the chapters in this section challenge the absolutist approach to academic freedom.

The third section, "The Academic Boycott of Israeli Universities in Historical Context," aims to historicize the subject at hand. Like the other chapters in this section, Ilan Pappé's "The Boycott Will Work: An Israeli Perspective" draws upon historical progressions since 1948 to argue that pressure from the outside is necessary in order to successfully coerce a paradigm shift that would lead to "finding a formula for joint living."

Section four, "Students and Scholars in the Struggle, Under Attack," describes the ways in which universities repress BDS activity on campuses. The last section, "New Horizons for the Academic Boycott Movement," is a look to the future. Inter alia, the chapters in this section aim to underscore the notion that academic boycotts, and BDS in general, are not to be ends unto themselves, but rather means to an end. Unfortunately, it is not always clear what end is envisioned. In this section, Joseph Massad's "Recognizing Palestine, BDS, and the Survival of Israel" implicitly rejects the two-state solution and troublingly seems to favor, not merely the end of the occupation, but the end of Israel itself.

For different reasons, a few chapters in particular deserve to be brought to attention. Lisa Taraki's "The Complicity of the Israeli Academy in the Structures of Domination and State Violence" makes the case for academic boycott by describing the complicity of Israeli academics and academic institutions in Israeli state policies that negatively impact Palestinians. Her main point is that, while

there are "dissident" Israeli academics, the Israeli academy is structurally complicit in state violence against Palestinians. Taraki discusses the careers of three Israeli academics, namely Yehoshafat Harkabi, Menahem Milson, and Shlomo Gazit, in order to demonstrate that the "Israeli university leadership [...] does not find anything morally amiss in appointing to top posts individuals known to have supervised and designed repressive measures and persistently committed violations of international humanitarian law against Palestinians in their other careers as military and intelligence functionaries." She goes on to explain that this is not a thing of the past and that "a quick review of the names of the founders, directors, or staff of these institutes shows that they have had careers with the Israeli military and intelligence establishment." Taraki then challenges the claim that academic boycott "punishes one of the most antiestablishment communities in Israel, namely Israeli academics." This, she writes, is a seriously flawed depiction. According to Taraki, the only times Israeli academics have taken a stand, they've released statements and resolutions that were "so general as to dilute the message." At the end of her chapter, Taraki acknowledges that "this does not mean that there are no dissident academics in Israel [but] the fact remains that the Israeli academy as an institution is still complicit in violations of international law, grave violations of international humanitarian law, and outright war crimes."

Rima Najjar Kapitan's "Climbing Down From the Ivory Tower: Double Standards and the Use of Academic Boycotts to Achieve Social and Economic Justice" highlights the possible double standards of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). She notes that in another international case (i.e. Singapore) the AAUP suggested the use of academic boycott was "not only a right but an obligation." In the case of the establishment of a Yale campus in Singapore—a country with a problematic human rights record—the AAUP had voiced concerns over Yale's collaboration with Singapore. This is in contrast to the anti-boycott stance the AAUP has taken with regards to Israel. As Kapitan writes, "[AAUP] concerns stemmed partly from a worry that the establishment of the campus might bring about unwanted political implications" because it would entail directly "assist[ing] the Singapore government in achieving greater financial strength and cultural legitimacy." For the AAUP, Yale has the obligation to avoid legitimizing countries with "odious" laws. By bringing up this international case, Kapitan makes a persuasive argument about the exception that seems to be made for Israel by some of those who position themselves as defenders of academic freedom.

She unfortunately undercuts her argument by employing a strange analogy:

The University of Illinois might choose to establish a joint degree program with the University of Edinburgh but not the University of Glasgow, but that would not violate the academic freedom of the professors at Glasgow. It is not a violation of anyone's "academic freedom" if American institutions freely choose to disassociate from Israeli universities until they cease reinforcing Israeli apartheid, whether or not we disagree with the reasons for the boycott.

Comparing the hypothetical situation of one university choosing to collaborate with another and stating that this does not "violate the academic freedom of professors" at a third, unrelated university is much different from American institutions choosing to boycott all Israeli universities. Kapitan is making this comparison in order to differentiate between academic entitlement and academic freedom. Her point is that those who disagree with a blanket boycott of Israeli universities are confusing entitlement with freedom. Indeed, in her hypothetical case, the professors of Glasgow would be guilty of academic entitlement should they protest at Illinois' collaboration with Edinburgh. But this is not the same as a general boycott of Israeli institutions.

Nerdeen Mohsen's "Standing for Justice: Challenges and Victories of Students for Justice in Palestine" must also be mentioned since it is a contribution that only tangentially deals with the subject of the book: making the case for academic boycott. Instead, Mohsen writes about her childhood in America before going on to make debatable claims and unproven assertions. One such assertion is that Israel is currently carrying out "ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians." One could indeed make the case that the nature of the occupation, with its ever-expanding settlements, calls into mind aspects of ethnic cleansing, but Mohsen does not make this argument. Rather, she states it as a fact without attempting to substantiate her claim. Assertions without substantiation are, unfortunately, symptomatic of Mohsen's contribution. Another example is her claim that "the recent hypermilitarization of police in the United States" is tied to its collaboration with Israel. It is true that various segments of US law enforcement have ties to the Israeli security apparatus, but this does not necessarily imply a simple link between police hypermilitarization in the US and collaboration with Israel.

Toward the end of her contribution, Mohsen writes of how her Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) chapter at the College of Staten Island (CSI) refused to work with Hillel at CSI even



though the latter group was very keen to collaborate. She explains how the CSI Hillel was “eager to work with us, regardless of our differing political stances.” Mohsen and the CSI SJP, however, were not as eager and declined, citing their “political differences” and their “stance of antinormalization.” Unfortunately, Mohsen does not clearly explain the exact circumstances of the collaboration the CSI Hillel had in mind. If it were merely a discussion or debate, for example, it would be unfortunate that “political differences” were an impediment. Similarly, if “antinormalization” impedes all interactions between two groups of people, how can any meaningful dialogue ever take place? In any case, even though Mohsen claims to have explained her stance of antinormalization to the vice president of student affairs (who was also keen to see a SJP-Hillel collaboration),

Mohsen does not explain “antinormalization” in her chapter. Instead, she tells us what she told the CSI vice president of student affairs: that SJP working with Hillel would be akin to “a climate change club” working with climate change deniers, or an LGBTQ group working with a homophobic organization. Of course, she does not clarify what working means in these contexts and, especially, in the non-hypothetical context of Hillel reaching out to SJP. If, by working together, she means the holding of some kind of dialogue, then it is regrettable that no such dialogue did take place due to ambiguous notions of “political differences” and “antinormalization.”

While Mohsen’s essay deserves some merit for highlighting some of the difficulties that SJP chapters at CUNY and other likeminded students face from the CUNY administration, her case is diluted by inconsequential paragraphs on her childhood, unsubstantiated assertions, and a general confusion over causality and correlation. As an example, she writes, “the fact that university administrations are trying so hard to silence us means that we are doing something right.” This, of course, is not necessarily so.

While there have been numerous books written both in favor and against BDS, there had not been, until recently, books written precisely about the question of academic boycott of Israeli universities. In November 2014, Cary Nelson and Gabriel Noah Brahm edited the essay collection *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel*. The following year, in October 2015, *Against Apartheid* was published. Considering the similarity in title, it is likely that *Against Apartheid* was conceived as a response to the former. Unfortunately, remarkably few chapters in *Against Apartheid* directly address points made in Nelson and Brahm’s collection.

In general, *Against Apartheid* reads as a mono-

logue that only briefly attempts to discuss or challenge opposing views. This is in stark contrast to Nelson and Brahm’s collection, which devotes at least 253 pages to discussing and challenging dissenting viewpoints. This is only one of the disappointing aspects of *Against Apartheid*, whose contributors, as we have seen, occasionally employ shaky metaphors and unclear terminology, while demonstrating a hesitancy to avoid the proposed subject of the collection.

A case in point regarding the confusion over terminology is how Andrew Ross’s “The Wall is Crumbling: Will Labor Follow the Universities?” states that boycotts are tactics and not strategies. Mas-sad’s piece, on the other hand, claims boycotts are, in fact, strategies. Neither author however, explains the difference between strategy and tactic. Nevertheless—and despite failing to convincingly make the case for a general boycott of Israeli universities—*Against Apartheid* has the merit of making a number of strong points in favor of their argument that will impact both the debate on academic boycott and the larger debate on BDS.

**Adi Saleem Bharat** is a PhD student in French at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. His research interests include twentieth and twenty-first century French literature, far-right politics in France, and religious and ethnic minorities in France.

#### Endnotes

1. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid: The Case for Boycotting Israeli Universities* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), xi.
2. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 1.
3. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 1.
4. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 3.
5. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 67.
6. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 113.
7. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 24.
8. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 24.
9. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 27.
10. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 28.
11. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 29.
12. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 150.
13. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 150.
14. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 147.
15. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against*

- Apartheid, 163.
16. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 162-163.
17. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 166.
18. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 166.
19. Mullen, Bill V., and Ashley Dawson, eds., *Against Apartheid*, 168.



Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy

A Harvard Kennedy School of Government Student Publication

## 2016-17 Call for Submissions

Deadline: November 30, 2016

The Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy (JMEPP) is accepting submissions for its print and online publications. JMEPP is a nonpartisan policy review published by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The journal presents a diversity of advanced scholarship on issues of policy relevance to the contemporary Middle East and North Africa. Submissions may discuss trends in politics, economics, development, military affairs, international relations, religion, or culture as they relate to public policy issues within the region.

If you plan to submit, please send an initial abstract of your proposed work to [jmepp@hks.harvard.edu](mailto:jmepp@hks.harvard.edu).

### Submission Guidelines

JMEPP is seeking submissions for both its print and online publications.

Appropriate submissions for the print edition include feature articles (1,000–2,500 words), commentaries (500–1,500 words), and book reviews (500–1,500 words).

Appropriate submissions for the online edition will be fewer than 1,000 words and may include commentaries and opinion pieces, news analyses, and art and cultural reviews, as well as other types of analytic or creative content that provide new perspectives on political issues and policy challenges facing the region today.

All submissions must be formatted in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) following the Chicago Manual of Style guidelines with citations provided as endnotes. All figures, tables, and charts must be submitted as separate, high-resolution files. Please submit a cover letter with your name, title, and affiliation; mailing address; e-mail address; and daytime phone number. All work must be submitted to [jmepp@hks.harvard.edu](mailto:jmepp@hks.harvard.edu).

For more information, please visit our website: <http://www.hksjmepp.com>.

# MALCOLM WIENER CENTER FOR SOCIAL POLICY

**The Malcolm Wiener Center is a vibrant intellectual community of faculty, masters and PhD students, researchers, and administrative staff striving to improve public policy and practice in the areas of health care, human services, criminal justice, inequality, education, and labor.**

The work of the center draws on the worlds of scholarship, policy, and practice to address pressing questions by:

- .....> carrying out research on important policy issues affecting the lives of those most vulnerable and needy
- .....> providing professional education for those in the world of practice
- .....> educating the next generation of academics and policy scholars
- .....> ensuring that research and education are closely tied to and draw from politics and practice in the field
- .....> developing working partnerships with the broader policy community

For more than two decades the Malcolm Wiener Center has been an influential voice in domestic policy through faculty work on community policing, welfare reform, youth violence, education, urban poverty, youth and the low-wage labor market, American Indian economic and social development, and medical error rates.

Our research portfolio is both broad and deep, spanning many academic disciplines, encompassing traditional research as well as executive sessions, case-based research and action research, and employing a variety of research methodologies. It is inspired by our focus on bettering the lives of our fellow citizens, particularly those who are most vulnerable and needy.

WEB SITE: [www.hks.harvard.edu/centers/wiener](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/centers/wiener)



HARVARD Kennedy School

**MALCOLM WIENER CENTER**  
for Social Policy