



SCHAR SCHOOL OF POLICY AND GOVERNMENT
Center for Security Policy Studies
at George Mason University

Crisis Simulation: Middle East Crisis Next

October 26, 2024

Event Schedule

09:00 AM	Participant check-in & breakfast	Van Metre Hall 308
09:30 AM	Large Group in-brief	Van Metre Hall 308
10:00 AM	Exercise start	Small Group Rooms
12:30 PM	Lunch	
1:00 PM	Exercise resume	Small Group Rooms
3:30 PM	Small Group after-action review	Small Group Rooms
4:00 PM	Large Group after-action review	Van Metre Hall 308
4:30 PM	Simulation complete	

Room and Role Assignments

Small group placement and roles are assigned at check-in. If you are reading this prior to check-in, you will not know your group / role assignment until the day of the simulation. At the conclusion of the in-brief everyone will head to their designated room, Van Metre Hall 308 or Van Metre Hall 311.

Mideast “Crisis Next” – Game Instructions

This exercise is a synthesis opportunity designed to refine your skills and understanding of the challenges involved in designing effective strategies aimed at advancing national interests in a complex and uncertain regional environment. It will improve your understanding of the application of strategy - how the instruments of national power – Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economic (“*the DIME*”) – are integrated in a dynamic environment with competing national interests from the various regional players. In the process, you will also improve your appreciation of how and why other countries in the region act the way they do.

Your effectiveness depends in large part on your understanding of both your own as well as competing and supporting interests in the region, your ability to deliver substantive and clearly articulated arguments, build coalitions (within your own team as well as with other player teams), and your capacity for developing and implementing a coherent strategy concept that integrates and synchronizes all instruments of national power.

One of the particular challenges that this exercise presents is many teams have both “Country Goals” for the entire team as well as different “Ideology Goals” for different players within that country team (representing different foreign policy perspectives)...or in the case of the EU Player Team to represent competing policy goals of elements within the EU (as a large international organization, different groups of countries have divergent goals). Internal and external policy friction may become a challenge within the team – as it is in the real world. Identifying shared goals and interests...and making relevant compromises will be critical – both within and between teams.

Exercise Description: This exercise is a matrix game - a competitive wargame centered on "structured argumentation." Players will participate in the exercise as members of eight teams representing the United States, Israel, Jordan, Iran, the European Union (EU), Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon. Each team will be seeking to advance their national interests (known only to the team) as in some cases, ideology goals (known only to individual players) through the exercise of the different instruments of national power (ideally in an integrated manner) – **D**iplomacy, **I**nformation, the **M**ilitary, and **E**conomic (often collectively known as “the DIME”) - in a near future Middle East crisis environment.

How does a Matrix Game work? In this exercise, players will go through a series of rounds, each representing two weeks of time. Each team has one turn during this round to argue a specific action (or "way" if we're thinking of Ends, Ways, and Means) based on a single instrument of national power. Israel is the exception to this and has two turns, one at the beginning and one at the end of the round, due to its relative power and proximity to the region (the US has multiple other ongoing and competing commitments around the world that all require attention). After the active team has presented their action argument, each of the other teams then follows with either supporting or countering arguments.

Effective players might build conditions using multiple instruments of power over several rounds to achieve their desired end states as well as build coalitions with other countries to provide supporting arguments or actions to help each achieve their mutual desired goals.

Play revolves around a map, which serves as a reference where they place counters representing DIME actions as they present their arguments. Teams will rotate different students as the "speaker" for that round. Each speaker will be responsible for providing the action argument and all supporting/countering arguments during that round so that everyone has a chance to participate fully. The entire team can always talk amongst themselves, however only the speaker can make the final formal arguments for that team during that round. *(note that this may result in interesting challenges since different speakers may have divergent goals)*

Each active team's action argument includes:

- 1) the explanation of what they are doing with their particular instrument of power** (your "Action", aka your "Way") and **what level of resources are being expended** (your "Means") – i.e. are you using a terrorist cell, a missile strike with x number of missiles, an army Brigade, a Carrier Strike Group, embassies throughout Europe, etc.
- 2) supporting facts explaining why it would work, and**
- 3) the expected outcome**

After this argument, each of the other teams (using the order of play) will then make either an argument stating why they think the active country's action will either work or not work. Israel doesn't get a "second argument" here in structured argumentation, they just have a second turn in the overall play during each round.

If the action that a team is presenting is an action that involves multiple teams (ie a conference, combined exercise, combined sanctions, etc), the facilitator will first go to each team and ask them if they are going to participate with that action. Then the facilitator will go back around and ask for supporting arguments.

NOTE: If another team isn't going to participate in your multinational action, then you probably want to know about it before hand! This is a good idea why you want to discuss these before the round starts, or at worst case by passing them a note (see *further on communication below*).

After each team has presented either a supporting or countering argument, the game facilitator will adjudicate the relative strength of the action argument and supporting/counter arguments (as well as the relative difficulty of the action) and then assign a modifier (a plus or minus) to the subsequent roll of two dice by the active country to see if that action is successful or not.

Following this die roll, the next team in the order of play becomes the active team.

Following Israel's second turn in that round, the overall round ends and the round marker is advanced.

After the first round and each round thereafter, there will be a 15 minute break period for team meetings and negotiations (and restroom breaks) before the start of the next round.

A note on communications between teams - as discussed above, teams have a period prior to the start of each round where they can conduct public or private bilateral or multilateral discussions. Additionally, teams may pass notes to other teams at any time during play. However, you cannot talk to other teams verbally *during* the round as it is extremely distracting to the flow of the game.

Covert/Secret Actions: Teams may at times desire to hide an argument from other teams. This might represent a covert action such as a cyber attack, espionage (spying), sabotage, strategic reconnaissance (ie using special forces), etc. Or, they might be have concluded a secret agreement with another team. In such cases, players should write their argument on paper and present it to the facilitator announcing to the other players the existence of a **Covert Action**. The facilitator will then adjudge its success or failure (by die roll, modified as appropriate) without disclosing to the other player-teams the argument or its disposition. Teams should attempt to limit covert actions, as extensive use may detract from game dynamics. Secret arguments should only be permitted when they refer to specific events or capabilities. The placement of conventional or irregular/paramilitary forces should always be made openly.

What do I do first?:

1. Prior to the start of play, read both your team sheet as well as your ideology sheet closely. Pay close attention to both the overall interests as well as specific policy objectives that your governments want to accomplish. - Do not show your ideology sheet to other teams until after the game.

- Do not show your ideology sheet to any other players (including your team) until after the game.

2. Meet the rest of your team. **Using the team interests and policy priorities as well as those in the country sheet that you were given, determine 2-3 initial objectives (Ends) that you will seek to achieve by integrating a series of ways from across the DIME. Discuss what your first action argument might be.** This is your starting plan. These will probably have to be adjusted after the first turn as you react to the actions of other teams. Remember that setting appropriate conditions and building coalitions often leads to subsequent success – although coalitions and the interests of your partners might present new problems and challenges.

3. Review and then constantly refer back to the one sheet "Player Guide". This is a quick smart sheet that will help you with the flow of the Matrix game.

4. Review the Matrix Game DIME Action Examples sheets in your packet. You can only use one instrument of power each turn. This provides you with a number of examples of how the instruments of power might be used, but feel free to use other innovative approaches (within reason of course...).

** 5. Remember throughout the game that strategy consists of Ends (Objectives), Ways, and Means. Are you integrating multiple ways to achieve your objective?

Player Guide – Mid-East “Crisis Next” Matrix Game

A matrix game is a competitive, turn-based crisis simulation centered on ‘structured argumentation’

SEQUENCE OF PLAY FOR EACH ROUND

1. Team Meeting / Negotiations with other Teams
2. Country Turns (DIME Actions)

(Note: players can communicate in secret with each other by passing notes during each of the following phases)

 - A. Active Country Team proposes/argues an action:
 - 1) Declares action using one of the instruments of national power (Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic)
 - 2) States why it would work (*Supporting facts*)
 - 3) Declares Expected Outcome of this action
 - B. Supporting or Counter-arguments (*from each other country’s standpoint – using the order of play, except for the country which has already made the argument above*)
 - 1) Why will it work (or)
 - 2) Why won’t it work
 - C. Adjudication of team action
 - D. Next Country’s turn – Return to Step A. (*Continue for each country until Russia has completed its 2d action*)
3. End Round

Types of Counter Arguments

- 1) Counter or support a position
- 2) Articulate alternative position
- 3) Negotiate support in the open
- 4) Send opposing signals
- 5) Advance an issue

Order of Play

Israel (1st action)
Jordan
Iran
European Union
Egypt
Saudi Arabia
Lebanon
USA
Israel (2d action)

Each total round represents a ONE WEEK period of game time

Example of an Argument:

Action: *(Israel places a conventional Military counter inside its territory near the Lebanese border). “Israel will conduct a brigade-sized military exercise in its territory near the Lebanese border..”*

This will work because Israel regularly conducts conducted training exercises throughout Israeli territory. The expected outcome is improved improved military readiness for Israel and a demonstration of Israel’s military might.

Supporting Counter: *“This will work because Israel has a large and effective military.”*

Or...

Opposing Counter: *“This will not happen because Israel would not put its forces in such close proximity to the location where the Lebanese are currently conducting a military exercise of their own out of fear that miscalculation could result.”*

Chance of successful action begins at 58% or a role of 7 of higher. *Chance of Successful Action modified by Facilitator evaluation of strength of: (Action argument +/- supporting facts) + (substantive supporting arguments and supporting facts) - (substantive counter arguments and supporting facts)*



Types of Matrix Game Actions (DIME examples):

Diplomatic: Influencing the international situation through bilateral and multilateral agreements, negotiations, and engagements (such as conferences or summit meetings). The Diplomatic element is conducted with foreign nations, the United Nations, and also Non-Governmental/International Organizations.

Example actions:

- Diplomatic Recognition
- Negotiation Conference
- Advocacy Conference
- Coalition Building Conference
- Intimidation
- Coordinate with NGOs

Other Examples:

- Restrict Diplomatic relations
- Break Diplomatic Relations
- Embassy Drawdown

Information: Communicating intent and perspectives or influencing another country's ability to utilize communications or communications networks or reinforcing one's own. Can be used officially via government statements and release, public appearances and displays, or laws and policies or informally through culture, news broadcast and, to some degree, commercial exports. Also includes Cyber operations.

Example actions:

- Press Release
- Public Policy Statements
- Espionage
- Psychological Operations
- Influencing Media
- Cyber Attack

Other Examples:

- Cyber Defense
- Intimidation
- Electronic Warfare

Military: The use of a state's *armed forces, paramilitary forces* (federal police, coast guards, civil maritime forces) or *partnered irregular forces* (motorcycle gangs, rebels, etc). Military actions can be used to compel an adversary or prevent a state from being compelled just as easily as it can be used to bolster an ally through unique capabilities.

Example actions:

- Combined Exercises
- Training
- Special Operations
- Irregular Warfare
- Peacekeeping
- Strikes and Raids

Other Examples:

- Humanitarian Assistance
- Freedom of Navigation
- Show of Force
- Blockades
- Conventional/Nuclear War

Economic: Shaping international activity through government spending/taxation, policy on money supply and interest rates, trade agreements, trade policy, and other negotiated trade arrangements in addition to government policy to promote international trade activity and sometimes trade interests.

Example actions:

- Trade Sanctions
- Trade Agreements
- Freeze/Seize Assets
- Foreign Aid
- Debt Forgiveness
- Economic Development

Other Examples:

- Embargoes
- Technology Controls
- Regulations
- Environmental regulations & Agreements

Note: Subsequent pages will expand upon and provide sample arguments for each of these elements of power

Diplomatic Action Examples

Diplomatic Recognition	Negotiation Conference / Summit	Advocacy Conference
<p>Task: The US releases a statement saying that it recognizes Vietnam's claims to Paracel Islands</p> <p>Purpose: To bring Vietnam closer to the US and to deter China from future actions in the Paracel Islands</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Increased cooperation between the US and Vietnam and a reduction in China's willingness to impede travel in the region</p> <p>Justification: We maintain close diplomatic ties to both Vietnam and China as well as the military might to back up our assertions</p>	<p>Task: Vietnam would like to invite the other members of ASEAN to a summit to discuss overfishing in the South China Sea</p> <p>Purpose: To create a regional consensus on how to deal with overfishing in the SCS</p> <p>Expected Outcome: A meeting after this turn where the members of ASEAN agree on how to deal with overfishing in SCS</p> <p>Justification: We are a member of ASEAN, the ASEAN countries have generally good relations with one another, and ASEAN is an economic organization</p>	<p>Task: The US hosts and publicizes a conference on the struggles of DPRK citizens</p> <p>Purpose: To pressure DPRK into addressing human rights abuses and to build awareness of DPRK's abuses on the world stage</p> <p>Expected Outcome: The world will view DPRK less favorably in the future as well as building a consensus for punishing DPRK for its transgressions</p> <p>Justification: The DPRK has one of the worst human rights records in the world and the US has hosted similar conferences in the past</p>
Intimidation	Coalition Building Conferences	Coordinate with NGOs
<p>Task: China restricts travel of Vietnamese citizens though Chinese claimed territory for a two week span due to "terror" concerns</p> <p>Purpose: To force the Vietnamese into accepting Chinese fishing controls in the SCS</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Vietnam agrees to China's terms after this show of force</p> <p>Justification: The Chinese Navy and Coast Guard are well trained, particularly for the task at hand</p>	<p>Task: Vietnam holds a conference inviting other regional powers to discuss opposition to China's aggression in the South China Sea</p> <p>Purpose: To create a framework for opposing China within the SCS</p> <p>Expected Outcome: The regional powers band together and present a unified front against Chinese aggression</p> <p>Justification: The majority of states within the SCS region have been targeted by China in the past and ASEAN provides an initial framework</p>	<p>Task: The US provides funds, as well as logistical and administrative support, to good governance NGOs in Vietnam</p> <p>Purpose: To improve the Vietnamese government's ability to respond to their people's needs, lowering their chance of unrest</p> <p>Expected Outcome: The NGOs work with Vietnam's government to improve its ability to work with its own citizens to solve problems</p> <p>Justification: The US has many good governance NGOs and has worked with both these NGOs and the Vietnamese government in the past</p>

Information Action Examples

Press Release	Public Policy Statements	Espionage <i>(note, can also be accomplished by cyber)</i>
<p>Task: The US publishes a press release condemning the continued human rights abuses in Russia</p> <p>Purpose: To deteriorate world support for the Russian government</p> <p>Expected Outcome: A variety of nations will be less likely to support Russian activities and objectives in the future</p> <p>Justification: The US has a long history of working with the world community as well as frequently shunning countries who display a flagrant disregard for human rights</p>	<p>Task: Malaysia releases its new plan to bring about closer integration with other ASEAN countries</p> <p>Purpose: To create greater ties with other regional powers and start to make ASEAN a more centralized organization</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Increased cooperation between ASEAN countries</p> <p>Justification: Malaysia is a member of ASEAN and has good relations with other regional powers</p>	<p>Task: Vietnam uses its fishing boats to perform covert surveillance of China's island building efforts in the South China Sea</p> <p>Purpose: To monitor developments in the island construction and record vulnerabilities for future use</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Vietnam acquires general knowledge of the status and structure of China's island bases</p> <p>Justification: The Vietnamese fishing boats already operate within the region, and the equipment required is relatively inexpensive</p>
Psychological Operations	Influencing Media	Cyber Warfare
<p>Task: Russia spreads anti-government propaganda over Latvian social media.</p> <p>Purpose: To foment unrest and reduce trust between the Latvia's population and its government</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Reduced effectiveness of Latvian security forces and internal services</p> <p>Justification: Russia has used social media to this effect in the past</p>	<p>Task: Vietnam uses its connections with regional media to air a series of interviews with fishermen regarding their interactions with the Chinese Coast Guard</p> <p>Purpose: To foster regional displeasure with China's treatment of fishermen in the SCS</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Decreased regional cooperation and coordination with China</p> <p>Justification: The Chinese Coast Guard has ruthlessly deterred fishing vessels for a long period of time and Vietnam is a respected regional power</p>	<p>Task: Russia destroys communications infrastructure in Lithuania</p> <p>Purpose: To cripple Lithuania's ability to communicate effectively both militarily and commercially</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Lithuania has much of its ability to communicate electronically destroyed</p> <p>Justification: Russia has performed similar attacks before, and has one of the most sophisticated cyber operations in the world</p>

Military Action Examples

Combined Exercises	Training	Special Operations
<p>Task: The US invites the member states of ASEAN to participate in a disaster relief exercise in the SCS</p> <p>Purpose: To increase preparedness for natural disasters in and around the SCS</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Increased readiness for disaster relief in the SCS and better interstate cooperation for disaster relief</p> <p>Justification: The US holds joint exercises often, particularly in the Pacific</p>	<p>Task: The Philippines invites the US to participate in counterterrorism training exercises</p> <p>Purpose: To better prepare the Philippine military to better perform counterterror operations</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Increased effectiveness is future counterterror operations</p> <p>Justification: The US has helped with similar training in the past and has strong historic ties to the Philippines</p>	<p>Task: Russia seeks to infiltrate a small team of special operations units into Ukraine in Ukrainian Army uniforms to attack Ukrainian military targets</p> <p>Purpose: To sow confusion and fear in the ranks of the Ukrainian military</p> <p>Expected Outcome: A reduction in the ability of the Ukrainian military to communicate and coordinate internally</p> <p>Justification: Russia has performed similar false flag operations in the past and the Ukrainian military is relatively unorganized</p>
Peacekeeping	Irregular Warfare	Strikes and Raids
<p>Task: Turkey and Greece invite the UN to place a peacekeeping force between their holdings in Cyprus</p> <p>Purpose: To deter both sides from performing a preemptive strike in Cyprus</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Decreased tensions between Greece and Turkey on the issue of Cyprus</p> <p>Justification: Both sides have agreed to have peacekeepers</p>	<p>Task: A Russian influenced motorcycle gang (or Russian aligned rebel forces) seizes control of a town in the western Donbass</p> <p>Purpose: To weaken the Ukrainian government's control over their territory and inspire other Russian-minority groups to action.</p> <p>Expected Outcome: The Ukrainian central government's control over its territory is weakened</p> <p>Justification: Russia has previously demonstrated the ability to use proxy forces to accomplish its goals in the Crimea</p>	<p>Task: The US plans and executes a series of airstrikes against suspected ISIS training camps</p> <p>Purpose: To disrupt ISIS' ability to recruit and train militants</p> <p>Expected Outcome: A reduction in ISIS' ability to fight and occupy territory</p> <p>Justification: The US has the largest and most advanced air force in the world, one of the best intelligence gathering operations, and several strong regional partners</p>

Economic Action Examples

Sanctions	Trade Agreements	Freeze Assets
<p>Task: The US places sanctions on Russia contingent on their continued aggression in Eastern Europe</p> <p>Purpose: To deter Russian aggression in the Baltic States</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Reduced economic output from Russia until the sanctions are lifted</p> <p>Justification: The US is the strongest world economy and has worked with other nations in the past to sanction rogue states</p>	<p>Task: China proposes a free trade agreement with Malaysia</p> <p>Purpose: To bring Malaysia closer to China and help implement the One Belt One Road initiative</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Bring Malaysia closer to China</p> <p>Justification: China has the means to do this and is largest economy in the region</p>	<p>Task: The US freezes all assets held by Qatar in the US and affiliate states</p> <p>Purpose: To prevent further funding of subversive activities and encourage Qatar cooperation in future endeavors</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Serious restrictions on Qatar's ability to operate until they give in to US demands</p> <p>Justification: The US has performed similar freezes in the past and has some of the world's largest financial entities at its disposal</p>
Foreign Aid	Debt Forgiveness	Economic Development
<p>Task: The US sends several million dollars worth of aid to Nigeria contingent on their continued support of good governance programs</p> <p>Purpose: To encourage further development of democratic institutions in Nigeria</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Increased activity of good governance NGOs in Nigeria</p> <p>Justification: The US has provided aid for these reasons before and there are already several good governance NGOs and programs in Nigeria</p>	<p>Task: The IMF reduces the debt load on Venezuela due to their near default and contingent on structural reforms</p> <p>Purpose: To enable Venezuela to become a functioning state again</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Enabling Venezuela to take the first step towards becoming a functioning state again</p> <p>Justification: IMF provides financial relief to a variety of states and often imposes structural reforms</p>	<p>Task: China provides matching funds for the construction of ports in several ASEAN countries</p> <p>Purpose: To provide the needed infrastructure for China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Additional construction in accordance with the OBOR initiative</p> <p>Justification: China has the funds to do this and has appropriated them to the OBOR plan</p>