

United Nations Security Council

Welcome

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to BUSUN 2009 and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)! My name is John Noh and I'm your UNSC chair for this year. I'm a senior concentrating in international relations with a focus on global security. I'm originally from Texas although I have spent the last several years in New England. During my junior year, I studied abroad at Oxford University. Outside school, I have had opportunities to work on foreign policy issues at places like the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the Pentagon, and the Wall Street Journal. Following my graduation from Brown next year, I plan to attend Officer Candidate School to commission as an officer in the Army.

As someone who has been involved with Model United Nations for a number of years (including BUSUN), I very well know the value that Model UN can bring to students interested in foreign affairs. The preparation and work that goes into Model UN are not all that different from what an international relations major would do for a foreign policy course in college. Also, the skills learned from participating in Model UN, whether researching in-depth about a critical policy issue or analyzing the strategic culture of a foreign nation, will come quite handy in your future careers especially those in the foreign policy fields. But even if your future plans and aspirations take you to studies and careers unrelated to international affairs, you will no doubt gain invaluable experiences participating in BUSUN.

Whether you are a returning participant to BUSUN or a first-time visitor to Brown University, I hope you enjoy your time at Brown and use your stay in Providence to learn more about our school. I have very much enjoyed my years at Brown, and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about Brown.

I look forward to meeting you all in the fall. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
John Noh
Security Council Chair
UNSC@busun.net

Committee History

The United Nations Security Council is a principal organization of the United Nations. The Council deals with matters related to international peace and security in a number of ways. It may recommend that parties resolve disputes by peacefully reaching agreements. It may also set out principles for a peaceful resolution or settlement. The Council could choose to undertake investigation and mediation. It may appoint special representatives or ask the Secretary General to act as one.

The Security Council is comprised of five permanent, veto-wielding powers- the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China- and ten elected members.

When a dispute escalates into fighting, the Security Council may work to bring an end to hostilities through cease-fire directives or the ordering of deployment of peacekeeping forces. If the Council acts under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, its decisions, such as economic sanctions or collective military action, are binding on UN members.

By the recommendation of the Security Council, a UN member's rights and privileges may be suspended by the General Assembly. Similarly, a member may be expelled from the UN by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Council.

A state whose interests are affected by a dispute may participate in discussions at the Security Council, without a vote, with the approval of the Council.

Topic 1: Piracy in Somalia

Background

Although piracy off the coast of Somalia has existed since the civil conflicts that have taken place in the country from the 1990s, it has recently become a major threat to international security. Operating in one of the most important shipping lanes in the world and benefiting from the lack of a strong and effective government in Somalia, pirates, many of whom are former fishermen, have threatened the economic interests of numerous nations. They have also threatened aid shipments bound for Africa. Using the latest hi-tech equipments like GPS and satellite phones and armed with automatic rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, pirates attack on speed boats by grappling the ships with hooks and irons and using ropes and ladders to subsequently climb the ships. Pirates often

fire at the ships prior to attempting to board in order to scare the ships to stop. The tactical speed and maneuver with which hijacking operations take place (along with the fact that many take place at night) make it difficult for such attacks to be spotted in time. After hijacking a ship, pirates sail it to the pirate hub town of Eyl in Somalia where the hostages and the cargo are held until ransoms are paid. Pirates are known to receive information from contacts at ports in the Gulf of Aden regarding ship movements.

The area over which piracy has taken place is enormous, thereby making it impossible to police the entire area, which encompasses over a quarter of the Indian Ocean. Over the past several years, pirates have been able to improve their capabilities using money from ransom payments to upgrade their equipment and weapons. Consequently, as a result of ransom payments, shipping costs have gone up (due to increased costs in security, insurance, extra fuel for longer routes).

Current Situation

The present concern relates to the surge in piracy activity that has taken place over the recent months and years off the coast of Somalia. Pirates have attacked numerous ships and have held crew members for significant ransoms. Among the many nations that have been affected are the United States, Saudi Arabia, India, France, and Russia.

Last year, more than 100 attacks were launched, of which 40 were successful. The Kenyan foreign minister estimates that pirates received approximately \$150 million in ransom payments last year alone. This is a significant amount of money in a country where the GDP per capita is \$600.

Currently, there is no international legal framework to deal with pirates. In August 2008, Combined Task Force 150, a multinational coalition naval task force, established the Maritime Security Patrol Area within the Gulf of Aden, to combat piracy. In October 2008, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1838 which allowed nations to pursue pirates on land and at sea. Countries have been allowed to enter Somali waters to pursue pirates. In November 2008, the UNSC adopted a resolution introducing tougher sanctions against Somalia for failing to combat piracy off its coasts. In December 2008, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1851 authorizing land operations against pirates operating out of Somalia.

To this day, the Transitional Federal Government remains largely powerless to stop acts of piracy off its coast.

Africa Union peacekeeping forces continue to operate in Somalia.

On April 12th, 2009, US Navy SEALs killed three and captured one pirate responsible for seizing an American container ship and holding an American hostage. The captured pirate was brought to the United States for trial. On April 20th, Dutch naval forces, after freeing 20 Yemeni fishermen kidnapped by pirates, released 7 Somali pirates because they lacked the legal jurisdiction to keep the pirates.

Numerous countries have devoted naval forces to combat piracy in the area. These include Canada, China, Denmark, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, Turkey, and the United States.

Bloc Positions

France, Croatia, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States- Sponsored Resolution 1838.

France- Wanted to expand an anti-piracy motion (allowing nations to enter Somali waters to combat pirates) to other parts, including West Africa.

China, Vietnam, Libya- Opposed the French measure citing concerns of sovereignty.

Questions to Consider

1. What are the underlying causes driving piracy? What can and should the international community do about them?
2. What responsibility does the international community have to Somalia?
3. What are the geopolitical implications of navies from around the world operating off the coast of Somalia to combat piracy?
4. How far should nations go to combat piracy?
5. How can the Security Council enhance international cooperation in this matter?
6. What international legal framework (if any) should be established to deal with pirates? As what should pirates be treated?
7. Besides threatening the economic interests of nations, how else does piracy threaten international peace and security?

8. Whose national interests are threatened the most by piracy off the coast of Somalia?

Helpful Resources

- International Maritime Organization:
http://www.imo.org/home.asp?topic_id=1178
- Reuters (Somalia piracy crackdown shows signs of success):
<http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE54S6H420090529>
- CNN (Somalia piracy threatens trade, boosts terrorists, analysts say):
<http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/africa/10/01/piracy.terror/index.html>
- Time Magazine (Somalia's Crisis: Not Piracy, but Its People's Plight):
<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,859,9,1902866,00.html>
- The Economist (Piracy off Somalia):
http://www.economist.com/world/mideast-africa/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13482292

Topic 2: Iran's Nuclear Program

Background

Since 2002, Iran has been developing a nuclear program despite strong objections from countries around the world. Major international actors, including the UNSC, the EU, and the US, have been trying to convince Iran to halt its uranium enrichment programs. Iran has failed to consistently cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in its inquiry regarding Iran's nuclear programs.

Many believe that Iran's nuclear program poses one of the greatest threats to international peace and security. While Iran claims that its nuclear programs are for peaceful purposes only, many nations suspect that its programs are ultimately a step in the nation's quest to acquire a nuclear weapon. A number of western nations have sought to resolve the issue diplomatically. However, mechanisms pursued by both the European Union and the United Nations Security Council have failed to halt Iran's nuclear programs. The re-election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad may mean that Iran and the western world are on an unavoidable collision course.

Current Situation

Since the election of Ahmadinejad as president in 2005, Iran has adamantly maintained its nuclear program and continued with uranium enrichment. Meanwhile, the IAEA (in 2005) found Iran to be in violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Security Council, by passing a number of resolutions, has tried to halt Iran's nuclear programs. Despite the efforts, accompanied in several cases by sanctions, Iran continues to develop its nuclear program.

The security implications for Iran's nuclear program are vast and complex. Israel views a nuclear-armed Iran as an existential threat. Last year, Iran test-fired long-range missiles capable of hitting Israel. A nuclear majority-Shiite Iran can significantly alter the power dynamic throughout the Middle East. It may precipitate an arms race in the region, which can have a destabilizing effect on a region already marked by instability and violence. Many nations are particularly concerned about Iran's connections to terrorist organizations, like Hezbollah, and the possibility of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of such groups.

Both the United States and Israel have made it clear that they will not tolerate a nuclear-armed Iran. The possibility of military action against Iran remains very real.

Bloc Positions

EU- The EU has been a significant actor in trying to convince Iran to stop its nuclear programs and to peacefully resolve the dispute. Notably in June 2008, it offered Iran a package of benefits (mostly trade) to convince the regime to stop its nuclear program. The Iranian government rejected the offer.

US- The United States has been working to put a halt to Iran's nuclear program. It has imposed a number of sanctions on Iran. President Obama has offered to open unconditional talks with Iran regarding its nuclear program.

Russia, China- In 2002, despite strong objections from the United States, Russian technicians began the construction of Iran's first nuclear reactor at Bushehr. Russia has been hesitant to impose new sanctions on the Iranian government. Security Council resolutions have been watered down due to Russian objections (September 2008). China has taken similar stances.

Questions To Consider

1. Should the Security Council take tougher actions against Iran?
2. Does Iran have a right to continue its nuclear program if it proves it is for peaceful purposes? Under what additional conditions should the nuclear program be allowed?
3. What different national interests are at stake? Why has the Security Council failed to put a halt to Iran's nuclear program? What can be done to remedy this?
4. What needs to be done to stop Iran's nuclear program?
5. I find this question a bit out of place. To me, all the other questions presented the possibility of Iran continuing its nuclear program, whereas this question shoots down that likelihood.
6. Should military action take place to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon? What role can the Security Council have? What role should it have?
7. What are the geopolitical security implications of Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon?
8. What are the consequences of taking military action against Iran?

Helpful Resources

- Global Security:
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/nuke.htm>
- The Washington Times (Iran closer to nuclear weapon capacity):
<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/jun/06/specialists-warn-possible-break-out-3-6-months/>
- Wall Street Journal (What if Israel Strikes Iran?):
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124467678369503997.html>
- PBS Frontline (Iran- Going Nuclear, 2005):
<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/iran403/>
- Heritage Foundation (Iran's Nuclear Threat):
<http://www.heritage.org/Research/nationalSecurity/sr0053.cfm>

Topic 3: US Involvement in IraqBackground

The US-led coalition invaded Iraq in 2003 without authorization from the UNSC. Since then, the coalition forces engaged first in a conventional war against the Iraqi military and then in a drawn-out counterinsurgency and counterterrorism campaign. Since the invasion, the Security Council has recognized the United States and United Kingdom as occupying powers under international law with legitimate authority in Iraq. On two occasions, the Security Council voted to extend the mandate for Multinational Force Iraq (MNF-I) for a year.

Current Situation

Since the implementation of the “surge” strategy under US General David Petraeus, the MNF-I has made significant progress in combating the Iraqi insurgency terrorist elements throughout the country. Much work remains to be done and the Iraqi government is still incapable of fully functioning by itself. US President Obama announced earlier this year that most US troops would be out of Iraq by the end of 2010. He also said that up to 50,000 troops would remain into 2011 to advise Iraqi forces and protect US interests in the country.

The progress that has been made by the coalition forces remains fragile. As the coalition forces hand responsibility over to the Iraqi government, numerous problems may arise. Iran has been working to exert greater influence in its Shiite-majority neighbor. Insurgent and terrorist activities may rise as coalition forces move out of major cities. If the Iraqi government becomes a failed state, the potential exists for a spread of sectarian tensions across the region and civil conflict within Iraq. Taking advantage of anarchic conditions, terrorists may seek to establish safe haven within the country.

Bloc Positions

US, UK- These two countries have led the efforts in Iraq over the several years.

France, Russia, China- These three permanent members opposed the Iraq war from the start.

Questions To Consider

1. What role should the UN play in the future of Iraq?
2. If the security situation deteriorates, should the UNSC

act? How?

3. Should the Security Council consider sending to Iraq peacekeeping forces?
4. What action, if any, should the Security Council take against Iranian attempts to destabilize Iraq?
5. Should the Security Council assist the coalition forces combat insurgents and terrorists within Iraq?

Helpful Resources

- Center for a New American Security (After the fire: shaping the future U.S. relationship with Iraq):
<http://www.cnas.org/node/986>
- BBC (Obama outlines Iraq pullout plan):
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/7914061.stm>
- United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq:
<http://www.uniraq.org/default.asp>