

Geography of the middle east



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Part 1: The top three issues that contributed significantly to learning in this course

Following are the major issues that contributed to my learning because they provide distinctive advantage to the Arab world and help them promote their culture and civilization throughout the world: The first issue is related to the geographical or geo-strategic importance of Middle East studied in the course. This factor is of significant importance because Middle East is located at such a region that provides it with unique benefits. The geography consists of deserts, mountain ranges and rivers and within these, there are various cultural aspects. So, it can be said that the Middle Eastern geography is a blend of benefits that tend to increase the importance of this region in the world. Different types of crops and trees are located in the region. Dates are not found in such a large variety and number in any other area as in the Middle East. Similarly, there are three major mountain ranges and water regions.

The geography contributes significantly to the learning because it is such a factor of civilization on which all other things depend. For instance: the political, economic and social systems of any region are directly related to it. Due to this reason, Middle East also forms the center of various geo-political activities. The water resources of this country are immense which have provided a reason for its huge importance. The water from River Nile had remained the center of attention of various countries and it also led to many conflicts. The management of this river has worldwide implications and the same is true for other water resources. So, basically, the reason why this factor has been chosen is that the geography is directly related to economic

issues such as trade (imports and exports), political issues such as balance of power and so on.

Moreover, another factor that provided excessive learning in the domain of civilization is the significance of oil and energy in the region and the reason as to how it is related to other issues. One can say that all the geo-politics of this region revolved around the distribution of oil. Due to this factor, this region always remained the focus of attention of great powers such as France, Britain and USA. OPEC which forms the basic unit of collaboration among the oil exporting countries contains the Middle Eastern countries. This issue is of significance because the entire petroleum industry of the world revolves around these countries because of existence of so many excessive resources. The non- OPEC countries collectively produce 277 billion barrels of oil whereas the OPEC countries produce 1200 billion barrels. This shows the sharp contrast and this is the reason why this region is powerful and strong as well as quite important in the eyes of the world.

The reason why the energy and oil issues have contributed to the learning is that they occupy immense importance. History is witness that the power of this region is directly related to the existence of oil. In the past, production, consumption and exports had been quite balanced and this is expected to increase by 2035. This shows that proper management of supply and demand of oil and gas reserves as well as the balance of exports and imports can prove to be an excessive advantage for the region in the long run. This shows that civilization is not just an isolated phenomenon rather it is a complex mixture which includes the geopolitical factors and all of these factors work together to improve their importance of any region. So, they

must be properly utilized in order to make sure that these real assets of the Arabian civilization do not go wasted.

The third issue that is of extreme importance and has contributed greatly is the cultural and religious aspect of the Arabian civilization. The reason why this issue is selected is that while geo-politics, economics and reserves are related to some wider problems, this is an internal issue and provides a distinctive advantage to the Middle Eastern countries over the rest of the world. This is so because the Arabian identity is associated with it. Culture and religion form the real essence of the civilization and all these factors work together to create better value for the people and as a result; they feel more strong bonding and association with their identity. The course materials explain the distinctive features of religion and culture for instance: Quran is the basic text that is the sole source of guidance for the Arabs. Their language is different which sets them apart from other nations of the world. Their attitudes and belief towards humanity, culture, non-Muslims and universality are such that they provide a superior advantage. The major learning associated with this issue is that the cultural aspects of Arab world must be polished and shaped, they must be promoted among the local populace in such a way that they form the real backbone of the Middle Eastern nations because this culture, ethnicity, language and religion is the motivating force that has the ability to lead us to great heights and act as a driver towards worldwide growth, progress and prosperity.

Part 2: The top two examples that strongly stimulated your critical thinking about the region's opportunities and problems

The first example that forms a core strength or opportunity for the region is its oil and gas reserves. This is a great opportunity because it provides financial power to the region. Moreover, having such a huge amount of oil and gas reserves has made it one of the prominent regions in the world. It has a positive impact on trade; the exports and imports are increased and huge profits are acquired. However, there are certain problems associated with the opportunity too. The first one being that this God gifted region becomes the focus and center of attention of great powers which then use their different strategies to acquire hold of these reserves.

Another example that is directly related to the regions opportunities and problems is the religion of Arab world. Islam is the strongest force which provides distinctive advantage and superiority to the Arabs over various other nations of the world. This is because of the better principles and rules taught by Islam. This religion is a huge opportunity for the Arab Muslim world because it provides the force of cohesion, unity and bonding to the people and thus provides a huge strength. This can be a great benefit in the sense that it can provide a power to the Arab people with which they can compete with rest of the world. Their ways of lives, their customs, their traditions as well as their norms and values are firmly rooted in the religion and thus, religion only is the biggest opportunity enjoyed by people of the Arab world.

But at the same time, it can lead to certain problems having a global impact. While on the one hand religion forms a big opportunity by providing cohesion and solidarity among the people but at the same time, it divides the world along two lines i. e. the Muslims and the non-Muslims. This can prove to be a great threat as shown by the examples of various battles. Most of the

regions fight either over economic or political issues and somewhere, these issues are also related to religion. The example of Iran war and the Israel-Palestine conflicts are good examples of this factor because directly or indirectly, they revolve around the issue of religion. Another factor that is closely related to religion is the concept of power and authority and it can also be a big problem and hindrance in maintaining smooth functioning of the society.

Part 3: The single top finding that clearly influenced the worldview and vision about how to promote mutual understanding between the American people and the peoples of the Middle East.

Based upon the subjects studied in the course, one single finding that can act as a stimulator to promote better understanding between the Middle East and the American people is the force of religion. This is so because all the other issues such as economics and geopolitics, the oil and energy reserves etc. are so complex that they become the center of political tensions. So, it is hard to adopt a middle approach in these cases and to promote better understanding among the two nations. So, the only factor that can prove to be beneficial in this case is the religion because it provides a clear cut explanation of all the issues that form the basis of misunderstanding between the Eastern and the Western world.

Another reason to select this finding is that it is always difficult to convince people in the domain of economics or politics but it is relatively easier to convince them in the domain of religion because religion includes within itself emotional attachments and bonding of people to some higher forces. It

is based upon certain concepts that form the base of all human activities. So, misunderstanding can be resolved by changing the wrong conceptions of people as well as their misperceptions about the Muslims as terrorists. This can be done by explaining to them the clear interpretation of Quranic texts which show that Islam is a liberal religion which allows us to follow utmost standards of humanity in all domains of life. Islam does not promote terrorism or unnecessary harsh behavior with any nation of the world. It asks human beings to believe in the higher authority of Almighty Allah as well as the belief that He is the only one and he has no son or father. So, the right explanation of religious texts in the Arabic literature to the Western world can be a source of motivation and can help in removing the misconception that Muslims are fundamentalists, terrorists and religious fanatics.

Although there are economic and political factors associated with every problem but I believe that the major source or reason of misunderstanding between the Western and Eastern world is the religious factor which created deep differences. These differences can be resolved only through better understanding and communication whereby the Muslims are able to portray their true image to the Americans and the Americans in turn are ready to accept this image as the real one and change their stigmatized labels about terrorism that are wrongly associated with the Muslim world. Resolution of such process take lots of time yet nothing is impossible. If proper efforts are given to this issue from both sides, it can help in better understanding of each other's position in the world in terms of religion, culture, economic as well as politics and hence; this can be a real positive step towards the

promotion of mutual understanding between the Eastern and the Western world.

Conclusion

Therefore, it can be concluded that while the Arab world is one of the strongest regions of the world because of its economic power, the oil and gas reserves, the huge development as well as the force of Islamic religion. Despite of various political battles and conflicts and religious issues in the region, most of the countries have still managed to thrive and prove themselves as strong nations as compared to the rest of the world. In order to remove various misunderstandings between the Arab and the Western world, a religious approach can be the best tool but at the same time, this religious approach needs to be assimilated with all other relevant factors in order to ensure progress and development in the long run.