

Crisis Committee

NERMAL 2024

The Trucial States Council: Unification of the UAE

Dear Delegates,

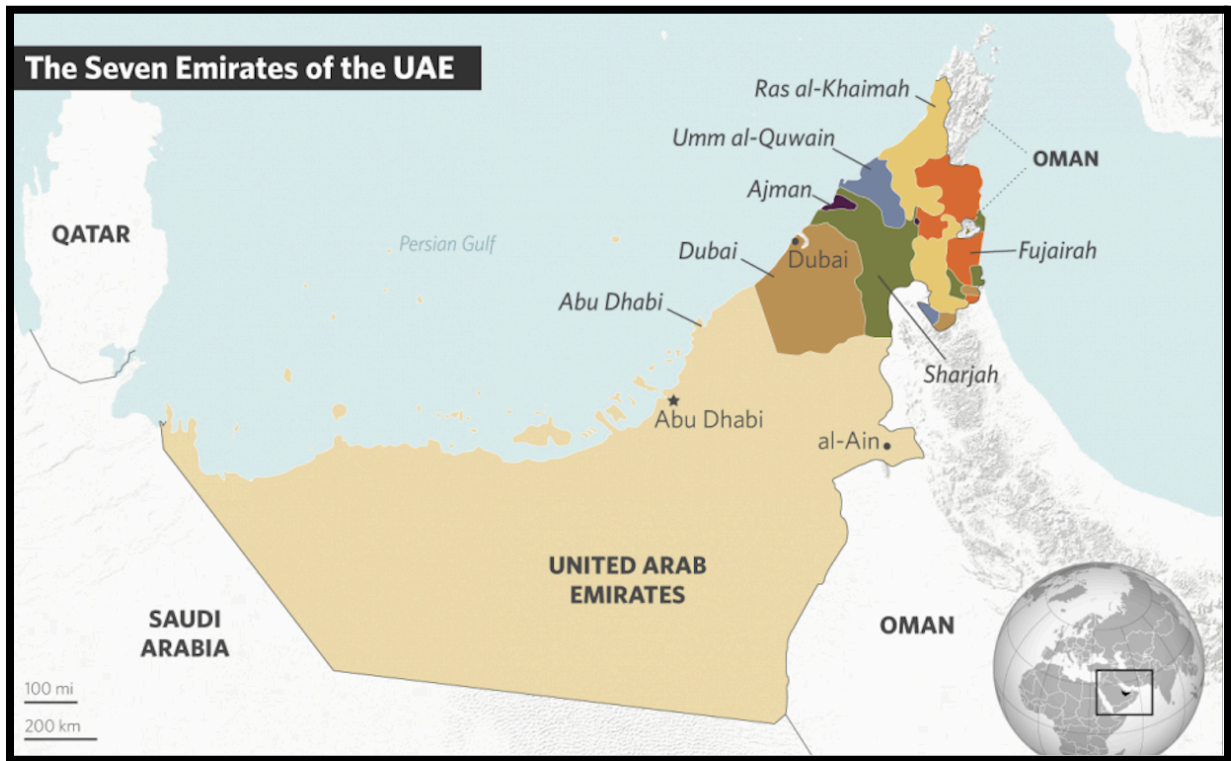
Welcome to the Crisis Committee at this year's Northeastern Regional Model Arab League (NERMAL) Conference. While your fellow delegates will spend the weekend cooperating on a common problem, your committee will find itself in conflict and negotiation, every delegate attempting to agree to the crisis at hand. Over the weekend you will find yourself working with government officials, military leaders, state ambassadors, and more, to solve the needs of your committee.

The officials of your committee will consist of your chair (frontroom) and the crisis staff (backroom). Your chair will effectively head the negotiations and act as an intermediary for the crisis itself. The backroom will act as the primary intermediate for this crisis to determine how your efforts will affect your committee in the frontroom.

If you are new to crisis in Model Arab League, the committee will flow slightly more informally than a traditional committee. You will partake in both frontroom motions and backroom activities. These motions should all serve your role assignment and your country, maintaining the spirit of cooperation that the Model Arab League encourages. In addition, you will be working in “real-time,” meaning crises may emerge that you will have to address throughout your deliberations in the form of personal crisis notes and joint directives from multiple delegates. These crises will include changes in the situation made by other delegates in the room as well as events from the backroom itself in the form of press releases.

I look forward to working with all of you and am excited to see what solutions you develop.

Mark Smith
Crisis Director



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Trucial States, also known as the Trucial Coast or Trucial Oman, comprised seven sheikhdoms: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al-Quwain, Fujairah, and Ras Al Khaimah. These emirates were historically governed by local sheiks who had established control over their respective territories through tribal alliances and maritime trade.

In the early 19th century, piracy along the Arabian coast threatened British maritime interests in the region, leading the British to intervene. The General Maritime Treaty of 1820 established a truce between the British and the sheiks of the coastal tribes, creating a framework for peace and stability in the area. Subsequent agreements in 1835, 1843, and 1853 reinforced these truces, culminating in the Perpetual Maritime Truce of 1853, which prohibited hostilities at sea and on land. Under these treaties, the Trucial States came under British protection, with the British providing military and political support in exchange for control over the Emirati foreign relations and defense. In fact, the name "Trucial States" originated from these maritime truces signed between the sheikhdoms and the British government. This arrangement lasted until the mid-20th century, allowing the British to safeguard their strategic interests in the Persian Gulf and maintain a dominant position in regional trade.

The mid-20th century brought significant changes to the region. The discovery of oil in Abu Dhabi in 1958, and subsequently in other emirates, transformed the economic landscape, providing the financial resources necessary for modernization and development. This newfound wealth, coupled with rising nationalist sentiments and the decline of British colonial influence, set the stage for unification. In 1968, the British government announced its intention to withdraw

from the Persian Gulf by the end of 1971, leaving the Trucial States to determine their own future. This announcement catalyzed discussions among the sheiks about forming a unified entity. The rulers of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Bahrain, Qatar, and the other Trucial States met several times to negotiate the terms of unification, ultimately agreeing on a federation model that would balance local autonomy with collective governance.

On December 2, 1971, six of the Trucial States—Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al-Quwain, and Fujairah—formally united to create the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Ras Al Khaimah joined the federation on February 10, 1972, completing the union of the seven emirates. Both Bahrain and Qatar ultimately left the negotiations amidst fears of foreign influence and became independent states. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the ruler of Abu Dhabi, was elected as the first President of the UAE, and Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, became the Vice President and Prime Minister.

The formation of the UAE marked the beginning of a new era of political stability, economic prosperity, and social development in the region. The federal structure allowed for cooperation and unity while respecting the autonomy and traditions of each emirate. Over the following decades, the UAE emerged as a regional power and a global economic hub, driven by visionary leadership, strategic investments, and a commitment to modernization.

CURRENT SITUATION

This Crisis committee begins on March 16, 1968. Britain has withdrawn from all territories “east of Suez” amidst the decline of the British Empire. With this withdrawal, the states of the Persian Gulf are left wondering what this means for the fractured sheiks of the region. Some states, such as Oman and Kuwait, have unified into independent states. The sheiks of the Trucial States do not find themselves with such luxuries. Insignificant and disunited, the individual sheiks of the Trucial States find themselves in danger as their neighbors watch carefully. Saudi Arabia and Iran, both states with an interest in the oil-rich region, are ready to pounce at any sign of weakness as the individual sheiks of the Trucial States are a juicy target. With the Trucial States in such a perilous state, the leaders of Abu Dhabi and Dubai have invited representatives from the other Sheiks to the negotiation table in the hopes of forming a principle of union between the states. Though negotiations have begun in earnest, any kind of unification between the nine sheiks invited is far from complete. Across the gulf, Iran has made its first move, officially announcing its claim upon the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tumbs and demanding their immediate surrender. Though no official announcement has been made, it is rumored that the state seeks to stretch its claim to additional islands such as Seer Abu-Nu’ayr and Bahrain though their true ambition may lie even further. In response, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has pushed for further negotiations around the Buraimi dispute in the south. The region holds its breath as the Trucial States Council convenes to discuss the troubling times ahead.

CHARACTER DOSSIERS

1. **Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan:** Sheikh of Abu Dhabi

The current ruler of the Abu Dhabi sheikdom, this character is a progressive figure in the emirates and the key figure behind current negotiations alongside the Sheikh of Dubai. His vision of a united federation, supported by his diplomatic skills and oil wealth, is a strong point to begin the unification of the Trucial States.

2. **Rashid bin Humaid Al Nuaimi III:** Sheikh of Ajman

The current ruler of the Ajman sheikdom, this character is a modernist in his sheikdom despite his limited access to resources with an economy largely made up of fishing and pearl diving. This character strongly supports economic collectivization across the emirates so that his people might benefit from the infrastructure of Ajman's oil-rich neighbors.

3. **Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum:** Sheikh of Dubai

The current ruler of the Dubai sheikdom, this character worked alongside the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi to bring about the current negotiations. In recent years leading up to negotiations this character has strongly improved the infrastructure of Dubai through projects such as Port Rashid and Dubai International Airport. Controlling one of the most developed regions of the Trucial States, the inclusion of Dubai in the negotiations is key to any potential unification.

4. **Mohammed bin Hamad Al Sharqi:** Sheikh of Fujairah

The current ruler of the Fujairah sheikdom, this character represents the last of the emirates to gain recognition from the British. A resilient and charismatic diplomat, this character has committed his skills to the betterment of his people and has thus gained vast popularity from local tribes within and without his sheikdom.

5. **Saqr bin Mohammed Al Qasimi:** Sheikh of Ras Al Khaimah

The current ruler of the Ras Al Khaimah sheikdom, this character is one of the oldest and most experienced of the leaders at the negotiating table. Known for being resolute and a nationalist of his sheikdom, this character has built strong bonds with the tribes of the northern emirates in particular as well as investing in industry and modernization.

6. **Khalid bin Muhammad Al Qasimi:** Sheikh of Sharjah

The current ruler of the Sharjah sheikdom, this character is known for his progressive outlook and dedication to modernizing his emirate. Under his rule, Sharjah has strengthened its economic and political standing in the region, fostering close relations with British and other international authorities in the region through his international connections.

7. **Ahmad bin Rashid Al Mualla:** Sheikh of Umm Al Quwain

The current ruler of the Umm Al Quwain sheikdom, this character is known for his traditional and careful policies, taking a cautious approach to his rule. His leadership is characterized by his intimate understanding of the desert environment, having spent much of his life among the Bedouin tribes, which has shaped his pragmatic, yet humble, governance.

8. **Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa:** Sheikh of Bahrain

The current ruler of the Bahrain sheikdom, this character is a dynamic leader who stands at the crossroads of tradition and modernization. Ruling over one of the most wealthy Trucial States, his reign has been characterized by his progressive relations with the Shia population of Bahrain and a strong push for economic diversification away from Bahrain's current oil-based economy. His inclusive approach has earned him broad support across the island, helping to solidify his leadership in a time of regional upheaval.

9. **Ahmad Bin Ali Al Thani:** Sheikh of Qatar

The current ruler of Qatar, this character has overseen the discovery of vast oil resources during his reign and used his position to increase the military and economic strength of Qatar. This character is also noted for his careful balancing act between maintaining traditional tribal authority and pushing for modernization. He commands loyalty from Qatar's key tribal leaders while introducing reforms that pave the way for economic growth and a stronger central government.

10. **Sir Robert Stewart Crawford:** United Kingdom Political Resident of the Persian Gulf

The architect of the United Kingdom's colonial withdrawal from the Persian Gulf, this character possesses keen diplomatic skills with which to approach the negotiations necessary for Britain's withdrawal from the region. What makes this character unique is his deep understanding of the local political landscape and his respect for the traditional leaders of the Gulf. Unlike many of his predecessors, he approaches his role with a

sensitivity to local customs and tribal politics, building relationships of trust with the rulers of the Trucial States.

11. **Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud:** King of Saudi Arabia

The King of one of the largest oil-producing states in the world, this character holds significant sway over its neighbors, including the Trucial States. His foreign policy, marked by his resistance to Western influence in the region, has earned him both admiration and criticism. His diplomatic skills, coupled with his deep understanding of the internal dynamics of the Middle East, have positioned Saudi Arabia as a major power in the Arab world under his reign.

12. **Hugh Brennan:** British Oil Companies Representative

The leading representative of the combined British Oil corporations acting in the Persian Gulf, this character is a seasoned businessman with years of experience in the oil industry. British economists are acutely aware of the political changes sweeping the region as the Trucial States move toward greater autonomy. They know that the days of easy British dominance are waning, and so have tasked this character with ensuring continued British influence even as new power dynamics emerge.

13. **Johnathan Mackleroy:** American Oil Companies Representative

The leading representative of combined American Oil corporations in the region, this character embodies the quintessential American businessman. American corporations have tasked this character with expanding American influence in the rapidly developing Persian Gulf oil sector, his presence signaling the growing competition between British and American oil interests in the Gulf.

14. **Adib Muhannad Bitar:** Abu Dhabi National Oil Company

The leading representative of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), this character represents one of the largest of the Trucial State Oil companies within the emirates. His unique position stems from his dual responsibilities: managing ADNOC's business dealings with foreign oil companies while fiercely advocating for the Emirates' sovereignty over natural resources. As one of many Emirati businessmen educated abroad, he possesses a deep understanding of Western business practices and a strong commitment to preserving cultural values.

Sources and Additional Reading:

- [The Formation and History of the UAE](#) (Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism)
- [The Formation of the Federation](#) (Arabian Gulf Digital Archives)
- [The Qawasim and British control of the Arabian Gulf](#) (M Al-Otabi, University of Salford)
- [The Persian Gulf's 'Occupied Territory'](#) (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy)
- [Overthrowing the Sheykh: The Trucial States at the Intersection of Anti-Imperialism, Arab Nationalism, and Politics, 1952-1966](#) (The Arab Studies Journal)