



HoMMUNC

Security Council

Chair: James Megibow

Moderator: Alex O'Neill

Dear Delegates,

My name is James Megibow and I could not be more excited to take on the role of your chair on the United Nations Security Council. I am a senior who has participated in Horace Mann Mun since my freshman year and am now one of our 3 Secretaries-General. I am an avid reader of the Wall St. Journal and love to keep up to date on the latest international conflicts. I'm also a huge fan of Game of Thrones and House of Cards, although since I'm the UNSC chair you probably already knew that. My Partner in crime/moderator Alex O'Neill also has extensive Model UN experience but perhaps just as importantly models for GQ in his spare time.

The modern political climate is among the most volatile we've seen in recent history. From Israel-Palestine, to ISIS, to Syria we see the world's most dangerous conflicts erupting in near simultaneous fashion. Given how rapidly these situations are developing, we felt it would be unfair to force the committee into a given topic or two months in advance, so we are featuring an open-agenda this year. You may vote to set the agenda to any topic, from this background guide or beyond, and assume that the entire crisis staff has been briefed up to the very day committee begins. Whatever you choose will yield exciting (and perhaps horrifying) results depending fully upon the actions you take as a committee. We can't wait for what will be an exhilarating and fast-paced crisis-committee with the integrity of the UNSC and the stability of the world hanging in the balance. Delegates are expected to maintain a high level of debate and research on this competitive yet fun committee. We look forward to meeting you all and saving (or destroying) the world.

Sincerely,

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Israel-Palestine

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has quickly transformed into one of the most pressing issues of our time. Violence in the region has spiked in recent months, and with no resolution in sight, demand for at least a temporary fix has increased steadily. However, because of the sensitive nature of the hostilities – namely, the major religious division between the two factions – the likelihood of legitimate countermeasures being spearheaded from within the region is slim to none. Therefore, it will be up to you, the Security Council, to find a way to proceed without inflaming preexisting ethno-religious tensions, or otherwise exacerbating an already grave situation.

History

Israel and its neighbors have a long history of animosity and conflict, dating back millennia. According to Judeo-Christian Scripture, the Israelite people were enslaved in Egypt for centuries, and upon escaping were faced with constant threat from surrounding states. Much of the Hebrew Bible details these hostilities, especially those between the Israelites and other tribes of the region, such as the Philistines. Around 587 BCE, the First Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Neo-Babylonians, who ruled Israel until about 538 BCE, as the Second Temple was in 70 CE by the Roman Empire.¹ Between those events, the Jewish people struggled against the Persian and Seleucid Empires, among others, and staged many violent revolts to prevent the total destruction of the Israelite religion and culture, including the Maccabean Revolt of the Second Century BCE.²

The Romans ruled Israel from the beginning of the Common Era to 390 CE, when the Empire was split in two.³ From then until 611, the Byzantine Empire controlled the land now known as Israel. Though Jews were allowed to practice their religion under Byzantine rule, dozens of laws were enacted that marginalized the Jewish population within the empire, enraging the people. These laws, in combination with several other factors, led the Jews to assist the Sassanid Persians in taking control of the area. Yet less than a decade later, the Sassanid rulers were forced out of power, and were replaced by the Byzantines once again.⁴ In 636, Arabs conquered the region, and remained for centuries; while European Crusaders attempted to free the Holy Land several times, beginning in 1099, the region was controlled by various Muslim Caliphates until the Mamluk Conquest of 1260.⁵ Next, in 1517, Israel and the surrounding territory was

¹"Jewish History from Babylon to Rome." *University of California at Santa Barbara Religion*. University of California at Santa Barbara, n.d. Web. 27 July 2014.

²Knight, George Angus Fulton. "Maccabees (priestly Jewish Family)." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 27 Jan. 2014. Web. 29 July 2014.

³Bury, John Bagnall. "John Bagnall Bury: History of the Later Roman Empire." *University of Chicago*. University of Chicago, n.d. Web. 20 July 2014.

⁴"History: Foreign Domination." *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013. Web. 6 July 2014.

⁵Madden, Thomas F. "Crusades (Christianity)." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 9 June 2014. Web. 23 July 2014.

brought under Ottoman rule, which lasted until World War I, when the British invaded and secured the region.⁶

The history of Israel in the 20th Century is wrought with conflict against Muslim aggressors. After the British Mandate was approved by the League of Nations in 1922, Jews immigrated en masse to Palestine, where they lived somewhat peacefully with Arabs for a few decades.⁷ In the 1930's and during World War II, however, enmity between Jews and Arabs grew, leading to calls for the creation of separate Jewish and Arab states. The horrors of the Holocaust furthered that cause, and in 1947, the United Nations General Assembly recommended that the British establish what would become the states of Israel and Palestine, as well as an independent city of Jerusalem, which would be administered by the UN.⁸ Though this plan was never formally accepted, the British eventually left the region while Jews and Arabs fought a full-scale civil war, which ended with a permanent ceasefire in 1949, resulting in the establishment of the State of Israel.⁹

In the decades following its historic creation, Israel fought several battles against the Arab powers in the region, including such conflicts as the Suez Crisis of 1956, the Six-Day War of 1967, the Yom Kippur War of 1973, and the 1982 Lebanon War.¹⁰ Yet the first large-scale outbreak of violence solely involving Palestine began in 1987, called the Intifada, and was followed by the Second Intifada of 2005.¹¹ This long history, though tragic, has for the most part involved the concept of Israeli national sovereignty, and the Jewish people's struggles to achieve that goal. It is clear that the present conflict between Israel and Palestine has been tremendously influenced by that history – the future of which you will shape in committee at HoMMUNC.

Present Situation

In 2014, tensions between the Israelis and Palestinians flared up once again, due in no small part to the involvement of Hamas, a pro-Arab group that is almost universally recognized as a terrorist cell. The current violence began with an agreement between the leaders of the Palestinian government and Hamas in late April, which frustrated Israel and its allies because of the group's frequent involvement in attacks on Israel. In response to the agreement, Israeli leadership enacted several new restrictions on its Palestinian territories and arrested hundreds of people who did not follow them. In June, three Israeli teenagers were kidnapped and murdered by two Hamas-affiliated men. In investigating the killings, Israel again arrested hundreds of Palestinians, many of whom were also connected to Hamas and applauded the violent act. Hamas and similar organizations

⁶"Ottoman Empire." *BBC News*. BBC, n.d. Web. 7 July 2014.

⁷"The Avalon Project : The Palestine Mandate." *Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library*. Yale University, n.d. Web. 25 July 2014.

⁸"Resolution 181." *United Nations*. United Nations, n.d. Web. 27 July 2014.

⁹Hammond, Jeremy R. "The Myth of the U.N. Creation of Israel - Foreign Policy Journal." *Foreign Policy Journal*. N.p., 26 Oct. 2010. Web. 5 July 2014.

¹⁰"Q&A: Israel-Gaza Violence." *BBC News*. BBC, 22 Nov. 2012. Web. 26 July 2014.

¹¹Fletcher, Martin. "Analysis: Who Will Heed Hamas' Call for 'Third Intifada'? - NBC News." *NBC News*. NBC, n.d. Web. 01 Aug. 2014.

responded with rocket fire against Israel, killing dozens in the process, and eventually provoked the Israeli Defense Force to respond in kind.

In early July, Israel intensified its efforts to fight Palestinian terrorism. The IDF increased the number of missiles it fired per day, and continued to use its Iron Dome defense system to destroy incoming attacks.¹² Then, on July 7, Hamas officially announced responsibility for the rocket attacks, and Israel launched its ground invasion of Gaza, titled Operation Protective Edge.¹³ Since then, Israeli forces have flooded Palestine and have been faced with the dilemma of whether or not to attack civilian dwellings and schools in the area, where Hamas agents often hide. In fact, although the organization decries the Israeli war effort as “genocide” and “murder,” dozens of tunnels used to traffic weapons have been found under schools and UN-built humanitarian shelters for Palestinian refugees.¹⁴ Overall, the battles have caused the deaths of hundreds and have wounded many more, but show no signs of permanently coming to an end. Short ceasefires have repeatedly been declared, but they are always followed by periods of even more intense violence.

Thus, several questions remain: first, how can the war be stopped, at least temporarily? To what extent should the international community – in this case, the UNSC – be involved in the conflict? In other words, would it be acceptable or beneficial to launch airstrikes or deploy foreign troops or Peacekeepers to the region? As well, what is the most feasible long-term solution that would minimize bloodshed and work to prevent further conflict from arising? Is a two-state resolution possible, and would it work? These are all questions that will have to be answered by you, the delegates, in committee. You will determine the direction of the conflict at the present, and, by extension, the future of the region as a whole.

Parties Involved

The current situation involves multiple groups, including both actual state governments and less-legitimate paramilitary organizations. Hamas, the organization described above, is the main source of aggression against Israel, though the group is not technically the official representative of the Palestinian people. Other violent groups supporting Gaza include the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ).¹⁵ The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) is the Israeli government’s military and by far the most active pro-Israeli force, though some small radically Zionists groups do exist. The civilian groups involved in the conflict are the Israeli and Palestinian people – two distinct ethnic and religious groups. Internationally, Israel is strongly supported by the United States,

¹²Ibid.

¹³Judis, John B. "Who Bears More Responsibility for the War in Gaza?" *New Republic*. New Republic, 25 July 2014. Web. 01 Aug. 2014.

¹⁴"What Are the Hamas Tunnels in Gaza? - The Short Answer - WSJ." *WSJ.com*. Wall Street Journal, 29 July 2014. Web. 01 Aug. 2014. <<http://blogs.wsj.com/briefly/2014/07/29/what-are-the-hamas-tunnels-in-gaza-the-short-answer/>>.

¹⁵"Palestinian Terrorism: Major Terror Organizations." *JewishVirtualLibrary.org*. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, n.d. Web. 01 Aug. 2014. <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Terrorism/paltertoc.html>>.

and to a varying lesser degree by other states in the West; Palestine, on the other hand, is supported most ardently by the Muslim nations in the Middle East and around the globe.

Nuclear Proliferation

The use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD's), especially nuclear weapons, has become one of the most controversial topics of the modern era. While military and political leaders of nuclear states claim the weapons work as deterrents to conflict, the sole purpose of such weaponry, in reality, is devastation. Thus, it is imperative that international regulatory bodies ensure that nuclear arms not fall into the hands of terrorists or rogue states. However, in recent years, some nations have chosen to disregard the strict international rules regarding the development and testing of nuclear arms, unlike the vast majority of the world. To prevent these nations from gaining and using their weapons simply to advance a misguided agenda, it is up to this committee to find a solution to the proliferation of military nuclear technology.

History

The development of nuclear weaponry began in the late 1930's, just as World War II began in Europe. President Franklin Roosevelt, having been alerted to the prospect of Hitler's developing a weapon of mass destruction, was understandably quite alarmed and immediately organized a collaborative effort between the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom to be the first powers to create a nuclear bomb.¹⁶ By the time of the first atomic bomb test, in July 1945, more than 200,000 people were working on the weapon in some capacity, including well-known scientists such as Albert Einstein and Robert Oppenheimer. Though the weapon was deemed ready for battle use after Nazi Germany had surrendered, American political and military leaders decided that nuclear arms would be the best way to end the war with Japan as quickly and bloodlessly as possible. On August 6 and 9, 1945, the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively, killing tens of thousands in the process.¹⁷ By 1950, nearly 350,000 people had died because of the attacks, more than half of the original population of the two cities. Even then, it was clear that nuclear arms were extraordinarily dangerous.

In the aftermath of World War II, the Cold War began to grow in intensity. Soviet scientists and military leaders felt it necessary to meet or exceed the United States' progress in developing weapons of mass destruction, even though both countries had stated publicly a desire to avoid an arms race. The Soviet Union had its first successful nuclear weapons test on August 29, 1949.¹⁸ In response, the United States continued to work on its own nuclear arsenal, and by 1954, both states possessed even more powerful weapons called hydrogen bombs, or "H-Bombs." At the same time, the United Kingdom tested its own weapons, which had been developed in conjunction with the United States, with success. Later, in the 1960's, France and China became the fourth and fifth nations to successfully test nuclear arms. During the same decade, the United States and the

¹⁶ "The Development and Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons." *Nobelprize.org*. N.p., n.d. Web. 31 July 2014. <http://www.nobelprize.org/educational/peace/nuclear_weapons/readmore.html>.

¹⁷ "American Experience: TV's Most-watched History Series." *PBS*. PBS, n.d. Web. 31 July 2014. <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/truman-hiroshima/>>.

¹⁸ "Soviet Atomic Bomb Test." *Cold War Museum*. Cold War Museum, n.d. Web. 01 Aug. 2014. <http://www.coldwar.org/articles/40s/soviet_atomic_bomb_test.asp>.

Soviet Union nearly destroyed each other during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1963, which was, at the most basic level, a dispute over the placement of each nation's nuclear missiles.¹⁹

The period between 1970 and 2000 signaled a new era of international nuclear policy. The Non-Proliferation Treaty, one of several measures taken by the international community against the spread of military nuclear technology, went into effect in 1970, and made clear that only the United States, Soviet Union, United Kingdom, France, and China could possess weapons of mass destruction.²⁰ All other signatories of the treaty agreed not to pursue nuclear arms, while the five nuclear states agreed to keep the technology to themselves. However, in the 1980's and 1990's, several nations forsook their obligations and began to establish their own arsenals. Iran restarted its program in 1984; India and Pakistan both announced successful nuclear tests in 1998; and North Korea, though more secretive, is thought to have gained nuclear capabilities at some point in the latter half of the 1990's.²¹ Throughout the 2000's, the United States and International Atomic Energy Agency faced off against those countries, especially Iran and North Korea, in the hopes of ending their nuclear agendas permanently. All of these events have together created the grim situation facing the world today, in which numerous states that should not possess WMD's do indeed.

Present Situation

Unlike the other crises on the UNSC agenda, there is not one pressing issue pertaining to nuclear proliferation that can be dealt with at once. Rather, the committee will need to decide how it will prevent nuclear technology from spreading further, and how it will ensure that states with active nuclear programs do not gain full nuclear capabilities. At the present, North Korea is believed to have several nuclear warheads at the ready, and has tested its mid-range warheads several times in the past few years, presumably with the intention of determining the nations it could fire upon.²² South Korea and Japan, allies of the United States and the West as a whole, are frightened by the thought that North Korea could destroy a major city at the push of a button, while they remain helpless. The United States, for its part, is most likely out of range of any North Korean strike, though threats of attack made by Kim Jong-Un in recent months are certainly disconcerting.

¹⁹"Cuban Missile Crisis." *John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum*. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum, n.d. Web. 31 July 2014. <<http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/Cuban-Missile-Crisis.aspx>>.

²⁰"UNODA - Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)." *UN News Center*. UN, n.d. Web. 28 July 2014. <<http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/NPT.shtml>>.

²¹"Timeline on Iran's Nuclear Program." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 19 Mar. 2013. Web. 23 July 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/03/20/world/middleeast/Iran-nuclear-timeline.html?_r=0>.

²²"Timeline on North Korea's Nuclear Program." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 04 Feb. 2013. Web. 24 July 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/02/05/world/asia/northkorea-timeline.html?_r=0#/%23time238_7098>.

Iran finds itself in a different situation. Before the Iranian Revolution of 1979, Iran ran a civilian nuclear program, and was aided by the United States, so it could provide cheaper and more efficient energy to its people. However, after the Revolution, its nuclear strategies became more militarized. Now, although the country recently agreed to extend an agreement with the West concerning the development of nuclear materials, public sentiment has begun to shift away from favoring the deal, and now seems to desire a renewed nuclear push. It is clear that economic sanctions on Iran's oil exports had a tremendous effect on the nation's economy – in 2012, the value of Iranian currency dropped nearly 40% – but now, with oil exports once again on the rise, analysts question whether Iran will adhere to the terms made clear in the treaty.²³ Regardless, it is important to understand that the nation's nuclear program is not stopped; instead, its development of new types of nuclear energy has simply been halted. The Security Council must find a way to curtail nuclear weapons development in both Iran and North Korea, as well as other countries that seek to gain nuclear power for military, and not civilian, use. The Council will need to determine whether economic embargoes and other diplomatic pressures are as effective as they are made out to be, or if more aggressive action needs to be taken. Evidently, this issue will play a monumental role in the development of 21st century diplomatic intercourse.

Parties Involved

Several parties play large roles in the nuclear proliferation crisis. Of course, the nations attempting to obtain nuclear technology, especially Iran and North Korea, appear to be the antagonists of this situation. Neutral regulatory bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Security Council play key roles as well, not only for their policy contributions but also because inspections of nuclear plants in belligerent or uncooperative countries would be impossible without them, especially in times of increased global tension. At the other end of the spectrum lie the United States, the United Kingdom, and other nations that detest nuclear proliferation. These nations are, for the most part, stronger militarily in comparison to their enemies, yet often act in their own interests before attempting to serve the common good. Finally, consider the state of Israel: though it has not confirmed any allegations, most specialists believe it has obtained nuclear technology. The position of Israel as a potential nuclear power and the only non-Islamic nation in the Middle East will certainly need to factor into the committee's decision-making processes, which will influence not only preexisting nuclear states, but also other countries looking to bolster their civilian and military capabilities.

²³ Lakshmanan, Indira R. A., and Anthony DiPaola. "Growing Iran Oil Exports Challenge U.S. Nuclear Sanctions." *Bloomberg.com*. Bloomberg, 12 June 2014. Web. 24 July 2014. <<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-06-12/growing-iran-oil-exports-challenge-u-s-nuclear-sanctions.html>>.

Syrian Civil War

Hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women, and children have been killed in the ongoing civil war in Syria, and with no conclusion in sight, still thousands more will have to die before the conflict is resolved. In the same manner, more than two million people have been displaced by the violence, and are forced to choose between illegally immigrating to another country, living in crowded refugee camps in Iraq, Jordan, or Turkey, or risking death by staying in their homeland. Yet unlike most other wars in the recent history of the Middle East, the Syrian Civil War does not stem directly from religious differences, but rather the fact that President Bashar al-Assad, a ruthless dictator, has used all the force at his disposal to massacre his people until they conform to its will. To deal with this situation, the Security Council will need to find ways to swiftly end the war, while also making plans to ensure that the victor does not simply continue to effect Assad's genocidal policies on the Syrian people.

History

Syria, like Palestine, has a long history filled with instances of war and conquest. For more than 1,000 years, during the second and third centuries BCE, the area now known as Syria was ruled by several different empires, including but not limited to the Akkadians, Sumerians, Assyrians, Egyptians, and Babylonians – all of whom conquered the area by force.²⁴ In later years, the Persians, Macedonians, and Seleucids invaded, and sporadic changes in leadership continued until the region finally came under the control of the Roman Empire in 64 BCE.²⁵ The Eastern and Western Roman Empires continued to rule Syria until the mid-7th Century, when Arabs invaded from the South and established a caliphate, which would rule for the next few hundred years.²⁶ Under Arab rule, Syria was constantly threatened by Crusaders and Mongols, and was eventually conquered by Egyptian Mamluks in the 13th Century. Next, in the 16th Century, the Ottoman Empire captured the Syrian territory, and controlled it until World War I, when the war's European victors partitioned the Empire.

After the First World War, France was given a League of Nations mandate over Syria, but only after it defeated King Emir Faisal and his Kingdom of Syria in 1920.²⁷ French Mandatory Syria, however, did not last, as in the 1920's and 1930's pro-independence revolts continued to break out, and after a series of steps toward granting Syria the autonomy it desired, France officially recognized the Middle Eastern nation as its own ruler in 1944.²⁸ While Syria was finally in control of its own affairs, the

²⁴ "Syria: A country Study – Ancient Syria". Library of Congress. Data as of April 1987. Retrieved 26 July 2014.

²⁵ "Alexander the Great." *BBC News*. BBC, n.d. Web. 27 July 2014.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/alexander_the_great.shtml>.

²⁶ Gadd, Cyril John. "Syria." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 4 June 2014. Web. 26 July 2014.
<<http://www.britannica.com/checked/topic/578856/Syria>>.

²⁷ Peter N. Stearns, William Leonard Langer (2001). *"The Middle East, p. 761". The Encyclopedia of World History*. Houghton Mifflin Books. ISBN 978-0-395-65237-4.

²⁸ "Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations." *United Nations*. United Nations, n.d. Web. 5 July 2014. <<http://www.un.int/syria/mhistory.htm>>.

government of the country was never stable in the mid-20th Century. By 1956, four national constitutions had been drafted, and later that decade, the Syrian government reached an agreement with the Soviet Union to provide military equipment and technology in exchange for influence in Middle Eastern affairs.²⁹ Around the same time, Syria and Egypt agreed to merge their nations into a large Arab state, called the United Arab Republic, but disbanded the burgeoning nation less than four years later.³⁰ The 1960's were plagued by countless military coups, to the point that no government could truly establish itself before being overthrown, because of the Syrian people's unwillingness to wait for long-term development. Rather, the Syrians hoped to defeat Israel and establish a strong government immediately, which none of the rulers of the time could deliver until Hafez al-Assad seized power in 1970.³¹ Assad delivered on his promises early in his reign, building up the military, drafting a new constitution, and invading Israel multiple times with other Arab nations.³² He would continue to rule with the general favor of the Syrian people and the West, due to his willingness to fight Saddam Hussein in the First Gulf War, until 2000, when his son Bashar came to power.³³

Present Situation

At the present, Bashar al-Assad's government forces have been fighting against the rebel opposition for more than two years. Following the president's ascension, relations with the West quickly soured, as Assad immediately began to pursue weapons of mass destruction.³⁴ In keeping with his father's policies, the younger Assad continued to build up the military, though he did attempt to thaw diplomatic tensions with western nations by attending peace conferences in Europe and promising to bring better relations to his region. Yet Assad's real intentions quickly became clear: in the late 2000's, Israel and the United States discovered advanced nuclear reactors in various locations throughout Syria, and accused North Korea of quickening the proliferation of nuclear arms in an unstable region.³⁵ Shortly thereafter, Assad's regime began a campaign against

²⁹ Katz, Mark N. "The Moscow-Damascus Alliance: A Tangled Tale." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 28 May 2012. Web. 23 July 2014.
<<http://www.cnn.com/2012/02/09/opinion/russia-syria-relations/>>.

³⁰ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "United Arab Republic (U.A.R.) (historical Republic, Egypt-Syria)." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d. Web. 29 July 2014.
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/615447/United-Arab-Republic-UAR>>.

³¹ Macfarquhar, Neil. "Hafez Al-Assad, Who Turned Syria Into a Power in the Middle East, Dies at 69." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 10 June 2000. Web. 6 July 2014.
<<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/11/world/hafez-al-assad-who-turned-syria-into-a-power-in-the-middle-east-dies-at-69.html>>.

³² "BBC On This Day: 10 June." *BBC News*. BBC, 06 Oct. 1967. Web. 25 July 2014.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/june/10/newsid_3047000/3047177.stm>.

³³ Horn, Heather. "To Know a Tyrant: Inside Bashar Al-Assad's Transformation From 'Reformer' to Killer." *The Atlantic*. Atlantic Media Company, 18 Sept. 2012. Web. 01 Aug. 2014.
<<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/09/to-know-a-tyrant-inside-bashar-al-assads-transformation-from-reformer-to-killer/262486/>>.

³⁴ "Syria Profile." *BBC News*. N.p., 19 Mar. 2014. Web. 31 July 2014.
<<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703995>>.

³⁵ Kerr, Paul K., Mary Beth D. Nikitin, and Steven A. Hildreth. *Iran-North Korea-Syria Ballistic Missile and Nuclear Cooperation*. Rep. N.p.: Congressional Research Service, n.d. Print.

domestic dissenters, arresting dozens of high-profile proponents of democracy as well as hundreds of members of opposition parties. In response, having witnessed other Arab Springs in the region, popular protests erupted in Damascus, and only increased in size and intensity when several protesters were killed by government agents. Meanwhile, in 2011, the IAEA reported Syria's violations of multiple international nuclear treaties to the Security Council.³⁶ The combination of all of these events has created the civil war that is currently ravaging Syria.

The war continues, strong as ever, in 2014. Rebel organizations are now better organized than in past years, but have associated themselves with known terrorist groups both domestically and abroad.³⁷ As a result of clearer divisions between the opposition groups, infighting has persisted. Therefore, the areas affected by the violence are not just those at which government and rebel forces meet, but the entire nation. Outsiders fear that this situation will continue to deteriorate and lead to an even larger refugee crisis, even though more than two million people have already been forced from their homes.³⁸ To make matters worse, Assad's government has been confirmed to have carried out chemical and biological weapon attacks against Syrian civilians, for which it has received international condemnation.³⁹ Having already destroyed multiple cities and killed hundreds of thousands of people, it is clear that the ruling party is not capable of bringing peace either. So what may be done? The war shows no signs of ending, since Assad receives military and financial aid from other Arab countries, while opposition groups have popular support and their own funding networks. There is also little hope of ceasefire, as neither faction has been known to follow rules of war in the past. Thus, it will be up to the UNSC to determine how it will bring about a rapid close to the conflict, without making foreign or non-governmental powers overly involved, because of the threat of retribution, either by the parties directly involved or by their allies. It is also important to consider the members of the Council, and their allegiances in the conflict. The West, of course, does not have favorable relations with Assad's government, but certainly does not wish to support terror cells. On the other hand, Russia and China do not support genocide, but have historical and financial ties to the current Syrian government. Together, all of these factors have further muddled an already complex situation; keeping them in mind will be key to resolving the crisis.

Parties Involved

The main groups involved in the Syrian Civil War are the government and opposition military forces. Among others, rebel groups include the Free Syrian Army (FSA), the Islamic Front, which includes numerous smaller coalitions, and the Syrian

³⁶"UNSC Gets 'devastating Briefing' about Syrian Nuke Plant." *Www.JPost.com*. Jerusalem Post, 15 July 2011. Web. 23 July 2014.

³⁷Alami, Mona. "Syrian Rebels Pledge Loyalty to Al-Qaeda." *USA Today*. Gannett, 14 June 2013. Web. 25 July 2014.

³⁸"UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response." *UNHCR.org*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, n.d. Web. 29 July 2014.

³⁹Brumfield, Ben, Hada Messia, and Ashley Fantz. "U.S. Ship to Destroy Last of Syria's Declared Chemical Weapons." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 3 July 2014. Web. 24 July 2014.

Islamic Liberation Front (SILF).⁴⁰ Outside, non-governmental agencies with the power to influence the conflict are the Security Council and the IAEA, though other groups could see their importance to the war rise greatly, should the international community decide to enact further sanctions or provide more aid to the opposition. Finally, the NATO and the West are of course very heavily invested in the violence, because of their various political, economic, and humanitarian interests in the region. Other countries, such as Russia, China, and the Arab states surrounding Syria, also factor into the conflict, because of their varying levels of support for President Assad. In determining a course of action for the future, it will be crucial that the Council consider the entire global community's interests in Syria and the Middle East together, and not just individual nations' own.

⁴⁰ "Guide to the Syrian Rebels." *BBC News*. BBC, 13 Dec. 2013. Web. 26 July 2014.

Ukrainian Crisis

The outcome of the ongoing hostilities in Ukraine promises to be one of the most important events in the history of post-Cold War Eurasia. For the first time since the fall of the Eastern Bloc, a large proportion of a country that was once under the control of Soviet communists is now fighting to rejoin the Russian Federation – something nearly unforeseen just years earlier. Crimean separatists, who align with Russia both ethnically and politically, have a documented propensity to use violence, and have a specific agenda to which they strongly adhere. This topic may very well be the most important of all presented in this guide, in the eyes of the members of this committee.

History

Ukraine and Russia share a history that, although shorter than the others covered in this document, has had a massive effect on modern European politics. Kiev, modern Ukraine's capital, was conquered by the Varangians in the 9th Century CE, and served as the capital of the powerful Slavic state Kievan Rus.⁴¹ When Ruthenia (alternate name for Kievan Rus) fell in the 13th Century to Mongol invaders, the territory now known as Ukraine was divided, and neighboring powers controlled the land for centuries to follow. Meanwhile, at the tail end of the 13th Century, the Grand Duchy of Moscow was established, and it began to flourish.⁴² Over the course of several centuries, the Grand Duchy became the Tsardom of Russia, which in turn became the Russian Empire. Attempts by Ukrainian Cossacks to secure their freedom by force from various oppressors were frequent, but almost always unsuccessful. By the time of the First World War and the Russian Revolution, Ukraine was firmly within the Russians' grasp.

Following the war, military forces within and around Ukraine fought over who should become the Russian Czar's successor. Certain factions called for the state to remain loyal to the Czar, while others, such as the Polish, sought to establish a new government altogether. In the end, Ukraine was incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1922, but only after its political, economic, and social structures were destroyed.⁴³ As such, the people of Ukraine were dependent on "Mother Russia" for just about everything. Yet because the Ukrainians blamed Russia for its newfound poverty, the people resisted Joseph Stalin's collectivization plans; for that, millions were killed, either through formal execution or the deliberate withholding of food and essential supplies. To repopulate the area, Stalin sent millions of Russians to the area, which was rich in coal and iron. This, according to former American Ambassador to Ukraine Steven Pifer, is why "the sense of Ukrainian nationalism is not as deep in the east as it is in the west."⁴⁴

⁴¹The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Kievan Rus (historical State)." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica, 23 Mar. 2014. Web. 22 July 2014.

⁴²The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Grand Principality of Moscow (medieval Principality, Russia)." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d. Web. 27 July 2014.

⁴³"Ukraine's Fraught Relationship with Russia: A Brief History." *TheWeek.com*. The Week, 8 Mar. 2014. Web. 28 July 2014.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Ukraine's struggles as a Soviet Republic continued throughout the 20th Century. Millions of Ukrainians were killed in World War II – more than one-sixth of the overall population – and thousands more were deported to Siberian gulags by Stalin for allegedly working with the Nazis.⁴⁵ It was not until 1991, when Ukraine voted nearly unanimously to declare independence from the USSR, that the nation finally became self-governing.⁴⁶ But, to the chagrin of Ukrainian nationalists, Russia did not stay out of their affairs. Presidential candidate Viktor Yanukovych, who had previously served as Prime Minister and Governor of a Ukrainian province, was backed by Moscow in the 2004 election and was chosen by popular vote to become the next president. However, observers alleged that Yanukovych, along with the Kremlin, had committed voter fraud and intimidation, and in an event known as the Orange Revolution, the people of Ukraine took to the streets to protest.⁴⁷ In the end, another election was declared, and Yanukovych lost, although he would be legitimately elected in 2010. Evidently, though it is no longer formally part of the Ukrainian polity, Russia has played and will continue to play a huge role in Ukrainian affairs.

Present Situation

The current protests began in November 2013, when President Yanukovych declined to ratify a European Union agreement that would have increased ties with the West and greatly benefitted the Ukrainian economy.⁴⁸ Students and other groups marched in the streets and occupied numerous historical areas in the hopes of changing the President's mind, and moving away from Russia. Yet instead of acquiescing to the demands of his people, Yanukovych's government fought back against the protesters, and popular outrage grew exponentially. Meanwhile, pro-Russia protests erupted in Crimea, where separatist groups and militia quickly began to form. Within weeks, the separatists and masked troops, later learned to be Russian soldiers, occupied Crimea and forced remaining Ukrainian security forces to leave. Russian troops massed around Ukraine's other borders as well, with some analysts estimating the presence of more than 20,000.⁴⁹ Shortly after these events, a referendum was held in Crimea to determine whether or not the people wanted to be absorbed by Russia; the answer was resoundingly affirmative.

In more recent weeks, conflicts have broken out in other areas of the country. Ukraine has accused Russia of shelling its troops in multiple areas, and while Russia denies those specific claims, it is clear that President Vladimir Putin does not wish to back down from his strong pro-separatist stance.⁵⁰ Then, on July 17, the international community became even more involved, through horrible means. A Malaysia Airlines

⁴⁵"Ukraine Profile." *BBC News*. N.p., 18 July 2014. Web. 30 July 2014.

⁴⁶"The Collapse of the Soviet Union - 1989-1992 - Milestones - Office of the Historian." *State.gov*. United States Department of State, n.d. Web. 01 Aug. 2014.

⁴⁷"Ukraine's Orange Revolution." *ForeignAffairs.com*. Council on Foreign Relations, Mar.-Apr. 2005. Web. 30 July 2014.

⁴⁸"Timeline: Key Events in Ukraine's Ongoing Crisis." *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 12 May 2014. Web. 01 Aug. 2014.

⁴⁹Bowen, Andrew S. "Russia Has 15,000 Crack Troops on the Ukrainian Border." *Foreign Policy*. Foreign Policy, 30 July 2014. Web. 01 Aug. 2014.

⁵⁰Kelley, Michael B. "US: These Satellite Photos Prove That Russian Troops Are Shelling Ukraine." *Business Insider*. Business Insider, Inc, 28 July 2014. Web. 01 Aug. 2014.

airplane was shot down by separatist rebels for no apparent reason other than to make a point to the Ukrainian government that they would not give up. On board the plane were 298 civilians, from the Netherlands, Australia, Malaysia, and other nations, all of whom were uninvolved in the crisis.⁵¹ Based on this occurrence and the many other tragedies of the ongoing conflict, it is obvious that steps must be taken by the Security Council to reduce the violence in Ukraine, since the nations and organizations involved have demonstrated little to no interest in doing so. Delegates should strive to solve the crisis as quickly as possible, but should also understand that many of the members of the Council have direct ties to the crisis, and may not necessarily agree on solutions or viewpoints presented in committee.

Parties Involved

The governments of Russia and Ukraine, along with the Ukrainian separatists operating in Crimea, are the key players in this situation. The people of Crimea – distinct from the separatist militia, even if they share ideologies – are also sure to play an important role. Onlookers from the West or other parts of Europe will almost certainly be wary of exacerbating the violence, but do have their own political and economic agendas to serve. Nations that fall into this category include the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and many others. These countries do not wish to see more violence, but also hope to prevent Russia from profiting economically off of bullying its neighbors. That would set an extremely dangerous precedent, and could revert international relations to a level only previously experienced during the Cold War.

⁵¹ Birnbaum, Michael, and Anthony M. Faiola. "Missile Downs Malaysia Airlines Plane over Ukraine, Killing 298; Kiev Blames Rebels." *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 18 July 2014. Web. 01 Aug. 2014.

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7177.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/june/10/newsid_3047000/3047177.stm)>.
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