

Dear Delegates,

Let me be the first to welcome you to the 2002 Washington State Model United Nations Security Council. My name is Gretchen Kiefer, and I will be your Chair for the Security Council. Our wonderful Secretary is Julia Balitsky. We invite you all to contact either of us over the course of the next several months with any questions or concerns that you may have. We are here to help you with anything, so please don't hesitate to reach either of us. Before we get to know all of you, let me take this brief opportunity to introduce the two of us.

Julia is originally from Russia, having spent her first 15 years there. She is finishing her fifth year at the University of Washington with a double major in Finance and International Business and a minor in German. She spent the summer of 2001 studying in Vienna and interning with a German travel company. After graduation, she intends to move to New York City and is interested in a career with the United Nations. I am completing my fifth year as well at the University of Washington, double-majoring in International Studies and Political Science. I spent the summer of 2001 in Cuba, doing research for my honors thesis on the social impacts of the collapse of the Soviet Union on the Cuban people. During the autumn of 2000, I interned with the United States Mission to the United Nations in New York City. The U.S. Mission to the UN is the body that coordinates the dialogue between the U.S. Department of State and the United Nations. In the future, I wish to pursue a career with the United Nations as well, in one of the UN offices abroad.

As delegates to the Security Council, an extremely critical and incredibly complex committee of the United Nations, we have a difficult but intriguing task at hand. We will have an open agenda during the conference. The topics of discussion will be chosen by you delegates on the first day of the conference, according to current crises or relevant topics that are of interest to you and to the UN Security Council. While these issues are very serious concerns to the international community, our main objective is to have fun!

Although the specific open agenda items will not be determined until our first meeting, you are responsible for completing two position papers prior to the conference. The topics of these position papers are for your choosing, but the breadth of information included in each should be substantial. Let me stress that it is as, if not more, important that you research your country's respective position on the topic you would like to discuss as it is that you are knowledgeable about the issue itself. You will want to keep current on present crises and conflicts in the newspaper (*The New York Times*, also available online, will be an invaluable resource). Once we receive all of the position papers, the Secretariat will distribute a list of everyone's topics so that each of you can sufficiently prepare on the likely items of discussion.

To reiterate, I urge you to contact either Julia or myself at any time with questions or concerns. We are extremely excited for the conference and want to make the Washington State Model United Nations Conference as enjoyable an experience as possible for all of you.

Sincerely,  
Gretchen Kiefer  
Security Council Chair

## **Overview of the Committee**

The Security Council is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring international peace and averting conflict. Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations states that “in order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.” The Security Council is comprised of 15 members: the five permanent members (the victors of World War II), China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and ten non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. Each council member has one vote. However, the permanent five members listed above have what is called “veto power,” which means that China, France, Russia, the U.K., or the U.S. can block any substantive decision of the Security Council with a “veto” vote.

While other UN subsidiary organs make recommendations to governments, the Security Council alone has the power to make decisions that member states are obligated to comply with under the Charter of the United Nations. When a conflict emerges, it is the foremost concern of the Security Council to bring the violence to an end as soon as possible. In order to achieve this, the Security Council has on many occasions issued cease-fire directives that have greatly contributed to the de-escalation of violence. The Security Council is also responsible for reducing tensions and creating conditions of peace. To this effect, the Security Council may decide to undertake enforcement measures, economic sanctions, or collective military action.

## **Position Papers**

As members of the Security Council, there are special provisions and allowances for your position papers. You will still need to write two position papers, but they will be on the topics of your choosing; they do not need to be on the topics mentioned herein. Try to pick two topics that are vital to your country and fun to research. When you receive your position papers back from the committee with our comments, you will also receive a short list of the other topics chosen by the members of your committee. Please do as much research as possible to become familiar with those topics, as well as keeping abreast of breaking news. You have been given the opportunity to control the destiny of your community, but it is also a responsibility. Try to be creative, but keep in mind the profound nature of the United Nations. We look forward to hearing your innovative topics.

## **Example Topics**

The following are three very brief topic synopses that should be helpful to your preparation for the Security Council sessions. They are admittedly, lacking in the breadth of information that you will want to have researched for your position papers. These are only suggestions for you to begin your research with a clear idea of some typical Security Council topics.

### *Economic Sanctions*

One measure of reducing conflict at the disposal of the Security Council is to apply economic sanctions to a particular country. Sanctions are defined as deliberate, government-inspired withdrawal, or threat of withdrawal, of customary trade or financial relations. A sanction is a restriction imposed by one or more states upon another state in order to force that state to comply with legal obligations. While the use of sanctions has increased dramatically in recent years, the effectiveness of these measures has come under harsh scrutiny. It is widely accepted that sanctions are aimed at those in power in order to coerce the government under sanctions to reform itself according to the directives of the imposing state. A closer examination of the effects of sanctions leaves many critics wondering if the restrictions are in fact serving their intended purpose. The effects of sanctions on innocent civilians are becoming more visible and the international community is now asking that the sanctions be reevaluated.

The most controversial UN sanctions currently in place are those against Iraq. The embargo against Iraq was implemented in 1990 after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and the post-war discovery of an extensive Iraqi program designed to produce weapons of mass destruction. The sanctions include comprehensive trade and financial restrictions, but allow for limited oil sales under the United Nations oil-for-food program. Unfortunately, shortages of food and proper health care equipment are unintended and devastating effects of the UN-sponsored sanctions. By dismantling the normal functioning of the Iraqi economy, the general population has been subjected to the most destructive effects of the sanctions. In addition, many are critical of these sanctions because they have failed to achieve the primary objective, which is the removal of Saddam Hussein.

### *Terrorism*

Terrorism is a topic for the Security Council that has received far more attention in recent months due to the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. However, terrorism is neither a new problem, nor is it confined to the United States, as we are all witness to with the ongoing concerns of terrorism throughout the world. Terrorism can assume many different forms as well, including biological and chemical terrorism. If one can draw any conclusion as to the common objective of terrorist acts, I would dare to say that the primary objective is to disrupt the lives of oftentimes ordinary citizens who have little direct relation to the object of the terrorists' rage. The Security Council is very concerned with the issue of terrorism as it threatens international stability and order.

At present, the Security Council is trying to determine the most efficient and effective ways to manage international terrorist networks. Since the September 11 attacks, we have seen some extremely unique and interesting measures implemented by various governments in order to disable these terrorist cells, including freezing financial assets and tougher immigration policies. The Security Council is a critical forum for governments to consider and coordinate ways to deal with this dilemma.

### *Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons*

According to the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, small arms are defined as "weapons designed for

personal use” while light weapons are defined as “designed for use by several persons serving as a crew.” Examples of small arms include revolvers, rifles, sub-machine guns, and assault rifles. Light weapons consist of grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft, and anti-tank guns. Rarely since World War II have international policymakers met to consider imposing regulations on trade in small arms and light weapons. Unlike arms regulations in the past, the supervision of the trade of small arms and light weapons has been difficult to monitor. Many scholars claim that, although the threat of nuclear proliferation is small, the potential threat of harm via the use of small arms and light weapons is escalating. Many developing nations legitimately acquire these weapons through developed countries, and these weapons are their main source of national security. However, there are illegitimate sources such as the international black market, where private dealers who acquire weapons from corrupt officials or surplus government stockpiles sell them through unmonitored routes.

Due to inexpensive prices and wide availability of these types of weapons, many conflicts that would otherwise have been small in scale have intensified drastically. Such has been the case of civil wars in various countries worldwide. The United Nations has, in recent years, taken a special interest in this subject as it threatens to increase the proliferation of violence and instability throughout the world. Unlike nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, there are no agreed to international norms and standards dealing directly with small arms and light weapons. At the same time, over 100 states that do not export these weapons rely on them for their legitimate national and collective defense and internal security needs.

## Conclusion

At the risk of being redundant, please don't hesitate to contact Julia or me. You may have questions on the content and/or expectations for your position papers and we are happy to help. We can be reached by the following ways:

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