



2012 - 2013

Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Special Committee on Arab League Reform

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National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations



Honorable Delegates,

My name is Shannon Bishop and I am so pleased to serve as your chair for the Special Committee on Arab League Reform. I am a senior at Converse College studying Psychology as well as Business Administration with an emphasis in Marketing. This is my fourth year participating in Model Arab League, my third year serving as a regional model chair, and my second year serving as chair at the National Model Arab League conference.

I am very excited to chair the Special Committee on Arab League Reform because the nature of the issues is current and integral to the future success of the region. You, delegates, have been selected to tackle some of the most pressing issues in the Arab region. As a result of the changing political landscape and ideals of the Arab region and the entire world there is a call for reform in policy as well. We must distinguish how we can best strengthen the Arab world in a global society. We will do this by identifying the strengths of the Arab League and deciding on a plan that is best to present these strengths to the world. It is my hope that you grasp on to this challenge and come forth with innovative and creative solutions to the topics set before you.

Those of you who are veterans to the Model Arab League conference will know that the best way to provide the most substantive debate and create quality resolutions is to research these topics extensively. It is my expectation that each of you will take the opportunity to do so before arriving at the model. I hope you will then use the knowledge that you have gathered to collaborate with the other delegates in order to produce the most comprehensive and effective resolutions. I look so forward to working with all of you and seeing what we have in store for us this year in Model Arab League.

Best wishes & happy researching,

Shannon

Topic 1: Forming recommendations for the annual budget and determining member state contributions in accordance with Article 13 of the Arab League Charter

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Article 13 of the Arab League Charter states that the Secretary General will prepare a draft budget for the League before the beginning of each fiscal year, which is to then be approved by a special council. This council is composed of the representatives of the member-states of the League; each state has a single vote, irrespective of the number of its representatives it sends to the council.¹ The council members then decide amongst themselves the expenses which will be contributed by each state.

Keeping this in mind, the purpose of this topic is to resolve how to best use the resources of the League and what amount each member states should contribute in dues. Currently the Arab League budget functions at approximately \$50 million per year.² Kuwait and Saudi Arabia contribute the largest amount to the Arab league budget at 14% collectively.³

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

The Arab League budget is used to fund projects to assist the region politically, economically, and socially. For example, it is used to fund and administer development projects, such as the construction of natural gas pipelines. Other sectors of the Arab League budget are devoted to education, technological advancement, and to monitor regional trends in, labor, crime, agriculture, and industry. The Arab League also funds peacekeeping missions; for example they provided Lebanon with a peacekeeping force during its civil war (until it became a purely Syrian force in the spring of 1979)⁴ and assisted in joint Arab League-UN talks during the conflict in Darfur.⁵

In the past the League has experienced difficulties in collecting members' dues. A prominent example of this came following the Gulf War in 1991.⁶ When Amr Moussa became Secretary General in 1991, it was estimated that the budget was over \$50 million in arrears.⁷ Article 15 of the Arab League bylaws states that if a nation is in arrears to the Arab League in a portion greater than the total they have paid in the current year and the two preceding years they may lose voting rights within the League.⁸

¹ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher/LAS,,,3ae6b3ab18.0.html/>

² Arab League Envoy Wonders What's Next for His Beloved Egypt, The Washington Diplomat, March 2011
http://www.luxner.com/cgi-bin/view_article.cgi?articleID=1961

³ <http://www.menafn.com/menafn/1093545944/Kuwait-pays-its-quota-of-Arab-League-budget>

⁴ Robert Fisk, 'Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War,' Oxford University Press, 2001, 187, see also 203.

⁵ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/08/AR2006100800668.html>

⁶ <http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?language=en&id=1186903>

⁷ <http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?language=en&id=1976728>

⁸ http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/League_of_Arab_States.aspx

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem Past, Present, and Future

We often find a divide in the League of Arab States between member states with more abundant wealth and resources and nations with lesser wealth. This divide is so marked that while the wealthier nations enjoy some of the highest GDPs in the world, the less wealthy countries often have issues with basic government funding even within their own borders.⁹ Deciding the appropriate way for each nation to provide what it is willing and able to contribute will be the challenge of this council.

A critical consideration in finding a budget solution is making a decision on what is best for the Arab League both at this time and in the long run. The question remains: how can the League most efficiently and fairly distribute budget charges to member states without causing internal financial strains? A solution might be crafted that takes into account the many and varied needs of the individual member states, while still benefitting the League overall.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What contribution does my country make to the Arab League budget?
- What changes would my country like to see made concerning contributions and expenditures of funds?
- Is my country current in its payment of dues to the League?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What is the best method for the league to obtain the necessary funds from member states?
- What is the most efficient way to delegate expenditures within the League?
- How can we better ensure the payment of dues by member states?

IV. Resources to Review

League of Arab States, *Charter of Arab League*, 22 March 1945, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b3ab18.html> [accessed 22 August 2012]

Michael R. Fischbach (Editor). *Biographical Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East & North Africa*. Publisher: Gale; 1 edition (October 12, 2007)

Arab League Envoy Wonders What's Next for His Beloved Egypt
The Washington Diplomat, March 2011, http://www.luxner.com/cgi-bin/view_article.cgi?articleID=1961

⁹ <http://www.amf.org.ae/>

Topic 2: Determining the League's role concerning member states experiencing unrest and evaluating methods for conflict resolution such as observer missions, sanctions, humanitarian aid, and other types of assistance

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background

Unrest in the Arab world has been the dominant issue in the region, and the world, since December 2010 when the first protests for democracy began in Tunisia.¹⁰ Since that time, major civil uprisings have taken place in many more Arab nations including Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria. Other Arab countries have also experienced more minor, though still significant, expressions of discontent with their respective governments through demonstrations. In the face of such radical changes within the member nations of the League, mechanisms to establish if, and how, the League should intervene in these situations may be required.

This is a particularly prickly issue for an organization that has until recently remained uninvolved in so-called domestic affairs of sovereign nations. However, the League has proven that it has an integral role to play in the unrest, upheaval, and outright conflicts in the region, whether it is through peacekeeping efforts, economic sanctions and levies, or even military interventions.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

The League has taken unprecedented steps in dealing with the current political changes within the region. In March 2011, the League called upon the United Nations Security Council to form a no-fly zone over Libya in order to better protect civilians in that country's raging civil conflict.¹¹ However, then-Secretary General Amr Moussa later backtracked, criticizing the implementation of the no-fly zone by U.S.-led forces for killing civilians.¹² The Arab League also decided to impose economic sanctions on Syria that would cripple trade and investment between Syria and the Arab world.¹³

Both these measures made evident to the global community the more active stance of the League. While the request for the Libyan no-fly zone invited the help of other nations, the sanctions placed against Syria were enacted by the League alone. This action served as a statement that the League was equipped to handle these issues on its own and needed no outside intervention from foreign nations.¹⁴

¹⁰ http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/28/opinion/the-arab-spring-still-blooms.html?_r=0

¹¹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/03/201131720311168561.html>

¹² <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2011/03/libya-airstrikes-military-tripoli-kadafi.html>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ (http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/28/world/middleeast/arab-league-prepares-to-vote-on-syrian-sanctions.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all.)

In June 2012, the Secretary General of the Arab League stated that the League would be in favor of replacing the United Nations observer mission in Syria with peacekeeping troops.¹⁵ The observer mission was intended to protect Syrian civilians but was deemed unsuccessful up to that point.¹⁶ Despite these actions, the League still lacks a standard for determining the appropriate time for, and type of, intervention.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem Past, Present, and Future

When looking to ameliorate an issue that affects a region as vast as the Arab world, it is important to be practical and also cautious with the measures taken. The League has shown precedence in involving outside organizations, such as the United Nations and individual countries, in regional conflicts. In addition, it has called upon both regional and independent observers to assess issues in domestic matters. Economic interventions, military actions, and even calls for humanitarian aid from third parties are all options that the Arab League has at its disposal. Each country must look at what the League has tried before, what has been successful, and what has failed. It will be a primary concern for the League to decide upon a plan of action regarding intervention while still maintaining a respect for individual state sovereignty

II. Questions to Consider in your Research

- What effect has civil unrest had on my country?
- What is my country's position on foreign intervention with nations experiencing unrest?
- Did my country support the actions taken in Libya or Syria?
- What resources could my country provide to nations experiencing unrest?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Should the Arab League play a more active or less active role in enforcing peace in nations suffering from internal conflict?
- How will the League determine whether a given situation is worthy of intervention or other action?
- What tools are available to the Arab League to influence situations of unrest?
- What will be the role of non-Arab international actors?

IV. Resources to Review

“A Revolution for all Seasons,” Empire, Aljazeera, November 13, 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/empire/2011/11/201111311165635164.html>

“Isolating Syria, The Arab League imposes broad sanctions” *The NY Times*, November 27, 2011, (http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/28/world/middleeast/arab-league-prepares-to-vote-on-syrian-sanctions.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all.)

¹⁵ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/03/201131720311168561.html>

¹⁶ (http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-57455262/arab-league-peacekeepers-must-be-sent-to-syria/)

Topic 3: Strengthening League efforts to enhance Arab unity and evaluating potential areas of greater cultural, economic, and political integration, with special attention to the exploration of a common Arab currency

I. Introduction to the Topic

A. General Background and History of the Topic in the Arab World

As is obvious, members of the Arab League share many commonalities including cultural components, language, and many religious traditions. However, the differences between them are often what serve to weaken regional cohesion. The League is composed of states with many different governmental systems with varying interests, which hinders the case for political integration.

Pan-Arabism, the “nationalist notion of cultural and political unity among Arab countries,”¹⁷ was one of the primary catalysts behind the formation of the Arab League itself, as well as much of the Arab politics of the 20th century. Syria and Egypt went as far as to attempt political unification in the late 1950s, becoming together the United Arab Republic.¹⁸ However, this integration lasted three short years and ended with Syria’s cessation in 1961.¹⁹

Arab economies vary greatly, as well. For example, take the hydrocarbon-heavy economies of the Gulf compared to commercial Lebanon or agricultural Egypt. Nevertheless, their economies are tied and co-dependent in many ways. Due to these various commonalities, the case for integration appears strong, though historical contexts have shown the inherent difficulties in actually enacting cohesive integrative measures.

This topic seeks to more deeply explore what options can be pursued for integration – whether it be economic, cultural, or political – in order to strengthen the League overall. As world trade quickly becomes more organized around unified trade organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), as well as regional blocs like MERCOSUR and ASEAN, it is important for the League to consider economic integration in order to participate competitively in the global marketplace.²⁰

The practicality of a common Arab currency has been an issue debated by League members for some years now. This topic will further explore that idea specifically, and any others the council deems relevant, looking in depth at its feasibility for today and the future. Some Arab economists have rejected the notion of a common currency, arguing that:

The Arab countries cannot introduce a common currency like the Euro because of the diversity of financial resources; some of them depend on oil as supports, another tourism, or agriculture and industry. To introduce a version of the currency of a common Arab is not easy to implement in the absence of

¹⁷ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/878838/Pan-Arabism>

¹⁸ <http://countrystudies.us/syria/14.htm>

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ *Mosad Zineldin*, Globalisation and economic integration among Arab countries, <http://www.smi.uib.no/pao/zineldin.html>

the stability of economic and political conditions as well that it would disrupt orientation of Arab countries to mitigate the phenomenon of economic inflation.”²¹

The countries of the GCC have also been discussing the possibility of sharing a more exclusive common currency amongst themselves for some time.²² The council must consider the potential impact of these projects in its discussions on the feasibility and practicality of a wider Arab currency within the larger context of promoting Arab unity and greater cultural, economic, and political integration.

B. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

It is essential for delegates to research what measures might be taken to increase Arab unity while considering the feasibility of such measures. The spirit of Pan-Arabism may not be dead, but delegates will certainly look to protect their own countries’ interests first and foremost. In addition to a common Arab currency, economic unions, culture-based multilateral coalitions, and political federations are also options to be explored. Delegates should look towards understanding the reasons that a common Arab currency has not been implemented in the past and what important changes have been made since that time. Weighing the mistakes of the past will better serve member states in creating lasting examples of League-wide integration, on all levels.

II. Questions to Consider in Research

- What is my country’s position on a common Arab currency?
- Would a common Arab currency economically benefit or hurt my country?
- What currency does my country currently use and how does its value compare to other Arab countries’ currencies?
- What measures toward economic and other types of integration have been used in other parts of the world? Have they been successful? Why or why not?
- With what current treaties or projects is my country involved that seek greater integration with other member states?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What measures toward increased Arab unity are feasible at this time? Will they be more feasible in the future?
- If a common Arab currency is not feasible now, what measures can be taken to put the League on the path toward such integration in the future?
- What would be the benchmarks to creating a common Arab currency?
- Can the current structure of the Arab League facilitate greater political integration? Should it be modified?

²¹ “Economist stress the inability of Arab countries to unify its currency financial” *Iraqi Dinar news, Information and Facts*, March 28, 2012. <http://iraqidinarchat.net/?p=1613>.

²²http://www.khaleejtimes.com/biz/inside.asp?xfile=%2Fdata%2Fbusiness%2F2011%2FSeptember%2Fbusiness_September215.xml§ion=business

- How can commonalities between Arab countries be exploited to overcome the differences?

IV. Resources to Review

“Economists stress the inability of Arab countries to unify its currency financial” *Iraqi Dinar news, Information and Facts*, March 28, 2012. <http://iraqidinarchat.net/?p=1613>

Mosad Zineldin, Globalization and economic integration among Arab countries, <http://www.smi.uib.no/pao/zineldin.html>

Al-Omran, Aisha. (May 25, 2010). “*Common GCC Currency, Are the GCC Countries ready?*” <http://www.scribd.com/doc/32483285/GCC-Common-Currency>

Aldoni, Lamis. (11 Feb 2011). *The resurrection of pan-Arabism*, Aljazeera. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/02/201121115231647934.html>

Karasapan, Omer. (February 22, 2012). *Can the Arab Spring spur regional integration?* The World Bank, Voices and Views: Middle East and North Africa <http://menablog.worldbank.org/can-arab-spring-spur-regional-integration>

Topic 4: Reviewing and amending the Arab League Charter regarding membership, council structure, and voting, keeping in mind the goal of advancing the League's influence in the international community

I. Introduction to topic

A. General Background

Article 1 of the Arab League Charter states that in order to obtain League membership an Arab nation must submit an application to the Secretariat which will then present the application to the general Council. The organization has added many new members to its original seven since its origination in 1945 using this process. The councils to be represented at the summit are outlined under Articles 2 and 4 of the Charter. Voting specifications are given in Articles 3 and 7 of the Charter, declaring that each nation shall have one vote and that decisions made by the councils apply only to those states that vote for them. Article 7 further states that national laws supersede decisions made by the League.²³

It will be important for delegates to evaluate the effectiveness of various parts of the Charter over the past 68 years and consider any changes, additions, or deletions. Differing from any regular resolution, any amendments to the Charter must pass with a 2/3 majority vote of the council.

B. History of the Topic in the Arab World

The face of the League is slowly changing and has gained more respect in the international community since its reaction to the Arab Spring. With this momentum it leaves the question of how can we further strengthen the League in the international community?²⁴

The League has accepted fifteen new members since its founding in 1945.²⁵ New members are considered primarily based on their linguistic and ethnic identity as Arabs.²⁶ Based on that requirement, there are few presumable candidates for future membership. The Republic of Chad maintains Arabic as one of its official languages²⁷, as does the State of Eritrea²⁸, making both potential candidates, though an application by either holds complications. The League Charter provides for membership for nations that splinter from current member states, making South Sudan a contender, though the South Sudanese leadership has rejected the notion.²⁹

Outside the realm of official membership to the League, certain non-Arab states have been invited to participate in particular sessions of Arab League Summits, though the League Charter does not officially provide for the position of 'observer state.' These nations are allowed to share

²³ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,LAS,,,3ae6b3ab18,0.html/>

²⁴ Tobia, P.J. "Minor League: Arab Regional Group Tries to Step Up Its Game" *PBS Newshour*, July, 25 2012. (<http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/31/world/arab-league-explain/index.html>)

²⁵ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/31483/Arab-League>

²⁶ <http://www.sudanradio.org/southern-sudan-will-not-join-arab-league-states>

²⁷ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cd.html>

²⁸ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/er.html>

²⁹ <http://www.sudanradio.org/southern-sudan-will-not-join-arab-league-states>

opinions and advice with the League but are not given a vote on any substantive matter. Turkey, Eritrea, India, and Brazil have all participated in this capacity.

The structure of the League's councils may also be addressed by the delegates. For the sake of argument, delegates should consider the councils as they are organized for the *Model Arab League* – Joint Defense Council, Council on Palestinian Affairs, Council on Political Affairs, Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers, Council of Arab Economic Affairs Ministers, and Council of Arab Economic Affairs Ministers. The Arab Court of Justice may also be considered, though delegates may want to consider adding it permanently to the Charter or other official measures.

The last major component of this topic addresses voting. Delegates might consider amendments to Articles 3 and 7 of the Charter, the process of suspending members, the voting rights of observer states, or any other issue related to voting.

C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future

When considering amendments to the Arab League Charter, delegates should, as the topic states, keep in mind the goal of increasing the League's influence in the international community. The League has not always been the effective, well-respected entity its founders envisioned and its members often seek. However, the opportunity to fashion a body with more clout and influence is now. It will be up to the delegates to decide if this is the best path, and if so, how the Charter can be amended to better reflect the new and changing realities of the Arab world.

II. Questions to Consider in Research

- When did my country become a member of the Arab League?
- What would my country gain or lose by accepting new countries as members or observers to the League?
- What issues are most pressing to the Arab world? Are they currently being addressed by the League?
- Which pressing issues are appropriate for the League to address?
- How would changes to League voting procedures affect its policy outcomes?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Should the Arab League Charter be amended? If so, in what ways?
- Which countries, if any, might be considered for League membership? Observer status?
- How can non-member nations be given a role in the League without compromising the values, goals, and mission of the organization?
- Are there more efficient ways to organize the councils of the League?
- What alternative methods of voting should be considered, with the goal of increasing the influence of the League in the international community?

IV. Resources to Review

Tobia, P.J. "Minor League: Arab Regional Group Tries to Step Up Its Game", *PBS NewsHour*, July 25, 2012. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/2012/07/minor-league.html>

Almond, Kyle. *The Arab League: No longer toothless?* CNN. January 31, 2012
<http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/31/world/arab-league-explain/index.html>

"Egyptian FM welcomes Chad to join AL," *People daily online*, October 11, 2010.
<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90855/7161907.html>

Masters, Jonathan. "Backgrounder: The Arab League," Council on Foreign Relations, January 26, 2012. <http://www.cfr.org/middle-east/arab-league/p25967>