The GCC: The GCC is the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, or the Gulf Cooperation Council. It was founded in 1981 in Abu Dhabi and it is a political and economic union of Arab states bordering the Persian Gulf, including: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. This is the only part of the region that has a more or less functional organizational league. The Arab League is for the most part non-functional, while the GCC gets shit done. The only functional organization is the GCC. The GCC was formed in 1981 largely in response to the Iran/Iraq war. The threat of Iran has been the glue that holds together the intra-gulf cooperation. These states’ regimes all rallied together during the Arab Spring for instance.

Golan Heights: One of Israel’s conquered territories during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. They initially belonged to Syria, and were returned to Syria following negotiations in 1999, although negotiations were considered a failure, they were still returned following the outcome of the 1973 war.

Hijaz: The area in which Medina and Mecca are located. Control of the Hijaz gave Saudi Arabia powerful connections and immense wealth. Land was not given to them by anyone; Ibn Saud conquered it for himself to create the state of Saudi Arabia that we know today.

The IMF: Known as the International Monetary Fund. It became important in the region following the oil collapse in the 1980s and the simultaneous shock received by Arab regimes. A series of IMF reforms were introduced following the economic crisis, and upon completion these Arab regimes received loans from the organization, only to pull back on their “freedoms” given to their citizens as a result of the reforms.

Intifada: This is an Arabic word, which literally means, “shaking off”, although it is translated into English as an uprising or rebellion. It is often used as a term for popular resistance to oppression in the region.

Iran-Contra Affair: The Iran-Contra Affair comes in the 1980s where the US supplies weapons to Iran. The Reagan administration wanted to get money to support the contras in Nicaragua etc. so they sold weapons to Iran in exchange for assistance to get a hostage out of Lebanon and get money etc. the key middle man was an Israeli arms broker, which is fucking hilarious. The Iran-Contra affair is only a few years after the hostage crisis, so it is pretty suspicious and risky to the American public, and there was a fear that it might tip the balance of power towards Iran, and the US didn’t want that.

Islamic ummah: Ummah is an Arabic word meaning “nation” or “community”. It can be a synonym for the “Islamic Nation” and it is commonly used to mean the collective community of Islamic peoples. In the Quran the ummah typically refers to a single group that shares common religious beliefs, specifically those that are the objects of a divine plan of salvation. In the context of Pan-Islamism and politics, the word Ummah can be used to mean the concept of a Commonwealth of the Believers. In general usage (such as with this course) The word Ummah refers to "the people" in Arabic, more specifically to Muslim people with a common ideology and culture. It is more commonly used in Islamic countries. Muslim Ummah absolutely refers to the unity of Muslims all over the world. It is a communal word, which divides people into two classes: one of them is Muslim and the other is non-Muslim. Non-Muslims are viewed as brothers and sisters in terms of all being children of Adam. The Muslim Ummah is responsible for upholding the religion and therefore benefiting the community regardless whether the community is Muslim or non-Muslim.

Jihad: This is an Islamic term, where it is a religious duty of Muslims. Within the context of the classical Islam, particularly the Shia’s beliefs, it refers to struggle against those who do not believe in the Abrahamic God, Allah. However, the word has even wider implications. There are two commonly accepted meanings of jihad: an inner spiritual struggle and an outer physical struggle. The "greater jihad" is the inner struggle by a believer to fulfill his religious duties. This non-violent meaning is stressed by both Muslim and non-Muslim
Arabia could be considered an Islamist state given that it has the Quran as its constitution, yet most people don’t view it this way because it is not part of these international Islamic networks, and it maintains a strong relationship with the US. Saudi Arabia is one of the states that are forming alliances out of regime security concerns because they are all similarly threatened by Islamist movements from below. Islamist movements in Saudi Arabia: members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt are cracked down on within Egypt so they move to Saudi Arabia and bring their political ideas with them, and instead of being laborers they enter into high ranking jobs (such as ministry of education, etc.). More of the hard liners of the Qutbists end up in Saudi Arabia, and the Muslim Brotherhood doctrine they bring with them are the more extreme version rather than the moderate one, despite the fact that the main brotherhood repudiates these ideas circa 1960s. Yet in Saudi Arabia there was no formal establishment of the Muslim brotherhood, but the group did start staffing the Saudi government; so then over time organizations develop and lead to the awakening in the early 1990s. These religious networks formed come to play an extremely important role in how official Saudi Islam develops, and how political opposition is organized. Al-Qaeda has its roots in Saudi Arabia, especially since the founder, Osama Bin Laden, is from there. However Saudi Arabia has a strict anti-terrorism policy, given its relationship with the United States.

**Syria:** The line between Lebanon and Syria is really artificially established and prior to the civil war it was very easy to cross this border. In Jordan, Syria, and in Iraq, there ended up being a minority regime, with the leaders being beholden to the colonial power. The leader doesn’t have a great base to the population of its country, as with Transjordan’s Hashemite leader and his differences with the Bedouin tribes in the region – you have the same thing with the kingdom in Syria. In 1970, after a series of military coups and the 1967 Arab-Israel War defeat, Hafez Assad comes to power in Syria, and rules from 1971 until 2000. He launches a correctional movement, which was an extraordinary successful move to deal with the problems that set all previous regimes. Over time he establishes a stifling form of authoritarian rule. It succeeded to remove popular politics and popular protests and most forms of civil society and political freedoms. This was justified by overcoming the instability of the past. He is finally standing as to foreign interceptions and foreign presence. Assad also moved to remove the possibility to the best of his ability of a military coup. Popular mobilization and foreign intervention and military coups are the biggest threat to his power. He decides to coup-proof his military, as over a period of about 19 years, there were 17 different military coups. Coup-proof: getting rid of any officer or general who might pose a political challenge and replacing them with your brother or cousins, whose entire political survival depends on your own survival. There are a couple of challenges to Assad’s rule over the first 15 years of his control of the country. In order of importance: the first comes from the various wars in Lebanon, which exposed the military weakness of the regime. Second: his cousin tries to launch a military coup against him, which is one of the few flaws in the coup-proofing strategy. Someone else in your family could replace you; you just need an Assad at the top to continue the regime. Third: from 1979–1982 he faces a profound challenge from the Muslim Brotherhood, which was a pretty well established political force that appealed to the conservative urban merchant class across the country. There’s rising protests by the brotherhood, more people in the streets, and the Iranian revolution is spilling chills down the spines of every authoritarian leader in the region. This leads to open warfare in 1982, and it demolishes 60% of the city and kills tens of thousands of people. This was the only real period of vulnerability for Assad, and after 1982 he consolidates his government and his rule. His son Bashar Al-Assad resumes presidency of Syria in 2000 after his father and his older brother’s deaths. One of the things that prevented Syria and Iraq from coordinating and concentrating their forces against Israel was the fact that they had to worry about Iran and Turkey north of them. Syria is the only outstanding state with a territorial dispute following the Yom Kippur war in 1973. Syria is now in its own mind in a situation where it has the same basic demands as Egypt – wants its territory back, wants a Palestinian state for full-scale Arab-Israeli peace, but it’s in a far weaker position that Egypt was as it’s the only state left standing in this issue. It’s also negotiating individually one on one. Around Camp David implementation Syria is facing insurgency in its state – direct and indirect Syrian military clashes with Israel during the Lebanese civil war. Basically Israel withdraws its forces, Lebanon goes into civil war, and Syria wins
Muammar Gaddafi: Put in power in 1969 following a military coup in Libya. Libya before the Arab spring is just a weird country because what Gaddafi did over the course of his long regime was he actively institutionalized politics. He tried to create a so-called self-organizing political society. It was a thin mask for what was actually a very oppressive authoritarian regime. This was worse than Tunisia and on par with Syria in terms of absolute domination and repression. On the one hand you have no institutions (weak state institutions) but you also have incredibly repressive institutions, which is why it is strange in Libya. Uprisings in Libya come at a stage where Libya is more similar to the situation in Syria. The early protesters were very brave given how repressive it was in Libya under Gaddafi’s regime. It became one of the strongest cases for Arab spring fever given how dangerous it was in mid-February 2011. The response was immediate large-scale violence from the military, which didn’t even happen in Syria. Shocking when the rest of the world still believes in the script that happened in Egypt and Tunisia where there was no violent response. Very quickly changes from a peaceful protest into a civil war. Benghazis falls almost immediately to the rebels, which the international community then recognizes. Ends in the sudden sharp uprising in Tripoli that then leads to the death of Gaddafi.

Muhammad Ali of Egypt: Muhammad Ali was a commander in the Ottoman army, until he was given permission by the empire to turn Egypt into a powerful, European-style state. Though not a modern nationalist, he is regarded as the founder of modern Egypt because of the dramatic reforms in the military, economic and cultural spheres that he instituted. He also ruled Levantine territories outside Egypt. The dynasty that he established would rule Egypt and Sudan until the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 led by Nasser. Egypt tries to be a modern European power and then goes bankrupt, and then the British come in and set up a protectorate and basically begin ruling behind the scenes, behind the throne. Britain doesn’t try to transform the country, they would much rather rule behind a puppet, a British remain in Egypt until Nasser expels them following the military coup in 1952, where Muhammad Ali was also expelled. The difference between British, French, and Italian colonialism showed the differences in the coercing patterns and legacies of their colonial influence over their respective states. Egypt follows a very different trajectory than the other North African nations and this is due to the British colonial legacy.

Osama Bin Laden: Osama Bin Laden was the founder of the jihadist group Al-Qaeda, which was responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001. He was Saudi Arabian, and hence he is a creature of the Saudi system. He formed Al-Qaeda in 1988, and was banished from Saudi Arabia in 1992, thus he shifted his base to Sudan until US pressure forced him to leave Sudan in 1996. After establishing a new base in Afghanistan, he declared a war against the United States, initiating a series of bombings and related attacks. Bin Laden was on the American Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) lists of Ten Most Wanted Fugitives and Most Wanted Terrorists for his involvement in the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings. From 2001 to 2011, bin Laden was a major target of the War on Terror, as the FBI placed a $25 million bounty on him in their search for him. On May 2, 2011, bin Laden was shot and killed inside a private residential compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, supposedly, by a group of Navy Seals and CIA officers. The al-Qaeda leader was motivated by a belief that U.S. foreign policy has oppressed, killed, or otherwise harmed Muslims in the Middle East, condensed in the phrase, “They hate us for what we do, not who we are.” Bin Laden also said only the restoration of Sharia law would "set things right" in the Muslim world. He opposed such alternatives as pan-Arabism, socialism, communism, and democracy. This belief, in conjunction with violent jihad, has sometimes been called Qutbism after being promoted by Sayyid Qutb. Bin Laden believed that Afghanistan, under the rule of Mullah Omar’s Taliban, was "the only Islamic country" in the Muslim world. Bin Laden consistently dwelt on the need for violent jihad to right what he believed were injustices against Muslims perpetrated by the United States and sometimes by other non-Muslim states. He also called for eliminating the state of Israel, and forcing the United States to withdraw from the Middle East.
negotiations, such as negotiating with Syria, Jordan, and Egypt separately. From 1967 until 1993, Israel did not recognize the existence of the PLO in regards to negotiation. It was illegal for Israel to negotiate with PLO, as they viewed them as a terrorist association. This war discredits the Pan-Arabists in the region, following with Nasser’s death as well. With the war between Israel and the Arab states, Egypt and Syria lose the worst and Pan-Arabism is blamed for this. During this time there is the emergence of the oil economy in the Middle East. The foundations of OPEC are created during this time. As a result, this creates an enormous influx of money into the hands of conservative Arab regimes – more money than they know what to do with. Now these countries are prepared to use this oil money in political ways both at home but also for their allies in the region.

**Yom Kippur War (1973):** The Yom Kippur War is also known as the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. It was a war fought by the coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria against Israel from October 6 to 25, 1973. The war began when the Arab coalition launched a joint surprise attack on Israeli positions in the Israeli-occupied territories on Yom Kippur, the holiest day in Judaism, which occurred that year during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The 1973 war largely establishes the balance of power within the negotiations between Israel and Arab states will be conducted. The Golan Heights, West Bank/Gaza strip are the conquered territories being discussed in these following negotiations. The potential negotiations of the return of these territories and some kind of peace agreement ensued as well. The 1973 war shifts the balance of power, and this then forces peace negotiations to bring about the return of the Arab territories. How much territory and to whom should it be returned? Should this be dependent on how each country performed in the war?

**Iranian Revolution (1979):** We are so deeply ingrained to view Iran as a pole resistant to the US, but until 1979 Iran was the absolute pillar of America’s military strategy in the region. The Shah of Iran was the template of the US’ regional politics and was deeply embedded in the US alliance in the region. He was able to do things that the US cared for deeply: they were the fire wall against soviet expansion in the region. Because of its commanding position along the gulf it was an extremely useful vehicle for the flow of oil. It reduced the need for the US to have its military basing in the Gulf. Iran also helped with protecting the security of Israel. It protected the emergence of opposition against US sentiment during this time. It was also a NATO ally with Turkey, and all of these things were very useful for Israeli security. One of the things that prevented Syria and Iraq from coordinating and concentrating their forces against Israel was the fact that they had to worry about Iran and Turkey north of them. This all comes crashing to a halt during the Iranian revolution, which started in 1978 and continued into 1979. The Shah was replaced with the Islamic government in Iran. It’s almost impossible to emphasize how shocking this was and how unexpected it was, and Khamenei seized control after overthrowing the Shah. The Shah was replaced by a coalition of opposition forces, and then everybody except the Islamists lost power. Now you have an Islamic republic. The Islamic republic at the time was not necessarily inevitably going to form a hostile relationship with the West. It was likely, but not inevitable. Khamenei held a particular foreign policy ideology that was neither east nor west. From an American point of view it could be a lot worse – it could be a communist revolution that would’ve been the worst-case scenario. Even after the Revolution, the US was willing to enter into diplomacy discussions with Iran in order to see what it would take to keep Iran out of the Soviet camp. Then by the end of November you get a radical seizure of the embassy, they hold the American diplomats hostage, publish CIA documents, and hold the people hostage for over a year. This absolutely paralyzed the United States, and it was one of the greatest diplomatic humiliations the US had ever gone through in its history. This set up the animosity between the two nations from the 1980s until the present.

**Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988):** The Iran-Iraq War is also known as the First Persian Gulf War, and it was an armed conflict lasting from 1980 until 1988, when a UN Resolution was signed for a cease-fire. It followed a long history of border disputes, and was motivated by fears that the Iranian Revolution in 1979 would inspire insurgency among Iraq’s long-suppressed Shia majority as well as Iraq’s desire to replace Iran as the dominant...
which you never had before. Plus you have a major Arab coalition aligning with the US, without losing an alliance with Israel. When the war is over, the US withdraws a lot of troops, but also leaves a lot of them in the region. Some argue that this is the start of the Al Qaeda organization, objecting to the presence of US troops basing on Saudi soil. When the US wins, it wages the war and reestablishes Kuwait, but then it stops. It does not go on and invade Iraq itself and overthrow Saddam Hussein.

The Gulf War (1990-1991): The Gulf War lasted from August 1990 until 1991, and was codenamed Operation Desert Storm in 1991. It was a war waged by coalition forces from 34 nations led by the United States against Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait. The war is also known under other names, such as the Persian Gulf War, First Gulf War, Gulf War I, Kuwait War, or the First Iraq War. Kuwait’s invasion by Iraqi troops that began on August 2nd 1990 was met with international condemnation, and brought immediate economic sanctions against Iraq by members of the U.N. Security Council. U.S. President George H. W. Bush deployed U.S. forces into Saudi Arabia, and urged other countries to send their own forces to the scene. An array of nations joined the Coalition, the biggest coalition since World War II. The US bases half a million troops in Saudi Arabia to conduct Operation Desert Storm. Now you have direct military presence from the US, which you never had before. Plus you have a major Arab coalition aligning with the US, without losing an alliance with Israel. When the war is over, the US withdraws a lot of troops, but also leaves a lot of them in the region. Some argue that this is the start of the Al Qaeda organization, objecting to the presence of US troops basing on Saudi soil. When the US wins, by waging the war and reestablishing Kuwait, the US then stops. It does not go on and invade Iraq itself and overthrow Saddam Hussein. From the Iraqi invasion, a bunch of North African workers in Kuwait sided with Saddam, and Kuwait kicked out these migrant laborers. They were forcibly disengaged from the Gulf and then went to Europe instead. This invasion was a big issue for Jordan because Jordan was highly dependent on the US. Jordan wanted to support the United States in the liberation of Kuwait, but 95% of the public is in favor of Saddam, and they opted for a position of neutrality – they did this because of their democratization. They suffered for this from America. Yemen was greatly affected as well, as the Yemenis were overwhelming in favor of Saddam, and the government couldn’t stand against their democratic people, so they decided to side with Iraq. The more democratic you are, the more likely you are to support Iraq against the US. The Yemeni conflict wanted to go along with their peoples’ public opinion, but this was awful because Yemen was highly dependent on Saudi Arabia, so the Saudis cut off their support to Yemen as a result. Yemen lost access to international loans and this hurt their economy desperately.

Second Intifada (2000-2005): The Second Intifada began in 2000 and lasted until 2005, and it was the second Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation – a period of intensified Israeli-Palestinian violence. It started in September 2000, when Ariel Sharon made a visit to the Temple Mount, seen by Palestinians as highly provocative; and the Israeli army with military force, using lethal ammunition, dispersed Palestinian demonstrators who were throwing stones at the police. Both parties caused high numbers of casualties among civilians as well as combatants: the Palestinians by numerous bomb attacks and gunfire; the Israelis by tank and gunfire and air attacks, by numerous targeted killings, and by harsh reactions on demonstrations. The death toll, including both military and civilian, is estimated to be about 3,000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israelis, as well as 64 foreigners. Some Israelis believe the war started due to the Israeli concessions made following the 1993 Oslo Accords, and thereby refer to the Intifada as the “Oslo War”; they also view the Intifada as a wave of terrorism, pre-planned by Yasser Arafat of the PLO. While others, such as Bill Clinton, believe it was caused by high tensions due to the failure of the Camp David accords in 2000. Some consider the “Sharm el-Sheikh Summit” in February 2005 as the end of the Second Intifada, when President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon agreed to stop all acts of violence against Israelis and Palestinians and reaffirmed their commitment to the roadmap for peace.

War on Terror (9/11 2001 – Present): After the September 11th terrorist attacks, the US announced its decision to launch the War On Terror. This resulted in an international military campaign to eliminate al-
very different set of security choices. Their traditional move is to ally with Iraq against Iran, but Iraq doesn’t exist anymore. Once a state is shattered it’s very difficult to put it back together.

**Israel-Hezbollah War (2006):** This is also known as the Lebanon War, or in Lebanon it is also referred to as the July War, and for Israel it is the Second Lebanon War. It was a 34-day military conflict in Lebanon, northern Israel and the Golan Heights. The principal parties were Hezbollah paramilitary forces and the Israeli military. The conflict started on 12 July 2006, and continued until a United Nations-brokered ceasefire went into effect in the morning on 14 August 2006, though it formally ended on 8 September 2006 when Israel lifted its naval blockade of Lebanon. Due to unprecedented Iranian military support to Hezbollah before and during the war, some consider it the first round of the Iran–Israel proxy conflict, rather than a continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The success that Hezbollah enjoyed in 2006 during this war was a real eye-opener for many in the region. They fought Israel to a standstill and survived on its own terms and won the war, and then became extremely popular around the region.

**Syrian Civil War (2011-Present):** In Syria over a period of about 19 years, there were 17 different military coups, until Hafez Assad consolidated his power in 1971. His son, Bashar Al-Assad, who many viewed as incapable of governing Syria, succeeded him. Assad’s Syria was an extreme case in terms of totalitarian regime (according to Lisa Wedeen’s article). She described a state that maintained an absolute monopoly over information, such as news – censorship was huge in Syria, and you wouldn’t know any of the news about your own nation because Assad’s government censored it. By the time you get to 2010, Assad and Syria have overcome repeated multiple stages of fairly extreme challenges to regime survival, and seemed to have a formula for keeping control. When the Arab Uprisings break out in Tunisia and Egypt, Bashar was downright cocky at this time. Then uprisings begin in Syria around March 2011, and turned violent in April or May of that year. In Syria if you protest, you and your family get a bullet in the back of the head. So initially they had small protests in January and February in Syria, but even a small demonstration was a strong change from the status quo. The shock value of 50 people in the street in Damascus was much greater, even if it had a small number compared to other nations. They were not triggering large-scale protests however. The more Assad cracks down, the more protests begin to spring up in the country. There was some degree of restraint in military power against the protesters at first. This disappears after 6-7 months. Popular protests were largely non-violent at first. Most people around the world are then viewing this is an Arab Spring uprising, because of the non-violence. The counter argument that Assad presents is that this is one of those external conspiracies that always used to threaten Syria – he said our external enemies, a total conspiracy, drove it. When Obama commented that Assad has lost his legitimacy and needed to step down, this was in response to his regime aggression over the mostly unarmed protesters, around September 2011. Assad has remained in power since, and is pulling Syria through a bloody civil war up until the present. Syria was truly the worst of all cases of the Arab Spring, and completely broke the script that countries had previously used for their revolutions. It is also the most unexpected and most inspiring of the Arab Spring cases of people rising up against authoritarian rule, but it is also the worst and most destructive state breakdowns in the region. This is arguably the worst humanitarian crisis since WWII. What we’ve seen in Syria over the last two years has been the unfolding of the extraordinary complex of the Arab Spring. During this civil war, Syria becomes an enormously useful and effective vehicle of the global jihad. It was the epitome of the jihadist argument for people to do whatever they can to defend Islam. They recode Assad’s regime as Shi’a etc. Syria greatly revives Al Qaeda’s situation. Al-Qaeda was basically on its deathbed until given new life by this bloody civil war in Syria.

**The Arab Spring:**

**Algeria:** In Algeria what you have is again a one party state, basically a military regime with a single ruling party. What makes Algeria different from other North African countries is that they have more oil, and the oil