



Noble and Greenough Model United Nations

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NGMUN VI

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Commission on Narcotic Drugs: Fentanyl Crisis

Background Guide

Alan Cai, *Chair*

Seynabou Seck, *Co-Chair*



Sensitivity Statement

You are assuming the roles and responsibilities of diplomats, and therefore will be held to the ethical standards of the role. During NGMUN, we expect all delegate behavior to reflect the gravity and sensitivity of the international and individual impact of the topics being addressed, just as such topics would be addressed by professional diplomats. While the issues you debate are on the world stage and may seem distant from your lived experience, we ask that you approach debate with a high level of respect and sensitivity for others. Absolutely no racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, or any other forms of discrimination will be tolerated in or out of committee. This includes any such harmful rhetoric that can be attributed to the country or character you are representing. Any discriminatory language or ideas in speeches, resolutions, or at any other point in the conference is prohibited.



Letter From the Chair

Dear Delegates,

I am so pleased to welcome you all to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at NGMUN 2024! My name is Alan Cai, and I am honored to have the opportunity to chair this committee alongside my co-chair, Seynabou Seck. I am a senior at the Noble and Greenough School, where I participate in Model UN and mock trial, play ice hockey, and write for the student newspaper. In my free time outside of school, you can find me reading or drawing. On the side, I co-lead the Massachusetts High School Democrats and volunteer with various local campaigns and political initiatives.

Personally, my first taste of Model UN happened in middle school. I was invited to a meeting of our middle school's MUN Club by a close friend at the time. Little did I know that this meeting would completely alter the trajectory of my academic career. I quickly fell in love with MUN, and while I wasn't great at the activity, my passion for politics and current events, coupled with a love for the intellectually engaging atmosphere that thrived at MUN conferences, encouraged me to keep persevering, eventually finding my way to Nobles MUN/Debate and NGMUN. I hope that MUN, whether you're a novice participant or an experienced delegate coming into this committee, allows you to find a similar joy and passion for intellectual engagement.

At its core, MUN is about tackling tough issues and doing your best to work with others in order to come up with your best (but never perfect!) solutions to difficult problems. In the nature of MUN, our committee is focused on the fentanyl crisis that has plagued and is currently plaguing the world. Hopefully, this background guide will assist you in garnering a more thorough understanding of the topic. At the same time, it would be prudent to conduct your own outside research. While we try our best to provide a comprehensive and detailed guide to the topic, there is much nuance and complexity left to be uncovered and brought to debate. Our background guide should serve primarily as a general overview of the topic. Thus, it is always important to come in with a strong, additional understanding of your own country's views, response, and experience grappling with this crisis. The best delegates aren't necessarily the loudest or even the most well-spoken; instead, preparation and research tend to shine through. Not only does being well-prepared and knowing your topic well show a passionate interest, but it also shows that you care about finding solutions, sparking engaging debate, and are willing to hold an open mind toward learning about new things! I look forward to seeing all the excellent work that all of you delegates will put together.

Yours,
Alan Cai & Seynabou Seck
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History of the Topic

Estimated to be “100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin as an analgesic,”¹ fentanyl has become a very well-known drug, that is recognized as the most significant opioid.² Despite its familiarity with many, the true history behind the uprising of fentanyl still remains unknown to numerous people who are constantly putting their lives at risk by using the drug and being uneducated about its history and dangers. First produced in 1959 and then later presented in the 1960s, fentanyl was first identified as an intravenous anesthetic.³ Beginning in 2011, until 2018 many deadly overdoses connected to the “abuse of clandestinely produced fentanyl and fentanyl analogs, and law enforcement encounters increased markedly.”⁴ This means that many people who died due to fentanyl, overused it and this has resulted in an amplified number of authoritative interactions relating to the usage of this dangerous drug.

Current Situation

Fentanyl is one of the strongest and most dangerous opioids currently on the market.⁵ While it serves several medicinal purposes, such as its role as an anesthetic and painkiller, it is also highly addictive and accessible through unregulated and unlawful sources, especially in North America.⁶ In recent years, fentanyl usage has exploded, responsible for around 70% of all drug overdose deaths in 2017.⁷ While seemingly a primarily North American issue, the fentanyl trade has roots originating in China.⁸ In China, many opiates, including fentanyl, are produced and then shipped directly to Mexico.⁹ Once in Mexico, cartels smuggle fentanyl across the US border for distribution to local consumers.¹⁰ In recent years, American officials across numerous presidential administrations have worked to combat the illegal importation of fentanyl products into

¹ DEA. 2020. “What Is Fentanyl?” https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Fentanyl-2020_0.pdf.

² Unclassified, Unclassified. 2018. “Fentanyl Remains the Most Significant Synthetic Opioid Threat and Poses the Greatest Threat to the Opioid User Market in the United States.” <https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2018-07/PRB-DIB-003-18.pdf>.

³ DEA. 2020. “What Is Fentanyl?” https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Fentanyl-2020_0.pdf.

⁴ DEA. 2020. “What Is Fentanyl?” https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Fentanyl-2020_0.pdf.

⁵ “Combating the International Dimensions of the Opioid Crisis.” n.d. USGLC. Accessed February 13, 2024.

<https://www.usglc.org/combating-the-international-dimensions-of-the-opioid-crisis>.

⁶ DEA. 2021. “Facts about Fentanyl.” [Www.dea.gov](https://www.dea.gov/resources/facts-about-fentanyl). April 29, 2021. <https://www.dea.gov/resources/facts-about-fentanyl>.

⁷ “Combating the International Dimensions of the Opioid Crisis.” n.d. USGLC. Accessed February 13, 2024.

<https://www.usglc.org/combating-the-international-dimensions-of-the-opioid-crisis>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.



the United States.¹¹ Diplomacy and working through established relationships and channels have become a hallmark of American efforts to crack down on the fentanyl trade and the general opioid trade.¹² For example, in April 2019, China declared fentanyl a controlled substance and began to make concerted efforts to limit the domestic production of opiates.¹³ This vital step was only achieved due to strong American insistence, through diplomatic channels and relationships, that the Chinese government take concrete steps to manage the production of fentanyl in their country.¹⁴ Mexico has also been a vital ally in the fight against drug smuggling, with the US supplying tools and equipment to local Mexican law enforcement in order to mitigate the effects of and hinder fentanyl smuggling operations.¹⁵ The United States has also worked with supranational organizations, such as the United Nations, to encourage nations to take steps in unison toward reducing the production of fentanyl and related products (for more information, see “Relevant UN Action”).¹⁶ However, each year, tens of thousands continue to pass away from fentanyl overdoses, with the number climbing drastically each year.¹⁷ While the situation may look bleak for the world, tangible solutions to this crisis in the modern era have never been closer within our reach, and hope still shines for the millions suffering under the iron grip of the lucrative fentanyl trade.¹⁸

Relevant UN Action

On December 15, 1920, the first assembly of the Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs was established, under the League of Nations, which was an organization that sought to sustain world peace.¹⁹ The Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs was the predecessor to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs under the control of the League of Nations. These assemblies would go on from 1921, until 1940. In 1946, resolution 9(I) by the Economic and Social Council committee would go on to create the Commission on Narcotic

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ USAFacts. “Are Fentanyl Overdose Deaths Rising in the US?” USAFacts. USAFacts, December 9, 2022.

<https://usafacts.org/articles/are-fentanyl-overdose-deaths-rising-in-the-us/#footnote-1>.

¹⁸ Miller, Jessica. “Fentanyl Statistics - Addiction, Overdose, & Recovery Facts (2023).” AddictionHelp.com, December 7, 2023. <https://www.addictionhelp.com/fentanyl/statistics/>.

¹⁹ United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs.” 2023. Wikipedia. February 19, 2023. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Commission_on_Narcotic_Drugs.



Drugs, or the CND.²⁰ The purpose of the commission would be to “provide policy guidance for the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, which is managed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The CND also prepares and monitors policy documents addressing the world drug problem.”²¹

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs is one of the functional commissions under the United Nations, Economic and Social Council committee. At first, the commission consisted of 15 member nations that were “manufacturing countries or countries in which illicit traffic in narcotics constitutes a serious problem.”²² Today, there are 53 member nations part of the CND that are elected by ECOSOC “for four-year terms,”²³ Every year, the CND gathers to discuss the global affairs relating to drugs.

The first CND meeting was in December of 1946 when the commission decided to control “all powers and mandates related to drugs previously held by the League of Nations” Today, prominent examples of action that have been taken to combat the fentanyl crisis have been educational campaigns that are meant to target the youth and teach them about the dangers of fentanyl. A notable educational campaign was established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). “The campaign provides information that can save the lives of people who use drugs or are struggling with substance use disorders and highlight actions the public can take to help prevent overdose.”²⁴ Similarly, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration “has created a special exhibit, The Faces of Fentanyl, to commemorate the lives lost from fentanyl poisoning.”²⁵ With the many resources provided by the UN, the path to the abolition of fentanyl misuse is underway.

Questions to Consider

1. Where should the responsibility of regulating the fentanyl trade lie? Should producing or consuming countries shoulder the burden of regulating fentanyl?
2. What active measures should be taken to regulate the trade from an international role?

²⁰ “United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs.” 2023. Wikipedia. February 19, 2023.

²¹ “United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs.” 2023. Wikipedia. February 19, 2023.

²² “United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs.” 2023. Wikipedia. February 19, 2023.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Commission_on_Narcotic_Drugs.

²³ “What to Expect at CND – Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs.” n.d. Vngoc.org. Accessed February 13, 2024.

<https://vngoc.org/about-the-vngoc/what-to-expect-at-cnd/#:~:text=The%20CND%20has%2053%20members>.

²⁴ “Now Is the Time to Stop Drug Overdose Deaths | Drug Overdose | CDC Injury Center.” 2022. Wwww.cdc.gov. January 13, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/featured-topics/overdose-prevention-campaigns.html>.

²⁵ DEA. 2022. “Fentanyl Awareness.” Wwww.dea.gov. 2022. <https://www.dea.gov/fentanylawareness>.



- a. Is deregulation viable or effective?
 - b. How will these measures impact free trade and the global economy/globalization?
 - c. How should we consider fentanyl's role as a prescription medicine?
3. How do national policies and interests tie within the fentanyl trade? Which countries benefit from the unlawful trade of fentanyl predominantly in North American cities? How will these considerations affect the stance of certain countries on the fentanyl trade?
4. What are the root causes of the fentanyl trade? How can we address them?
5. In an era of growing global conflict and rivalry, how will nations at war or facing deteriorating relationships overlook these issues to collaborate on fentanyl regulation?

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