



The League of Arab States (Arab League) 1982

Introduction

The Arab League is a regional body consisting of Arab states from the Middle East and parts of Africa. The organization originated on March 22, 1945, after nationalist notions of cultural and political unity among Arab countries had grown into a movement. In addition, postwar concerns of colonial territory division encouraged the formation of the League. The Charter of the Arab League serves as its founding treaty, and notes that each member state receives one vote in the body, regardless of the number of representatives sent into the Council. It is also stated that threats of aggression or attacks warrant an immediate meeting of the Council. Decisions are only binding for those who vote in favor of them, and the League lacks a mechanism compelling compliance of resolutions.

At its founding, the League aimed to strengthen and coordinate political, cultural, economic, and social programs for its members. It also served as a mediator for disputes between members or between members and non-members. A later agreement expanded its purview to joint military and defense measures. On the international scale, the League has received criticism for disunity, poor governance, loose alliances, and collective inaction on important issues. The state of the Arab League in 1982 is unique due to recent political differences among states, as issues among Israel and Palestinians rose, and member country Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. The league consequently voted to suspend Egypt's membership and relocate its headquarters out of Cairo. Tensions remain as a result.

Committee Background

The Cold War

Background

The Cold War refers to a historical era defined by a decades-long rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union (USSR), the world's two preeminent economic and military superpowers at the time, who each sought global dominance. The conflict was rooted in an ideological split between the two states. While the United States sought to protect and expand democracy and capitalism, the Soviet Union subscribed to a communist economic model coupled with centralized, authoritarian leadership. The USSR saw the United States as Western imperialists whose capitalist system was oppressive and fraught with contradictions. Meanwhile, the United States believed the Soviet Union posed an existential and expansionist threat to its liberal system. In the minds of both, the two could not co-exist.

The Cold War represents what many international security scholars refer to as a bipolar world order. Bipolarity is a system of international order in which two competing powers control global economic, military, and political relations, resulting in other states choosing to ally with one of them.¹ As the United States and Soviet Union made their opposition to each other clear, each sought to expand their sphere of influence to other countries. The contrapositive of this was true as well. U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's "domino theory" contended that the fall of one country to communism would lead other countries in the area to follow. This thinking shaped much of the United States' approach to intervening in Cold War-era conflicts.²

A Brief History

Tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States first arose in the aftermath of World War II during negotiations over the occupation of Germany after the Nazis were defeated. As tensions between the Soviet Union and United States grew, both states quickly rushed to shore up allies and influence in their respective spheres. A public example of this came in 1947, when U.S. President Harry S. Truman released the Truman Doctrine, which stated that the United States would provide aid to all nations under threat from external or internal authoritarian forces.³ This decision was guided by a containment policy. First articulated by George Kennan, containment expressed the political necessity to prevent communism from spreading any further than it already had.

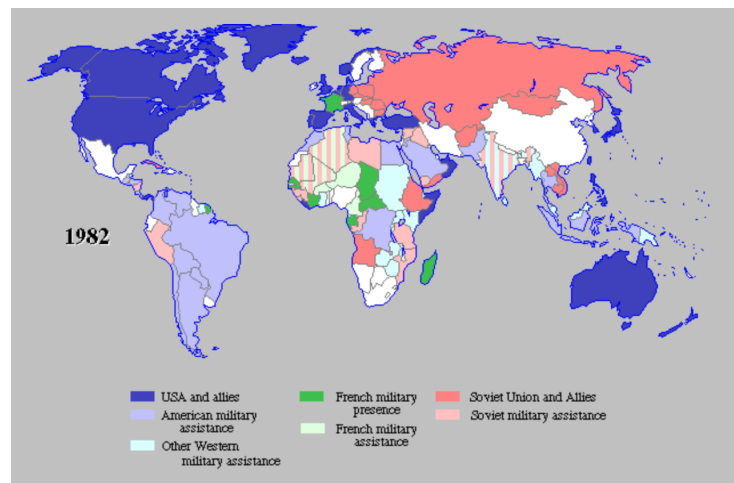
As a result of these growing tensions, in 1949 the United States established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance between several Western countries. NATO was

¹ [The politics of bipolarity and IPE in contemporary times](#)

² [President Eisenhower delivers Cold War "domino theory" speech - HISTORY](#)

³ [The Truman Doctrine, 1947](#)

most famously known for Article 5 of its founding treaty, which created a collective defense pact, meaning an attack against one NATO member was treated like an attack against all of its members.⁴ The 12 founding members of NATO were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.⁵ The Soviet Union responded in 1955 with the Warsaw Pact, a military alliance between the communist governments of Eastern Europe. The founding members of the Warsaw Pact were the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Albania.⁶ These two blocs would serve as the opposing forces throughout most of the Cold War, led by their respective superpowers.



MAP OF US AND USSR GLOBAL MILITARY PRESENCE IN 1982⁷

Throughout the late 1950s until 1982, the United States and Soviet Union opposed each other on a variety of fronts. The first of these were proxy wars, which are wars between certain entities instigated by major powers that are not directly involved.⁸ Throughout the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union often intervened in other countries' affairs to gain political allies or prevent their rival from gaining a potential ally. These proxy wars wreaked havoc throughout the global South, resulting in political disruptions with lasting impact.

The second area of opposition was nuclear research and weaponry. The first atomic bombs were dropped by the United States on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan in 1945, effectively ending World War II.⁹ Since then, the U.S. and USSR raced to advance nuclear technology and stockpile nuclear weapons. The positioning of nuclear weapons has led to some of the Cold War's most climactic moments, such as the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.¹⁰ After the world stood on the brink

⁴ [NATO - Topic: Collective defence and Article 5](#)

⁵ [NATO - Topic: Member countries](#).

⁶ [NATO - Declassified: What was the Warsaw Pact?](#)

⁷ [Map - Cold War 1960-1991](#)

⁸ [Cold War Facts and Information](#)

⁹ [Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki](#)

¹⁰ [The Cuban Missile Crisis](#)

of apocalyptic nuclear warfare throughout the 1950s and 60s, the U.S. and USSR came to an understanding called mutually assured destruction (MAD), giving the power to destroy the other with nuclear weapons.¹¹ MAD was a significant reason the United States and Soviet Union never engaged in direct conflict.

By 1982, significant progress had been made on the issue of denuclearization, which refers to the effort to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, nuclear weapons due to the existential threat they pose. In 1972, the United States and Soviet Union signed the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I). In it, they agreed to limit the number of anti-ballistic missiles (ABM), not to manufacture strategic weapons for a period of five years, and not to construct land-based launchers.¹² However, nuclear peace continued to be a tenuous prospect. Other states seeking to increase their security have developed nuclear weapons of their own, even as much of the international community continues to push for denuclearization through platforms such as the United Nations. These include the United Kingdom, France, and the People's Republic of China.¹³ Additionally, the United States and Soviet Union signed a second nuclear limitation treaty (SALT II) in 1979. This program was not implemented due to the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan.¹⁴

As a third point of contention, propaganda and espionage served as key tools used by both the United States and Soviet Union to attempt to gain a foothold against the other. The U.S. and USSR used propaganda as a means of psychological warfare to win over the hearts and minds of their citizens and call people around the world to support their ideological perspective.¹⁵ Along with propaganda, both states had large networks of spies coordinated through their central intelligence agencies that sought to bring home military and political secrets.

The Cold War consisted of more than the United States and Soviet Union going head to head; the rest of the world was also implicated in the process. Countries in the global South sought to assert their own agency throughout this period of history. Some chose to avoid siding with the U.S. or USSR altogether, founding the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1955.¹⁶ The NAM emerged during the wave of decolonization following World War II and sought to give developing countries a platform to advocate for self determination against colonialism and imperialism.

Timeline of Events

The following is a condensed list of essential moments of the Cold War up to this point;¹⁷

¹¹ [Mutually Assured Destruction: When Not To Play](#)

¹² [Foreign Relations of the United States Series: SALT I, 1969–1972 | Wilson Center](#)

¹³ [Nuclear Weapons by Country 2023](#)

¹⁴ [Jimmy Carter and Leonid Brezhnev sign the SALT-II nuclear treaty - HISTORY](#)

¹⁵ [Project Troy: How Scientists Helped Refine Cold War Psychological Warfare](#)

¹⁶ [History and Evolution of Non-Aligned Movement](#)

¹⁷ [Cold War Timeline - CVCE Website](#)

- **1945:** World War II ends.
- **1948:** The United States pours billions of dollars of aid into Western Europe through the Marshall Plan. Yugoslavia withdraws from the Eastern Bloc by decree of President Josef Broz Tito.
- **1949:** The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is established. The communist People's Republic of China wins the Chinese Civil War; the Republic of China retreats to the island of Taiwan.
- **1950:** The Sino-Soviet Pact is signed between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. The Korean War between North Korea (supported by the USSR and PRC) and South Korea (supported by the US) begins.
- **1953:** Joseph Stalin, President of the Soviet Union, dies. The Korean War ends in a stalemate.
- **1957:** The Soviet Union launches the first ever satellite, Sputnik 1, into space. This marks the beginning of the Space Race.
- **1959:** Nikita Khrushchev, President of the Soviet Union, visits the United States. He is the first Soviet leader to visit the USA.
- **1960:** The friendship between the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union deteriorates.
- **1961:** John F. Kennedy is elected President of the United States. The United States attempts to overthrow Prime Minister Fidel Castro's communist regime in Cuba and fails, strengthening Castro's position. East Germany builds the Berlin Wall, separating both sides of the city. The Soviet Union puts the first man in space.
- **1962:** The Soviet Union positions nuclear missiles on Cuba, only a few miles from the coast of Florida. The United States responds with a naval blockade. For a few weeks, the world is poised to go to nuclear war; this is called the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- **1963:** President John F. Kennedy is assassinated. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson becomes President in his stead.
- **1964:** Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev becomes First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).
- **1968:** Several states, including the United States and Soviet Union, sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Brezhnev orders Soviet troops to crush the Prague Spring, a liberal uprising in Czechoslovakia.
- **1969:** Richard Nixon becomes President of the United States. The United States puts the first man on the moon.
- **1972:** The United States and Soviet Union sign the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, or SALT I. In it, they agree to limit the number of ABM anti-missile missiles, not to manufacture strategic weapons for a period of five years, and not to construct land-based launchers.
- **1973:** The United States signs the Paris Peace Accords, which enables it to pull out of the Vietnam War. A coalition of Arab countries attacks Israel on the high holiday of Yom

Kippur; quickly regains control of the situation and launches successful counter-offensives that push deep into Syria and Egypt.

- **1979:** The United States and the USSR sign the SALT II Agreement, which limits the number of missile launchers and bombers. This agreement has yet to come into force with the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan.
- **1979:** The Soviet Union invades Afghanistan to support the ruling communists against counter-revolutionary guerilla fighters. Margaret Thatcher is elected Prime Minister of the United Kingdom as the leader of the Conservative Party.
- **1981:** Ronald Reagan becomes President of the United States.

Current Landscape

At this point in history, the Cold War has been an ongoing saga that has defined the lives of both governments and civilians for generations. Several wars have been fought, alliances have been made, nuclear weapons have been built, and some progress towards resolution has even been forged. With the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty signed but not yet enacted, it seems as if the world is beginning to progress towards peace. Even so, this progress is fraught by several challenges.

The first is the re-emergence of conflicts with the potential to grow into large-scale proxy wars. In 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to support the Afghan communist government during a conflict with anti-communist Muslim guerillas. Backed by the United States, these Muslim guerillas, called the mujahideen, have rebelled against the attempted Soviet takeover. The war between the Soviet Union and the American-backed mujahideen had settled into a stalemate. Meanwhile, following years of territorial disputes, Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, leading to the Iran-Iraq War. Iran managed to successfully push back Iraqi forces to pre-war lines and the war sits at a tipping point of ending or regaining momentum.

The second is the election of leaders in key countries who seek to restore Cold War divides. In the United States, President Ronald Reagan has been elected Commander in Chief on a staunch wave of anti-communist sentiment.¹⁸ With Reagan's primary foreign policy goal being American victory in the Cold War, the United States seems poised to re-ignite simmering tensions with the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher leads the Conservative Party. Much of Thatcher's foreign policy profile has been built on criticizing the Soviet Union for its failure to engage in "genuine detente."¹⁹ This led to the Soviet press giving her the nickname of "the Iron Lady." The United States and United Kingdom have a Special Relationship, or close alliance between the two nations based on their shared history. Reagan and Thatcher's alignment on foreign policy could lead to a resurgence of antagonistic relations with the USSR.²⁰

¹⁸ [Ronald Reagan | U.S. Department of the Interior](#)

¹⁹ [Thatcher, Margaret | Wilson Center Digital Archive](#)

²⁰ [History of the U.S.-UK Special Relationship and U.S. Policy](#)

Many countries are facing domestic economic crises, some more significant than others. In the Soviet Union, economic productivity has fallen below economic growth under the country's centralized economy.²¹ The USSR faces the question of whether it must adopt Western technology and decentralization programs in order to keep up with the West. The United States is emerging from a recession that has lasted throughout the early 1980s, the worst economic downturn in U.S. history since the Great Depression.²² The United Kingdom is facing high unemployment and a struggling manufacturing sector.²³ Much of the world is facing a recession spurred by the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which disrupted the global oil supply.²⁴

This history shows that Cold War dynamics have evolved and complexified since the initial emergence of the conflict. It is up to Cabinet members to adapt to ever-changing scenarios while considering the relevant historical context and geopolitical positioning.

The Evolution of the International Political Community

The very first Inter-Governmental Organization (IGO) was the Congress of Vienna from 1814 to 1815 to re-establish the territorial borders of Europe after the defeat of French dictator Napoleon Bonaparte.²⁵ Since then, different governments have been working together in various organizational capacities to form the institutions of the international political community that guide the world in 1982.

The most well-known IGO is the United Nations and all the smaller bodies and committees contained within its reach. The Charter of the United Nations was first ratified on October 24, 1945, in the wake of a devastating Second World War. Now, in 1982, the international political system the United Nations created has expanded to sprawling heights.

The United Nations contains six primary organs²⁶:

1. *The General Assembly*, the U.N.'s main deliberative body, composed of all its Member States, each with one vote;
2. *The Security Council* is directly charged with maintaining international peace and security. It is the only U.N. organ capable of passing binding resolutions, composed of 15 states, five of whom possess veto power;
3. *The Economic and Social Council* serves as the policy hub for economic and social issues within the U.N. system;

²¹ [Why the USSR Collapsed Economically](#)

²² [Recession of 1981–82 | Federal Reserve History](#)

²³ [How record-breaking inflation was tamed in the 1980s | The Week UK](#)

²⁴ [What Iran's 1979 revolution meant for US and global oil markets](#)

²⁵ [From the Congress of Vienna to Present-Day International Organizations | United Nations](#)

²⁶ [UN Structure | United Nations](#).

4. *The Trusteeship Council* provides international supervision for the U.N.'s Trust Territories and primes these Territories for independence;
5. *The International Court of Justice* settles legal disputes between States, give advisory opinions to U.N. bodies, and serves as the U.N.'s principal judiciary organization;
6. *The Secretariat* carries out the U.N.'s day-to-day administrative work.

Alongside its six organs and six standing committees of the General Assembly, the U.N. now encompasses fifteen specialized agencies legislating on issues from meteorology to telecommunications. Subsidiary bodies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Trade Organization have been created to work along the U.N.'s main committees. Post-colonial countries have contributed to a growth in the U.N.'s membership, making the General Assembly a broad forum for smaller countries to have their voices heard. The United Nations has passed an increasing number of treaties on subjects related to disarmament, human rights, and maritime law. All of this growth has increased the scope and influence of the U.N.'s role in the international political community.

It is also important to note that IGOs are not constrained solely to the United Nations. Smaller bodies like the Arab League have emerged as a forum for groups of countries with specific regional or ideological interests to collaborate internally.

Other Actors to Keep in Mind

Other national Cabinets also seek to advance their country's agenda and positioning in the world order:

- Cabinet of the United States, led by President Ronald Reagan
- Cabinet of the United Kingdom, led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher
- Cabinet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, led by President Leonid Brezhnev
- Cabinet of the Islamic State of Iran, led by Ayatollah Khomeini
- Cabinet of the Republic of Iraq, led by President Saddam Hussein

Additionally, the following intergovernmental organizations and national parliaments will be active in real-time decision-making alongside you:

- United Nations General Assembly
- United Nations Security Council
- British House of Commons

Final Takeaways

The world is constantly in flux. We are on a tipping point of the Cold War ending or gaining renewed strength. Though the United States and Soviet Union are still considered economic and military superpowers, other countries are looking to assert their agency on an ever-changing global order.

Topic A: The situation between Iraq and Iran

The Origins of the Conflict

The Iranian Revolution, 1979

One of the most prominent turning points in the history of the Middle East took place in 1979 in the form of the Iranian Revolution. During the Iranian Revolution, the Pahlavi dynasty, led by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, was overthrown. The Shah's government was replaced by the rule of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who was previously in exile for 14 years. The Iranian people approved a new constitution, instituting the Islamic Republic of Iran as a theocratic republic.

The Iranian Revolution took place after years of tension between the Shah and Ayatollah Khomeini that culminated in 1978, when a campaign of civil resistance began in earnest on Iranian streets to protest the Shah's rule. Ideologically, the Iranian Revolution was centered on the ideal of Islam (specifically Shia Islam) as the one true liberator of the Third World from oppressive colonialism, neo-colonialism, and capitalism from both the East and the West.

The reason the revolution marked such a drastic change in international politics is that the Shah's secular, authoritarian government was friendlier to the West. In fact, the coup that brought the Pahlavi dynasty into power in 1953 was orchestrated by the United States and the United Kingdom. In contrast, the new Iranian leaders called for the end of American influence in the Middle East. The Iranian Revolution effectively destroyed the American-Iranian alliance, which had previously guided American policy in the region.²⁷

Most of the world was unprepared for the upheaval the Iranian Revolution would cause to the global order. The Iran-Iraq War began as a reaction to the Iranian Revolution. Tensions between the two countries had grown throughout the 1970s as they competed for control of the Shatt al-Arab, the waterway formed by the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, the southern end of which forms the border between the two nations.²⁸

²⁷ [The International Relations of the Persian Gulf](#)

²⁸ [Iran-Iraq War](#)



The border dispute over Shatt al-Arab had been recurring between Iran and Iraq since the 1930s. In 1975, the Algiers Agreement was signed between Iraq and Iran in which Iraqi control over the waterway was reduced in exchange for Iran withdrawing their support for a Kurdish insurgency in Northern Iraq. Even so, border skirmishes between the countries continued, as Iraq wished to regain control over the territory it had ceded.

Pathway to War

In 1979, the Iranian Revolution inflamed tensions between Iran and Iraq. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein feared that the Iranian Revolution would turn Iraq's Shia minority population against his Sunni-dominated, officially secular Ba'athist Party, which was sharply in contrast with Iran's new theocratic rule. Iran had long been a pre-eminent power in the Middle East due to its oil wealth and alliance with the United States. Hussein saw the Iranian Revolution as a prime opportunity for Iraq to increase its standing in the region.

At first, it appeared as if Iraq may not invade Iran during its governmental transition. In August 1979, Iraqi authorities invited Medhi Bazargan, the first Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to visit their capital of Baghdad in an attempt to improve bilateral relations.²⁹ This was disrupted in November that same year by the Iran hostage crisis. The U.S. embassy in Tehran, the capital city of Iran, was taken over by militarized Iranian students who supported the Revolution; Iran took 66 Americans hostage. The Iran hostage crisis did not end until 1981. As a result of the crisis, Bazargan was accused of plotting to overthrow the Islamic Republic of Iran with the help of the Iraqi government.³⁰

²⁹ [Iran-Iraq War Timeline*](#)

³⁰ [Part 1: Iran's Role in Iraq | Wilson Center](#)



Iran and Iraq's relationship further deteriorated in April 1980, when an Iranian militia group called Al-Dawa attempted to assassinate the Iraqi Foreign Minister and Minister of Information and Culture, which was unsuccessful. Iraq responded by rounding up Al-Dawa supporters in Iraq and deporting Iraqi Shia Muslims to Iran. Meanwhile, Iran put its forces on alert, publicly stating this was a response to Iraqi attacks on their oil facilities and the border. Ayatollah Khomeini broadcasted a speech encouraging the Iraqi people to "wake up and topple the corrupt regime in your country before it is too late."³¹

At this point, Iran and Iraq are heading closer and closer to open warfare. Saddam Hussein ordered the leader of Al-Dawa be executed and pulled out of 1975 Algiers Accords. Iran began shelling Iraqi border towns. At the same time, in April of 1980, U.S. President Jimmy Carter prohibited all financial transactions, imports from, and travel to Iran. On April 25, 1980, a covert U.S. operation to rescue the hostages ended in failure. Iranian officials speculated the true cause of this mission was to overthrow the new Islamic regime.

The Iran-Iraq War's First Two Years

The Iran-Iraq War officially commenced on September 22, 1980, when the Iraqi military launched a two-prong invasion against the Islamic Republic of Iran. First was the Southern operation, a 10,000 man force invaded Southern Iran to besiege an air base at Dezful, accompanied by fighter aircrafts to counter any Iranian attacks. This attack largely failed, with Iranian aircraft immediately responding and bombing strategic Iraqi targets. Second was the Northern operation, in which Iraq launched a second front straight into central Iran. This attack captured several hundred kilometers of Iranian territory, destroyed an Iranian oil refinery at Abadan, and besieged the Iranian city of Mehran.

³¹ [AYATOLLAH RUHOLLAH KHOMEINI THE MULLAH WHO TRANSFORMED IRAN - The Washington Post](#)



The Iraqi invasion continued and in December of 1980 Saddam Hussein declared that the front established by their invasion would become the new military border of the conflict. Hussein also stated that they would not withdraw Iraqi forces until Iran ceded full control of the Shatt al-Arab waterway and accepted self-rule by the ethnically Arab population in Southern Iran (mostly concentrated in a province called *Khuzestan*).

In 1981, the Iranian government had not yet effectively responded to the invasion. Members of Iran's parliament accused Iranian President Bani Sadr of ineffectively responding to the Iraqi invasion. At this point, Iraq and some entities in the international community sought to bring the conflict to a close. In January 1981, a United Nations Special Envoy named Olof Palme visited both Iran and Iraq. By February, both Iran and Iraq had agreed to peace talks with Islamic leaders. Palme set off on a trip to begin peace talks and a high-level Islamic peace mission presented a detailed cease-fire agreement. However, negotiations failed with both sides rejecting the agreement. Iran refused to accept a cease-fire until all Iraqi troops had left their territory.

The fighting continued, ramping up on both sides. By March of 1981, the Iranian government stated that it would not negotiate with Iraq until Saddam Hussein was overthrown. Meanwhile, the tides of the war began to shift. Iran drove back a large Iraqi offensive on the oil-rich city of Abadan and launched an attack on Iraqi forces in Khuzestan. On January 16, 1982, the Washington Post reported that Iran was winning the war.

International Involvement

International involvement in the Iran-Iraq War has been multi-faceted. Regionally, Iran's only major public allies in the conflict are Syria and Libya, while the Iraqi advance is openly financed by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and other Arab states in the region. Internationally, countries outside the Middle East viewed the Iran-Iraq War as a predominately regional conflict. However, this had not stopped them from attempting to take advantage of the situation for their own gain. When Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, the Overseas and Defense

Committee of the British cabinet reportedly held a meeting to discuss how to enter Iraq's lucrative arms market. Though the United States attempted to avoid taking a public stance on the war, they also saw supplying arms to Iraq as a lucrative opportunity. In 1980, the United States began outreach to Italy, seeing Italy as a potential go-between to the Iraqi government.

In January 1981, Saddam Hussein alleged that the United States was supporting Iran by selling them weapons, despite the American embargo on arms sales to Iran. In response to this, the United Nations' Special Envoy Olof Palme began warning of potential superpower involvement in the conflict. That same month, President Ronald Reagan assumed power in the United States and the remaining Iranian hostages were released and returned to America. In April 1981, President Reagan's Secretary of State stated in a message to the Iraqi Foreign Minister that he believed Iraq was an important country with influence in the region. Later, American officials met with Iraqi officials in Baghdad. As of this time, the United States had publicly rejected all requests from Iran to purchase weapons.

The United States had not been the only superpower to involve itself in the conflict thus far. Kurdish resistance groups in support of Iraq were found using both American and Soviet weapons in battle. An Iraqi spokesperson would claim that they stopped receiving weapons deliveries from the Soviet Union. Even so, this was proven false as the Washington Post reported that the Soviet Union was still supplying arms to Iraq, just indirectly through its allies in Eastern Europe.

Similar collaboration with Iraq was occurring in Europe. In February 1981, a Lebanese newspaper reported that Iraq had received fighter jets from France, despite France being publicly neutral in the conflict. Later in April, French nuclear scientists arrived in Baghdad to begin research on a nuclear weapon. In March, Italy authorized \$1.8 billion dollars in the sale of naval vessels to Iraq. In June, the United Kingdom signed a trade pact with Iraq worth \$2 billion dollars.

Despite the flow of weapons sales, there have been many attempts by the international community to bring an end to the Iran-Iraq War. The Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca Peoli traveled to Beirut, Lebanon in 1981, leading an attempt by the non-aligned bloc to conclude the conflict. His visit was followed by visits from the leaders of Libya, Cuba, India, Zambia and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Islamic peace movement attempted twice to begin peace talks between Iran and Iraq; the United Nations attempted no less than five times. The reason for the failures is simple on the surface: Iraq stated that it will end the war if Iran agreed to its new proposed borders. Iran refused.

Beyond the nation-state level, non-state conflicts and ethnic groups further complicate the dynamics of this war.

- **Khuzestan** - Khuzestan is a province in Southern Iran that borders Iraq, situated within the fertile crescent. The Khuzestan province was historically home to the "Susian" people

and is known for its ethnic diversity and historic landmarks. Khuzestan's population is predominantly Shia Muslim, but there are small Christian, Jewish, Sunni and Mandaean minorities. Beyond religion, Khuzestan is home to Iran's largest Arab community, known as the Khuzestani Arabs.³² They primarily reside in the Western half of the province, known as Ahwaz. In 1979, during the Iranian Revolution, a Khuzestan insurgency took place in which the Arab population demanded autonomy. This insurgency included a siege of the Iranian embassy in Kensington, London. However, the uprising was quelled in 1980 by Iranian security forces.

Khuzestan had been a strategic location in the war thus far. The province is home to 80% of Iran's oil reserves and 60% of its gas reserves and is situated on the border near the Shatt al-Arab waterway. Consequently, much of Khuzestan had been captured by Iraq during their invasion; the city of Khorramshahr was captured by Iraqi forces in 1980.³³ The Iraqi government had a vague hope that the Khuzestani uprising would continue into the Iran-Iraq War, making their conquest of the province easier.³⁴ However, the constant fighting in Khuzestan led to the destruction and impoverishment of many of its inhabitants, with many defending against the Iraqi invasion. The Iranian counteroffensive in Khuzestan had been growing stronger, and it appeared that the Iraqi invaders may not be able to sustain their high casualty rate for much longer.

- **Kurdistan** - The Kurds, or Kurdish people, are an Iranian ethnic group native to the mountainous region of Kurdistan, which spans Northern Iraq, Northwestern Iran, Southeastern Turkey, and Northern Syria.³⁵ After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War II, Western states promised the Kurdish people their own independent state. This promise was later reneged in the Treaty of Lausanne, making the Kurds a minority in every new country created in the region.³⁶



³² [The Iran-Iraq War](#)

³³ [Poverty, Separatism, And Bloody Memories Of War: Why Iran's Khuzestan Matters](#)

³⁴ Karsh, Efraim *The Iran-Iraq War 1980–1988*, London: Osprey, (2002): page 27.

³⁵ [The Kurdish population](#)

³⁶ [The Treaty of Lausanne](#)

The Kurdish nationalist movement continued throughout the 20th century. More than 20 million Kurds still lived across Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria; their struggle for their own nation was opposed by these nations and the Kurdish people were used as pawns in regional politics.³⁷ Shortly after the onset of the Iran-Iraq War, the Iraqi government attempted to curry favor from the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) as potential leverage in its war effort.³⁸ In 1981, Saddam Hussein's regime established its first major weapons supply route to the KDPI near the Iranian cities of Nowdesheh and Qasr-e Shirin. The Iraqi government hoped to conquer Nowdesheh to use the highway connecting Baghdad and Tehran. Meanwhile the Kurdish people hoped to establish "Kurdish Liberated Zones" within Iran. However, the Iranian army had launched a series of destructive attacks against the Iraqi Kurds, limiting their military efficacy in the war.

Regional Impacts of the War

Thus far, the Iran-Iraq War has been a devastating conflict. In a region already destabilized by political revolutions and lasting consequences of colonialism,³⁹ the war has caused thousands upon thousands of casualties and millions upon millions of dollars of damage.⁴⁰ As the Iran-Iraq War stretches on, these consequences will only become more severe. Communities that have been the target of attack – especially those on the Iran-Iraq border – are in particular danger. Additionally, damages from the war have the potential to lead to internal and external displacement, which could create a refugee crisis in the region.

Past International Action

Attempts by the United Nations to seek an end to the war date back to 1980, when an outbreak of armed conflict between Iran and Iraq prompted Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim to offer his good offices to work for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. On September 23, 1980, in accordance with Article 99 of the United Nations Charter, he brought to the attention of the Security Council the threat to the maintenance of international peace and security. In resolution 479, the Council called upon Iran and Iraq to refrain immediately from any further use of force and to settle their dispute by peaceful means. It had little effect, and on 11 November of 1980, Mr. Olof Palme, former Prime Minister of Sweden, was appointed as the Secretary-General's Special Representative to Iran and Iraq.

Since then, Olaf Palme has attempted to initiate peace talks five times; none of these attempts have been successful. As it stands, neither side of the conflict is interested in a ceasefire, even with the requests of the Security Council. The UNSC favors the United States as the broker of peace in this conflict, but concerns are raised regarding the United States' influences in Iran and are cautious to fully engage since recently exiting the Iranian Hostage situation. In addition,

³⁷ [The Kurds' Story | The Survival Of Saddam | FRONTLINE | PBS](#)

³⁸ [The Kurdish Factor in Iran-Iraq Relations | Middle East Institute](#)

³⁹ See the Sykes-Picot Treaty for more insight into this history!

⁴⁰ [The Arab/Muslim World: Iran-Iraq War](#)

Hussein has escalated tensions in the region due to “[...] Iran [allegedly] getting American arms and spare parts from private markets despite the U.S. embargo.” Meanwhile, U.N. Special Envoy Olof Palme warns of potential superpower involvement in what has been, up until this point, a strictly regional conflict. (1) Some alternatives to the United States that have been proposed include Italy and the Netherlands, primarily for their lack of involvement in partisan issues in the region.

At this point, the Arab League has not taken any official action nor even released any official statement on the Iran-Iraq War. The League is historically considered an ineffectual organization (see Topic C for more insight into this issue),⁴¹ so it is likely that this lack of action is related to dysfunction and disagreement on the proper path forward between states. However, as the war rages on, the Arab League may find it necessary to become a voice for the region and take some sort of stance on the conflict.

Possible Solutions

Firstly, it should be noted that the Arab League is a regional entity – it does not have an established military unit, nor has it created entities with the capacity to put boots on the ground. However, within the context of the Arab League, its members may come to political agreements on the subject, whether it be through united support for either side of the war...or an overall end to the conflict. Each member of the Arab League has its own reasons for supporting one side of the conflict or another. Though a majority has sided with Iraq thus far, there are a select few states who have supported Iran in some capacity. Even so, Arab League representatives may prefer an end to the war altogether; if this becomes a chosen solution, the League should discuss the nature of realizing this conclusion or possible peace talks.

The Arab League should also consider addressing the humanitarian consequences of the conflict. Though certain states may be more interested than others in providing aid (as several Arab League countries have their own entanglements), responses to humanitarian issues may provide the League an angle to develop a united position on the topic.

Furthermore, there are root causes related to the ineffectiveness of the Arab League as a body that inhibits its ability to respond more actively to the conflict (see Topic C for context). Through restructuring and renewed vigor, these kinds of institutional changes could allow the Arab League a larger toolbox to respond to the conflict, if they so desire.

As a regional body, Arab League member states are deeply impacted by the consequences of this conflict. With thousands of pre-existing civilian casualties, instability in the Middle East, and potential for international warfare, tensions between Iran and Iraq may also bleed into other conflicts that are pressing in the Middle East, such as in Afghanistan and Syria. It is urgent that

⁴¹ [The Inter-Arab System and the Gulf War: Continuity and Change](#)

the Arab League does not ignore the situation at hand, and take immediate action regarding the Iran-Iraq War.

Questions to Consider

- When does international influence to de-escalate violence become a violation of sovereignty?
- Do powerful countries have an obligation to be involved in conflicts beyond their borders?
- What implications does the conflict have for politics and economics at the international scale?
- With this context in mind, what should be the Security Council's approach to the Iran-Iraq War?

Further Reading

- <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/10/09/how-the-iran-iraq-war-will-shape-the-region-for-decades-to-come/>
- <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/the-iran-iraq-war-the-view-baghdad>
- [Iran-Iraq War Timeline*](#)
- [UNITED NATIONS IRAN-IRAQ MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP \(UNIIMOG\) - Background \(Full text\)](#)
- [Iran-Iraq War | Causes, Summary, Casualties, & Facts | Britannica](#)
- [The Arab/Muslim World: Iran-Iraq War](#)
- [1982 United Nations Security Council election](#)
- <https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/28122/chapter-abstract/212291853?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

Topic B: The Situation in Afghanistan

Executive Summary

In 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to install a more friendly regime and solidify a faltering ally on its southern border. The Mujahideen, a collection of Muslim rebels, rose up against the invasion, and fighting consumed the country. The United Nations has acted, but the Arab League has yet to do so. The invasion has resulted in numerous civilian deaths and an enormous refugee crisis, and the future remains uncertain.

Background Information

Origins of the Conflict

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan on December 24, 1979. The reasons for the invasion are multi-pronged. First, Afghanistan held a location of strategic importance to the Soviet Union. Back during Tsarist Russia, Great Britain fought multiple wars to maintain its control over Afghanistan in order to prevent Russia from accessing the Indian border. As British imperial and military power declined post World Wars, the Soviet Union offered military and economic aid to neutral Afghanistan in order to develop a friendly relationship with the country. Afghan leadership, however, was not responsive to the Soviet's advances.⁴²



In 1973, Afghanistan's last king was ousted in a coup by his cousin, Mohammed Daoud Khan, who established a new autocratic government. The Soviets initially welcomed this shift, believing Afghanistan to be moving closer to the left. Although Daoud was more nationalist than socialist, his rise to power was dependent on pro-Soviet military and political factions.⁴³ A third of Afghanistan's active troops had trained in the Soviet Union and Daoud was supported by a

⁴² [Why the Soviet Union Invaded Afghanistan - HISTORY](#)

⁴³ [The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and the U.S. Response, 1978–1980](#)

faction of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), the Parchamists, led by Babrak Karmal.

Daoud's reign was rife with tension. Disappointing the Soviets, the authoritarian Prime Minister Daoud Khan refused to let Afghanistan become a Soviet puppet state, stating "Afghanistan shall remain poor, if necessary, but free in its acts and decisions" to Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev. Daoud hoped that moving away from the Soviet influence and towards the United States would help decrease the radical elements of his government and military. This would prove a failure. He never earned the support of the Khalq faction of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, while also never effectively governing Afghanistan's many tribal leaders.

Five years after he came to power, Afghanistan President Daoud was overthrown and murdered in a coup led by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan's Khalq faction, led by Noor Taraki.⁴⁴ During the coup, soldiers from Taraki's faction assaulted the Presidential palace and executed Daoud. In the days following the coup, Taraki became the Prime Minister. In December 1978, Afghanistan signed a 20-year "friendship treaty" with the Soviet Union which increased the amount of Soviet aid flowing into the country.

Even Soviet assistance, however, could not stabilize Taraki's government. Taraki's Deputy Prime Minister, Hafizullah Amin, received word in 1979 that the Parcham faction was leading a plot to overthrow his regime. In response, Amin took the opportunity to purge and execute many Parchamists and consolidate his own power. Additionally, Taraki's government attempted to incite a Communist revolution in Afghanistan's tribal areas, which led to armed revolt throughout the country. The Soviet Union feared that Taraki could not effectively govern Afghanistan, even if he was friendly to them. Soviet leaders were further concerned an Islamic government would take power if Taraki were to be overthrown.

In September 1979, Soviet officials sent a delegation to Kabul to assess the situation and shore up Taraki's regime. The political chaos in Afghanistan did not calm; forces close to Hafizullah Amin, Taraki's Deputy Prime Minister, executed Taraki. Islamic insurrections continued. On December 24, 1979, the Soviet Union decided to take full control itself. The invasion began with the murder of now-Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin and the installation of Babrak Karmal as the Soviet's puppet head of government. Soviets sent in ground forces from the north in an attempt to conquer Afghanistan.⁴⁵

Current Situation

The Soviet Union faced more resistance than expected in their attempt to take control of Afghanistan. Outside of their strongholds, Soviet troops faced fierce resistance from the local peoples. Resistance fighters, called mujahidin, saw the Soviets controlling Afghanistan as a defilement of Islam as well as of their traditional culture. The mujahidin employed guerilla

⁴⁴ [Afghan president is overthrown and murdered - HISTORY](#)

⁴⁵ [Soviet Union Invades Afghanistan - HISTORY](#)

tactics against the Soviets, attacking quickly and retreating into the mountains, using whatever weapons they could find. These guerilla troops enjoyed a natural advantage over their invaders, as they knew the territory and also had local strongholds of support. Soviet troops, on the other hand, did not know the territory, constantly faced surprise attacks, and were not welcomed by local populations. Consequently, the invasion was miserable for Soviet soldiers, most of whom were unprepared for the endeavor.

In addition, the Soviet Union's invasion was opposed by the United States, both publicly and through arms sales to the mujahidin. In the years following the Soviet Union's invasion, Afghanistan quickly became a Cold War battlefield. The United States responded harshly to the invasion, freezing arms talks, cutting wheat sales, and even boycotting the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow. American opposition to the Soviet's invasion only increased when Ronald Reagan became U.S. President in 1981. The United States provided arms and other assistance to what Reagan referred to as the "freedom fighters" in Afghanistan. For the Soviets, the intervention has drained both Soviet finances and manpower. In the United States, commentators labeled the invasion of Afghanistan "Russia's Vietnam."

Furthermore, in early 1980, violent demonstrations broke out against Karmal and the Soviet invasion. The United States continued their campaign of arming the insurgency, and with that support the mujahideen went from a collection of insurgents to a more organized force against the Soviet military and the USSR-backed Afghan army. Afghan refugees began to flee to Iran and Pakistan.⁴⁶ Karmal failed to gain popular support and soon the fighting settled into a stalemate. The Soviet military controlled urban areas while the mujahideen controlled the countryside. This conflict has claimed many lives of combatants, but also countless civilian lives. Between civilian deaths and the refugee crisis, this conflict is as much a humanitarian crisis as it is a military conflict.

Past International Action

Other international actors have begun to take action on the emerging Soviet-Afghan War. Two years ago in 1980, the Security Council considered two resolutions on this topic. The first demanded Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. It was defeated with a veto from the Soviet Union as well as votes against from non-permanent members. The second, Resolution 462, called for an emergency session of the General Assembly to consider the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The General Assembly voted to demand Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan by a vote of 104-18. The General Assembly, in emergency sessions, has the power to make recommendations to its members about measures they can use to enforce their resolution. As a result, many members imposed sanctions and embargoes on the USSR. However, it is not expected that members will engage in direct military conflict. The United States also led a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Neither the Olympics boycott nor the economic measures have shown any success in shifting the attitudes of Soviet leadership. In addition to

⁴⁶ [A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan | PBS NewsHour](#)

action from the GA, UNSC, and economic sanctions, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees established a permanent office in Pakistan in 1980 to help manage the massive influx of refugees from Afghanistan.

The Arab League has yet to speak with a united voice on the topic – it has not taken any formal action on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This upcoming meeting is a chance for the Arab world to engage in multilateral discussion on the issue and determine what role they wish to play in the coming engagements.

Even so, some in the Arab world have taken an active role in the conflict. Certain leaders in the Arab world have called for active involvement from Arab and Muslim populations to defend Afghanistan against Soviet incursion. This has led to certain people, called Afghan Arabs, to begin mobilizing in support of the mujahideen. While these movements have yet to fully emerge at this point in time, there is serious discussion of establishing guest houses in Pakistan, next to the Afghan border, to prepare international recruits to fight against the Soviet Union.

Possible Solutions

First, and most importantly, it must be noted that the Arab League is a multi-state organization. It does not possess the unilateral power to act the same as a national Cabinet or legislative body – it cannot send in troops, for example. Delegates should note that discussions of the Soviet-Afghan War should remain situated in the Arab League's potential responses, whether it be a statement, an official position on the matter, or a united offering of aid to certain affected populations.

Though the Arab League is unlikely to directly interfere in the Soviet-Afghan War through troop movements, the body may wish to exercise its political will in some form, whether this be through attempting to offer peace negotiations or offering support (both immaterial and material) to one, both, or no side of the conflict. The Arab League's will may not be recognized by the powers of the Soviet Union, but a good faith discussion should still be had on what the best course of action would be for the committee to achieve its internal goals for peace and stability in the region.

Moreover, the ramifications of the conflict are widespread for the region. The humanitarian crisis that has begun because of the conflict is also a discussion. The vast majority of the refugees have fled to the bordering states of Pakistan and Iran. Refugees in the Cold War have been treated as pawns to destabilize rivals, which is a dangerous risk in a major conflict zone.⁴⁷ In addition to their utilization as political leverage, refugees are fleeing states that are then demanding their repatriation. Pakistan is receiving aid from the UNHCR but very few states would be capable of handling millions of people coming across their border all at once. More resources are always helpful to improve living conditions for refugees, but their political predicament is not as easily

⁴⁷ [UNHCR - Afghan refugees in Pakistan during the 1980s: Cold War politics and registration practice, Rüdiger Schöch](#)

helped. The Arab League may wish to consider how it wishes to respond to these humanitarian concerns, especially when the conflict could impact its own members.

Additionally, during the Muslim conquest of Afghanistan and the Bolshevik Revolution, groups of Arab peoples settled in Afghanistan. Though Afghanistan is an ethnically diverse country many of these Arabs mixed with the local populations, they are still considered to be their own unique ethnic group. This means that the Arab League may feel it has some kind of role in protecting those who share its heritage. Furthermore, the Arab League should consider how the Arab population of Afghanistan will impact its voice – does this create an obligation for the Arab League to oppose the invasion?

Questions to Consider

- What are the potential consequences of the Soviet-Afghan War that the Arab League should address?
- Should the Arab League take an official position on the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan? If so, what should it be?
- Should the Arab League offer any aid to populations struggling as a result of the conflict? Should it do anything to incentivize or disincentivize Soviet interference in the region?
- What implications does the Arab League's response to this war have on the committee's ability to serve as a united voice for the Arab world?

Bloc Positions

The situation in Afghanistan is one that is familiar to the Cold War. Two superpowers are using their proxies to accomplish their geopolitical aims and one of those superpowers, in this case the Soviet Union, has become directly involved militarily. The Soviet Union and its allies seek another strong ally in its neighbor to the south. The United States and their allies seek an ally on their rival's border and to destabilize the Soviets with this conflict. The Non-Aligned Movement, many of whom are developing states and former colonies, often look out for the people in these conflicts. They also seek multilateral approaches to solve situations like this and seek to avoid the binary nature of Great Power conflict altogether.

Further Reading

- Timeline of modern Afghan history:
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/asia-jan-june11-timeline-afghanistan>
- History.com's summary of the conflict:
<https://www.history.com/news/1979-soviet-invasion-afghanistan>
- UNHCR's research paper on the refugee crisis:
<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/research/working/4868daad2/afghan-refugees-pakistan-during-1980s-cold-war-politics-registration-practice.html>

Executive Summary

With a history of solutions left stymied by resistance among member states, the Arab League faces challenges in restructuring its setup to create a more cohesive body of amicable countries. Political disputes and religious differences have charged several arguments among the region, both cordial and unfortunately violent. Limitations of the League charter have left Arab nations puzzled over the extent of control the League truly has over their actions and whether membership is ultimately worthwhile and respected on the international scale.

Background Information

There has been a history of conflicting and sometimes violent relations between Arab states in the region. Palestine was recognized as a full member of the League in 1976, represented by the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Later, the League suspended Egypt's membership upon the signing of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty. The headquarters of the League of Arab States was moved to Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, in 1979.⁴⁸ The League was founded in response to a strong opposition to the emergence of a Jewish state on Palestinian territory, so the decision to open unilateral peace negotiations predictably highlighted conflict within member states. The Arab League charter affirms Palestinian independence, as stated by their annex on the issue.⁴⁹

Tensions have also emerged due to power rivalries among the autocratic regimes ruling over Arab citizens. The Civil War in Yemen in 1962 led to direct confrontations between Egyptian and Saudi armies. When the Lebanese Civil War broke out, regional politics and Syrian interests prevented the League from playing a constructive role for its founding member, Lebanon, in times of domestic crisis.⁵⁰ Syrian troops entered Lebanon to bring stability to the region in 1976, despite the mandate of the Arab League outlined in its charter renouncing violence to resolve settlement disputes.

Ever since the end of World War II, many independent Muslim states have been formed as a result of the colonial era in Arab territories. Military withdrawal, economic & political wellbeing, and differences in cultural control influenced the outlook of each newly formed state. Legal systems were tremendously influenced by their history as former colonies, and resources were exploited.⁵¹ From the increased access to empire economies, trade and investments came at the cost of improper labor use and confusing divisions of territory previously held under the British and Ottoman Empires.

The Arab body has also eroded in credibility due to religious divides. Sunni-dominated countries like Saudi Arabia and Qatar come at odds with Shia-dominated countries like Iraq and Syria.⁵²

⁴⁸ [Arab League: History >> globalEDGE: Your source for Global Business Knowledge](#)

⁴⁹ [The Arab League | Council on Foreign Relations](#)

⁵⁰ [From Beirut to Algiers: The Arab League's Role in the Lebanon Crisis | The Washington Institute](#)

⁵¹ [Colonialism and Post-Colonialism in the Middle East | Free Essay Example](#)

⁵² [Arab League a Divided House — Strategic Culture](#)

The sectarian agenda of Iran and its ethnically homogeneous makeup assisted the 1979 revolution.⁵³ Additionally, the League failed to assist with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and allowed the United States to intervene instead.⁵⁴ Inter-state conflicts within the Arab League arose as states picked sides in the Iran-Iraq war. Iranian allies included Syria, Libya, and Israel, while Iraq received support from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, and Jordan.⁵⁵

Shared Arab culture and historical experiences are connected to Islamic concepts coming together against outside infringements and language imposition on Arab peoples. In World War I, the British promised an independent Arab state, but this plan was overrode by another contract dividing the Arab land into many sects.⁵⁶ Arab solidarity movements finally saw progress with the creation of the League following World War II. The Arab League evolved over time due to repeated exclusion from recognition. Despite the League finally finding a foothold, it has been incapable of resolving conflict due to its charter establishing non-compulsory adherence to decisions passed by its body. By protecting national sovereignty, the League has yet to find collective unity and agreement upon its actions.

The ineffective results of the Arab League pose a threat to the level of respect member states receive from the international community. If member states fail to cooperate with one another, and the body in charge of their relations is unable to intervene, then the entire existence of the Arab League is called into question. Considering that member states created the League in order to foster a larger, collective agreement of Arab countries, then it is of interest for member states to maintain healthy communication with one another. This will allow well-perceived public appearances and increased support of decisions made by the League from countries outside of the region, bolstering the impact of Arab initiatives.

Past International Action

The League of Arab States has succeeded in passing the Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation in 1950, an agreement on commercial transactions and payments in 1953, an agreement on the common table of tariffs in 1956, and an economic unity agreement in 1957. The League was officially recognized by the United Nations in 1958. A Labor Mobility Agreement was approved in 1968, an Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa was established in 1973, and an Agreement on the Facilitation and Development of trade between Arab countries was approved in 1981.⁵⁷ The League also agreed to assist Arab states in gaining liberation from foreign rule. This common theme of Arabic pride has been one of the few links holding together relationships among states.

⁵³ [Sectarian divide | Arab News](#)

⁵⁴ [The Arab League's Many Failures](#)

⁵⁵ [The Arab/Muslim World: Iran-Iraq War](#)

⁵⁶ [The Arab League | Council on Foreign Relations](#)

⁵⁷ [Arab League: History >> globalEDGE: Your source for Global Business Knowledge](#)

At the same time, there remains stagnancy in the League and little has been done to address the lack of comradery among member states. The Arab League formed with the intention of dissuading violence and instead using diplomatic measures to collaborate with member states. Despite this, many wars have erupted between Arab countries, whether they be based on political, cultural, or religious differences. As a result, the relationship between the Arab League and the United Nations has been tainted. Several UN conferences have been hosted in the hopes of fostering improved cooperation and resetting priorities for the body.

Actions from the Arab League that have been successful are often centered around economic benefits for those that abide by the agreement. Trading of Arab petroleum was managed in 1959, allowing coordinated control of oil prices and major power over the world market.⁵⁸ Failures usually are seen when warring political agendas or religious disagreements cause difficulty for League actions. Peace has not been fully kept in the region, even though the Arab League Charter says to avoid military force and to use the diplomatic process for disputes. League interventions and mediation have been ignored due to state interests leaving members unwilling to submit to the sovereignty of the organization. Thus, despite prior work on the topic, the problem of friendliness among member states remains unresolved.

Considering how the current setup of the League does not ensure its propositions are carried out, delegates are encouraged to define and elaborate upon methods to create lasting change. Programs and initiatives to increase accountability will compel member states to follow through on any resolutions that pass.

Possible Solutions

To find greater tolerance and goodwill among the Arab League, this committee should create a consistent set of rules of procedure that allow adherence to Arab League policy. Should the committee feel bold and find universal support, perhaps they could consider more convincing possibilities of consequences for member states breaking protocol. Past resolutions have been limited by a scarcity of conditions which penalize those states refusing to abide by decisions made through the mediation process of the League.

Previously, topics like border disputes, relations with Israel, and evolving allyship have promoted havoc within the League. Following the defeat of Arab states in war against Israel in 1948, Iraq joined Britain, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan in 1955 to form the Baghdad Pact, a defense alliance called the Central Treaty Organization. Other Arab countries viewed this move with contention due to its potential threat to the Arab cause. Additionally, Iraq's failure to recognize Kuwait in 1961 also stirred chaos. The UN and Western armies had to send troops to forcibly withdraw Iraq from the area.

⁵⁸ [Historical Essay – Arab League](#)

Religious crises emerged in Lebanon in 1958 when Christian and Muslim factions preferred different international alliances. Saudi control of oil allowed for considerable funding in the Iraq war, and troubles emerged when Palestine's entrance into the League angered Jordan. Despite common mistrust of the West, internal issues in the Arab League have to be addressed. In order to be more effective, changes may have to be made to the structure of the body or the duties of signatory states.

Questions to Consider

1. How can member states remain respectful of alliances made outside of the League?
2. When does a state's determined spirit become too charged to remain diplomatic?
3. What level of decorum is necessary between states to keep international affairs a private matter, and at what point should the League be required to intervene?
4. How should disputes be corrected, and to what extent?

Further Reading

- General outline of the organization: <https://arab.org/directory/league-of-arab-states/>
- Full Charter of the Arab League:
<https://arableague-us.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Charter%20of%20the%20Arab%20League.pdf>
- Historical overview of the League: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Arab-League>
- The International Center for Not-For-Profit Law describes the functions of the Arab League: <https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor/las>
- The United Nations High Commission for Refugees cooperates with the League: <https://www.unhcr.org/eg/what-we-do/las-cooperation>