

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Background Guides



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Letter From The Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to MITMUNC 2010!

My name is Radhika Malik, and I am the Chair for UNSC. I, along with my vice-chair, Eyas Alsharaiha, and crisis director, Bahar Shah, have been working hard to make sure you have a great experience as Security Council delegates.

I am currently a sophomore majoring in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. My home town is New Delhi, India, where I spent the first seventeen years of my life. My Model UN experience goes back to high school where I was involved a bit in organizing and attending conferences, but I plunged myself deep into MUN mainly during freshman year at college. Currently, I am head delegate of MIT's intercollegiate Model UN team. Other activities I am involved in on campus are MIT's Undergraduate Association, and my dorm's house government; I occasionally also attend Parliamentary Debate tournaments and write for the Tech, MIT's newspaper, in the Opinion or Sports sections. My other interests include developing countries, technology, sports, and movies.

We have tried to select topics which have a great deal of significance in the sphere of international relations today yet are not issues that have been debated upon for years without any effective resolutions. We look forward to having great debates and crises in committee during the 3 days of the conference. MIT's forte in every field is the art of problem solving, and that is what we in UNSC will also aim to do, together as a committee try to find the best possible solution to two important issues concerning the entire world today. If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're very excited to meet all of you, and I'm sure MITMUNC 2010 will be a wonderful experience for all of us.

Sincerely,

Radhika Malik

Radhika Malik
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MITMUNC 2010 UNSC Chair

Topic One: On the Question of the Iran-Israel Conflict

1. Introduction

Recent times have seen a rapid escalation of tension between these 2 nations. As Iran continues with its nuclear program, refusing cooperation with the UN or the IAEA, tensions rise between Iran and Israel, with the latter feeling threatened by Iran's nuclear program. Recent statements by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad such as at the 2009 UN General Assembly Meeting regarding the state of Israel, Zionism, and the holocaust, have inflamed relations between Iran and Israel even more. On one side, Israel believes their security is threatened by Iran, stressing that Iran's nuclear program is designated to create nuclear weapons that will target the country, offering a literal interpretation of President Ahmadinejad's statement that Israel should have been "wiped off the map". Iran, on the other side, maintains that its nuclear program is peaceful, and that all enriched uranium is being used for energy and civilian research. Iran maintains that its views on Israel, though legitimate in their perspective, will not be translated to a direct military conflict.

2. Background

During the Pahlavi Dynasty in the 20th century, Iran and Israel had close ties to each other. In fact, Israel viewed Iran as a Muslim ally in a predominantly Muslim region. Yet, eventually, the two countries' friendship deteriorated especially after the Iranian Revolution and hostility took its place.

One of the first instances of discord occurred in 1975 when Iran voted in support of the UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 which stated that Zionism equaled racism. Resolution 3379 was later nullified by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 4686, although Iran voted against the new resolution. The Zionist movement

became a formal organization in 1897. The Zionists wished to establish a "Jewish Homeland" in Palestine under Turkish or German rule. Initially, most Zionists were not concerned about the Arab population, which they ignored, or thought would agree to voluntary transfer to other Arab countries.

However, following the Islamic Revolution (also known as the Iranian Revolution or the 1979 Islamic Revolution), Iran began severing all ties with Israel. During Ayatollah Khomeini's campaign to overthrow Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi from 1979 to 1989, Iran began referring to Israel as "an enemy of Islam" and "The Little Satan." After Iran was established as an Islamic Republic, they officially cut all ties with Israel. Following Ayatollah Khamenei's appointment in 1989, tensions between the two countries continued to escalate.

In the year 2005, the tension reached a high after Iran publicly supported the Palestinian uprising in Israel saying, "Palestine belongs to Palestinians, and the fate of Palestine should also be determined by the Palestinian people." For the Middle East, the issue of Palestine has always been a disputed topic. In the mid 1940s, the United Nations Special Commission on Palestine (UNSCOP) recommended that Palestine be divided into an Arab state and a Jewish state. The commission called for Jerusalem to be put under international administration and the UN General Assembly adopted this plan on Nov. 29, 1947 as UN Resolution (GA 181). The Jews accepted the UN decision, but the Arabs rejected it. The resolution divided the land into two approximately equal portions in a complicated scheme with zig-zag borders. This plan failed as not all of the countries supported it and as a result conflict broke out until the region came to an uneasy peace in the years leading up to the Gulf War. Following the Gulf War, the problems between Palestine and Israel continued until the events of 2000 in which Palestinian violence broke out.

Following the year 2005 rumors about the situation between Israel and Iran continued until Ayatollah Khamenei stated, on September 20, 2008, that "it is incorrect, irrational, pointless and nonsense to say that we are friends of Israeli people... we are on a collision course with the occupiers of

Palestine and the occupiers are the Zionist regime. This is the position of our regime, our revolution and our people.”

In addition to the hostility felt between these countries due to religious and political differences, the situation is worsened by Israeli fear over the nuclear program of Iran and the potential for Iran to build nuclear weapons. This has led to the possibility of an Israeli pre-emptive strike against Iran; In June 2009, Israel threatened to attack Iran’s nuclear facilities, and Iran promised to fight back. Recently Israel has alleged that Russia is helping Iran with its nuclear program. Thus, the current condition of Israeli and Iranian relations has become an issue of world-wide concern due to the unstable nature of the current Middle East.

Latest Updates:

<http://www.stljewishlight.com/commentaries/296054378654001.php>

3. Committee Goals

The focus of this topic is not just to rein in Iran’s rogue nuclear program, which is primarily IAEA’s domain; the goal is instead to propose a resolution that can find solutions to the Iran-Israel conflict that are feasible for both sides. There are measures that are required immediately, and those that are needed to be implemented in the long run to ensure peace and security in the region. The underlying issues pertain to more than just nuclear weapons, and therefore a comprehensive resolution that addresses these events would be ideal. Working papers and resolutions need to establish long term and short term goals separately. While the immediate focus is to prevent a war that appears to be imminent, unless prompt action is taken, long-term stability can only be established by reconciliation of differences between the two states, and direct and open negotiation regarding the conflict. The UNSC should aim to discuss each of these major differences separately in order to reach a consensus regarding how to settle the various aspects of the dispute, and resolutions and working papers should highlight these as well. From time to time, we will throw crises at you to see how well you can respond to new developments.

4. Conclusion

In this topic, it is of prime importance to be abreast with, both, the history of the conflict and the latest developments. Position papers must underscore the stands the country has maintained in the past, and what aspects of the problem they think is of prime importance, along with possible solutions to these aspects of the problem. In general, points will be assigned to bringing new issues to the front, suggesting feasible solutions that would be acceptable to both nations in question, and also providing insight on the implementation of these solutions.

Topic Two: On the Question of The Situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan

1. Introduction

The eight-year long war in Afghanistan, aiming to eradicate Taliban influence, is again facing major setbacks. While post-war Afghanistan never realized its full stability, seeing numerous IED explosions and increased opium and drug trade economically linked to Taliban demonstrates that today's challenges in Afghanistan are even more serious; the direct influence of Taliban has resumed its growth, and Taliban-backed insurgency is, again, on the rise.

The issue, which was previously a problem exclusively in southern Afghanistan, has been spreading in all directions. North and West Afghanistan are witnessing increased Taliban influence, and the Taliban is also rapidly expanding its base into Pakistan. There is internal instability in the Pakistani state, which is making it even more difficult for Pakistan to resist the militant infiltration.

2. Background

The War on Afghanistan started on October 7th, 2001 as a response to the September 11th attacks on the United States by al-Qaeda. The War on Afghanistan officially marked the beginning of the War on Terror. Following 9/11, a U.S.-led coalition under the name of "Operation Enduring Freedom" (OEF) was formed, upon which the most major branch is OEF-A: Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan, which includes participants from all over the world (check <http://www.defense.gov/news/May2002/d20020523cu.pdf> or <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/6207.pdf> for more detail). The OEF-A entered Afghanistan on October 7th, 2001, and since has defeated the Taliban government, eradicated most of their political

influence from Afghanistan and even Pakistan, and embarked on the long and difficult process of re-establishing stability in the country.

The Taliban themselves came to power as Afghanistan rose against the Soviet rule, where Islamist Jihad movements played an important role in the independence of the country. Out of the vacuum of power created, the Taliban emerged initially as a religious-political group that embraced people's Islamic beliefs that lead to their own independence. However, after seizing control over Kabul, the Taliban initiated a fundamentalist system of rule that implements extreme interpretations of the Islamic shari'a. The Taliban were known and outspoken about their support for al-Qaeda and harboring Osama bin Laden. After it became apparent that al-Qaeda and Bin Laden were responsible for the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. issued a five-point ultimatum for Taliban (see the points of the ultimatum in transcript of George W. Bush's speech on the night of September 20th, 2001, here <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/>).

After the beginning of the OEF-A operation in Afghanistan, on December 20th, 2001, the United Nations Security Council voted in resolution 1386 to establish the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, which continues to be run to this day parallel to the OEF-A. In the southern region of Afghanistan, OEF-A military operations have been - since 2006 - succeeded by the NATO-led ISAF. The United States Army conducts operation both as part of the ISAF in the southern region, and 'independently' under the OEF-A banner in other parts of Afghanistan. Note that the ISAF itself does operate outside the southern region, and is present and influential in all parts of Afghanistan, however, it is only in the south that the ISAF operates solely, rather than in parallel with the OEF-A.

(For information on military placement of the ISAF currently, see <http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/placemat.pdf>)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1890 (here <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/550/19/PDF/N0955019.pdf?OpenElement>), adopted on October 8th,

2009, extends the mandate of the ISAF in Afghanistan “for a period of 12 months beyond 13 October 2009”. The situation was gradually improving, with occasional lapses where Taliban insurgency rises in different “waves”. However, 2009 saw the first major Taliban resurgence since 2007. Indeed, the Taliban are slowly gaining the upper hand, especially in the devastated southern region, and ISAF actions against Taliban are insufficient.

The opium industry in Afghanistan supports the Taliban. Today, Afghanistan is the number one producer of opium in the world. The August 2007 Afghanistan Opium Survey (see http://www.unodc.org/pdf/research/AFG07_ExSum_web.pdf) states “in 2007 Afghanistan produced an extraordinary 8,200 tons of opium (34% more than in 2006), becoming practically the exclusive supplier of the world’s deadliest drug (93% of the global opiates market)”. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, states in an article published in the Washington Post (see it here http://www.csdp.org/news/news/post_costa_042507.htm) that:

Drug traffickers have a symbiotic relationship with insurgents and terrorist groups such as the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Instability makes opium cultivation possible; opium buys protection and pays for weapons and foot soldiers, and these in turn create an environment in which drug lords, insurgents and terrorists can operate with impunity.

Opium is the glue that holds this murky relationship together. If profits fall, these sinister forces have the most to lose. I suspect that the big traffickers are hoarding surplus opium as a hedge against future price shocks and as a source of funding for future terrorist attacks, in Afghanistan or elsewhere.

As for North-West Pakistan, war in the region of Waziristan broke in March 2004. The it was a result of tensions after the Pakistani Army entered various regions, originally as an attempt to regain and establish military control over desolate areas controlled by tribes, but quickly escalated into a search for al-Qaeda and Taliban members. As a response, local tribal members, along with Taliban and al-Qaeda militants, were engaged with the army in an armed clashes as a “resistance move-

ment”.

Taliban is believed to have a strong presence in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, especially in the region of Waziristan, and many believe that Osama bin Laden presides currently in Waziristan. The situation is extremely alarming in North-West Pakistan, and conflict continues strong despite a truce between Baitullah Mehsud and the Pakistani Army in the first half of 2008. Since September 2008, the local tribesmen in North-West Pakistan have engaged in war with the Taliban, and an internal “civil war” of some sort unfolds, adding to the existing Pakistan Army-Taliban armed conflict going on. The U.S. supported the local tribesmen in their conflict and provided aid to the region.

Starting late August and through September of that year, the U.S. intensified its attacks - primarily in the form of air raids - on villages along the northern border of Pakistan, such as South Waziristan. Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari commented: “Just as we will not let Pakistani’s territory to be used by terrorists for attacks against our people and our neighbours, we cannot allow our territory and our sovereignty to be violated by our friends” (read more: <http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5iGTgxqoTldD4lBtlbyfU5MSNowjg>). The region continues to be under fierce bloody conflict, with an abundance of offensives, assassinations, attacks, and counter-attacks occurring between the Pakistan Army, Taliban insurgents, and local tribesmen.

In March 2008, the Khyber Border Coordination Center was formed as a collaboration between the Afghani and Pakistani governments, NATO, and the ISAF, in an effort to share intelligence regarding the situation of Taliban insurgents. The center’s achievements, however, have been stagnant, due to a lack of coordination and - most importantly - an apparent mistrust between the involved groups.

From an Afghanistan perspective, the situation in Pakistan harbors Taliban, who themselves represent the core of the recent escalations within that country. From a humanitarian perspective, the situation has resulted in the displacement of more than 3 million individuals, and the death of more than 7000 civilians and ~16,000 police officers, militant tribesmen, soldiers, and Tali-

ban insurgents. From a Pakistani perspective, the ongoing war has cost the country an equivalent of billions of US dollars, and continues to drain the country's budget.

peace and stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

3. Committee Goals

The UNSC session does *not* aim in its session to address concerns and goals of the United States. That is, though finding Osama bin Laden is important and of international concern, the priority remains the stabilization and revitalization of Afghanistan and Pakistan's southern borders. Such stabilization and revitalization includes the eradication of the Taliban, reconstruction of the infrastructure, and the rebuilding of the economy. Such goals can be achieved in a multitude of ways, ranging from direct military-oriented resolutions to those that indirectly attempt to squander the Taliban by blocking their sources of power (i.e. the drug and opium industry). We appeal to your critical thinking and creativity to come up with innovative effective solutions that, if implemented in real life, can make real change in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The crises we give will also aim to reflect your understanding of the depth of the problem, and appeal to your ingenuity in order to handle the new developments.

4. Conclusion

In this particular topic, the United States would probably have a large role to play as it is involved directly in the region. Our criterion for judging delegates would not be how much they speak, but how well they represent their country's foreign policy, their initiatives in proposing measures and bringing new ideas to the committee, as well as the quality of their negotiations with other delegates to help the committee reach a consensus. Again, knowledge of history of the conflict will be important. Delegates should be aware of the previous UNSC resolutions aimed at maintaining peace in the region, and should aim to build upon them, try to analyze the shortcomings of the proposed solutions of the past, and discuss how to build upon the solutions in the quest for sustainable