

The Interaction of Development Projects and Climate Change on Sustainable Security in Shared Water Bodies, A Case Study: Euphrates and Tigris River Basin

ABSTRACT

Euphrates and Tigris River Basin is considered as one of the most conflicting shared watercourses in the world where measures of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey as its active stakeholders, have had mutual implications on each other and their environment. Development projects such as dam construction by riparian states, which is assumed to strengthen the national security of the countries concerned, have had adverse effects on access to water and water quality. These activities, however, besides their environmental consequences, have raised convulsions and unrest in downstream countries, and have criminalized the region, in a way that the formation of ethnic and terrorist groups has provided the ground for an insecure future in this area, thereby, causing violence and consequently water crimes such as water theft and smuggling, destruction of water infrastructures, deliberate water pollution, diversion of water in upstream, state water corruption, etc. Commitment of such crimes severely endangers water security as well as food security of growing population of surrounding the basin, and therefore, having a direct impact on sustainable security in the region. Lack of a comprehensive legal framework and an operational and strategic institution involving all stakeholders have made the situation proceed convulsively and politically dire. This study suggests that negotiations should be advanced in a bottom-up approach and finally, officials of riparian states continue negotiations based on all gained results for establishing a mutually agreed framework. Our proposed solution is to formulate a comprehensive framework convention, by taking international customary principles and rules in the main text and to envisage a Joint Technical Committee involving representatives of influential countries and to include specific issues of the basin under protocols and amendments through a piecemeal approach. This solution may address reciprocations between different aspects of the subject matter to be regulated.

Key Words: Development Projects, Climate Change, Euphrates and Tigris River Basin, International Cooperation, Sustainable Security, Water Security.