General Assembly First Committee

Background and Committee Guide
Esteemed delegates,

Allow me to warmly welcome you to Baylor University’s High School Model United Nations conference. Our conference has always aspired to help equip self-motivated, talented high school students who want to use their leadership abilities to help serve their schools, states, countries, and the world. To this end, your research, analytical, speaking, and leadership abilities will be developed and tested. In the upcoming days, you will be asked to address the following topics:

1. Modern Use of Private Militaries
2. Illicit Drug Trafficking in the Americas

The importance of these issues cannot be overstated; they affect nations the world over. To succeed here, you must be well-versed in current events. Start by reading the news regularly, daily if possible. Utilize sources with good, independent journalistic credentials, but don’t be afraid to also engage with other perspectives—from Al Jazeera to the Vatican Information Service, from The New Republic to The Weekly Standard. The goal is to build a wealth of knowledge for you to draw upon at a moment’s notice.

Unfortunately, the debate at Model UN conferences is too broad and too short to truly go in-depth on most topics. There simply isn’t time to waste on every little thing you might come across. As you think about all your news and research however, you should start to develop a certain sense of judgment as to what is important and what needs to be left out. You will have to narrow all that research into concise, persuasive country positions. This is the kind of analytical thinking that position papers are designed to stimulate.

Of course, if you are to impact other people, you need to be able to express all these things in the spoken word. The most important thing here is to practice. No one is born a good speaker. Of course, the first rule of public speaking is to consider your audience. Unlike most speech events, in Model UN your fellow delegates are also your audience. The goal is not to destroy the competition, but to make friends and influence people. This political element is one of the most rewarding aspects of Model UN. Like in the real UN, no one can succeed without the help of other delegates. You might win an argument by backstabbing someone, but then lose the vote because you’re untrustworthy. This is a crucial element of leadership.

Naturally, you have to be loyal to your country’s interests. Nevertheless, catering to your own country’s position, while ignoring the perspectives of others is not a winning strategy. In the process of working with other delegates, you will be forced to confront the perspectives of other countries. Sometimes you will have to disagree. But if you can respect and appreciate their point of view, it is possible that you can compromise and find common ground. There are significant problems in the world that can only be solved by mutual understanding, negotiation, and cooperation. Still, there are significant obstacles which threaten the cooperative goals of the UN—and your goals as a delegate. Creatively overcoming these obstacles is what separates the truly great leaders from the simply good leaders.

Sincerely,

2010 Chair and Rappoteurs
History of First Committee

The General Assembly (GA) is one of the main organs of the UN system, established under Article 3 and governed by Article 4 of the UN Charter. It is the premiere forum today for issues that transcend traditional national politics. 192 states are represented in the Assembly today, and under Article 18 each state has one vote. This means that resolutions from this body represent the will of the majority of the world’s states. Therefore, although its resolutions are not binding (except those dealing with budgetary matters), its resolutions carry significant moral authority.

Under Article 22 of the UN Charter, the GA “may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.” Given the broad scope of the work of the GA, it often utilizes these various “subsidiary organs.” These organs can be compared to the various sub-committees in the U.S. Congress such as the Senate Finance Committee, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, etc. In fact, most of the actual work done in the GA is performed in the context of these bodies. Each committee then submits proposals and recommendations for final approval by the main, plenary session of the GA. Today there are 6 main committees and many other more specialized committees.

One of these main committees is the First Committee, which is concerned with matters of disarmament and international security (DISEC). This is a central tenet of the overall UN mission. Indeed, the very first GA resolution (in 1946) dealt with nuclear disarmament. The UN and the First Committee still grapple with these important, complex issues today.

It is important to realize that the First Committee is not the Security Council. They are very different in their make-up and their goals. The Security Council has only 15 members, including some of the most powerful states, and may take binding, decisive action relating to peacekeeping, international sanctions, and military action. The First Committee is much more egalitarian, with all 192 member states eligible to attend, and is concerned with broader matters of deliberation, consensus building, and policy. The Security Council is frequently the scene of national power politics, with so few states represented and especially with some states possessing veto power. Although the GA naturally has its fair share of political gamesmanship with so many diverse views represented, this diversity actually forces the body to search for areas of common ground. More than 75% of GA resolutions since 1991 have been passed by consensus, i.e. without any states voting “no”.

One would think that First Committee would have difficulty reaching consensus on such contentious and divisive topics as disarmament and international security. But it actually makes quite a bit of sense, given the nature of the First Committee. Unlike the Security Council, whose resolutions are binding and sometimes backed by military power, the General Assembly resolutions are only as strong as the international support behind them. The First Committee seeks to build peace and security not primarily through force, but by agreements among states for cooperative security, deescalating conflict through disarmament, etc. Its goals are therefore often ambitious and long-term (and easily criticized by some as “ineffective” or “wishy-washy”!). Resolutions sometimes develop or utilize new “language” which can help set international law and guide policy making in member states. It can also “shame” other states whose aggression
and lack of cooperation is more transparent in light of the “moral consensus” of the international community.

Obviously there are challenges in First Committee as well. Sometimes states simply do not actually carry out what they resolve to do. Sometimes delegates have no real freedom to negotiate, and are instructed to merely restate national policies without engaging in any substantive debate. Sometimes differences between states emerge along large “fault lines” over areas of significant disagreement, where consensus cannot be easily reached. Sometimes the body can rush to a premature “consensus” which does not adequately deal with hard facts on the ground. And sometimes the problems of disarmament and international security are just so old, entrenched, and complex that solutions are extremely difficult to implement. All of these are significant challenges which threaten the work of the First Committee to build a more peaceful world.

The First Committee meets every October and concludes its work by early November. In the 64th Session of the GA in 2009, the First Committee passed draft resolutions on topics ranging from Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, an arms trade treaty, nuclear disarmament, regional security and disarmament issues, “dual-use” technology, transparency and confidence-building measures, land mines, military spending, the role of information and telecommunications, science and technology in international security, outer space peace, cluster munitions, acquisition of WMDs by terrorists, disarmament and development, and other issues. All of the previous work of the First Committee, especially the 64th Session, will help guide the continuing work of future sessions in both the actual First Committee and Baylor University High School Model UN First Committee.

**Topic I. Modern Use of Private Militaries**

"Give a man fire, and he'll be warm for a day, light a man on fire, and he'll be warm the rest of his life"

-Staff Sgt. Timothy A. Breen

**Introduction**

Mercenaries have been around since large-scale war began. In fact, civilizations as far back as the ancient Chinese, Greeks, and Romans all utilized mercenaries as a means of insuring their victory over their enemies. The United States had to face the German mercenaries fighting for the British Empire during the American Revolution. In order to prevent the need to conscript citizens, the United Kingdom hired over 30,000 German soldiers.¹

Over the years, the use of mercenaries by civilized countries has somewhat diminished. However in recent years, there has been a sudden increase in the utilization of private military forces, mostly in Africa. This sudden rise was brought about by the continued strife in the area

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that often overwhelmed the governments to the point that they needed to supplement\textsuperscript{2} their local military to maintain control. Since there has not been a significant effort to step in and take over the operation by other members of the United Nations, the continued use of private military forces continues to concern other members of the international arena, since they are not bound by the same international codes that bound the state militaries.\textsuperscript{3}

\textit{Why the Increase?}

Studies done on the somewhat sudden increase in the utilization of private militaries have listed three main reasons for said increase. The first is most obviously the end of the Cold War and the disruption of the delicate balance of power that existed during it. This disruption caused several areas around the world to become somewhat chaotic. The second most prevalent reason for the increase in private military use is the transformation of warfare that made it difficult to perceive the difference between civilian and combatant. In order to avoid having these difficult decisions on the record of the state militaries, the government outsourced the dirty jobs to private militaries.\textsuperscript{4} The final reason for the sudden increase in private military use is the lack of support from intergovernmental organizations and the United Nations Member States. However the convenience allowed by these private militaries does not come cheap and often states incur drastic increases in spending in order to hire them.

Somehow, even with the steep cost of employment, these private militaries continue to exist as a legitimate business. There are many who would put this on the lack of support shown for weaker states by the rest of the international community. This disregard for those less powerful has forced the hand of the weaker states to utilize the private militaries as a means to control their respective countries.\textsuperscript{5} Even when states had their own military, they were not equipped well enough to endure the vacuum of aid created by the end of the Cold War.

But it goes a step further. The fact of the matter is that private militaries have the ability and the motivation to act much more swiftly than the Intergovernmental Organizations. So, even when there is the possibility of receiving aid from these organizations, governments find themselves choosing to hire a private military instead of waiting for the bureaucratic process to conclude.\textsuperscript{6} This further perpetuates the use of private militaries and causes worry among the other states in the international community.

\textit{UN Response}

In order to really take steps against the use of mercenaries, but United Nations first needed to decide what a mercenary actually was. In 1989 the United Nations in a resolution, defined a mercenary as anyone who is specially recruited (from home or abroad) to fight in an armed

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2} Singer, \textit{Corporate Warriors}, 2003, p. 37.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Singer, \textit{Outsourcing War}, 2005, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{5} Alabarda, \textit{The private Military Firms-Historical Evolution and Industry Analysis}, 2007, p. 20
\item \textsuperscript{6} Singer, \textit{Corporate Warriors}, 2003, p. 63
\end{itemize}
conflict; not a citizen of the state involved in the armed conflict, but partaking in the combat; an is motivated, in full or in part, by private gain due to the conflict. According to this definition of mercenary, private militaries seem to be included in the category of mercenary. Since private militaries fall into the category of mercenary, they are then in violation of the resolution. However, even after the ratification of the resolution in 2001, the world has continued to see a rise in the use of private militaries.

In order to initiate discussion about the continued use of mercenaries or private militaries, the Human Rights Council passed HRC resolution 7/21 in 2005. This resolution created a group to cooperate with other states and intergovernmental organizations to discuss the mercenary involvement in human rights violations. This was a key concern for the international community, because, as stated above, the same laws that bound the state governments did not bind the mercenary forces. This group continued to encourage the states that were currently using private militaries to abide by the 1989 resolution, but the mere words of a group did not go very far. The group’s investigation found that even though the United States was a large client of private militaries, they still wanted to see more regulation on private militaries and private security. This is key in describing the international perspective on the issue. While the United States saw the usefulness of the private militaries, and thus utilized them, they felt that it would be better to regulate them rather than outlaw them. However, upon further investigation, the group found that the United States was not nearly as transparent as first thought.

**Blackwater Case Study**

Blackwater USA is a private military company based in the United States and founded by Erik Prince. In 2003 Prince received a contract from the US State Department to utilize Blackwater USA’s services in Iraq, and Blackwater USA started its work in Iraq in 2004. In September of 2007, there was a shooting in Nisour Square, Baghdad. While there are some who say that the Blackwater guards were provoked, there are others who say the shooting was not justified or provoked. Regardless of the reasoning, the problem lies with the aftermath. The first problem with this situation is that under the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, the guards are immune from prosecution under Iraqi law. There is another problem in that since event took place overseas, it is very difficult to prosecute the guards under United States law as well. This is an example of why the United States wants to see more regulation on private militaries and private security.

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8 Nikitin, *Oral statement by Mr. Alexander Ivanovich Nikitin*, 2009.
**Conclusion**

As stated earlier, the use of mercenaries has predated many of today’s societies. The sudden recurrence of the private military has lead to some concern in the international community. Steps have been taken on both a state level and an international level in order to further regulate the use of private militaries.

The sudden increases are results of several different circumstances, most of which have roots in the end of the Cold War. Weaker countries found it difficult to adapt to the power vacuum left by the Soviet Union and fell into a state of chaos that could not be controlled by the states military. The turn to private militaries was out of necessity on the part of the weaker countries that were not receiving support from stronger states or intergovernmental organizations.

While there are some states and organizations that would like to see the complete outlaw of private militaries, there are other states and organizations that realize the usefulness of private militaries and would simply like to see further regulation on the use of these tools.

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**Topic II. Illicit Drug Trafficking in the Americas**

"After 40 years of war against terrorism and drug-trafficking Colombia is clearly winning."

- Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy, Karen Hughes

**Overview**

In the last half decade North, Central, and South America have played equal parts in an explosion of illicit drug trafficking. Though the illicit drug trade is certainly a global issue, the two continents and land bridge of the Americas serve as a perfect storm of drug trafficking with the largest consumers and largest producers doing business via the most convenient and thus most prolific traffickers.

The illicit drug trade consists of every facet of the industry including cultivation, production, transportation, distribution, and financial systems. Like any other black market sector, the majority of drug trade is executed through a series of organized and specialized links of the supply chain, each controlled by individual cartels or drug lords. In general, this breaking up of the supply chain results in several challenges for law enforcement. First, it increases the efficiency of production as individual cartels can specialize on one portion of the supply chain, increasing production and potency of the product. Second, it helps to contain the damages of police intervention and thus adds a significant challenge to any efforts against the drug trade. The organization and relationship between the various links of the supply chain range from dealers on street corners, to mid-level transnational transporters, to multinational drug organizations employing thousands of people and earning billions in profits annually.
Technically, the illicit drug trade includes every form of narcotics including methamphetamines, hallucinogens, steroids, and even alcohol/tobacco products. However, the overwhelming focus of the international war on drugs is on marijuana, cocaine, heroine, and opium. With the exception of opium (more concentrated in Central Asia), the top producers and consumers of these drugs are in South America and North America, respectively.

To examine the nature of the problem in an effort to entertain potential solutions, it is necessary to focus on the three links of the supply chain: production, transportation, and consumption. Although in the Americas, every nation engages in each facet of the drug trade to varying degrees, this examination of the three links can best be achieved by examining the three countries that best represent these links: the United States of America (consumer), Mexico (transporter), and Columbia (producer). In each of these countries the economic, political, and geographic circumstances initiate and reinforce their respective roles in the illicit drug trade. Any proposed solutions or efforts to combat the drug trade should take into account these factors that have made the drug traffic a systemic problem.

**Producers: Columbia**

South American countries dominate the list of world’s largest producers of coca based illicit drugs, among these include Peru (2nd largest producer), Bolivia (3rd largest producer), Venezuela, Brazil (2nd largest consumer), Ecuador, and Chile all playing major roles in the international illicit drug trade. However, each of these nations pale in comparison to the production rate of Columbia who supplies nearly all of the cocaine and heroine demands for the United States as well as being a heavy supplier to many western European nations. What is more astonishing is that Columbia maintains this large production rate despite the marginal success of law enforcement agencies which claim to have cut the production by half over the past few years. According to the 2009 United Nations World Drug Report, Columbia shipped out roughly $2 billion worth of cocaine/heroin products through Mexico to the United States.

The strength of Columbian production is systemic. The capacity for drug lords to facilitate the cultivation, production, and exportation of coca products is reinforced by cultural norms, political corruption, and geographic/infrastructural elements. Open fighting between paramilitary groups and the government has plagued Columbia for decades, reaching a highpoint of conflict in the 1990s. These conflicts have all been funded by drug trade. A weak central government unable to assert control over particular areas allows for rival bands to exert their own dominance over particular regions, providing excellent opportunities to set up drug organizations. Within these regions, drug lords use the geography of Columbia to their advantage, dense forests sprawling across mountainous regions provide perfect places to grow and process coca based products. Furthermore, within these regions, the drug cartels are able to garner some support of locals by employing them as well as providing many of the services the government fails to provide. In some instances, entire villages will be funded and governed by cartels. Transportation out of the country presumably employees governmental corruption to some extent because the drug cartels are some how able to transport thousands of metric tons of cocaine annually from the densely forested inland to the borders with relative ease. This trifecta of political corruption,
geographic orientation, and cultural acceptance has made Colombia the largest producer of coca based products in the world.

**Transporters: Mexico**

All of Central America serves as a giant shipping lane for drugs northbound from South America. But no country plays a larger role than Mexico. Sharing a nearly 2,000 mile long border with the United States, Mexico transports 90% of South American cocaine to the United States and is also the largest foreign supplier of marijuana for the US. The hotspots of transportation are the various US/Mexico twin border towns including El Paso/Juarez, Laredo/Nuevo Laredo, and Brownsville/Matamoros. These cities have experienced an explosion in unprecedented corruption, disorder, and violence in recent years and have garnered international attention as some of the most dangerous places in the world. The murder rate in Mexico is nearly triple that of the United States and these murders are highly concentrated along the border.

Like Colombia, Mexico’s role in the drug trafficking world is largely determined by its geographic orientation, governmental incapacities, economic deficiencies, political corruption, and cultural reinforcement. In regards to geography, Mexico is strategically positioned as the largest and most dominate country in Central America, allowing it to assert control over the international highway linking the world’s largest consumers and producers of illicit drugs. However, it’s not that Mexico has the only route into the United States. With effort, drug transporters could smuggle drugs through international shipping lanes or through the air. But these options pose greater challenges to smugglers as security is tighter in seaports and airports. Mexico’s advantage is that it has sole access to the most permeable and vulnerable portion of the United States’ Homeland Security system. Despite the joint effort of the governments of the US and Mexico to control their shared border, the 2000 mile line seems too much for effective regulation heretofore. Aside from merely controlling the border, the Mexican government seems unable to exert control over the border towns and surrounding regions. Crimes rates in these cities are at all time highs and have forced Mexico to deploy military units to several towns in order to regain control. Also like Colombia, various strategic regions in Mexico are heavily dominated, if not outright controlled, by drug cartels that set up corporatist systems in which the cartels provide protection and some services; while in turn the community harbors “los narcos” from authorities. Meanwhile, on local and regional levels, political corruption continues to plague Mexico as authorities are often bribed or intimidated into cooperation or feigned ignorance of the illicit activities occurring within their jurisdiction. To add to the mix of problems, many of the regions most vulnerable to cartel control are also some of the poorest and most dilapidated regions in Mexico. Therefore, in some instances, the drug trade presents itself as the only viable economic opportunity for poor communities. This conglomeration of factors continues to reinforce and expand the drug trade’s place in Mexico and pose significant challenges to law enforcement agencies in Mexico and the United States alike.

**Consumers: The United States of America**

Despite notable drops in consumption in recent years, the United States still stands as the single largest consumer of illicit narcotics (as well as prescription and over-the-counter drugs) in the
world; this enormous market of consumers is the fuel to the spreading fire of the illicit drug trade. Unlike Mexico and Colombia, the United States does not face the same geographic and economic factors that so strongly reinforce the drug trade. However, the US does face similar problems of cultural reinforcement, political corruption, and government capacity deficiencies. Millions of Americans use various narcotics addictively and recreationally, including an estimated 9.5 million cocaine users and 31 million marijuana users in 2007. The US’s demand is not the only factor at play here; with $46,000 GDP per capita US consumers can afford the drugs at an on-going and ever-increasing rate. Furthermore, some drugs are becoming increasingly socially acceptable, notably marijuana. Grassroots campaigns to decriminalize and/or legalize marijuana are steadily increasing in popularity in various states including California, Oregon, Arizona, and New Mexico. Although, the same cultural trend cannot be associated with harder narcotics such as heroine, cocaine, or methamphetamines which are all still vastly considered harmful to health and a detriment to society. In regards to political corruption, at local and regional levels the United States is at times also found to have varying degrees of ranging form simple bribery to the outright use of the drug trade to fund and support various rebel leaders in Central Asia and South America. The United States’ role as the primary consumer of illicit drugs is paramount when considering potential comprehensive solutions, especially those that would focus on decreasing the demand of the United States, thus eliminating the need for production in source regions.

--This map illustrates the supply line of the illicit drugs trade in the America: beginning in production countries such as Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia, then flowing through Central America and Mexico into the primary consumer, the United States--
Recent Successes

Demand for narcotics in the US has decreased considerably in recent years. In the past decade, the percentage of the American workforce that tested positive for marijuana use has decreased by 31% while the positive tests for cocaine use has decreased by 50%. Furthermore, international cooperation between the United States, Mexico, Colombia and other Central and South American countries to locate and eradicate coca and cannabis farms has resulted in considerable decreases in yearly yields with Colombia’s production decreasing 20% between 2007 and 2008. On the same note, international cooperation between law enforcement agencies has resulted in the doubling of narcotic seizure rates between 2000 and 2007. These trends at least imply that the $50 billion spent annually between federal and state programs for the war on drugs in the United States is working in some capacities. The problem is in identifying which efforts are effective and which are futile. Is the decrease in demand a result of the various social programs discouraging the use of drugs? Or can it be credited to an increase in drug prices coinciding with a decrease in drug purity, as a result of the increase in Homeland Security measures? It is important to understand which measures are working and which are not so governments can appropriately alter their anti-drug programs.

Conclusions

The international community has, at least publicly, maintained a rather consistent commitment to thwarting the illicit drug trade as made clear by the series of resolutions and declarations adopted by the body of nations. These agreements helped to facilitate international cooperation and implementation of a unified plan of action to address the increase in drug demands in developed nations, capacity building measures to better regulate trade and increase border control for all nations, the cooperation between law enforcement agencies domestically and internationally to seek out and eradicate drug sources, and to address the financial laundering schemes born out of the drug trade. Among these resolutions and declarations is the “Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction”, as well as resolutions 2001/16 of 24 July 2001, 2002/21 of 24 July 2002 and 2003/34 of 22 July 2003.

Despite the marginal and varying success of these efforts, the international community is still in dire need of an effective plan of action that addresses these particular points (among various others):

1. Cultural norms that reinforce the presence of drug cartels in regional hotspots
2. Political and governmental corruption at local, regional, national, and international levels
3. The ever-present and sizable demand from developed nations (The United States)
4. The porous nature of key land borders, notably the US/Mexican border
5. Cooperation domestically and internationally between law enforcement agencies
6. International money laundering schemes
7. Capacity building measures for production and transportation countries to better assert control over cartel dominated arenas
Moreover, how will the international community implement these measures while not hindering legitimate trade between these countries, as well as not infringing on the national sovereignty of participating countries? Lastly, how will participating nations gauge the success of their efforts in the future and then alter their tactics to perpetuate any successes while altering any failures?

**Bibliography**


Risen, 5 Guards Face U.S. Charges in Iraq Deaths, 2008


