Advisory Council On The Question of The Levant Region

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Skander Lejmi
Tara Tell

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Student Officer:	Skander Lejmi & Tara Tell
Position:	President & Deputy President

Introduction

The Levant Region, a geographical approximation that designates the countries along the Eastern Mediterranean shore, has historically been host to a great deal of conflict and tension (the most prominent being the Crusades). As of currently, it is concerned with a very delicate conflict catalyzed and properly initiated upon the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005 (former Iranian prime-minister) who had particularly strong views regarding the state of affairs with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The tension between Israel and Iran inevitably resulted in a proxy-war, whereby the opposing parties carefully conducted a series of attacks and retaliations against each other whilst ensuring an absolution of guilt (hence the nature of the conflict).

The Israel-Iran proxy conflict merely subtends the broader, multifactorial and dimensional issue that is what we as the Advisory-Panel will be addressing, that of the Question of the Levant region; an issue that remains unresolved and requires a multilateral solution that accounts not merely for the political and thus military conflict of Iran and Israel, but rather the geopolitical bilateral conflict that has brought the Levant to the humanitarian, political and military crisis that it is in.

Given the intricacy of this situation, we have decided to separate it into the following three topics:

1. Israel-Iran Proxy Conflict
2. The Question of Refugees
3. Preventing heavy weapons from being acquired and used by non-State actors

Separating the conflict approximately into the three factors: Political, Humanitarian and Military respectively.

Definition of Key Terms

Levant

The Levant region refers to countries in the Mediterrian as well as Eastern Asia. Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Israel are countries within the Levant region.

Non-State Actors

Non State actors (NSAs) are individuals or organizations that operate without being allied to any state or nation. They generally have significant political influence. Non-State actors can encompass NGOs or MNCs, however this topic focuses on terrorist groups and organizations such as Al-Qaeda.

Weapons of mass destruction

Weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) are categorized as weapons that have the potential to cause widespread devastation and life loss, threatening national security. Examples of such weapons would be Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical weaponry.

Proxy Conflict

A Proxy conflict is when two opposing states acquire a third party state, in order to instigate attacks on one another indirectly, so that they themselves do not get involved.

Cross-Border Aid

Cross border aid procedures enable UN agencies to aid nations when need be without the permission of the government in said country. This form of aid has been provided to Syria on multiple instances in the past.

General Overview

As previously mentioned, we will be addressing the Question of the Levant Region in its manifestation as three separate factors and subsequently topics.

Israel-Iran proxy conflict

The proxy conflict between Israel and Iran has been ongoing for the past 20 odd years and some even argue for many more. The motivation on both sides for the conflict is relatively

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ambiguous (in that there is no certitude regarding the specific cause of the conflict) as arguments for the cause of the conflict differ by source. It is however certain that the motivation pertains to the fundamental disagreement with the Israeli-Palestinian situation.

The generally maintained consensus suggests that the conflict manifested as a result of Iran's desire for the dissolution of the Jewish state paired with Israel's desire to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran and initiative in exacerbating the situation of Iran's proxies/allies.

The progressive emergence of tension between Iran and Israel can be traced back to 1979 following the Iranian Revolution that resulted in the culmination of the Pahlavi dynasty and the overthrow of the leader at the time (who was notably supported by the United States), Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. The government of the former leader was replaced by an Islamic Republic led by a certain Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, whose views on Israel were conceivably distinct from that of the US backed Pahlavi.

With the new leadership and the subsequent rise in geopolitical tension in the Levant Region (particularly with regards to the US' involvement in Iran), a rise in military acts was inevitable and certainly anticipated by Israel (being the US' main ally in the region and an enemy to the Palestinian people).

So it began, a series of delicate operations conducted on both sides to support their proxies in their efforts against their enemy. Iran's covert support of Hezbollah during the South Lebanon Conflict was imperative to their monopolisation of the military activity in South Lebanon (in the early 1990s) and their subsequent "victory" against the Israelis in 2000 (resulting in Israel's withdrawal from South Lebanon).

By 2005, the conflict had evolved into a sustained regional proxy war with sustained support in the form of covert operations on both sides wherever necessary to harm the enemy. Since then, both sides have actively been partaking in the proxy conflict. Iran actively supplying weaponry to Hammas and Hezbollah as Israel carry out an alleged wave of assassinations against Iranian nuclear scientists in the early 2010s.

The Syrian Civil war has been the most recent platform of opportunity for covert operations of the aforementioned nature. Both Iran and Israel have maximized the potential of the opportunity, with the Israeli Air Force carrying out daily missions against Iranian positions within Syria, dropping 2 thousand bombs in 2018 alone; and Iran simply sustaining its support of its proxies (i.e. Hezbollah, PFLP, PIJ).

Conclusively, these parties have been at proxy war for decades now and will sustain their efforts against one another in whichever manner they deem fit. This proxy war prevents any peace in the Levant Region whose people have been plagued with war, violence and death for generations.

The question of refugees in the Levant region

The refugee crisis in the Levant region is one of the most pressing humanitarian crises internationally. It provides a fertile ground for the isolationist and far right ideology to flourish and this is going to pose a challenge for the next decade, and it must be made a point to reemphasize universal values. The nationalities of refugees in the region are usually either Syrian, Palestinian or Iraqi. There are more than 12 million Syrians that have been displaced, 4 million displaced Iraqis, and 7.2 million displaced Palestinians. Most of which have settled in neighboring Levant countries.

Lebanon is the largest host to refugees in the middle east, hosting 1.7 million refugees, meaning that in Lebanon for every 1 refugee there are four Lebanese citizens.

Jordan ranks right below Lebanon in their refugee numbers, and is host to approximately 745,000 refugees who are predominantly Palestinian, Syrian and Iraqi. The conflict in Syria negatively impacted the economic and social growth in Lebanon. It intensified already existing issues in Lebanon which in current times are becoming increasingly relevant and subject to great concern.

Countries like Jordan are looking to create potentially 200,000 new job opportunities in response to the influx of refugees, and are already witnessing the success of this prospect. All the while committing to long term development goals. Jordan is working on strengthening the labour market and in recent events inhabitants of refugee camps in the country were permitted to apply for work at a workplace that is not affiliated with the refugee camp.

The government had also amended a labour law to increase the percentage of women working in the local market and Syrian women were able to take up this opportunity, amongst many others.

Preventing Heavy weapons from being used by Non-State actor

One of the most powerful Non-State Actors known to the Levant Region are al-Qaeda which is a terrorist organization that formed in the late 1980s as a result of the afghan war in 2001,

when the war became an incentive to revive pan Islamic attitudes, accordingly birthing a new generation of jihadists. The organization originally disbanded after the Soviet Union withdrew from the afghan war in 1989, when the organization revitalized they pursued several lethal attacks threatening the US, planting a suicide bomb in order to attack a US warship in Yemen.

There are several Non-State Actors similar to Al-Qaeda that have intentions with differences slim to none, that rose to power in similar manners, and commit similar acts of violence. Today, many states supply the non-state actors they support politically, such as the USA, which is deemed to be the greatest supplier of Non-state actors, specifically prior to the Iraq invasion in 2003, According to a blatant report, 'the Pentagon provided more than 1.45 million firearms to various security forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, including more than 978,000 assault rifles, 266,000 pistols and almost 112,000 machine guns…'

Russia does not supply Non-State Actors on the same wide scale that the USA does, which is active exclusively in their bordering terrain of Ukraine, where speculation arises that Russia is supplying military and intelligence guidance specifically in the Donetsk region. Iran too is a lead supplier of NSA's in the Levant region, supplying them with small arms and ammunition and re-exporting the weaponry they receive from their main arms trade partners the DPRK and China.

The UN are concerned that Iran has violated an arms embargo by supplying Lebanese group Hezbollah, allegedly providing them with 120,000 missiles and rockets, some with ranges over 300 km. China and Turkey on the other hand are not suspected to be supplying revolutionary groups however many Chinese and Turkish handguns and small arms have been seized in many countries in and around the Levant region, meaning that there is one form or another of illegal arms importing occurring.

Israel has remained silent in regards to whether or not they are in ownership of nuclear weaponry causing tensions to arise within the Levant region, taking into consideration the close alliance of the USA and Israel. In 1970 Pakistan felt as though a threat was being directed to them by India, therefore commenced its nuclear construction, however they did not produce any biological or chemical weaponry.

Initially Non-State Actors are the instigators of the crisis at hand, as the genesis of the issue lies with the groups who sought out the illegal possession of weapons for spiteful usage with

unethical means. Over time as the issue progressed there were several historical marks of great significance to the topic as a whole, beginning with the proposal of the establishment of weapon free zones in the middle east, proposed initially by Russia in the year 1958, to later be included in the NPT.

In 1962 fell the regional discussion of the Committee for the Denuclearization of the Middle East, where a group of Israeli intellectuals voiced their concerns as to how Israel being in possession of nuclear weaponry would pose a threat on the security of the country itself.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

USA

The USA is one of Israel's primary, and strongest allies, having sent 3 billion USD in foreign aid to the state. They openly aid Israel militarily and economically. especially in the USAs relocation of their embassy from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem thus recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, as well as the US president Trump's recognition of the Golan heights as a part of Israel. The USA is also deemed to be the greatest supplier of Non-state actors, specifically prior to the Iraq invasion in 2003. The US had supplied forces in Afghanistan and Iraq with weapons in bulk, approximately 2.806 million firearms overall.

Russia

Russia is known for its support of Bashar Al Assad, Syria's president, since the conflict in Syria initially arose in 2011. Russia has provided Syria with aid militarily and politically. As well as via direct interventions from Russian forces. Russia is also recognized by the NPT as one of the five 'nuclear-weapons states.' Since the arms race in the 1960's Russia has put effort into minimizing the production of such weaponry. In 1991, Russia violated BTWC (Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention) terms. Russia and Iran are also strategic allies and have close political relations to one another.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia and Iran are engaged in a Proxy-Conflict via Yemen and they officially broke off any diplomatic relations as a product of the attack on the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Tehran in 2016. As a by-product of the Russian intervention in Syria, Saudi Arabia heavily increased their support and aid of Syria and increased their supply of arms, however diplomatic relations between the two nations are strained.

Hezbollah

Hezbollah, a Lebanese Militant group, is a Non-State actor that is a supporter of the Assad government, and aided them during the Syrian civil war, to fight Syrian opposition.

Iran

In the 1970s, Iran began a nuclear weapons research program, possessing 5 research reactors and 2 partially constructed power reactors. As for chemical weaponry, in the 1980s the Iran-Iraq war, Iran produced the first chemical agent. Iran has always kept very strained political relations to the USA stemming from the US embargo on trade with Iran in 1955. Taking into consideration the additional strains that were placed on the relations of the two countries at the beginning of 2020 with the Persian Gulf Crisis.

Israel

Israel has complicated foreign relations with a number of nations in the Levant region. Actively their relations with Iran are under pressure in light of the Proxy-Conflict. Israel also has poor relations with Syria, after Syrian defeat in the 6 day war. When Israel demolished most of Syria's air force and captured the golan heights. Israel has also never accepted refugees from Syria.

Syria

Syria is actively being used as a Proxy for Iran and Israels conflict. Iran and Syria are strategic allies seeing as they have similar ideological agendas. They have both demonstrated opposition towards Israel. Syria is also enduring a refugee crisis where they are in need of cross border aid and are experiencing an overwhelming lack of it.

Timeline of Events

One can find a generalized timeline of events for the question of the Levant region below, for a more detailed timeline of events exclusively pertinent to the Israel and Iran proxy conflict, we implore you to observe the [following resource](#).

Date	Description of Event
1917	The declaration of Balfour was initiated, where Arthur James Balfour, Britain's Foreign secretary at the time, sent a letter to the president of the Zionist movement affirming the formation of "a national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.
1929-1938	In light of the facist rulership in Europe at the time approximately 250,000 Jewish-Zionists arrived in Palestine. Arguments between Arabs and Zionists arose over the western wall. Violent clashes took place including the Arab Revolt.
1947-1949	Official declaration of the state of Israel and 900,000 Palestinians fled the country or were expelled.
1948	The British withdrew from Palestine and the Arab-Israeli war took place, where Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan declared war on Israel. Jordan, Egypt, and Syria invaded Israel. They settled on an armistice.
1956	Egypt nationalized the Suez canal, The UK and France were outraged by this news, therefore in retaliation they allied with Israel to plot to take control of the canal. They said they would deploy troops to protect the canal on the pretense that it is now an international waterway, however these troops acted with hostility and seized the

Sinai, however due to poor planning they failed and could not follow through.

1967	Israel launched a precautionary attack on Egypt, Syria and Jordan which started the Six-Day war. They seized the Sinai and Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and East Jerusalem and West bank from Jordan. Later that year the UN passed a resolution that called for Israel to withdraw its armed forces on foreign territory.
1973	October war takes place, Syria and Egypt attempt to take back the Golan Heights and Sinai. However they were unsuccessful.
1979	Peace deal was struck between Egypt and Israel, making it the first Arab state to recognize Israel.
1982	Israel invades Lebanon to handle Palestinian Liberation Organization fighters under the pretense that they were threatening their borders. The organization relocated to Tunis
1987	First uprising in the Gaza strip and West bank. Palestinian NSA Hammas was formed as a byproduct of this.
1990	Iraqi invasion of Kuwait spurred UN sanctions.
1991	The Middle East Peace conference is held in Madrid and is attended by Israeli, Syrian, Palestinian, Jordanian and Lebanese representatives.
1994	Israel and Jordan sign a peace treaty putting years of hostility between the two nations to bed.

2004	The ICC ruled that the Israeli barrier was breaching international law and had to be removed.
2004	Kurdish-Iraq and Iran conflicts began, continuing into 2015.
2008	Civil conflict in Lebanon was imminent for about 18 months between those pro government and those who opposed the government.
2014-2017	Iraqi civil war took place.
2017	Iraqi-Kurdish conflict. Iraqi Insurgency also began around this time.
2019-2020	Persian Gulf crisis.

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- The Non Proliferation of WMDs, Resolution 1540, April 28 2004

- Ceasefire in the Yom Kippur War, Resolution 338, October 22nd 1973

- Calls for Israel to withdraw armed forces in the Six day war, resolution 242, November 22nd 1967

- Calls on all parties in the Syrian Civil War to permit free access to humanitarian aid, resolution 2139, February 22nd 2014

- Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, resolution 2165, July 14th 2014

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Preventing heavy weapons from being acquired and used by non-State actors

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In 2004 resolution 1540 was adopted in regards to the proliferation of WMD the Levant region to Non-State Actors, the security council came to the conclusion that no states are to provide NSA's with weaponry and/or display any efforts to support these non-state actors that will repeatedly endeavor to manufacture, own, or transport, nuclear, biological, or chemical weaponry, particularly ones with disparaging intents, in other words, terrorist intents. This resolution urges all states to apply and enforce specific laws in order for this resolution to be effective, and to take any measures necessary to deter the proliferation of

WMD. Unfortunately, a major loophole to Resolution 1540 is its applicability to non-state actors gaining access to nuclear material. Also, effective physical protection measures are not adequately specified which leaves room to various interpretations by member states.

Israel-Iran proxy conflict

As of yet, there have been no efforts to directly address the issue of the Iran-Israel proxy war given the delicacy of the issue as a result of its geopolitical nature. The situation in the Levant Region with regards to geopolitical tension has been exacerbating tremendously since the beginning of the Syrian Civil War and as such efforts have targeted the short-term issues that could prevent further exacerbation.

The question of refugees in the Levant region

The Syria Cross-Border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) is an ongoing attempt and initiative to put this humanitarian crisis to a halt. It is a Country Based Pooled Fund (CBPF) with multiple donors, set up in 2014 after UN Security Resolutions 2139 and 2165 taking into account the gravity and unpredictability of the Syrian Civil War and the requirement for elective approaches to convey philanthropic aid within Syria.

The SCHF empowers humanitarian accomplices, especially Syrian associations, to grow and bolster the conveyance of helpful aid across border and conflict lines. The Fund underpins undertakings and exercises in accordance with the Syrian Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the Fund's Operational Manual.

The SCHF aims to advance needs-based aid and intensify the nature of humanitarian responses, such as but not limited to responsibility to influence populaces, gender and protection mainstreaming. Advance the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and the Grand Bargain responsibilities settled upon in 2016, in accordance with the proposals of the Pooled Fund Working Group and SCHF's primary target.

This relates specifically to the target of 15% of HRP financing being diverted through the pooled subsidizing instruments, the standard of un-earmarked humanitarian financing, just as localisation of help. Pursue its ability to reinforce activities as required and in a joint effort with other existing limit fortifying activities to amplify the effect of various activities, expanding on the accomplishments of Fund since 2014 in helping to build/construct the limit of new and existing humanitarian collaborators especially Syrian NGOs.

Possible Solutions

The question of refugees in the Levant region

A solution that could be proposed to solve this issue is for it to be illegal to deport any individual who has arrived to the soil of a certain nation, to **a** country that may pose a threat and or risk to that individual's right to safety. This could be done by creating an international framework that limits and or restricts a nation's ability to deport an individual if a direct threat to his or her right to life and or security is threatened.

Whereas the point of this treaty would be to make it an essential point for the foreign policy of all nations to avoid taking such action. Countries could work in collaboration with governments of other nations and arrange for said person to be transported to a nation where they will be able to either gain asylum or obtain a visa instead of the country that they had initially applied for. This would in turn ensure the dignity of these individuals and in turn compensate for their inability to remain in said nation for travel or visitation.

Israel-Iran proxy conflict

The difficulty in finding a solution to the Israel-Iran conflict has shown to be apparent since 2005 (when the conflict really took off). The difficulty of course lies in the proxy nature of the conflict and thus the multitudinous parties involved herein. Of course, while we could get both parties to convene and come to an agreement that would address the different concerns they have, it is self-evident that this would not solve the issue entirely given the higher stakes of the conflict.

An effective solution to this conflict would require the involvement of all of the involved parties in a peace treaty that outlines a series of rules of which both parties are duly in accordance with and of which, in the event of their obstruction, would result in a considerable penalty.

Naturally, this agreement would need to involve all of the aforementioned parties and would need to be forwarded to the Security Council to be compelled of the involved parties.

Of course, from hereon it would be worthwhile to establish an international body that oversees the conduct of the aforementioned parties in the Levant Region and appropriately investigates and prosecutes any violations of the terms of agreement established during the peace convention. In order to be able to investigate and thus prosecute violations of these terms, the body would require an international mandate bestowed upon them by the Security Council (hence the importance of referring the resolution thereto).

These aforementioned solutions would certainly require compromises on both sides of the conflict and thus would manifest as desirable for all members partied to the conflict. Other solutions that could be more helpful to one side that they would to another are of course conceivable but simply shouldn't be within the realms of consideration given the short duration of time we have at our disposal to come to a solution for the topic and the self-evident retaliation that it would cause for the opposing side that would simply result in wasted time and effort that could have been better invested.

Preventing heavy weapons from being acquired and used by non-State actors

Solutions that could be further applied to deescalate the issue of Weapons of Mass Destruction being acquired in the Levant region could begin with an order of a ceasefire of any ongoing hostilities and to take immediate steps to restore the status quo prior to when NSA's were supplied with WMD's and the reversal of all military escalatory measures including all of the hostile acts and threats put forth by non-state actors through the immediate withdrawal of all weapons of mass destruction from countries that have been proven to supply non-state actors with arms, to ensure that this transaction does not repeat itself or continue to occur.

This ceasefire would have to be strictly implemented to ensure that all whom have any correlation to the issue refrain from any hostile and/or violent actions that may violate the terms of the ceasefire, the ceasefire would be under the following terms; There will be assembly points or districts or regions within which forces are required to be confined for a reasonable period of time before going back to living in the same community as that will make it difficult to abide by the terms of the ceasefire. All 'warzones' in the Levant region must be demilitarized to ensure that it would not be possible for the war to be rekindled and the ceasefire to be violated.

Additionally arms embargoes and economic sanctions could be imposed on whomever provides non state actors with weaponry of any form whether it is nuclear, chemical, or biological, with a specific focus on the countries that have been previously identified as the suppliers of weaponry to NSAs, to take an additional precaution in the case that these states manage to continue to supply these organizations post the withdrawal of all WMD from these countries to take into consideration every feasible circumstance to avoid room for error. United Nations envoys and/or peacekeepers are to be deployed in the countries which are involved, The UN should appoint an envoy who should be an experienced UN member to monitor the situation as to whether or not these regulations and terms set are being followed up with.

A conference to discuss this motorization will be held at the United Nations headquarters to discuss in detail, attendance is a requirement to all UN member states. Representatives from each nation are required to meet every 2 months with the envoy who is monitoring the situation to ensure the regulations are complied with. This envoy will ensure that all terms mentioned are complied with and if not, the previously stipulated economic sanctions and arms embargo are to be applied as they are deemed to be fitting towards the situation at hand and are applicable.

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