



2015 - 2016
Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE
Summit of Arab Heads of State

ncusar.org/modelarableague

National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations



Original draft by Melanie Waddell, Chair of the Summit of Arab Heads of State at the 2016 National University Model Arab League, with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to the 2015-2016 Model Arab League season. My name is Melanie Waddell and I am currently getting my Master's in Political Science, International Relations concentration, from Northeastern University. I have been doing Model for a while now in various capacities, and have participated in MAL from the Arab Court of Justice to serving as Assistant Sec. Gen. at SERMAL last year. I hope that this background guide will be a sufficient starting point in your research.

The topics chosen for the Heads of State committee are relevant to today's global landscape. Many of the issues and solutions you will come across in your research are going to be pertinent because these topics are based on events occurring in real time. As the Heads of each of your respective States, you all are in a powerful position to enact actual measures to address these topics. I would encourage you to use this power. I've found that often with difficult topics in MAL, an easier avenue to address the topic is to create a conference to discuss the issue or bring together a council of experts. However, this committee is composed of diplomatic and political experts, so this is the avenue to discuss meaningful solutions. These topics don't have easy or obvious answers, but finding solutions to these issues is absolutely necessary for long-term survival not only for the region's political order, but for the people who live in these states. Though this is a simulation, this committee operates at a level of premier importance, with life or death stakes. Humanitarian assistance to refugees, the continued threat of the Islamic State, the economic conditions of the region, and the status quo of the region are all issues which impact the entire world. Therefore, the debate and potential solutions should reflect that importance.

I have tried to provide a good starting point for your research, but please understand that this is by no means an exhaustive guide to these issues. Though I hope this background guide will be a useful resource both in terms of general knowledge and as a place to look for source information, I encourage each of you to really delve into the many factors which affect these issues so we can have an intelligent, thoughtful, nuanced conversation about the issues which represent the future of the Middle East.

As I mentioned previously, I have done this for a few years now. If you have any questions related to these topics or your research, or if you have any questions related to MAL and how it works, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to meeting those of you attending NUMAL 2016 and I hope to have a productive, successful, and fun adventure delving into these issues with you guys.

Thanks and good luck,
Melanie Waddell

Topic I: Encouraging League-wide economic diversification, emphasizing cooperation that capitalizes on complementary comparative advantages

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Some of the wealthiest and most influential countries in the Middle East are heavily dependent, almost entirely so, on specific mineral resources such as oil. This is a problem for future economic growth because such mineral resources will inevitably be depleted; the oil sector has experienced rapid growth in recent decades, unmatched by other industrialization, accompanied by a constant flux in pricing and distribution. Many of the GCC countries are already searching for ways to diversify their economies and to wean their populations off of oil dependence. However, this can be a challenging task. The GCC nations represent the top countries in most heavy reliance on one or two sectors and the least economically diversified countries in the world¹. The Council should consider creating individual plans for economic diversification and increasing communication between nations to encourage regional diversification efforts.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

Current Middle Eastern markets focus on local services and non-tradables such as construction and energy creation, rather than on exports that can be traded with other countries (Shediach, 2008). Economic diversification poses a number of problems for countries in the Middle East, specifically those countries who are heavily reliant on the export of mineral resources such as oil. Part of the problem lies in these states' traditional employment – mainly being public sector employment. Public sector employment offers workers more benefits due to the exorbitant wealth of the state than does private sector employment. Thus the private sector is seriously underdeveloped given the comparative advantage of the public sector. The following are some of the other issues countries face when looking to diversify: the traditional focus on non-tradables in the private sector, a lack of regional trade infrastructure, a lack of new exports in the private sector, a lack of technically-skilled laborers which guarantees dependence on domestic laborers, economies tied almost entirely to market fluxes in crude materials, slow growth, reliance on various forms of public savings or investment, and time are just a few of the issues facing any serious diversification program. On a regional scale, these issues play a significant role in determining the success or failure of a diversification program and the aftershocks felt both in regional and global markets.

Growth in non-oil sectors is currently happening at a stagnant and slow pace. The GCC economies have been taking this issue seriously and have begun steps to diversify their economies². However, their success has been limited. Additionally, the majority of growth in non-oil sectors has occurred in

¹ “Shediach, Richard, Rabih Abouchakra, Chadi N. Moujaes, and Mazen Ramsay Najjar. "Economic Diversification: The Road to Sustainable Development." (2008): Booz & Company Inc. Web. <http://www.strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/Economic-Diversification.pdf>.

² Callen, Tim, Reda Cherif, Fuad Hasanov, Amgad Hegazy, and Padamja Khandelwal. “Economic Diversification in the GCC: Past, Present, and Future.” International Monetary Fund, 2014. Web. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2014/sdn1412.pdf>.

sectors tangentially related to oil, such as chemical production and distribution which encounter the same types of problems as reliance on mineral resources. In Arab nations dependent on oil exports, non-oil GDP is still limited at around 30% of total GDP.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem

Creation of a League-wide framework encouraging diversification could help ensure an easier transition, resulting in less failure (and failed states) as well as creating successful models for states less likely to attempt diversification in the near future (due to power transitions and economic instability). The Committee should consider creating a region-wide framework for diversification, using diversified countries as models to help other nations implement changes in their own country. Additionally, without some type of collaborative communication, individual states may be unintentionally hindering their growth before they begin – Dubai (UAE) is one of the biggest examples of successful diversification³. Much of Dubai's GDP is based on foreign trade; the country's free trade zones offer foreign ownership and do not levy taxes, which encourages foreign investment and economic expenditure. Though this may be a model for how to successfully diversify, if other countries were to follow this example exactly, the region could become an investor's paradise, which could cause other social issues such as foreign encroachment and diminishing returns for individual countries due to mass amounts of competition. There are many potential consequences of diversification, which should be discussed by people qualified to actually make drastic decisions.

One path to economic diversification could include the promotion and creation of regional infrastructure encouraging regional trade, which at this time is seriously underutilized. Exports among various sectors in Middle East states show a region overwhelmingly dependent on minerals and crude materials so even if countries are diversified within their local services and production, it does not translate to their exports. Reliance on the export of minerals such as oil exacerbates migrant worker and imported labor issues which can lead to various claims of human rights abuses and other issues. Rising populations indicate that governments will be unable to meet the demand for lucrative government positions and without a burgeoning and successful private sector, unemployment will likely rise.

Middle Eastern nations are at the mercy of fluctuating oil prices. When oil prices decline, Arab nations dependent on oil exports suffer; governments receive smaller returns from trade, resulting in cuts of positions and wages. This results in individual losses in income. The successful state of the economy is matched by consumption – wealth results in exchanges of goods; but that can easily change if oil prices drop, or oil resources become exhausted and depleted. In that case, consumption would drop dramatically, which would further negatively impact the economy.

Encouraging young Arabs to obtain certain degrees might also stimulate economic diversification. If Arabs specialize in scientific and technological fields of study, they will be more likely to pursue careers in these sectors. This could help establish private sector manufacturing and international trade. Encouraging niche development within the League could help aid in the development of specific sectors rather than creating a region of similar products and massive competition. Though this type of process usually happens on its own, with businesses competing and the weaker one

³ "Middle East: United Arab Emirates." The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency, 1 Sept. 2015. Web. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ae.html>.

failing, should this happen with state economies, the results would impact all states in the region. Thus, an eye towards niche development within the League could only help in the successful transition to privatized economies.

There are few successful cases of countries that have diversified their economies; these include the economies of Malaysia, Indonesia, Mexico, and Norway⁴. Some common themes include longevity of the diversification program (actual successful export growth in non-oil sectors took ~ 20 years), incentive creation – or private incentive creation rather than public incentives, vocational training for new areas and for those who wish to transition into non-oil and non-public sectors, technology upgrades to import more sophisticated investment, and sector creation of industrial clusters.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What steps has your nation taken to diversify? Is economic diversification a concern for your country?
- What regional partnerships does your country possess in regards to trade? What are your country's top exports?
- What type of resources does your state have other than minerals such as oil?
- Has your country already begun to diversify in a specific sector? What incentives would promote further diversification into this sector?
- Is your state dependent on the public sector for employment?
- How can the League support your country in diversification endeavors?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Address

- In what ways can cooperation between states foster regional growth and niche development?
- Are there technological advancements that can foster growth? Are poorer states able to take advantage of these technological innovations?
- How can members promote successful diversification throughout the League? What safeguards can be put in place to maximize success?
- In cases where diversification has succeeded, what lessons can be taken from those states, understanding that most exist in a different regional context? How can Arab nations use these tactics to maximize success?

IV. Additional Resources

- [Definition: Complementary Comparative Advantage](#)
- [IMF Working Paper: Alternative Fiscal Rules for Norway](#)
- [Economic Diversification in the GCC: Past, Present and Future](#)

⁴ Movahed, Masoud. "Why Should Resource-Based Economies Diversity?" *Al Jazeera*, 25 Jan. 2013. Web. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/01/2013116152324850803.html>.

- [Economic diversification in GCC countries: Past record and future trends](#)
- [IMF Working Paper: Soaring of the Gulf Falcons: Diversification in the GCC Oil Exporters in Seven Propositions](#)

Topic II: Confronting the self-proclaimed Islamic State and its affiliates through military, ideological, financial, and political means

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), also known as Daesh⁵, is a highly motivated, organized, tactical insurgency. Its use of propaganda and ideology makes it one of the most sophisticated terrorist organizations to date. The group has continued to be an issue for the US, the Middle East, and the international community. In the past year, there has been region-wide collaboration in air strikes and Iran and Kurdish fighters have both engaged Daesh. There has been moderate success in efforts to retake some Daesh occupied territories. However, Daesh remains a large threat to Middle Eastern nations, as well as the international community⁶.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

Daesh is an offshoot of Iraq's branch of al Qaeda. Many Sunni military leaders were fired after Saddam Hussein was ousted from power and the new Iraqi government was formed. These leaders eventually formed Daesh, a jihadist group dedicated to establishing a global caliphate. Their strategy has worked well in that they have steadily expanded their territorial holdings from their base of operations in Raqqa, Syria According to a report by the Institute for the Study of War, Daesh hopes to establish a global caliphate by focusing on "three geographic rings: the Interior Ring in Iraq and al-Sham (Syria), the Near Abroad in the wider Middle East and North Africa, and the Far Abroad in Europe, Asia and the United States."⁷ The organization combines conventional warfare, guerilla warfare, and terror attacks to expand its influence.

International authorities have admitted that Daesh's ideology is difficult to understand, making it difficult to fight against⁸. Diehard members believe they are apocalyptic harbingers whose sole purpose is to establish a global caliphate for end times⁹. The organization's caliphate ideology is

⁵ Throughout MAL Background Guides, we have attempted to simplify and clarify word usage in reference to the group known alternately as Islamic State, ISIS, ISIL etc. by consistently labeling it 'Daesh,' a widely used name derived from the group's Arabic acronym and one which the group itself despises.

⁶ Goldberg, Jeffrey. "Look... It's My Name on This': Obama Defends the Iran Nuclear Deal." *Atlantic*, 21 May 2015. Web. <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/05/obama-interview-iran-isis-israel/393782/>.

⁷ Lewis, Jessica. "The Islamic State: A Counter-Strategy for a Counter-State." Institute for the Study of War. Web. <http://www.understandingwar.org/report/islamic-state-counter-strategy-counter-state>.

⁸ Bunzel, Cole. "From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State." The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, Mar. 2015. Web. <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/ideology-of-islamic-state-bunzel/the-ideology-of-the-islamic-state.pdf>.

⁹ Wood, Graeme. "What ISIS Really Wants." *Atlantic*, Mar. 2015. Web. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>.

somewhat legitimized by its success in gaining and holding territory, an integral part to establishing said caliphate.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem

Combatting Daesh is something which requires a new approach. Current approaches have not been working. One potential solution is to use current ideological divides to deepen derision between other groups and Daesh. For example, Al Qaeda and Daesh have an ideological rift between them. Perhaps there is a way to exploit these types of divides to lessen Daesh's credibility. The international community must also work to cripple Daesh financially. The organization's financial support comes largely from "oil sales, taxation and extortion, and the sale of looted antiquities."¹⁰ Daesh utilizes both the natural and man-made resources found within its territory, such as oil and antique artifacts, for profit. Oil sales have been occurring with Turkey, taxation of non-Muslims is an Islamic practice in use today, and the sale of antiquities to private buyers has proven quite profitable as well. Daesh also receives funding from international benefactors. One problem with trying to combat Daesh financially is that any disruption in one source of revenue does not necessarily equate to financial distress because of the variety of revenue streams. It can also be difficult to disrupt the organization's finances because much of its income comes from within the territory it controls.

Political power is less of a bargaining tool because of the ideology behind the caliphate. Some compare Daesh to the Khmer Rouge, which sat for Cambodia in the UN, however, even this comparison is faulty because though Daesh wants to establish a legitimate caliphate, they would not sit in the UN because this would be seen as contrary to their ultimate goal¹¹. An additional way to weaken Daesh financially may be to review their expenses. Since they do hold territory, and much of their ideology is based on the centralization of their territory, they do have to attribute funds to tasks of daily governance. However, it should be noted that the majority of their financial operation is procured towards the military effort.

Ultimately, the most successful approach to combating Daesh will be to focus on multiple avenues of attack. However, based on the current information about Daesh, it seems that a multi-pronged strategy will be useless without a concrete military strategy. Therefore, focus should remain on combating Daesh's military strategy, perhaps not with a method of containment, but eradication.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What strategies have already been utilized in fighting Daesh? How effective were these strategies? What's the ultimate goal in fighting Daesh? Does your country want to see Daesh eradicated completely or simply contained?
- What resources and supplies have been used to fight Daesh? How have these resources been employed? Is there an opportunity for streamlining the use of similar resources?
- Does your state have an agenda in Daesh's survival? Is combating Daesh a real goal for your country?
- At what level is your state/will your state be involved?

¹⁰ Humud, Carla, Robert Pirog, and Liana Rosen. "Islamic State Financing and U.S. Policy Approaches." Congressional Research Service, 10 Apr. 2015. Web. <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R43980.pdf>.

¹¹ Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants."

III. Questions a Resolution Might Address

- How does the Council plan to combat Daesh? Will the Council use one specific approach or a multi-pronged approach?
- Who will be in charge of any programs created to combat Daesh? Will this be in conjunction with current efforts or is this something new, divorced from current operations?
- To what degree will non-Arab nations be involved in the Council's plans?
- How will the Council's plan differ from what's already been done?
- How will the Council address the ideology of Daesh? Its influx of new recruits?

IV. Additional Resources to Review

- [Islamic State Financing and U.S. Policy Approaches](#)
- [The Islamic State's Strategy: Lasting and Expanding](#)
- [The military strategy behind IS conquests](#)
- [From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State](#)
- [What ISIS Really Wants](#)
- [Iran, Shia militias involvement in ISIS fight a mixed blessing for U.S., Iraq](#)
- [Senior Western official: Links between Turkey and ISIS are now 'undeniable'](#)
- [Opposition MP says ISIS is selling oil in Turkey](#)

Topic III: Exploring effective strategies for employing humanitarian assistance to refugees and others displaced by regional conflict

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

It is important to begin this discussion with an understanding of the terminology being utilized. Refugees are defined as individuals who have fled their country of origin or permanent residence and settled in host countries. Refugees flee for fear of violence or due to religious, ethnic, or political persecution. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) define humanitarian assistance as:

“aid that seeks to save lives and alleviate suffering of a crisis-affected population. Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the basic humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality, as stated in General Assembly Resolution 46/182. In addition, the UN seeks to provide humanitarian assistance with full respect for the sovereignty of States. Assistance may be divided into three categories - direct assistance, indirect assistance and infrastructure support - which have diminishing degrees of contact with the affected population.”¹²

¹² “Glossary of Humanitarian Terms.” ReliefWeb Project, Aug. 2008. Web. <http://www.who.int/hac/about/reliefweb-aug2008.pdf>.

The UN has been providing humanitarian assistance since World War II and is the most prominent and prolific organization providing aid to those in crisis. However, there are many other organizations, both state-sponsored and private, providing aid in a complex and interconnected realm of organizations, multiple crises, and security concerns.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

There have been a number of crises in the Middle East and North Africa requiring intervention in the form of humanitarian assistance, some of which are still ongoing. The civil war in Syria has been called “the biggest humanitarian emergency of our era.”¹³ Over 11 million people have been uprooted from their homes, 4 million have been displaced to a neighboring country and the conflict has no end in sight. Yemen’s humanitarian crisis stems from internal conditions such as food instability. UN Rapporteur on the Right to Food Hilal Elver said that 6 million people in Yemen are “severely food insecure”.¹⁴

The UN has pulled out of Syria and Yemen, due to dangerous working conditions. The UN has had to pull out of regions in the past when areas experiencing high levels of violence became too dangerous for peace workers and other aid workers. During the latest Palestinian-Israeli incursion, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) shelters and UN schools became targets of violence.

Another issue is that of displaced peoples. Many nations in the Middle East have closed their borders because of the mass influx of refugees they saw as a result of the Syrian crisis. At a certain point, taking in displaced persons is simply unsustainable. Indeed, some countries have received more of a burden than others and sustainability is not the only issue. Tensions between natives and refugees often result in violence. In the case of Jordan, clashes between native Jordanians and Palestinians resulted in a number of clashes between the PLO and Jordanian security forces¹⁵. Though these tensions seem to have been left in the past, the underlying issues of limited geographical location and native versus non-native are still present. Political tensions only exacerbate this problem, especially when refugee populations are underrepresented in politics.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem

When conflicts become too dangerous, organizations providing humanitarian assistance have no choice but to remove their personnel. This begs the question of what becomes of people who need help when organizations cannot go into countries to help them or countries face issues with maintaining refugees they are hosting. The UN has been the ultimate organization providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced peoples, but when conflicts become too dangerous in the Arab world, does the League have the responsibility to intervene if it is able to do so? Security forces, ceasefires, and specific locations for aid drops are all possible ways to provide assistance when international organizations cannot. There is also the question of supporting existing aid efforts.

¹³ Neuman, Scott. “U.N. Says Syria Represents Worst Refugee Crisis in 25 Years.” National Public Radio, 9 July 2015. Web. <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/07/09/421413467/u-n-says-syria-represents-worst-refugee-crisis-in-25-years>.

¹⁴ “Where We Work: Yemen.” United States Agency for International Development, 18 Aug. 2015. Web. <https://www.usaid.gov/crisis/yemen>.

¹⁵ “Jordanian History: Black September.” Encyclopedia Britannica. Web. <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Black-September-Jordanian-history>.

Though the serious case in the MENA region is those countries who cannot receive aid due to security concerns or limited resources, the question of how to aid in existing efforts is one that should not be overlooked.

The traditional ideas in this topic are not working anymore. International organizations which are seen as the premier standard, like the UN, have had to pull out of countries. Where this has occurred lately has been in the MENA region. Even if there are security concerns and limited resources, the most vulnerable populations will suffer without aid. The League should determine if providing humanitarian assistance to states in the region is something it would like to do at an organizational level. If not, then this discussion could function as a way to determine bilateral aid donations and partnerships.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How would humanitarian assistance provided by the League at an institutional level help your state?
- How can your government provide assistance to refugee populations?
- Are there distinctions that your government would make on providing aid? For example, is there a certain conflict your country does not wish to be involved in?
- Is your country limited already in the number of resources it can provide? If this is the case, how could the League help?
- How can the League work with the already complex landscape of private and public organizations, and the UN, to deliver aid? Does the League have any special access or methods by which they could be of use in regional conflicts?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Address

- How is the Council going to provide humanitarian assistance?
- Are there other types of assistance the League could provide, rather than simply donating supplies or monetary aid?
- Could the League be more useful in mediating conflicts with humanitarian goals in mind, or placing conditions on mediations? Or could the League provide a support role rather than direct involvement?
- Who will pay for assistance? Should an aid program be based on individual member states' contributions?

IV. Additional Resources to Review

- [UN Pulls Its International Staff Out of Yemen](#)
- [Israel-Gaza conflict: UN school shelled leaving 15 dead](#)
- [UN Pulls Troops From Syrian Golan Heights](#)
- [DR Congo conflict: UN pulls out of planned assault on FDLR](#)
- [UN pulls out of Yemen, ending hopes of brokered peace](#)
- [Financing For Humanitarian Operations in the United Nations System](#)
- [Humanitarian Aid: Are Effectiveness and Sustainability Impossible Dreams?](#)

- [Humanitarian Assistance and Assistance to Refugees](#)
- [Deliver Humanitarian Aid](#)

Topic IV: Discussing challenges to the existing regional order, with special consideration given to the breakdown of borders and emergence of new states

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Which direction the committee decides to take this in really depends on the individual states in the room. However, some general ideas might be useful in framing debate towards more specific situations. Currently, the status quo of the Middle East is currently changing. From the Arab Spring to the Iran nuclear deal with the US, recent events have the ability to significantly alter the Arab landscape. The existing regional order, if there even is such a thing anymore, is very much an idea of the past. In a world of globalization, where borders are increasingly porous, the regional order as a concept sounds antiquated. However, the concept is one that has been in play, especially in terms of political power and prominence. Stable states, transitional states and possible future states are seeing a change in regional order. The Islamic State's territorial grab and the number of states undergoing civil wars, power transitions and other crises pose a significant reimagining of the regional order, or the status quo. Combining these events with the international power order makes the situation even more complicated.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

The regional order in the Middle East and North Africa has been, as it has been most places, significantly tied to location, resources, and wealth. The states most in power are those either in a strategic geographic position, such as Jordan and Egypt; financially wealthy, such as the GCC; or have vast resources, whether these are natural resources, domestic labor or military forces. Though the issues of borders and regional power have never been superficial topics, recent events have complicated an already incomprehensible subject. Understanding the importance of borders relies on an understanding of the history of the Middle East.

With the emergence of new states and pseudo-states, even terrorist-held territory, the regional order becomes divided between stable states and transitioning states, which will include new states. States like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Iran, and Turkey all have significant power in that they are stable (or at least, relatively so), important (either geographically, financially, or militarily, and in some cases, all three), and influential in the region. Other states, such as South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq, are either new or are in transition or crisis. These states are influential in that their survival or destruction will alter the makeup of the surrounding region. The current trend in Middle East conflict seems to be war by proxy. Iran has been a major player recently, and with the US – Iran nuclear deal, it remains to be seen what this will mean for the regional order. Will Iran become more directly involved in conflicts versus the indirect approach they've taken in regards to funding and other forms of covert support in the past? As economic sanctions against Iran are gradually lifted, the nation will have an increasingly influential role in the region. However, this is not to say that Iran is the only country engaging in proxy wars. Throughout the history of MENA conflict, a number of countries both outside and inside the region have influenced domestic politics for their own interests.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem

Perhaps the question is not whether we can return to the framework of regional order, defined by states' power and influence, but whether this concept is no longer applicable to today's Middle East. If that is the case, then a solution might be to find a scenario or a scale that works better. However, maybe the regional order is the method to use. In either event, a solution to the problem should include a way to measure states that are new, transitioning, or pseudo-states. To begin the discussion, it would be useful to ascertain what aspects of power and influence are used to decide regional order. Perhaps stability is less important than conflict in today's world and those states which are engaged in a civil war, political transition, or other type of conflict actually operate on a more equal playing field with stable states. A solution is perhaps not even the right term to describe what the discussion should focus on. Instead, the Council should discuss this seemingly fundamental shift in the Middle East's socio-political landscape. Perhaps a better term is finding an approach to understanding regional power.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Where does your state fit in the old regional order? The current regional order? Has your state gained or lost relative power?
- What does the regional order mean to you as a Head of my State? What does it mean to others in the Council?
- Where is the Middle East headed? With all of the conflicts occurring, what will the Middle East look like in ten years? Twenty? Longer?
- What's the purpose of looking at the Middle East through this analytical lens?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Address

- How do new states and states in transition affect the regional order, and ultimately the stability of the region?
- Is there a way to ease the transition of states, resulting in sustained stability and strength?
- Are all new and transitional states necessarily at the bottom of the order? Some states in the Arab Spring might have been more powerful because of their transitions, though some might argue that these states lost strength where they gained popular support.
- How does the international community play a part in this discussion? The Iran deal with the United States is between an outside player, yet it has important influence in the way things run and might run in the future.

IV. Additional Resources to Review

- [Iran in the Middle East Regional Order](#)
- [The Middle East: Evolution of a Broken Regional Order](#)
- [Defying Gravity: Working Toward a Regional Strategy for a Stable Middle East](#)