

Study Guide for the United Nations Security Council

Don Bosco, Liluah MUN '16



**Topic: Arms Trade and Terrorism with special emphasis on the
Middle East**

President – Andre Jaggi

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Respected Delegates,

Welcome to the UNSC being simulated at Don Bosco, Liluah MUN '16!

I look forward to chairing each and every one of you, and I hope that, together, we can make this committee a success. I believe that one of the key elements that contribute to the success of an MUN Committee is a holistic understanding of the topic being discussed – and this study guide should lead you in the direction of understanding the multi-faceted topic we are discussing. It should not serve as the only research you do; it should rather serve as the guide to your research and help you to understand the key aspects of the topic at hand.

Please do not hesitate from contacting me for clarifications on the agenda, or any sort of help with respect to country policy, rules of procedure or anything else that you find relevant. Best of luck for your research!

Thanking you,

Andre Jaggi

Chairperson, UNSC

What is the United Nations Security Council?

The Security Council is the United Nations' principal crisis-management body, empowered to impose binding obligations on the UN's 193 member states to maintain peace. The council's five permanent and ten elected members meet regularly to assess threats to international security, addressing issues that include civil wars, natural disasters, arms control, and terrorism. Structurally, the body remains largely unchanged since its founding in 1946, stirring debate among many members about its efficacy and legitimacy as an arbiter on matters of international security. Syria's civil war poses particular challenges to the Security Council amid concerns about regional instability, proliferation, and a mounting humanitarian crisis. Similarly, Russia's frictions with the United States and European Union following its actions in Ukraine in early 2014 have introduced new tensions into the council.

What are the Security Council's tools for conflict management?

The Security Council aims to reach peaceful resolution of international disputes under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, which authorizes the council to call on parties to seek a solution via negotiation, arbitration, or other peaceful means. Failing that, Chapter VII empowers the Security Council to take more assertive action, such as imposing sanctions or authorizing the use of force "to maintain or restore international peace and security." Peacekeeping missions are the most visible face of the UN's conflict-management work; in mid-2015 the council was overseeing sixteen operations and nearly 105,000 uniformed personnel.

Constrained by U.S.-Soviet rivalry, the Security Council acted infrequently in the four-and-a-half decades between its founding and the close of the Cold War in 1989. During that time it authorized seventeen peacekeeping operations. Since 2014, heightened tensions between the United States and Russia have manifested anew in the council, leading to concerns that it may be less able to act when faced with crises. For example, in July 2015, Russia vetoed a resolution that would have

created an international tribunal to prosecute the pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine who are thought to have shot down Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 using a Russian-made missile.

The Security Council has authorized fifty-one operations in the years since the Cold War, many responding to failing states, civil wars, or complex humanitarian emergencies, and deploying to conflict zones in the absence of cease-fires or parties' consent. Under more muscular mandates, they have combined military operations—including less restrictive rules of engagement that allow for civilian and refugee protection—with civilian tasks, including policing, electoral assistance, and legal administration. Developing nations provide the lion's share of personnel.

Regional organizations have played an increasingly important role in peacekeeping and conflict resolution, in some cases prodding the council to action and in others acting as subcontractors on its behalf. For instance, the council authorized the use of force in Libya in 2011 after the Arab League called for a no-fly zone, which NATO then executed. Experts point to the increased will and capacity of the African Union (AU), which has partnered with the UN in carrying out hybrid missions in Somalia and the Darfur region of Sudan. However, in late 2014, the UN took over peacekeeping responsibilities in the Central African Republic from the AU-led International Support Mission (MISCA).

What coercive measures can the Security Council take?

The sanctions provisions in Article 41 of the UN Charter, dormant during much of the Cold War, have become one of the Security Council's most frequently employed tools. Sanctions were imposed just twice prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall: In 1966, a trade embargo was enacted against the white-minority government in Southern Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe), and in 1977, an arms embargo was enacted against apartheid-era South Africa. In the early 1990s, the council began to make regular use of sanctions, starting with Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, and Haiti.

As of 2014, 13 Security Council sanctions regimes, listing 618 individuals and 421 entities and other groups, are in place.

These comprehensive embargoes have faced criticism. After Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent Gulf War, the United Nations coupled a successful disarmament regime with severe sanctions. The UN subsequently established the Oil-for-Food Program, which was marred by exploitation and corruption. An independent inquiry found that some two thousand firms—many of them based in P5 countries—paid kickbacks to the Iraqi government totaling nearly \$2 billion. The inquiry found that much of the food provided under the program was of poor quality and that delivery schedules were delayed.

So-called "smart sanctions" emerged in the mid-1990s as an alternative to the "blunt instrument" on display in Iraq, targeting discrete economic and political matters and specific individuals deemed threats international security. Certificate-of-origin regimes have curtailed the trade in so-called "blood diamonds" that finance several civil wars, for example. Arms embargoes, travel bans, asset freezes, and import/export bans on individual goods are now the norm, rather than comprehensive embargoes, with roughly a dozen regimes in effect at any given time.

CFR Senior Fellow Stewart Patrick says the Security Council has played an important role in setting a floor for sanctions on Iran's nuclear program and harmonizing international policy on terrorist financing.

But targeted sanctions have raised human rights concerns of their own. In order to be delisted, blacklisted individuals, entities, and items—often those with dual uses, such as agricultural or medicinal applications—require an affirmative vote of sanctions committees in which all Security Council members are represented.

The council also has the power to refer cases of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity to the prosecutor of the independent International Criminal

Court. It did so for the first time in 2005, resulting in an outstanding warrant for Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir on charges of genocide in Darfur.

Is force unsanctioned by the Security Council legitimate?

Under the United Nations charter, the use of force is legal only in cases of self-defense or when it has been authorized by the council. The question of legitimate use of force—as distinct from strict legality—remains contentious.

NATO's seventy-eight-day-long air war in Kosovo is the most oft-cited case in arguing for the legitimacy of humanitarian interventions outside Security Council authorization. The bombing campaign was undertaken to protect Kosovar Albanians from ethnic cleansing by Serbs, then leading rump Yugoslavia, after Russia had indicated it would block authorization in the council. An independent commission of scholars later deemed the intervention "illegal but legitimate."

The emergence of the responsibility to protect (R2P) in the early 2000s appeared to justify the use of force outside Council authorization by qualifying the principle of noninterference in sovereign affairs. The doctrine, as adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005, stipulates that states have a responsibility to protect their populations from crimes against humanity; the international community has a responsibility to use peaceful means to protect threatened populations; and when a state "manifestly fails" to uphold its responsibilities, coercive Chapter VII measures should be collectively taken.

Successive U.S. administrations have argued that humanitarian intervention can be undertaken with regional organizations or "minilateral" coalitions of the willing, conferring legitimacy. But UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has rejected this position, saying, "The responsibility to protect does not alter, indeed it reinforces, the legal obligations of Member States to refrain from the use of force except in conformity with the Charter." This debate was revived in the run-up to the 2011 NATO-led Libya intervention and continues with the ongoing Syrian civil war.

"Legitimacy is very much in the eye of the beholder," veteran UN analyst Jeffrey Laurenti says. Some experts caution that by lowering the threshold the United States claimed for legitimacy as it sought to intervene unilaterally in mass atrocities—most recently, following allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria in August 2013—Washington may achieve its short-term objectives while setting precedents counter to its long-term interests.

Illegal trafficking of Weapons –

The illegal trafficking of weapons is an international issue that plagues many of the world's developing nations. Illicit arms trafficking fuels civil wars, incites conflict, and is in general a detriment to the successful rehabilitation of developing nations. The main focus of this guide is on the trade of small arms and light weapons. Small arms and light weapons account for approximately 60-90% of the 100,000 deaths linked to international conflict each year. As well, because of their ease of use and the ease with which they can be acquired; they are the preferred weapons of terrorist organizations. Additionally, since many small arms are lightweight and easy to use, they are used in conflicts involving child soldiers. It is therefore critical that the continued illegal trade of weapons is stemmed and heavily controlled.

Small Arms and Light Weapons –

Small Arms/Light Weapons is loosely defined as weapons that can be used by individuals or that can be mounted on vehicles or pack animals. These include:

- Small arms: hand-held small calibre firearms, usually consisting of handguns, rifles, shotguns, manual, semi-automatic, and full automatic weapons and man-portable machineguns.
- Light weapons: Includes a wide range of medium-calibre and explosive ordnance, including man-portable and vehicle-mounted antipersonnel, antitank and anti-aircraft rockets, missiles, landmines, antiaircraft guns, mortars, hand grenades and RPGs, and so on. Many of these weapons are small, light, and easy to transport across international borders. Therefore, smuggling rings are large and difficult to control.

The main issue in the illegal arms trade is that there exists a blurred line between legal and illegal trade. Because of loose international standards and regulations, weapons are often able to fall into the hands of paramilitary forces and terrorist groups. Many of the institutional checks on small arms that are in place around the world are weak and poorly enforced. As a result of corruption and general misinformation, many states both willingly and unwillingly supply weapons normally destined for legitimate government military services straight into the hands of terrorist groups that seek only to incite violence. Because of the difficulty in determining the legality of small arms, defining what legal and illicit arms trade means is a key component in understanding how to combat it. The Small Arms Survey defines it as:

A transfer generally is legal if it fully conforms to international law and the national laws of both the exporting and importing states. An illicit transfer breaks either international or national laws. This simple division often blurs in practice, especially in ambiguous cases where legal or policy exceptions are exploited. Another source of controversy arises from transfers that are legal by these criteria – for example, which do not violate international arms embargoes or sanctions – but not in terms of international humanitarian or human rights law.

Overview of Small Arms and Light Weapons –

The issue of small arms is most obvious now, in the twenty first century, after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. After the end of the Cold War, the prevalent inter-state conflict quickly transformed into intra-state conflict fought not by large weapons and weapons of mass destruction but by small arms.

Instead of the large political and ideological battles of the past century that divided the world in two, much of the world in conflict laden nations is now instead

divided by ethnic and religious conflicts, most of which are fought by small arms and rebel groups. These small weapons are prevalent throughout the world. Unlike the massive war machines of the Cold War, even when out-dated, these weapons are useful in combat and unlikely to disappear (except into different conflicts). They provide easy armament for any party wanting to reignite a conflict or engage a neighbouring country. Even when further fighting does not materialize, small arms can be employed in other forms of criminal violence, disruption of development efforts, or interference with efforts to deliver humanitarian aid. The advantages of these weapons are clear.

They are cheap, widely available, lethal, simple to use, durable, portable, concealable, and have legitimate military, police, and civilian uses, making them easy to transfer across borders, legally and illicitly.

It is for this reason that they are so prevalent and the issue so difficult to approach. Any solution would require multiple facets and must target both the lax control and regulation in the target nation(s) as well as the current socio-economic condition of the area. For that reason, it is important to understand where and how these weapons are entering the market, as well as which issues are international and which must be solved at a rural level.

Supply of Small Arms and Light Weapons –

Small arms can enter the illicit market in nine different ways:

1. The first and most serious transfer of illegal arms occurs when states and organizations defy weapons trade embargos on nations. By doing so, they directly fuel the conflict in nations that have already been pre-identified as war-torn. Cases on regional, national and international scales can be found where the embargos were not monitored closely enough, such as the embargos on Angola and Liberia.

2. Another important transgression occurs because of corruption in the system. In many countries, such as Russia, the illegal passage of weapons is allowed through and across the border of a country as officials are bribed to cooperate. These officials will often accept payoffs, especially in countries where government officials receive meagre salaries and have little to no incentive to enforce the law.
3. The inadequate management of weapons stockpiles has meant that many legal weapons, often stored once they are out-dated, leak into the black market. It is in this way that most legal arms leach into illicit trafficking networks.
4. Another important source of illegal weapons can again be linked to the poor management of weapon caches. During times of civil unrest, many opportunists find the time to raid weapon arsenals. In 1997, for example, Albanian government arsenals emptied as the country descended into chaos and more than half a million weapons flowed into the hands of Albanian citizens. Many of these guns made their way throughout the Balkans and into other regions. In the most extraordinary case, that of Iraq, the loss of control of millions of small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives helped to undermine the stability of an entire country.
5. Often times, weapons are also lost from military stocks. Each year, approximately 1 million light weapons are stolen or lost from military arsenals.
6. There are also known cases where members of the military who have legal access to guns and other weapons sell them or provide them to the black market. Israeli soldiers are known to sell weapons to Palestinians with the full understanding that these weapons will be used against Israeli soldiers and citizens.
7. Weapons have been stolen from owners, a case that occurs in countries where it is legal to carry firearms, such as the U.S.

8. Ambiguous or unclear domestic laws can allow persons to own and purchase multiple guns. These owners then go on to sell these weapons to other parties.
9. Lastly, there are many organizations in the black market that make their own weapons directly.

As can be seen, a key component in the fight against illegal arms trafficking is the correct management of weapons stocks. The secure disposal of weaponry as well as the safe management of current stocks would greatly reduce the likelihood that weapons which are originally made for legal purposes, i.e. national defense, do not fall into the hands of black market traffickers. Of important note as well is that, as recommended by the Secretary General of the UN himself, Ban Ki-moon, the safest disposal of weaponry is when the weapon stocks are destroyed once they are no longer in use.

Current Response to Illegal Trafficking –

The current international response is still weak and uncoordinated. The U.S. currently leads the world in its international small arms and light weaponry disarmament attempts with its efforts to secure and destroy surplus and obsolete small arms and light weapons. Since 2001, the State Department's Small Arms/Light Weapons Destruction Program has facilitated the destruction of over 800,000 surplus small and light weapons and 80 million rounds of ammunition in 23 countries. The international response, however, has not been as strong. While its response to such weaponry as landmines and biological weapons has been very effective in curbing and limiting their use, the enforcement of measures against the illegal distribution of light weaponry is currently insufficient. Although the UN has passed multiple resolutions against the proliferation and endorsement of arms trafficking, such as the United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN Program of Action, or POA), these resolutions are too vague and widespread

to have much of an impact on the global community. Instead, it is recommend that any proposed resolution would seek to curb the spread of specific types of weaponry or seek to limit the influx of weaponry in certain nations, among other recommendations.

Trading Arms to Terrorist Organizations –

Growing threats of the terrorist organizations has become one of the most important concerns of the United Nations and the international community, which leads us to another very important concern that is the channel through which such organization are acquiring these arms. United Nations has recently started laying emphasis on this matter by increasing the arms trade regulations and restraining its activities. Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is currently the paramount in regulating the arms trade. It is by far supported by most of the prominent arms trading nations like USA, UK, Russia, France and Germany. Despite of the implementation of the ATT, it is important to bear in mind that there are still lack of international restrictions, laws and policies for arms brokers which trigger the ease of arms falling into the hands of terrorist organizations.

Outside of the ATT and the Program of Action in securing small arms trade, there have been no real international efforts to restrict or secure the trade of arms by nations or to impose any oversight to the arms brokers trading weapons internationally. It is important to note that while many nations have attempted to prevent illicit arms trade, both on import and export within the country, the issue of setting up any form of guidelines, rules, restrictions, regulations, or even clear international law on the subject remains absent from international trade laws. No doubt however, programs by EU and the United States have been enacted to help prevent illicit arms trade.

Arms Brokers and Arms Embargo –

Currently, the UN Security Council arms embargoes is the only global, legally binding prohibition on arms transfers. Since 1990, the United Nations has imposed 28 arms embargoes against targets in 17 countries and one non-state entity (Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda). The most recent new arms embargo was introduced against Eritrea on December 23, 2009.

Arms brokering has gained popularity in the course of recent history as a common method of illicit arms trade. Major markets for the illicit arms trade have been in the Middle East and African regions. Many illicit arms dealers have managed to export and import the weapons into areas of civil conflicts due to the negligence and lack of restrictions on the arms trade policies in such regions. Arms brokers frequently falsify documents, such as weapon identification and permit to sell these arms as legal trades.

Many governments do not regulate arms brokering when the brokering activity does not take place within their legal boundaries. For example, in 2004 an Irish arms broker negotiated to transfer 50 T-72 tanks from Ukraine to Sudan. The government was restricted to take any legal actions since there were no laws governing Irish arms brokers ordering arms from other countries.

During the Lebanon crisis, the Apache helicopters used by the Israeli forces were made up of more than 6000 parts manufactured worldwide including the UK, Netherlands and Ireland. According to the EU Code of Conduct, these countries were supposed to deny any request for the export of helicopters directly by the Israel.

Cross Border Trade –

There has been a large issue of illicit arms trade from country to country across the border. According to a recent report on arms trafficking by Mexico's governmental research service, known as the CESOP, an estimated 2,000 weapons illegally cross the U.S. border into Mexico every day. The report revealed that 85 percent of the

approximately 15 million weapons that were in circulation in Mexico in 2012 were illegal.

The lack of port and border security has given an obstacle free pathway to many terrorists or rebel groups to bring small arms across the borders of neighboring countries. Since 2000, UN investigators have documented weapons transfers by neighbouring governments to armed groups in Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan, all of which were under UN Arms Embargoes.

Unregistered gunsmiths are also fuelling up the illegal production and trade of illegal arms in various civil wars struck regions. The borer and maritime security needs to be upgraded in order to block the routes of such cross border arms transfers.

State Sponsored Terrorism –

The term “State Sponsored Terrorism” is used by the U.S., mostly in defining a state that is directly or indirectly assisting the terrorist groups by providing them with funds and arms. The member states of Sudan, Syria and Iran have mostly been accused of assisting the deadly terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Hezbollah and Hamas. Despite of the Iran’s denial of supporting such activities, it has given refuge to the Hamas and Hezbollah leaders and it is still believed that Iran has government sponsors programs that train, give arms and give financial assistance to such extremist groups.

However, there remains much evidence to the contrary.

Secondly, Syria has also provided their support to Hamas and Hezbollah by facilitating them through arms and letting them enter states like Iraq through Syria. It also facilitated the transfer of arms to Hamas in Palestine. Nevertheless, despite of facing so many crisis, Syria has improved its border security and shrunk the amount of terrorists passing through their border over the past two years. Sudan

has also been in support of such terrorist groups. Their opinion about the Hamas Group is as more of freedom fighters than terrorists and have been known in the past to offer shelter to Hezbollah officials. However, Sudan has not promoted their terrorist activities.

Islamic State (ISIS) Arms portfolio –

The Islamic State is currently in hold of the Mosul, the second largest city of Iraq with a population of more than 1 million Iraqi locals.

In the recent course of history, the U.S. has launched several surgical strikes against the Islamic militant group in the northern part of Iraq. Investigation reveals that during the 16 month offensive of the ISIS in Syria and Iraq, the jihadist group has been able to accumulate piles of weapons including heavy armour. The concern which is to be highlighted here is that where are these weapons coming from? How effectively can the ISIS use such powerful arms?

The arms mainly comprise of a combination of Soviet Tanks, large and advanced U.S. made systems and of course the black market arms inventory.

“Arms transfers like this are a hallmark of these kind of insurgencies,” said James Carafano, vice president for Foreign and Defense Policy Studies at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C. “They often look for weapons from different sources, places like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria and Eastern Europe.”

The Islamic State is known to possess Tanks like, T-72, a comparatively modern Soviet design, and the T-55, an obsolete model from World War II. The group also has captured Chinese duplicates of Soviet field and anti-aircraft guns from the Iraqi and Syrian armies.

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Arms portfolio –

Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is an alliance of militant networks formed in 2007 to unify opposition against the Pakistani Government and military.

The Taliban and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) are in possession of weapons like firearms, RPG-7 launcher, Kalashnikov assault rifle, variants of the PK machine gun, small semiautomatic pistols and AK-47.

According to the Pakistan Defence sources, earlier this year, it was revealed that over 200,000 US weapons including assault rifles and grenade launchers are missing from the US army's inventory in Afghanistan. The US army is unable to provide serial numbers for a large number of the missing weapons and no records have been maintained for the location or disposition for the rest.

Other such terrorist organizations like Hamas, Al-Qaeda and Haqqani Network also possess dangerous weaponries.

Bloc Positions –

African Bloc:

As the region with the most conflicts, this bloc understands the effects of the proliferation and use of SALW's – having been most destabilized economically and politically by the illicit use of SALW's. Though few nations thrive peacefully through the effects of SALW's, many other nations have been marred by the conflicts the arms have brought. The long lasting conflicts in Rwanda, Somalia, and Darfur have been perpetuated because of the available access to the arms. As such, the African Bloc has been establishing preventative measures for keeping the SALW's away from belligerent parties and rehabilitation programs to stop the effects of their illicit use.

Asian Bloc:

Conflicts in this region have been relatively high, especially in the South Asian region. For example, the armed confrontation in Thailand has greatly destabilized a region once hailed as a tourist haven. As such, the Asian Bloc has also been careful to regulate its arms trade throughout the region. However, as a region with one of

the biggest suppliers of SALW's, members of this bloc need to also consider solutions that do not impose upon a nation's autonomy to legally sell arms.

The Association of South- East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been establishing particularly stricter regulations into the arms trade by unifying the arms tracking methods and improving international communication.

Middle Eastern Bloc:

As a region that has experienced many armed conflicts, the Middle East is no stranger to the stress that SALW's can bring. However, with a military expenditure comparatively high to its gross domestic product, the Middle East is also a large customer base for legitimate arms sales. In-fighting throughout the Middle Eastern Bloc, originating from the Israeli conflict, has frequently destabilized peace in the region through retaliatory attacks. As such, efforts to build peace are repeatedly undermined through renewed acts of violence.

Latin America Bloc:

The Latin American states have experienced many uprisings that have garnered a great human cost. Furthermore, the instability that such rebellions bring has caused a great deal of violent crimes – between 1979 to 2003, 500,000 Brazilians have been killed by SALW's. The conflicts have also been attributed to the wide gap between the poor and the rich. The Organization of American States (OAS) has devoted measures to more efficiently track arms and their illicit trade to end such prevalence of volatility.

Western Bloc:

As a bloc with the most SALW manufacturers and some of the most developed nations, members of this bloc need to consider various viewpoints. Although many of these nations support disarmament, it is also important to consider that their economies are also dependent on the sales of arms. Thus, the biggest discrepancy

between the Western bloc and other blocs is that they would consider the reduction of SALW's rather than the complete eradication of them. However, this stance is not to say that the Western Bloc would disagree with the demobilization of armed belligerents.

Case Studies –

The Yemeni Crisis

The Yemeni crisis started out in 2011 as an uprising against President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his successor, former vice president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi by Houthi militants. After president Hadi was forced to resign and leave, the Houthi leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi established the Revolutionary Committee in place of the Parliament and fled the capital, gaining authority over part of the country. The conflict has both political and religious roots, Houthis belonging to the Zaidi branch of Islam which in basic principles follows Shiite ideology, while the Hadi government is Sunni. The two parties have accused each other of receiving foreign help, the former government from Saudi Arabia and Al-Qaeda and the insurgents from Iran and Hezbollah.

Saudi Arabia and several other countries including Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Sudan had created a coalition with the aim of "repelling Houthi aggression" in Yemen, which had led military operations in Yemen against Houthi rebels. Iran is currently accused of shipping weaponry to Houthi rebels. "A coalition of Arab states is putting mainly US- and European-sourced advanced arms into use in Yemen," said senior researcher Pieter Wezeman said in the SIPRI report. Meanwhile the rebel groups also acquire new weaponry, allegedly from Iran who denies shipping arms to Houthis.

The Yemeni crisis shows us the important link between politics and religion which is a strong factor in Middle Eastern conflicts. It is also a perfect example of foreign intervention and weapon trades worsening the situation, especially if we take into

account the issues between Iran and Saudi Arabia which are now projected onto an internal matter of Yemen.

Syrian Civil War

The Syrian Civil War, which also spilled over to the territory of Lebanon also started in 2011 with protests against president Bashar al-Assad during the Arab Spring. Since then it escalated into a multi-sided armed conflict with foreign interventions. Multiple groups are fighting on the side of the Syrian government of Assad, and of the opposition. ISIS and the de facto autonomous region of Rojava (Syrian Kurdistan) are also involved in the fights. Fighting from the Syrian Civil War has spilled over into Lebanon as opponents and supporters of the Syrian rebels have traveled to Lebanon to fight and attack each other on Lebanese soil. Religion also has an effect on the conflict, as Sunni Muslims tend to support the rebels while Shiites are generally on the government's side.

This case is an example of Western superpowers and some other internationally significant countries intervening in a regional conflict, preparing parties to “protect themselves”. The major parties backing the Syrian Government with military equipment, training and battle troops are Iran and Hezbollah. The USA, UK and France support the Syrian opposition with training and equipment. Iran's legal and illegal arms transfers to the Assad regime and significant Shiite populations living in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Iraq, and Bahrain in order to counterbalance the Israel-U.S.-Sunni alliance poses the threat of increasing black market activity and more illegal arms trade deals.

Libyan Civil War

The Second Libyan Civil War is fought by several groups for the control over Libyan territory. The main parties are the government elected democratically in 2014 and the rival Islamist government of the General National Congress (GNC). The democratically elected government has the loyalty of the Libyan Army and has

been supported by Egypt and the UAE while Qatar and Sudan support an opposing faction. The United States is also engaged in occasional strikes against Islamist terrorist targets.

Apart from providing yet another example of intervention by regional and Western actors, the situation in Libya is also significant in the matter of arms smuggling. After the fall of Qaddafi in Libya, the country became a source of stolen armament which was transported to Egypt either as final destination to extremists living in the Sinai Peninsula which further escalated the conflict discussed in the next case study or to be later smuggled to the Gaza Strip and to the Syrian rebels.

The Sinai insurgency in Egypt

The Sinai insurgency is a conflict started by extremists and militants at the Sinai Peninsula after the Egyptian crisis resulting in the overthrow of president Hosni Mubarak in 2011. Militants exploited the chaotic situation in Egypt and weakened central authority to launch a series of attacks on government forces in Sinai. Egypt has launched two military operations in order to restore their authority in the region. The group Ansar Bait al-Maqdis which has operated in Sinai from 2011 to 2013 pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in November 2014 posing an even bigger threat to the already fragile situation. The reason for insurgency is said to be the lack of attention from the central government in Cairo to the people's needs in the Sinai, causing growing dissent in the area.

The conflict is significant when it comes to weapon trade due to the high number of weapons originating from Libya that are in the hands of extremists and the Bedouin populations living in Sinai. This shows that different conflicts can effect each other, and how the escalation of one crisis can lead to the escalation of other crises. The fall of Qaddafi and the chaos that followed made it possible for smugglers to steal weaponry later sold to Egyptian insurgents, further arming militants of the Sinai insurgency

Points to Consider –

1. How can the UN stem the illicit trade of Small Arms/Light Weapons and their flow into armed conflicts?
2. Can past-effective solutions be expanded into current situations?
3. How will the international community enforce the solutions proposed?
4. How will Small Arms/Light Weapons be dealt with in terms of those in post-conflict regions?
5. What can be done to ensure legally traded arms reach their designated destination?
6. How can we control the increased amount of terrorism in the Middle East?
7. How can we solve issues that are pertinent to the case studies that have been discussed?