



Study Guide

Arab League

AGENDA ITEM

The Saudi-Lebanese Crisis

Chairing Panel

Medo Naser & Anni Zettl

Introduction

Forum: Arab League

Topic: The Saudi-Lebanese Crisis

Represented Countries: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia

Chair: Medo Naser

Co-Chair: Anni Zettl



Welcome to the Arab League!

We are delighted to invite all of you to a debate on a very current issue. Political tensions between various countries in the Middle East are increasing due to religious conflicts and economic resources. There unfortunately is no shortage in examples for a violent outcome of similar situations in history.

We will be focusing on the Saudi-Lebanese crisis, which is however affecting more than only these two countries and is connected to bigger powers.

Let us find a good solution together and hope for contributions to it from all delegations.

Definition of Key Terms

Middle East: The geographical area in West-Asia and Northern Africa, including countries from Libya to Afghanistan, from Turkey to the Arabian Peninsula.

Hezbollah: Hezbollah is a militant resistance group and political party that is based in Lebanon. It is Shia Muslim and fought with Israel in multiple wars. It is considered a terrorist organization by the United States, Israel, Canada, the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council, and a military/security wing by the United Kingdom, Australia and the EU.

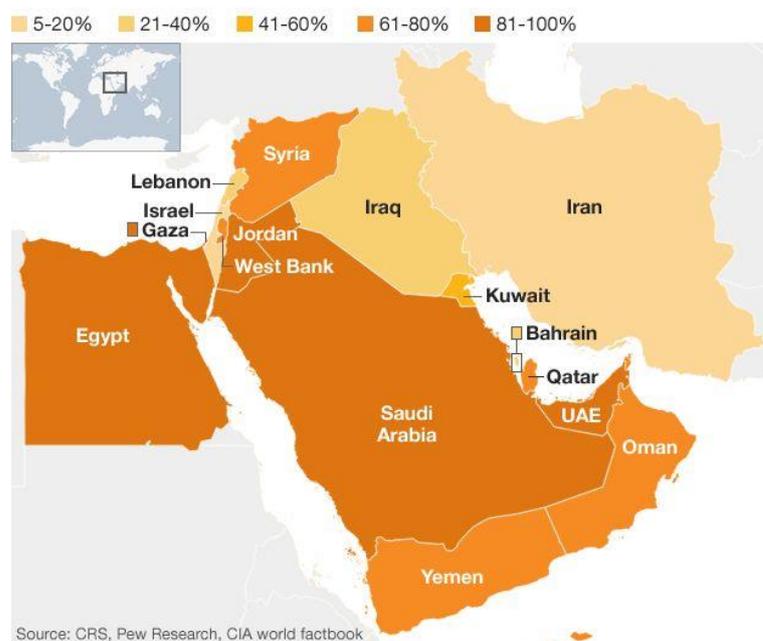
Sunnis: The largest religious denomination of Islam. Sunnis give great value to the Sunnah, what the prophet Mohammed said and condemned, and believe that the first four caliphs (rulers) after Mohammed are the rightful successors.

Shias: The second largest religious denomination of Islam. Shias relatively value the Sunnah less, however traditionally mainly disagree with the Sunnis in the successors of Mohammed. They see the twelve Imams (leaders) as direct descendants of Mohammed, starting with his son in law Ali, where the twelfth is yet to come at the end of time.



Arab League: The Saudi-Lebanese Crisis

Estimated distribution of Sunni Muslims in the Middle East



Estimated distribution of Shia Muslims in the Middle East



General Overview

After the Prime Minister Al Hariri's resignation of office, Saudi Arabia became more obvious in terms of the conflict with Shias in Iran and Lebanon. Saudi Arabia, which is Sunni, has always been in war with Shia Muslims; recently, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman has clearly said that his country is in continuous conflict with Iran and the Lebanese Shia Islamist political party Hezbollah. The Arab League is concerned about further complications and events increasing the tension and physical danger of millions of people.

Further Information

Saudi Arabia has been ruled since 2015 by King Salman. He declared in June 2017 his son, Mohammed bin Salman, to be the crown prince, prime minister and Minister of Defense, having great influence on Saudi Arabia's foreign affairs.

In late 2017, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigned from his position in Saudi Arabia. As the official circumstances are very odd and unusual, there are many suspicions that he was forced to this decision by the Saudis.



Arab League: The Saudi-Lebanese Crisis

As many countries are based on religion in the Middle East, the differences in Sunni and Shia Islam also lead to political issues. Especially Iran and Saudi Arabia are having since years great tensions about this. They are having proxy wars outside their countries supporting their respective denomination of Islam. As Hezbollah is Shia, Iran is supporting it, whereas Sunni Saudi Arabia is fighting the group. Here Saudi Arabia is further supported by the United States, who have improved their relations in recent times.

“Saudi Arabia is trying desperately to contain rising Iranian influence and the militaristic adventurism of the kingdom's young and impulsive Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman - the country's de facto ruler - is exacerbating regional tensions.

He is waging a war against rebels in Saudi Arabia's southern neighbour, Yemen, in part to stem perceived Iranian influence there, but after nearly three years this is proving a costly gamble.

Meanwhile in Lebanon, many observers believe the Saudis put pressure on the prime minister to resign in order to destabilise a country where Iran's ally, Shia militia group Hezbollah, leads a politically powerful bloc and controls a huge, heavily armed fighting force.

There are also external forces at play. Saudi Arabia has been emboldened by support from the Trump administration while Israel, which sees Iran as a mortal threat, is in a sense "backing" the Saudi effort to contain Iran.

The Jewish state is fearful of the encroachment of pro-Iranian fighters in Syria ever closer to its border.

Israel and Saudi Arabia were the two countries most resolutely opposed to the 2015 international agreement limiting Iran's nuclear program, insisting that it did not go far enough to roll back any chance of Iran obtaining the bomb.” (BBC News 'Why Saudi Arabia and Iran are bitter rivals')



Appendix

Sunni and Shia Islam

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sunnite>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-16047709>

Saudi Arabia orders citizens to leave Lebanon as tensions rise

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/10/saudi-arabia-orders-citizens-to-leave-lebanon-as-tensions-rise>

Why Saudi Arabia and Iran are bitter rivals

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42008809>

Saudi-Iran proxy wars: In pursuit of regional hegemony

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/11/saudi-iran-proxy-wars-pursuit-regional-hegemony-171113110353492.html>

Why Saudi Arabia cannot go to war with Iran

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/why-saudi-arabia-cannot-go-war-iran-9549775>

How Saad Hariri's resignation could backfire on Saudi Arabia

<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/17/middleeast/saad-hariri-lebanon-saudi-arabia/index.html>

Hezbollah's Hassan Nasrallah vows to focus on Palestine

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/hezbollah-hassan-nasrallah-vows-focus-palestine-171211202950858.html>

Saudi Arabia Orders Its Citizens Out of Lebanon, Raising Fears of War

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-lebanon-war.html>

Tension mounts in Lebanon as Saudi Arabia escalates power struggle with Iran

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/11/lebanon-saudi-arabia-iran--power-struggle-saad-hariri-resignation>



Arab League: The Saudi-Lebanese Crisis

The Unresignation of Saad al-Hariri

http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_slatest/2017/11/22/lebanon_s_prime_minister_unresigns_did_saudi_arabia_blow_it.html

