

Disarmament and International Security

Hello, my name is Jeff Hall, and I am a senior at Jamesville-DeWitt High School. I've been doing MUN since UNYMUN in 2008, and this will be my first time chairing. Outside of MUN, I practice martial arts (when I have time :-\) and attempt to read philosophy (until my head explodes).

Ruth Shefner is a senior at Fayetteville Manlius High School. She has been involved with Model UN since 9th grade, and was co-secretary general of CNYMUN 2009 in January. Ruth chaired UNYMUN 2008, and is looking forward to returning this year. This is Ruth's last high school conference, and she is excited to be chairing Disarmament.

As chairs, we would like to see delegates come prepared with outside information (go beyond the research links!) for a lively debate. Delegates who represent their country's policy accurately, and maintain a diplomatic attitude in committee will be looked upon favorably. Due to time restrictions, this committee will be run resolution style. Resolutions must be printed ahead of UNYMUN, as there will be no opportunity to print them at the conference. Delegates should bring about 30 copies to ensure there are enough for all delegates. It should be noted that any delegate who wishes to be considered for an award must bring at least one resolution, though having one for each topic will be most favorably looked upon.

Delegates may feel free to contact us at any time with questions they may have. Jeff's email is jeffreyrhall@gmail.com, and Ruth's email is rooster12391@aol.com

Background

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), or more formally the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, (or less formally merely Disarmament), concerns itself with "disarmament and related international security questions." Including all 191 member states of the UN, this committee annually convenes to discuss matters pertaining to nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, and conventional arms. In recent years discussion has been dominated by topics as the non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons and efforts against terrorism, but also includes topics ranging from biological warfare to the weaponization of space to landmines to military budgets.

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Background

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict has long been one of the most well known Middle Eastern conflicts. Involving religious tensions, international intervention, terrorist organizations, human rights violations, and internal instabilities, the conflict has defeated efforts of diplomats and peacemakers since the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel in 1947 by Resolution 181 of the General Assembly. A conflict fought over the issues of land

distribution, it has claimed thousands of lives and has been detrimental to the stability of the region.

The roots of the issue go back to World War I, after which the British Empire annexed the territory of Palestine from the losing Ottoman Empire. The predominant group in the area, Palestinian Arabs felt increasingly threatened by an influx of Zionists seeking to create a Jewish state, and an Arab rebellion broke out in 1936. Tensions and violence continued, and in 1947 the issue was brought before the United Nations. On November 19, 1947, the UN adopted Resolution 181 to create separate Jewish and Arab states along with an International Zone consisting of Jerusalem and the surrounding areas; this plan met with opposition from both sides for varying reasons, though with greater Jewish support. One Arab complaint was that it was unfair; the Jewish state comprised about 55 percent of the territory of Palestine even though the Jews at the time were only about 30 percent of the population and owned about 7 percent of the land. After the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, Israel controlled 78 percent of what was formerly Palestine, and after the Six Day War of 1967 Israel took control of much of the rest, occupying the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. Palestinian opposition coalesced into the First Intifada in 1987, bringing the conflict back into international attention. The Madrid Peace Conference of 1991 and the Oslo Peace Accords of 1993 marked progress towards peace with efforts from both sides, but diplomatic efforts continued to be thwarted by one reason or another. The early years of the new millennium saw the Camp David Summit fail; saw the start of the Second Intifada; saw many changes in leadership of the major players in the conflict; saw the proposal of the Road Map for Peace by the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and Russia; and saw the election of Hamas to a majority in the Palestinian parliament.

Part of the difficulty of reaching a solution is the question of power and authority within Palestine. In 2006, the Islamic Resistance Movement, also known as Hamas, took a majority of seats during the Palestinian parliamentary elections. Violent conflict arose between Hamas and the previous ruling party, Fatah – failures to reach an agreement to share power resulted in the Palestinian Civil War which has continued in one form or another to the current day. Hamas currently controls the Gaza Strip, and Fatah the West Bank, and this division in Palestine complicates efforts for peace. Hamas is considered a terrorist organization by Canada, the European Union, Israel, Japan, and the United States, and Israel refuses to negotiate with Hamas, instead pursuing peace with the Fatah based government in the West Bank while simultaneously battling Hamas in Gaza. The question of the legitimacy of Hamas' power and their disarmament will be one of the key pieces in securing the region and reaching peace.

Another factor that complicates the issue is the nuclear status of Israel. Even though Israel has never declared themselves to possess nuclear weapons, many nations believe that Israel currently possesses anywhere from 75 to 200 nuclear warheads and the capability to deliver them by ground, aircraft, or submarine. Ambiguously, Israel has repeatedly stated that it wouldn't be the first nation to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East. Even if only a deterrent, the idea of nuclear weapons in the hands of Israel has a great affect on the balance of power in the region and so affects negotiations.

The most recent flare in the conflict, the Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip, illustrates the importance of solving this conflict. After a six month truce between Hamas and Israel expired on December 19, 2008, with both sides claiming that the other had violated the truce, Israel began what it calls Operation Cast Lead. Bombardments of the Gaza Strip by airstrikes and artillery preceded a ground invasion, and Hamas retaliated by increasing the number of rocket and mortar attacks against Israel. By January, Israel had retreated from the Gaza Strip and both sides had declared unilateral ceasefires. Both sides were accused of war crimes by international observers, and it is estimated that 1,200 or more Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed. Throughout the conflict many demonstrations were waged for and against both sides of the conflict, often disagreeing with their governments' official positions on the conflict. There was also a three-fold increase in the number of anti-Semitic incidents, and similar violence against Muslims and Arabs was reported in France and Israel.

Militarily, the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict has seen many internationally decried actions. Historically, Palestinian resistance has used suicide bombers to attack both military targets and civilians. Hamas is accused of deliberately targeting civilians in its rocket and mortar attacks, and Israeli bombings are claimed to only target military targets, but the fact remains that both sides wreak havoc among civilians, injuring and killing innocents and destroying infrastructure. Israeli violence against Palestinian militants and civilians has been denounced as being especially cruel, and the Israeli military has been accused of using white phosphorus, banned under international law.

Past actions

The United Nations and the international community have remained greatly involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, whether by intervening, acting as mediators and negotiators, condemning actions of either side, or providing humanitarian aid. The involvement of the United Nations goes back to the start of the conflict, when Resolution 181 partitioned Palestine into two independent states. In 1967, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 242, which is now the basis of many proposals centered around the Land for Peace principle. One year later the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People was formed, and in 1974 the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was formed. Recently, the United Nations has helped propose the Road Map for Peace, a plan for transferring control of Palestinian territories from Israel to Palestine. At one of the latest conferences, the Annapolis Conference held at the United States Naval Academy, a two-state solution was agreed upon to be the basis of any solution to the conflict.

Questions to Consider

The situation contains many more aspects – the Israeli settlements in Palestinian lands, the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees, the quality of life for Palestinians under Israeli military occupation, the humanitarian crises of the area, the border of Jerusalem – that fall under the jurisdiction of other bodies of the United Nations. As the General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, the relevance of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict to your task as delegates lies mainly in solutions to limit and eliminate the armed conflict between Israel and Palestine and between the two de facto Palestinian

governments, and to secure the safety of both Israeli and Palestinian civilians. Such solutions, however, will most likely have to take into consideration political, military, economic, and cultural aspects in order to be effective. It is also important to take into consideration previous proposals for peace, and examining why they failed will be beneficial in coming up with new solutions. Other questions to keep in mind include, inter alia:

- What can be done immediately to safeguard the civilians of Israel and Palestine?
- Previously there have been numerous truces and ceasefires agreed to, but almost invariably they have been broken by one side or another. What steps can be taken to ensure that such agreements are honored?
- Is Hamas a terrorist organization? If so, should it be allowed to remain in power in Palestine, and if not, how can it be removed?
- The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often considered part of a greater Arab-Israeli conflict. How a potential solution take into account the involvement of the Arab world as a whole?
- There have been many proposals for peace, and there continue to be many groups working towards a solution. Why have these previous efforts failed and what can be done differently by the United Nations to succeed?
- Which aspects of this conflict have the largest and highest consequences and should be considered by the First Committee first?
- Much of this conflict can be attributed to the intervention of the United Nation in creating separate states, overriding the right to self-determination. Is the United Nations therefore responsible for solving this conflict, or is it in fact obligated to allow the states to negotiate their own solution, as intervention led to the problem in the first place? With the current state of affairs, is a self-negotiated solution possible or plausible?

Further Research

Histories/Viewpoints

<http://www.mideastweb.org/timeline.htm>

<http://www.mideastweb.org/briefhistory.htm>

http://www.historyguy.com/israeli-palestinian_conflict.html

<http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/viewtopic.asp>

<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/ngo/history.html>

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2001/promises/timeline.html>

Articles/Recent Events

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/middle_east/2001/israel_and_the_palestinians/default.stm

<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/02/28/israelgaza-donors-should-press-israel-end-blockade>

<http://www.arabisto.com/article.cfm?articleID=28363>

http://gush-shalom.org/archives/compare_eng.html

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7812290.stm

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUKTRE50423320090105?sp=true>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7914838.stm

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/03/200931132514286358.html>

The Prevention and Reduction of Arms Buildup in the Arctic

Background

Resources are being scrambled for by nations across the world, and the Arctic is no exception. Especially because it is believed that the Arctic may have up to 25% of the Earth's undiscovered oil resources, countries have recently been laying claim to as much area as they can. However, these claims are often backed up by the military forces; this makes for a potentially dangerous situation. Countries such as Canada, the United States, and Russia have been the most aggressive in attempting to claim Arctic territories, but buildup of arms by any country in this area is undesirable. Aside from its vast oil reserves, the Arctic is home to many species of animals, and contains 1/5th of the world's water supply. These factors all make it more imperative that a buildup of weapons in the area is avoided.

Though only roughly defined, the Arctic is generally known as the area surrounding the North Pole. Attempts to define the exact area have not been met with a universal consensus; methods range from fixed distances, such as longitudinal lines, to more variable markers, such as the 10 degree isotherm line. In either case, it may be necessary to come to a definition of where the Arctic borders lie, before determining where weapons are strictly unacceptable.

Past Actions

According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, countries may claim an area up to 200km away from their land boundaries; this area is known as an Exclusive Economic Zone. While this is an acceptable solution, complications arise due to the fact that continental shelves are considered differently than normal waters under the Law of the Sea. Consider areas that are not well defined by the Law of the Sea, such as overlapping areas and areas beyond the 200km mark.

Additionally, it may also be important to consider the Ilulissat Declaration, which was an agreement between Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States. This declaration stated the intent of the countries to work together on a number of points.

Questions to Consider

- Generally, what should be done to prevent a buildup of arms in the Arctic areas?
- Does the Arctic area need to be exactly defined? If so, what methods may be used that will be fair, accounting for global warming? Consider melting masses of land, and changing isotherm lines.
- Should certain arms be allowed into Arctic regions, while others are limited?

Further Research

Treaties and Declarations

http://www.oceanlaw.org/downloads/arctic/Ilulissat_Declaration.pdf

http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/closindx.htm

News Articles

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20090321.wxsubmarine21/BNStory/National/home>

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm?aid=1376>

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29735378/>

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/canada/090317/battle-the-arctic>

Prevention of Nuclear Weapon Acquisition by Non-Governmental Groups

Background

Currently, there are five nations that are considered to be nuclear weapon states, as defined by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. These nations are China, France, Russia, The United Kingdom, and the United States. Aside from these internationally recognized nations, others have possessed and tested weapons on their own; a somewhat unsettling prospect for the international community. However, there is at least a bit of consolation in the idea that any nation which makes use of a nuclear weapon stands a good chance of receiving great retaliation from the international community.

Much more unsettling, though, is the thought of non-governmental groups getting possession of nuclear weapons. Because these groups can operate independently of internationally recognized states, it is difficult to use political pressure as a preventive measure. Furthermore, the threat of international retaliation may be somewhat mitigated by the delicate politics involved with violating a nation's sovereignty. Independent groups are also often concerned only with a single issue – such as the secession of a certain area, or the toppling of a certain government – making them prone to decisions that further only their cause. Nuclear weapons in the hands of a politically undeterable group that is prone to rash action is a threat to global security, and something that this committee must address.

A non-governmental group aiming to get control of nuclear weapons more than likely falls under international definitions of a terrorist organization; consider whether prior international definitions are sufficient, or propose new ones to fit ambiguous areas.

Past Actions

Perhaps the largest step the international community has taken to reduce the nuclear presence in the world is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This treaty was joined by 189 countries; only four internationally recognized states are not a party to the treaty, and those are India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan. There are three pillars to this treaty: non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful use of energy.

Nonproliferation refers to the commitment of nuclear states to ensure that non-nuclear nations receive neither nuclear arms nor encouragement for the production of nuclear arms. Furthermore, non-nuclear nations pledge to not seek technology for nuclear arms. The

pillar of disarmament refers to the commitment that nations have to try and reduce the number of nuclear weapons they have, though the language of the pillar is neither specific nor incredibly binding. The third pillar is recognition of a nation's right to use nuclear power for the peaceful purpose of energy production.

However, just like nations who are not a party to the non-proliferation treaty, non-governmental bodies who desire to possess weapons are not bound by the treaty. Consider what standards non-governmental groups must be held to, and develop new ones if prior standards are insufficient.

Questions to Consider

- How do non-governmental groups attain nuclear weapons?
- Based on these methods, what can be done to prevent non-governmental groups from attaining nuclear weapons?
- Because non-governmental groups are not considered nations, does the wording of the non-proliferation treaty make it possible for nuclear nations to transfer nuclear technology to these groups?
- If a non-governmental group does attain arms, and operates within a country's territory, what steps should the international community take to mitigate the nuclear threat?

Further Research

<http://www.isis-online.org/mapproject/introduction.html>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty
<http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/npt/text/npt2.htm>
<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/37191.htm>