

Meddling in the Middle East: OPEC Oil Crisis

By Nadia Stouwie

Tensions were high after the OPEC embargo of 1973 was passed, which caused oil prices to rise over 400% in the affected countries. The embargo was the Arab Coalition's response to U.S. intervention in conflicts between Syria and Israel. At MUNSA XXIV, the Historical Crisis 1 committee discussed multiple ways to abolish the embargo and find a peaceful solution to the issues in the Middle East.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) controls over 80% of the world's oil supply, so oil became political leverage for the Arab Coalition. During the conference, it was obvious who had the power in the room. Delegates from western countries voiced their opinion loudly on the situation while countries who were a part of the Arab Coalition seemed to be quiet the entire time; only making about two or three comments.

The debate seemed to be mostly between the U.S.S.R. and the United States. The two countries discussed more who was to blame for the conflict, rather than how they could solve the conflict. "The West's actions are the one who caused the incident," commented the delegation of the U.S.S.R., in regard to the U.S. funding Israel with weapons. The delegate from the U.S. responded with, "We aren't seeking war, we are only protecting our ally, Israel." Out of nowhere, there were heated words from the U.S.S.R calling the western countries the "lapdogs" of the U.S. and calling the U.S. "imperialists."

Soon the debate became more and more of a blame game, and the Middle Eastern countries still remained silent. It then became a debate between communism and capitalism. However, the delegation of the Netherlands spoke up and helped get the room back on track by reminding delegates about why the committee was together and asked how were they going to solve this issue.

Finally, an Arab country spoke up. The delegate of Saudi Arabia stated, "The U.S needs to stop interfering in Israel, and that's how you'll solve the issue." This was backed by a representative from OPEC, who said: "If the West wants their oil, they'll have to listen to our demands." The delegate of Venezuela agreed. Of course, this issue could not be solved in one day. There will be many more discussions about the best way to solve this problem, but the delegates did cover several aspects of the problem and overall made very good progress.