Committee Overview

Regulating the Disposal of Radioactive Waste in Japan  
Stabilizing Northern Cyprus Governance and Trade  
Disinformation in Russia  
Peacekeeper Protection of Security in Kosovo

Committee Description

Special Political and Decolonization Committee covers a wide range of topics from nuclear radiation to peacekeeping. Delegates will be expected to be prepared with knowledge on the topics at the beginning of the conference. Researching specific country policy on the topics is strongly encouraged. Keep in mind that the goal of committee is to resolve the topics cooperatively.

This committee will be run Harvard style, meaning pre-written resolutions are prohibited. It is recommended that delegates write at least one position paper, a requirement to be eligible for awards. They will be collected the first day of committee. We prefer a hard copy of position papers but will accept them in email as well.

Chairs

Bella Cullotta  
bellamcullotta@gmail.com

My name is Bella Culotta, and I am a senior at Ithaca High School. I have been in Model UN for four years and am the co-president of IHS MUN. Outside of Model UN I enjoy dancing and participating in clubs and events such as the World Food Prize, Global Youth Institute, and Israeli-Palestinian Peace Project. Feel free to email Libby and me with any questions!

Libby Russell  
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Hello delegates! My name is Libby Russell, and this is my first time chairing. I am currently a junior at Penfield High School, where I play varsity basketball and varsity field hockey. I am also my class secretary and participate in various clubs. Feel free to email us with any questions or concerns!
Following the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011, the Japanese public demanded that many of the country’s nuclear power plants be shut down. The Japanese government reluctantly decommissioned many of the plants as it increased the pressure to find a sustainable disposal method for nuclear waste. Since the beginning of Japanese nuclear power plants in 1966, the island country has created 17,000 tons of radioactive waste. Currently, the waste is being stored underground in large canisters where scientists have deemed the land suitable for storage.

The biggest risk in storing the waste underground is that the water supply could become radioactive if there is any leakage. Furthermore, in the event of an earthquake or a tsunami, which are common in the country, the storage containers could break, exposing soil, water, and people nearby to hazardous radiation. The harmful waste can spill into the ocean, and be carried many miles. High levels of radioactivity can be lethal to marine life, humans, and all living things.

Also, there have been multiple reports of unregistered Japanese waste being dumped into the Pacific Ocean. This is a result of a surplus of nuclear waste from the decommissioned plants, as well as a lack of storage.

Not only is storing the waste in containers underground risky, but it also costs about 29 billion US dollars, putting a strain on the national economy. The Japanese Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NUMO) is currently searching for less expensive and safer options of radioactive waste disposal.

*How can the UN ensure the protection of nuclear waste from natural disasters? How can we regulate the safe disposal of future radioactive waste in Japan? How can the UN help Japan with long-term storage of current nuclear waste?*

Sources:

Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/13/is-it-safe-to-dump-fukushima-waste-into-the-sea
Northern Cyprus has been a disputed territory for many years. Although the Republic of Cyprus is recognized as a legitimate state, the Turkish army has declared control of the northern part, guarding their territory with an armed forces. Since the 1960s there has been legal and physical confrontation and constitutional breakdown between the countries. The UN created a 2004 referendum, including the Annan Plan, designed to unite both governments creating the United Republic of Cyprus with a bicameral parliament and a senate of equal distribution.

Yet Northern Cyprus airports and trade ports were prohibited to be used by the Republic of Cyprus people and companies as they were seen as unregulated and not part of the EU. As they continued to become economically separate, the referendum lost power and those in the north feel more deeply in poverty.

In 2014 they truly began peace talks and reunification meetings as promised since the 2008 election but there has been no progress shown towards a permanent solutions.

Some problems that may surface soon are drilling rites and waste disposal problems. Offshore gas deposits were found and Turkish officials stated that they planned to begin drilling in 2017 but The Northern Republic of Cyprus said that they may claim some of the gas. Furthermore, Turkey is one of the highest waste producers in the world and have little space to dispose of it. Northern Cyprus land is more open and Turkey may expand landfills onto it, threatening Cyprus water and food supplies.

*What can the UN do to protect the people of Cyprus? How can the UN aid in the creation of a referendum? What other steps can be taken towards a peaceful solution?*

**Sources:**
Disinformation is the spread of false information or stories with the purpose of misleading. This tactic is often used by the Russian government through the Internet and other media to create confusion and anger in other countries.

From Ukraine’s ministry of finance to Olympic athletes, Russia has continually been the prime suspect for Internet based manipulation and hacking. Although discussion of Russian disinformation in accordance to the recent United States presidential election is prominent, this topic covers many different occasions in countries all over the world. Disinformation is being used with very little detection because media is filled with a multitude of information, some of it true and some of it false.

Mass hysteria is created as a result of the fictitious tales and citizens are beginning to distrust their own government and Russia is benefitting from the political turmoil. For example, many Swedish citizens are questioning whether or not their government is lying to them about NATO’s power. Untruthful tories such as NATO having the ability to rape women without discipline are circulating around Sweden and causing distrust. Without a system of filtration for such disinformation, Russia will continue to use this tactic to achieve their political goals.

*How can the UN help discover false stories? What can be done to resolve anger and confusion as a result of disinformation? How can we prevent the spread of false information from Russia?*

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**Sources:**


In the 1990s, Albanians in Kosovo (mostly Muslim) sought independence from Serbia (predominantly Christian) after the downfall of many European communist regimes. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was formed in 1996 by nationalist Albanians to fight against Serbian forces and gain independence. The conflict escalated quickly and in 1998, over 1,500 Albanians were killed and 400,000 Albanians were forced to leave their homes.

In the early 2000s Serbian leaders were charged with multiple war crimes including: deportation, forcible transfer, murder, and persecution. Many of these leaders were also found guilty of crimes against humanity: destruction of mosques, sexual assault, and murder. Some KLA members were also arrested for crimes against humanity but most of the charges were dropped or the leaders were acquitted.

In response to the violations of human rights, the United Nations created UNMIK (United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo) in June 1999. UNMIK’s mission was to implement basic administration, facilitate a political process for the future, provide humanitarian relief, promote reconstruction, maintain order, and assure the safe return of refugees. UNMIK’s goal was significantly changed, after Kosovo declared independence in June 2008, to promote security, stability, and human rights. Despite the conflict deescalating, UNMIK has been accused of negligence by a human rights council, and deemed a “complete failure”. Complaints from the council are focused on the hundreds of Roma families that were left displaced in lead-contaminated UN camps until the camps were destroyed. Other accusations included sexual assault and failure to investigate missing persons.

The ultimate goal of UNMIK is to create a secure and stable environment in Kosovo so that there is no longer a need for peacekeepers but political divisions and unratified treaties have slowed development. UNMIK has begun to work closely with neutral KFOR (NATO’s Kosovo peace program) and the European Union (now in charge of Kosovo’s law operations as a neutral party) to achieve sustainable peace.

How can the UN revise UNMIK so that more progress towards stable peace is made? What should be done to ensure that negligence is not occurring within UNMIK? How can we create a secure environment in Kosovo so that less peacekeeping forces are needed?

Sources: