Greetings Delegates,

I am honored to welcome you to UCI's Model United Nations conference for 2024! My name is Kellie Fernandez, and I am so excited to serve as your Director for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL)! This will be my eighth year in Model UN and my second year with UCIMUN! Last year I served as an Assistant Director and when I was a sophomore in high school I attended UCIMUN as a delegate.

I'm currently a third-year student at UCI, double majoring in Political Science and History. I'm very interested in U.S. politics, foreign policy, and international relations, which guided me to my majors. Aside from this, I'm involved in various political organizations and other Model UN organizations outside of UCI.

The topics we will be debating in SPECPOL for this conference, "combatting terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa" and "territorial disputes in the South China Sea" both impact millions of people worldwide, making it essential to have these debates to work to combat these issues one step at a time. As a committee, part of SPECPOL's mission is to focus on special political issues and conflict prevention/resolution between states. Thus, both of the topics at hand need the attention of SPECPOL to help maintain peace in our communities.

While we urge you to read the topic synopsis, I want to remind everyone that this paper is just a starting point for your research. These topics are very complex, and many different factors affect them. When researching these topics, we urge you to thoroughly understand your country's policy and look at these topics through a multifaceted lens.

I'm so excited to hear you all debate the broad range of issues that our topics encompass at the conference in April! I encourage you to reach out to me with any questions and I'll do my best to help you in any way I can. We know you are all capable of great things, and we are so thrilled to see you all in committee!

Best,

Kellie Fernandez

specpol.uci@gmail.com

Topic A: Combatting Terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa

Introduction

There is no universally agreed-upon definition of terrorism by the United Nations. However, the General Assembly's standard definition is "acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes" (E4J University Module Series, 2018). The lack of a universal definition makes it difficult to identify acts of terrorism correctly which can lead to the misuse of the term and make it difficult for domestic laws to encompass all acts of terrorism.

Sub-Saharan Africa has become the new center of terrorism globally. According to the 2021 Global Terrorism Index, five of the top 10 countries most affected by terrorism are in Sub-Saharan Africa (2021 Global Terrorism Index, 2022). This index tracks incidents, fatalities, injuries, and property damage from terrorism. Combatting terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa requires the utmost attention from the international community, otherwise, it will continue to threaten the lives of those in the region more and more every day. The threat of jihadi terrorism has risen significantly in the last five years, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Jihadi terrorism is influenced by an extreme and violent interpretation of Islamic texts (Marc, 2021). Following several military defeats in the Middle East over the past 15 years, Islamic extremist organizations have shifted their efforts to Africa. In Africa, they have been able to prey on weak governmental structures and economically disadvantaged populations. Because of this, terrorist groups have flourished in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Sub-Saharan Africa is responsible for 48 percent of all terrorist attack deaths globally. This figure is the worst the region has ever experienced (Global Terrorism Index 2022, 2023). Terrorism poses a significant threat to

countries within Sub-Saharan Africa because it has become significantly more concentrated than it used to be. Despite this, the rise of jihadi terrorism is also a great international concern. Global jihadi terrorist attacks still occur abroad and can be highly damaging. As the world becomes more advanced, terrorist organizations are also becoming significantly more developed. The increased use of advanced technologies such as drones, GPS systems, encrypted messaging services, and more all put civilians at greater risk of danger (Global Terrorism Index 2022, 2023). Thus, it is essential to address and understand the multiple threats that are posed by increased terrorist activity in the region as new technologies continue to develop.

The rise in terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa is due to high population growth, weak governments, lack of adequate water and food, and overall poor socio-economic status. Terrorism only exacerbates these issues and contributes significantly to poor governments. Moreover, the two most affected regions within Sub-Saharan Africa are the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. The Sahel is in North-Central Africa and extends from Senegal to Sudan (Sahel, 2020). The region is a transitional zone between the Saharan desert to the north and the savannahs to the south (Sahel, 2020). The Sahel, in particular, has seen the most rapid growth in violent extremist activity out of any other African region over the past two years (Shurkin, 2022). There has been a 140 percent increase in violent attacks since 2020 in the Sahel, which is only projected to worsen. This continued violence has also led to the displacement of more than 2.5 million people (Shurlin, 2022). It is estimated to be responsible for the deaths of more than 8,000 individuals (Shurkin, 2022).

Terrorism in the Horn of Africa has also seen a rise. In particular, terrorism led by Al-Shabaab in Somalia has increased. The main obstacles to combating terrorism are the growth

of terrorist organizations and the inability of governments to counter them effectively. Most countries within Sub-Saharan Africa have weak governments. Many countries also lack the resources and military power to fight terrorist organizations. Furthermore, a general distrust for the government and overall inequality can push civilians to join terrorist groups. The threat of violence and the promise of stability tempt many civilians. Because of a long list of obstacles, this issue continues to persist. Counter-terrorism efforts must be pushed throughout the region and by the international community. Currently, no countries within sub-Saharan Africa are at immediate risk of collapse. SPECPOL must address this issue before that happens (Marc, 2021).

Description of the Topic

Causes of Terrorism

Since 2007, deaths from terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa have increased by over 1,000 percent (Mroszcyzk and Abrahms, 2021). In 2020, 7,108 attacks in Sub-Saharan Africa targeted civilians. They resulted in 12,519 fatalities, meaning that almost half of deaths from terrorism worldwide were from the region (Mroszczyk and Abrahms, 2021). This data shows the dramatic increase in terrorism, which leads us to question what is responsible for this rise. Poor socioeconomic status, political instability, and the rise of Islamic extremist groups contribute to the re-emergence of terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa. Poor socio-economic status is a common factor contributing to terrorism worldwide. Terrorist groups tend to take advantage of youth. Youths aged 12–25 are prime targets for recruitment by terrorist organizations (Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups, 2017). Terrorist organizations particularly recruit young men aged 18–25 in poverty-stricken areas (Darden,

2019). Terrorist groups understand the vulnerability of young people, which is why impoverished youth are easy for terrorist groups to mobilize. Youth are recruited either through force or deception. They are often tempted by the idea of a group-based identity with the promise of economic security. There are few job opportunities for youth aged 15–24 in Sub-Saharan Africa. Parents often push their children to join these groups for financial gain. Therefore, youth settle for temporary and unsafe jobs within terrorist organizations (Devlin, 2013).

On the other hand, organizations can forcibly recruit young people through kidnapping. Terrorist groups in sub-Saharan Africa have done this since the late 1980s. Boko Haram, al Shabaab, ISIS, and the Lord's Resistance Army are all terrorist groups that have kidnapped girls and boys. Over 20,000 children have been forcibly taken since 1987 by the Lord's Resistance Army of Uganda (Darden, 2019). It is also essential to understand that men and women often have different roles within terrorist organizations. While men take most combat roles, many young women and girls become Jihadi Brides or suicide bombers (Darden, 2019). Jihadi Brides or ISIS Brides are often women coerced into marrying members of terrorist organizations. Jihadi Brides can also be women who were radicalized online. Radicalization means they believe in the terrorist organizations' goals. These women move to terrorist-ridden regions to marry a member and provide children for the movement (Hare-Osifchin, 2021).

Women are also commonly suicide bombers. Between 1985–2015, 214 cases of women suicide bombers were reported (Thomas, 2021). In the last three decades, female suicide bombers have been responsible for more than 2,000 deaths (Thomas 2021). Women make up almost 30 percent of suicide bombers (Bloom, 2005). Historically, women have played more passive roles during conflict. Because of societal gender norms, many underestimate women's

ability to conduct violence. Therefore, women pass through security checks much more easily than men. Then, they have easier access to potential targets (Thomas 2021) The most challenging obstacle for terrorist organizations is finding operatives that would reach their target without being caught. Hence, groups like ISIS and Boko Haram have recruited children because they are more likely to look innocent (Thomas, 2021) Many suicide bombers are not voluntary perpetrators. Terrorist organizations are known for forcing or coercing women and children to commit such attacks. Overall, terrorist groups tend to exploit vulnerable youth for promises of economic, political, or social stability.

Main Terrorist Groups in Sub-Saharan Africa

Currently, there are a large number of Islamist extremist groups that are operating in Sub-Saharan Africa. Some of the most prominent terrorist groups in the world include Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and the Fulani Extremists (Comparison of the Largest Terrorist Groups, 2017). The most alarming region for terrorism growth within Sub-Saharan Africa is the Sahel, where terrorist groups have exploited political instability. The Sahel is facing high population growth, inadequate water and food, and weak governmental structures. These factors allow terrorist groups to develop and grow (Global Terrorism Index 2022). The two main terrorist groups within the Sahel are the Islamic State of the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM). JNIM was formed in March 2017 after merging four Saladijihadist groups in the Sahel: Ansar Dine, Katibat Macina, al-Mourabitoun, and the Sahara branch of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Thompson, 2021). Since 2017, JNIM has raged violence against UN peacekeepers, local communities, civilians, and even international militaries (Thompson, 2021). As the fastest growing terrorist group, they were responsible for

351 deaths in 2021. The ethnic diversity of the JNIM is uniquely concerning. Many extremist or jihadist groups are formed to promote one ethnicity or religion. Therefore, to see multiple ethnic representatives uniting under one jihadist organization is concerning because it shows the group's growing influence. Their unity contributes to their ability to wage acts of violence in different countries and disrupt the region's stability. In June 2022, ACLED reported that JNIM militants attacked Waraou, a town in the Tillaberi region. It resulted in over a dozen deaths (Regional Overview: Africa, 2022). In Burkina Faso, a string of attacks from April into May drove 17,500 people from their homes and killed nearly 45 people (Regional Overview: Africa, 2022). JNIM leaders are highly concerned with building local influence and choose their targets for specific political or ideological reasons.

Counter-Terrorism Efforts

Governments directly affected by the issue and the international community have taken action against terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa. Most actions have been through operations that aim to increase security and destabilize terrorist organizations. However, the current solutions are not enough to address the problem in their entirety. The African Union has been actively preventing terrorism for over four decades (E4J University Module Series, 2021). In 1977, it adopted the Organization of African Unity (OAU)'s Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa. It was the first significant legislation proposed for combatting terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose was to criminalize mercenarism when a professional soldier is hired to serve in another foreign army (E4J University Module Series, 2021). Its criminalization is significant because many terrorist organizations were recruiting past army

members experienced with weapons and military strategies. Another primary counter-terrorism measure was the 1992 Resolution on the Strengthening of Cooperation and Coordination among the African States (E4J University Module Series, 2021). It allowed the AU to have a more developed plan for major actions against terrorism in the region. Examples of actions include creating assignments for counter-terrorism, outlining laws that would address Africa's security challenges, and calling for police and border control. Lastly, the most effective instrument against terrorism is the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. This Convention requires that countries criminalize terrorist attacks under their national laws (E4J University Module Series, 2021).

Previously, many African countries did not have legislation to criminalize these attacks. Thus, many terrorist organizations would not be punished for smaller-scale attacks inflicted on a community. The Convention also defines specific parameters for states to cooperate and even establishes state jurisdiction over terrorist attacks. Ultimately, it gives countries the legal framework to prosecute crimes of terrorism. Many countries have attempted to stop the growth of terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa through special operations. Government officials in the Sahel have personally requested military support and extra security measures. For instance, France has launched several military operations. One was Operation Serval, a response to Mali's request for support in preventing Al-Qaeda from seizing the country's capital, Bamako (Dugit-Gros, 2022). There are roughly 9,000 European and American troops stationed in the Sahel. It is the West's largest offensive battle against jihadists worldwide (How Not to Lose the War on Terror in Africa, 2021). Many troops from other countries conduct special training for the Sahel's security forces to enhance local military capabilities. Under the new guidance, the trained Sahelian troops

will be more prepared to counter terrorist organizations. The troops from supporting countries also actively fight terrorist organizations and supply weapons for many local troops.

Bloc Positions

Countries With Moderate Global Terrorism Index Values

A medium GTI ranking is between 4.5 and seven. The countries in this bloc tend to be close to other countries that experience high rates of terrorism. Some have stable, and some have unstable governments. What brings them together is their greater vulnerability to terrorism. Countries in this predominantly Muslim bloc risk being used as new hotspots for extremism, but it is not exclusive to the Muslim world. Other countries, particularly those in the West are seen as the enemy of many terrorist organizations. These countries would likely support policies implementing preliminary measures to protect their citizens from extremist violence. Moreover, these states are more likely to support more extraordinary security measures. At the same time, they may offer foreign aid to countries in bloc one suffering from higher rates of terrorism. This bloc includes countries from all over the world. Example states in this bloc include Indonesia, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Algeria, and the Philippines.

Countries Lowest on the Global Terrorism Index

Countries that have a low GTI ranking are those that score below 4.5. Many countries fall under this bloc since most countries have active anti-terrorism legislation. The difference between bloc three and bloc two is that these countries have had less domestic terrorism. This can be due to the strength of their anti-terrorism policies, the lower-risk location of the country,

or the fact that terrorism has not yet spread to them. This bloc will support increased anti-terrorism legislation and military operations that prevent terrorism from growing. Many members of this bloc launch military operations in high GTI regions. These states will also favor strengthening governments in countries with a high GTI to prevent terrorist organizations from taking advantage of weak governmental structures. This bloc includes countries such as the Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand, Peru, Norway, China, and South Africa.

Countries Highest on the Global Terrorism Index

Countries with a high GTI are those that rank above seven. The countries that belong to this bloc are most affected by terrorism and have the greatest likelihood of extremist violence. Most countries within this bloc already had unstable governments before the emergence of terrorist organizations. They also tend to face extreme poverty and poor socioeconomic conditions, leaving them much more vulnerable to terrorist propaganda and attacks. Terrorism has only increased political instability and resulted in mass casualties. Most states in this bloc also tend to share a dominant religion, Islam. This can make them a hotspot for extremism. Most countries in this bloc gladly accept foreign assistance for anti-terrorism efforts. They mainly support military operations hosted by Western countries. These countries will also support measures that strengthen the domestic government and its security capabilities to fight against terrorist organizations. Some examples of countries in this bloc include all those in Sub-Saharan Africa, some in the Middle East (such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria), Myanmar, Colombia, and India.

Committee Goals

For this committee, I'm hoping to see all delegates leave with a deeper understanding of terrorism and the implications it can have on communities. I hope to see lively debate, deep discussion, and cooperation among delegates in this committee. I urge delegates to look at the different nuances of this topic, paying particular attention to the subtopics. When researching, delegates should aim to understand what causes this issue as well as how to best solve it. While exploring this topic, it is encouraged to also investigate ways the UN and other international bodies have engaged together. Delegates should consider the private sector and non-governmental organizations in the scope of terrorism. This topic is of great international concern, making it essential that the Special Political and Decolonization Committee be proactive in responding quickly and appropriately.

Research Questions

1. How can the causes of terrorism inform your research into solutions for terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa?

2. How will your delegation balance the fight against terrorism and the efforts of decolonization simultaneously in this region?

3. In your solutions, how will you ensure that terrorism is dealt with short-term and long-term?

4. How will the effects of COVID-19 expose the abundance and severity of terrorism in this region?

5. Does your country suffer from high rates of terrorism? What has it done in the past to address attacks?

6. Has your country actively played a role in reducing terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa? Has it ever had any military operations in the region?

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Topic B: Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea

Introduction

The South China Sea is a disputed territory that is claimed by several states including Brunei, China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam (What is the South China Sea Dispute, 2023). Since the 1970s, states began to claim islands in zones of the South China Sea, beginning the decades-long dispute that we see today (Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea, 2023). Each of the competing countries has overlapping territories of the sea's stretch of islands, rocks, and archipelagos which cause tensions that are a threat to international peace and security (Understanding the South China Sea Dispute, 2023). This region is of particular interest to the states involved due to its estimated 11 billion barrels of untapped oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas (Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea, 2023). Moreover, this region is a critical shipping route with major economic and environmental importance, having more than half of the world's fishing vessels located in the South China Sea (Hartman, 2019). This region is estimated to account for 21% of all global trade passed through these waters, which amounts to $3.37 trillion annually (What is the South China Sea Dispute?, 2023). In recent years, China has attempted to claim sovereignty over the South China Sea while participating in island-building projects and conducting naval patrols. China has claimed the largest portion of the territory in an area demarcated by its "nine-dash line" which is an area that extends hundreds of miles east and south from its southernmost province of Hainan (What is the South China Sea Dispute, 2023). These claims have been supported by a 1947 map that detailed China's claims over this region, supposedly granting China parts of the Spratly island chains. However, these claims have not been accepted by the international community as China

has failed to be specific about the exact details of these claims and the coordinates on the 1947 map are not present (What is the South China Sea Dispute, 2023?).

Description of the Topic

Main Territorial Contestations in the South China Sea

The South China Sea is a very contested region with some areas being more disputed than others. These include the Paracel Islands, Pratas Island and the Vereker Banks, Macclesfield Bank, Scarborough Shoal, and the Spratly Islands. Each of these territories falls under the disputed "nine-dash line", meaning that China has claimed the majority as territory (Chaudhury 2023). The Paracel Islands are a group of islands, reefs, and banks that are controlled and occupied by China while also being claimed by Taiwan and Vietnam. The islands are surrounded by vast fishing grounds and are speculated to have significant oil and gas reserves (South China Sea: War on the Horizon, 2017). The Pratas Islands are an atoll which have three islets roughly 340 km southeast of Hong Kong. China has claims over the islands, but Taiwan controls them and has declared them a national park (Ogasawara, 2020). The Macclesfield Bank is a sunken atoll of underwater reefs and shoals and is also one of the largest atolls in the world. It is claimed by both China and Taiwan despite being located beyond the territorial sea of any of the previous contested nations (Pedrozo, 2014). The Scarborough Shoal is a disputed territory that is claimed by China, Taiwan, and the Philippines which consist of triangle-shaped reefs and rocks. Access to the shoal has been restricted by China since 2012 despite its abundance of resources for fishing (France-Presse, 2017). Lastly, the Spratly Islands are 14 islands, islets, and cays consisting of more than 100 reefs that lie off the coasts of the

Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam. These islands are rich in fishing grounds and are believed to contain an abundance of oil and natural gas reserves. All islands contain structures that are occupied by military personnel in China, Malaysia, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Vietnam with Brunei claiming an exclusive economic zone (Spratly Islands, 2023).

Past Action Taken by the International Community and the Actors Involved

Control of The South China Sea has been disputed since the 1970s with the first serious altercation in 1974 between China and Vietnam with the Chinese military seizing the Paracel Islands from Vietnam, resulting in the killing of more than 70 Vietnamese troops. China and Vietnam would clash again over the Spratly Islands in 1988 with Vietnam losing roughly 60 sailors (What is the South China Sea Dispute?, 2023). Since then, multiple clashes have continued to occur between China and other countries that claim these waters, specifically Vietnam and the Philippines. Despite this, the states have attempted to reach an agreement through bilateral negotiations, however many countries have argued that China has an unfair advantage due to its size and significance. The Philippines believed that international arbitration would be fairer, leading them in January 2013 to take China to a UN tribunal over the UN Convention on the Laws of the Sea to challenge China's claims over parts of the South China Sea. In 2016, the Philippines won their case over the South China Sea at the Hague through the Permanent Court of Arbitration where they found that China violated several parts of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Minnick, 2016). Other countries such as the United States also have a vested interest in which country controls the South China Sea with the U.S. pushing for the creation of an agreement on a binding code of conduct for all countries

involved (Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea, 2023). This is being promoted in order to prevent China from barring other countries from participating in flights over its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and to conduct other intelligence-gathering activities that China has prohibited. The U.S. wishes to ensure freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and is working to prevent military escalation in the dispute.

How the South China Sea Dispute Has Affected Crime in the Region

The South China Sea dispute has made the region vulnerable to pirate attacks seeing as it serves a major geographic importance for the region. It is located in a strategic trade route that has narrow waterways that have many cargo ships carrying energy and goods to all of Asia. Crude oil attacks are one of the most common in this area, affecting the energy supply going to the rest of the region. Moreover, due to territorial disputes, a lack of security enforcement has been a major issue, preventing proper patrolling.

Coastal security in Southeast Asia is threatened by multiple forms of crime with the most pressing being interstate disputes, terrorism, piracy and sea robbery, crude oil theft, IUU fishing, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and environmental crime (Edwards and Bradford, 2023). For interstate disputes, the South China Sea is the main hotspot with states increasing their security presence in the sea and has led to violence towards fishermen and Coast Guard units, affecting the security in the region. Next, terrorist organizations such as Jemaah Islamiya and the Abu Sayyaf Group that operate in Southeast Asia are known for conducting terrorist operations in which they raid towns, conduct kidnap-for-ransom attacks, and bombings which have increased in recent years due to higher levels of regional terrorism. Piracy and sea robbery

are also major issues with crude-oil theft being one of the main commodities stolen on a vessel. Moreover, acts of drug trafficking have recently increased in the waters of Southeast Asia as the region has developed to become a producer, consumer, and conveyor of illicit drugs, making the coast vulnerable to this type of trafficking.

There has been a growing demand for commodities in the region and with more ships traveling through these waters due to trade, pirates see this as a perfect opportunity to target these ships for their goods. Moreover, the region tends to have lax maritime regulations as contested territories make it difficult to enforce proper security measures. Additionally, poor socio-economic conditions also lead more individuals towards engaging in lucrative business activities at sea seeing as major commodities, like crude oil, tend to be on these vessels. While the risk may be high for committing such crimes at sea, the reward is also high with the potential payout for acquiring these goods being very high, encouraging unemployed young men to participate in this activity.

Not only has crime increased, but dangerous encounters at sea have also been on the price with Chinese military and non-military ships and aircraft being accused of performing unsafe maneuvers (Dolven, Campbell, and O'Rourke 2023). These actions have taken place in and over the South China Sea and put other actors in the region at risk of harm. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, there has been a "sharp increase in unsafe and unprofessional behavior" by PRC military ships and aircrafts in the past two years.

Bloc Positions

Countries Directly Involved In The Dispute

Countries in this bloc are those who have some claim to the territory in this dispute. While their policies will vary, these countries either have small, medium, or large claims to the South China Sea. These countries often work through international organizations like ASEAN and UNCLOS to submit their claims. While some states in this bloc are willing to comply with international law and compromise territory, others are not, which makes this an ongoing issue. Countries in this bloc include those that border the Sea from the Straight of Malacca to the Straight of Taiwan.

Countries Not Involved In The Dispute With External Interest

Many countries that are not directly involved with this dispute have a major interest in this conflict due to its effect on freedom of navigation as it affects shipping routes. Global oil markets are largely affected by the South China Sea dispute seeing as the price of oil can be influenced by events in the region. Because of this, many countries that get their oil from Asia have a vested interest in the mediation of this dispute to keep commodities flowing at a good price. Moreover, other countries in this bloc are interested in the region largely to prevent conflict from emerging. Countries like France, the United Kingdom, and the United States have all expressed their concern for this issue in regard to increased aggression by China. This has pushed countries in this bloc to advocate for mediation and denounce overly assertive behavior in the region.

Countries Not Involved In The Dispute With Minor Stake In The Conflict

Countries in this bloc include those who take less of a stance on which country in the

dispute should get the territory and rather advocate for peaceful resolution of the dispute. Many countries globally haven't taken hard sides on the issue, including many states belonging to the Non-Aligned Movement as well as ASEAN. This bloc can include countries that aren't directly affected by shipping route delays in the South China Sea and who are further away in proximity from the conflict.

Committee Goals

By the end of committee, delegates should have a deeper understanding of the South China Sea dispute as well as have collaborated with other nations on how to best solve this issue. Delegates should understand the main territorial contestations and what action has been taken by the countries involved to resolve the issue. Similarly, delegates should be able to identify why past attempts to resolve the dispute have failed and what can be done to make new solutions last. It is important for delegates to also understand other implications of this dispute, including its effect on crime and diplomatic relations between the countries involved. Territorial disputes in the South China Sea have impacted the lives of many in the region, making this a pressing issue for the international community. As delegates, your research and debate during this conference will help address an important issue in our world today.

Research Questions

1. Is it more effective to address this territorial dispute through multilateral organizations or bilateral talks between conflicting states?

2. What role does your country play in this topic?

3. How can the international community help resolve maritime territorial disputes between

states? Has your country been involved in a territorial dispute in the past?

4. Do you believe that there is a feasible way to determine which country has the most legitimate claim to the South China Sea? If so, in what way can this be done?

5. Why have past efforts to resolve this dispute failed and what can be done to create a lasting solution?

6. How does each state affected by this dispute benefit from claiming their rights to the South China Sea?

7. What factors prevent this issue from being solved?

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