

International Organizations Against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria: An Neoliberal Institutional Analysis

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Abstract: The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/the Levant (ISIS/ISIL) has threatened human and national security of Iraq and Syria as well as the rest of the world as its influence spreads in forms of terrorism in many parts in the world such as Yemen, Libya, Sinai, Mali, Somalia, North-Eastern Nigeria, Pakistan and some parts of Southeast Asia and Europe. USA has called for a formation of a new international coalition to confront ISIS in Iraq to provide a support for the Iraqi government institutions to impose the sovereignty of law and to provide equal opportunities for the members in federal governmental institutions. Following the declaration from the US President, an international coalition was formed by the USA, British, Bahrain, Jordan and Iraq on 10th September 2014, in addition to the military and humanitarian supports provided by NATO and EU states. A number of international organizations namely the UN and NATO as well as regional organizations namely the Arab League and EU have moved to contain the development of ISIS but the results were limited and inconclusive. Using neoliberal institutionalist perspective, the study argues that an effective international organization is required to solve the crisis caused by ISIS in Iraq and the shortcoming in solving ISIS crisis is caused by the non-existence of a unitary international organization. The study firstly identifies the current operating role of those international and regional organizations in response to ISIS in responding and preventing ISIS and its expansion. Secondly, the reasons behind the shortcoming of the current international coalition are discussed. Consequently, the study suggests the formation of a stronger international organization that manages the strategy to fight IS in Iraq.

Key words: Islamic State in Iraq and Syria/Levant (ISIS/ISIL), conflict, security, neoliberal institutionalism, international organization (UN, NATO, Arab League and EU)

INTRODUCTION

ISIS has become the threat for human and national security of Iraq and Syria as well as regional and international security of Iraq. It is an extremist militant Islamic group that strictly follows the Wahhabi and Salafi jihadist notions in addition to the perspectives and thoughts of Kharijites. This group aims to establish an Islamic Khalifa and carry out their interpretation of Sharia law. They have controlled substantial parts of Iraq and Syria and exert extremist version of Islamic rule in those areas. In addition, its influence spreads to many parts of the world in many Islamic countries such as Yemen, Libya, Sinai, Mali, Somalia and eastern north of Nigeria and Pakistan as well as other parts of the world such as the Europe, United States (hereafter, US) and Southeast Asia.

From the very beginning, ISIS adopted the terrorist methods for erecting its influence. ISIS emerged from a terrorist organization named "Al-Qaeda in Iraq" which

was established by Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. After the invasions of Iraq on 2003, he participated in the military operations against the US forces and successive Iraqi governments between 2003 and 2011. The current leader of ISIS is Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi whose real name is Ibrahim Awad Ibrahim al Badri al Samarraai (Blanchard *et al.*, 2015) was the leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) on 16 May 2010, following the death of his predecessor Abu Omar al-Baghdadi.

The Islamic State organization has posed a continuous threat on Iraq's stability and security and extended to Syria, Turkey and Lebanon. Iraqi security forces have been powerless to confront ISIS that is active in Mosul and in the provinces of Anbar, Tikrit, Diyala, the south of Kirkuk and the north of Baghdad. ISIS has controlled approximately one third of Iraq at the end of 2013 after the collapse of Iraqi forces. ISIS obviously gets support in Iraq due to the declaimed economic and political discrimination by Iraqi Sunni citizens. As a result,

all of a sudden, some changes occurred in political and security imbalance in Iraq in addition to outcropping new factors, agreements and balances affected the Iraqi authority.

Foremost, the US formed a coalition to fight ISIS. Around 110 countries including 28 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members, 23 NATO partners and 59 independent countries are contributing in various ways to the fight (Benitez and Maletta, 2014). There are also 36 countries that guaranteed humanitarian aids to the people of Iraq and Syria. Furthermore, the US cooperates more closely with the Kurds. Kurdish militia in Iraqi Kurdistan and Syria has shown the capability to confront ISIS. Besides security assistance-air support and the supply of sophisticated weapons-Kurds deserve diplomatic and political support. Iraqi Kurdistan emerges as American's best alliance in this region (Phillips, 2015).

Currently, there are four international organizations playing roles in the fight against ISIS in Iraq. The United Nations (hereafter, UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (hereafter, NATO) the Arab League and the European Union (hereafter, EU). International organizations are leading a multilateral coalition undertaking direct military action; providing advice, training and equipment for partner ground forces in Iraq and Syria gathering and sharing intelligence and using financial measures against the Islamic State. The objective of these measures is to progressively shrink the geographic and political space, manpower and financial resources available to the Islamic State. On 10 September 2014, President Obama announced a series of actions intended to "degrade and ultimately destroy" the Islamic State organization. In mid 2015, observers continued to debate the success of the international organizations and coalition efforts against the Islamic State. Some experts asserted with the coalition strikes and ground efforts by Iraqi security forces, Kurds and predominantly Shiite Popular Mobilization, the United forces have reduced the area of the Islamic State's control to some degree while others argued that the US goal should be "the containment" of the Islamic State, rather than outright defeat (Zakheim, 2015).

Subscribing to the neoliberal institutionalist theory this study argues that an international organization should play as the main driver to manage the strategies to fight ISIS and alleviate the crisis caused by the terrorist organization. The existence of four international organizations have their shortcoming in terms of conflict of interests and coordination. For this reasons this study suggests the imperative for a stronger international organization to play the driving seat for this purposes. However, it is puzzling why the success of international organization's efforts to contain and fight ISIS has been

very limited. To discuss this issue, this study firstly examines Neoliberal Institutionalism as the theoretical framework and methodology, followed by discussing the role of international organizations, the shortcoming of current international coalitions and finally goes in depth in its conclusion that argue for the imperative of a stronger international organization to manage strategies to fight the IS in Iraq.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used qualitative method in achieving its objective. It relied on secondary sources involving issues concerning the role of international organizations in Iraq in fighting against ISIS. The researchers collected data from secondary sources and references such as books, previous researches and analytical studies. These resources are related to the subject of the current study either directly or indirectly since the beginning of the emergence of ISIS in Iraq and how it has dominated large parts of Iraq to the current time. Along with analytical reports, they show the roots of the organization of ISIS and why it has changed its name to become what is known today Islamic state.

The study used a thematic analysis to iteratively re-organize the data. In the thematic content analysis approach, the researcher identified recurring issues to refine and in other cases, to develop new themes in resonance with the objectives of the research study (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). In this study, some of the themes had already been generated from the literature review. Another technique that will be used in the data analysis for data interpretation preparation is pattern building. This technique was applied more on the data extracted from the questionnaires. Through reviewing on literature, researcher has noted that studies on the role of international and regional organizations in fighting against ISIS need to be studied more thoroughly.

Theoretical framework (Neoliberal Institutionalism):

Neoliberal Institutionalism is a theoretical approach in the discipline of International Relations (hereafter, IR) that focuses on the role of International institutions in mitigating conflict (Navari, 2008). Neoliberal institutionalism privileged that international institutions and organizations including the UN, NATO, EU and the Arab League could actually support the cooperation between states (Jackson and Sorensen, 2010). States are treated as rational actors operating in an international political system in which hierarchy cannot be enforced (Keohane and Martin, 1995). On the other hand, political realism and institutional liberalism are utilitarian and rationalistic.

The neoliberal institutional framework suggests that power is important and that states do things in their self-interest but different from Realist's perspective, power is an institutional set-up. As Keohane and Martin (1995) argues, neoliberal institutionalism analyzes power under the effects of international institutions and practices of state behavior at the systemic level. Neoliberal institutionalists assumed that international institutions/organizations can reduce the fear and uncertainty of a state. This will lead and encourage the cooperation between states. This IR theory is optimistic and idealistic tradition but it shares several key concepts with neorealism. It is unlike its predecessor, classical liberalism which opposed realist assumptions more rigorously.

Neoliberals accept that states are the major actors in making international relationships. World politics are performed by two types of actors states and non-states actors. However, Neoliberals suggested that international institutions and regimes could play crucial roles and effects on their own autonomous impact upon state behavior. Neorealists dismiss that all international institutions as merely tools of powerful states. On the other hand, non-states actors are not ignorable or underestimated compared to the states actors as they are important entities in IR. In addition, Neoliberals acknowledge the role of international organizations in world politics which are often independent in their own rights and their own decisions. Moreover, Bureaucrats are also having a great influence in setting agendas and determining which issues is most important.

The question is: how suitable is neoliberal institutionalism with regard to security issues to fight ISIS? Jervis has observed that the realm of security has special characteristics that at the same time make regime creation more difficult and increase its need: security regimes with their call for mutual restraint and limitations on unilateral actions, rarely seem attractive to decision-maker's under the security dilemma. Basic to the neoliberal institutionalists is the idea of common interests that states could achieve together to fight ISIS. But what if antagonists do not share common interests? According to Jervis, states will establish an institution if and only if they seek the goals that the institution will help them reach. It does not seem super-ficially that institution could do much to increase security (Williams, 2012).

The role of international and regional organizations in the fight against ISIS: Subscribing to neoliberal institutionalist theory the study argues that international organization should play leading roles in encouraging

cooperation between states in the cause of fighting against ISIS. International regime should lead to coordinate the cooperation among states to achieve their common interest to contain and reduce ISIS threats in the Middle East and its spread of terrors at the rest of the world.

Currently, four international organizations are actively involved in the fight against ISIS-UN, NATO, Arab League and the EU. The study argues that UN is the most legitimate international organization to lead the fight against ISIS because it has founded since 1945 to maintain peace and security, promote and encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms and to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character (United Nations, 1945). In addition to that other related international organizations (NATO, Arab League, the European Union) and states related to the conflict should be involved to work together to support the cause of fighting ISIS and promoting peace and security in Iraq and Syria. The following section discusses more in-depth on the current role of these four institutions in the fight against ISIS.

The role of the United Nations in the fight against ISIS:

The UN is the first organization actively involved to manage the crisis in Iraq because ISIS challenged the most fundamental principles of the UN: the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of self-determination and basic human rights and the protection of fundamental freedoms (Schaefer and Harkness, 2014). ISIS has arguably challenging international peace and security by organizing attacks towards legitimate Iraqi government, facilitating terrorism in Iraq, Syria as well as in many parts of the world. In addition, the ISIS conduct of atrocities to the minorities and the people who do not accept their rule arguably challenges the UN basic human right and protection of fundamental freedoms.

On 24 September 2014, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told a special session of the UN Security Council that "the world is witnessing a dramatic evolution in the nature of the terrorist threat.... Eliminating terrorist requires international solidarity and a multifaceted approach among the many tools we must use we must also tackle the underlying conditions that provide violent extremist groups the opportunity to take root." He spoke when the UN and its member states raised their own concerns and vowed to take collective action to thwart a global terrorist threat that is not only more diffuse and transnational but increasingly mobile, adaptable and brutal. A recent UN report illustrates how the Islamic State

in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as a splinter group of al-Qaeda is shaped by the contemporary conflict end (Fink, 2014).

Cordesman (2002) with sponsor from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) published a study on the Role of the United Nations in Fighting Terrorism. He contended that the United Nations has long reacted to the threats included in the narrower definition of terrorism and it is only natural that the UN took new action after the events of September 11, 2001. The Security Council adopted three important resolutions, 1368, 1373 and 1377 after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. These resolutions, affirmed the right of self-defense have found terrorism to be a threat to international peace and security and stressed the accountability of supporters as well as the perpetrators of terrorist acts. They obliged member states to limit the ability of terrorists and terrorist organizations to operate internationally by freezing assets of terrorist-affiliated persons and organizations and denying them safe haven, among other things. They also set forth a Ministerial Declaration on International Terrorism.

Two areas that the UN has already begun to address are of particular importance. First, lasting and well-institutionalized efforts will be needed in counter-terrorism, law enforcement and related activities like customs. Second, there are far fewer national barriers to a UN approach to improving the security of international transportation, movement of hazardous material, protection of high-risk facilities and critical infrastructure security. The UN can pursue the creation of common security standards for air (Cordesman, 2002).

In 2009, a seminal working document (UNODC, 2009) was published in Arabic to describe a study on anti-terrorism legislation in the Arab Gulf states. This study discusses the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the role of regional and subregional organizations in the Arab Gulf countries in terms of fighting against terrorism. The results of the work indicate that what is stated in the plan of action adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on human rights requires the coalition against terrorism a critical deep study for the security of the society and human rights guarantees. This study should equate among the rights of the accused people, victims and witnesses categorized by the international instruments and norms of international law and international humanitarian law settled in the light of the judicial precedents.

Katulis *et al.* (2014) have been discussed on how to defeat ISIS on counterterrorism and it should expand the

efforts at the United Nations during the 2014 UN General Assembly. The UN Security Council voted to add ISIS members to the Al Qaeda sanctions regime and invoked Chapter VII of the UN Charter, underscoring the threat that ISIS poses to international peace and security. This can serve as a useful basis for coordinating international action to disrupt ISIS's financing and other support. Given the divisions among leading global powers, action through the United Nations to authorize the use of force against ISIS, particularly in Syria, would prove difficult. Nonetheless, engagement through the United Nations can build political capital and legitimacy for unified international action against ISIS, including military strikes should they prove necessary. The UN Security Council meeting that President Obama personally chaired in 2014 offered a unique opportunity to mobilize international action on the foreign terrorist fighter issue. A new UN Security Council resolution (hereafter, UNSCR) could sharpen countries' tools to counter radicalization and to meet their obligations to suppress terrorism and prevent terrorist recruitment. President Obama can stress that a new resolution should increase cooperation between various counterterrorism and law-enforcement bodies helping frontline states track and coordinate with entities such as the INTERPOL.

Fink (2014) in her policy brief entitled "Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism" discussed how the United Nations and its member states vowed to take collective action to thwart a global terrorism threat that is not only more diffuse and transnational but increasingly mobile, adaptable and brutal. A recent UN report illustrates how the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as a splinter group of al-Qaeda is shaped by the contemporary conflict environment and uses its considerable resources and sophisticated communications technologies to attract international support and recruits from far and wide. Fink (2014) argued that this threat is too difficult for any country or region to address. As a result, Fink (2014) argued that the United Nations is in a very different position now than it was in September 2001. During this time, it has evolved and now has more mandates, resources and personnel to address the threat of global terrorism. Moreover, the litany of capacity-building activities supported by the United Nations and its member states testifies to the recognition by Security Council members that in order to meet all council-mandated obligations, many states require technical assistance and support.

Fink's policy brief (2014) has also explored the impact of Resolution 2178 on international counterterrorism efforts with a particular focus on countering violent

extremism and reflected on how the UN could support implementation efforts. There have been concerns that adding a new dimension of work to the already dense bureaucratic architecture could impede coordination and increase the likelihood of duplication but the above key principles and action ideas offer suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of existing UN resources and activities and adapting them to address the resolution's goals. As complex conflict dynamics such as FTFs challenge the United Nation's role and ability to respond effectively and uphold the values of the UN Charter the world body should adopt an approach that is cognizant of existing efforts but also strategic in adding value (Fink, 2014).

In conclusion, UN has legitimate mission to fight ISIS for its emergence and action has been challenging the most fundamental principles of the UN as it has violated international peace and security, basic human rights and the protection of fundamental freedoms. In further development, UN Resolution 2178 on international counterterrorism efforts to counter violent extremism has become the foundation for the UN leading role for fighting ISIS. However, the complex conflict dynamics such as Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) challenged the United Nation's role and ability to respond effectively and uphold the values of the UN Charter.

The role of NATO in the fight against ISIS: NATO is the second organization actively involved to manage the crisis in Iraq. The intergovernmental military alliance is based on the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty and constitutes a collective defense system whereby its member states agree to mutual defense in response to an attack by any external party. Currently, NATO membership comprises 28 states, consisting of 25 European countries, two North American countries (the US and Canada) and Turkey in Eurasia.

The September 2014 NATO Summit took several steps to energize the Transatlantic Community to confront ISIS. Nine countries pledged to join US efforts to counter ISIS but no specific commitments were made. And as evidenced over the past few years in Afghanistan and Libya, follow through on commitments is essential (Tarpley, 2011). Further, the US and its Western partners need to proactively manage the dangers posed by European and American citizens now fighting alongside ISIS.

Aleksoski and Karagjuleski (2015) argued that military political cooperation and protecting the security of member countries is an essential objective for NATO to pursue. They suggested that all NATO members to

cooperate with each other to a very high level in order to provide lasting and peaceful order worldwide through partnerships and operations management crisis in those regions and countries where it is needed. Cooperation in the fight against terrorism between NATO and the UN these international Organizations permeate all levels of that act or institutional field, conceptual and political. Fighting terrorism and dealing with crisis situations are just part of the cooperation and consultation of NATO and the UN and it extends to other issues such as civil military cooperation, the fight against human trafficking and destruction of mines (Aleksoski and Karagjuleski, 2015).

Tarpley suggested that the US should work with its Trans-Atlantic partners and traditional allies with NATO in two distinctive strategies as follow. Firstly, NATO need to enhance reliable and capable partners in the region to take the fight directly to ISIS (Tarpley, 2011). NATO and other US allies should together develop a strategy to help the region counter ISIS with technical support and military assistance. This should include specific commitments to provide support to the Iraqi government, Kurdish forces and third-way opposition alternatives to the Assad regime and ISIS in Syria. Secondly, NATO should enhance law enforcement and intelligence fusion efforts to identify and counter ISIS and other terrorist fighters holding Western passports (Tarpley, 2011). This should build on existing US European efforts in coordination with the International Criminal Police Organization or INTERPOL. >2,000 foreign fighters are estimated to have flocked to Iraq and Syria. According to intelligence agencies and outside experts, one-quarter of these fighters come from Western countries. With an estimated 3,000 individuals, including perhaps 500 each from Britain and France, the dangers of extremists coming home to continue the fight with acts of terrorism cannot be ignored. Western countries should partner with allies in the Middle East and local communities on counter-radicalization efforts.

In short, NATO has decided to take concrete moves to confront the Islamic States since the September 2014 NATO Summit. It played its role in fighting ISIS because of its mission to protect the security of its member countries. Moreover, NATO is required to proactively manage the dangers posed by the citizens of NATO member countries now fighting alongside ISIS.

The role of the Arab league in the fight against ISIS: The Arab League is the third organization actively involved to manage the crisis in Iraq. This organization consists of independent Arab States on the territory of northern and North-Eastern part of Africa and Southwest Asia. It was

formed in Cairo on 22 March 1945 with six members. Since, then, 16 more states joined the organization but due to recent uprising in Syria and their government's brutal way of dealing with political opponents, the league suspended this member state and now counts 21 members (Arab League, 2012).

In September 2014, the head of the Arab League, Nabil Elaraby, has made a collective call to militarily confront the Islamic State group. He told the session that the rise of the group in Iraq challenged not merely the authority of the state but "its very existence and the existence of other states" and called for a decisive resolution to confront terrorism militarily, politically, economically and culturally. He then suggested that military action could take place under the umbrella of an Arab League joint defense pact (Patterson and McLean, 2015). However, the Arab League stopped short of agreeing to conduct airstrikes against the extremists and offered few specifics on what the strategy will entail. The situation has become more pressing in the difficult circumstances to speed up putting together an Arab strategy to fight ISIS.

In contrast, it can be noticed that the attitudes of the Arab countries are quite reluctant and unclear towards the threat of ISIS. Dr. Wafiq al-Samarrai, an formerly Iraqi chief of Iraqi general military intelligence who currently served as an analyst in military affairs, indicated that the reason why the US sent a number of envoys to visit Arab countries was to win their support. In a later development, France held the Paris Conference in 2014 which included both the territorial states and the permanent member states of the UN Security Council to discuss the issue of ISIS and came with a pledge to support Iraq by all possible means to fight jihadists, including providing military support.

Baghdad had earlier submitted a draft resolution endorsing its own efforts to confront militants who have seized large areas for a cross-border caliphate and to condemn ISIS actions as war crimes and crimes against humanity. The final text did not directly endorse either the Iraqi or US campaign against ISIS but diplomatic sources said the wording clearly offered Arab cooperation to US and Iraqi efforts and could be read as a tacit agreement to back Washington's campaign against the group.

Undoubtedly, the support from the Arab League in the fight against ISIS is extremely important because it is the legitimate intergovernmental organization in the region. In fact, the emergence and atrocities of ISIS has challenged the peace, stability and security in the region, so the struggle against ISIS has fought and led by the

Arab League, although doubtless with international and regional organizations (UN, NATO, Arab league and EU) and US backing. Politically, it must present an Arab face to win the ideological battle against Isis. After the disastrous US occupation of Iraq, Arab leaders are well aware that the more the US increases its exposure in the Middle East, the greater the anti-American feeling in the region and the more difficult it becomes to gain support for action from a reluctant White House and Congress (Rashid, 2015).

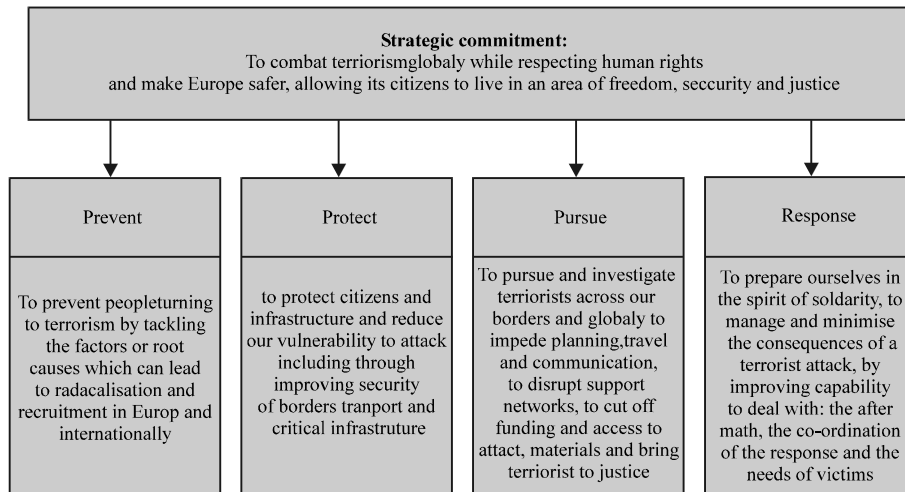
The role of the European union in the fight against ISIS:

The EU is the fourth organization that is actively involved to manage the crisis in Iraq. It is a politico-economic union of 28 European countries which operates through a hybrid system of supranational and inter governmental decision-making ("Information about the EU," nd). Some EU members have already decided to join the US-led international coalition to counter an armed offensive of ISIS. It seems necessary to reflect on how the EU could contribute to the fight against ISIS. This comment focuses such reflection on European interests, strategy and means (Arteaga, 2014).

The Islamic State has developed a military capability in Syria that is geographically quite a remote place from the EU thus it traditionally does not pose a direct threat to the sovereignty of EU member states. However, EU observed the development of ISIS to be able to encourage terrorist activities in Europe. Even without the threat of imminent attacks, European and Western countries are still concerned about their nationals taking part in the Middle Eastern jihad and coming back to their home countries (Arteaga, 2014).

Pertaining to terrorism, the European Council adopted the EU counter-terrorism strategy (2005) that emphasizes the commitment of EU member states to jointly fighting terrorism both in Europe and internationally as well as providing for the best possible protection for its citizens. The strategy acknowledges the EU as an area of increasing openness in which internal and external aspects of security are intimately linked. The European Council are aware that the EU feature of free movement of people, ideas, technology and resources is prone to terrorist abuse to pursue their objective. Thus, EU emphasizes the four pillars of EU's Counter-Terrorism Strategy prevent, protect, pursue and respond-constitute a comprehensive and proportionate response to the international terrorist threat. The strategy requires work at national, Europe and international levels to reduce the threat from terrorism and our vulnerability to attack. The EU counter-terrorism strategy is summarized in Fig. 1.

The EU's counter-terrorism strategy covers four stands of work, fitting under its strategic commitment:



Member states have the primary responsibility for combating terrorism and the EU can add value in four main ways:

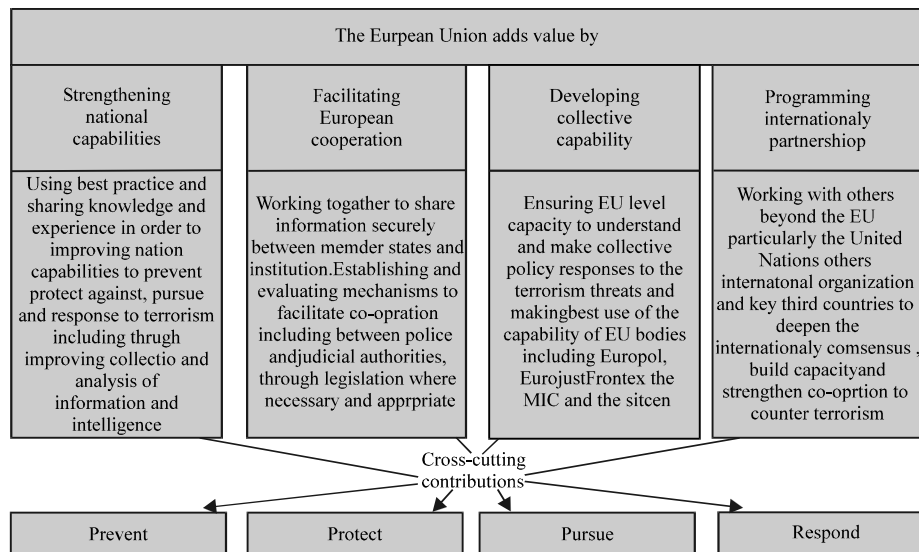


Fig. 1: EU counter-terrorism strategy; The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2005

Summing up, although EU is not located immediately to the Middle East, it has urgent interests to contain terrorism both conducted in Iraq or in the Europe by ISIS and its supporters. EU's counter-terrorism strategy has emphasizes the commitment of EU member states to jointly fighting terrorism both in Europe and internationally. As Felix Arteaga contends, the EU is not expected to have a prominent role in the ongoing struggle against ISIS in Iraq and Syria but it should be prepared to take the lead in the next round of the fight against terrorism. Because when a new threat occurs in the EU's periphery, the EU should decide to lead from behind rather than take the initiative.

Shortcoming of the current role of international organizations: Neoliberalist institutional theories used by this study argue that the efforts for fighting and managing the effects of ISIS should be institutionalized under an international regime that lead the cooperation among states to achieve their common interest to contain and reduce ISIS threats in the Middle East and its spread of terrors at the rest of the world. Currently, there are some deficiencies in the current role of international organizations for fighting ISIS. ISIS has been active in Iraq since 2004 but the success of the international coalitions in fighting it and managing its impact is very limited.

The UN has limitation in its fight against ISIS because unlike NATO, UN has no air and ground forces to destroy ISIS. Having said that UN's role is imperative because it has legitimate position to coordinate international powers to fight ISIS that have challenged international peace and security, basic human rights and the protection of fundamental freedom. Furthermore, ISIS terrorism attacks span not only in Iraq and Syria but also in many parts of the world, so UN has more legitimacy to promote necessary and politically viable cooperation.

UN actually has the potential to promote the cooperation between international organizations and actors (NATO, Arab league, EU, the Iraqi army, Russia and Iran) to fight ISIS. However, until recently the actions from the UN are considered very limited over the past few years because of the fundamental disagreement within the Security Council about just what the future of these countries Iraq and Syria ought to be. While all five Security Council members was agreeable on being opposed to ISIS (with the exception of China that is somewhat indifferent to such affairs) they cannot agree on what measures to take to achieve this aim.

There is conflict of interests among the five permanent Security Council members on the conflict in Iraq and Syria (Security Council, 2015). Russia, as per its history, supports Assad, the Alawite dictator, the Syrian government forces/structure and their Shiite allies in the region, especially Iran. They want to eliminate ISIS and restore the Syrian government whose power was challenged when the Syrian Civil War began in 2011 (PORGMUN, 2016). On the other hand, the US has repeatedly called for Assad to step down and believes (wishfully) that there is a third party in the region with enough military force to defeat ISIS with Western support and a democratic, humanitarian ideal that is in line with Western's interest. The UK and France support the US position but with a qualification the UK insists that Assad can remain as an interim leader but cannot remain in the long term.

Many observers hope NATO can play a bigger role in fighting ISIS. NATO's role in the fighting against ISIS is not optimum for lack of consensus reason. NATO works on a consensus model of governance; thus, unless each members votes in favour of an action, they cannot proceed with it as a NATO mission. Much like the UN, however, individual members are free to act in their own best interests, so although NATO or UN have reached no consensus on fighting ISIS, individual members can proceed with their own measures.

As for now, ISIS has used terrorist measures to attack NATO members several times but NATO has not come to consensus to go for war against ISIS in a full scale. In the

response against the threat of ISIS, no country has asked to invoke Article 5 of NATO Treaty (Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty provides that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognized by Article 51 of the charter of the United Nations will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith individually and in concert with the other Parties such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area). So, they can go on full scale war against ISIS. Turkey which shares borders with Iraq and Syria has experienced some attacks on its soil but its attitude towards fighting ISIS can be considered ambiguous for not asking invoking the Article 5 of NATO Treaty (Labott and Browne, 2016). The US has called for NATO to play a bigger role in the fight against ISIS but two of its largest members-France and Germany which have experienced several attacks in their soil are still reluctant to respond to that call because they are worried that deeper NATO involvement in Syria could be taken by Moscow as a provocation that the alliance is seeking to extend its influence (Emmot *et al.*, 2016). In addition, it is debatable that many members of NATO are still feeling traumatic to deploy ground troop against ISIS. After the huge debacle of the 2001 Afghanistan war and 2003 Iraq war, NATO arguably would be unwilling to launch another unpopular and long drawn ground offensive in the same volatile region.

Pentagon analysts are said to believe ISIS will be permanently suppressed only by sustained action by ground troops whose task would be to physically wrest control of those areas currently occupied by the ISIS "caliphate". Experience in Afghanistan (after 2001) Iraq (after 2003) and Libya (after 2011) certainly suggests that air power alone, even if unchallenged, cannot achieve a clear and lasting victory. However, the deeply scarring 8 year occupation of Iraq has made the US and Britain reluctant to resumed large-scale ground troop deployment in the Middle East. Even if it were thought desirable, capacity would be lacking, given NATO's still incomplete withdrawal from Afghanistan and the new demands posed by the "rapid reaction force" envisaged for eastern Europe in response to Russia's military intervention in Ukraine (Tisdal, 2014).

The regional power the Arab League have no capability to send in ground forces which is what it would take to completely destroy the group. Saudi Arabia and the UAE which are the strongest of the League states are already overstretched dealing with the Houthis

in Yemen and none of these countries really has armed forces created to be deployed abroad. It is arguable that the focus of Arabic states are merely internal security and their current objective is to keep the government from being overthrown in a revolution (Almasmari, 2015). It is debatable that the cause of eradicating ISIS might not serve their purpose. The Arab League has interest to keep ISIS in power as it may serve as obstacle for Iran and Syria and to prevent the mullahs in Iran from providing more assistance to Bashar al Assad. Thus, ISIS have served the interests of Arab countries to weaken the Shi'ite power in Iran and Syria.

The reluctance of Arab leaders are evidential. Rashid (2015) indicates the Arab's reluctance with these evidence: firstly, there was lack of reaction from the Arab and wider Muslim world after the 2014 and 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris and Beirut. Secondly, the US-led coalition to fight Isis in Iraq and Syria is reeling from desertions by Arab states that have increasingly found excuses not to take part in military actions against the Islamist militant group, even though some of their own capitals have been targets. International pressure is mounting on the Arab states. Thirdly, The UAE and Saudi Arabia long ago stopped bombing Isis targets in Iraq and Syria, claiming that they were too busy with Yemen where the conflict is localised rather than a regional threat. Finally, the wealthy Arab states also cannot agree on who to finance and arm among the myriad Syrian groups nor have they provided enough funding for UN and other aid organisations operations in the refugee crisis that erupted in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon and has now spread to Europe. In addition, while the Europeans debated how many refugees to take in, the Gulf States have yet to agree to rehabilitate any Syrian or Iraqi refugees (Rashid, 2015).

As discussed previously, EU has developed a counter-terrorism strategy that emphasizes the commitment of EU member states to jointly fighting terrorism both in Europe and internationally. The EU's ISIS policy that used to be making initiatives for stopping humanitarian crises in the region has turned into a fight against terrorism. However, the EU has limited legal and administrative capacity because it is the member states that have the actual authority to combat terrorism. After the failure of occupation in Iraq have made EU reluctant to be involved in the combat against ISIS. However, EU has played its role in supporting the fight against ISIS indirectly by providing contributions, donors, advise and programmers in order to develop political solutions to the Syrian and Iraqi crises as well as the degradation of ISIS capacities while playing an essential role in alleviating the dramatic humanitarian consequences of the crises. Substantial coordinated efforts have been made to

defeating ISIS with a large range of internal and external measures (European External Action Service 2016).

The shortcoming of EU's measures in their fight against ISIS is on its focus only on humanitarian measures and contribution for institutional building in Iraq and Syria. In their domestic part, EU strives to strengthen European law enforcement and intelligence capabilities. It is arguable that EU's strategy has no direct effects on fighting ISIS. ISIS has easily retaliated by influencing its supporters in Europe to launch attacks against European targets. Harleen Gambhir the Counterterrorism fellow at the Institute for the study of war observes that ISIS attacks in European soils was carefully planned as it particularly aim to destabilize Europe through polarization which it calls "destroying the grayzone". ISIS hopes attacks in its name will provoke state and social backlash against Europe's Muslim communities, encouraging radicalization and jihadist recruitment. ISIS's safe haven within Iraq, Syria and now Libya will continue to provide the logistical infrastructure necessary to train, resource and direct attack cells in Europe. Thus, Gambhir (2016) suggests that the anti-ISIS coalition must deprive ISIS of its territorial control as a caliphate which is its primary source of strength, in order to destroy the ISIS threat to Europe.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes the discussion by arguing the imperative for a stronger coalition of international organizations and actors to manage strategies to fight ISIS and achieve a total solution for the crisis in Iraq and Syria. Neoliberal institutionalist argues that as rational egoist powers, states need to cooperate to achieve its objective for creating and maintaining peace and security in an anarchic Middle East region threatened by the rise of ISIS.

Subscribing to neoliberal institutionalist theory, the paper argues that international organization should play leading roles in encouraging cooperation between states in the cause of fighting against ISIS. International regime should lead to coordinate the cooperation among states to achieve their common interest to contain and reduce ISIS threats in the Middle East and its spread of terrors at the rest of the world. The study argues that UN is the most legitimate international organization to lead the fight against ISIS because it has founded since 1945 to maintain peace and security, promote and encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms and to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian

character (United Nations, 1945). In addition to that, other related international organizations (NATO, Arab League, the European Union) and states related to the conflict should be involved to work together to support the cause of fighting ISIS and promoting peace and security in Iraq and Syria. However, the cooperation has not yet been robust now because a variety of military powers with different interests are currently engaged directly in the fight against ISIS the United States, France, Russia, the United Kingdom along with several Arab nations and the Kurds. In Addition, the international organization (UN, NATO, Arab league and EU) also have played their roles in various level by providing supports for the fight. However, given the shortcoming of the current coalitions and roles of international organization, there is necessity to rethink the strategies.

Finding an answer to the threats of ISIS requires formulating a strategy. It is an imperative to form a stronger coalition of international organizations to manage strategies to fight ISIS. The aims of the coalition's strategy should be to: contain and reduce ISIS threats to the Middle East and global security, alleviate humanitarian crisis affecting the people, strengthen government capabilities to provide national as well as human security and peace, achieve acceptable political solutions to cater conflicting factions in these countries to join democratic system and promote democratic values to the nations to respect life, peace, liberty, justice, equality, diversity, truth, human rights, freedom of religion and rule of laws.

The study admits that achieving a unitary international organization is very difficult now due to the divergence of interests among states. For this case, international regimes should go back to the first purpose of the United Nations and negotiate the interests among conflicting parties and international actors.

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