



SOFIMUN
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CHAIRPERSON:
PLINIO LIMATA & YANISLAVA
KARUSHEVA

TOPIC: (A)
STABILITY IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (SC)



The Security Council has primary responsibility, under the Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is so organized as to be able to function continuously, and a representative of each of its members must be present at all times at United Nations Headquarters.

When a threat against international peace is brought to the attention of the Security Council, the council first attempts to negotiate a settlement between the disputing parties. The council may use its own member delegations, refer the issue to discussion in the General Assembly, or appoint the Secretary-General, the head of the United Nations, to act as mediator. It may set forth principles for a peaceful settlement as well.

If no peaceful agreement can be reached, and the disputing factions use violence, intimidation, or force, the Security Council can then enact policy resolutions to solve the conflict or restore peace. Sometimes this policy includes economic sanctions such as trade embargoes or prohibitions on governments borrowing from international funds. Under the Security Council regulations, however, humanitarian aid can never be withheld from any nation or group of people. The Security Council also reserves the right to recommend expulsion of any UN member state in gross violation of the UN charter and international law, though the dismissal must be voted on and passed in the General Assembly.

The Security Council is the only United Nations organization that can authorize military action and maintain a military-trained peacekeeping force. In violent international dispute, the Security Council can send intervening peacekeeping troops to secure areas in turmoil.

The Security Council is further responsible for overseeing compliance with international agreements involving weapons, the rules of engagement (conduct during war), the illegal spread of nuclear technology, and other threats to international peace. To enforce these treaties, such as international agreements on nuclear non-proliferation, the Security Council can authorize UN-led inspections of a nation's military arsenal. In addition, the Security Council can order sanctions or authorize military action.

More at: www.un.org/Docs/sc



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Topic A: Stability in the Arabian Peninsula - SUMMARY

The Arabian Peninsula, which includes among others, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, is a region of strategic and geopolitical importance. This is for a significant extent due to the large reserves of oil and gas, whereby Saudi Arabia is one of the largest oil producers in the world. Moreover, the Gulf of Aden to the South-West of Yemen is of strategic importance to international shipping and trade. Some 22,000 vessels use it annually, carrying around 8% of the world's trade.

Stability in the Arabian Peninsula is challenged. Al-Qaeda has a growing presence in the Arabian Peninsula and has carried out attacks in, amongst others, Saudi-Arabia and Yemen. The security situation in Yemen constitutes a threat to the territorial integrity of the country and thereby to peace and security in the Arabian Peninsula. This threat is caused by the presence of Al-Qaeda, the independence movement in the South and the conflict with the Houthi's in the North. This all takes place in the context of ethnic, political and tribal divides, widespread poverty and the internal displacement of more than 200,000 people. Yemen has been referred to by some as the 'second Afghanistan.' Further instability in Yemen would certainly have implications that go far beyond the Arabian Peninsula itself.

The SOFIMUN 2010 Security Council is requested to address the threat to peace and security in the Arabian Peninsula in all its aspects and prevent further escalation.

1. Introduction

Figure 1. Arabian Peninsula¹

The Arabian Peninsula (AP) as a region has varying demarcations based on political, historical or geographical motives. In the context of this study guide the AP refers to the area covered by Saudi-Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Yemen as well as the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and the Red Sea.

The AP has an important geopolitical and strategic value as it contains the world's largest reserves of oil and the waters surrounding it are important traffic lanes for globe trade. The region however also faces a number of challenges that threaten peace and security in the region itself



¹ <http://www.nystromnet.com/information/Maps/images/ArabianPeninsula.jpg>



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and beyond. This study guide aims to provide a broad overview of the main threats to peace and security in the AP and the socio-economic context. Existing efforts to address these issues will be mentioned in the second part of this study guide.

2. Threats to peace and security in the Arabian Peninsula

The main threats to peace and security in the AP are:

- The situation in Yemen
- Terrorism (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula)
- Piracy



3. The situation in Yemen



Stability and security in Yemen is challenged by the independence movement in the South and the conflict with the Houthi's in the North. In addition also Al-Qaeda carries out attacks in Yemen or uses it for training and sheltering (see the section on AQ). These security challenges take place in a socio-economic context that will be elaborated on first.

Yemen rates 151 out of 177 countries on the human development index. The population of Yemen totals over 23 million people and is growing rapidly. The median age is only 17.9 years². The main religious groups in Yemen are Islamic with the Shaf'i (Sunni) in South/South-East of the country and Zaydi (Shia) in the North/North-East. Yemeni society has mainly a tribal structure.

Yemen is the poorest country of the AP with a GDP per capita of \$2500 and over 45% of the population living below the poverty line. The economy of Yemen is to a large part based on agriculture and oil (related) revenues. Petroleum accounts for 70% of the government revenue and

² <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html>



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roughly 25% of the GDP³. Oil reserves in Yemen are however declining with the indication that oil reserves will be depleted by 2017.⁴ It is the local population who suffers the most. According to the Common Country Assessment (CCA) 2005 the main reasons for poor economic development in Yemen are:

- Lack of transparency and participation
- Disempowerment of women and children
- Inequitable and unsustainable use of water resources
- Jobless growth, in the face of rising population⁵.

The challenges are aggravated by the serious water shortages and the presence of 200.000 internally displaced

people and 150.000 refugees from Somalia. Moreover, the country has the region's largest arms' market: according to unofficial sources, around 20 million people have at least 20 million guns. This makes it easy for people to search for justice on their own and in alternative ways.



Secessionist movement in South-Yemen

The current Republic of Yemen exists since the 22nd May 1990 when the Northern and Southern part of Yemen were unified as one republic. The reunion in 1990 was long expected and yearned for by the Yemeni people, but alas, it did not set an end to the internal disputes, which constitute a permanent threat to the territorial integrity and thereby to peace and security. There has been a clear separation on a religious, social and ideological basis among different social circles. Despite major efforts at reconciliation, from within and without Yemen, the political struggle escalated into armed conflict in the spring of 1994, when politicians and separatists—still in control of their armed forces—resorted to armed secession in the early summer of 1994. A civil war broke out between the Yemeni Government in Sanaa and the Yemen Socialist Party. The war lasted a couple of months and resulted in the defeat of the armed forces from the secessionists in the South. Saleh remained as president while a new coalition government was elected that excluded the leading southern party.

³ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html>

⁴ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7739402.stm

⁵ From the Common Country Assessment (CCA) 2005 by the UNDP



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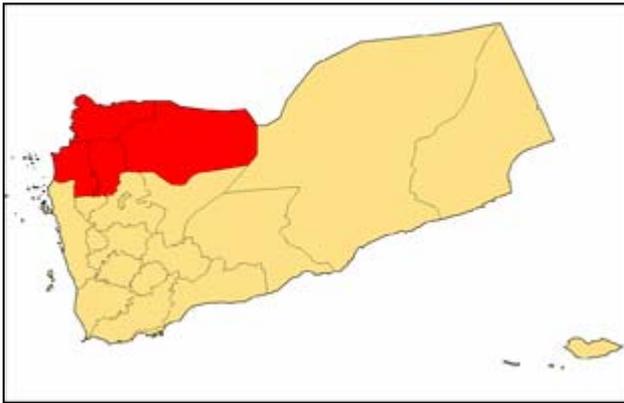
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In recent years the call for independence by movements in the South and its leaders in exile has become stronger and the rule of president Saleh is openly challenged. Violence also increased notably as reflected in riots, kidnappings, ambushes etc⁶. It has left dozens of people killed and hundreds wounded. In suppressing the violence the government is accused of human rights violations.



Conflict with the Houthi's in the North - Sa'dah insurgency

The North of Yemen has until recent been the stage of a violent conflict, termed the 'Sa'dah insurgency'. The conflict differs from the situation in the South of Yemen, as it much closer resembles a conventional (civil) war. Violence has sparked up in waves and resulted in an estimated 4000-8000 people killed and many more wounded. Among those who lost their lives are also over hundred Saudi's.

The conflict erupted in 2004 between the Zaidi muslim group named after their leader, Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, which was killed in september 2004. The Houthi's claim to defend their community against discrimination and government aggression. The Yemeni government accused the Houthi's of an attempt to overthrow it and implement Shi'a religious law.

Most of the fighting took places in the Sa'dah Governorate in northwestern Yemen although hostilities, mainly at the end of 2009, also spread across the boarder and took place on Saudi-Arabian territory. In august 2009 the government of Yemen launched a large offensive again the Houthi's bearing the name Operation Scorched Earth which included the use of tanks, aircrafts and 30,000 troops. Fighting continued till the beginning of Februari 2010. On the 12th of February a ceasefire was declared by president Saleh after the Houthi's agreed to adhere to the 'six point agreement' put fort by the Yemeni government. Despite this agreement the security situation remains fragile, as previous ceasefires have proven not to be stable⁷.

4. Terrorism – Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

The AP is in various ways linked with terrorism. One the one hand its has been the stage of terrorist attacks but on the other hand it also functions as a region where terrorist groups find shelter and receive training. Because of its poverty, high illiteracy and birth rates and government

⁶ See for example
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/05/world/middleeast/05yemen.html?_r=1
http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKLDE62316G.CH_2420

⁷ <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2010/02/2010211183014399724.html>



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corruption Yemen is a fertile ground for extremism. Yemen is also the ancestral region of the ideological leader of Al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden and a large part of those carrying out the attacks of on September 11 2001 originated from the region.



Increased US presence in Saudi Arabia, following the first Gulf War, is believed to be one of the reasons for increased attacks on Westerners from the mid-1990 onwards in Saudi Arabia. A variety of assassinations, kidnappings and bombings have taken place since then, mainly in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. A few examples;

The Khobar Towers bombing on the 25th June 1996 in Saudi Arabia killed 19 people and left about 500 wounded when a truck exploded near a US military dormitory.

The Riyadh Compound Bombings on the 12th May 2003 killed 26 people when three cars loaded with explosives were driven into residential compounds housing many westerners.

On the 29th of May 2004 gunmen entered a compound that housed employees of foreign oil companies and eventually killed 22 people. This event is known as the Al-Khobar massacres.

In addition to terrorism on land also maritime terrorism is an issue of concern. Maritime terrorism nowadays is still relatively rare although the AP has been the stage of two prominent attacks:

The US Navy destroyer USS Cole was targeted on the 12th of October 2000 in the port of Aden. An explosion killed 17 US sailors and wounded 39.

On October 6th 2002 the French oil tanker Limburg carrying 397,000 barrels of crude oil from Iran to Malaysia was targeted with explosives in the Gulf of Aden off Yemen. As a result of the attack 90,000 barrels of oil leaked into the Gulf of Aden and one crewmember lost his life. The attack resulted in a short-term disruption of international shipping and the loss by Yemen of several millions of dollars in port revenues.

Due to the characteristics of the shipping industry (i.e. big vessels with very small crew and precious cargo, new technologies etc.) and the current situation of maritime security, terrorists could find multiple "windows of opportunity" e.g. hijacking a vessel and using it as an attack weapon, for drug trafficking in cargo or for piracy ransoms as a means of financing terrorist organizations. As sea trade is the backbone of international trade, maritime terrorist activities will



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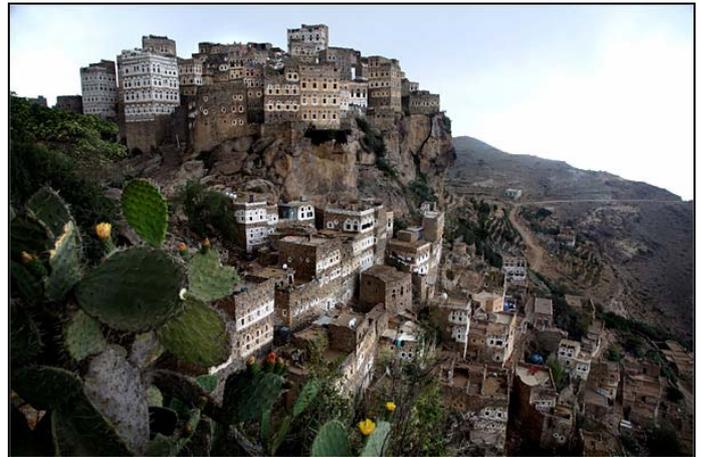
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seriously disrupt the global economy having an asymmetrical effect, an important characteristic of every act of terrorism.

Apart from being targeted by terrorism the AP and in particular Yemen are also known to function as place where terrorist elements seek shelter and training⁸. The tribal structure of Yemen as well as the country's extreme topography – outlined with rugged mountains and remote deserts – are in the advantage of terrorist networks like AQAP. In Yemen they also benefit from the country's poor economy, demography and domestic security. Successful efforts by the Saudi Government to combat terrorism are considered to be one of the reasons for increased presence of AQ in Yemen as they were forced to relocate. In the recent year however AQ seems to be strengthening and heightening its activity in and from Yemen. In January 2009 it was announced that Al-Qaeda formed a branch in the AP, therefore also termed Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Most recently they claimed responsibility for attacks on the Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, Deputy Interior Minister in charge of Counter-terrorism. The failed bombing of Northwest Airlines Flight 253 by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab during Christmas on 2009 was also initiated from the AP as he allegedly received training and instructions from terrorist elements in Yemen.



5. Piracy



Note. Piracy is mentioned here as it affects the security situation in the AP, is closely related to maritime terrorism and can increase if the security situation in the AP deteriorates. It is however also a subject in its own right and addressed last year during SOFIMUN in the Disarmament and International Security Committee. For this reason it is only mentioned here briefly and the SOFIMUN 2010 SC is requested to exercise restraint in it's efforts with respect to piracy.

Piracy is one of the oldest acts of

⁸ <https://www.cia.gov/> Middle East:Yemen



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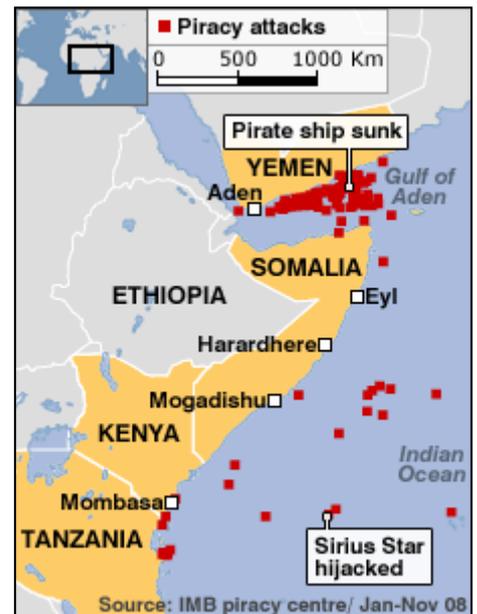
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violence against the freedom of maritime communication and trade, and those committing thefts on the high seas and inhibiting trade, have been considered by sovereign states to be "enemies of humanity" and can be persecuted by every state, comprising the legal notion of universal jurisdiction. With the expansion of international sea trade, especially after the Age of discovery, rule of law and order spread by means of powerful fleets over the seas and pirate raids considerably diminished. Acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships however have been increasing again in recent years in certain regions of the world and have evolved into a considerable problem for the modern shipping industry. UN and International Maritime Organization (IMO) constantly alert the international community over the seriousness of this situation since piracy jeopardizes the delivery of much-needed aid to regions in a deteriorating humanitarian situation, but also inhibits free trade, threatens maritime communication and endangers energy security.

The Gulf of Aden is a piracy prone area with frequent attacks on commercial vessels. According to some official sources, piracy in the Gulf of Aden costs Yemen \$350 million annually. Piracy is mainly taking place from Somalia but there are fears that if the situation in Yemen deteriorates it could also lead to increased piracy from Yemen. In addition, a growing climate of insecurity and lawlessness in international seas may provoke a rise in maritime terrorism.



6. Efforts to address the issue



There are various efforts to address the above-mentioned issues. Efforts to address the security issues that affect the AP are often part of thematic approaches to for example terrorism.

SC Resolution 1904 (2009) & Resolution 1822 (2008)

Security Council resolution 1822 (2008) and in particular resolution 1904 (2009) are milestones in the evolution of the Al-Qaeda and Taliban sanction regimes. These resolutions have improved the Committee's procedures and created effective instruments to ensure that the Committee's "Consolidated List" of individuals and groups of persons associated with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban remains updated and most accurately reflects the



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current threat according to the present posture of affairs.

Resolution 1904 introduces measures to increase the fairness and transparency of the sanctions regime imposed on Al-Qaida, Osama bin Laden and the Taliban. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula was listed on 19th January 2010 pursuant to paragraph 2 of resolution 1904 (2009) as being associated with Al-Qaida

<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Terrorism%20SRES%201822.pdf>

Yemen conferences

November 2006, London

An international donors' conference was convened in London to raise funds for Yemen's development. Yemen received pledges totaling \$4.7 billion, which were to be disbursed over four years (2007–2010). They represented over 85% of the government's estimated external financing needs.⁹ However, only a small portion has been disbursed, partly because of concerns about how the money would be spent.¹⁰



January 2010, London

At the Yemen conference in the beginning of 2010 in London, the common opinion was voiced that Yemen risked becoming a failed state unless the world helped to develop its economy and address the security situation.

Piracy

An overview of efforts to address piracy is given in the study guide for DISEC from SOFIMUN 2009: <http://www.2009.sofimun.org/SOFIMUN2009-CM-DISEC-Topic-B-summary+guide.pdf>

For the reasons mentioned above the efforts to address piracy are not further elaborated on here.

7. Questions a resolution should answer

The SOFIMUN 2010 Security Council is requested to address the threat to peace and security in the Arabian Peninsula in all its aspects and prevent further escalation. The questions a

⁹ [Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations](#), Congressional Research Service

¹⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE60Q0A520100127>



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resolution must answer address several critical aspects. These questions are also meant to guide research and preparation for the conference:

- How can the threat to peace and security in the AP be addressed in an integrated and comprehensive manner?
- What is needed for a durable and long-term solution?
- How effective are current efforts to address the situation in the AP and how can effectiveness of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral efforts be improved?
- At what level will a solution be most effective; local or regional?

Suggested Reading and Additional Sources

Topic A: Stability in the Arabian Peninsula

For a better understanding of the issue, the following sources should be consulted, but they are not exhaustive, therefore it is recommended that the delegates research the topic on their own, both through academic sources, as well as informal channels.

Mandatory

The following materials should be read by the participants in order to gain an in-depth view on the issue.

1. [UN, UNEF I, Meadle East, Background report](#)
2. [Yemeni national](#) and [international politics](#)
3. North and South Yemen: Lead-up to the Break-up By Robert Hurd and Greg Noakes from Washington Report on Middle East Affairs
4. [Al-Qaida In The Arabian Peninsula](#)
5. [UNHCR Yemen: Protest threaten Stability](#)
6. [Finance and funding](#)
7. [World Bank Country Profile](#)
8. [Oil, Gas and the Future of Arab Gulf Countries, Fareed Mohamedi](#)
9. [Poverty Assessment Report, 2007 Volume I](#)

Suggested

For information on the topic these links might be useful. Also search the sites for additional articles on the subject. Knowledge of the central United Nations Security Council Resolutions is expected.

10. Check the information provided by the national foreign policy authority of the state which you represent or the cooperation with the NGO which you represent.
11. Any other relative materials.