UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

Debating the Legitimacy and Consequences of Military Interventions in States Experiencing Severe Governance Collapse and Humanitarian Crises

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Greetings Delegates!

It is an honor to be serving as a part of the Executive Board of the United Nations Security Council at Kanakia MUN 2024. We hope to be a part of an enriching academic simulation and engage in a constructive discussion which includes the features of diplomacy, fact based arguments and most importantly confidence.

The background guide shall only be an instrument of assistance to the delegates instead of being the sole basis for your research. This guide is not exhaustive and it is not intended to be. It is simply indicative of pressing issues and topics of concerns, which must be addressed and will give you a bird's eye view of the gist of the issue. The delegates are at full liberty to bring up any other relevant point for discussion.

We understand that MUN conferences can be an overwhelming experience for first timers but it must be noted that our aspirations from the delegates is not how experienced or articulate they are. Rather, we want to see how they can respect disparities and differences of opinion, work around these, while extending their own foreign policy so that it includes more comprehensive solutions without compromising their own stance and initiate consensus building.

We sincerely hope that this simulation will help you gain experience to become better professionals and persons in future.

And may the odds be ever in your favor!

Regards,

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BASIC SUGGESTIONS BEFORE YOU START RESEARCHING

A few aspects that delegates should keep in mind while preparing:

Procedure: The purpose of putting in procedural rules in any committee is to ensure a more organized and efficient debate. The committee will follow the UNA–USA Rules of Procedure. Although the Executive Board shall be fairly strict with the Rules of Procedure, the discussion of agenda will be the main priority. So, delegates are advised not to restrict their statements due to hesitation regarding procedure.

Foreign Policy: Following the foreign policy of one's country is the most important aspect of a Model UN Conference. This is what essentially differentiates a Model UN from other debating formats. To violate one's foreign policy without adequate reason is one of the worst mistakes a delegate can make.

Role of the Executive Board: The Executive Board is appointed to facilitate debate. The committee shall decide the direction and flow of debate. The delegates are the ones who constitute the committee and hence must be uninhibited while presenting their opinions/stance on any issue. However, the Executive Board may put forward questions and/or ask for clarifications at all points of time to further debate and test participants. A challenging, yet highly rewarding committee, involvement in this simulation offers an insight into the dynamics of international relations and politics. Lots of work will be required but as previous participants in similar simulations ourselves, we promise you an exciting experience.

NATURE OF SOURCES/EVIDENCE:

This Background Guide is meant solely for research purposes and must not be cited as evidence to substantiate statements made during the conference. Evidence or proof for substantiating statements made during formal debate is acceptable from the following sources:

1. United Nations:

Documents and findings by the United Nations or any related UN body are held as credible proof to support a claim or argument.

2. Multilateral Organizations:

Documents from international organizations like NATO, NAFTA, SAARC, BRICS, EU, ASEAN, OPEC, the International Criminal Court, etc. may also be presented as credible sources of information.

3. Government Reports:

These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that a report that is being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as a credible piece of information.

4. News Sources:

Reuters: Any Reuters article that clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council.

State operated News Agencies: These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, may be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are – RIA Novosti8 (Russian Federation), Xinhua News Agency11 (People's Republic of China), etc.

Note:

Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia, or newspapers like the Guardian, Times of India etc. be accepted. However, notwithstanding the aforementioned criteria for acceptance of sources and evidence, delegates are still free to quote/cite from any source as they deem fit as a part of their statements.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA

The legitimacy and consequences of military interventions in states experiencing severe governance collapse and humanitarian crises remain a contentious issue within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This debate is rooted in the tension between respecting state sovereignty and the international community's responsibility to protect human rights. The complexity of this issue requires a nuanced understanding of both the legal frameworks and the ethical considerations involved.

Legitimacy of Military Interventions

The legitimacy of military interventions is often debated through the lens of international law and the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. However, Chapter VII of the Charter allows for military intervention if there is a threat to international peace and security[1]. The concept of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), endorsed by the UN in 2005, further complicates this debate. R2P asserts that the international community has a duty to intervene when a state is unable or unwilling to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity[2].

Arguments for Legitimacy

Proponents of military intervention argue that in cases of severe governance collapse and humanitarian crises, intervention is not only legitimate but necessary. They contend that the international community has a moral obligation to prevent atrocities and protect vulnerable populations. Historical examples, such as the interventions in Kosovo (1999) and Libya (2011), are often cited as instances where military action was justified to prevent widespread human suffering[3]. Additionally, supporters argue that non-intervention can lead to regional instability and prolonged human suffering, making a compelling case for timely and decisive action.

Arguments Against Legitimacy

Opponents of military intervention emphasize the importance of state sovereignty and the potential for abuse of the R2P doctrine. They argue that interventions can be driven by political or economic interests rather than genuine humanitarian concerns. [The interventions in Iraq (2003) and Afghanistan (2001) are frequently cited as examples where the stated humanitarian objectives were overshadowed by other motives[4]. Critics also highlight the risk of exacerbating conflicts and causing additional civilian casualties, as seen in the prolonged instability in Libya post-intervention[5]].

Consequences of Military Interventions

The consequences of military interventions are multifaceted and can have both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, successful interventions can halt mass atrocities, restore order, and create conditions for long-term peace and stability. For instance, the intervention in Sierra Leone (2000) is often regarded as a success, leading to the end of a brutal civil war and the establishment of a stable government.

However, the negative consequences of military interventions can be severe. Interventions can lead to unintended civilian casualties, destruction of infrastructure, and long-term political instability. The intervention in Somalia (1992-1995) is a stark reminder of how well-intentioned actions can result in a protracted conflict and humanitarian disaster. Furthermore, interventions can undermine the legitimacy of international institutions if perceived as biased or inconsistent, eroding trust in the UNSC's ability to act impartially.

TIMELINE OF RECENT EVENTS

24 October 1945

The UN is formed and the UN charter is signed, establishing the UNSC, which has authority over the UN peacekeeping force and can deploy them in other countries.

1950-1953

The Korean war was one of the first tests of the newly created UNSC. It enabled the body to show its powers. The UNSC adopted resolution 82, which called for a ceasefire and established a force, led by the US to help South Korea in its war against North Korea. This proved to be a very successful operation and almost conquered the entirety of the North.

1965-1973

The US intervened in the Vietnam War, a conflict between the North and South of the nation. The US fought on the side of capitalist South Vietnam and supported it militarily. This operation involved the deaths of millions and turned out to be a failure as the North won and turned the country into a communist state

1979-1989

The invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR was a large military operation by the nation, wherein the USSR sought to establish a buffer state surrounding it. The single-handed operation was not sanctioned by the UN and led to many casualties and the radicalisation of many Afghanis. This invasion was unsuccessful, and the Soviets had to retreat by 1989.

26 December 1991

The fall of the Soviet Union resulted in the end of the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union. This marked the end of ever-intensifying proxy-wars between the nations and a great reduction in global tensions as the world reached a state of having only one superpower.

April 1944 – July 1994

The Rwandan genocide took occurred, where millions of civilian were massacered. There was minimal attention paid by the UN to this issue until almost a million people were killed or injured. While the UN was focused on ensuring a ceasefire, it did not send a military force until much later in the genocide, causing the additional death of thousands.

11 September 2001

The 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in the US caused then President George H.W. Bush to pursue the most well known recent military operation, the war on terror, where many American soldiers were sent to the Middle East. This was supported by some NATO allies of the US. This military operation caused large amounts of tension in states such as Iraq and Afghanistan, causing humanitarian crises and eventually leading to governmental collapses in Afghanistan and the takeover of the Taliban in the region.

28 April 2006

This saw the adoption of resolution 1674 by the UNSC, which intended to further prevent war crimes and stop nations from violating the sovereignty of other nations, unless under very serious circumstances. It reinforced the Geneva conventions and the Hague accords. This treaty has been ignored over the past few years, especially by countries such as Russia.

2014

Russia invaded the Ukrainian territory of Crimea, and held referendums in the region, which resulted in results stating that a majority of Crimeans wanted to secede from Ukraine and become a part of Russia. This led to the military occupation of Crimea which has been condemned by many countries.

16 October 2017

The MINUJUSTH is established, representing the most recent UN-mandated effort to bring peace to Haiti. The nation has been plagued with gang violence and killings since its inception and has experienced many government collapses. The mission aims to restore peace to Haiti after its predecessor, MINUSTAH, failed to do so.

24 February 2022–Present

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has been one of the largest and most important military operations in the country's recent history. This invasion was expected to cause the fall of Ukraine in a matter of months, but has led to a years-long conflict with no end in sight. The Ukrainian government has been strong and resistant to collapse, but many predict that this stalemate in the war will not last for long, with Russia winning in the long run.

5 August 2024

Protests in Bangladesh against reservations made for those who fought in the nation's war for independence led to the fall of the government and the abdication of Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister.

IMPACT ON STAKEHOLDERS

IMPACT ON STATES EXPERIENCING GOVERNMENT COLLAPSE

States such as Afghanistan, Haiti and Bangladesh have experienced various responses to the collapse of their governments. Afghanistan's government collapsed due to external influences, especially the withdrawal of American forces from the country. Haiti's and Bangladesh's government collapsed due to internal pressures from gang violence and riots against the government respectively. The international response to these governmental collapses has depended on the reaction of a few major countries: The US, Russia and China.

These nations' response to most issues tends to be opposite. While the US cut all ties with Afghanistan in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover, Russia and China have sought to establish ties with the nation. The case of Haiti has been led, surprisingly, by none of the major superpowers, but by Kenya, which seeks to lead the UN mission to Haiti. Bangladesh as well has warranted no major response from these superpowers other than the rejection of entry to Sheikh Hasina by all western nations.

IMPACT ON STATES EXPERIENCING HUMANITARIAN CRISES

Humanitarian crises have escalated majorly in the past few years, especially in the Middle East and Africa. Wars such as the Tigray War in Ethiopia and the Sudanese Civil War, along with the Gaza war have led to the proliferation of refugees in the region. Military interventions in these states by external powers has led to only more suffering and pain, especially in the case of the Tigray war, with many Tigrayans allegedly suffering war crimes not only by Ethiopian soldiers, but also from Eritrean ones which have crossed the border to support Tigray.

However, this does not always stand true, in the case of Bangladesh's war for independence, Indian intervention on the side of Bangladesh turned the tide of the war and prevented the country from entering into a state of humanitarian crisis at that time.

IMPACT ON GLOBAL AND REGIONAL SUPERPOWERS

Superpowers, whether global or regional, play a major role in the peace of their region and the world. Their response determines the course of history. If major powers do not respond to government collapse and humanitarian crises, they can potentially worsen. If these superpowers do intervene with the wrong intentions, these crises can become some of the largest issues. Therefore, all superpowers must be weary and use their power ethically and morally to ensure that they can benefit all countries in the region and not adversely affect the world. To this extent, they must be selective in the operations which they choose to partake in.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MIGHT ANSWER

Note: These questions are only a guideline and delegates are encouraged to go above and beyond these.

1. What constitutes a "governance collapse" or "humanitarian crisis" that warrants military intervention?
2. Under what circumstances is military intervention allowed under international law as of now; does this need to be changed to accommodate our plan? If so, how? What is the legality of the same?
3. What is the scope of such interventions, including geographic scope and duration?
4. How will such interventions not cause a deterioration of humanitarianism in the affected country?
5. Who is responsible for unintended consequences such as further instability, proliferation of weapons etc.?
6. Under what circumstances can long-term peacekeeping missions be terminated while the affected region is still undergoing government collapse or humanitarian crisis?
7. How will the costs of the mission be divided between UN member states?
8. Who is responsible for economic reparations in case of a failed intervention?

KEY ACTORS

THE UNITED STATES

The United States is well known for its numerous military interventions, especially since the end of World War 2, where it took the mantle of one of the world's major superpowers. It operates the largest military in the world and has played a part in numerous military operations in places such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and many more.

RUSSIA & CHINA

Russia and China seek to counter the American influence in the world. They stand against the US in most military interventions. An example is in the Syrian Civil War, where they supported the government of Bashar al-Assad against the US-led rebels. However, Russia and China intervene generally in fewer cases than the US and tend to criticize the efforts of the US in their military interventions.

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh has recently experienced severe government collapse and requires aid from many foreign players, regionally and globally, including the support of the UN. Currently, the new Bangladeshi government is not receiving enough aid to support its civilian population. Military intervention might be required for the country to return to a state or normalcy.

HAITI

Haiti has been cited numerous times in this guide and is a prime example of a country plagued with multiple government collapses and humanitarian crises due to the nature of gang violence and corrupt government and law enforcement. The UN has sent a Kenyan-led peacekeeping effort to help the country, but it might require more assistance.

AFGHANISTAN

The Afghani government had been in a state of turmoil for a long time, ever since the American War on Terror, the government faced challenges from the Taliban. This culminated in when the US and other countries withdrew their forces from Afghanistan in 2021. This led to the eventual toppling of the Afghani government and the takeover of the Taliban.

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