



4th Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

FORUM: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA4)

TOPIC: Addressing the implications of proxy warfare

STUDENT OFFICER: Roza Anna Christodoulou, Aggeliki- Peleia Papoutsani

POSITION: Co-Chairs

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Aggeliki-Peleia Papoutsani, I am 16 years old, and I am a student at the 1st High-school of Kifisia. This is my first experience chairing in a conference, and I feel both delighted and honored to be serving as a Co-Chair in the SPECPOL (GA4) committee in this year's AMLMUN.

Firstly, I would like to welcome you all to the 4th AMLMUN and to the Special, Political and Decolonization Committee. I believe that the topics chosen for our committee are very interesting, challenging and have a lot of room for discussion.

Regarding the study guide and talking from experience based on my previous participation as a delegate, I strongly recommend using it as a source of information. The guide provides a general summary as well as comprehensive information on the subject. Having said that, it is equally, if not more important, for each delegate to conduct their own research, as it will provide a complete understanding of the topic. As always, I am open to any questions you may have, and I'll be more than happy to assist you with any issues you might be facing, please contact me via email in aggeliki.papoutsani@gmail.com.

Looking forward to meeting you all!

Best wishes,

Aggeliki-Peleia Papoutsani

Dear Delegates,

My name is Roza Christodoulou, and I am a student at Saint Joseph FR/GR School. This year I have the honor of serving as a Co-Chair of GA4 for the first time, marking my 5th MUN conference. I would firstly like to welcome you all to the 4th annual session of AMLMUN. During our conference, we aim to provide a nice and friendly environment for the debate.

In this study guide, you should find the necessary information to prepare your resolution. Regardless of the study guide though, I urge you to conduct your own research to explore the topic more thoroughly for your better understanding. At the end of this study guide, you'll find the bibliography. We will have linked our sources, and by visiting these pages you can achieve a fuller understanding of this topic.

For any questions regarding the committee, the conference or topics, do not hesitate to contact me via email at aspa.zana@gmail.com!

I am looking forward to meeting you all!

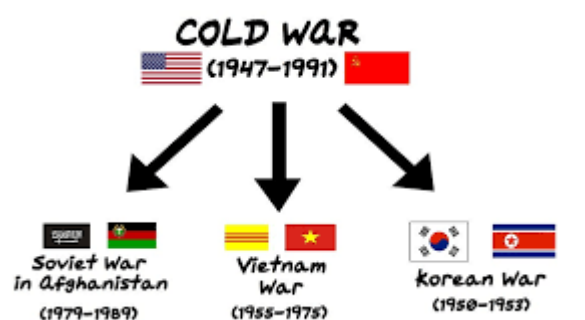
Kindest regards,
Roza Anna Christodoulou

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Proxy warfare is when, in a conflict, one party prefers to get another smaller and weaker military power involved to fight against an opposing side in a smaller and less direct conflict. In other words, proxy warfare is a war that happens when large powers indirectly fight against each other by funding smaller armies to create a smaller conflict instead of engaging directly. This strategy allows the known power to carry out their strategy without the risks of war. Proxy wars are a common global phenomenon, often occurring in non-Western or developing regions with ties to wealthier, more powerful states. An example is the Yemeni war, in which Iran is supporting the Houthi movement on their attack towards Yemen.

From a military point of view, it could cause more dangerous fighting, unlike normal wars, and might even attract major powers.

From a political point of view, proxy wars are particularly detrimental to the stability of regions, and support the conflict escalation.



Example of proxy war

Ethically speaking, proxy use puts in question the responsibility, and the potential international law violations of the major powers involved.

It may have military implications such as:

1. Maximised Lethality and Dispersion,
2. Potential for Escalation,
3. Regional Instability,
4. Violation of International Law,

¹ Riley, Jonathan Stephen Harry. "The Art of Proxy Warfare." *Medium*, 2 Oct. 2023, jonathanrileywriter.medium.com/the-art-of-proxy-warfare-9f85926388e4. Accessed 16 Aug. 2025.

4th Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

5. Blurred Lines of Accountability,
6. Impact on Civilian Populations,
7. Difficulty in Attributions,
8. Increased Secrecy and Corruption.

Historical & Contemporary Examples:

- The Cold War era: U.S. and USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) backing opposing sides in Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan.
- Ongoing conflicts in Yemen and Syria: foreign powers supporting rival factions.
- Sahel region: external involvement exacerbating local insurgencies.



2

A recent famous proxy war

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Proxy Warfare

“a military conflict in which one or more third parties directly or indirectly support one or more state or non-state combatants in an effort to influence the conflict’s outcome and thereby to advance their own strategic interests or to undermine those of their opponents”³

Cold War

“The Cold War was a period of global geopolitical rivalry between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union (USSR) and their respective allies, the capitalist Western Bloc and communist

² “Iranian Axis Is Not Deterred, Houthi Missile Attack on Israel Shows: The Jerusalem Post.” *The Jerusalem Post* / *JPost.Com*, 15 Sept. 2024, www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-820126 . Accessed 15 Aug. 2025.

³“Proxy War.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/topic/proxy-war . Accessed 09 Aug. 2025.



4th Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

Eastern Bloc, which began in the aftermath of the Second World War and ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.”⁴

Non-State Actors

“on-state actors (NSA) are entities that participate or act in international relations. They are organizations with sufficient power to influence and cause a change even though they do not belong to any established institution of a state.”⁵

Balance of Power

“in international relations, the posture and policy of a nation or group of nations protecting itself against another nation or group of nations by matching its power against the power of the other side. States can pursue a policy of balance of power in two ways: by increasing their own power, as when engaging in an armaments race or in the competitive acquisition of territory; or by adding to their own power that of other states, as when embarking upon a policy of alliances.”⁶

Spheres of Influence

“in international politics, the claim by a state to exclusive or predominant control over a foreign area or territory. The term may refer to a political claim to exclusive control, which other nations may or may not recognize as a matter of fact, or it may refer to a legal agreement by which another state or states pledge themselves to refrain from interference within the sphere of influence”⁷

Insurgency

“term historically restricted to rebellious acts that did not reach the proportions of an organized revolution. It has subsequently been applied to any such armed uprising, typically guerrilla in character, against the recognized government of a state or country.”⁸

⁴“Category:Cold War Terminology.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 9 Oct. 2024, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Cold_War_terminology . Accessed 09 Aug. 2025.

⁵“Non-State Actor.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 18 July 2025, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-state_actor . Accessed 09 Aug. 2025.

⁶“Balance of Power.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 24 July 2025, www.britannica.com/topic/balance-of-power . Accessed 09 Aug. 2025.

⁷ “Sphere of Influence.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/topic/sphere-of-influence . Accessed 09 Aug. 2025.

⁸ “Insurgency.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 17 June 2025, www.britannica.com/topic/insurgency . Accessed 09 Aug. 2025.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Proxy wars in history

Proxy wars have quite the history. Nations and empires have used them as both military and foreign policy strategies to influence or even take control over neighbouring nations. Going back to the Byzantine empire (330-1453) which deliberately created disputes and hostilities between the different groups located in enemy territory, and when war broke out, they supported the strongest side. In the WW1 era, Britain and France supported the Arab revolt (1916-18) against the Ottoman empire, in a similar way as the Byzant. Correspondingly, the Soviet Union supported Republican forces and the Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy supported National forces, leading to the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Notably, Germany used the civil war as an opportunity to test new weapons technologies on the Spanish population.

As the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union grew during the 1950s/60s, the intense competition between the two created the impression that direct conflict would lead to worldwide destruction. Proxy warfare became quite a normalized way for two grand powers to compete for world influence. In the cold war era, the U.S., the S.U. and China engaged in proxy wars such as the Angolan Civil War(1975-2002). From 1954 to 1975, the Vietnam war was a major proxy war for the Soviet-Chinese conflict that supported North Vietnam and the Viet Cong. Eventually, the U.S. withdrew forces and South Vietnam got defeated, the conflict's goals of limiting American influence in the region and increasing its own were achieved. In the '80s, after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in an attempt to install a new communist government, the U.S.A. acted as a third party in a proxy war that pitted the Afghan and Soviet army against Islamic guerrillas, supplied with weapons and equipment by the U.S. government.

The cost of the Afghan War of 1978 to 1992 crippled the Soviet Union and eventually contributed to its downfall. Proxy wars haven't stopped in the 21st century. Examples include a civil war in Yemen, begun in 2014, involving a coalition between the Houthi movement, backed by Iran, and Yemeni government forces, supported by Saudi Arabia and its allies. Additionally, after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the United States and its NATO allies acted as third-party supporters of Ukraine, supplying them with significant military help and imposing economic sanctions on Russia, while China and Iran acted as third-party supporters of Russia.

Implications of Proxy Warfare

Proxy wars have several implications that sabotage regions and harm civilians. A grand issue is the question of accountability, as external actors are most likely to deny involvement, making it extremely hard to hold them accountable for human rights violations or war crimes. Beyond that, proxies may act unpredictably or independently, disrupting peace processes and escalating violence. Furthermore, proxy wars undermine national sovereignty by thinning out state authority, while reducing public trust in institutions, often resulting in governmental failure. Civilians are usually caught in the cross fire of such warfare, suffering from all the consequences of war. Furthermore, this type of warfare frequently involves breaches of international humanitarian law, deepening humanitarian crises in already vulnerable regions.

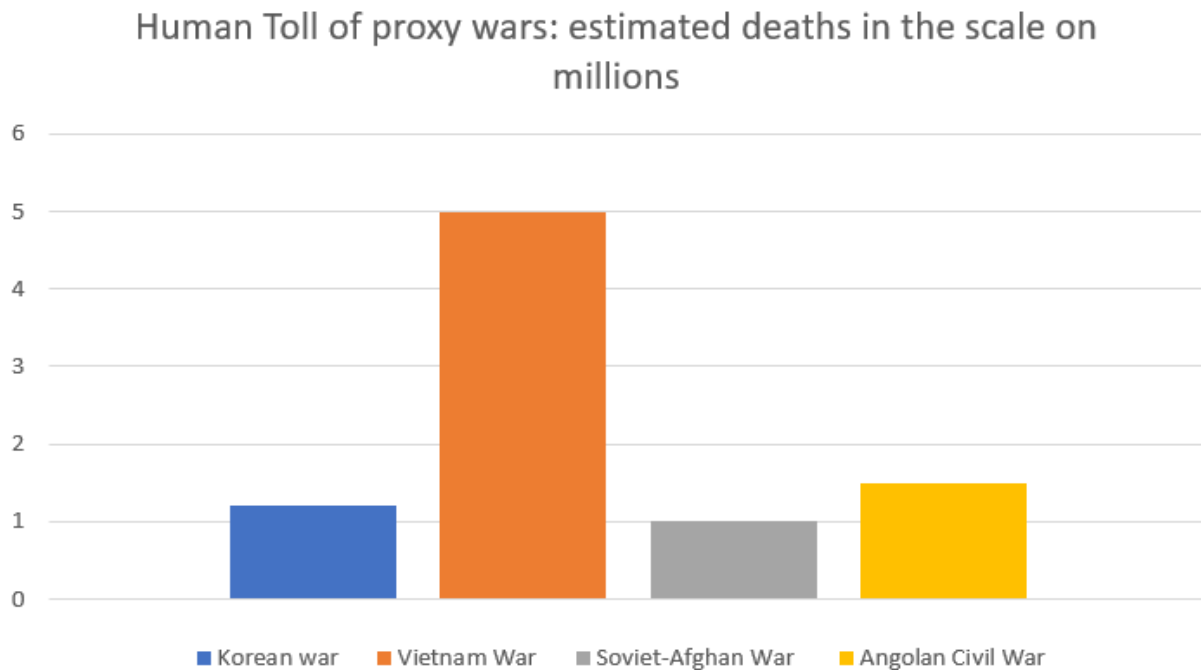


diagram of proxy war inflicted deaths (created by us)

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United States of America (USA)

The USA has been involved in proxy wars by participating but they have also tried to resolve the issue. For example, in the cold war era , the US has been involved in backing one side. The United States of America has funded research on conflict prevention and disarmament. They have also supported the UN peacekeeping and counterterrorism efforts aiming to reduce conditions leading to proxy wars such as the creation of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) championed by Washington DC under president Obama in July of 2020. In addition, the USA has participated in negotiations on arms transfers and sanctions that target states/ groups fueling proxy wars. By July of 2025, the USA sanctioned 22 companies in Hong Kong, the UAE and Turkey in order to facilitate the sales of Iranian oil in order to provide financial support to the IRGC-Quds Force, its weapon programs and local proxies. The United States has addressed proxy wars both as a participant and as a policy actor seeking to manage or contain their impacts through diplomacy, military support, and strategic alliances.

United Kingdom (U.K.)

The United Kingdom government funds research on conflict drivers. They also support mediation and capacity building in fragile states aiming to reduce external interference. In addition, the UK has been actively involved in leading international efforts to forge coalitions



4th Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

against proxy warfare that contributes to human rights abuses. Moreover they have been working with allies in order to address the use of proxy forces by state and non-state actors. The UK has also called for the UN to establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism for proxy warfare, focusing on human rights violations like CRSV (Conflict-Related Sexual Violence).

Germany

Germany traditionally self-defines as a “civilian power,” committed to diplomacy and multilateral conflict resolution. Military involvement is only within limits under the condition that all peaceful options are exhausted already, and must be permitted under international law and frameworks such as NATO, the EU, or the UN. In the cold war era and after, Germany has supported and implemented international law and institutions, including UN conventions, European law, and the concept of universal human rights. In June 30 of 2002, the German government passed and implemented a new law named Völkerstrafgesetzbuch (Code of Crimes against International Law) which allows cases to be brought against suspects under international criminal law provisions, meaning that suspects can be prosecuted even though both they and their victims are foreigners and the crime itself took place abroad, giving Germany a legal mechanism to prosecute serious crimes committed during proxy conflicts.

Switzerland

Switzerland is known for their neutral position. In the '50s Switzerland has acted as a peacekeeper in conflicts such as Algeria's independence in '62 or more recent ones like in Sudan, Syria, and Colombia. Switzerland built their reputation as a trusted provider of good offices not through acting as a peacemaker, but through repeatedly acting as a protecting power in the 19th and 20th centuries. Switzerland managed diplomatic communication channels – that sometimes lasted years – between hostile states that had ruined their diplomatic relations. During WW1, Switzerland held 36 protecting power mandates, and even more during WW2. In 2014, the Swiss government facilitated the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine and encouraged ceasefire and political peace discussions.

In addition, they have fully implemented universal jurisdiction, which allows them to put on trial individuals accused of genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity in general, no matter the location or nationality. Furthermore, via a foreign policy, the Swiss government is preventing difficulties created by proxy warfare. As an active member of international efforts to combat the issue, Switzerland's approach includes the strengthening of the international legal framework, promoting good governance and encouraging civil society in conflict zones. They are also working in order to counter violent extremism and ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Northern Countries

The northern countries are Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Norway. These countries, in order to address the issue, have been using a combination of strategies such as giving support



4th Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

to opposing factions, bolstering a stable region and imposing sanctions. These actions' aim was to counter the influence of the rival powers, prevent the spread of instability and the potential for escalation to be limited. The NORDEFCO (Nordic Defence Cooperation) is a collaboration among the Northern countries in the area of defence. It aims to strengthen their defence capabilities. The memorandum of understanding was signed in Helsinki on November 4, 2009, succeeding the Nordic Supportive Defence Structures (NORDSUP), the Nordic armaments cooperation (NORDAC) and the Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORDCAPS), previous parallel cooperative arrangements.

United Nations (UN)

The United Nations (UN) to prevent proxy wars from spreading ,should create a standing body that checks where weapons used in conflicts and how they are being used to make sure that they comply with the international war laws and the UN Charter. Since it was created in 1945, the United Nations (UN) has been a key organization for peacekeeping and safety around the world. The UN after WWII was founded to prevent future wars by promoting diplomacy, security and cooperation among states. Early warning is key to preventing conflicts and the UN should monitor events worldwide so it can detect threats to peace and security so the Security Council and the Secretary General should take action before problems get worse.

European Union (EU)

The European Union (EU) has attempted to address proxy war via multiple approaches including diplomacy, conflict prevention and law creation. They encouraged peace making processes in war zones (ex: Libya, Syria and the Sahel) by partnering with the UN and through the European External Action Service (EEAS) they dispatched ambassadors. Additionally, the EU used its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to conduct peace support and consulting operations like EUNAVFOR MED which imposes arm embargoes off the Libyan coast. The European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) is the revised doctrine of the EU to improve the effectiveness of the CSDP, including the defence and security of the member states, the protection of civilians, cooperation between the member states' armed forces, management of immigration, crises etc. Adopted on 28 June 2016, it replaces the European Security Strategy of 2003. The EUGS is complemented by a document titled "Implementation Plan on Security and Defense" (IPSD). Deterrence theory is applied to deter aggressors as one of the core mandates of Common Security and Defence Policy, yet lacks credibility due to insufficient resources.

African Union (AU)

The African Union(AU) has addressed proxy warfare via encouraging continental peacemaking frameworks, mediating regional coalitions and reinforcing regulations against foreign intervention. Via the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the AU established



4th Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

mechanisms such as the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and African Standby Force (ASF). The CEWS is responsible for data collection and analysis and is mandated to collaborate with “the United Nations (UN), its agencies, other relevant international organizations, research centres, academic institutions and Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)” with its information to be used by the Chairperson of the Commission” to advise the Peace and Security Council (PSC), on potential conflicts and threats to peace and security in Africa and recommend the best courses of action. Its goal is the anticipation and prevention of conflicts on the continent and the providence of timely information on evolving violent conflict based on specifically developed indicators. The Constitutive Act gives the African Union the right to step in in a Member State in grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. As per Article 13 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the ASF is based on standby arrangements with Africa’s five sub-regions.

International Committee of the Red Cross (I.C.R.C.)

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) approach to addressing proxy wars includes focusing on humanitarian protection, impartial aid delivery, and the promotion of international humanitarian law (IHL) in conflict zones where foreign powers support local armed groups. The ICRC launched a holistic framework in 2021 in order to help decision-makers understand and manage various support relationships in conflicts and their humanitarian impact. In conflicts such as Yemen and Syria, where proxy wars are prominent, the ICRC aims to provide medical assistance, support arrestees and ensure access to clean water and food.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	PARTIES INVOLVED
1839–1841	Egyptian- Ottoman War	Egypt (under Muhammad Ali Pasha) vs. Ottoman Empire re (with support from Britain, Austria, Russia, and later France)
1839-1851	Uruguayan Civil war	Colorado Party (supported by Brazil, Argentina, and Britain) vs. Blanco Party (supported by Argentina’s federalists)
1886-1894	First Samoan Civil War	Rival Samoan factions (Malietoa Laupepa vs. Tupua Tamasese) with foreign involvement from Germany, the United States, and Britain
1898–1899	Second Samoan Civil War	Supporters of Malietoa Tanumafili I (backed by Britain & U.S.) vs. Mata’afa Iosefo (backed by Germany).
1896–1922	Somali campaign	Dervish State vs. United Kingdom, Italy, and Ethiopia



4th Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

1910-1920	Mexican Revolution	Various revolutionary factions (Constitutionalists, Zapatistas, Villistas) vs. Mexican federal forces; foreign involvement from U.S., Germany, and Britain
1947-1991	<p>Cold war:</p> <p>1.Korean War (1950–1953)</p> <p>2.First Indochina War (1946–1954)</p> <p>3.Vietnam War (1955–1975)</p> <p>4.Afghan War (1979–1989)</p> <p>5.Nicaraguan Contra War (1981–1990)</p>	<p>1.North Korea & China (with Soviet support) vs. South Korea, U.S., UN allies</p> <p>2.France vs. Viet Minh (backed by China, Soviet Union)</p> <p>3.North Vietnam (Soviet Union, China) vs. South Vietnam (U.S., South Korea, Australia, others)</p> <p>4.Soviet Union & Afghan communist government vs. Afghan mujahideen (backed by U.S., Pakistan, Saudi Arabia)</p> <p>5.Sandinista government (backed by Cuba, Soviet Union) vs. Contra rebels (backed by U.S.)</p>
1992–1995	Bosnian War	Bosnia and Herzegovina vs. Republika Srpska (Bosnian Serbs, backed by Serbia) and Herzeg-Bosnia (Bosnian Croats, backed by Croatia)
1998–2003	Second Congo War	DR Congo government (backed by Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe) vs. rebel groups (backed by Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi); involved nine African nations
1991–present	Somali Civil War	Various Somali factions, including Transitional Federal Government, Islamist groups (e.g., al-Shabaab), and clan militias; foreign interventions by Ethiopia, Kenya, U.S., and AMISOM
2011–present	Syrian Civil War	Syrian government (backed by Russia, Iran, Hezbollah) vs. opposition rebels (variously backed by Turkey, Gulf states, U.S., EU); ISIS and Kurdish forces also involved
2014–present	Yemeni Civil War	Houthi rebels (backed by Iran) vs. Yemeni government (backed by Saudi-led coalition, including UAE, with U.S. support)
2014–2020	Libyan Civil War	Government of National Accord (backed by Turkey, Qatar) vs. Libyan National Army (backed by UAE, Egypt, Russia, France)
2022–present	Ukraine War	Ukraine (backed by NATO countries, U.S., EU) vs. Russia (with Belarusian support)



RELEVANT UN TREATIES, CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

United Nations General Assembly / Resolution 2625 (XXV)

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2625, "The Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States" was adopted by the General Assembly on 24 October 1970, during a commemorative session to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. It happened on October 24, 1970. This resolution reaffirms the *UN Charter* principle that nations must refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

UN Charter (1945), Articles 2(4), 2(7), and 51

The UN Charter's Article 2(4) sets a foundational norm in international relations. It asks all member states to refrain from threatening or the usage of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or anything similar that is in any way inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. This principle of international law aims to hold peace and prevent conflicts. Despite the article setting a clear standard, it has space for exceptions. Notably the right of self-defense as outlined in Article 51 and actions authorized by the Security Council under Chapter VII.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Cold War Arms Control & Detente

After the Cold War, there have been Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) negotiations made aimed to ease tension and reduce the direct risk of conflict between the USA and Soviet Union—indirectly limiting the scope for proxy battles. In addition, Nixon & Kissinger exploited Sino-Soviet tensions, enhancing diplomatic leverage—used to guide US troop withdrawal from Vietnam

Ceasefire Diplomacy & Peace Conferences

Some important examples are the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) which was resolved via back-channel diplomacy and public quarantine. It helped avert nuclear escalation through compromise. In addition, Dayton Accords (1995) the active pressure from the US and Nato helped produce lasting peace in Bosnia—after military intervention and diplomatic leverage. Furthermore, Henry Kissinger's step-by-step diplomacy post-Yom Kippur War stabilized Egypt-Israel relations—prioritizing order via negotiated agreements .

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Multilateral Diplomacy

Multilateral diplomacy could play a significant role in combating proxy warfare by uniting a diverse range of stakeholders through international forums such as the United Nations (UN), the Arab League, and the African Union (AU). These platforms allow for communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution among all parties



4th Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

concerned, including both sponsors and proxies. These organizations can help de-escalate tension and the promotion of mutual understanding by encouraging inclusive dialogues. Additionally, coordinated diplomatic measures are essential for pressuring on sponsors to withdraw their support for proxies in favor of more effective and peacekeeping alternatives. Multilateral diplomacy can pave the way for long-term stability and prevent indirect confrontations through proxies.

Sanctions and Arms Embargoes

Sanctions against state sponsors and proxy leaders are intended to minimize their support for conflict actors by limiting financial and political resources. In parallel, the execution of arms embargoes is critical for cutting off the flow of weapons, reducing armed organizations' ability to maintain violence. Together, these measures are designed to constrain external influence and disrupt the supply chains that fuel conflict.

Conflict Mediation and Peacebuilding

For mediation and peace-making, the presence of neutral intermediaries such as the UN Special Envoys can be very important in terms of trust-building among the sides of the conflict(s). These neutral figures are useful in building ceasefires, setting up lines of communication and navigating political transitions in ways that serve stability and fairness.

Just as important, though, is making sure the voices of everyone affected by the conflict are heard. That could include not just official leaders but local actors and even proxy groups that have genuine influence on the ground. Peacemaking that is inclusive and grounded in reality is much more likely to yield durable, effective outcomes.

Legal Accountability

Strengthening institutions like the International Criminal Court (ICC) to successfully prosecute war crimes is crucial to addressing accountability in conflict areas. In parallel, shedding light on foreign involvement through transparent UN reports and resolutions is vital—not just for accountability, but for giving affected communities the clarity and truth they deserve.

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