

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Dear Esteemed Advisors and Delegates,

I am pleased and excited to invite you to the 2014 rendition of MITMUNC as well as the United Nations Security Council.

My name is Derek Salvucci, a sophomore here at MIT. I have been involved with Model UN since high school, competing at the Harvard Model United Nations Conference every winter during my high school years. Coming to MIT, I looked to continue my Model UN career by continuing to chair the local conference that you will be attending.

In addition to Model UN, I study Computer Science here at MIT as well as being involved in Greek Life as a brother of Zeta Psi fraternity and the Undergraduate Association as a liaison for the Finance Board. In addition, I enjoy Boston sports so feel free to bring up any shared interests or rivalries in the small down time that we have during the conference!

This will be my second year chairing this specific committee, along with my co-chair Aofei Liu who will be joining me. We hope to bring you an exciting weekend of debate and resolution as you discuss our selected topics. Should you have questions, feel free to contact us.

Looking forward to meeting you all,

Derek Salvucci

Topic A: On the Question of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

Introduction:

A Jihadist rebel group known most recently as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL, has been creating disturbances across the Middle East, specifically in the regions of Iraq and Syria where the organization controls territory. Their end goal, as publically stated, is to create a world caliphate with the intention of overthrowing current world leaders in their pursuit of complete control of the world with a theocratic government. Currently their sphere of control has expanded across parts of Sinai, Libya, Pakistan as well as North Africa, South Asia and some Pacific Islands.

ISIL has grown in coverage in the last few months through a string of released beheadings of Western Civilization hostages. This violent propaganda is only one of the many avenues of force that ISIL has displayed to the public. Other charges include but are not limited to ethnic cleansing as well as countless other human rights violations. As ISIL spreads not only across their region, but across the Eastern Hemisphere, it is becoming increasingly clear that UN intervention will be required to uphold international peace and security.

Background

Development of ISIL

The origin of ISIL actually dates back to 1999 when the militant group Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad was formed and gained notoriety in 2003 following the US invasion of Iraq. It was at this time that their use of beheadings and suicide bombings gained them international recognition for their use of violence. Over the years, largely in response to the US and allies' invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, this militant group grew in strength, pledging itself to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network in 2004 as well as taking in other Iraqi insurgent groups to train and grow

in strength. In 2006, this militant group declared itself a state, the Islamic State of Iraq, despite not being recognized as one. [1]

The Islamic State continued to grow in prominence, with goals of establishing a Sunni Islamic state in the central and western portions of Iraq, aided by prominent incumbent figures of Iraq's government. However, as the Islamic State's numbers grew, it became increasingly difficult to control their followers, leading to many rogue Iraqis acting in the name of the government, creating havoc and creating heightened tension between the Islamic State, the incumbent government, and the military forces within Iraq. Eventually, the world responded, particularly with US force, driving much of the Islamic State out of its held territories in Iraq and into hiding[2]. Under Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the current Caliph of the organization, the Islamic State was able to rise into prominence again in 2012, including many raids on prisons within Iraq to free Iraqi insurgents and replenish both the strength in numbers as well as leadership of the organization.

In an attempt to grow, al-Baghdadi began deploying guerilla warfare in Syria during the Civil War there in late 2011 and 2012, allowing the group to expand from Iraq into the surrounding areas. [3] This support of the insurgents in Syria has prompted many local leaders, most recently being the Egyptian militant group Ansar Bait al-Maqdis to join the conquest of the Islamic State.

Ethnic Divide

ISIL is comprised mostly of Sunni Muslims with much of their motivation coming from the intent of establishing a theocratic government, one following their radical perception of the ideals and testaments of Sunni Islam religion. This has created a divide between the people[4]. ISIL has targeted many different ethnicities, looking to eliminate both Christians and Shia Muslims out of Iraq and other territories. Reports claim that ISIL has been initiating ethnic cleansing of the area, with the goal of ultimately eliminating anyone that does not follow the subdivision of Islam known as Sunni Islam.

Political Divide

The political divide within Iraq, and now Syria and Egypt, is very much tied to the ethnic divide of the people. ISIL is looking to replace established governments with a Caliphate, or a Muslim sovereign state.[5] The Caliphate requires all citizens to be Muslim, specifically Sunni in the case of ISIL's intentions. Because of this, All existing governments, as well as people, who refuse to buy into the system have become targets of elimination for the organization.

Consequences

Violence

ISIL has developed a reputation for using extreme violence in attempts to convince people and governments of their cause. This includes, but is not limited to, hostages, torture and public beheadings. ISIL's conquest of the Middle East is rumored to include mass beheadings of citizens and soldiers, as well as inhumane executions, amputations and crucifixions on its way to becoming the most violent and feared terrorist organization in the region. This fear, the shock of the actions created by this organization, spreads across all platforms of social media and fuels both the support of its followers and anger of its resisters.

Unrest

Naturally, ISIL's rise to prominence has pushed many local governments to the brink. So much so, that many argue Iraq has been left helpless and will ultimately fall apart entirely due to this organization. In addition to the local governments, ISIL has effected many governments around the world. Countries like the United States and the United Kingdom are left scrambling to decide what to do with the insurgents as they continue to sweep across the lands killing all in sight. The hysteria and confusion has limited many governments ability to focus on anything but the situation in the Middle East.

Economic Unsettling

Similar to the way foreign relations have been strained and confused, so is the economic markets. As ISIL marches across the Middle East, it is gaining territories all across the land. This has lead to them being in control of key oil fields, and ultimately leaves much of the Western world in a potential chokehold. Iraq is forced to spend on its military, heavily cutting into the country's revenue and crippling its oil industry. ISIL is in position to cut international trade heavily, furthering their goal of creating chaos and ultimately weakening the surrounding region.

Bloc Positions

Attack

Much of the world agrees that ISIL must be stopped, but have very different ideas about how to do this. There are still many unanswered questions about what to do with the region. Should Iraq be rebuilt as it was before ISIL came to control? Would Iraq be better off split into two countries, Sunni and Shia? These are questions to be asked in the future, but both require an attack on ISIL to remove them from power. There is a very clear divide in the response to ISIL, although stopping ISIL is practically universally accepted.

Most countries agree on attacking ISIL directly. The United States, United Kingdom, France, Jordan, Rwanda, South Korea, South Africa, Australia have expressed desire, or has already taken action in attacking ISIL directly to try and eliminate the organization.

On the other hand Russia, China, Chad, Nigeria, Angola, Luxembourg, Lithuania have not explicitly attacked the group. In the case of Chad, Nigeria and Angola, they have been attempting to deal with their own Jihadist uprisings and have not been able to commit to the offense in the Middle East. The other nations, although wanting to stop the terrorist organization, have not explicitly attacked ISIL.

Instead, they have pledged support to Iraq through supplies and training in hopes of stopping ISIL through local government instead of their own troops.

Raised Questions

Responsibility

As with all major conflicts, this specific one brings up the idea of responsibility. For many countries, they have not been directly affected by the terrorist organization. However, for countries like Australia for example, do they have a responsibility to step in and help while watching the citizens of ally nations being executed on camera? Obviously the Security Council, with the intent of promoting world peace, should be responsible in coming up with a solution to this mess. However, is it the Security Council's responsibility to deny an organization the religious sovereignty they seek?

Propaganda

Similar to almost any war for the last forty years, the role of propaganda has been huge in this conflict. Both sides of the conflict have taken advantage of social media to drum up support for a response. This prompts the increasingly standard response of how much media should be trusted? What news is there to keep you informed and what is done to convince you?

Committee Goals

The committee needs to establish an end goal for this conflict. The time to wonder about what ISIL will become is over. It is now up to the Security Council, charged with maintaining peace and stability across the world, to decide what the next step is in combatting the instability of the Middle East.

Should there be a mandated UN attack on ISIL's forces? Should there simply be humanitarian efforts and support for the local governments to take down the

terrorists on their own accord? Should ISIL be awarded a sovereign nation under the expectation of stability?

The Security Council must leave this meeting with a plan of action on how to create stability again in the region and bring peace to the Middle East, an area so tied to the foreign relations of many different countries.

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TOPIC B: On the Question of Ebola and the Outbreak

Introduction

The Ebola virus was first discovered in 1976 in Sudan and Zaire, where the first outbreak of this virus strain infected nearly 300 people, killing roughly fifty percent of those infected. Only months later, a second strain of Ebola, known as Ebola-Zaire, showed up in the Zaire region of Africa infecting over 300 people killing eighty eight percent of those infected. The third known strain of Ebola known as the Ebola Reston strain was brought into America in 1989 when monkeys being brought to a zoo in Virginia were discovered infected with the strain. The last known strain of Ebola, the Ebola Cote d'Ivoire strain, was found in chimpanzees in 1994 during a necropsy on a chimpanzee [1].

For the most part, this deadly virus remained contained to the African continent with outbreaks rarely exceeding one or two hundred infected. Often mistaken for malaria or influenza, Ebola is not easily transferred to humans, but difficult to stop once the outbreak occurs. Often transmitted from some form of primate, the virus enters a single human host, which the outbreak can often be traced back to, before spreading rapidly. Many individual governments such as the United States Center heavily monitor this deadly virus for Disease Control and Prevention as well as the World Health Organization within the United Nations.

Background

Outbreaks

The world has had to deal with over 30 outbreaks of Ebola since its discovery in 1976 [2]. Many of these “outbreaks” are simply lab incidents, where the outbreak is contained to one or two test cases in hopes of gaining some information on the virus. Most of these outbreaks never affect more than two or three hundred people at a time, often occurring in a rural village somewhere in Africa where it can wipe out the village, or be stopped in time to save most of the people before they get

infected. The public reaction to Ebola is often swift and decisive, with medical technology rapidly containing the virus to small quarters. Although there is no cure or vaccine to Ebola, it is easily quarantined with the right precautions easily stopping the spread despite how contagious and lethal the virus truly is.

The worst of these outbreaks before the most recent one occurred in 2000 in the country of Uganda, infecting over 400 people and killing half of them. Often times the virus was spread by attending funerals and medical care provided to [3]. previously infected bodies. Because of this carelessness, the virus was able to rapidly spread across the Ugandan districts known as Gulu, Masindi, and Mbarara creating the largest outbreak previously known to man. This spread of Ebola made it clear to the people just how deadly, a fifty three percent mortality rate, and infectious, virus still live even in dead hosts, the Ebola virus truly was.

The West Africa Epidemic of 2013 and 2014 has replaced the 2000 Uganda outbreak as the largest Ebola outbreak to date [4]. With over 17,000 humans infected and counting, this outbreak is leaps and bounds more serious than any other case. In addition to that, the expected mortality rate when all is said and done is expected to be nearly seventy percent, with nearly seven thousand already dead and counting. This kind of destruction could become the worst mankind has seen since the smallpox epidemic that killed nearly fifteen thousand people in India in 1974. Many were left wondering how this became so serious so quickly with little response.

Unlike most outbreaks, this Ebola outbreak originated near an urban area of Guinea. In addition, Ebola had never been seen in West Africa, so many doctors were hesitant to consider this Ebola, and thus did not treat the virus as if it were Ebola, giving the virus time to develop and spread across Western Africa. After three months from the initial death, Guinea finally recognized the outbreak as Ebola, and the World health Organization began efforts to curb the virus. Unfortunately, the virus reached the capital of Guinea before it could be contained, leading to the spread of the virus to nearby countries, as well as the United States and parts of

Europe. Currently, the outbreak is only considered active in Mali, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Ebola Across Africa

In addition to the West African Epidemic, an isolated outbreak had begun in the Democratic Republic of Congo as well [5]. This virus had a sixty five percent mortality rate, but given the swift reaction and location of origination, the Democratic Republic of Congo's outbreak is already considered over with no new recent outbreaks. Despite this, the West African Epidemic shows that Africa, and any areas connected to it are still vulnerable to the virus. The infrastructure there simply cannot handle a large scale epidemic, making the place susceptible to another sustained outbreak similar to the one occurring now in West Africa.

Epidemics create mass hysteria and universal panic. It makes organizations uneasy, governments strained, resources are cut into, and people are left dead. The world must be prepared to handle this kind of problem at every potential turn. Unfortunately, there are people in Africa and the surrounding regions that have shown the kind of extremist nature necessary to propagate something as serious as a deadly virus. Though there is nothing suggesting a weaponized outbreak [6] could occur, the Security Council has taken steps towards ensuring that the world is safe from Ebola. The worry, as unrest in the Middle east and North Africa continues to expand, is has the Security Council done enough?

Bloc Positions

Aid Through Donation

Many countries feel direct intervention is simply too extreme, something that this situation does not require at the current time. Instead, they would rather aid the infected areas and potential target areas of Ebola through monetary donations to develop the infrastructure required and train the citizens and local doctors how to properly handle the virus. Countries that are not an immediate threat of the virus

see this as the best course of action. These nations include Russia, China, France, Australia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and South Korea.

Aid Through Direct Intervention

Other countries see the pressing need to stop the potential spread of Ebola as quickly as possible. Because of this, they suggest immediate intervention in the areas already suffering from an outbreak as well as susceptible areas near the outbreak. Many of these countries have dealt with recent outbreaks of their own, or have increased investments in the area and see the donation option too long of an investment to stop the outbreak. These countries include the United States, United Kingdom, Chad, Jordan, Nigeria, Rwanda, Angola and South Africa.

Raised Questions

Responsibility

The epidemic raises again the question of responsibility. How much should the other nations feel is required of them to help? Surely the development of the infrastructure in the area would help secure their own borders from infectious viruses and diseases, but at what cost is that investment worth it? At what point does the cost outweigh the benefits of securing another nations borders medically. And how much should another nation intervene in the development of a sovereign state?

Security

The world did not look ready for the outbreak of Ebola in the last 24 months, and that was not even in a populated area. How would the world have responded if Ebola had been found in a capital significantly more populated like Beijing or more realistically, Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo? Odds are, the virus would have spread even faster than it had before. Is the world ready in the event of a truly catastrophic epidemic?

Committee Goals

This topic is slightly different from most topics that the Security Council deals with. Although military involvement is not the topic being discussed, it is still the Security Council's job to ensure that in the event of mass panic and hysteria, that peace can be instilled and order maintained. The Security Council must consider Resolution 2177 recently passed, and determine possible expansion from the resolution to ensure that the outbreak of Ebola these past two years is not only contained, but never replicated again.

Further Reading:

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