

Oil and National Security Module

This module is designed to allow one student leader or chapter member to read a short, scholarly article on the role of oil in national security, and specifically the threat of disruptions in the global oil market, and then to summarize the article to the rest of the chapter. It briefly examines criticisms of the article by other scholars, and features questions at the end to help guide discussion. Having someone outside the organization's core leadership give the presentation could be a good way to deepen their engagement with the chapter.

The policy discussion in Washington tends to treat oil disruptions as critical threats that require a major U.S. presence on the ground in the Persian Gulf and an active U.S. role in Gulf security. The article suggests that some of the assumptions underlying this approach are incorrect: that several mechanisms in the oil market can quickly address smaller disruptions, and that a major, permanent U.S. Gulf presence is unnecessary to address larger disruptions. (In fact, the authors argue, it could make those disruptions more likely.)

In giving the presentation, if you feel the need to speed up, you can skip over or go quickly through the case studies of disruptions, as they are helpful to the discussion but not necessary.