

World Youth Summit 2018

A Letter from Your Chair and Co-Chairs

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of all staff members, it's my pleasure to welcome you all to World Youth Summit 2018! We are really honored to serve as Chair and Co-Chairs to Model United Nations General Assembly First Committee at World Youth Summit 2018.

With DISEC being one of the largest committee in WYS 2018, the complexity of debate and unparalleled discussion are expected. As a consequence, this study guide only provides you brief introduction on this topic. We strongly suggest you do further research rather than rely solely on this study guide. Please keep in mind that the case studies we provide in this study guide is merely the starting point of your research. Delegates are more than welcome to do further discussion on any other cases as long as it's related to our topic. Case studies are provided for fear that you don't know where to begin.

We really appreciate our delegates to come up with the best solution not only for your countries and your allies, but also for all countries represented in the committee. Always feel free to ask questions and make sure you've been well prepared before attending the conference. We're looking forward to seeing you here in person at WYS DISEC 2018!

Best regards,
Chair Hsiao-Chun, Chuang
Co-Chair Pei-Chi, Lee
Co-Chair Hsin-Yu, Lin

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Topic: Combating the Rise of Violent Non-State Actors in the Middle East

Committee Introduction: GA1

— Disarmament and International Security Committee

DISEC, known as Disarmament and International Security Committee under the General Assembly of United Nations, is an organ mainly focusing on disarmaments and the threats toward global security and armed force. Under the scope of the General Assembly, the sessions of this committee is connected and structured by general debate, thematic discussions and action on drafts. Not to mention, this committee aims to maintain international security.

According to Article 26 of United Nations Charter, DISEC's mandate is to "promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources." Still, comparing to the Security Council, which has practically similar main function with DISEC, their methods taken during the conference are absolutely different.

Facing continuing outbreaks of security concerns, DISEC continues to serve its purpose focusing exclusively on international peace and disarmament, in cooperation with the Security Council in maintaining peace and international security.

Problem Statement

The rise of non-state actors has never been an urgent piece of news to the world. However, since more and more non-state actors start to equip themselves with their own lethal weapons, VNSAs have hence become the main focus of discussion. Nowadays, severe turmoil still occurs, which is caused by a variety of VNSAs around the globe. Factors including, such as but not limited to, history, religious conflicts, the invasion of the western countries, arguments of territories etc. are the main reasons of existence of the VNSAs. Meanwhile, there are still other factors that should be concerned while taking actions toward this fragile region and the regimes therein.

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Introduction to Non-state actors

Non-state actors (NSAs) are individuals or organizations that have formidable economic, political or social power. They are capable of influencing domestic and sometimes international affairs, while not belonging to or allied themselves to any particular country or state. NSAs are organized political actors not directly connected to any particular country but pursue aims that affect critical state interests. There are many different kinds of NSAs, such as the international media, non-governmental organizations, religious groups, multinational corporations, etc.

Among all of them, violent non-state actors (VNSAs), which are a lot different from the others, have adapted violent tactics to spread terrorism or fulfill their mandate. Such gruesome actions not only result in regional fear of conflicts, but also exert a negative influence on international security.

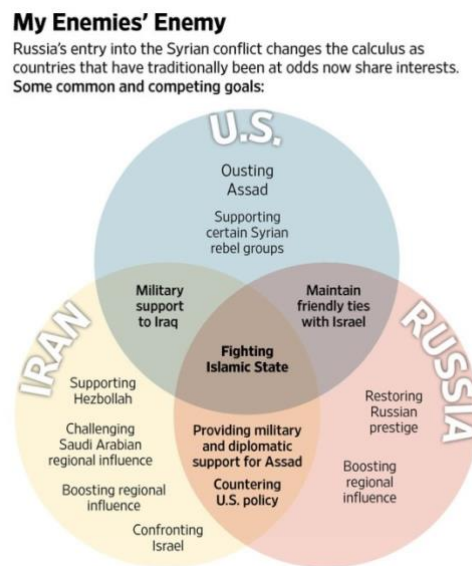
The Rise of Violent Non-State Actors

Speaking of violent non-state actors (VNSAs), they are recognized as any organizations or armed groups that practice illegal violent actions to achieve multiple specific goals. VNSAs are organs consisting of individuals interacting with other formal structures within open systems. Categories of VNSAs are mentioned and defined by documents, including warlords, militias, insurgencies, terrorist organizations, criminal organizations, gangs, and so on.

The term “Violent Non-state Actors” has been used in numerous formal historical documents and non-governmental organizations. By means of several resources, such as black market trade of weapons, international smuggling, illegal trade of weapons and crude oil, VNSAs have grown with ample support while expanding their authority over vast regions. Also, new technologies have not only made it possible to produce propaganda with astonishing ease, but they have also made it far easier to disseminate films and images, which help VNSAs to spread violence through social media in an easier way.

History of VNSAs originated from the Middle East

Retrospectively taken all together, the history of VNSAs originated from the Middle East is quite complicated. Tracing back to the beginning of the 21st century, 9/11 attacks in USA in 2001 has kicked off global awareness toward the Middle East. At that time, the leader of Islamic militant group al-Qaeda based in Afghanistan, Osama bin Laden claimed that such invasion at a non-Middle East country was their tactics to fulfill their ideology of spreading terrorism through the globe. Consequently, the Western world took actions to capture the VNSAs. For instance, a NATO-led movement named the International Security Assistance Force was established to provide assistance to Afghanistan and to wipe out the remaining military forces in the conflict area, preventing the nation from once again falling into the hand of terrorists.

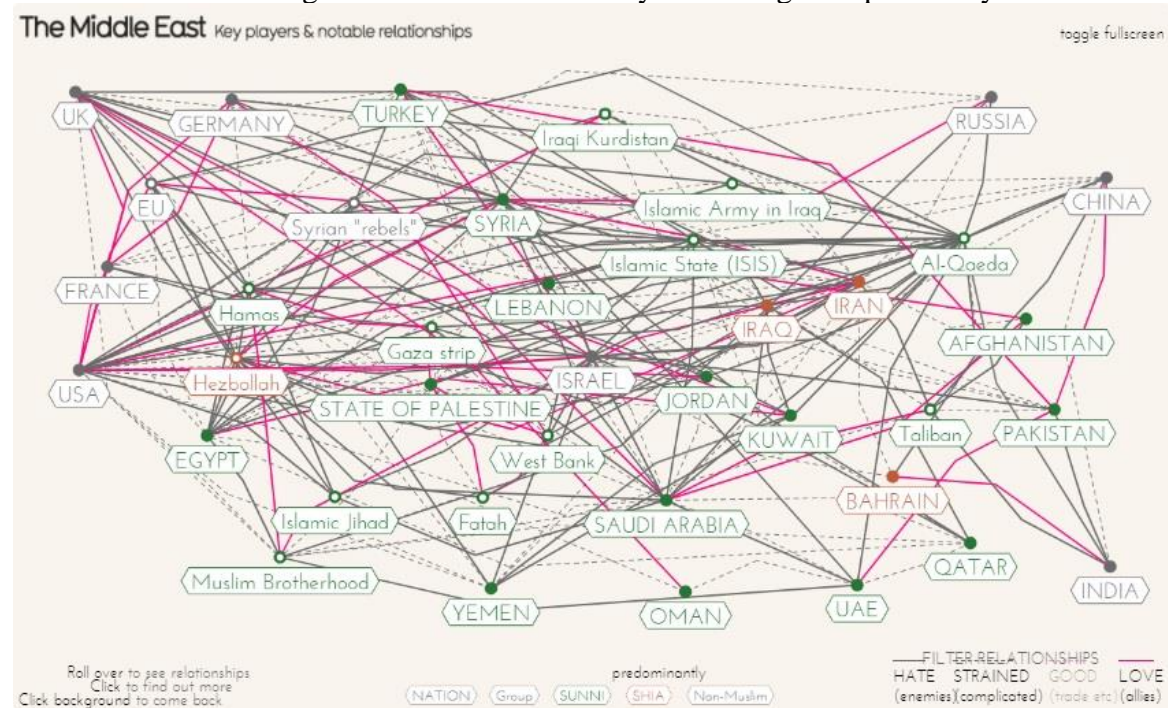


Apart from the above mentioned, VNSAs that participated in the Syria Civil War should also be concerned. The Houla massacre, with Shabiha (mostly Alawite groups of armed militia in support of the Ba'ath Party government of Syria) and Syrian military being the perpetrators, was an attack that took place on May 25, 2012, in the midst of the Syrian Civil War. The Free Syrian Army (FSA) stated that it could no longer honor the ceasefire if the safety of civilians was not guaranteed, and that the peace plan negotiated by Kofi Annan was "dead". Members of the group stated their intent to retaliate against government forces. Following the Houla massacre of 25 May 2012, in which 108 people were summarily executed, and the subsequent FSA ultimatum to the Syrian Ba'athist government, the ceasefire practically collapsed, as the FSA began nationwide offensives against government troops. On 11 January 2013, Islamist groups, including al-Nusra Front, took full control of the Taftanaz air base in the Idlib Governorate, after weeks of fighting.

About IS: Current Situation and Key Players

Under fire from Kurdish, Turkish, Russian, Iraqi and Syrian forces, as well as US air power, one of the most eye-catching VNSAs is the so-called Islamic State (IS), which so far has lost large swathes of land, as well as fighters and money in comparison with its original territory. The once lightning rise of Islamic State (IS), the

jihadist militant group that has seized large parts of Syria and Iraq since 2014, has sent shockwaves through the Middle East and beyond through the past few years.



Apart from the above, as of now, civil war in Syria and Yemen is still continuing. Nowadays, multiple participants are escalating their scale of intervention in the conflicts, including regional powers like Saudi Arabia, foreign powers like the United States and Russian Federation, and violent non-State Actors Islamic State and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

To conclude, the problem in the Middle East has never been a straight line but with branches. By far, not only did a US-led coalition of Western and Middle Eastern countries begin air strikes against the group in Iraq and Syria in 2014, the UK has also begun striking IS targets in Iraq since September 2014 and extended its involvement in Syria in 2015. Meanwhile, Russia began carrying out its own air strikes in Syria in 2015 after a request from Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who has clung on to power despite more than four years of civil war.

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Case Studies

Case 1: Syrian Civil War

Overview

The chaos started after the Arab Spring, when the Basharal-Assad government arose. The conflicts that combined government armies, and non-governmental armed force that are so called terrorist groups. The Basharal-Assad government is supported by Russian Federation, while the opposition fighters are backed by United States of America. The competition between these two powerful western countries has turned the civil war to a much more complicated situation. The authority in Syria recently has been questioned by the western countries, for the policy this government adopted

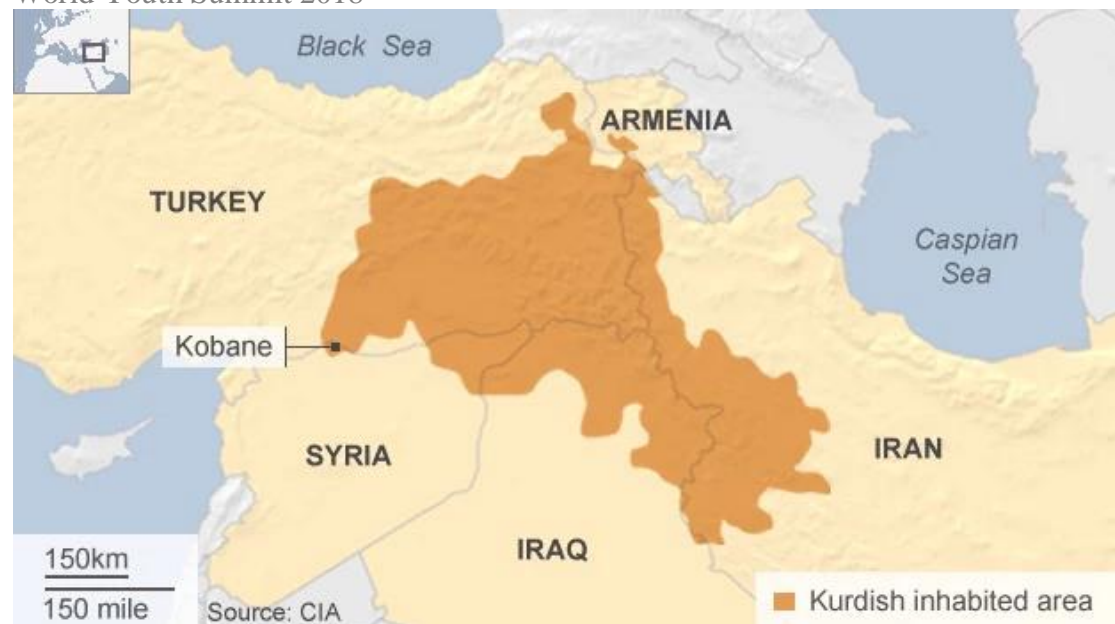
violates human rights to some level. The rebels in this region have been requesting the government to step down, while it is impossible under the support of Russian Federation. Coalitions have been formed by several rebels, claiming their responsibilities to knock down the government in power, but nations around the world are still unclear about their actual position.

Details

The Syrian Civil War is a multi-sided conflict in the Syrian region. In March of 2011, the Syrian government, led by President Bashar al-Assad, faced an unprecedented challenge to its authority when pro-democracy protests erupted throughout the country. Protesters demanded an end to the authoritarian practices of the Assad regime, in place since Assad's father, Hafiz al-Assad, became president in 1971. The Syrian government used violence to suppress demonstrations, making extensive use of police, military, and paramilitary forces. Opposition militias began to form in 2011, and by 2012 the conflict had expanded into a full-fledged civil war. Basically, the civil war originated from the extreme governing of the Syrian government, which started since the Assad regime, and the series of actions which violate human rights started. The current situation involved several western countries, mainly the United States and Russian Federation.

The conflicts are caused by multiple parties, each backed up by different powers that do not approve one another. After the chaos of the Arab Spring, people rose up to fight for their rights and fight against the Assad regime, some soldiers that used to belong to Assad even joined them, which formed the so called "Free Syrian Army".

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To handle this issue, President Assad let the ISIS and extremists around the country to be involved in the Free Syrian Army on purpose, so that the western countries would not support them. The al-Qaeda then formed the "al-Nusra Front" to be engaged in this civil war. The next year, Iran began to send supplies and army into this region. Arabian Gulf States countered Iran by doing the same. When the

Hezbollah claimed to join Assad, Arabian Gulf States, especially the Saudi Arabia, sent more funds and weapons to countered Iran. By 2013, two sides had formed: Sunni that supports the rebels, and the Shia that supports Assad. The Kurdish tribe also rose to fight for their rights and independence, which added complication into the war.

UN Past Actions

2016/12/21

— renew the authorization for cross-border aid delivery until 10 January 2018.

2016/12/31

—support Russia and Turkey to end violence in Syria and jumpstart a political process for the war-torn Middle Eastern country

The Special Envoy convened the parties to the United Nations Office at Geneva for one round of intra-Syrian talks on the 10th of July 2017. Previous rounds were held on these dates:

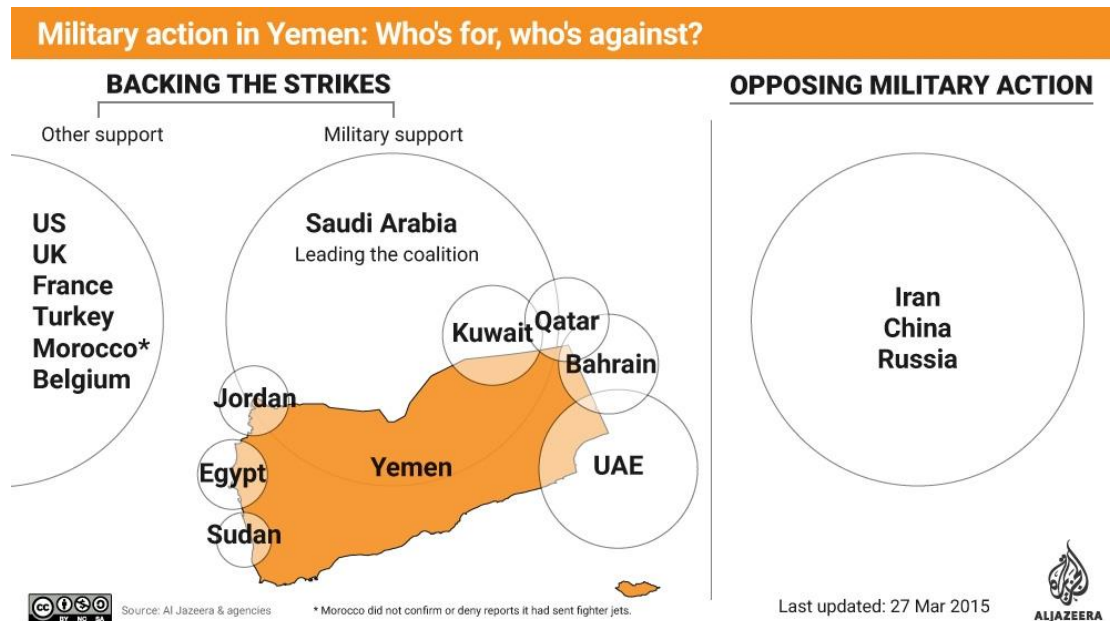
- From 23 February to 3 March 2017
- From 23 to 31 March 2017
- From 15 to 19 May 2017

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Case 2: Yemen Civil War

Overview

Yemen Civil War has been a long history, with the south side and the eastside of the country not having peaceful relationship between themselves. The previous president Ali Abdullah Saleh was supported by the public at first. Nevertheless, due to the chaos, poor economic situation and the outbreak of the Arab Spring, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi replaced Saleh as the president. Under the governing of Hadi, the economy did not improve, but conversely started to worsen off while corruption had become a common phenomenon in the authority.



Also, in order to eliminate the al-Qaeda organization particularly in Yemen, Mansour Hadi cooperated with the United States to fight against the domestic terrorist groups, especially the al-Qaeda, which resulted in the riots of the Islamic citizens. Shia youths organized militarized movements and carried out terrorist activities based on the purpose of anti-corruption and anti-America to fight the Assad regime, which caused President Hadi to leave the country. Iran, which mainly consists of Shia side, supports the rebels. Saudi Arabia, mainly the Sunni side, supports the Assad regime. At that time, the al-Qaeda invaded a jail in Yemen, released 300 criminals on the purpose of creating chaos. The war started in 2015, and it is still ongoing. Today, non-state actors still play a crucial role in this civil war.

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Conclusion: General Problems Caused by VNSAs

From Regional to International Security

Although violent non-state actors (VNSAs) have exerted a perceptible influence on the international system for centuries, it was only after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 that they began to receive significant study in academic and policy circles. In the beginning, VNSAs affect only in a relatively regional scale. The modus operandi of VNSAs consists of the use of the extensive infrastructure of their opponents for their cause, meaning that such as local road networks, public transportation systems can be used by terrorists to travel to their target destination, conceal their motives and plan their attacks. Targeting regional administrative, economic or infrastructural establishments, VNSAs have posed great threats in the Middle East.

“Upgraded” to the international level in the 21st century, VNSAs employ logistics which are embedded in globalized criminal networks and black markets. Such tactics means that they exploit similar loopholes in security measures, police surveillance and legal measures as regular criminals do. Nowadays, VNSAs mainly aim to disrupt the flow of goods and products, services, capital, personnel and information of the global society or a certain country, which lead to a global concern on transnational security issue.

Human Rights Concern

From the humanitarian aspect, VNSAs has interpreted the word “violent” by all abuses of human rights. Violations of international humanitarian law by VNSAs, including violence against civilian populations, notably women and children, kidnappings, killings, hostage-taking, pillaging, rape, sexual slavery, recruitment of children and destruction of civilian property, has stunned the international politics. Though the UN Security Council has reiterated the primary responsibility of Member States to protect civilian populations on their territories, in accordance with their obligations under international law, VNSAs today still seem to play an aggressive role in the world.

Question to Ponder

1. Has each country reached the consensus on the definition of “Non-State Actors”?
2. Are the current methods of military use of force against non-state military actors being effective? Should they continue to be used this way or should it be rethought or even thought of together with some other strategy?

3. Is it possible to tackle all Middle East's non-state military actors in the same manner, or is the current approach of a case-by-case nature the best one?
4. Is it able or desirable to negotiate with non-state military actors, or would this mean that their existence as a non-state entity is recognized? Is their adherence to the current state model a fair approach? Should they be incorporated in the formal ranks of state government, or would it eventually lead to internal sabotage or coup d'états?
5. How can DISEC take part in this issue or cooperate with other United Nations bodies to promote international security concerning acts of terror?
6. How to strike the balance between the rebels and the Assad Government in the Syrian war?
7. Can the proxy war between USA and Russian Federation really stop? How?
8. Is there any way to ensure the human rights in the Middle East?

Resource & Supplementary Reading

1. How the changing media is changing terrorism
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/25/how-changing-media-changing-terrorism>
2. Top major causes and motivation of terrorism
<https://www.thoughtco.com/the-causes-of-terrorism-3209053>
3. 7 Maps That Explain the Middle East
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/max-galka/7-maps-that-explain-the-m_b_8766040.html
4. Who's who in Syria: A look at 8 key players in the war
<http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-syria-players-syria-war-20151002-htmstory.html>
5. Williams, Phil (28 November 2008). "Violent Non-State Actors" (PDF). Zurich: International Relations and Security Network
<https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/93880/VNSAs.pdf>
6. Russia, China veto UN resolution on Syrian chemical weapons use
https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Russia-China-veto-UN-resolution-on-Syrian-chemical-weapons-use?gclid=Cj0KCQjwq7XMBRCDAIsAKVI5QYe9g-OrDlnj-05uFnIRW9PCICJPN_kHhTk2INbA-8GWqpdmh03VzYaAl89EALw_wcB