



Security Council (beg)



Committee Summary

Under the UN Charter, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members, and each member has one vote. Under the Charter, all member states are obligated to comply with Security Council decisions.

The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Topic I: ISIL

Background

Origins

The group traces its lineage to the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, when the Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi aligned his militant group, Jama'at al-Tawhid w'al-Jihad, with al-Qaeda, making it al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).

Zarqawi's organization took aim at U.S. forces, their international allies, and local collaborators. It sought to draw the United States into a sectarian civil war by attacking Shias and their holy sites to provoke them to retaliate against Sunni civilians.



Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. airstrike in 2006. U.S.-backed Awakening Councils, or Sons of Iraq, further weakened AQI as Sunni tribesmen reconciled with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government. Zarqawi's successors rebranded AQI as the Islamic State of Iraq, and later, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). The name refers to a territory that roughly corresponds with the Levant, or eastern Mediterranean, reflecting the group's broadened ambitions with the onset of the 2011 uprising in Syria (and leading many instead give it the name ISIL).

Expansion

The jihadists exploited the chaos and divisions within both Syria and Iraq. IS grew out of what was al-Qaeda in Iraq, which was formed by Sunni militants after the US-led invasion in 2003 and became a major force in the country's sectarian insurgency. In 2011, the group joined the rebellion against President Bashar al-Assad in Syria, where it found a safe haven and easy access to weapons. At the same time, it took advantage of the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, as well as widespread Sunni anger at the sectarian policies of the country's Shia-led government.

In 2013, the group began seizing control of territory in Syria and changed its name to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The following year, ISIL overran large swathes of northern and western Iraq, proclaimed the creation of a "caliphate", and became "Islamic State".

Past and Future Action

In order to combat ISIL-led terrorism, it is essential to assess important stakeholders and analyze all available paths for intervention. The factionalism



in Syria has created immense complexity within the war. Countless parties have found themselves involved directly, or indirectly. These actors include the Turkish government, Russia, Western Powers, as well as large regional powers such as Saudi Arabia and Iran. Meanwhile, the UN is playing a significant role both on the ground, as well as diplomatically, as it attempts to facilitate talks and agreements between contending parties. Understanding the role of each actor is crucial to determine where responsibility lays, and who needs to be involved if deeper intervention is deemed necessary. One country that plays a major role in the conflict is Turkey.

Turkey has been continuously pressured by the international community to have a stronger role in the conflict. Although Turkey has traditionally had a warm relationship with the Syrian government, following the outbreak of civil war, Turkey took a strong stance against Bashar- al-Assad, and began extensive training and arming the Free Syrian Army (FSA). Turkey also has a significant interest in the affairs of the Kurdish people. Bitter relations exist between the Kurdish people, specifically the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), who are in the midst of an armed insurgency against Turkey, after a cease-fire ended in July 2015. The Peshmerga, which consists of Kurdish fighters from Iraq and other countries such as Turkey, are currently fighting against ISIL. However, Turkey fears the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish territory, an agenda which the current government is highly opposed to. The Turkish government is divided between defeating ISIL and the Syrian Army, while supporting the FSA, and actively campaigning against Kurdish statehood. Turkey has had limited military involvement, with a short escalation in the summer of 2015. However, Turkey continues to focus on defending its borders, and plays a profound role in accepting Syrian and Iraqi refugees, with over 1.5 million currently being accommodated in refugee camps.



When considering the rise of ISIL, one must also reflect upon the Sunni-Shia divide that has fueled many conflicts in the Middle East. The current divide is especially driven by a major regional balance of power, led by a Shia Iran and a Sunni Saudi Arabia. Iran has been a vocal supporter of Bashar al-Assad and the existing Syrian regime. Iran sees Syria as a strategic ally, relying on its existence to further dominate its influence into the region. Iran has traditionally used Syria as a proxy for its support of the militant group Hezbollah, located in Lebanon, but also relies on Syria as a buffer against Saudi Arabian and American influence, countries that remain Iran's main adversaries in the region. So far Iran has contributed heavily to the conflict, providing an average of \$6 billion a year in aid. Iran has contributed with training, technical support, military equipment, and combat troops. Iran's role has been instrumental in preserving the Syrian regime and weakening the opposition.

Post 2011, the region had become further embroiled by the limited intervention of Western powers, including the United States, France and Britain. The United States offered limited support in terms of non-lethal aid to the Syrian rebels in 2011, which later expanded to covert operations by the CIA, and then combat training for local rebel militias, with assistance from France and Britain. However after the sudden rise of ISIL in the summer of 2014, all three countries stepped up their operations with increased military intervention, mainly in the form of aerial bombings via fighter jets and drones. The US is also supported by efforts from Australia and Canada, as well as several other Arab states. The US continues to expand its role in the region, and has slowly began a "boots on the ground" effort by contributing more soldiers to Iraq, expanding its advisory role, and has been involved in direct operations through its Special Forces. The effort to defeat ISIL is seen as crucial in combatting terrorism. In light of the attacks in Paris on November 13th, 2015, French forces temporarily



stepped up their operations against ISIL strongholds. However, paradoxically, ISIL claimed that the attacks in Paris was a reaction to the initial French operations against ISIL that began in September of 2014. The question of whether or not military intervention by the West will be effective in stopping the terror threat remains highly controversial in current foreign policy debates.

Recently, adding to the mix of factions in Syria, President Putin stepped up Russia's role in assisting Bashar al-Assad and his regime. Immediately following Syria's request for military support from Russia, Russia responded with a significant boost in arms supplies and began its own campaign of airstrikes. Russia was criticized almost immediately for using its aerial power against Syrian rebels, although Russia claimed it was there to combat ISIL and did not strike the FSA. Russia has always been a strategic ally of Syria, previously providing arms support to the Syrian military. Many view Russia's operations in Syria as a new proxy war between the US and Russia, and is seen as a response for the West's harsh sanctions and isolation against Russia following the conflict in Ukraine. Currently, Russia has had an immense role in pushing back ISIL, and arguably Russia's struggles against Islamic extremism is rumoured to be part of the motivation behind their operations. Russia made an announcement that although it supports the Assad regime, it would call for immediate elections to determine the power transition in Syria.

The United Nations has also made significant contributions in the form of humanitarian aid, mainly through its refugee agency the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). The security council has passed several resolutions condemning the violence in the region, and has called for a more active role from its members, especially in regards to preventing radicalization, ISIL recruitment, financial support and arms trading with Jihadist groups. The question of sending peacekeepers to mediate the conflict has fallen out of



favour, after a resolution passed in 2012 created the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria, which never fully materialized due to growing conflict in the region. Several peace plans between 2011 and now have been set up or proposed by the UN, but so far nothing has been agreed upon.

Questions to Consider

1. How should past actions in the middle east shape current intervention tactics?
2. Given the diverse political agendas of nations in the UNSC, how is a body such as this supposed to effectively combat ISIL?
3. What are the benefits and drawbacks of multifaceted intervention with local forces?
4. What measures must be taken to address radicalization and ISIS recruitment?

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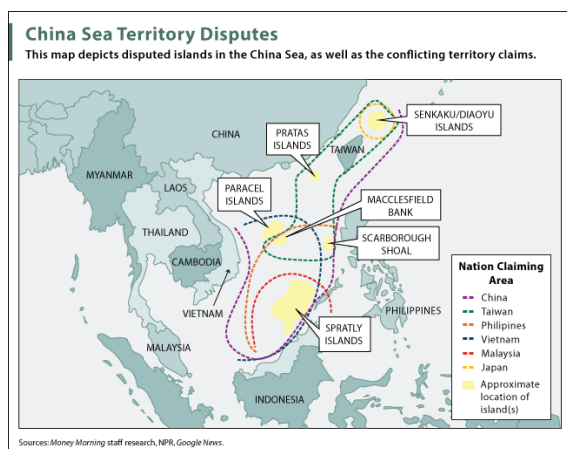
Topic II: East China Sea

Background and Origin

The East China Sea Dispute takes place in the island region - referred to as the Senkaku Islands in Japan and the Diaoyu Islands in China - located in the East China Sea. However, the area being disputed is not seen as the commodity within this debate, but it is rather the Exclusive Economic zone that would allow any country that owns those islands to possess and control any form of trade made within 200 nautical miles of the coast. Therefore, it can be understood why countries like China, Japan, Malaysia, and the Philippines have expressed so much interest in these islands.

Brief History and Recount of Current Stages of the Dispute

The history of this dispute dates back to when it was first claimed in 1895 by Japanese authorities, as an island for bird feather harvesting. This



being said, the dispute did not truly begin until the ownership of the islands returned back to Japan after World War 2, which immediately attracted the attention of China. By 1971 numerous different countries had discovered the value in the land, and therefore tried to strike claim it, with no avail. It must be recognized, then,

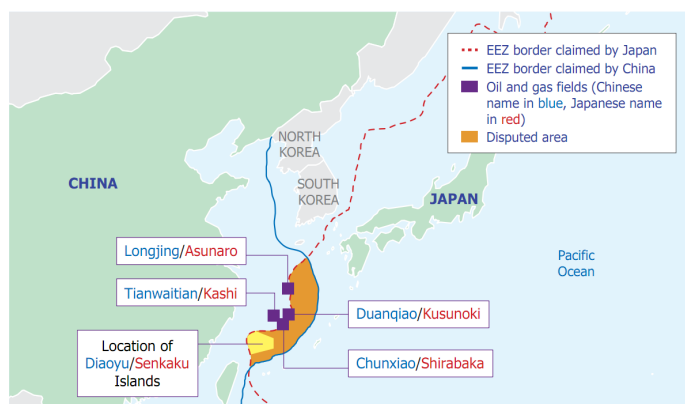
that these small islands that have only recently gained the attention of Southeast Asian nations because of the economic opportunities they bring.



The islands are currently uninhabited and have been controlled by Japan for almost 121 years, with a 27-year period of control by the United States. Japan states that they discovered the island during a period where no one controlled it, and therefore claimed them. China reluctantly allowed Japanese sovereignty until the 1970s. China has since claimed that there is evidence from before the first Sino-Japanese war which indicates Chinese possession of the islands. This means that the land is a part of Japanese conquests and should have been returned along with the rest of Japan's acquisitions in 1945. China has recently made territorial claims to the islands and the surrounding seas, and these claims have become more vigorous

particularly as discoveries of resource rich areas have been found in the sea bed in the area.

They have started to aggressively assert these claims through physical activity. This includes



regular naval and air force patrols and geological testing. Most recently, China has begun construction on some of the atolls and small islands, including expanding them through artificial means, potential turning them into year-round bases for activities in the region. Concerns have been voiced by Japan in particular, but other nations as well, in response to this activity. China's claim to these islands has since become an issue of sovereignty, resource development, and free shipping lanes for many nations in the area. This creates a seriously destabilizing conflict in the region, in large part due to long standing alliances that carry a potential of escalation on a global scale. The United States, in particular, has been very hostile to Chinese claims to the islands, and as a result has increased its military presence in the region.



Role of the UN

Historically disputes involving territorial control have ended in the eruption of war, however after the creation of the UN, these situations have also been settled with treaties made between all of the present parties. Examples include the Paris Peace Treaty in 1947, and the Treaty of San Francisco In 1945, both of which dealt with major disputes revolving around the claim to land. Also of note is the recent legal activity regarding the South China Sea, a similar dispute to the issue currently under discussion. In July 2016, a United Nations Tribunal found Chinese claims to vast swaths of the sea largely baseless, a ruling welcomed by the Philippines and United States but denounced and rejected by China. It must be noted that this ruling has no binding impact on any parties in the dispute. Therefore, delegates, given the increasingly dangerous nature of the situation, and unwillingness of parties involved to accept rulings unfavourable to their position, you must work together on the Security Council to find a peaceful resolution before it is too late.

Questions to Consider

1. To what extent can the security council truly achieve peace between these clashing countries?
2. In what way can the bountiful resources of this area can be both extracted and distributed in a way that all present parties are satisfied
3. Is the UN fit to moderate and participate in such a dispute, or is this a matter better fit for a 3rd party organization with no involvement in the situation?
4. How can the UN develop a treaty that will stay appropriate to the situation and the countries for plenty of years down the road?



5. Is there any current or previous territorial dispute that is applicable to the situation at hand, and can be therefore equally applied to the dispute?

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