UGAMUNC XXII
Special Political and Decolonization, Background Guide
Greetings, Delegates!

I would like to extend to you a warm welcome to the 2016 University of Georgia Model United Nations Conference! My name is Colby McCoy and I have the distinct pleasure of being your Chair for General Assembly Fourth Committee, Special Political and Decolonization. This is my first time ever participating in Model UN, a prospect that I see as a welcome challenge. Needless to say, I will surely share in your excitement for this conference. I cannot wait to see and hear all your wonderful, inventive ideas. My Co-chair and I have spent a lot of time choosing the topics for this committee. These topics are sure to be both engaging and rousing. Due to the specialized nature of these topics, I encourage you to read this background guide in detail. While informative, this guide is meant to be supplementary. Therefore I encourage you to do your own in-depth research. To be considered for any awards, a position paper must be typed up and submitted on the first day of committee. I encourage you to put in an extra effort when writing them. Be straightforward but also think outside of the box!

It would be impolite of me to not share more about myself; seeing that we will be spending a great deal of time together. I am currently in my third year at the University of Georgia, a school I have loved every minute of attending. My major area of study is International Affairs with Russian as my foreign language. I have studied abroad in St. Petersburg, Russia, whereupon I was bitten by the travel bug! During my spare time I like to visit vintage book stores, go to concerts, and listen to vintage records. When I’m not walking around downtown Athens I can be found at home cooking dinner for my roommates or writing for my personal blog. Most importantly of course, I love being a member of Model UN; it is increasingly becoming a part of who I am.

Now that I feel we have been properly acquainted it is my pleasure to introduce my Co-chair for this year’s conference, Taylor Gates. She is also a third year at the University of Georgia double majoring in International Affairs and Political Science. This year will also mark her first time in Model UN. So much like myself, she relishes the chance to be a part of such a unique and thrilling opportunity. Apart from her membership in Model UN, Taylor has been active in UGA’s study abroad program. In the fall of 2014 she attended Keble College at Oxford University, England. It seems that the travel bug has affected us both. For in addition to England Taylor boasts a host of European, African, and Latin American countries, as well as a majority of our own fifty states in her repertoire.

In closing, I would like to wish you all the best of luck in this year’s conference. I have complete confidence in your abilities as debaters and believe you will be excellent delegates. If you have any questions regarding this year’s conference or the background guide please don’t hesitate to contact me via email (ctm39443@uga.edu).

Warmest regards,
Colby McCoy
Chair, GA 4
History of the UN General Assembly, Fourth Committee: Special Political and Decolonization

Rising out of the ashes of WWII, the General Assembly was officially established in 1945 in an effort to tackle a multitude of global issues. There is a total of six individual committees under the umbrella of the General Assembly. Each committee has its own focus to help address any issues that the international community may be facing. Currently, the General Assembly meets from September to December each year. If needed, extensions may be granted outside of the set time frame. In total the Assembly is comprised of 193 member nations where each is entitled to one vote.\(^1\) Decisions on issues of extreme importance require a two-thirds majority. Other decisions only require a simple majority.\(^2\) The committee in which you will be participants is the Fourth Committee on Special Political and Decolonization.

According to the United Nations official webpage, the “Special Political and Decolonization Committee deals with a variety of subjects which include those related to decolonization, Palestinian refugees and human rights, peacekeeping, mine action, outer space, public information, atomic radiation and University for Peace.”\(^3\) Much like all other committees, Fourth Committee focuses on specific issues that have both short and long term effects. For example, the issue of Palestinian refugees has led to increased tensions between Israel and other Arab nations. These difficulties directly affect the peace and stability of the region and has led to major powers such as the United States bringing nations of the Middle East together to try to find an answer to the conflict. While many may argue these types of issues are of less importance, in actuality they can lead to destabilization on a global scale. Without the existence of the Fourth Committee, there wouldn’t be an appropriate arena to discuss these types of issues. Since its inception Fourth Committee has addressed a multitude of issues from demilitarization of outer space to the side effects of atomic radiation.

As chosen delegates of this committee you will be discussing three distinct issues that specifically fall under the purview of Fourth Committee. Each of the chosen topics are issues we currently face in the modern world. Leaving them unaddressed could lead to global consequences in the near future or even in the present day. With the political and global landscape ever changing, Fourth Committee’s role in facing certain crises is becoming even more essential.

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\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid.
I. Demilitarization of Outer Space and Space Rights

Introduction
The militarization of outer space and establishing space rights has become a growing concern for the UN’s Fourth Committee. Due to major advances in technology, outer space has become both an area of exploration and militarization for major world powers. Beginning with the launching of basic satellites in the mid-nineteenth century, humanity has had an increasing presence in outer space. While this is seen as a marvelous achievement it also has fostered many unintentional consequences. An example being the threat of space debris orbiting the earth. The leading cause of this is the destruction of satellites. Because modern technology has become primarily dependent on the use of satellites in space, debris orbiting the earth pose a major threat. “Each destruction of a satellite creates, in effect, thousands of missiles zipping round randomly; each subsequent impact provides yet more high-speed debris. At some point, given enough litter, there would be a chain reaction of impacts that would render parts of low-Earth orbit—the location of about half the active satellites—uns usable.” On 11 January, 2007 China fired a missile into space to destroy one of its older satellites. Anti-satellite tests (ASAT) such as this have only added to the tension between world powers. In conjunction with anti-satellite weaponry, intercontinental ballistic missiles with nuclear payloads can only exacerbate issues further.

In addition to issues of militarization, there are growing questions in terms of space rights. The types of rights that have been discussed include access to natural resources, property rights, and the role private industry may have. With the number of actors increasing in space, this issue will only become more essential to establishing peaceful relations. If actions are not taken by this committee the possibility of conflict only increases. The largest obstacle to answering these questions has been the lack of a clear legal framework which establishes rights to those with assets currently in space. Although legislation has been previously passed in an attempt to address these issues, it has proven to be inadequate. When looking towards the future it would be realistic to assume that human activity will only increase in outer space.

Brief History
With the launching of Sputnik on 4 October, 1957, humanity’s race towards space officially began. News of Sputnik’s successful launch quickly reached the airwaves which in turn spurred the United States to launch its own satellite into space. In 1958 the U.S. launched Explorer 1 which would lead to an unprecedented militarization of outer space. The Space Race

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5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
had officially began. Within the same year the first ever resolution related to space was drafted. The resolution was entitled “Question of the Peaceful Use of Outer Space.”\(^{10}\) Although the resolution was a step in the right direction, there still was the lack of a uniform international space law. It wasn’t until 1967 that the General Assembly passed the Outer Space Treaty (OST). This treaty laid the foundation of international space law today.\(^{11}\) With advances in technology, satellites soon became able to provide support to military personnel on the ground. Furthermore, the creation of GPS has completely changed the idea of how we function on a daily basis. Since the treaty’s inception the total number of satellites in orbit has increased greatly. It is due to this increase of satellites that questions of demilitarization and space rights have become major topics of discussion in the Fourth Committee.

Although the Outer Space Treaty has established a rough framework for space law and demilitarization, it has failed to address the use of anti-satellite weaponry. As early as 1950, both the United States and Soviet Union began showing interest towards anti-satellite technology. This interest was partly spurred by the development of reconnaissance satellites.\(^{12}\) After several years of testing, the Soviet Union officially declared their Co-Orbital ASAT weapon operational. The Co-Orbital strategy involved launching conventional explosives into space that could detonate extremely close to their targets.\(^{13}\) In an effort to address increased militarization, the U.S.-Soviet Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty). Although the treaty mainly addressed anti-ballistic missile weaponry, it also indirectly protected reconnaissance satellites.\(^{14}\) In addition to the ABM Treaty, both the Accident Measures and Hotline Modernization Agreements were formally signed by the United States and Soviet Union in 1971. These agreements extended protection to non-reconnaissance “essential communications in the event of a crisis.”\(^{15}\) In 2010, the European Union officials drafted a Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. The Code of Conduct aims to prevent “harmful interference with space objects” and attempts to curb satellite destruction.\(^{16}\) While this draft is a step in the right direction, much more work has to be done to fully address issues of militarization.

The Outer Space Treaty and those passed in recent decades have played an essential part in answering some of the basic questions in regards to space. However, many issues remain unresolved and questions have yet to be answered. Particularly issues of anti-satellite weaponry and increasing actors in space.

**International Implications**

With the exception of the oceans, space has become the final frontier. As we continue to explore space in search of new discoveries and solutions to global issues it is imperative that our focus be shifted towards demilitarization. Furthermore, it is also extremely important to create a

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13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
comprehensive framework for space rights. If we do not strive towards these goals, the possibility of global conflict increases. With increased tensions between nations the possibility of another arms race seems likely. As seen in the Cold War arms races may cause global instability and divide the international community.

**Actions Taken**

In recent decades the General Assembly has drafted a series of treaties to address the issues of demilitarization and space rights. By far the most influential one being the Outer Space Treaty (OST). Drafted in 1967, the Outer Space Treaty embodies a few key principles; freedom of exploration and access to space for all countries, non-appropriation, and nuclear weapons/WMD’s are prohibited. Four other treaties have been drafted to add to the framework of the OST. Firstly, the Rescue Agreement of 1968 requires mandatory assistance from states for any astronaut who is experiencing an emergency. Next to be passed was the Liability Convention of 1972. Which creates regulations in terms of liability for any damage that may be caused. In an effort to keep track of increasing space activity, the Registration Convention of 1975 was formally drafted. The treaty stipulates that states must “register all objects launched into space with the United Nations.” Lastly, the Moon Agreement of 1979 was created to reinforce principles already established in the Outer Space Treaty.

Currently the General Assembly has met to discuss demilitarization in space in an effort to improve security. While much has been discussed, no comprehensive treaties have been passed. Space rights also remain as an unresolved issue.

**Action vs. Inaction**

For these issues to be resolved a productive, diplomatic, and flexible discussion must occur between those nations who directly affect security in outer space. Clear parameters must be set in regards to space rights and mutual demilitarization has to be on the table. Nations big and small must work together to resolve this crisis. In contrast, avoiding diplomatic talks over these issues could prove to be a grave mistake. Seeing that outer space is the final frontier for humanity to explore it is essential that peace prevails. Furthermore, consequences in space could lead directly to earth. Particularly escalation of nuclear weapons, increased diplomatic tensions, and the possibility of another Cold War.

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18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
Key Terms
Anti-satellite tests (ASAT): Testing of anti-satellite weapons which are used to destroy satellites for strategic military purposes.23

Intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM): A type of missile that is guided to a pre-determined target. In most cases an ICBM is designed to deliver nuclear payloads. Differing from other missile types, ICBM’s have a trajectory outside of the atmosphere. Thus, they travel through space.24

Space debris: Any remnants of manmade objects that are currently orbiting earth. In other words, junk.

Questions to Consider
1. How can we effectively differentiate between military and consumer satellites?
2. What actions can this committee take to guide the process of demilitarization in space?
3. How would an arms race or diplomatic tensions affect your nation?
4. Can clear guidelines for space rights that are fair for all be formulated? If so, how?
5. Which methods would be most effective in decreasing ICBM stocks?
6. Could these issues turn into another Cold War? If so, which nations would be involved?

Further Reading:
Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space: Overview
This provides a great overview of the current arms race crisis. Read everything carefully.

Disharmony in the spheres
Excellent article in the Economist that talks about anti-satellite tests and their implications on U.S. - China relations. Involvement

This timeline is an excellent tool to help you get your bearings on the space race and the UN’s involvement.

II. Fair Elections in Africa

Introduction

Over the past decade, electoral systems and processes have become a centerpiece of UN peacekeeping missions, with heavy emphasis being on the promotion of free and fair elections. This development is intrinsically linked to the growing significance of democracy. While it was not the original intent of the United Nation’s upon its foundation through the years democracy has come to be one of the universal and indivisible core values and principles of the United Nations. This is not an avocation for any one type of government structure, but rather for the rule of law and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms that is inherent to democracy.

As such it is argued by many that the maintaining of free and fair elections is essential to ensuring the continued stability and credibility of states, as well as to solidify a relationship of respect and accountability between states and their citizens. However, as can be seen by much of Africa’s tumultuous and violent political history, fair and free elections are not always a peaceful process. In fact some studies show that electoral processes are often associated with heightened risk of civil war, a fact that prompts the question whether democratic elections do more harm than good?

To best understand this issue it is first vital to determine what constitutes a free and fair election. A popular definition states that democratic elections must be competitive, periodic, inclusive, and definitive. The four factors being defined as follows:

1. Competitive: candidate choices must not be limited to only select options; voters must have access to all options as well as being able to decide on policy issues in direct manners, through referendums or initiatives available on the ballot.
2. Periodic: citizens cannot elect dictators or presidents-for-life; those they elect must be accountable to citizen requests as well as being subject to elections (and the potential to lose re-election) at the end of their term.
3. Inclusive: the definition of voters within a state must include a large proportion of the adult population; government cannot be chosen by a small and exclusive group
4. Definitive: election outcomes must be determinant of government leadership; elected leaders must hold real power and authority, not just symbolic status.

Another definition offers that free and fair elections must include: (1) the right of all voters to participate in the electoral process without hindrance; (2) freedom to campaign for all political parties; (3) secrecy of the ballot; (4) reasonable speed in the counting of ballots; (5)

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28What is Democracy? (U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Information Programs) http://www.aic.org.tw/infousa/zh-tw/DOCS/whatsdem/whatsdm5.htm
accountability and openness of the electoral process to the competing parties and (6) an acceptable electoral law.\textsuperscript{29}

Political elections mark a channel of communication between the citizens and political leaders that is undeniably essential to the existence and success of a representative democracy. Therefore the provision of frequent and credible political elections is crucial to fostering trust and ongoing stability within the state.\textsuperscript{30} However, elections are not the only components necessary for a representative government, economic growth, reduction of unemployment, diversification of the economy, and security are also vital elements.

Furthermore, the corruption of elections (think rigging, vote-buying, etc.) results in the impediment of social and economic development of a state, as well as a greater risk of violent social unrest and upheaval.\textsuperscript{31} Given this it may come as no surprise that new democracies are often more prone to recurring civil unrest than non-democracies.\textsuperscript{32} The susceptibility to violence that accompanies so many political elections throughout Africa is a clear threat to the stability and development of states.

As such, despite recent evidence that may indicate democracies today now experience substantially fewer conflict recurrences than other regime types\textsuperscript{33}, there remain legitimate concerns that democratic standards within Africa are facing gradual erosion.\textsuperscript{34} This leaves the international community with a largely mixed consensus on the state of African political and democratic success.

**A Brief History**

The 1950s and 1960s marked the advent of decolonization throughout the African continent and signaled a significant transitional period for the region.\textsuperscript{35} This wave of Independence brought to end the near 75 years of colonial rule by Britain, France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and Germany.\textsuperscript{36} It was not until the 1990s that the global fervor for democracy hit Africa, but once it did, African states began to implement many electoral reforms. The autocratic regimes that had been in place gave way, under pressures from citizens and the


\textsuperscript{34} \textit{African Democracy, A Glass Half-Full}, (The Economist, March 31, 2012). http://www.economist.com/node/21551494 (This is of course excepting for the transitional state of Libya’s government.)


international community alike, to the introduction of periodic political elections. However, the shift from colonial rule to a pursuit of democratic governance structures has yielded outcomes of varying success.

Since the end of decolonization, Africa has witnessed nearly two hundred coups d’états. These coups occur due to varying factors that are subjective to the unique environment of individual states. Determining factors range from warring factions seeking to gain power in newly independent states; existing corruption or low quality of governance and officials within a state; autocratic oppression that causes sociopolitical unrest; low levels of economic development combined with high levels of poverty; shadow participation of foreign powers in inter and intrastate African conflicts. These coups signal that independence in Africa was accompanied by deep political instability. However, there have been some positive trends. Following the post-Cold War period, participatory politics grew as the percentage of African countries that held democratic elections rose from 7 to 40 percent. And in the past twenty years there has been a greater call for the increased accountability of political leaders and the legitimacy of their attaining power.

Progress remains largely inconsistent. While some states are able to attain democratic governance, many remain lost somewhere in the grey area in between democracy and autocracy, and numerous others witness the corruption and use of electoral processes to revert back to autocratic or dynastic regimes.

Recent Developments

Given that today only one African state, Eritrea, does not hold elections it would seem likely that democracy has been achieved throughout the region. However, that is not quite the case. Elections do not always ensure democracy, as such true representative governments seem to be increasingly rare throughout Africa. Freedom House, an American think-tank, says the number of full electoral democracies among the 49 sub-Saharan countries has fallen from 24 in 2005 to 19 today. This could in large part be due to security issues as many states lack the means to ensure peace throughout election periods. However, the recent peaceful conclusion of

37 *Elections in Africa, Between Hope and Reality* (African Studies Centre)
http://www.ascleiden.nl/content/webdossiers/elections-africa-between-hope-and-reality#Introduction
40 *Elections in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities*, (International Peace Institute, September 2011).
elections in Nigeria gives cause for hope that democracy may still be on the rise in Africa. Plagued by electoral violence in the past, and facing serious security concerns posed by the Boko Haram group, it was feared that Nigeria’s election would bring disaster and violence. However, Nigeria’s peaceful transition of political power marked a historical development for not only Nigeria but also the African continent at large.

Nigeria is not the only African state to be holding elections this year (2015). The states of Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central Africa Republic, the Comoros, Ivory Coast, Sudan, Ethiopia, Zambia, Niger, Mauritius, Guinea, Chad, Egypt, Cote d’Ivoire, (potentially) South Sudan, and Togo are all set to hold presidential or legislative elections this year as well. Yet, despite Nigeria’s success, violence still plagues 20 to 25 percent of elections in Africa. These instances of electoral violence can severely undermine the credibility and trust people have in democratic processes, posing a threat for the success of democracy throughout much of Africa.

**Past UN Action**

In 1996, with the drafting of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights the United Nations established the right to vote. Stated in Article 25, it reads:

> “the right to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors”

As of July 2015 the number of parties to have ratified this Covenant amounted to 168 countries, almost 85% of the United Nation’s memberships. Today this can be seen as an integral aspect of all United Nations actions within the African region and the world in general. The United Nations continues to provide electoral assistance to approximately 60 countries each year, either at the request of Member States or based on a Security Council or General Assembly mandate. However, given the tendency of violence to accompany electoral procedures, debates have arisen within the General Assembly that perhaps elections are meant to be a sovereign responsibility in which the UN should not intervene.

This issue of intervention on behalf of democracy has been highly controversial and heavily debated. While in some cases it has been adopted into various institutional forums as the

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48 Ibid.
Call to Action

The United Nations continues to act based on the principle that democracy contributes to peace and security, social justice and human rights, and economic and social development.\(^5\) The holding of free and fair elections is of course a clear way to support and promote democratic ideals, however because elections throughout much of Africa are accompanied by a heightened risk of violence and political instability, it is evident additional steps must be taken. Rather, elections are to be viewed as a process rather than an event, a gradual transformation towards democratization rather than an abrupt transition.\(^5\)

To be considered fair and free, and to ultimately meet with success elections must be accompanied by an emphasis on transparency and accountability, as well as active support of political institutions designed to monitor the political system.\(^5\) As it is, Africa has made significant progress in developing democratic values and governance throughout the continent, but given the ongoing vulnerability of states to electoral violence it is clear that there remains much to be done within the region.\(^5\)

Questions to Consider:

1) Is it the international community’s responsibility to intervene in cases of unfair elections throughout Africa? Should it be?
2) Should electoral corruption be allowed to continue if it means political stability?
3) Do political elections in Africa inflict more harm than good when it comes to state stability and success? What are the costs and benefits of implementing democracy in Africa?
4) What sort of factors put states at greater risks of electoral violence? What’s the best way to resolve these issues?
5) What tools/policies have been implemented in the past to ensure fair elections? What were the effects of these policies?

\(^{51}\)Goodwin-Gill, Guy S., Free and Fair Elections, (Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva, 2006).

\(^{52}\)Democracy and the United Nations, Global Issues.


\(^{56}\)Guidance Note of the UN Secretary-General on Democracy, (The United Nations Democracy Fund).

6) What steps, if any, should the General Assembly take in the future to protect fair elections?
7) What other factor are necessary to supplement fair elections in order for democracies to be successful and stable? (Think interconnectedness of issues here.)

Further Reading:

http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/iiag/
This is an annual statistical assessment of the quality of governance in every African country and as such provides a useful tool for examining the state and effects of fair elections throughout Africa.

http://www.ascleiden.nl/content/webdossiers/elections-africa-between-hope-and-reality#Introduction
This web dossier, compiled by the Library, Documentation and Information Department of the African Studies Centre Leiden (ASC), lists numerous readings and case studies on African elections. A great anthology to use!

This case study on coups throughout Africa is sure to lend insight into what causes political instability in African countries and why elections are met with so much tension and violence, as well as providing historical context.

While this case study is limited to the region of Western Africa, it still holds pertinent and revealing information in regards to electoral processes in Africa.

This is a great source of the historical development of elections in Africa, and it also provides specific case studies as well as an examination of the International Community’s role in African elections.

This guidance note from the former UN Secretary-General provides a potential plan for the implementation and support of elections throughout Africa.
III. Drone Strikes- Violations of National Borders?

Introduction

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV’s), commonly referred to as drones, have completely changed the way in which nations conduct military operations. Drones are quite arguably one of the most flexible weapons systems ever created. Originally created for surveillance and intelligence gathering, the role of these machines has morphed into an entirely different purpose. With increasing fears of terrorist attacks, drones have been weaponized in an effort to provide surgical strike capabilities. With these newly founded capabilities, nations can wage war within the safety of their own borders. Formal declarations of war are no longer needed nor do troops need to be deployed. Death is dealt from a remotely controlled vehicle. Ironically enough these killing machines are controlled from thousands of miles away in an air conditioned room.

When referring to drones, major news outlets typically speak only of U.S. drone policy. This lacks in accuracy seeing that drones have become tools employed by multiple countries. Drone usage has now become a global issue. With the increasing popularity of drones within multiple states, challenges to international law continue to arise. One such challenge is presented by the many cases of targeted killings occurring in nations where an armed conflict has not been officially recognized. Therefore issues of national sovereignty become extremely important. International law has established that the use of force in a state’s borders without their approval is a violation of state sovereignty. Not addressing these issues will be a direct challenge to international laws that have been cornerstones to peace for decades. Unfortunately, legal waters meant to address this issue are murky at best. A clear and concise policy addressing issues of national sovereignty in relation to drone strikes is extremely important. Furthermore, failing to face these issues increases the risk of civilian casualties which can in turn increase tensions within the international community.

Brief History

UAV strikes in the sovereign territories of other nations is a relatively new phenomenon. Prior to the terrorist attacks on September 11th, drones had solely been used for surveillance purposes by

the Central Intelligence Agency. However, after 2001 U.S. drone policy shifted towards surgical strikes of selected targets. Not only the United States, but the United Kingdom, Israel, and Pakistan have all shown tendencies to use drones for combat purposes. The majority of other nations who are capable of using them, roughly 87 total, have used drone technology purely for surveillance. Although, it has become apparent that numerous other nations have begun to develop UAV’s with strike capabilities. Pakistan has statistically suffered from the highest number of strikes in the last 10 years, which has led to increased tensions between the United States and Pakistan over violations of national sovereignty. In response to these issues, a specially appointed UN envoy visited Pakistan and ruled that there had been “a violation of Pakistan’s sovereignty.” The Obama administration has admitted to seeing the press release “but would not comment on classified information.” Failing to comment on the report and refusing to admit wrongdoing has harmed U.S.-Pakistani relations even further. In addition to continued drone strikes in Pakistan, the Indian government has announced its intentions to acquire combat ready drones from the U.S. This can be seen as a direct challenge to Pakistani military control over the region. Thus, Indian-Pakistani tensions have increased with fears of India possibly acquiring increased strike capabilities. As of today, the General Assembly’s Third Committee has met to discuss the issues of human rights in regards to drone strikes. While this can be seen as progress, no definitive legislation has been passed to deal with violations of international laws due to drone strikes.

International Implications
With many nations becoming increasingly interested in developing armed drones, international laws will continue to be challenged. Persistent violations of state sovereignty could set the tone for future drone programs. Currently, Pakistani-U.S. relations have been strained due to these violations and have yet to be resolved. Furthermore, the death toll of innocent civilians could definitely increase as a result of drone strikes. It has also been discovered that China has begun to increase its drone production due to the lucrativeness of the market. As more of these weapons are produced the chances of state sovereignty violations only increase. Particularly, India’s While issues of human rights have been discussed by the General Assembly, no formal actions have been taken to address the issue at hand. It should be the goal of this committee to take action and set the first ever precedent on this issue.

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66 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
Action vs. Inaction

The concept of how war is waged has changed dramatically over the last 15 years. Since the inception of the combat-ready drone, legal definitions of sovereignty have been consistently tested. The world is seeing an increased interest in the usage of drones internationally. China clearly sees this trend and has sought to rapidly produce more UAV’s. With the skies becoming busier and busier it is essential to clearly define state sovereignty and how it pertains to drone strikes. Although actions must be taken to solve these issues, nations must tread carefully. Overly restricting drone usage could just as likely increase tensions. Both the U.S. and Israel heavily depend on drone technology for the elimination of high value targets. Possibly upsetting this policy could increase diplomatic tensions and prevent meaningful progress.

On the other hand, adopting a policy of inaction could lead to disastrous consequences. Refusing to study how drone strikes relate to sovereignty could lead to increased tensions between the violators and the violated. In this case, Pakistan has been the location of the highest number of drone strikes. A deterioration of relations with Pakistan could indirectly damage global counter-terrorism initiatives. Seeing that Pakistan has been ally of many nations in the War on Terror. Due to India’s increasing interest in acquiring U.S. combat ready drones, Pakistan’s relations with western nations could decline even further. Thus jeopardizing the War on Terror. In addition, not addressing this issue could lead to large loopholes in international law. The existence of a uniform legal framework is an essential part of maintaining peace around the globe.

Questions to Consider

1. What steps should be taken to establish a legal framework to protect national sovereignty from drone strikes? How would this newly established law affect your nation?
2. Should there be a limit on the number of drones a nation may produce? If so, what would be a reasonable amount? Furthermore, should nations be prohibited from selling drone technology?
3. How could restricting drone usage affect global counter-terrorism policy?
4. If a nation’s sovereignty is violated by drones, does that in effect give them the right to shoot them down?
5. Has Article 51 of the UN Charter been incorrectly interpreted by those carrying out drone strikes? If so, how should this article be addressed? (You will need to do a little research on this one)
6. How much of a threat do drones pose to world peace?

Further Reading:

A Brief History of Drones

This article featured in the Nation gives an excellent overview on the history of drones.

International Security Data Site

Is an excellent resource for data related to drones. I highly recommend you read all of the data related to drones on this website. This will be a very valuable resource to you.
Drones: What are they and how do they work?

Gives a basic explanation on how drones work.

India Seeks Armed Drones From U.S. in Challenge to Pakistan

While I do cite this in my footnotes, I think it’s a very interesting article in terms of Indian-Pakistani relations. Especially because it fits with the issues Fourth Committee will face.