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JRMC 460
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CIMAL: The Unconventional Model

LEAD- IN: Cairo International Model Arab League takes place every fall and is currently the largest student-run conference at AUC. It has been held for 21 successive years and has grown to be the largest and most distinguished simulation of the Arab League worldwide. A-U-C's Reem Khedr reports.

NAT sound: *Airstrike (0:06) (FADE OUT)*

Youtube Video: "February the 23rd, 1991, the coalition ground forces started rolling in Kuwait. The allied defenses go fast and deep in Kuwait without encountering significant resistance. The Iraqi military revive is nowhere in sight and the troops still present in Kuwait are simply no match for the modern coalition forces." (0:24) (FADE OUT)

CIMAL, the Cairo International Model Arab League, was sparked by the 1990 Gulf War. Amr Gweily, an AUC political science student at the time, came up with the idea of CIMAL because he believed that students should have their say in what was happening in the Arab World. But this was not the only reason, says Nada Shatat, CIMAL's Organizing Committee head this year reflecting on Gweily's motivations. (0:27)

Shatat: "He found that the Arab League is not as effective as it should be. It should be very powerful and it has the authority but it's not doing anything. So, he started Model Arab League that was more of a vision than a model," (0:13)

Music: *The Arab Dream by 23 Singer from all over the Arab World (0:24) (FADE OUT)*

CIMAL is more than just a student activity on campus. Organizers and participants say that it is a valuable venue for intercultural exchange, negotiations, awareness and decision-making among youth interested in Arab affairs. (0:19)

Shatat: "A script with straight As, I don't think it will last long but my skills, my knowledge and my experience will definitely last long" (0:07)

Youtube Video "Students in the Model Arab League do everything. Most of the students are part of a team that represents a country or a nation in the Arab League. The team will then decide which student delegates will go into each of the committees. After that has been determined, the students will research the current issues of their country in each of these categories. They will then take these issues to their committees and use those stances in discussion and debate. In the committees, they students are given topics to discuss and must set an agenda for the duration of the conference." (0:31)

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Reem Shalaan narrates her experience as a delegate in CIMAL 2008. (0:05)

Shalaan: "The fact that you meet so many people you never thought you'd meet from different ages and you have to work with them so that you can actually develop a plan, represent the country that you are given, work together and sometimes you don't even know these people and they don't necessarily have to be your friends. So, I think one of the best things about MAL is working with someone on something so..I don't wanna say very real because it's still a simulation but at the same time, you try to make it as real as possible. So making it seem real and working with this person to team up and develop that plan is very important. That's one of the very good things. People skills, debating..it taught me a lot. It also benefited me in terms of information. Sometimes...I mean a lot of us know some things about different Arab states. Sometimes we don't even know some things about a certain Arab state."(1:00)

According to Earl Sullivan, the former faculty advisor of CIMAL, the word "model" has more than one meaning. In one sense, it is used to indicate that participants will simulate events and procedures in the real Arab League. Students represent specific countries and must argue for the interests and policies of that country even if they don't agree with the policies. This sense of modeling or simulating is a major focus of the Model Arab League and provides students with an opportunity to learn about contemporary Arab politics and about the functioning of the League of Arab States. (0:36)

Shalaan: "It enabled me to know more about all the Arab states, research more specifically about my state which was Iraq at that time and I didn't know too much about it at the time except that about the US invasion and a couple of things that were going on at that time so it made me go in depth inside that country at the same time in depth of relationships of Iraq with other countries. Because you have to know a lot so that you can deal realistically with them at the council."(0:35)

However, there is also another meaning of the word "model" which also pervades this activity. A model can be thought of as an ideal or an objective. (0:10)

Shatat: "We didn't want to copy and paste it as it is because it's not efficient-at least in our opinion. So we started the Model Arab League with a vision that it should be more effective than the Arab League and I think that over the years, we became a real model. It started with one council. It's an Arabic council -The Arab summit-and it's the only council that we have in the model that is really stimulated in the Arab League" (0:31)

Music: *The Arab Dream* by Nabil Mashaal (0:12) (FADE OUT)

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Ahmed Elessawi, CIMAL's secretary general this year, says it's a reflection of what the Arab League could be. (0:08)

Elessawi: "The councils that we have don't exist in reality. For example one of the English councils this year is the Arab economic forum. There is actually no such thing in reality as the Arab economic forum. Initially we had the idea to have a council of Arab economic unity, which is a council that does exist in the Arab league-if I am not mistaken. However it has, I mean, this span of the last 20 years it has been very inefficient. There is no work being done. So, we thought that instead of stimulating a council that is not effective, we can just make our own council that reflects our own vision."(0:39)

Reem Shalaan, an AUC Economics alumna, commemorated her 2008 CIMAL experience in a poem. (0:09)

Shalaan: "A council nonexistent and yet we remained. We were more than persistent to keep ourselves insane." (0:05)

Music: *The Arab Dream* by Zekra (0:11) (FADE OUT)

The ten councils represented in CIMAL this year reflect the different aspects of the Arab world. The political, economic and social, military and legal relations between the Arab states are discussed respectively in the Council of Arab Foreign Affairs, People's Assembly, The Knesset, The Arab Economic Forum and The Middle East Media Forum. The other councils reflect other aspects. Each year the high board: secretary general, the OC head and the graduate advisor get together to decide on the councils that they all feel would better reflect the situation on the ground and would better be of interest to the delegates who come and discuss it. (0:41)

Shatat: "For example, last year we had the council on Iranian affairs because Iran has a major role in the Arab world and it was very obvious last year. This year, we replace it with the Turkish affairs because we think that Turkey is rising." (0:15)

Elessawi: "It's more relevant this year to have a council on Turkish affairs," (0:03)

CIMAL has a very special theme, which is very carefully chosen every year. (0:05)

Elessawi: "The way we chose the theme is quite a process if I remember correctly it doesn't happen in an hour. We bring together the two branches of MAL. There is the academic committee. The academic committee comprises the secretariats of each council, of the councils that we have, and there is the organizing committee which are the heads

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of each committee that organizes the conference, the sessions and everything throughout the year. So, what we did is that we brought the heads and the secretariats together and we started brainstorming ideas which would best reflect the vision that we saw for that year.”(0:48)

The sequence of MAL’s themes reflects the dynamics, changes and political growth that have been happening year after year. (0:07)

Elessawi “Last year, the theme was “their thrones...our nation” which at that time - 2010- was just before all those revolutions broke out and we saw these leaders were holding on to power in the Arab world were holding on to thrones but in the end the nation is ours. And given what started happening this year, it actually seems very fitting because this year, it’s finally proved that yesterday’s people, the people of the Arab world, were the leaders of tomorrow. We are now making change in the Arab world.” (0:31)

Music: *The Arab Dream* by Ahlam (0:10) (FADE OUT)

Shataat: “If you look at MAL themes years ago, you will find that ever year the theme is not negative. Themes like “Nobody’s playground” defying the rule that every Arab country is defeated by western powers or foreign forces. “If not now, when”... they are not negative but we didn’t have the power to implement everything. We thought that this year we really have the power to be the leaders.” (0:36)

Music: *The Arab Dream* by Meteab El Emry and Anoshka (0:21) (FADE OUT)

Farah Yousry, Multimedia head who put CIMAL’s documentary together last year, thinks some logistical issues would get easier after January 25 revolution. (0:12)

Yousry “Before the revolution when we tried to invite a keynote speaker to come speak at our event for example, we faced a lot of obstacles and sometimes the university wouldn’t allow a certain keynote speaker to come because he is politically controversial and maybe the regime doesn’t like him so we don’t want to get into trouble. The same time with the documentary when we were making one of the documentaries, I asked one of the voice he’s a famous presenter-radio presenter- and I gave him the script. It had a lot of nuances and a lot of political euphemism that might get him into trouble. He’s like no I can’t say that. I had to change the script to cater for his willingness to say the script. These things wouldn’t be there anymore. We’d be more free. We can speak our minds. We can say a direct message. We wouldn’t be worried about how the turnout would be. Also I’m sure participants in MAL would be more because people now see hope. So

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instead of them going to MUN which is the simulation of the United Nations, now they will go to MAL because it's the Arab world where there's hope. Something is happening now.”(1:14)

Shatat “I think that after the 25th of January, MAL's vision started to take place. It's what we hope to see from 22 years ago.” (0:10)

Music: *The Arab Dream by Mohamed El Helw (0:12) (FADE OUT)*

Reem Khedr, A-U-C News.

Credits:

-Nada Shatat, CIMAL 2011 Organizing Committee head

-Ahmed Elessawi, CIMAL 2011 Secretary General

-Farah Yousry, CIMAL 2010 Multimedia Head

-Reem Shalaan, CIMAL 2008 Delegate

-AUC DAR

Music: The Arab Dream by Nabil Mashaal, Zekra, Ahlam, Meteb El Emry, Anoshka and Mohamed El Helw.

Youtube Videos:

1- The Model Arab League: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xeQ_1YHIJNM

2- War Footage: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQnQKqqs90&feature=related>

3- Airstrike Nat Sound: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H49R8SoFdBg>