DELEGATE BACKGROUND GUIDE

DISEC

Director's Letter

Dear Delegates,

In preface, I would like to sincerely welcome you to TMUN 2023 and to the DISEC committee. I am looking forward to seeing delegates from all over Canada and the world participate in this iteration of TMUN. I hope that by participating in this committee, experienced and newer Model UN members will be exposed to critical concepts that are being debated internationally today, and that each and every one of you will experience growth as a delegate. I assure you that everyone - you and I alike - will learn and grow from shared experiences in DISEC.

As the director of the DISEC committee in TMUN 2023, I would like to offer an introduction: Hi, my name is Samuel Wu (he/him), and I am a Grade 10 student at The Woodlands Secondary School in Mississauga, Ontario. I first joined the Model UN club at my school in late 2021, enticed by my interest in world politics and history. I have participated in some conferences with my peers, from Vancouver to Montreal. My experience in Model UN has been unforgettable to say the least thus far, and I expect that TMUN will be no different. Outside of MUN, I enjoy a wide variety of sports, including alpine skiing and snowboarding, hockey, swimming, and track. In my free time, I indulge myself in playing different styles of music on the trumpet, piano, violin, or even the saxophone.

In terms of the conference and the committee, it will take place between March 24-26, 2023, and time will be allocated accordingly to the needs of the delegates and debate. Both topics will be covered, being "The Regulation of Illegitimate Weapons Dealings in Conflict Areas and Their Effects" and "Present and Future Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons Testing". What DISEC hopes to achieve is a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the problems that may be raised during debate and the ultimate lawful regulation of armed conflict around the world.

Remember to consider the possibilities of individual needs and policies of each respective nation, to stay true to your country's assignment. The goal is to reach a sustainable and successful agreement anchored towards a peaceful trend across the globe, while keeping the interests of all nations in mind. It is important to try and cooperate with other delegates, as an international committee, the goal is to find an equitable solution that hears the voice of everyone. Finally, it is greatly encouraged to be knowledgeable and prepared for the conference by reviewing this background guide and doing extensive individual research. It is not mandatory, but highly encouraged to write a position paper to further enhance your knowledge on policy and topics.

I am excited to meet you all at the conference, and I look forward to hearing your ideas this March.

Regards,

Samuel Wu - Director of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)

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Topic 1: The Regulation of Illegitimate Weapons Dealings in Conflict Areas and Their Effects

The history of human existence, rich, vast, and mysterious as it is, has a conspicuous and pitiful stain on its legacy - the organized and armed conflict our species engages in. War - such that when all parties seek utter debilitation for one another, and thus the execution of any war requires weapons for destruction and death, weapons which tear families apart, which kill the innocent and forever mutilate the image of our humanity on this earth. Hope exists however - as in recent times, international organizations such as the United Nations are taking a more active role in regulating these weapons and their subsequent dealings, and through all of this a chance presents itself for salvation from this unnecessary fact of life.

A future free from war, free from terror, and free from tyranny. This is what DISEC seeks to achieve, to envision a better future, one that never seemed to manifest, hiding itself behind the curtains of more failures, wars, and instability. The United Nations has taken many steps to prevent irresponsible entities from acquiring weapons which may be pointed at their own people or the global community at large. However, without full cooperation, this has yet to be completely successful, with these entities continuing to evade and bypass sanctions, with arms purchases emptying their coffers and filling their war closets.

In addition, in many regions of the world where state control is less absolute and fractured, countless are unfortunate enough to live in a world where weapons of all kinds, from Soviet-era rifles to modern explosives are engaged in a sea of combatants and fleeing civilians alike, all with the groups who orchestrate these attacks doing so with a complete and utter disregard for all these crimes against humanity.

DISEC and the United Nations have sought for and will continue to strive for cooperation and negotiation to resolve and manage the issue of these harmful, unmandated sales, their circulation, and to mitigate their impacts, especially those of the people and citizens of the world.

Areas of Interest

Africa

One of the key areas of interest regarding illicit arms trading is the continent of Africa. Countries such as the Central African Republic, Somalia, and South Sudan currently face an illicit arms trading crisis, with between 10-20 violent deaths by firearms per 100,000 citizens in 2017. Due to government corruption, lasting effects of colonialism, and frequent civil conflict, it is significantly easier to illegally obtain firearms in many African countries than it would be in a country similar to the United States of America. It is vital that the committee addresses the issue of illegal arms trading in Africa, and how to stop it. Some solutions currently brought forward include securing borders

between African nations further, therefore preventing illegal arms from being spread around the entire continent as easily.

Unfortunately, there are many states in Africa which are suspected to have allowed the illegal arms trade to continue, whether that be through the funding of terrorist groups on the continent, or through a lack of action against gun-smuggling groups within their own country. This problem must also be dealt with by the committee if they hope to be able to tackle the issue of the illegal arms trade in Africa.

Central and South America

Arms smuggling is prevalent in both Central and South America, with powerful drug cartels possessing a high number of illegal arms. Cartels and other criminal organizations are also reported to be in possession of not just firearms, but also grenade launchers and anti-tank rockets. The situation is different from the one in Africa in many ways, but a lack of border security is a problem prevalent in both regions.

Guns are smuggled into the region through two primary methods - first of all, smugglers may obtain guns directly from foreign countries, and then bring them into countries via illegal methods. The other method involves military corruption, with many military officials being caught falsifying permits and destruction documents of weapons in order to enrich themselves. Government agencies are usually uncoordinated in the region when it comes to tackling arms smuggling, and the police system is also ill-equipped to fight the illegal arms smuggling crisis in the region. It will take a coordinated effort from all countries in the region to stop the illegal arms trade in Central and South America.

Past Actions

As of now, the United Nations has been taking action against illegal arms trade through the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition (Firearms Protocol). This agreement is legally binding, and aims to strengthen international cooperation in order to combat the issue of illegal arms manufacturing and trafficking. Although the Firearms Protocol has been somewhat successful, more work must be done in order to ensure that the illegal arms industry is eliminated.

Questions to Consider

1. Where do criminal groups and terrorist organizations obtain their illegal arms from? Can the committee remove these sources?
2. How can the committee prevent rogue states from violating the Firearms Protocol and supporting illegal arms trading?

3. How can the committee prevent illicit firearms from being trafficked across the borders of different countries?
4. Should developed countries use their resources in order to help developing nations combat illegal arms trading? How can funding for anti-smuggling programs be used most effectively?

Topic 2: Present and Future Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons Testing

Introduction and History of Nuclear Weapons

The dangerous effects of nuclear weapons came into full focus during World War Two when the United States bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 2 highly populated cities in Japan.[1] The horrific devastation and suffering witnessed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 by Japanese Red Cross and International Federation of Red Cross (ICRC) and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) medical staff, as they attempted to help tens of thousands of dying and wounded people, have driven its advocacy of the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons over the last 77 years.[2]

Evidence of the immediate and longer-term impacts of the use and testing of nuclear weapons has been the subject of scientific investigation ever since. In a major 1987 report, the World Health Organization (WHO) summarized existing research into the impacts on health and health services of nuclear detonations. The report noted inter alia that the blast wave, thermal wave, radiation and radioactive fallout generated by nuclear explosions have devastating short- and long-term effects on the human body, and that existing health services are not equipped to alleviate these effects in any significant way.[3] Since then, the body of evidence of the immediate and longer-term humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons use and testing, and of the preparedness and capacity of national and international organizations and health systems to provide assistance to the victims of such events, has been growing steadily.

Fast forward to 2020, the discussion of nuclear weapon testing has continued. The ICRC and the IFRC discussed the humanitarian impacts and risks of the use of nuclear weapons. This discussion aimed to understand the humanitarian and environmental consequences of the use and testing of nuclear weapons, as well as the drivers of nuclear risk.[4]

Introduction to Non-Proliferation Treaty

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[1] https://historyincharts.com/the-devastating-bombing-of-japan-in-world-war-ii/
[2] https://doi.org/10.1080/25751654.2018.1450623
[3] https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/39199
[4] https://www.icrc.org/en/document/humanitarian-impacts-and-risks-use-nuclear-weapons#:~:text=The%20immediate%20and%20longer-term%20humanitarian%20and%20environmental%20consequences,preparedness%20and%20response%20measures%20to%20nuclear%20testing.%20

The next three years, in the run-up to the 2020 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference, represent a critical time for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and other measures aimed at halting nuclear proliferation and achieving global nuclear disarmament. The NPT was originally a fixed-term treaty of 25 years. Frustration that progress on nuclear disarmament has been so slow despite states' commitments is threatening to destabilize the international nuclear order.

Nuclear weapons tests – and equally policies relying on nuclear weapons use – would endanger the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The impacts of nuclear weapons testing and nuclear weapons detonations, for instance, would have severe consequences for human health and well-being (SDG 3), the availability of clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), the alleviation of poverty and hunger (SDGs 1 and 2), and gender equality (SDG 5), among others. Learning from the continuing history of nuclear testing allows states and civil society to examine some of the missing links between development and security.

Current State of Affairs

Twenty years on from the negotiation of the CTBT in Geneva, the treaty has yet to enter into force. Progress is being held up by eight key ('Annex 2') countries – China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the US – that are required to ratify the CTBT in order for it to enter into force, but that have still not done so.[5] Indeed, a quarter of a century after the end of the Cold War, interest in nuclear weapons has been revived rather than reduced. Established nuclear weapons states such as the US and Russia have increased investment in modernization.[6] The activities of new players such as North Korea have raised concerns that more states may step into the nuclear weapons possessor category if insecurities increase and alliance commitments become uncertain.

Nuclear weapons tests have been halted in all states that have signed the CTBT, while India and Pakistan – despite having neither signed nor ratified the treaty yet – have not carried out any tests since 1998.[7] However, North Korea has conducted five tests in the past decade, and is likely to continue doing so.[8] The US's position has also proved problematic. The US Senate's failure to ratify the CTBT in 1999[9] resulted in the stagnation of progress towards ensuring the treaty's entry into force. In addition, increased uncertainty about the long-standing commitments made by the five NPT nuclear weapons states with regard to the CTBT and other nuclear disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation measures is leading some analysts to question whether the norms established against nuclear testing will hold.[10]

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[5] https://www.ctbto.org/the-treaty/status-of-signature-and-ratification/
[6] https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2014_05/Nuclear-Weapons-Modernization-A-Threat-to-the-NPT
[7] http://www.un.org/en/events/againstnucleartestsday/history.shtml
[8] https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/24/world/asia/north-korea-nuclear-missile-program.html?_r=0.
[9] https://fas.org/nuke/control/ctbt/text/ctbtsenate.htm

[10] https://www.chathamhouse.org/2017/05/humanitarian-impacts-nuclear-testing/1-introduction

Effects of Nuclear Testing

Inhabitable Habitats

The first peacetime detonation of a nuclear bomb was tested on Bikini Atoll in 1946. A huge hydrogen bomb, code-named Castle Bravo, was detonated in 1954. It was 1,000 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. The people of Bikini Atoll were told they would have to leave the island for just three months before it would be safe for them to return home. More than 60 years after the detonation of the Castle Bravo bomb, the island is still too dangerous to live on. In June 2016, researchers from Columbia University reported levels as high as 639 millirems per year and an average of 184 millirems. The researchers compared those readings with levels in New York's Central Park, which showed just 9 millirems per year.

Nuclear Fallout

Severe nuclear contamination is created in fractions of a second. When a nuclear bomb explodes underground, the rock surrounding the device is vaporized. Rock lying further from the bomb is melted as temperatures rise by several million degrees. In many cases, the ground above collapses into the molten cavity, allowing radiation to spread into the atmosphere and surrounding environment. But many of the early tests were carried out above ground. There was no attempt at containment. It's estimated that hundreds of thousands of people living within 80km of Russia's Semipalatinsk test site were exposed to high levels of radiation. [11]

In 1963, the Limited Test Ban Treaty was signed to prevent atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. Since then, tests have been underground to prevent environmentally and health-related risks. However, between 1945 and the signing of the treaty, 545 nuclear weapons were tested atmospherically. Atmospheric nuclear weapons testing involved the release of considerable amounts of radioactive materials directly into the environment and caused the largest collective dose from man-made sources of radiation. It is estimated that the thermonuclear weapons tests conducted between 1950 and 1960 close to doubled the concentration of isotope C-14 in the atmosphere, a result of excessive injection of radioactive material into the stratosphere. This is an unnatural level of isotope, but its effects have yet to quantifiably hurt humans. Underground tests are considered safer to humans and the environment. However, studies show that accidental atmospheric contamination resulting from venting. Researchers have estimated that, from around 800 underground tests performed in the Nevada Test Site, considerable quantities of radionuclide I-131 were released into the atmosphere through venting in the 32 known cases of underground tests conducted in that site. There has not, however, been evidence yet to indicate such nucleotides directly causing harm to the environment or to human beings.[12]

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[11] https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/09/nuclear-weapons-test-environmental-damage

[12] http://large.stanford.edu/courses/2019/ph241/lu2/

Questions to Consider

1. How can DISEC ensure that International Humanitarian Law is upheld at all costs?
2. How can DISEC regulate nuclear weapon testing?
3. How can the tension between countries be reduced to ensure that the amount of nuclear tests diminish?
4. How can DISEC provide aid to people who have been displaced due to nuclear testing?