Security Council (Adv)

Committee Summary

The United Nations Security Council has the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. As the only authoritative body in the UN, the Security council has the ability to mandate policies, passed by its members. The council contains 15 members, each with one vote. There are 5 permanent members who possess the right to veto in opposition against any resolution; the permanent members are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. There are also 10 non-permanent members, that are elected for 2 year periods of time by the General Assembly. The Security Council has the power to impose sanctions, as well as authorise the use of force to maintain international peace.
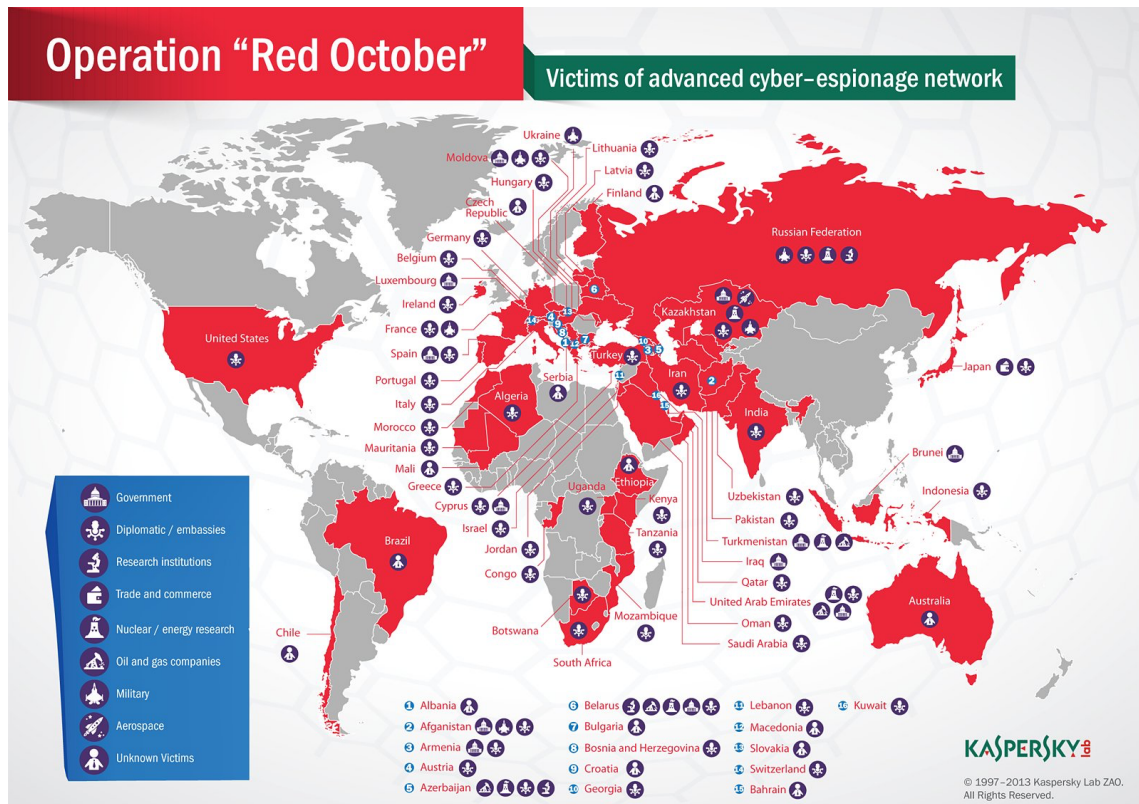
Topic I: Cyber Warfare

Topic History

Over the past few decades, the digital world has ascended to the forefront of our lives. Humanity's reliance on digital technology is ever increasing and shows no sign of slowing down. Virtually every aspect of our personal lives are stored electronically on servers located around the globe. As the presence of the internet has increased, governments have had but no choice to adapt to the ever changing digital landscape to not fall behind the rest of the world. However, as classified information and sensitive documents

have found their home in this realm, new threats to the security of national secrets now face governments. Not only are sensitive information under threat, but so are the crucial infrastructures and systems which keep countries running. These days, power grids, public transportation, and communication, to name a

Operation "Red October" — Victims of advanced cyber–espionage network

few, are all completely digitalized in a majority of countries. The changeover makes sense for governments; it makes it much simpler to keep track of and search through important documents as well as allow governments to take advantage of computers and the technology sector. Despite these advantages, there have been grave and unintended consequences. Warfare has found a fifth domain: Cyber warfare.

Cyber warfare is not limited to actions between nations. In a world where computers and technology are readily available, the definition of cyber warfare can include non-state actors such as terrorist groups, criminal organizations,

and political groups. Cyber warfare is a relatively new type of aggression, but one that appears to be the future when it comes to war between nations. The earliest recorded instance of a cyber-attack was in 1989, when a computer worm shut down a large portion of the internet. This event spurred the advent of cyber security measures and protocol. Since then, the world has come a long way, but so has the threats facing the security of our digital frameworks.

Over the past few decades, the digital world has ascended to the forefront of our lives. Humanity's reliance on digital technology is ever increasing and shows no sign of slowing down. Virtually every aspect of our personal lives is stored electronically on servers located around the globe. As the presence of the internet has increased, governments have had but no choice to adapt to the ever-changing digital landscape to not fall behind the rest of the world. However, as classified information and sensitive documents have found their home in this realm, new threats to the security of national secrets now face governments. Not only are sensitive information under threat, but so are the crucial infrastructures and systems which keep countries running. These days, power grids, public transportation, and communication, to name a few, are all completely digitalized in a majority of countries. The changeover makes sense for governments; it makes it much simpler to keep track of and search through important documents as well as allow governments to take advantage of computers and the technology sector. Despite these advantages, there have been grave and unintended consequences. Warfare has found a fifth domain: Cyber warfare.

Cyber warfare is not limited to actions between nations. In a world where computers and technology are readily available, the definition of cyber warfare

can include non-state actors such as terrorist groups, criminal organizations, and political groups. Cyber warfare is a relatively new type of aggression, but one that appears to be the future when it comes to war between nations. The earliest recorded instance of a cyber-attack was in 1989, when a computer worm shut down a large portion of the internet. This event spurred the advent of cyber security measures and protocol. Since then, the world has come a long way, but so has the threats facing the security of our digital frameworks.

Current Situation

Several different threats currently exist which are capable of compromising the security of nations and their citizens. These can originate from nearly anywhere on the globe. Among them, the safety and security of countries and their critical national infrastructures (CNI) are severely at risk due to attacks from other nations as well as non-state actors, including terrorist organizations. The three largest players in the cyber warfare universe are Russia, China and the USA. China has been accused of hacking key Russian and American industries including defense, nuclear, and aviation to steal trade secrets and information from both public and private entities. In addition to Google, at least 34 American companies have been attacked. According to a Russian security expert, the number of cases of Chinese attacks on Russian cyberspace rose to almost 194 in the first 7 months of 2016, compared to 72 the year before.

Attacks on Critical National Infrastructure are extremely damaging to a nation's ability to function. They have the possibility to quite literally grind a

country and its people to a halt. Entire power grids can be shut down, internet can be completely wiped out, and the systems protecting sensitive information can be compromised. The most famous example of a computer virus damaging infrastructure is the Stuxnet virus which destroyed one fifth of Iran's nuclear centrifuges in 2010. Though the origins of the virus are unknown, it has been widely reported that the US and Israel were behind the attack.

In 2007, Estonia was hit hard by a rash of cyber-attacks originating from Russia. The attacks were successful at disabling Estonian government ministries, political parties, newspapers, banks and companies. The reason behind the series of attacks was over the removal of the Bronze Soldier of Tallinn, a statue commemorating the Soviet liberation of Estonia from Nazi Germany. Despite accusing the Kremlin of being behind the attacks, Estonia was not able to prove any of their claims. These attacks served as a lesson for countries around the world as to the vulnerability of their cyber space and the debilitating effects an attack would have.

Most developed countries have relatively advanced capabilities when it comes to their defensive and offensive capacity. Thus, it is imperative, similar to the other four more established domains of warfare, to have a clear set of guidelines governing the laws of cyber warfare. As part of this committee, it will be your job as the international community to address the rise of cyber warfare. To create a comprehensive set of protocols to deal with cyber-attacks in the future. With a number of countries on the Security Council directly impacted by the threats of cyber warfare, including those who hold a veto, it is instrumental that an agreement is reached between all nations.

Past Action

In 2013, a group of UN international experts published a report titled, "On the Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security." The report, for the first time, put forth recommendations pertaining to the rules, norms and principles of responsible behaviour by states in cyberspace. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council and ten leading cyberpowers have recognized it as international law. That acceptance was a massive step towards international compliance with a working legal framework.

Questions to Consider

1. How does cyber warfare compare to traditional types of warfare? Is it better or worse for international security?

2. What course of action can be taken by the Security Council in order to prevent more threats in this day and age?

3. How can an agreement be reached between all nations when they are all very different, especially in the world of technology?

4. What security measures should be taken in order to prevent the numerous cyber-attacks around the world?

Sources

1. Kravchenko, Stepan. "Russia More Prey Than Predator to Cyber Firm Wary of China." Bloomberg's Market Canada, 25 August, 2016. Web

2. Sharkov, Damien. "Chinese Cyber Attacks on Russia Nearly Triple." 26 August, 2016. Web

3. Guest Blogger. "Despite Cyber Agreements, Russia and China Are Not as Close as You Think." 30 June, 2016. Web

4. Julian, Ted. "Defining Moments in the History of Cyber-Security and the Rise of Incident Response." Web

5. Morris, Christopher. "Russia, China And United States Engage In Cyber War." 8 August, 2015. Web

Topic II: Yemen Civil War

Topic History

Yemen is a country in Western Asia that is experiencing a brutal civil war, which has resulted in over 11,000 civilian casualties, and the displacement of over 3,000,000 people. The fighting began on the 19th of March, in 2015, and is still an ongoing crisis. There are 2 factions that claim to be the Yemeni government: The Houthi forces (loyal to the former president Ali Abdullah Saleh), and the forces that are loyal to the government of current President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi. Al-Qaeda and ISIS have also performed attacks in the area.

There was a five-day ceasefire agreement, which was proposed by Saudi Arabia, agreed to by both sides on May 10, 2015 to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid to the country. The truce began on the night of May 12, 2015 to accommodate for the delivery of food, water, medical and fuel aid throughout the country. Although, on the fourth day of the ceasefire, the agreement disintegrated as fighting began once again.

There have been many demonstrations since the beginning of the Civil War. The largest of them occurred on August 16, 2016, when 900,000 Yemeni demonstrators gathered in support of the Houthis and Saleh, who had just proposed a governing body called the Supreme Political Council. The idea was rejected by the United Nations. During the rally, Saudi Arabia performed a bombing nearby, leaving many injured.

There is a very grave humanitarian situation occurring in the country during the brutal civil war, as over 10 million Yemeni citizens have been
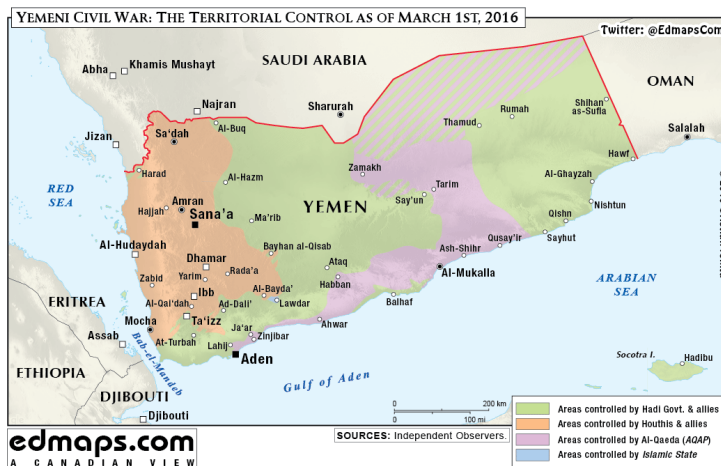
deprived of water, food and electricity due to the conflict. The UN has appealed for international aid to combat this serious issue. However, the humanitarian conditions in Yemen remain desperate.

Current Situation

The conflict in Yemen is remains ongoing, and there is an international effort to slow the conflict. Under President Obama, the US led a campaign of airstrikes on Houthi-Controlled regions. In his first operation authorized as

President, Donald Trump ordered a raid in the al-Bayda province against an Al-Qaeda terror base. The US is gradually being drawn into the conflict. The US government, because of its support for an air campaign led by Saudi Arabia that has killed many civilians, is worried that they could be implicated in potential war crimes.

The Houthis have been accused of representing Iran, since they both follow Shia Islam (a branch of the Islamic religion). The United States and Saudi Arabia have accused the Houthis of receiving weapons and training from Iran. However, the Iranian government and Houthis have both denied any connection. In addition, the neighbouring nation of Eritrea has been alleged to be offering medical support for injured Houthi fighters. They have also been accused of conveying Iranian materials to the Houthis. However, the Eritrean government has denied this and said that this accusation has no ground or reason.

The conflict in Yemen is remains ongoing, and there is an international effort to slow the conflict. Under President Obama, the US led a campaign of airstrikes on Houthi-Controlled regions. In his first operation authorised as President, Donald Trump ordered a raid in the al-Bayda province against an Al-Qaeda terror base. The US is gradually being drawn into the conflict. The US government, because of its support for an air campaign led by Saudi Arabia that has killed many civilians, is worried that they could be implicated in potential war crimes.

The Houthis have been accused of representing Iran, since they both follow Shia Islam (a branch of the Islamic religion).   The United States and Saudi Arabia have accused the Houthis of receiving weapons and training from Iran. However, the Iranian government and Houthis have both denied any connection. In addition, the neighbouring nation of Eritrea has been alleged to be offering medical support for injured Houthi fighters. They have also been accused of conveying Iranian materials to the Houthis. However, the Eritrean government has denied this and said that this accusation has no ground or reason.

Past Action

Attempts by the United Nations have been made to put an end to the prolonging war in Yemen that has been going on for 17 months. The efforts hit a "roadblock" when the Security Council failed to agree on a statement that supports the UN special envoy to Yemen. The members of the Security Council wanted to include a statement that criticizes the rebels, to which the Russian UN ambassador said was an unacceptable demand.

While time is running out for a UN-brokered peace deal to be signed by Yemen, which requires the support of Houthi rebels, prospects of peace appear farther and farther away.

While time is running out for a UN-brokered peace deal to be signed by Yemen, which requires the support of Shia Muslim rebels, the lack of agreement has caused a blow towards the peace efforts

Questions to Consider

1. What actions can the UN Security Council take in order to resolve this conflict and bring long-term peace?

2. How can a humanitarian aid force be brought into Yemeni during this intense period of fighting?

3. What should be the role of foreign countries, or NGOs in the solving of this crisis?

4. What actions should be taken pertaining the claims that have been made surrounding the war crime accusations to many parties involved?

5. In what ways does the involvement of other countries affect the situation in Yemen itself?

Sources

1. Smith, Lyon Robin. "Official Says US Missile Destroyed Radar on Coast of Yemen." Washington Post, 5 Sept. 2012. Web.

2. Johnson, Xavier. "Yemen Crisis: Who Is Fighting Whom?" *BBC News*. BBC, 14 Oct. 2016. Web.

3. Jasoon, Ali A. "Key Facts about the War in Yemen." *News from Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera - English, n.d. Web.

4. Thompson, Blake E. "Turmoil in Yemen." *Yemen News - Today's Latest from Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera - English, n.d. Web.