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Kim Nguyen
Benjy Malings
Emily Reece
Octavio Farfan



Hey Delegates!

Welcome to BMUN 63 and welcome to SOCHUM! My name is Kim Nguyen and I am so beyond honored to be your head chair. I am originally from Calgary, Canada but spent the majority of my life in sunny Southern California. I am currently a sophomore majoring in bioengineering with a minor in public policy. This will be my 6th year doing MUN and I can honestly say that participating in MUN, especially BMUN, has impacted my life in so many positive ways. I believe that Model United Nations is a great way to not only learn about the interactions that shape society and the world around us but to also engage with these topics on a level that truly promotes both self-awareness and awareness of the crazy world around us. Besides my interests in international relations, I have a deep passion for public health. This past summer, I worked for a surgery lab at UCI Medical Center developing implants to help halt the detrimental effects of Type 1 diabetes. By developing implants that mimic the function or can renew the function of islet cells, we hope to be able to eradicate Type 1 diabetes in general and ease the dependence of Type 1 diabetics on insulin. When I am not doing MUN, you can find me slaving away in the research lab that I work for dancing in my pajamas, and hanging out with my friends. In my free time I love to rock out to Beyonce and binge watch romantic comedies on Netflix.

If you have any questions regarding Cal, engineering, BMUN, or absolutely anything feel free to email me at kimberlynguyen@berkeley.edu! Can't wait to meet all of you!

Hello delegates! My name is Benjy and I prefer to talk about myself in third person, so here we go! Benjy stumbled upon the Berkeley Model United Nations table his freshman year while seeking out clubs and activities. He could never have dreamed of what would follow from there. Now in year 2 of BMUN (and Model UN in general), Benjy loves every second of working with high schoolers on intense, intellectual committees. Benjy is currently a second-year studying Rhetoric, a multidisciplinary program that combines philosophical thought with cultural criticism. This past fall, he helped lead Cal's voter-registration drive for the midterm elections. He also minors in Education and hopes to go into teaching, politics, or law. Outside of school he is a steady consumer of books and films, and he's been a musician his entire life. He's beyond stoked to chair SOCHUM.

Hi delegates! My name is Octavio Farfan. I am a freshman at UC Berkeley studying Political science/Economics. I was born in Jalisco, Mexico and grew up in a small town. I moved



to Fresno, California in 2008 and now I am a freshman at UC Berkeley. I enjoy listening to music, especially EDM and Alternative. I also love to watch TV, movies, and read. I enjoy exploring and going on adventures and I really like the Bay Area because there is so much to see and do around here.

Hello delegates! My name is Emily Reece and I'm a third year Political Science major here at Cal. I'm originally from Murrieta, California, but I love living here in the Bay Area. I currently hold the position of USG of Special Events, which means I plan opening ceremonies, closing ceremonies, the delegate dance, and our conference cause. When I'm not having a blast with BMUN, I enjoy playing soccer, drawing, hiking, or running. My interests include event planning and working with children. During the past two summers I've worked as a group counselor at Gold Arrow Camp where I counseled a group of 12 year old girls throughout the whole summer. After graduating in Spring of 2016 I would like to pursue a career in teaching. If you have any questions about any of these hobbies/interests, or would just like to chat about BMUN LXIII, feel free to send me an email at events@bmun.org!



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The Question of Self-Determination

Background

Cornell's law dictionary defines self-determination as "the legal right of people to decide their own destiny in the international order"(Cornell Law Dictionary 1). Self determination, as a concept, has been codified since the foundation of the United Nations. The Charter's first chapter of it's first article, in section two, states that a central purpose of the United Nations is to: "develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace"(UN Charter 1). The UN expanded upon this concept and its practical functions in a 1960 resolution relating to granting independence to colonial countries: "All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development"(The United Nations and Decolonization 1). Since then, self-determination as an ideal has been the lynchpin for several important, violent, and consequential territorial and political disputes:

[South Sudan](#)

In 2011, South Sudan voted to become an independent country. The election was called for after a 2005 peace agreement ending a civil war, Africa's longest-running one to that point. Secession was officially declared after a unanimous vote by South Sudan's citizens(South Sudan Profile 1).

[Tibet](#)

Legally part of China, Tibet is ruled under China's constitution, which codifies a single, autonomous state with no room for an autonomous territory such as Tibet

There is currently a Tibetan government in exile (led by 14th Dalai Lama), which works to advocate for independent state. It does not technically hold authority, but sees itself as the representative body for Tibet's people(China and the Tibetans 1).

[Palestine](#)

Palestine refers to an area in the Middle East that most commonly refers to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Israel has officially claimed these lands for several decades, and has periodically and controversially announced the building of settlements for its own, non-Arab



peoples. Palestine has a separate government that makes decisions for its people, but its lands and territories are still legally controlled by the state of Israel (Kenyon 1).

Kashmir

Kashmir is a state in dispute between India and Pakistan, one that has been fought violently over in the past. While India and Pakistan fight over a “Line of Control” to establish as a border, Kashmiris themselves have been seeking independence for several decades(A Brief History of the Kashmir Conflict 1).

Self-determination, when interpreted as nationalism, has been used to justify great violence as well. As Charles Tilly said in a 1993 article published in Daedalus: “When the population under the jurisdiction of a given state is strongly segmented, principles of democracy, human rights, and national self-determination commonly conflict, with partisans of each prepared to take drastic steps on behalf of their causes. In recent years, people have been slaughtering each other over the proper application of national self-determination...” (31) An article in Peace Review published in 1998 by Michael Freeman expands upon this idea, noting the difference between self-determination and human rights: “However, the logic of human rights and the logic of democracy are different. The concept of human rights is designed to protect certain fundamental interests of individuals against the actions of governments. The concept of democracy legitimates a particular form of governmental power. Democratic government does not necessarily respect human rights. Where democratic government is informed by strong nationalist sentiments, it is more likely to violate the human rights both of its own dissident citizens and of foreigners”(31). It is clear that the implications of this could see a minority group, not represented fully by the new, more powerful group that was once itself a minority in an empire of larger state, be cast aside as irrelevant toward principles of ‘self-determination’. Self-determination itself, as a phrase, has never been clearly defined without exception by the UN. Clear evidence for this is the mere fact that so many territorial disputes exist today, even with self-determination being a central part to the guiding UN charter. It would appear that the phrase itself is unenforceable on its own, and requires mountains of context and deliberation to truly see practice. As far as membership in the UN goes, the Security Council and the General Assembly possess the sole right to admit member states, and in theory only sovereign states may become members. So, even if sovereignty by all practical purposes has been reached by a state, the Security Council still has supreme power in determining UN



membership. The UN has created a special status (non-member statehood) for Palestine to observe and speak (but not vote) at the General Assembly. Western Sahara is, at this time, recognized as a “non-self-governing territory”.

Past International Involvement and Attempted Solutions

Written in the United Nations Charter, the right to self-determination is clearly outlined. In article 1, the charter states that one of the purposes of the United Nations is “to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace” (UN Charter 1). Being one of the main principles that comprise the foundation of the United Nations, there are many international instruments in place that uphold the right to self-determination. Two major documents include the UN Declaration on the Grating of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The former, a major milestone in regards to decolonization, was solidified in 1960. Also known as UN resolution 1514, the declaration emphasized that a denial of self-determination is a denial of human rights in its truest form. In an attempt to guarantee this right, the declaration outlines that “all peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (The United Nations and Decolonization 1). Similarly, the latter document goes to explain the innate right of self-determination as well as, in more or less words, declaring it as a foundational right. When examining the documents involved in upholding the right of self-determination, a peculiar pattern appears. Although each document highlights the importance of the right, they each fail to do one thing: create an infrastructure in which this right can truly be both protected and implemented.

While the idea of self-determination is not a novel one, its presence as an institution has not truly impacted the lives of many. Although nations have the protected right of self-determination, this declaration does not grant those who employ the right much more than the declaration in itself. However, the United Nations has taken action in situations that are similar in nature, namely, when it comes to the protection of minority rights as well as the rights of indigenous people. In true likeliness to its name, The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People outlines the rights given to indigenous people. Within the declaration, there are several areas of emphasis including rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, and



education. A major concern when it comes to the rights of indigenous people are is both the accidental and systematic destruction of the culture of indigenous people by those in power either by their rank in society or their numbers. Thus, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People “emphasized the rights of indigenous people to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions, and to pursue their development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations”(2). Although the declaration does not have a true form of enforcement or highlight any means to protect the rights outlined in its text, it does state the indigenous people must be protected from all forms of discrimination.

Documents protecting minority rights, indigenous rights, and the rights of groups in similar situations, are important when it comes to the topic of self-determination because it both highlights what needs to be done in the situation as well as what can be improved. Often times, those who must employ the principle of self-determination are living in disputed regions where they are often the minority. While they have the innate right to self-determination, utilizing this right could mark them as targets for discrimination. The idea of self-determination must be linked with a declaration that protects the rights of those who employ the principle beyond guaranteeing them the right to self-determination but the right to also thrive in their situation. While this could mimic the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous people, there needs to be an additional step: a means of enforcement, a way to guarantee that the right exists, and not just on paper.

Case Studies

1 | Western Sahara

Western Sahara is an African territory currently claimed both by the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario front. The right to self-determination of Western Sahara has been legally affirmed several times, but the UN Security Council has yet to allow any resolution on the matter to be enforced. Several members of the UN Security Council see Morocco's rule in Western Sahara as essential to holding Islamist militancy at bay. The region of Western Sahara is still a highly disputed region and, to this day, remains in the process of decolonization. Officially deemed a Non-Self-Governing Territory in 1963, what was then called Spanish Sahara, was essentially handed over to Spain to guard over. Since this time, the Madrid Accords created a temporary tripartite which took the full power of administration and split it among, as the



proclamation's name would suggest, three countries: Spain, Mauritania and Morocco. Despite the many calls to action in regards to the conflicts in Western Sahara, the region is still marked as a Non-Self-Governing Territory. Not only has the region been forced into holding the title of a Non-Self-Governing Territory, but this position has been constantly reaffirmed throughout the years. Various organs of the United Nations as well as the Security Council and the General Assembly have passed resolutions that affirm Western Sahara's status. While the region has a whole seems to have been sidelined by the United Nations, that indigenous people of Western Sahara have not been ignored. The Sahrawi, the main indigenous group in Western Sahara, are often displaced because of the territorial dispute(Western 1).

2 | Palestine

Palestine is a geographic region in the Middle East, comprised of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. As the birthplace of both Judaism and Christianity, the territory has a long and tumultuous history as a crossroads for religion, culture, commerce, and politics. On 29 November 1947, in response to the atrocities of World War II and the Holocaust, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 181 calling for the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states with the city of Jerusalem as a separate entity to be governed by a special international regime. The Jewish community supported the resolution, however, many of the surrounding Arab leaders and governments rejected the plan of partition. The resolution, almost immediately succeeded by regional violence, was never fully implemented. Nonetheless, referring to Resolution 181 for legal basis, head of the Jewish Agency, David Ben-Gurion, proclaimed the establishment of Israel on 14 May 1948. Despite growing conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Palestinian Jews, United States President Harry Truman recognized the new nation on the same day. Many consider the establishment of Israel as an unjust occupation of the Palestinian territory and a threat to the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Attempts have been made in order to appease both parties involved in the conflict. In the 1994 peace agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Israel recognized the Palestinian Authority (PA) as the official governing body of the Palestinian people. Despite this fact, Palestinian lands and territories are still legally controlled by the state of Israel. The 2002 Arab Peace Plan has gathered significant support within the international community. Proposed by Saudi Arabia at the annual Arab League Summit in Beirut, the plan calls for full Israeli withdrawal from all Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. In exchange,



surrounding Arab countries would consider the Arab-Israeli conflict ended, enter into a peace agreement with Israel, and provide security for all the states of the region. Although this solution has not gained much Israeli governmental support, it is generally considered one of the more reasonable of recent proposed solutions and is backed by a large portion of the international community. Without the cooperation of both parties, however, such proposals have no way of protecting or ensuring the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

As of 2012, the United Nations recognizes Palestine as a non member state with the right to observe UN activities, however, Palestine does not have the ability to vote or propose resolutions within the General Assembly. While achieving non-member status is a step in the right direction, Palestine is still unable to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Until a lasting agreement is reached between Israel and Palestine, and Palestine achieves recognition as an official state by major international actors such as the United Nations, the Palestinian people's right to self-determination remains insecure (McElroy 1).

Questions to Consider

1. For people living in territories where the ownership of the region is disputed, how should self-determination affect them?
2. In what ways should self-determination aid people?
3. Would there be an enforcement agency? How would they be funded/ran?
4. What potential disputes would there be? What can be done to provide these countries incentives to comply?
5. Would those who declare self-determination be allowed to create their own laws? Why or why not? How would this be mandated?
6. How can the issue of UN membership be addressed?



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The Ethics of Technology

Topic Background

New technologies have often been spawned from a need created by warfare. Belligerents feel a pressing need to adapt and hold an upper-hand against the enemy, and thus constantly spend money into researching and developing new tools for battle. More often than not, this kind of advancement is done in secrecy, with the highest possible security brought to keeping high-impact projects under wraps. So, while new projects are developed, they are developed with little public accountability. A tension arises, then, between the need for progress and the need for ethical considerations in the waging of war.

A high-profile recent example of this is the use of unmanned drones in the battlefield. A 2012 *Nation* article by John Sifton gives both a historical and ethical overview of the drone issue. Sifton details the history of aircraft in general, and how both the CIA and the US military have worked to develop new methods of warfare and surveillance through the skies since World War 1. What is perhaps most important is the ethical dilemma created by the use of drones that Sifton points out. Essentially, according to Sifton, drones take the human element out of the act of war and killing while simultaneously providing an intimate form of destruction, a kind that kills single persons at a time. Assassination occurs without a human to pull the trigger. This, in an argument tied together with behavioralist studies, removes the empathy typical in aggressors about to perform a violent act. Drones kill without empathy, act without humanity, and thus provide an ethical dilemma in warfare.

Technology and warfare do not only intersect on the battlefield. Thanks to high profile leaks by former defense contractor Edward Snowden, the United States populace is now intimately aware of widespread and massive ongoing data collection by the National Security Administration. Thus an ethical tension between safety and privacy is carefully held in balance, with technology's presence clearer than ever. With technology comes an immense amount of progress- progress especially in the way that battles are fought and that national security is maintained. Technology provides with it promises of completeness and thorough work, no stone left unturned, no tactical mission left impossible. However, the drive to progress consistently carries with it a myriad of humanitarian concerns, as well as concerns with privacy and personal



freedom. Society to this day continues to struggle with the need for progress and the need for humanity.

However, we must remember that technology has brought humankind extreme advances and comfort that would not be present if the push to develop did not exist. From advances in medical techniques, treatments, devices for communication, among many other advancements, technology has played a vital role in bettering the lives of people all around the world. Therefore, society is faced with a situation with an intrinsic gray area. Representing both sides of the coin, technological advancements are walking the thin boundary between ethical and unethical. As technology continues to advance, it is vital to consider whether or not something needs to track this development or if this is the path society wants to go down.

Past International Involvement and Attempted Solutions

As technology not only advances but also spurs a risky reliance from societies all throughout the world, the relationship between the two entities continues to evolve. With the ever-changing field of technology, as well as the evolving relationship between different societies and technology, it becomes clear that guidelines that surround such kinds of conduct much also evolve. While the latest forms of technology can be extremely groundbreaking in different ways with some granting the gift of sight, health, and knowledge in novel ways, one can often find that these forms of technology exist in a moral gray area, a limbo of some sorts. Due to the nature of the topic, the legislation that defines the limits of the topic in question is either not yet created or still developing. However, some major discussions have been opened acting as a catalyst for further foundational precedents to be set. Developed in the 1970s, UNESCO has a subdivision responsible for exploring the ethics of science of technology. As a primary UN agency with a specialized mandate of the social and human sciences, one of UNESCO's sole responsibilities is to balance the forces of scientific advancements against the moral context to which it is applicable(A Global Perspective on Science, Technology, and Innovation 1). The Division of Ethics of Science and Technology is split into two main areas of focus: Bioethics and Science in Technology in an attempt to both categorize and narrow the scope of what needs to be reviewed(Ethics of Science and Technology 1).

One notable NGO related to the topic is the International Committee for Robots Arms Control. Comprised of experts in the fields of robot rights, internal relations, and humanitarian law, among others, the ICARC aims to explore the threat the militant robots can pose on both



civilians and armed forces. Recently, the United Nations has been tasked with deciding the fate of “killer robots.” Set to be debated by the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), killer robots and their potential uses will be scrutinized. Robotics experts will address the issue of killer robots. Killer robots are such machines that will be guarded with lethal autonomous weapons systems meaning that it can both engage and select targets without the aid of human beings or controller. Although this type of technology does not yet exist, the rate of technology advancements thus far makes the possibility of these weapons very likely in the future(Ward 2). Supported by the International Committee for Robots Arms Control (ICARC), this debate seems to be a major stepping stone in regards to creating a framework on the ethical uses of technology or abolishment of such types of legislation. Although drones are not on the current agenda, many are pushing for both non-automated and automated drones to be placed under discussion(Killer Robots 1).

Case Studies

1 | Drone Warfare

Drone Warfare has its routes in satellite surveillance of enemy activities. Unmanned, remote-controlled and sight-equipped aircraft has been in military use since the late 20th century. Only after the September 11th attacks in 2001 did the United States government begin arming unmanned aircrafts with missiles, allowing for deadly targeted blasts with no risks of American casualties. While the official number is murky and undisclosed, some estimate that thousands of people have been killed in targeted airstrikes. Those killed included deliberately targeted combatants as well as civilians.

The ethical implications of the use of drones in warfare are long and varied. A 2011 article from *The Economist* lays out a key point of contention:

The United States is surely right to seek to minimise its own casualties, but if war can be waged by one side without any risk to the life and limb of its combatants, has a vital form of restraint been removed? Is the drone “pilot” who clocks off after a day's work a legitimate target for those he has been hunting down? If the drones of the future have the intelligence to act autonomously, who is responsible if a vital algorithm fails to distinguish between a tank and a school bus?



Indeed, it would appear that drones complicate traditional questions of actors and agents within the world of warfare. However, the same article ultimately concludes that drones do indeed have a line of culpability that rests in the distant pilot, and that the same legal processes of determining innocence and civilian casualties can be applied(Mazetti 1).

Other issues beyond culpability arise too. Restraint is often discussed- the relative ease and lack of opposition to drone warfare has raised concerns about the lowering of barriers of degree. Without much risk, attacks could get more and more gruesome and dramatic.

The legal problems that arise with drone warfare have also been widely publicized-targeted killings without trial have become widespread and widely defended by the Obama administration. While the decisions made in warfare do not directly relate to the ethics of the technologies themselves, it does pose the question of the kinds of possibilities opened up with the introduction of new warfare technologies.

2 | UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons; The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

Concluded in Geneva on 10 October 1980 and entered into force in December 1983, the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) seeks to “ban or restrict the use of specific types of weapons that are considered to cause unnecessary or unjustifiable suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately”(UNOG 1). The convention itself only contains general provisions, however, the five annexed protocols place prohibitions or restrictions on the use of specific weapons or weapons systems. The protocols are as follows:

Protocol I | Prohibits the use of any weapon which intends to injure by fragments that are not detectable in human body x-rays.

Protocol II | Prohibits the use of non-detectable anti-personnel mines and their transfer; prohibits the use of non-self-destructing and non-self-deactivating mines outside fenced, monitored and marked areas;

Protocol III | Prohibits weapons in which the object of attack is primarily designed to set fire to objects or to cause burn injury to persons through the action of flame, heat or a combination thereof, produced by a chemical reaction of a substance delivered on the target

Protocol IV | Prohibits the use of laser weapons specifically designed to cause permanent blindness.



Protocol V | Requires the clearance of UXO (unexploded ordnance), such as unexploded bomblets of cluster bombs, land mines and abandoned explosive weapons.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, formed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in October 2012 and launched in April 2013, is an international coalition that is working to preemptively ban fully autonomous weapons(Stop Killer Robots 1).The association suggests that the CCW mandate needs to adequately recognize the multifaceted challenges posed by fully autonomous weapons and specify the aspects that the CCW will address(Stop Killer Robots-CCW 1).There are many different suggestions for how to introduce new protocols to the CCW, aimed at banning newly developed/developing weapons. Deliberations could be approached through a process that seeks to define what is problematic about the type of technology involved and then formulate restrictions or a ban by addressing the design purpose, technical characteristics, and deliberate or inadvertent effect of the weapons technology. An alternative approach involves framing discussions in terms of the level of human control needed for an attack to be acceptable.

All of these suggested approaches aim at bringing into focus the blurred line that separates acceptable forms of warfare from more inhumane methods. Restrictions and enforcements cannot be executed until this distinction is made clear. The first priority of the international community must be to decide what constitutes as just and unjust methods of destruction.

Questions to Consider*

1. Should there be a UN body that decides whether or not a certain technology is ethical?
2. Should there be guidelines on the ethics of technology? If so, what would it include?
3. What are the possible downfalls of implementing such a policy?
4. What countries would not be happy with this new legislation?
5. What is “ethical” and how can we define this?
6. Is there a possibility that implementing a guideline regarding the ethics of technology would slow technological advancement? What can be done to address this?



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