



THE FIFTY-SIXTH ANNUAL NORTH AMERICAN INVITATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Dear Delegates and Moderators,

Welcome to NAIMUN LVI and more specifically welcome to the Gulf Cooperation Council. The staff of NAIMUN LVI has been working day and night to make this the most rewarding and educational experience yet, and we are excited to welcome you all to DC in February!

This document is the topic abstract for Gulf Cooperation Council. It contains three key elements to allow you all to prepare well in advance for the committee: topics, structure, and research avenues. The goal of this abstract is to give you a better understanding of the content in the committee. As well, it is meant to be a launch point for further research about the content of this committee. By reading and understanding the topic abstract, you will more fully get a sense of how this committee will be run at NAIMUN and what specific issues the NAIMUN staff want you to focus on.

We hope to be of assistance to you in your preparation for NAIMUN LVI. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact the Secretary-General or Director-General. We look forward to welcoming you to the NAIMUN family!

Best,
Chase and Charlotte

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Topic Abstract: Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

What is a Crisis Committee?

Crisis committees are markedly different from both GAs and ECOSOCs. They tend to focus on specific issues, geographic areas, and historical periods. For example, NAIMUN LI's Yedintsvo: Vladimir Putin's Cabinet, 2000 simulated the early years of President Putin's cabinet, tackling issues from reforming the Russian economy to confronting separatists in Chechnya. In essence, crisis committees have a narrower and more specific focus than the GAs and ECOSOCs that focus on broad global concepts and issues. Crisis committees also have the distinguishing characteristic of portfolio powers, where delegates have and can use individual powers that are part of their character's bio in order to shape the 'world' they interact in. Finally, crisis committees are the smallest of committees, usually with less than 30 delegates per committee. They tend to be faster-paced and more dynamic than assemblies with set topics.

Adapted from "A Guide to Model UN." For more information, please visit: <https://naimun.modelun.org/introduction-to-model-un/>

Introduction

In 2017, Saudi Arabia, along with its allies in the Gulf Cooperation Council, imposed sanctions and instituted a blockade on Qatar, sparking the current crisis within the GCC. This committee will attempt to tackle the pressing issues in the Middle East despite tensions. At the same time, this diplomatic crisis must be solved before a war of words escalates into something that threatens to more broadly destabilize the region.

Topic A: State Support of Terrorist Organizations



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The origins of the current diplomatic crisis can be traced back to several incidents, but one of the reasons for Saudi Arabia's sanctions is Qatar's perceived support of terrorist organizations. The Saudi-led coalition has often claimed that Qatar's support of groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood is destabilizing the region. Qatar has strongly denied these allegations and claims that it has taken concrete steps to fight radicalization. However, Saudi Arabia points to incidents such as Qatar's hostage negotiations in April 2017, where the government paid an Al-Qaeda-affiliated group \$1 billion in exchange for the release of 26 members of the Qatari royal family.

These state-sponsored efforts to provide financing for terrorist organizations, whether explicit or implicit, make it difficult to effectively tackle terrorist organizations operating in already destabilized areas like Yemen and Syria. In order to combat the problem, the GCC will need to coordinate their efforts to target terrorist finances. While the blockade was originally called in response to perceived Qatari support of terrorist organizations, it has had limited results. As such, negotiations may be more fruitful, but with a variety of interested parties, any outcome is sure to impact the region.

Topic B: Regional Security

Conflict in the Middle East is rife, with civil wars in Syria and Yemen seemingly without end. Since Houthi rebels began a campaign to oust the Yemeni government in March 2015, the country has seen a civil war that has killed tens of thousands of civilians and caused a humanitarian crisis. Saudi Arabia's decision to launch a coalition air campaign to target Houthi rebel positions has only exacerbated the conflict, and the decision to blockade Yemeni ports has contributed to what the UN calls the "largest famine the world has seen for many decades."¹ In addition, Gulf States have at times competing interests in the Syrian Civil War, and several countries have contributed money, supplies, or training to rebel groups seeking to overthrow Syrian President Bashar al-

¹ "Yemen facing largest famine the world has seen for decades, warns UN aid chief." *UN News*.
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/11/570262-yemen-facing-largest-famine-world-has-seen-decades-warns-un-aid-chief>



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Assad. The ongoing civil war has displaced nearly 11 million Syrians and has destroyed much of the country's infrastructure.

Both of these conflicts are examples of Gulf States using their influences to shape events in other countries. However, these efforts can also backfire and destabilize the Gulf regions. As a result of Saudi Arabia's airstrike campaign, Houthi rebels have repeatedly fired rockets into Saudi airspace, targeting the capital and oil facilities.² Continued conflict in both Syria and Yemen have also allowed extremist groups like Al-Shabaab and Islamic State to spread their influence and grow. Despite an international campaign targeting extremists in these regions, the ongoing conflicts have made it difficult to effectively remove them. To ensure regional stability, the GCC will need to take concrete steps to ensure that these conflicts do not spill over and threaten the oil-rich region.

Topic C: Hegemonic Power in the Middle East

When the rift between Saudi Arabia and Qatar first erupted, many analysts saw it as another move in the greater ideological and geopolitical conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran for hegemonic power. Recently, Saudi Arabia has sought to increase its influence in the region, and as a result, a 2011 proposal to transform the GCC into a Gulf Union with greater economic, political, and military cooperation has resurfaced. Saudi Arabia claims that this move will counteract Iranian influence in the region, but critics fear that such a union would lead to Saudi Arabia dominating Gulf politics.

In order to resolve the current diplomatic rift, the Gulf Cooperation Council will need to decide if there are areas where greater cooperation could be possible, whether this is a security, monetary, or political union, or perhaps some combination of the three. Any Gulf Union would, of course, have to be balanced to ensure that no state is able to dominate the Union. The diplomatic rift and ensuing economic standoff has illuminated

² "Yemen's Houthis fire missile at Aramco facility, Saudi says it falls in desert." *Reuters*.
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-security/yemens-houthis-fire-missile-at-aramco-facility-saudi-says-it-falls-in-desert-idUSKCN1IF136>



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the need for a more structured system to resolve disputes between Gulf countries. In order to move forward and address the problems faced by the Gulf region, the GCC will need to decide where its future lays.

Resources for Further Research

Below is a list of resources that will be useful in preparing for the committee. Overall, knowledge of the diplomatic rift between the Saudi-led coalition and Qatar and an understanding of petro politics and how oil influences the policies of the Gulf states will be most helpful in performing well in committee. In addition, knowledge about the ongoing challenges faced by the GCC and the security risks of the region, as well as an understanding of the goals of each Gulf State in both short and long term may also be helpful.

The following are resources that may be useful to begin your research:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/06/06/the-persian-gulf-crisis-over-qatar-explained/?utm_term=.aa7da9fe3981

This Wapo article explains the current diplomatic crisis between Qatar and the Saudi-led coalition

<https://www.cfr.org/background/yemen-crisis>

This Council on Foreign Relations article explains the current players in the Yemeni Civil War

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-40246734>

The BBC explains why other countries have accused Qatar of supporting terrorism in the region

https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/15/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-seeks-union-of-monarchies-in-region.html?_r=1

This report from 2011 helps explain the Saudi proposition of a Gulf Union

<https://www.mepc.org/commentary/toward-gulf-union>

This report illustrates possible futures for the GCC. Pay special attention to the different paths that the GCC could take to create a tighter union.