



SMA CENTCOM Panel Discussion

The Gulf and Egypt

From the SMA Study in Support of USCENTCOM:

*Assessment of Strategic Implications of Population Dynamics in the
Central Region*

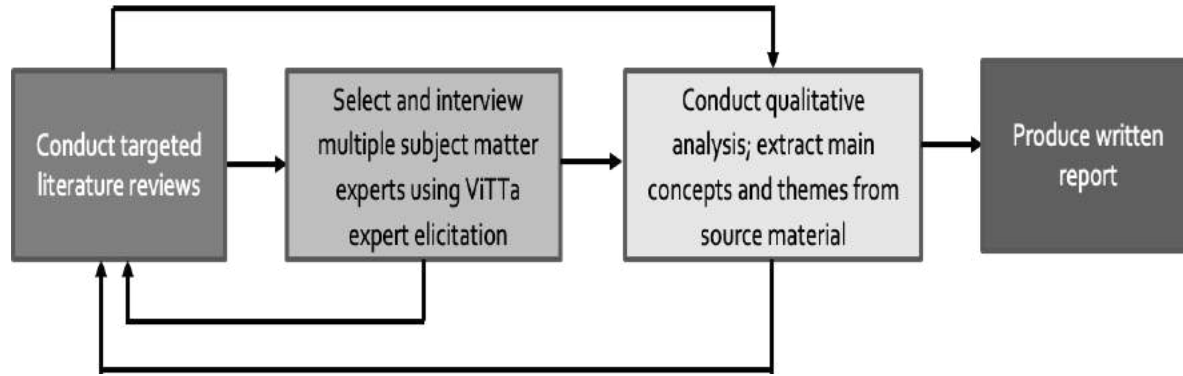
31 March 2020

1300-1430 ET

Tab A Question 1

[A1] What events in EGY (protests, military coup) could result in the U.S. reacting with severe policy shifts and mil-mil restrictions? As a result, would the Government of EGY degrade or deny current access, basing, and overflight (ABO) agreements?

NSI Reachback Methodology



Findings

- The US-Egyptian relationship was already “stress tested” during significant prior events in Egypt (major protests, bloody crackdowns, jailing of thousands, Islamist control, a military coup) and the threshold for a major US policy shift in response to Egyptian events is high
- Experts nonetheless indicate several kinds of events that could prompt a major US policy shift (e.g., deepening ties between Russia and Egypt and violent crackdowns by the Egyptian state)
- Egypt is unlikely to respond with an immediate retaliatory response, but this may change given a more drastic and permanent US policy shift—though Suez restrictions remain unlikely

Relevance to CENTCOM → Recommendations

- Maintain a leadership position in the region
- Reassess the composition and amount of annual US aid provided to Egypt
- Curtail Egyptian spending on unneeded weapons and provide proper equipment and training
- Continue to press Egypt on its violations of human rights
- Encourage democratization in Egypt and the Middle East, more broadly

Technical Approach

- Objective: Using NSI’s Reachback methodology, derive which events could result in major US policy shifts toward Egypt and determine whether and how such shifts affect Egypt’s response
- NSI Reachback methodology takes a layered approach, beginning with targeted literature reviews, refined with expert elicitation, and deepened through qualitative analysis

Key Deliverables & Milestones

- February 2020: A1 Reachback report

Team:

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- Nicole Peterson

Tab A Question 2

Egyptian, Chinese, and Russian Media Perceptions of Egypt's Economic Crisis, Potential Bailout Partners, and Great Power Competition from December 2014-December 2019

Key Findings:

1. Egypt's economy is likely to recover barring exogenous shock (terrorism, pol. Instability, income inequality).
2. Most likely bailout leaders include the IMF/World Bank and Middle Eastern countries (most notably—Saudi Arabia).
3. Chinese interests are more long-term and strategic in nature (sees itself as bailout agent).
4. Russian interests are more tactical and industry specific (more inwardly focused).

Theoretical Approach:

Why look at media?

- Proxy for understanding how foreign nations perceive security environments
- Media = social force & cultural reservoir whereby problems and solutions are discussed
- Elites are often held accountable by their public statements
- Media = tool for social mobilization & policies

Media Sources Selected for Analysis

Egyptian	Chinese	Russian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al-Ahram • Al-Akhar • Al-Ahrar • Al-Wafd • Al-Maydan • Al-Ushu • Arab Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xinhua • Renmin Ribao (People's Daily) • Global Times • China Business News 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rossiyskaya Gazeta • Izvestia • Kommersant • Vedomosti Daily • Argumenty i Fakty • RIA • TASS

Quantitative Content Analysis

- Crisis likely (3 subcategories)
- Crisis causes (8 subcategories)
- Crisis unlikely (8 subcategories)
- Bailout interests (11 subcategories)

Qualitative Narrative Analysis

- Narrative elements (Act, agent, scene, instrument, purpose)
- Key narrative ratios: Scene-Act, Act-Scene, Act-Purpose

News Articles Analyzed

Country	Hits	# (95% CI)
Egypt	620	240
China	220	145
Russia	212	137
Total	522	522

Two Phases: Before / After IMF Bailout

- Phase 1: December 2015-June 2016
- Phase 2: July 2016 to December 2019

Comparative Analysis of Egypt's Economic Outlook: Egyptian, Chinese, & Russian Media Perceptions

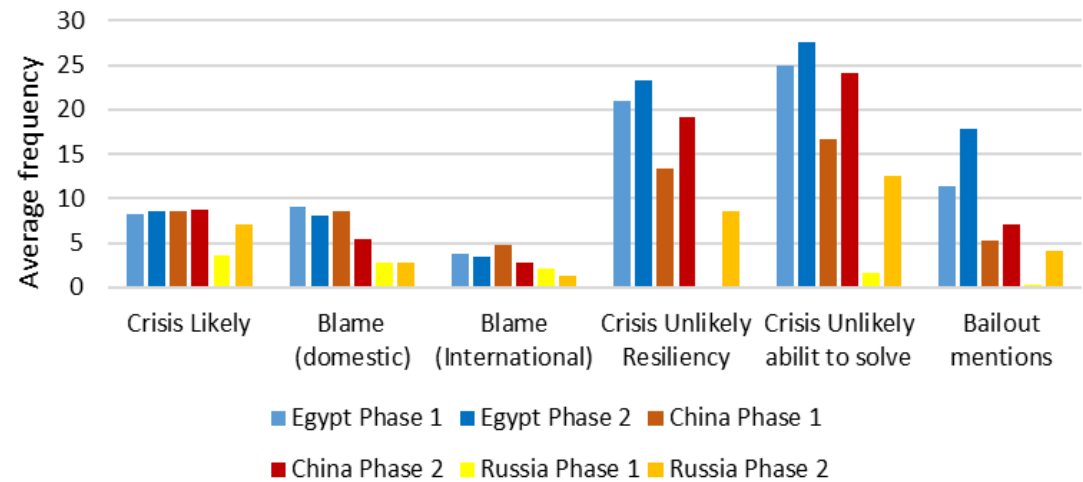
Indicators of crisis being unlikely:

- All three nations report greater Egyptian ability to manage its economic crisis from Phase 1 to Phase 2.
- Increases in both positive reporting of Egyptian reform policies as successfully resolving economic problems and increased reporting of resiliency narratives.

Indicators of crisis being likely:

- Russian media reports of crisis indicators increases from Phase 1 to 2 while Egyptian and Chinese media indicators of crisis remain consistent.
- This suggests the Egyptian economy continues to struggle, despite policies being enacted to resolve Egypt's economic problems.
- Russian and Chinese media express some concerns regarding Egypt's ability to prevent terrorist attacks in Sinai and maintain political stability.

Comparison of Narrative Shifts in Egyptian, Chinese, and Russian Media



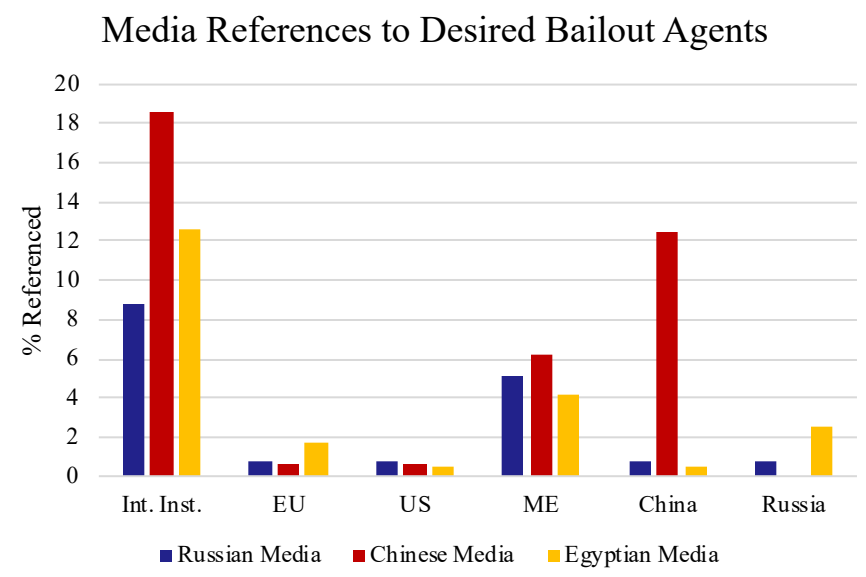
Takeaways:

1. Egyptian, Chinese, and Russian media *converge* in reporting Egypt's ability to manage crisis, although some concerns remain.
2. Barring some exogenous shock to the Egyptian economy, Egypt should weather crisis. Key threats include terrorist attacks and global financial crises threatening its tourism industry.
3. Some concern regarding economic inequality threatening domestic stability.

Comparison of References to Likely Bailout Agents: Egyptian, Chinese, and Russian Media

	Bailout Leader Comparisons			
	China	Russia	ME	IMF/WB
Egyptian Media		X	X	X
Chinese Media	X		X	X
Russian Media			X	X

- Most likely bailout agents: Middle Eastern countries: primary: Saudi Arabia; secondary: UAE, Qatar.
- China sees itself as a bailout leader, but Egypt and Russia do not.
- Egypt slightly views Russia as bailout leader, but Russia does not.



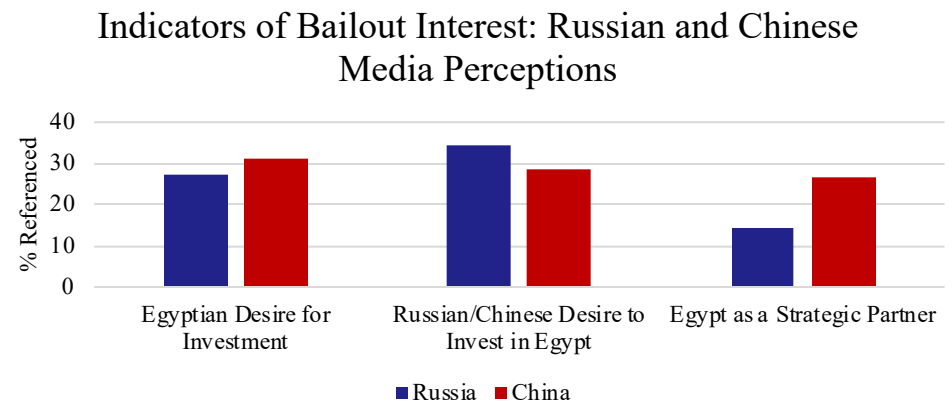
Comparison of Russian and Chinese interests in Egypt within Russian and Chinese Media

Russian Interests

- Tactical, stresses individual sectors: (weapons sales, tourism, oil/gas)
- Inward focus on Russian industries

Chinese Interests

- Strategic, long-term investments; broad areas of economic cooperation
- Tied to One Belt, One Road initiative





Media Narratives about Egypt’s Economic Crisis: Narrative Ratios and Shifts

Takeaways:

1. Initially, Egyptian media reports describe the economic crisis as dictating Egypt’s economic actions and reforms (**Scene-Act**)
2. As time went on, reports emphasize the government’s ability to manage the crisis through active economic measures (**Act-Scene**)
3. As more time went on, reports highlight the government’s intent for specific economic measures, suggesting public buy-in for continued reform policies (**Act-Purpose**)

Implications:

- Egypt’s actions emerge as the driving force to control the crisis (**Agency**)
- Explanation of successful action invites public support for Egypt to continue economic reforms (**New Rhetorical Trajectory**)

Table 3. Narrative Shifts in Egyptian Media

Ratios:	Frequency	Average across time
Scene-Act	49	2.02
Act-Scene	51	2.75
Act-Purpose	39	3.15

Examples:

Scene-Act: “MP Basant Fahmi called for a speedy plan to save the Egyptian economy over the next six months, citing warnings from two international reports on Egypt that pointed to the possibility of a disaster due to the economic crisis”.

Act-Scene: “After the government succeeded in raising the growth rate to 5.3% in 2017/2018 against an average growth of 2.3% in the period from 2011 to 2014, supported by a strong performance and a positive contribution from investments and exports, which is reflected in the decline in unemployment rates to less than 10% June 2018, the lowest rate since 2010”.

Act-Purpose: “During the formulation and implementation of structural reforms aimed at increasing the competitiveness of the sector and in line with global trends, which contributes to turn the challenges into opportunities that can be used to develop the sector and make it more resilient to shocks”.

Comparison of Chinese and Russian Media Narratives: Ratios and Shifts

Table 4. Narrative Shifts in Chinese Media

Ratios:	Frequency	Average across time
Act-Purpose	28	3.04
Act-Scene	34	3.24
Scene-Act	28	3.04

Takeaways:

1. China's media narratives are evenly distributed
2. China's actions mostly aim at improving Egyptian-Chinese relations and Egypt's support for the Belt and Road initiative (**Act-Purpose**)
3. Act-Scene narratives vary, but Chinese media reports mostly embed Egyptian actions within Chinese-Egyptian cooperation (**Act-Scene**)
4. Scene-Act narratives vary, but the scene is an equally balanced mix of Egypt's economic successes and challenges in the crisis (**Scene-Act**)

Implications:

- China presents itself an economic partner for Egypt's economic recovery
- Chinese media build a strategic long-term narrative that treats Egypt as a partner in its Belt Road initiative

Table 6. Narrative Shifts in Russian Media

Ratios:	Frequency	Average across time
Scene-Act	19	2.89
Agent-act	67	2.51
Instrument-Purpose	14	4.57

Takeaways:

1. Russia's media narratives appear tactical, rather than strategic
2. Russia's investment in Egypt as the result of a history of Russian support for African countries (**Scene-Act**)
3. Russian energy companies, military, and tour operators are the drivers for cooperation and modernization in Egypt (**Agent-Act**)
4. Creation of a Russian industrial zone in Egypt as an important means to expand Russian enterprises into African markets (**Instrument-Purpose**)

Implications:

- Russia's tactical, inward focused, and industry driven narratives restrict Egypt's role
- Lack of clear overarching idea or purpose that defines Russia's actions regarding Egypt

Comparison of Topics: Chinese and Russian Media Narratives

Table 5. Chinese Media Topic Frequencies

Topics	Frequency
Egyptian-Chinese trade and scientific expositions and symposiums	10
Egyptian-Chinese bilateral visits and official meetings (including G20 meeting hosted in China)	11
Positive general relations between China and Egypt (Belt Road, cultural diplomacy)	18
Chinese opportunities for investment into Egypt	11
Suez Canal	7
Tourism industry	16
IMF/World Bank/Credit ratings	15
Positive developments/reforms of economy	22
Economic weakness (crisis, lack of investment, currency)	9
Internal Egyptian politics	8
Egyptian-Saudi relations	4
Dam politics (Sudan, Ethiopia)	4
Other	10

Table 7. Russian Media Topic Frequencies

Topic	Frequency
History of good African -Russian relations	16
Russia as modernizer and defender of African countries against Western influence	11
Russian nuclear companies as “engines of nuclear modernization” in foreign countries	18
Restoring Russian-Egyptian tourism industry after A321 incident	22
Russia reorients to other countries for wheat exports; not dependent on Egyptian markets	9
Russia does not dependent on foreign tourist destinations; high demand for domestic tourism	12
Investment in Egyptian markets and industries	15
Egypt’s economy depends on Russian tourism	8
Russian-Egyptian military and economic cooperation	11
Egypt and the Suez Canal	2
Rex Tillerson as positive influence for US-Russian relations	3
Other	10

Takeaways:

1. Chinese media agendas highlight actions taken by both the Chinese and Egyptian to strengthen the Egyptian economy and provide opportunities for the Egyptian people (**Dialogic Cultural Diplomacy**)
2. Russian media agendas emphasizes its economic and military role for rebuilding the Egyptian, rather than treating Egypt as an equal partner in this endeavor (**One-Way Public Diplomacy**).

Tab A Question 7



The Athena Simulation

Modeling the Sociocultural Landscape



CENTCOM Regional Stability Project CENTCOM Question A7

Saudi Arabia Regime Change Dynamics

31 March 2020



Task & Concept



Task Statement. In support of USCENTCOM and the Joint Staff J-39 Strategic Multilayer Assessment, the TRADOC G-2 Modeling and Simulations Directorate (MSD) employs the Athena Simulation to address research questions posed by CENTCOM that will explore the strategic implications of destabilizing population dynamics within the Central Region.

Question A7: What happens if there is a revolt in the House of Saud? What happens if there is a collapse of the House of Saud? Will Wahhabi clerics seize or attempt to seize control? Do Saudi forces (especially the SANG) stay loyal?

Study Concept. The study tested various possible regime change dynamics that might affect the House of Saud. Three primary options were evaluated, the first reflecting the implementation of a progressive, liberalization agenda, the second calling for the reasserting of traditional hardline Islamic standards of conduct, and in the third, the implications of a place revolt (coup) were explored. The population's satisfaction with governance, overall mood and feelings of security were the primary factors evaluated.



Athena Model Design



Three Use Cases & Two Excursions:

1. Progressive (Baseline)
2. Traditional
3. Coup
 - Robust SANG Support
 - Extended US Force Presence

Six Key Actors:

- Mohammad bin Salman
- Mohammad bin Nayef
- Rebel Prince
- SANG Loyal to Saudi Government
- SANG Rebel Faction
- Council of Religious Scholars

Four Key Civilian Groups in Saudi Arabia:

- **Governing Elites.** This segment of the civilian population includes members of the Saudi royal family and senior Ulama.
- **Sunni Religious Hardliners:** This segment of the population is composed of a mix of hardline clergy, Islamist intellectuals, and a small jihadist fringe.
- **Progressive Reformers.** This civilian population includes businesspeople, intellectuals, and moderate religious leaders.
- **Disgruntled Youth.** Members of this segment are young and primarily Wahhabis who live in Riyadh and the rural areas of central Saudi Arabia.

Athena Modeling Totals: 16 Actors, 7 Civilian Groups, 9 Belief Topics



Use Cases



- **Use Case 1 (Progressive)**. Establishes conditions in Saudi Arabia reflecting the implementation of a progressive liberalization agenda ushered in by a change in the ruling leadership following the death of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and the installation of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as the King.
- **Use Case 2 (Traditional)**. Sets conditions in Saudi Arabia during a period in which the leadership of the country reestablishes more traditional standards of Islamic conduct. This regime change is depicted in two phases, the first of which is ushered in by a change in the ruling leadership following the death of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman assuming the throne. The second phase then introduces resistance by royal/government hardliners and the 'Council of Senior Scholars' to the liberalization agenda leading to Mohammad bin Salman being deposed and Mohammed bin Nayef being installed as King. This two-phase regime change occurs peacefully under controlled, managed circumstances ending in the formation of a new ruling government that will reinstitute many of the traditional standards of Islamic conduct and economic conservancy.
- **Use Case 3 (Coup)**. Provides a set of conditions in Saudi Arabia reflecting a time of significant turmoil following the death of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and the assumption of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to the throne in which hardline traditionalists launch a coup led by an obscure, hardline Saudi Prince to seize control of the ruling regime. Fighting occurs principally in Abqaiq and Riyadh.

Excursions



- **Use Case 3 (Coup)**. Use Case #3 introduces a set of conditions in Saudi Arabia reflecting a time of significant turmoil following the death of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and the assumption of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to the throne in which hardline traditionalists launch a coup led by an obscure, hardline Saudi Prince with formal ties to the Saudi Monarchy in order to seize control of the ruling regime. Fighting occurs principally in Abqaiq (petroleum producing region) and Riyadh.
 - **Robust SANG Support** (3a). In this excursion, the size of the Saudi Arabian National Guard supporting the rebel prince is doubled to determine if there is a tipping point associated with force structure & support that might enable the coup to succeed.
 - **Extended US Force Presence** (3b). This excursion is initially modeled as is shown in Use Case #3 (Coup), in which the US introduces military Abqaiq with a mission of protecting the nation's oil producing capabilities; however, in this modeling run, US forces are left in place rather than being removed after the Rebel Prince's forces are pulled out of Abqaiq.



List of Athena Insights



Insight #1. The Progressive Agenda (Vision 2030) being implemented by Saudi leadership could be at risk if implemented too aggressively.

Insight #2. The civilian population has greater overall satisfaction with the conditions in Saudi Arabia established under the Progressive Agenda than they do under the more hardline traditionalist future.

Insight #3. The Saudi youth population is a key societal demographic that can sway Saudi Arabia towards the progressive agenda goals or toward more traditional hardline values depending on how it is engaged and/or influenced.

Insight #4. A coup in Saudi Arabia is unlikely to succeed unless a significant portion of the Saudi Arabian National Guard supports the rebellion.

Insight #5. The Progressive Agenda (Vision 2030) being implemented by Mohammed bin Salman leads to economically better conditions across all population groups despite how particular groups feel about the Progressive Agenda.

Insight #6. The Wahhabi clerics will not have sufficient long-term popular support to effectively seize control of the government.

Insight #7. Population satisfaction declines across all civilian groups if US forces remain deployed indefinitely in control of the oil producing region and resources of Saudi Arabia.



Insight #2 – Progressive Agenda



Question A7: What happens if there is a revolt in the House of Saud? What happens if there is a collapse of the House of Saud? Will Wahhabi clerics seize or attempt to seize control? Do Saudi forces (especially the SANG) stay loyal?

Insight #2. The civilian population has greater overall satisfaction with the conditions in Saudi Arabia established under the Progressive Agenda than they do under the more hardline traditionalist future.

Description. Over the long-term, the civilian populations across Saudi Arabia are more generally satisfied with the conditions set under the Progressive Agenda being implemented by Mohammad bin Salman than that of the more traditionalist agenda espoused under Mohammed bin Nayef. The progressive agenda however, does take additional time to gain traction with the majority of the civilian population, so over the first two years there is a downward trend that can be expected to stabilize as the population becomes more comfortable with the freedoms found under the progressive agenda.

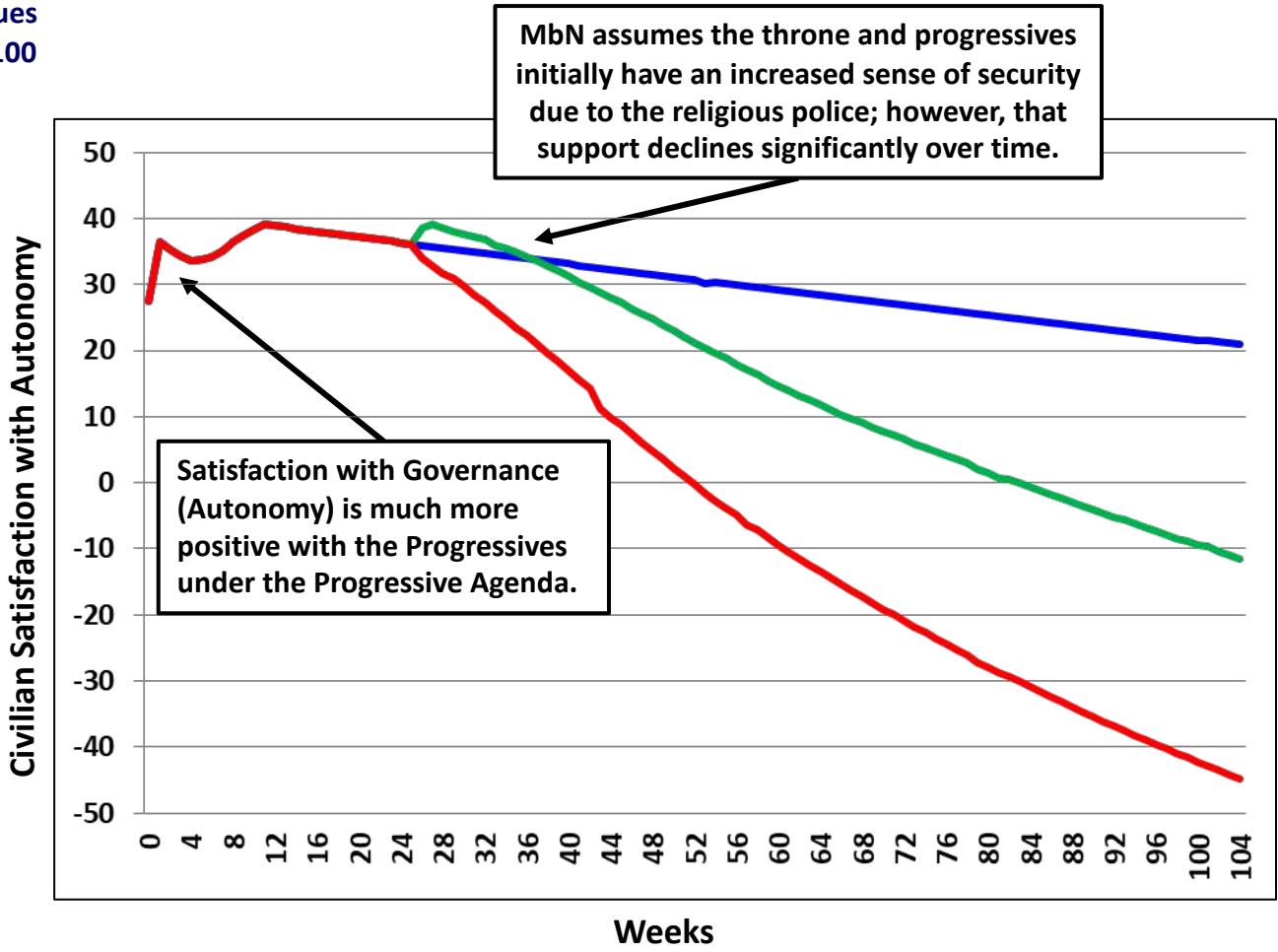


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Progressives Satisfaction with Governance

Model Values
(Range : +100
to -100)



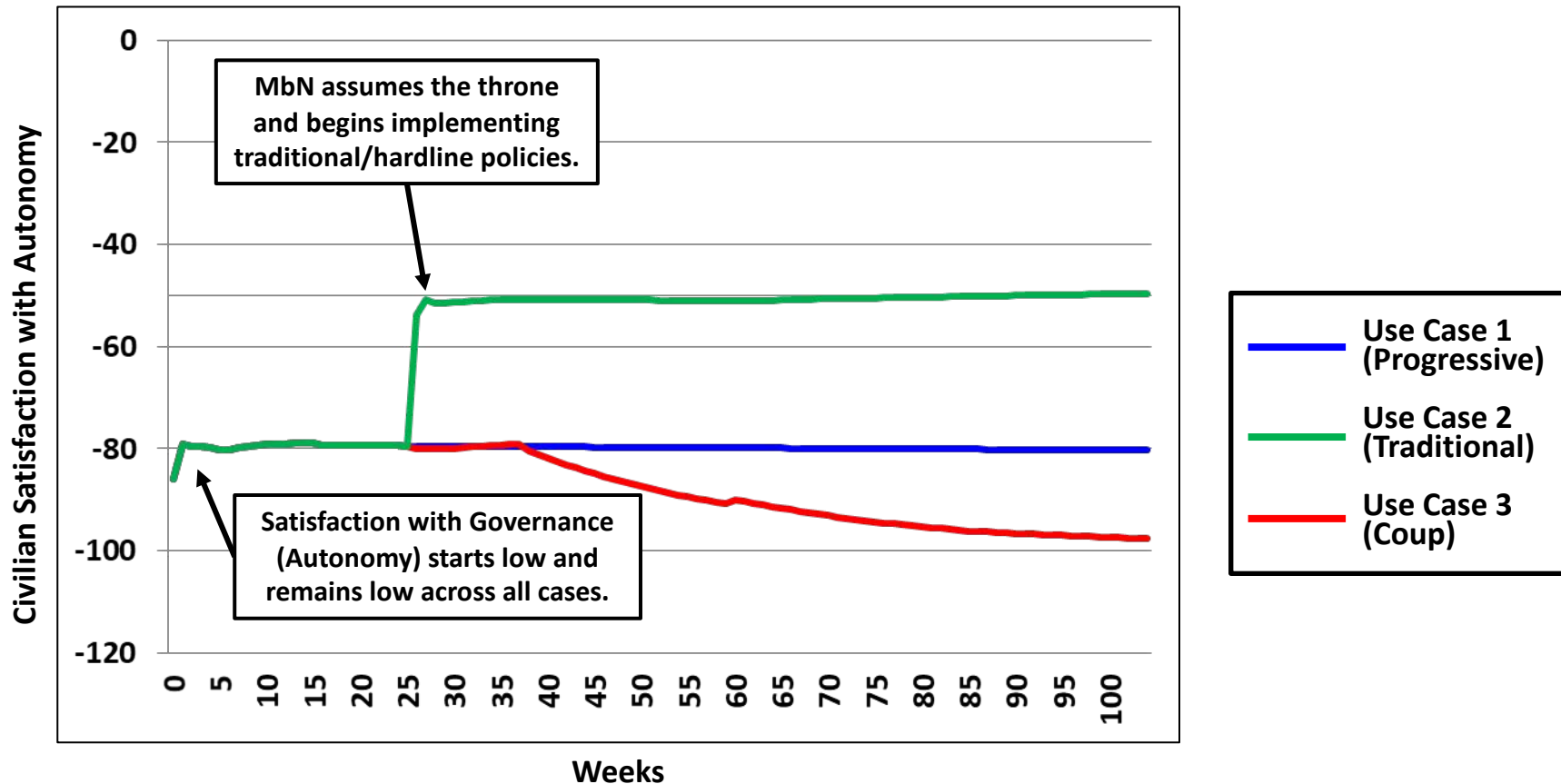
- Use Case 1 (Progressive)
- Use Case 2 (Traditional)
- Use Case 3 (Coup)

The Progressives feel greater satisfaction with governance under the leadership of MbS than that of MbN and that satisfaction is considerably more enduring.

Hardliners Satisfaction with Governance



Model Values
(Range : +100
to -100)



Religious Hardliners feel increased satisfaction with governance under MbN's leadership and hardline agenda than they do with that of MbS and his Progressive Agenda.



Insight #5 – Economics



Question A7: What happens if there is a revolt in the House of Saud? What happens if there is a collapse of the House of Saud? Will Wahhabi clerics seize or attempt to seize control? Do Saudi forces (especially the SANG) stay loyal?

Insight #5. The Progressive Agenda (Vision 2030) being implemented by Mohammed bin Salman leads to economically better conditions across all population groups despite how particular groups feel about the Progressive Agenda.

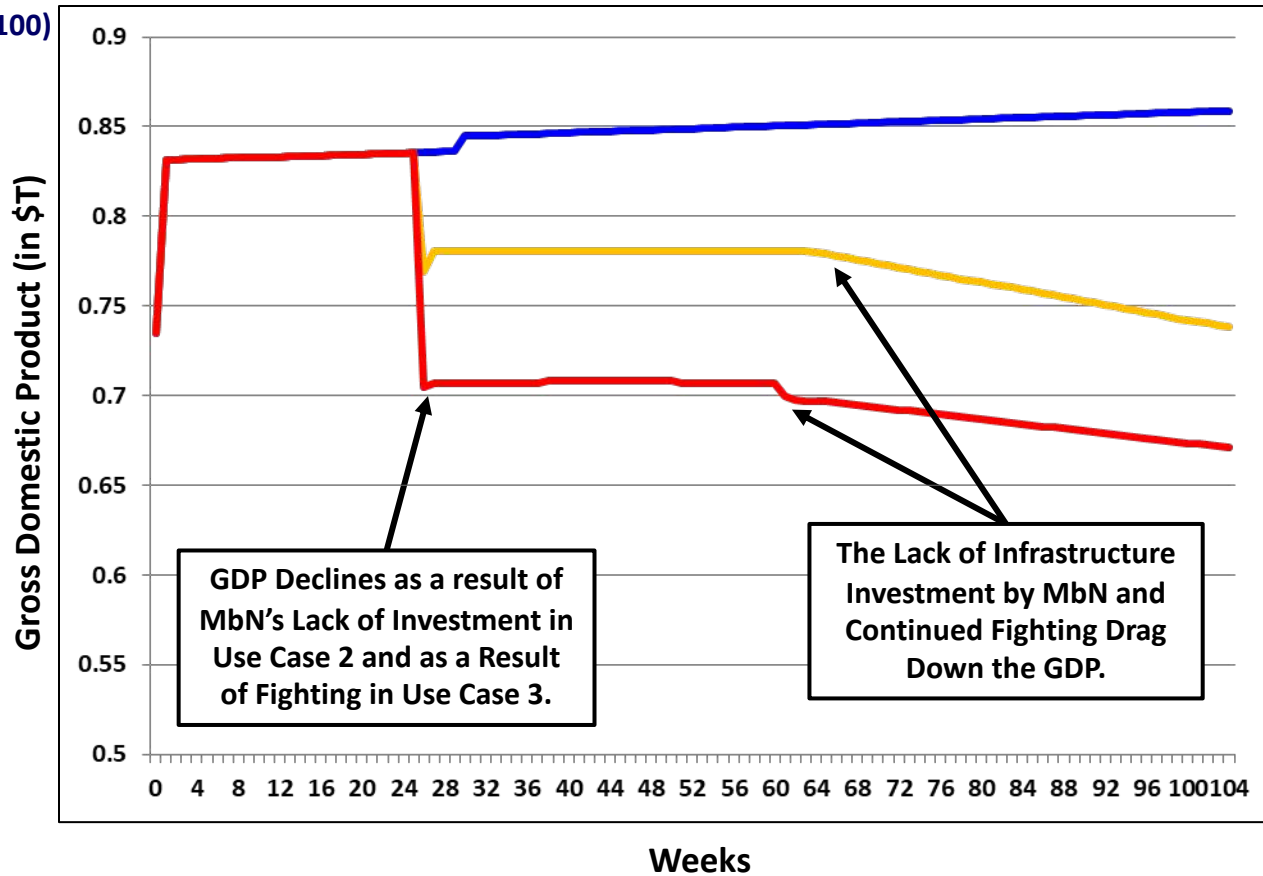
Description. The implementation of alternative futures in Saudi Arabia (progressive versus traditional) has a significant impact on the direction and stability of the Saudi economy, as measured by the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the national unemployment rate. Those two measures are influenced by the underlying agendas promulgated by MbS and MbN and support of the civilian populations. Both measures show a clear indication that the Progressive Agenda has better long-term implications for Saudi Arabia.



Gross Domestic Product Over Time



Model Values
(Range : 0 to 100)



- Use Case 1 (Progressive)
- Use Case 2 (Traditional)
- Use Case 3 (Coup)

GDP Declines as a result of MbN's Lack of Investment in Use Case 2 and as a Result of Fighting in Use Case 3.

The Lack of Infrastructure Investment by MbN and Continued Fighting Drag Down the GDP.

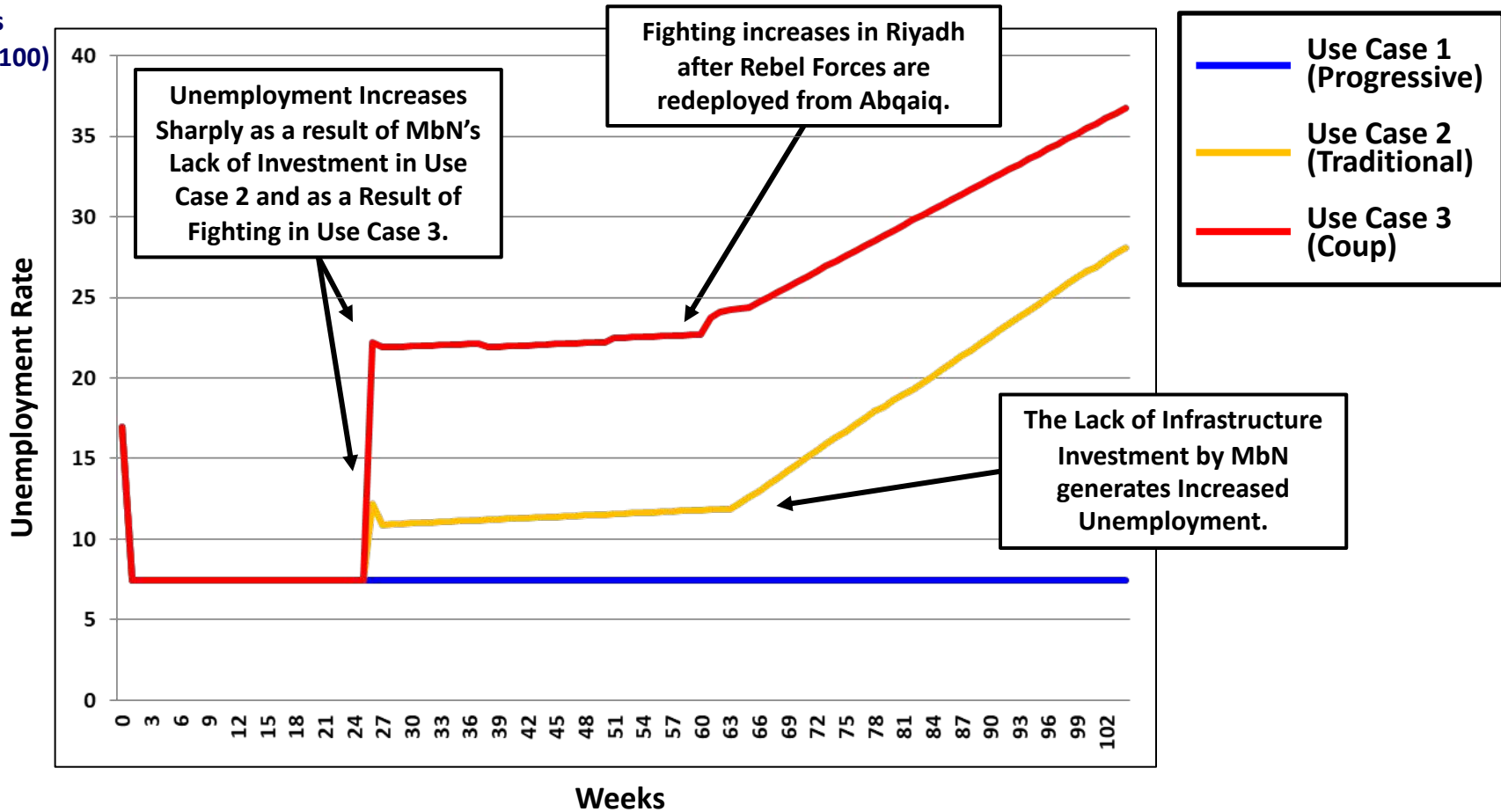
GDP is Affected by MbN's Lack of Investment (Use Case 2) and as a Result of Fighting (Use Case 3). This Decline in GDP Continues Later Due the Ongoing Fighting and Lack of Investment. GDP Continues to Grow Under the Progressive Agenda (Use Case 1).



Unemployment Rate Over Time



Model Values
(Range : 0 to 100)



Unemployment Increases Sharply Beginning at Week 26 as a Result of MbN's Lack of Investment (Use Case 2) and as a Result of Fighting (Use Case 3). This Growth in Unemployment Continues Later Due the Ongoing Fighting and Lack of Investment.



Insight #6 – Wahhabi Cleric Influence



Question A7: What happens if there is a revolt in the House of Saud? What happens if there is a collapse of the House of Saud? Will Wahhabi clerics seize or attempt to seize control? Do Saudi forces (especially the SANG) stay loyal?

Insight #6. The Wahhabi clerics will not have sufficient long-term popular support to effectively seize control of the government.

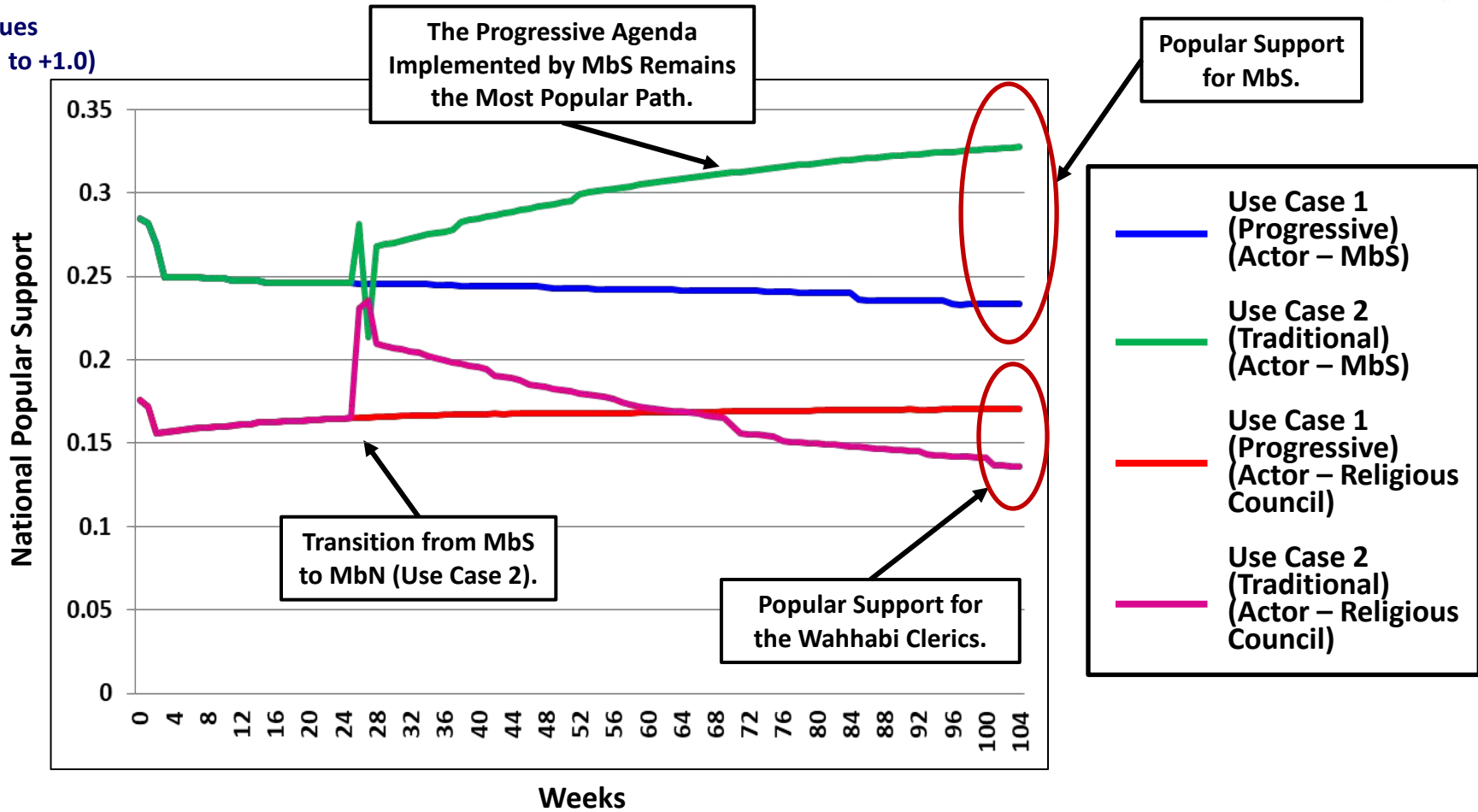
Description. The Wahhabi clerics exert considerable influence over the trajectory and speed of the progressive agenda. However, if they seek to seize control of the current government by deposing MbS and placing MbN in power, as modeled in Use Case 2, then the overall trajectory of popular support and attitude across the country declines. These actions will potentially lead to an increasingly chaotic future state and may also be susceptible to radical actors.



National Direct Support for Key Actors



Model Values
(Range : 0 to +1.0)



In Both Cases, the Religious Council (Wahhabi Clerics) Have Insufficient Popular Support to Displace the Monarchy and Establish a Theocracy.



Insight #7 – U.S. Presence



Question A7: What happens if there is a revolt in the House of Saud? What happens if there is a collapse of the House of Saud? Will Wahhabi clerics seize or attempt to seize control? Do Saudi forces (especially the SANG) stay loyal?

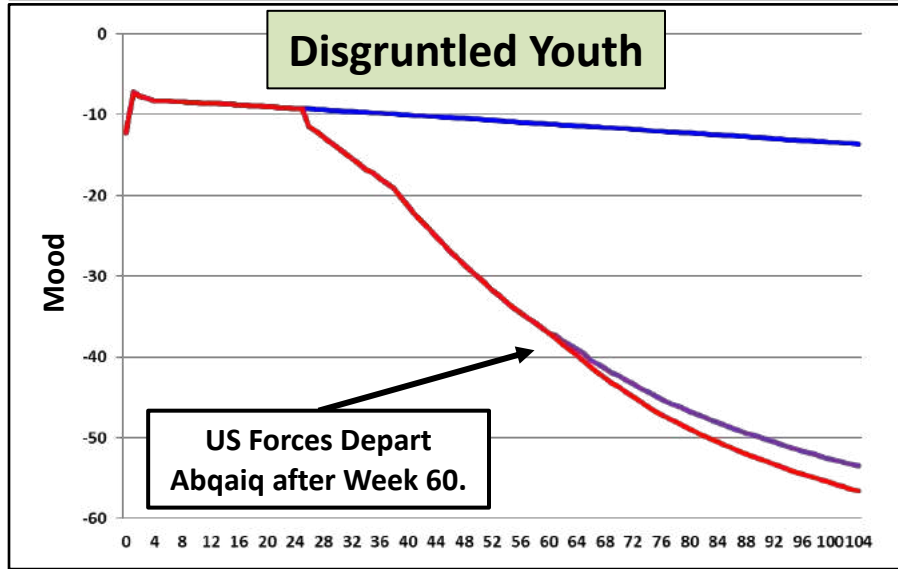
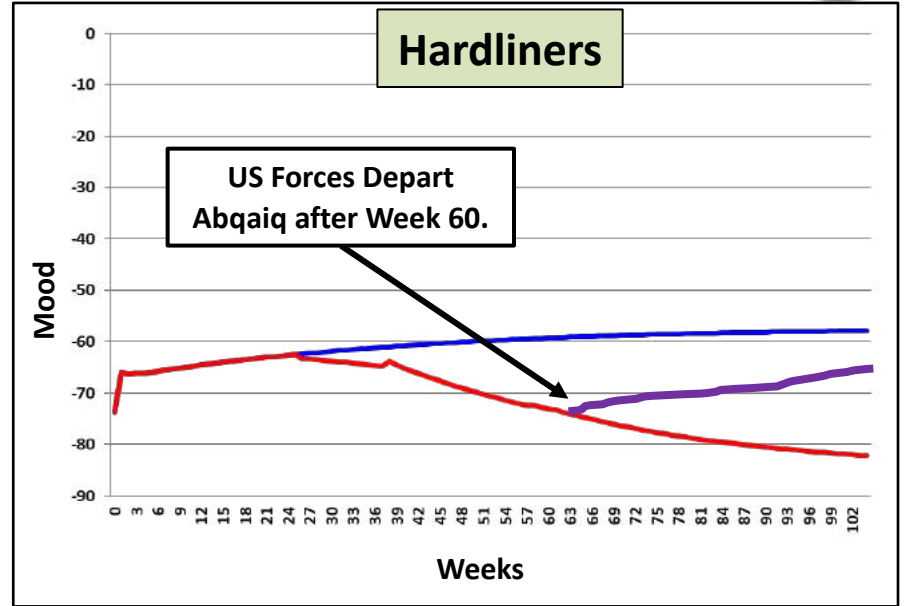
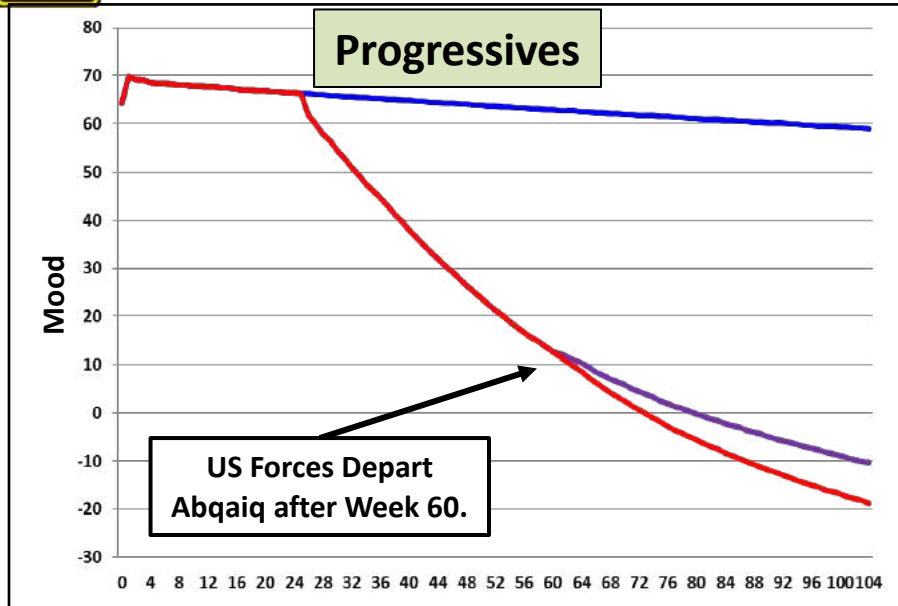
Insight #7. Population satisfaction declines across all civilian groups if US forces remain deployed indefinitely in control of the oil producing region and resources of Saudi Arabia.

Description. The fundamental values (beliefs) of the various civilian groups do not encourage the presence of western military forces on their sovereign territory. The introduction of US forces is accepted for a short period reflecting the civilian population's understanding that the US actions in securing the oil fields are necessary; however, if those forces remain in place for an extended period, the population's dissatisfaction with this situation will continue to decline, creating a strong negative attitude toward the US.



U.S. ARMY

Population Mood in Nejd (UC 3 - Excursion)



- Use Case 1 (Progressive / Baseline)
- Use Case 3 (Coups) – US Forces Depart Abqaiq
- Use Case 3 (Coups) – US Forces Remain in Abqaiq

In each case, the departure of US forces following completion of the mission improves the satisfaction (mood) of all the civilian groups.



Contact Information



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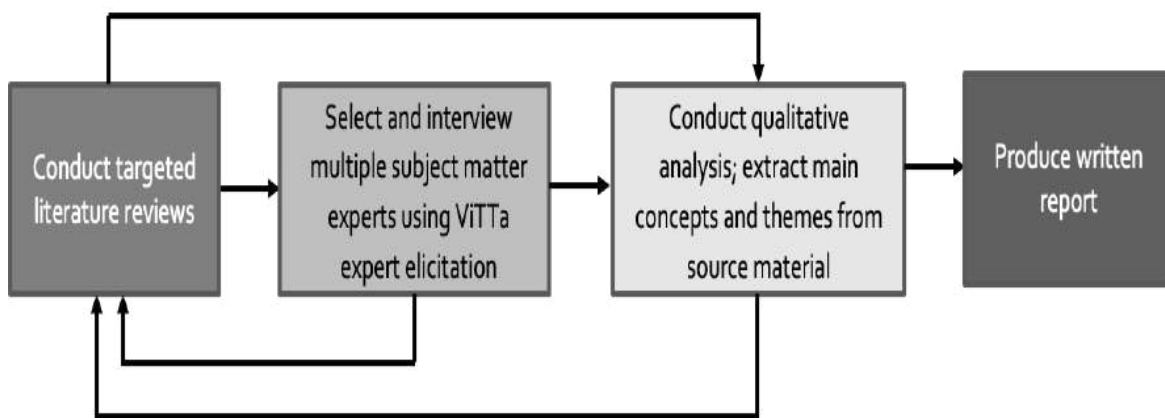
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Tab A Question 9

NSI Reachback Methodology



Technical Approach

- Objective: Using NSI's Reachback methodology and supplemented by SME input, identify areas of conflicting interests of relevant state and & non-state actors to determine both likely triggers and buffers of military escalation in the Qatar-Quartet rift, and how such a scenario would affect US, Russian, and Chinese interests, as well as interests of regional actors.
- NSI Reachback methodology takes a layered approach, beginning with targeted literature reviews, refined with Virtual Think Tank (ViTTa)TM expert elicitation, and deepened through integrated analysis

Findings

- Risk of militarization is low, but underlying tensions will persist in near-medium term.
- Most likely avenues of escalation are proxy conflict, unintentional confrontation, and highly overt Qatari support for Quartet oppositionists.
- Turkish, Iranian, and Russian support for Qatar make precipitous escalation more likely.
- Russia: act opportunistically to increase influence, US: preserve GCC and Arab Gulf cohesion against Iran, China: lacks influence but support immediate mediation to prevent economic instability.

Relevance to CENTCOM

- Qatar-Quartet security cooperation with CENTCOM affords the US significant leverage to mediate the rift, and mil-mil partnerships can disarm the Iranian narrative of GCC/Arab Gulf weakness and fracture.

Key Deliverables & Milestones

- February 2020: A9 Reachback report

Team:

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- Aleksandra Goncharova
- Tom Rieger

Avenues to Conflict

- Scenarios are unlikely
- While each Avenue may not lead all the way to direct armed conflict between Qatar and the Quartet, even partial movement could still harm US interests and increase instability

Unintentional Confrontation



Proxy Conflict



Qatari-backed Insurrection



- **A9 Interest Mapping:** NSI used an interest assessment of relevant actors in order to determine the buffers and drivers of escalation. Below is an abridged version of the interest table from the full A9 report.

Regional Actors

	Interests Served by De-Escalation	Interests Served by Escalation
Turkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional & Economic Stability • De-Escalation runs counter to most Turkish interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional prestige • Maintain ally (Qatar) in support for Muslim Brotherhood • Increase proxy presence in Libya
Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Regional & Economic Stability • De-Escalation runs counter to most Turkish interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge Saudi regional hegemony • Bolster security and economic relations with Qatar • Create division within the GCC
Oman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US as ally • GCC unity 	
Kuwait	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US as ally • GCC unity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combat Qatari soft power threat to legitimacy

- **A9 Interest Mapping:** NSI used an interest assessment of relevant actors in order to determine the buffers and drivers of escalation. Below is an abridged version of the interest table from the full A9 report.

Qatar-Quartet

Interests Served by De-Escalation

Interests Served by Escalation

	Interests Served by De-Escalation	Interests Served by Escalation
Qatar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional stability and Arab Gulf allies • US as ally • Protect economic access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escape Saudi hegemony; assert independent foreign policy • Expand partnerships beyond Arab Gulf allies (Iran, Turkey, and Russia)
KSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arab cohesion/ United front in vs. Iran • Regional and economic stability • Avoid costly conflict that could threaten legitimacy • US as ally • GCC unity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combat Qatari soft power threat to legitimacy • Combat proxy conflict with Qatar in Yemen and Syria, and competition regarding Palestinian issue • Combat Iranian influence • Reassert regional hegemony
UAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and economic stability • US as ally • GCC unity • Avoid costly conflict that could threaten legitimacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combat Qatari soft power threat to legitimacy • Combat Iranian influence • Combat proxy conflict with Qatar in Yemen, Syria, Libya
Bahrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US as ally • GCC unity • Avoid costly conflict that could threaten legitimacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combat Qatari soft power threat to legitimacy • Combat territorial disputes with Qatar
Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Quartet unity • Avoid costly conflict that could threaten legitimacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combat Qatari ideological threat to legitimacy

- **A9 Interest Mapping:** NSI used an interest assessment of relevant actors in order to determine the buffers and drivers of escalation. Below is an abridged version of the interest table from the full A9 report.

Great Powers

Interests Served by De-Escalation

Interests Served by Escalation

Russia

- Energy interests, exploration of new resources and infrastructure development.
- Advance regional influence & maintain role of peaceful powerbroker

- Opportunities for arms sales
- Increase economic relationship, and begin strategic security cooperation with Qatar

US

- Regional stability
- Regional economic access
- Military presence
- Combat Iranian influence
- United counter-terrorism front

China

- Regional & Economic Stability

What can CENTCOM do?

- Leverage security relationships
- Mil-mil cooperation
- US leadership both in crisis and peacetime to combat Iranian narratives, strategies, and tactics