Dear Everyone,

First of all. Please accept my apologies for having to cancel last week’s class and any inconvenience that caused. Unfortunately I had to deal with a difficult family issue that took me out of Ottawa on short notice. I really enjoy teaching this course and I’m grateful for the chance to make up the class on Iran on the 25th.

This coming Monday, we’ll continue as scheduled with the discussion on Terrorism and Globalization. If I can, I’ll have the lecture slides online by Monday morning.

In the meantime, here are my responses to the questions from the ‘news segment’:

The impact of Saudi 2030 Plan on the Bedouin:

I’m afraid I haven’t been able to find out much about this - very sorry. The only one or two things I’ve come across that mention the Bedou population in relation to Vision 2030 refer to the fact that MBS has been very focused on presenting the plan as positive for them (not really a suprise) but I did find one academic sources that might be of interest by Tim Niblock (from Exeter) -
https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781317539971/chapters/10.4324%2F9781315727455-13

Spies in the Middle East:

Obviously not an easy topic to get into in much depth, but here are a couple of sources that either are or should be really interesting: https://primarysources.brillonline.com/browse/us-intelligence-on-the-middle-east
https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/how-britain-engaged-covert-operation-overthrow-assad
http://www.conflictsforum.org/ (Alaster Crooke who writes this was an MI6 officer - and is a source for all sorts of interesting info!)

Women and the ‘Arab Spring’:

A hot topic to say the least! There are all sorts of articles on this in the press. I have no reason to doubt any of it - I’m sure while on the one hand these events presented the possibility of major transformations in the lives of everyone involved, but at the same time there were lots of stories of horrible abuse that took place as well.

The only benefit my academic lens can bring when I look at this is that I question basic notion that anything in this context is really all that exceptional to the norm. Such is the nature of patriarchy that Women are, as we know, often the subjects of male power games in every context. Be that the ‘Arab Spring’ or anywhere else. This does not mean that all women are always victims or that - even in the most oppressive situations - that women lack all agency… If you want to follow up on this in the broader context of the Middle East I strongly suggest looking into the following sources:

Women and Power in the Middle East: Suad Joseph

Women's Political Activism in Palestine: Peacebuilding by Sophie Richter-Devroe (my PhD supervisor!)

Iraqi Women: Untold Stories From 1948 to the Present: Nadje Sadig Al Ali

If I’ve missed anything here please let me know!!

A couple of easy access books and resources on the Middle East that may be of interest (these are the text books I recommend in my Undergrad course):

A History of the Modern Middle East an excellent and detailed history book by William L. Cleveland, Martin Bunton

International Relations of the Middle East by Louise Fawcett

and - If you can access through Carleton (rather than pay $290 for the hardback!) then the new edition of the
Routledge Handbook of International Relations in the Middle East will be out in April (with a chapter by yours truly)!

Additionally - some of you might be interested in this podcast from the LSE by Ian Black (former Diplomatic Editor at the Guardian) on Israel’s developing links with the Gulf States: https://pca.st/9iy7 (there is a whole bunch of fantastic talks available to listen on the LSE website:

For those who prefer to read than listen, I tweeted Dr. Black to ask him if his research would be published, and he said a paper would be forthcoming - so look out for that!

Unfortunately the Audio recording from the last class hasn't worked properly. I'm still hoping there is a way to rescue the file, but I'll let you know.

Looking forward to being back on Monday!

Best wishes,

Phil