The alliance is experiencing a shift as complex security concerns within the Middle East begin to overshadow the relationship’s foundational tie of oil. For the U.S., the threat of terrorism and terrorist organizations, such as ISIS, are major national security concerns. Meanwhile, the growing influence of Iran potentially destabilizes the regional balance of power in the Middle East posing a threat to Saudi Arabia. Today, the US-Saudi alliance is evolving to a mutual relationship based more on security issues than oil.

Research Factors
- Oil as the Foundation
  - History
  - Cold War alliance
  - Cultural differences
- Limits of Oil
  - Drop in price
  - Climate Change
  - Energy independence
  - Vision 2030
- Security Issues Become a Higher Priority
  - The 9/11 Attacks
  - Iran
  - Israel/Palestine
  - Arms Sales and Military Training
  - Proxy wars

Discussion
Since both the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are taking significant measures to reduce their dependency on oil and oil revenues, the alliance is experiencing a shift away from decades of oil security and a move towards aligning to address the increasing security threats within the Middle East. When Roosevelt met with Ibn Saud after the Yalta Conference in 1945, both men focused on reaping the benefits of Saudi oil. Today, both countries are moving towards a new chapter in their relationship, where aligning to bring stability to the Middle East is the new focus of their relationship.

As the importance of oil decreases because of climate change, oil is overshadowed as a priority within U.S.-Saudi relations when security issues are brought to the forefront of the relationship. The Middle East has no shortage of complex conflicts that bring instability to the entire region. As one of the only stable nations in the region, it is essential that Saudi Arabia and the U.S. focus their allied partnership on working to bring lasting peace to the conflicts taking place in the Middle East.

Conclusion
To work towards the mutual goal of stability, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia need to continue to use the strategy of what was used in the past, which is endurance. Without oil as the binding component, both will need to increase their focus on overcoming their differences of opinion in regards to complex security concerns, in an effort to bring about more stability in the Middle East. Although their economic ties remain significant, security is beginning to take center stage. Without the support of each other, each country will find itself in an increasingly difficult predicament in addressing its core national security interests – thus, the alliance will need to endure.

References