

A Background Guide for the  
*Special Political and  
Decolonization Committee*



Dalton Model United Nations III

*Saturday, April 25, 2015*

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# Dalton Model United Nations

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## A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Delegates,

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to Dalton's third annual model United Nations conference and the fourth committee of the General Assembly, the Special Political, and Decolonization Committee. My name is Sunaina Danziger, I'm a senior at Dalton, and I've participated in Model UN since my freshman year. Over the course of these four years, I've attended roughly fifteen conferences, and Model UN has become an integral part of my high school experience. Outside of Model UN, I'm the Editor-in-Chief of *RealPolitik*, Dalton's political magazine, I write and edit for *The Daltonian*, our school newspaper, and I'm a captain of Varsity Track and Field and Tennis. I'm also an avid runner, traveller, reader, and particularly enjoy watching tennis and baseball (go Yankees), *Mad Men*, and *Breaking Bad*. At Dalton, I've been especially interested in studying History, English, and Spanish/Hispanic Literature.

State Failure is a fascinating topic that is rarely addressed in General Assembly committees. It addresses issues of development, postcolonialism, sovereignty, and conflict resolution: each of these topics is not merely a question of humanitarian assistance and foreign intervention, but requires careful reflection and consideration. You'll need to delve deeply into the research process, understand your individual policies well, and use creativity and careful research to craft complex solutions. As the situations in each of our highlighted case studies are evolving on a day-to-day basis, I encourage you to keep up-to-date with recent developments. *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, and *Foreign Policy Magazine* are particularly helpful resources.

Along with our moderators, Seneca Meeks (a junior on the team) and Julien Loo (a sophomore on the team), I look forward to meeting all of you for a day of lively debate, collaboration, and active global awareness. I encourage you begin your research as soon as possible, and please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns, or just to introduce yourself to me (I would love to hear from you!). Best of luck, and see you in April!

Sunaina Danziger

Chair; Special Political, and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL)

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## Topic A: State Failure

### Statement and History of the Problem

Failed states pose a distinct challenge to international peace and stability. To define a failed state, it is a political entity that cannot provide for the most basic public needs of its citizens due to a lack of legitimate institutions needed for proper government. According to political Scientist Max Weber, failed states are those in which a government does not hold a “monopoly on the legitimate use of force,” his definition of the modern nation state.<sup>1</sup> Such states can come in many forms: a geographic space with boundaries that is recognized as a nation with a government in shambles, or a highly coercive apparatus that is either ill-equipped to handle the needs of a population or one that systemically fails to provide basic public services.<sup>2</sup>

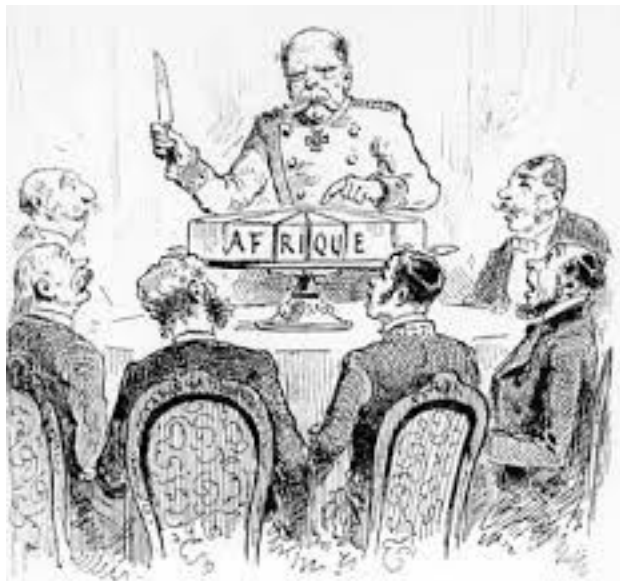
States fail for a whole host of reasons, including rampant disease and pandemics such as smallpox or tuberculosis, environmental disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes, drought, famine, natural resource conflict, vicious civil war, poverty, or as the result of authoritarian dictators such as Mobutu and Idi Amin. In many cases, state failure is deeply rooted in ethnic conflict, which can lead to state collapse, coups, and even genocide. The 1994 Rwandan genocide, for instance, centered around perceived differences in ethnicity between the Hutu and Tutsi groups. In Sudan, differences between various religious and ethnic groups contributed to the 2011 partition into Sudan and South Sudan.

Due to this failure of adequate governance, failed states often serve as incubators for international terrorist groups. Their lack of stable government authority allows them to become transshipment points for illicit drugs, human trafficking, or the

<sup>1</sup> Weber, Max. "Authority and Legitimate Violence - Boundless Open Textbook." N.p., n.d. Web. 23 Feb. 2015. <<https://www.boundless.com/sociology/textbooks/boundless-sociology-textbook/government-15/politics-power-and-authority-112/authority-and-legitimate-violence-621-8983/>>.

<sup>2</sup> Wyler, Liana Sun. "Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and US Policy." 28 Aug 2008. Web. 16 May 2012. <<http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34253.pdf>>.

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. State failure in Somalia, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the former Yugoslavia, have led to human rights catastrophes. States deemed to be in the process of “failing,” such as Pakistan and Syria, are likewise witness to egregious human rights infringement, political and religious-based violence, and instability.



*Cartoon shows the partitioning of Africa by imperialist powers.*

Many instances of state failure can be attributed to poorly-conceived colonialism. In an effort to exercise their national and industrial might, newly-defined European nations sought resource, cheap labor, and geographic expanse in the African

continent, the site of today's most lawless regions. Following the decline of imperialism beginning with First World War, former colonies gained independence in the early 1960s. Because of the economic and political decline of the colonizing states, and their rapid, often haphazard and hasty departures from colonies, those colonies were left abandoned with little cultural or national identity and, more often than not, no formal central governments. They received hefty infusions of aid from the United States and Soviet Union during the Cold War, each superpower seeking to buttress a potential ally. Yet again, the lawless states were sustained almost entirely by foreign assistance.

Since the fall of the USSR in December, 1991, individual countries and the United Nations, by means of its peacekeeping forces, have attempted intervention in failed states on a number of occasions. The United Nations and its subsidiary bodies have frequently sought to build central governments in territories where none exists or has ever existed. Although UN efforts began with a humanitarian focus, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) of 1993, the most recent of many peacekeeping undertakings

spearheaded by the United States, led to the downing of a US Black Hawk helicopter and the death of eighteen US Armed Forces personnel over the course of the ensuing firefight between Somali rebels and US forces. The Battle of Mogadishu caused 18 members of the US Armed Forces to be killed in its attempt to track down a rebel leader. Post an executive order from the Clinton administration mandating withdrawal of US troops, poverty and lawlessness remained rampant.

Today, international law and codes of conduct prevent hostile takeovers and postwar imperialism, yet state failure remains a major international security concern. September 11, 2001 marked a turning point in international policies towards failed and failing states, and elucidated the insidious relationship between religious extremism, terrorism, and state failure. State failure became a central component of the subsequent and contemporary “war on terror,” which forces us, as an international community, to consider failure-based conflicts as equally based in socio-economic inequality as in ethnic and religious conflict. As Franklin Delano Roosevelt famously articulated, “The

test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.”<sup>3</sup>

Citizens of failed states live in poverty, without access to clean water, let alone proper health care or legislation, and are often unable to guarantee their own physical security. The larger “developed world” has a humanitarian responsibility to intervene to ensure individuals access to fundamental human necessities. Yet at the same time, external military intervention in internal conflicts, often led by the United Nations, or individual nations such as the United States and its allies, incurs high costs in terms of money, supplies, and human life, and has, in recent years, only entailed increased conflict. As you consider which forms of state failure present the exigent circumstances for intervention, you must ensure they be carried out cautiously, sensitively, and centered around the protection of civilians.

The Special, Political, and Decolonization committee will be tasked with finding an effective

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<sup>3</sup> Roosevelt, Franklin Delano. Second Inaugural Address. Washington, D.C.. 20 Jan 1937.

solution to the challenges of terrorism, human rights violations, development, and intervention facing failed states. Our committee will pick up in 2015 and focus predominantly on responses to independence and post war developments in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Syria. Each case study is deemed either to be “failed” or in the process of “failing,” and each presents unique socio-political and economic circumstances to consider. According to certain frames of thought, failed states only really emerged in the post-Cold War era. The impact of imperialism and the effects of Cold War politics will be important historical antecedents to consider as you examine recent developments in our three case studies.<sup>4</sup>

You will need to delve deeply into the research process in order to understand how to work within existing structures, address each of the specific case studies discussed in this background guide, and adopt

solutions aimed at combatting the security and humanitarian issues that come alongside state failure. Although it is important to consider the responsibility to protect civilians, you must also be careful to consider states’ national sovereignty. Many failed states, especially those in which terrorist organizations have gained power, oppose foreign intervention and are adamant about resistance.<sup>5</sup> The international community must strike a balance between acknowledging the sovereignty of failed states and ensuring the safety and well-being of their citizens through humanitarian intervention.

## Current Situation

### Definitions of State Failure

Broadly, a failed state is a state in which the government has become ineffective to the point at which it cannot provide for the most basic public needs of its people, including education, security, health care, and

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<sup>4</sup> Nguyen, Minh. “The Question of Failed States.” UNIYA. March 2005. Web. 9 Aug 2012. <[http://www.uniya.org/research/state\\_failure.pdf](http://www.uniya.org/research/state_failure.pdf)>.

<sup>5</sup> Reuven Pedatzur. “Syria’s new chemical equation. Haaretz. 6 Aug 2012. Web. 6 Aug 2012.<<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/syria-s-new-chemical-equation.premium-1.456189>>

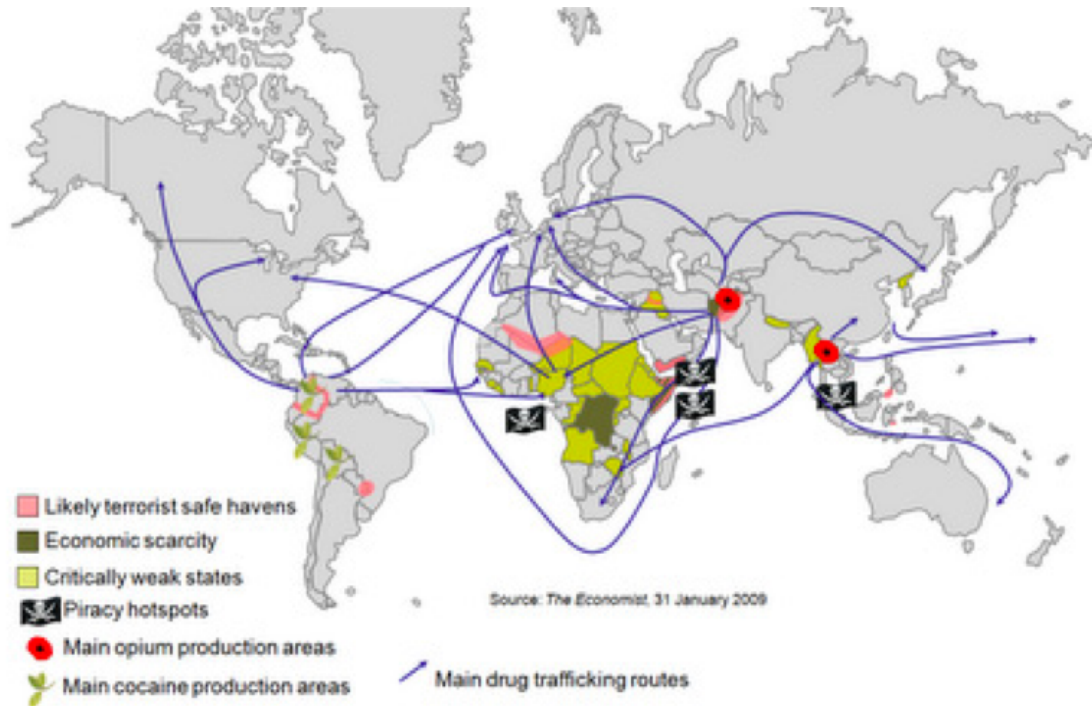






strictly economic analysis. The HDI takes into consideration indicators such as adult literacy rates, labor

Development.” It is evident that a lack of functional government has a direct impact on the particular



*This Fragile states map illustrates the origins and pathways of illicit activities worldwide.*

force participation rate, intensity of deprivation, and life expectancy at birth.<sup>11</sup>

nation’s development. The top 10 fragile states account for 250 million people combined.<sup>12</sup>

The correlation between the FSI and the HDI remains as such: of the top 10 most unstable nations according to the FSI, 6 are among the nations with the lowest 20 HDI ratings, all top 10 are classified as “Low Human

Although several existing structures, both quantitative and qualitative, exist as measurements of state failure, there is currently no formal, international means of gauging the effectiveness of a governing

<sup>11</sup> "Human Development Reports." *Data*. N.p., n.d. Web. 01 Feb. 2015. <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>>.

<sup>12</sup> "The Failed States Index 2011." *Foreign Policy The Failed States Index 2011 Comments*. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failedstates>>.

apparatus, both quantitative and qualitatively. It is also important to understand that although the root causes of state failure may be similar, no two places or countries share the same history, people, or cultural norms. As a committee, you must attempt to balance use of overarching mechanisms with detailed case-specific solutions.

### **Case Study: Somalia**

Social scientists regard Somalia as the quintessential failed state and likewise, no international intervention has resulted in meaningful change. Somalia has topped the Failed States Index since 2008, due to a near-complete absence of law and order, rampant social and ethnic-based dispute, and resource conflict. Although Somalia does have an internationally recognized government, this government exercises little if any monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Built atop a clan-based system, the region has never been successfully governed by a centralized state, and faces widespread threats from rebel

warlords and militias, who all seek to impose their own variation of strict and violent religious codes on the region's constituents, under the facade of Islam.<sup>13</sup> An understanding of the history of Somalia and humanitarian intervention therein is critical to adopting solutions to state-building.

Located on the horn of Africa, Somalia houses a population of approximately 10 million.<sup>14</sup> It gained independence from Britain and Italy in 1960, after years of colonial conflict decimated the land. A variety of Somalia's many factions -- political, ethnic, religious -- adopted their own strains of self-determination. Intra-state conflict in Somalia negatively affected its neighboring countries until the late 1960s, when then Prime Minister Mohamed Ibrahim Egal quelled many separatist movements and consolidated power. The Prime Minister's decision infuriated Somali citizens, who orchestrated the first of many successful coups in the history of the nation. Major General Barre appointed himself President

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<sup>13</sup> "The Fragile States Index 2014 | The Fund for Peace." The Fragile States Index 2014 | TheFund for Peace. N.p., n.d. Web. 01 Feb. 2015. <<http://ffp.statesindex.org/rankings-2014>>.

<sup>14</sup> "U.S. Relations With Somalia." *U.S. Department of State*. U.S. Department of State, 16 Aug. 2013. Web. 03 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm>>.

following the coup, and created a highly-centralized security council largely removed from Somalia's every-day political affairs. Barre's rigid, authoritarian regime drove many Somalis to rebel factions, which eventually succeeded in toppling his bureaucracy in the Ogaden War of 1977.<sup>15</sup>

Immediately following the war, Somalia sought international aid and rebuilding assistance. The United States responded by restarting its USAID mission and attempting to protect Somalia's sovereignty from foreign takeovers.<sup>16</sup> The country became increasingly dependant on massive foreign aid programs, and civil violence verged on a full-fledged civil war. By the late 1980s, the rebel army had become so powerful that it incited a mass exodus, and the national army disintegrated. By that time, the Somali government lost its monopoly over the legitimate use of force: the state had failed. In the absence of a secure governmental structure to

provide food services, famine ran rampant, affecting millions of people. Coinciding with the famine was a major drought and a substantial uptick in violence. The combination of the three lead to the launching of Operation Restore Hope, spearheaded by the Unified Task Force (UNITAF).<sup>17</sup> The operation was intended to offer aid to those suffering from the effects of violence and famine within Somalia. Yet Somalia was in shambles, and the mission lacked the critical infrastructure to effect a progressive state-building agenda. After The Battle of Mogadishu and the downing American and black hawk helicopters, the United States withdrew from Somalia and ceased all relations.<sup>18</sup>

Since the withdrawal of the United States, Somalia has received international assistance, mostly in the form of humanitarian aid. Poverty, food insecurity as a result of widespread crop failure, statelessness, and lack of any formal

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ulfelder, Jay. "The Watch List." Foreign Policy July/ August 2012. Web. 18 Aug 2012. <[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/06/18/the\\_watch\\_list](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/06/18/the_watch_list)>.

<sup>18</sup> Ulfelder, Jay. "The Watch List." Foreign Policy July/ August 2012. Web. 18 Aug 2012. <[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/06/18/the\\_watch\\_list](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/06/18/the_watch_list)>.

legal or judicial system, however, continue to destabilize the region. The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) has held ostensible power since 2004, yet real power lies in the hands of local warlords and extremist groups. The mass proliferation and success of piracy in Somalia has presented a serious international security concern. Hijacked vessels, stolen cargo, and holding crews for ransom have been the tactics of the pirates and since 2008 the number of attacks by the pirates has been in the hundreds, spreading to directly off the coast, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, and parts of the Indian ocean.<sup>19</sup>

Somalia is in desperate need of solutions to its economic and security concerns, its lack of diplomatic relations, extreme poverty, and absence of a legitimate government. The TFG was tasked with addressing each of the aforementioned issues, yet has itself failed. Somalia is vital to informing our understanding of state failure not only because it is the archetypical failed state, but because

of sequence of events and foreign involvement that have defined international hesitance to intervene in fragile regions and ungoverned territories.

### **Case Study: The Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Known intermittently as Zaire, between 1971 and 1997, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has a long history of governmental instability. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the DRC was governed as a Belgian colony. Belgian colonial rule in “the Belgian Congo,” instigated by King Leopold II, was characterized by brutality, ethnic conflict, famine, resource exploitation, and poverty, and is widely regarded as the most horrific example of Western imperialism.<sup>20</sup>

Today, the DRC is a largely ungoverned territory teeming with corruption, human and resource exploitation, and poverty: millions of people are forced to survive on a

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> “International condemnation for Mali coup.” Al Jazeera 23 Mar 2012. Web. 10 Aug 2012. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/03/2012322234952301942.html>>.

mere 400 USD a year.<sup>21</sup> Many individuals living within official national boundaries are subjected to crimes against humanity including genocide, rape, and enslavement as a result of group conflict. The standing government has been weakened to the point that it can provide neither sanctity to these individuals nor a stable penal code with which to prosecute responsible parties. A persistent lack of infrastructure has created an abundance of problems for the state that the international community has yet to adequately address. The DRC is among the poorest nations within the international community as it faces severe economic difficulties.<sup>22</sup> Although it is abundant in natural resources, it has an annual budget of only 6 billion USD, not nearly enough to effectively sustain its

population of 67.5 million people. The DRC is ranked as the second lowest nation on the HDI, with a life expectancy of just 50 years of age.<sup>23</sup> Corruption plagues the high ranking government officials, leading them to resort to cronyism and nepotism.<sup>24</sup> Journalists are frequently subjected to attacks and executed for treason against the government: the DRC does not recognize freedom of the press as a legitimate protection.<sup>25</sup>

The leadership of the DRC has for decades incubated the nation's current state failure. A slew of dictators -- Mobutu, Joseph Kabila, and his son, Joseph Kabila II -- all exploited their citizens for personal gain.<sup>26</sup> Kabila's authoritarian system bore some resemblance to a functional government, yet following his death,

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<sup>21</sup> "Congo, Dem. Rep." *Congo, Dem. Rep.* N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Feb. 2015. <<http://data.worldbank.org/country/congo-dem-rep>>.

<sup>22</sup> "The Failing State in the Democratic Republic of Congo." - *Centre for World Dialogue*. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.worlddialogue.org/content.php?id=500>>.

<sup>23</sup> "Human Development Reports." Human Development Index (HDI). N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Feb. 2015. <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>>.

<sup>24</sup> "Failed State: Can DR Congo Recover?" *BBC News*. BBC, 21 Nov. 2011. Web. 03 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15775445>>.

<sup>25</sup> Trefon, Theodore. "Failed state: Can DR Congo recover?." BBC 21 Nov 2011. Web. 10 Aug 2012. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15775445>>.

<sup>26</sup> "U.S. Relations With Democratic Republic of the Congo." *U.S. Department of State*. U.S. Department of State, 08 Nov. 2013. Web. 03 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2823.htm>>.

that governing apparatus disintegrated. His son and successor, Joseph Kabila II failed to enact any serious economic and political reforms. Mobutu, who renamed the DRC Zaire, instigated a state-sponsored system of ethnic cleansing.<sup>27</sup>

The DRC remains afflicted by serious human rights violations, staggeringly low education rates, an absence of necessary infrastructure, and a lack of individual physical security.<sup>28</sup> Large territories remain in control of local warlords, and the resources available for sustainable income are not harnessed by those who would benefit the public good. The DRC, similar to Somalia, faces issues related to human rights abuses, leadership, economic instability, natural disasters, resource exploitation, and warlords. The DRC has also faced difficulty monitoring its natural resources, and houses a significant number of dangerous conflict diamonds.<sup>29</sup>

United Nations intervention in the DRC has been far from consistent. The UN maintained peacekeeping operations in the DRC that lasted ten years under the United Nations Organization Mission, which ultimately became the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The reinstated peacekeeping force emphasizes cooperation with the government, protection of civilians in armed conflict, and coordination and dialogue between the various rebel groups within the nation.<sup>30</sup>

### **Case Study: Syria**

The ongoing Syrian Civil War is an issue of major concern to the international community, and its escalating violence has pushed many in the international community to support some form of UN intervention in the matter. Syria is close to failing, and some may even

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<sup>27</sup> Herbst, Jeffrey. "There Is No Congo." *Foreign Policy* 18 Mar 2009. Web. 10 Aug 2012. <[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/03/17/there\\_is\\_no\\_congo](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/03/17/there_is_no_congo)>

<sup>28</sup> "U.S. Relations With Democratic Republic of the Congo." *U.S. Department of State*. U.S. Department of State, 08 Nov. 2013. Web. 03 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2823.htm>>.

<sup>29</sup> "U.S. Relations With Democratic Republic of the Congo." *U.S. Department of State*. U.S. Department of State, 08 Nov. 2013. Web. 03 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2823.htm>>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



consider it to have already failed. Group grievances in Syria escalated violent conflict in the wake of the 2011 Arab Spring, and have only become more defined since then. This year, the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a vicious jihadist group with a very low risk-profile and no regard for humanitarian law, has further defined the fault lines of the civil war, putting Syria on the brink of state failure.<sup>31</sup>

Two mobilized and armed groups -- the Kurds and a rebel force of Sunni Muslims -- have been in conflict since the onset of the civil war. It is important to note that the government led by President Bashar al-Assad is primarily a Shiite government, whereas the majority of the Syrian population (74%) is Sunni Muslim (16% belong to other sects of Islam, and 10% are Christians).<sup>32</sup>

Kurds have been denied citizenship in many instances, and have taken up arms in Northern Syria and in Iraq as a means of protesting their grievances. The Assad regime has

largely had to withdraw from the northern regions in order to maintain its control over other parts of the country, namely the Sunni majority. In 2013, the assassination of opposition leader Mashall Tammmo reignited the Kurds to violent action. The Kurds are also a primary target of the Islamic State.

Throughout Assad's tenure in office, Sunni Muslims have also developed deep-seated grievances at the hands of a minority government, under an iron-fist of dictatorship. Assad concentrated power in the hands of his family and members of the Alawite community, who wield a disproportionate power in the Syrian government, military and business elite. Claims of corruption have been abundant among the excluded Sunni majority, and protests have generally been most prominent in Sunni-dominated areas. The majority Sunnis are tired of being controlled by a domineering minority that has been in charge of the state for four decades. The situation is even more dangerous because of how sectarian conflict in any Middle Eastern

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<sup>31</sup> "Syria: The Story of the Conflict." *BBC News*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 May 2014. <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>>.

<sup>32</sup> Sterling, Joe. "Daraa: The Spark That Lit the Syrian Flame." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 01 Mar. 2012. Web. 15 May 2014. <<http://www.cnn.com/2012/03/01/world/meast/syria-crisis-beginnings/>>



country could easily overflow to neighboring countries, thus initiating severe regional sectarian conflicts in a chain reaction.<sup>33</sup>

Assad promised and repeatedly failed to deliver reforms on multiple occasions, adding to citizen grievances. The Syrian government has also repeatedly authorized the use of force against its citizens, including by means of chemical and biological weapons, and have not differentiated between the Sunni majority and Shiite minority. The ascendance of the Islamic State, which is attempting to turn the entire Syria and former Levant regions into a Sunni caliphate, presents an unprecedented challenge to stability.<sup>34</sup>

Although it would take far more time than that allocated to a one-day conference to address the many social, political, and economic issues related to Syria, SPECPOL will address the ways in which Syria could or ought to be defined as a “failed state.” We will consider the unique situation in Syria through the lens of our analysis of state failure in

Somalia, the DRC, and in terms of providing failure-prevention mechanisms.

## Possible Solutions

Addressing state failure and each of the case studies requires a complex understanding of the various political, economic, security, and humanitarian issues at play. It requires you to develop a detailed understanding of the cultural and structural underpinnings in Somalia, the DRC, and the ongoing conflict in Syria, and also the ways in which external actors such as the UN, individual nations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) ought to intervene and coordinate humanitarian and state-building solutions.

In the event of natural catastrophes, the UN has by-and-large succeeded in delivering humanitarian aid. Yet when that catastrophe is, for instance, a developing famine, an underlying cause of state weakness, UN action tends to be less effective. The UN could implement early warning systems, or a time limit for

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<sup>33</sup> "U.S. Relations With Syria." *U.S. Department of State*. U.S. Department of State, 20 Mar. 2014. Web. <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3580.htm>>.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

responding once a potential crisis (such as a famine) has been identified by international organizations and member states who can offer assistance. Solutions would need to identify examples of potential crises and mechanisms for identification. It is also important to engage in dialogues to address specific, regional concerns.

One might be inclined to adopt an almost exclusively humanitarian approach to failed states: yet even the delivery of humanitarian aid requires overcoming a number of institution-based obstacles. In Somalia and DRC, warlords and faction leaders interfere with the deliverance of humanitarian aid. In Syria, IS beheaded a number of aid workers, journalists, and NGO members, and used a large portion of the humanitarian aid to provide for its own members. The Assad government has demonstrated few ethical qualms regarding the use of violence against its own citizens, and an effective solution to humanitarian intervention would need to consider an effective means of acting outside of state parameters to protect civilians. The DRC and Somalia each face issues of Islamist militant groups overrunning more peaceful strains of Islam, which complicates

its development and forces SPECPOL to consider a conflict-resolution based approach to state restructuring. Reforming and re-imagining the role of peacekeeping troops would be one means of addressing more immediate civilian protection concerns. It might also help to consider the role of peacekeepers in security sector reform, election monitoring, and state-building processes.

Building partnerships with regional bodies and NGOs, including and especially the African Union, is vital to any effective solution to overcoming state failure. Regional and international bodies also ought to collaborate on issue related to development.

## Bloc Positions

State failure is not a topic that divides into distinct policy blocs, but rather one characterized by groups of countries more supportive of reconstruction efforts and intervention, and those who are less in favor. Although you must stick to your country's particular policy, we would encourage collaboration between developed nations, who would offer aid and possibly

intervene, developing nations, who may offer strategic support, and failed states themselves. Keep in mind that some failed states would actively advocate for United Nations assistance and/or intervention, whereas others would vehemently oppose it.

### **Western Bloc**

In the past, while supportive of global development, the United States and most of Western Europe remained hesitant to independently act in failed states due to the potential risk to all parties involved. Those who advocate for intervention is the development of countries that would be considered failed would likely do so because they have a vested interest in a specific place. For example, several major economic powers have advocated military aid-based intervention in Somalia, as continued instability threatens the commercial shipping industry, vital to the economies of developed and developing nations alike. Other countries that may be considered failed, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, would either deter or attract foreign intervention depending on the country's relationship with the United States and public opinion.

### **Economic Intervention Favoring Countries**

Another major policy supports intervention purely for development purposes. In many cases, a state's stability and growth, or lack thereof, directly affects the stability, security and economic performance of its neighbors and potential trading partners. China and Russia have demonstrated particular interests in intervening in potentially failed regions for economic purposes.

Within the bloc of those favoring intervention, there would be those in favor of greater military involvement and those who would use the military only as a last resort and rather rely on development aid in the form healthcare, education, government training programs and such. The United States has been a staunch advocate of more direct foreign involvement, often militarily, and has utilized its clout with NATO and other allies to support its agendas. Yet many of the US's allies are less willing to intervene (generally, the United Kingdom and in the case of Afghanistan, Australia). Additionally, changes in government in these countries further influence how countries decide to intervene in failed states. Consider both the differences

and similarities in President Bush's and President Obama's approaches to intervention.

## Developing Nations

In general, developing countries seeking aid may be in favor of a greater foreign involvement. Struggling nations with more dictatorial regimes, including some of the most egregious human rights offenders, would oppose mandated intervention because they would see it as a threat to their sovereignty. Examples of such countries may include Zimbabwe, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Cuba.

Yet "developing countries" are certainly not homogenous. There are many countries that are developing and house high poverty rates, but are not at risk of failing. Those countries would advocate intervention in the countries in which they hold personal interests or who place a potential threat to their security or prosperity. For example; if a neighboring country fails and the borders are flooded with refugees, this would inevitably create a difficult situation for that country's neighbors. An example of this would be the neighbors

who were affected by the Ivorian Refugee Crisis originating in Cote D'Ivoire.

Specific relationships between countries are also complicated and many developing countries actively lobby for foreign investment and assistance for themselves but oppose such action in other countries. Eritrea, for example, believes that "the experience of the past two decades has repeatedly and amply demonstrated that only Somalis can find an enduring solution for themselves and their country."<sup>35</sup> Other countries in the Horn of Africa region have lobbied for support as millions face life threatening circumstances because of the famine that spread.

## Questions a Resolution Must Answer

A successful resolution will identify a definition for a failed state and describe when and why the United Nations should define countries as such. It will also develop a mechanism for identifying failing states. It must not use abstraction but rather describe specific indicators and

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<sup>35</sup> "Eritrea." *Eritrea*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Feb. 2015. <<http://data.worldbank.org/country/eritrea>>.

criteria, building on current models. It will further describe general mechanisms for approaching a failed state but also specifically address the case studies (some of the most failed states) discussed in the study guide. Resolutions by different blocs will place emphasis on either failing states or those considered to be the most failed. A successful resolution will specifically identify organs of the United Nations as well as partners organizations to be called to action.

- What is a failed state and what is a failing state? Provide a specific definition, building off of (not borrowing) current ones, for both the terms.
- At what point should the United Nations address nations that have either become failed states or are on the path to becoming them? This should be measured quantitatively with specific statistics such as human development indices or a “Failed States Index.”
- Which United Nations member states should be defined as failed states or failing states at present?
- Who should be involved in restoring the nation, ensuring global peace, and the human rights of those residing in the

country? Identify a plethora of partners in the resolutions.

- What specific suggestions are there for the case studies? Utilizing information gleaned in both domestic and international sources, how can the United Nations provide assistance to the three case studies highlighted above?
- Is there a “responsibility to protect?” What constitutes the exigent circumstances for intervention, both humanitarian and military?

## Suggestions for Further Research

It is imperative that attention is given to evaluations of states effectiveness/ how failed a state is, the processes involved in nation building, current situations in our specific case studies. To begin your research, you should conduct a basic search to understand the existing literature on failed states that could provide you a broad overview (Wikipedia may be helpful for general-understanding purposes).

I would then suggest reading parts of reports published by NGOs or the UN that provide more specific ideas on development and state-building

strategies. Understanding how, specifically, the United Nations can assist individual failed or failing states will be useful for debate and resolution writing. A must read would be the UNIYA publication on “The Question of ‘Failed States.’” In particular, you should focus on Box 1.

Newspapers and internet media sources will be useful for country specific information. You should definitely read several short and long-form pieces published by *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, or *Foreign Policy Magazine* (which issues special reports, together with the Fund for Peace, on individual failed states). The CIA World Fact Book and various foreign ministries including the United States Department provide country overviews with detailed statistics. The United Nations Human Development Report is perhaps one of the most helpful resources on issues related to development. Adapting information from these sources will allow for more detailed resolutions and speeches. Concrete facts will be integral in crafting a successful resolution.

A background knowledge of past United Nations actions is also

important helpful. Pay particular attention to past resolutions on the case studies (such as peacekeeping mandates) as they inform the relationship between national and international operations and intervention. These actions can be found on the United Nations website. The Security Council publishes every resolution it passes online, organized by topic.

Lastly, the Failed States Index provides a comprehensive guide to the evaluation of states effectiveness. Successful resolutions ought to utilize this as a means of quantitatively measuring state failure, although models built off of it would be of course interesting to entertain.