In the wake of the global food crisis of 2008 Middle Eastern oil producers have announced multi-billion investments to secure food supplies from outside the region. So called landgrab investments are at the heart of the global food security challenge and put the Middle East in the spotlight of simultaneous global crises in the fields of food, finance and energy. Water scarcity here is most pronounced, import dependence growing and the links between oil and food are manifold ranging from the economics of biofuels to climate change and the provision of crucial input factors. The Middle East does not only play a prominent role in global oil but also in global food markets, it imports about a third of globally traded grain. The “virtual water” that is imbedded in food imports has added a second river Nile to the water balance of the region. Yet for strategic reasons a desire for food self-sufficiency looms large even though it is unrealistic: The Middle East has lost the ability to grow its needed food from renewable water sources since the 1970s already. How will the Middle East maintain its ability to pay for necessary food imports, especially those countries that do not enjoy large oil revenues? How will it allocate its water resources in the future and what will this mean for regional hydropolitics along the Nile and Euphrates?

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