Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2015 Valdosta State University Model United Nations Conference. My name is Nicole Poole and it is my pleasure to introduce you to the Security Council. This is my second year as a Model United Member and I am elated that I have the opportunity to work with you all. To give you a little background about myself, I am senior English and Political Science major and Legal Assistant Studies minor. My goal is to attend law school and run for political office. I have a passion for international relations and learning about different countries and their policies. My interest for international relations stemmed from taking an International Terrorism course during my second year at VSU where I learned about different terrorist groups and how the United States handles terroristic threats.

The Security Council is the perfect branch of the United Nations to address issues such as terrorism because it consists of the world’s five strongest countries: United States, China, Russia, France, and United Kingdom or the P5. These countries have the ability to make decisions that affect all member states. The Security Council’s top priority is to maintain international peace and security. Along with the P5 there are ten other member states that are non-permanent members of the Security Council: Argentina, Australia, Chad, Chile, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, and Rwanda. Together these member states make decisions that aim to maintain and promote international peace. The Security Council is the only organ within the United Nations that passes binding resolutions.

The topics that the Security Council will address are the following:
1. Cyber warfare
2. ISIS and the Radicalization of Islam

To help you prepare for conference, this guide contains history of each topic, current actions taken by the United Nations and countries involved, and current issues. Although this guide contains extensive information, it is beneficial to do your own research and create innovative ideas that would make you stand out in committee and improve your country’s stance on each issue.

Each delegation is expected to submit a two-page position paper that highlights the history and political positions of their nation on the topics. For more information about how to prepare for conference please refer to the teacher’s manual.

Good luck delegates and see you all in March! This background guide was prepared by:

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I. Cyber Warfare

Background

The threat of cyber warfare is a relatively recent threat that is also rapidly developing. As new technologies have been distributed around the world, and the world has become more connected, the threat of cyber-attacks has grown. Cyber warfare is “the use of computers and other devices to attack an enemy’s information system as opposed to an enemy's armies or factories.” Cyber-attacks take place in what is known as cyberspace. As this problem continues to grow, it is crucial to make efforts against this problem, through policies and international cooperation.

One issue in the fight against cyber warfare is the vague definition that it has. It has often left it impossible to distinguish between an act of war and a conventional attack. With this noted, another issue in combatting cyber warfare is that solutions tend to focus only on either responding or preventing attacks. In order to combat this issue, both are important.

Cyber warfare can be targeted at governments, corporations, or individuals. It is generally used to steal classified information from others. Keeping this in mind, it is also important to note the importance of cyber security. Cyber security (also known as computer security) is defined as “the protection of computer systems and information from harm, theft, and unauthorized use. The same means used to protect other valuable or sensitive equipment, namely, serial numbers, doors and locks, and alarms typically protect computer hardware. The protection of information and system access, on the other hand, is achieved through other tactics, some of them quite complex.”

While cyber security is important, one must also not that the weapons used to perform these cyber-attacks are often state-sponsored military weapons. Despite security efforts, breaches will eventually be made and response will be necessary. Response time is critical in cyber-attacks, because these attacks can go beyond simply stealing information. Cyber warfare can be used to attack and damage critical infrastructure. Critical infrastructure includes “telecommunications, energy, banking and finance, transportation, water systems and emergency services, both government and private.” Damages to critical infrastructure can have permanent effects. What makes military grade cyber weapons so dangerous is that they can cause copious amounts of damage in small amounts of time. Cyber-attacks cost countries around the world billions of dollars each year. The United States alone spends 250 billion dollars annually because of cyber warfare.

Documented Attacks

Every country in the world is susceptible to cyber warfare attacks, and any country can become a target of an attack with the right incentive. Obviously countries with more technologies offer more opportunities to hackers, however the larger and wealthier countries are not the only ones targeted by cyber warfare. The first documented act of cyber warfare was the Morris worm in 1988 that slowed computers down to the point of being unusable.

Larger and wealthier countries usually offer more incentive as targets by hackers, and the United States has been the target of numerous cyber-attacks in recent years. In 2007, the secretary of defense’s unclassified email was hacked as part of a series of attacks on the Pentagon. In 2008, both presidential candidate campaigns were hacked by an unknown foreign source. The United States isn’t the only large country that’s a target of cyber warfare. In 2011, Canada reported heavy cyber-attacks on some of the financial and defense departments.
Smaller countries can also offer incentive as targets of cyber warfare. In 2007, the Estonia experienced heavy cyber harassment, and major denial of online government services and banking. Their government was able to respond quickly to each situation, but the attacks still inflicted serious political and economic damage. In 2008, the member state of Georgia was the target of minor cyber-attacks that seemed to be for the purpose of political pressure. In 2009, Israel’s Internet infrastructure was attacked during their military operations in the Gaza strip. “The attack, which focused on government website, was executed by at least 5,000,000 computers.” These attacks show that any country can be a target of cyber-attack with the proper incentive.

Current Situation

Cyber-attacks still occur today, and there are likely still millions of undiscovered hacks in computers around the world. It is estimated that eighteen attacks happen globally every second. With this heavy statistic in mind, it is necessary to promote international cooperation in combatting this issue. Groups such as the North American Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) already have minor initiatives in the development of security technologies. Without continued global efforts to combat cyber-attacks, cyber warfare will continue to cause billions of dollars of damage globally.

The question of development of cyber weapons is also a recent phenomenon. Some believe that countries should develop their own cyber weaponry for the possibility of using it for positive purposes. The United States used cyber warfare, in the form of the Stuxnet worm, to slow down and interfere with the Iranian Nuclear Program. However with this question, also comes the question of regulation.

Committee Directive

As globalization continues to occur, as the threat of cyber warfare will continue to grow. When preparing for this committee, it is important that delegates not only know important history and facts about cyber warfare, but also the situation in their respective member states. It will help to keep these questions in mind. How can member states build their resilience to cyber-attacks? Should countries develop their own cyber weaponry? If so, for what purposes would it be used and under what regulation? What will be the role of international cooperation in combating this issue? These are the types of questions that will help you prepare for this topic.

Plan of Action

The United Nations has increasingly been discussing the threats of cyber warfare and what methods should be used to combat the threats. In 1998 the Russian government introduced a resolution in the first committee. There are resolutions referencing computer-related crimes that were adopted prior to 1998 such as General Assembly resolution 55/65 mentioning the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1990. This is essentially when the issue regarding cyber warfare began to be noticed in the United Nations, according to Ronald Deibert, a professor of political science and the director of the University of Toronto’s Citizen lab: “Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists: The United States has been pushing for broader cooperation on the crime-fighting level, and Russia has been calling for — cyber arms control. Is this achievable?

Deibert: Russia has been pushing for arms control in cyberspace, or information-weapons control. Most people dismiss this as disingenuous, and I tend to agree. Most observers see it as Russia’s attempt to constrain U.S. superiority in the cyber domain. Russia is more concerned about color revolutions and mobilization on the Internet by dissident and human rights groups – and trying to eliminate the United
States’ ability to support that type of social mobilization – than it is about protecting the Internet. In spite of that, I think it’s worthwhile to push them on it. When working for a foreign affairs ministry, using this as an opening to talk about mutual restraint, cooperation, and would push them back on what should be the rules of cyberspace**ii

Clearly there are different approaches when it comes to rights and responsibilities in regards to cyber warfare; it is because of the vast differences of government types and leaders that little has been able to be agreed upon. For example, In Russia some of the motives regarding cyber terrorism and warfare, they have insisted on what they describe as an “issue of sovereignty calling for a ban on cyberterrorism. American officials view the issue differently and describe this as a Russian effort to restrict politically destabilizing speech. The Russians have also rejected a portion of the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime that they assert violates their Constitution by permitting foreign law enforcement agencies to conduct Internet searches inside Russian borders.”**iii

Is it possible for the United Nations to find a viable solution? The UN Charter does not specifically list all the answers for the issue of cyber warfare; it must be interpreted according to national laws in order to find out what we can do. “If any, cyber operations can amount to (1) an internationally wrongful threat or use of “force”, (2) an “armed attack” justifying the resort to necessary and proportionate force in self-defense, or (3) a “threat to the peace”, “breach of the peace” or “act of aggression” subject to UN Security Council intervention.”**iv
According to article 2(4) of the UN Charter, “[a]ll Members [of the United Nations] shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations”. The question thus arises to what extent cyber operations can qualify as “force” within the meaning of this prohibition. In the absence of a treaty definition, the concept of “force” must be interpreted in good faith in accordance with the ordinary meaning to be given to the term in its context and in the light of the Charter’s object and purpose.¹

Conclusion

Essentially the threat of cyber warfare is extremely real but it is seemingly more and more difficult to place sanctions and regulations on Member States without infringing on sovereignty and local laws. We must come to a viable solution to the ever increasing threats; ultimately it is only through tolerant mindsets and constructive dialogue that we will reach any sort of solution.

II. Syria: ISIL and the Radicalization of the West

Introduction

The country of Syria has been stricken by unrest since the beginning of the Arab Spring. After protests by the citizenry were violently suppressed by the government of President Bashar Al-Assad, a popular revolution quickly became a full-fledged civil war that is at least partially fought along ethnic and religious lines. The rebel forces are splintered into various factions ranging from moderate nationalist forces to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria that has infamously taken large swaths of territory in Iraq and Syria. Currently the death toll has been placed at nearly 200,000 people including women and children. Concerns about the area becoming a staging and training ground for terrorists are widely accepted by the international community. So far the international community has been unable to reach a consensus on the appropriate actions to take to end the current tide of violence.

History of Recent Conflict in Syria

The series of popular uprisings throughout the Middle East during the spring of 2010 caused several Middle Eastern leaders to relax their grip on power. President Bashar Al-Assad refused to give up his claim to power and instead began to suppress the protests with a heavily militarized police force. Several policemen were killed in protests resulting in retaliatory actions such as indiscriminate fire into crowds of protestors. On May 15, 2011, coordinated protests erupted in several cities throughout Syria. The Syrian Army retaliated with armed vehicle and infantry attacks that killed hundreds of protestors. Abductions by security forces were not uncommon and in one case a 13 year old boy was abducted and tortured to death. Early June saw the defection of several officers from the Syrian Army. These officers created the Free Syrian Army (FSA) with the goal of removing the Assad regime from power and establishing a democracy in Syria. The FSA began to make gains in northern Syria with the aid of Turkey which allowed the FSA to use its border as a safe zone both for commanders and supply lines. Many western nations recognized the FSA as the legitimate government of Syria and began offering logistical support.

Origin of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

While the West was enamored with the moderate FSA and their democratic goals, a group of former Al-Qaeda affiliates began causing strife within the terrorist networks in and around Syria. Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) was effectively made impotent in their home region when their leader and founder Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was assassinated by a drone strike by the United States. The two following leaders were also killed just as the Arab Spring took root. The next leader was a charismatic Iraqi known as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Baghdadi shifted the focus of the group to include Syria and rebranded AQI as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). ISIL quickly made enemies of their home organization when they tried to force a merger with al-Nusra Front in Syria. Ayman al-Zawahiri, the current leader of Al-Qaeda, declared his opposition to the merger and tried to patch relations between the two groups, but al-Baghdadi refused any peace efforts leading to Al-Qaeda cutting ties with ISIL and Zawahiri calling for the group to disband entirely.

Recent ISIL Activity

After capturing large swathes of territory that includes major cities such as Mosul, ar-Raqqah, Fallujah, Sinjar, and Tikrit, ISIL has begun calling itself the Islamic State declaring that it has ascended to a caliphate and that all Muslims owe it fealty. This announcement and name have been much derided by
The Islamic State has continued expanding in Iraq and Syria only facing real opposition in the Kurdish peshmerga fighting force. ISIL’s northern expansion includes Mt. Sinjar which is the traditional home of the Yazidi minority. The Yazidis’ faith differs from traditional Islam causing them to be targets for ISIL militants. After the deaths of thousands of Yazidis at the hands of ISIL militants, the United States commenced air strikes targeting the militants and aid drops to the Yazidis and the Kurdish forces fighting to protect the unarmed Yazidi population. The seizure of Mosul and the oil refineries in the area have provided ISIL with oil to sell on the black market for funding. Mosul was taken after the Iraqi Army fled from the advancing ISIL militants with barely a shot fired. Emboldened by easy victories over the Iraqi Army, ISIL stated intentions to march on Baghdad but as of yet the group has only accomplished scattered car bombings in Shiite neighborhoods within the city. ISIL has also begun an offensive in northern Syria that aims to take the border town of Kobane which would create a major threat to the Kurds using the area as a staging ground as well as the many civilians who are trying to flee to Turkey through the area.

Radicalization of the West

While the military victories of ISIL are alarming, the greatest threat the group poses is not from military might, but from its appeal to Westerners who could easily carry out attacks in their home countries. During the execution of American reporter James Foley, the world was introduced to “Jihadi John,” an ISIL militant who spoke flawless English with a London accent. While al-Qaeda had a small number of Western supporters such as Anwar al-Awlaki, much larger numbers of Westerners are entering Syria to help fight the Assad regime under the ISIL flag. Part of the appeal of ISIL to Westerners is due to their very capable media arm. Al-Furqan Institute for Media Production was established soon after al-Qaeda in Iraq rebranded itself ISIL. The media center has used social media to spread its messages in German, Russian, French, and English. The group also produces the magazine, Dabiq, in several Western languages. Recruitment videos often feature ISIL militants in scenes reminiscent of dramatic action movie climaxes. These dramatized videos are considered a tactic to lure those with extreme views but no combat experience to a battlefield they know little of. While the threat of radicalization is looming in every area of the world, Europe specifically has had troubles with “homegrown” terrorism. The London Bombings and the Madrid Bombings were both carried out by citizens of the nation that the attacks occurred in. Part of the appeal of terrorist groups including ISIL is their bold confrontation of the West which many Muslims prone to radicalization see as a suppressing force upon their ideal way of life.

Response to ISIL

The international response to ISIL has been muted due to fatigue of the Middle East. The Second Gulf War has wearied America and its allies to the idea of sending more soldiers to an unwelcoming region of the world especially right after the withdrawal of a bulk of their forces from Iraq. Air raids by the United States Air Force were one of the first non-Middle Eastern offensives taken against the ISIL group. More recently, a coalition force including the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia has conducted airstrikes against ISIL assets in northern Iraq and Syria. Turkey has taken a defensive stance against the ISIL threat on its border by stationing large numbers of soldiers along the border, but not committing troops to the fight. Instead, Turkey has been providing materiel and logistical aide to the Kurdish forces battling ISIL and allowing refugees to cross their border for safety. So far most other states have done little except offer personnel in advisory roles and condemn the heinous actions of ISIL.
Syria: ISIS and the Radicalization of Islam

Actions Taken by the United Nations

On Monday September 29, 2014, in New York City, the Syrian Deputy Prime Minister spoke at the 69th United Nations General Assembly. Deputy Prime Minister, Walid Al-Moualem, affirmed that Syrians believe ISIS or the Al-Nusra Front and many other Al-Qaeda affiliates will not remain confined within the borders of Syria and Iraq alone, rather it will spread to every spot that it can reach, starting with Europe and America. However, Al-Moualem also maintains that the direct military actions used as preventative measures against the spread of ISIS and other armed extremist groups must not violate the national rights or sovereignty for the Kingdom of Syria. ISIS has gained global attention and has emerged as a true global threat to both national international security, thus the United Nations has been empowered respond quickly.

In April of 2012, The United Nations Security Council adopted resolution S/RES/2042, which both condemned the widespread violations of human rights by the Syrian authorities and any human rights abuses by armed groups, as well as authorized the deployment if 30 military observers to Syria. Resolution S/RES/2043, also adopted in April 2012 by The UN Security Council established a United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) under the command of a Chief Military Observer, consisting of an initial deployment of up to 300 unarmed military observers as well as a civilian component required to fulfill the missions’ mandate.

On September 27, 2013 Resolution S/RES/2118 was unanimously adopted by the Council. While reaffirming the UNs strong and unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, resolution S/RES/2118 also required the verification and destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons stockpiles, called for the convening of the Geneva II peace talks, and positively endorsed the establishment of a transitional governing body in Syria with full executive powers.

What may be considered perhaps the most vital resolution implemented by the UNSC to date in reference to ceasing the radicalization of Islam in Syria, is resolution S/RES/2170, unanimously adopted on August 15, 2014. By means of adopting this resolution, The United Nations Security Council “Deplores and condemns in the strongest terms the terrorist acts of the group”, and its violent extremist ideology, as well as its “continued gross, systematic and widespread abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law.” With resolution S/RES/2170 the SC took direct aim at Islamist militants in Iraq and Syria, blacklisting six people including the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). This Resolution also threated sanctions against those who finance, recruit or supply weapons to the dangerous insurgents. Resolution S/RES/2170 ultimately condemned the recruitment of foreign fighters by and for ISIS and al-Nusra; moreover it listed six individuals affiliated with those groups under the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida regime. In addition, ISIL acts of human degradation, hostage-taking, kidnapping, and trafficking have also rightfully been condemned under this Security Council resolution. The Council expects to eventually see a cease all to violence and terrorist acts buy ISIS, and aims for the immediate disarmament and disbandment of the brutal group. The council strongly urges that ISIS attacks against civilians on the basis of ethnic or religious identity may very well constitute as crimes against humanity, and have only further stressed the need to bring any and all perpetrators, including foreign fighters, to justice under resolution S/RES/2170.
The United Nations Security Council has also imposed sanctions and tariffs on ISIS trading. Furthermore, The Council directed the sanctions monitoring team to report on the continuing threat posed by ISIL and the Front, and their sources of arms, funding, recruitment and demographics, and to present recommendations within 90 days to further address the threat of ISIS gaining power and resources

Within Syria’s borders ISIS has caused a great deal of publicized internal conflict. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), internal conflict and political unrest has been shown to be the leading cause of internally displaced persons. As of May 2014, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), in Syria alone there are at least 6,500,000 IDP’s, largely as a result of conflict involving ISIL insurgency and tactics. On the 22nd of February 2014, in order to better lend humanitarian aid to IDP’s of ISIS’s reign in Syria the UNSC adopted resolution S/RES/2139, which required that the Syrian authorities, as well as any other involved parties, to allow humanitarian access into Syria across conflict lines predominately in besieged areas and across borders. In the case of any non-compliance, resolution S/RES/2139 expressed the intent to take further steps to ensure provisions of humanitarian aid for those suffering as victims of ISIS.

In hopes to advance its steps in lending aid to ISIL victims in Syria on July 14, 2014, the Council also adopted Security Council Resolution S/RES/2165; which authorized cross-border and cross-line access for the UN and its gallant partners to deliver essential humanitarian aid in Syria without state consent, and established a monitoring mechanism for 180 days.

**Current Situation**

ISIS has proven to be a “growing threat” and has been denounced by the Security Council, President of the United States Barack Obama, as well as many other nations’ officials. On September 24, 2014, at a Heads of state Security Council session, President Obama’s resolution cracked down on supporters of the ISIS and was supported unanimously by the U.N. Security Council.

King Abdullah II of Jordan, whose nation has been historically one of the biggest recipients of U.S. military aid, stated on the matter: “This demands a coalition of the determined...It is the fight of our times and success requires a united struggle backed up by strong resources.” Furthermore, President Obama stated that "the only lasting solution to Syria's civil war is political: an inclusive political transition that responds to the legitimate aspirations of all Syrian citizens, regardless of ethnicity or creed."

The Secretary General Political Military Report S/2014/756 covering a period from September 18 to October 17, 2014 state that “conflict and high levels of violence continued throughout the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period, including in the governorates of Aleppo, Damascus, Dar’a, Deir ez-Zor, Hama, Hasakeh, Homs, Idlib, Quneitra and Raqqa.” In addition, explosive weapons are still being used in populated areas within Syria.

The SANA State News Agency reported that the United Nations envoy to Syria, Staffan de Mistura, met with Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem on Sunday November 9th in Damascus, where the two men discussed the UNs recent initiative on establishing local cease-fires as an attempt to halt the fighting and brutality in the country.

In 2014, the number of national non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) authorized to partner with the United Nations in the Syrian Arab Republic increased to 99, operating through 156 branches, with
six national non-governmental organizations being recently approved; furthermore, the number of international non-governmental organizations (IGO’s) approved to work in the Syrian Arab Republic remains at 16 according to The Secretary General Political Military Report S/2014/756.

**Conclusion**

While a U.S.-led military coalition has been bombing ISIS fighters who hold large amounts of territory in both Iraq and Syria, The United Nations Security Council has pushed for a bombing campaign in Iraq against the strengthening and expansion of militants of ISIS and associated extremist groups as of October 2014. Efforts are being made to combat ISIS and Islamic radicalism, however, according to UN commission reports: "Violence has bled over the borders of the Syrian Arab republic, with extremism fueling the conflict's heightened brutality”.

UN commission reports in Geneva state that the Syrian government and ISIS insurgents are continuing to commit both war crimes and crimes against humanity. Syrian government forces have dropped barrel bombs on civilian areas, in which eight incidents are believed to have contained the chemical agent chlorine. As of 2014, The Guardian also reported that as many as 11,000 people had been systematically killed in Syrian jails and ISIL forces in northern Syria have been waging a campaign to instill fear; including amputations, public execution-style killings, and whippings\(^\text{xiii}\).

According to the independent commission of inquiry on the human rights situation in Syria, "In areas of Syria under ISIS control, particularly in the north and north-east of the country, Fridays are regularly marked by executions, amputations and lashings in public squares.” Activists estimate that more than 200,000 people have been killed in Syria since 2011 when protests against Assad spiraled into violence and the rise of ISIS began\(^\text{xiv}\).

**Committee Directive**

When assessing the issue of the rise of ISIS, or any other extremist operation or threat to international security, delegates must first always take into consideration the rights of sovereignty entitled to each and every nation, which must be respected. With that notion in mind, delegates must also consider that in Syria, and other territories overrun by ISIL activity, the death toll, kidnappings and hostage taking, radicalism, bombings, IDP’s, and victimization only continues to rise.

Advances in technology and social media, as well as the result of globalization, consequently, has largely empowered the spread of ISIS, propaganda, and self-radicalization. Keeping in mind existing Security Council delegation, what other programs may be implemented to combat ISIS radicalization by way of technology and media? Do you see current delegation, tactics, and on ground/bombing strategy in Syria as effective or do we need alternative solutions? Why or why not has the current systems used in Syria been effective. Are the rising numbers of IDP’s any inclination on the success of current SC Resolutions and efforts of other organizations?
References

I. Cyber Warfare

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II. Radicalization of the West


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