



S P E C P O L

DEENS MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2024

BACKGROUND GUIDE

SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE

AGENDA:

“ Combating the Weaponization of diplomatic and economic influence ruining global stability in current times with special emphasis on the Israel Palestine Conflict”

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Letter From the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to SPECPOL at DMUN, where economic leverage becomes geopolitical might, and diplomatic manoeuvres redefine the boundaries of international power. We stand at the epicentre of a seismic shift in global politics.

As you step into this chamber, know that you enter a battlefield where words carry the weight of warheads and economic policies can be more devastating than any bomb. The Israel-Palestine conflict is not just a regional dispute; it's a microcosm of the global power struggle, a chessboard where every move reverberates across continents. This isn't your grandfather's model UN. We're not here for platitudes and recycled resolutions. We demand innovation. Disruption. Solutions that will make the old guard uncomfortable and the status quo obsolete.

Your mission is multifaceted and challenging:

Expose the invisible strings that puppet masters pull to manipulate global events.

Dissect the anatomy of modern conflict, where currencies and clauses are the new bullets and bayonets.

Rewrite the rules of engagement for a world where economic embargoes can be as deadly as military ones.

Forge a new path through the minefield of the Israel-Palestine conflict, one that acknowledges the power dynamics at play beyond its borders.

Your background guide is not a comprehensive map, but a launch pad. Use it to propel your research into uncharted territories. Question everything. Trust nothing but verifiable facts and your own analytical skills.

As you step into this committee, we urge you to leave your preconceptions at the door. The only limits here are your imagination and your will to effect change. In SPECPOL, you're not just representing a country. You're representing the future of global diplomacy. Every word you

Speak, every alliance you forge, every resolution you draft has the potential to reshape the world order.

Remember: In this committee, the stage is set for those who dare to think differently. Show us what diplomacy looks like in the age of shadow wars and economic weaponry. The world watches with bated breath. Will you rise to the challenge? Will you unmask the puppet masters and rewrite the rules of global engagement?

The gauntlet has been thrown. The spotlight awaits.
Dare to redefine global stability,
Godspeed!

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Rules of Procedure - ROP

Rules of procedure refers to the set of rules and conduct that delegates are expected to follow and maintain during the entirety of the conference in order to ensure that decorum is maintained. This committee would follow the UNA-USA format of rules and procedure.

Flow of committee:

1. Motion to begin formal session - To put this motion in order, the delegate of (portfolio) puts forward a motion to begin formal session.
2. Motion to set agenda - To put this motion in order, the delegate of (portfolio) puts forward a motion to set the agenda of the committee.
3. Motion to begin roll call - To put this motion in order, the delegate of (portfolio) puts forward a motion to begin roll call. During roll call the delegate can either say “Present” or “Present and Voting”.

Note - If a delegate chooses to say “Present and Voting” then the delegate cannot abstain from voting for the resolution at the end of the committee. If the delegate votes “Present in voting” on the first day, their stance cannot be changed to “Present” during the rest of the conference. Meanwhile if they choose to say “Present” on the first day, a delegate can choose to change their stance to “Present in voting” during the rest of the conference.

4. Motion to open the GSL (General Speakers List) - To put this motion in order, the delegate of (portfolio) raises a motion to establish the General Speakers List.
5. Motion to move into Moderated Caucus - To put this motion in order, the delegate raises a motion to suspend formal debate/session and move into a Moderated Caucus on the topic “xyz” for a time period of “xyz” minutes allotting “xyz” minutes/seconds per speaker.
6. Motion to move into Unmoderated Caucus - To put this motion in order, the delegate of (portfolio) raises a motion to suspend formal session and move into an unmoderated caucus for a time period of “xyz” minutes.

7. Motion to adjourn committee - To put this motion in order, the delegate of (portfolio) puts forward a motion to adjourn committee session.
8. Motion to resume committee - To put this motion in order, the delegate of (portfolio) puts forward a motion to resume committee session.
9. Motion to present Draft Resolution (or any other documentation) - To put this motion in order, the delegate of (portfolio) puts forward a motion to introduce “resolution name”.
Note - In order to introduce amendments, the delegate of (portfolio) raises a motion to move into amendments for the “resolution name”.
In order to vote on the resolution the delegate of (portfolio) raises a motion to table “resolution name” for the voting procedure. Delegates can either vote “Yes” or “No”, if their voting stance is “Present in Voting”. However if their voting stance is “Present”, delegates can choose to abstain from voting in the resolution.

General MUN Terms:

1. Motions – It is a call to take a decision by a delegate that will affect the entire committee.
2. Points – Used to bring something of non-substantive importance to notice in committee and ask questions.
3. Yields – Utilising extra speech time left after a GSL speech.
4. Executive Board – They will facilitate debate within the Committee and are usually seated at the very front.
5. Blocs - Different groups that have similar ideas and opinions about the topics. In the real UN, there are regional blocs, but delegates can choose to build their own blocs in the Model UN. These blocs will typically work together to create a draft resolution.
6. Lobbying – Informal discussion with fellow delegates before and after the MUN sessions regarding the agenda, bloc positions, etc.
7. Quorum – The minimum number of delegates required to begin a committee session (1/5th of total strength).

Debate in MUN conference:

In a MUN conference, debate is of two types -

1. Formal debate - which consists of the General Speakers List (GSL)
2. Informal debate - which consists of Moderated Caucus and Unmoderated Caucus.

General Speakers List (GSL):

- The GSL is a non exhaustive list, if it is exhausted the committee concludes.
- It has a default speaker time of 90 seconds
- It is generally an introductory speech in relation to the agenda, but with the flow of the committee it is recommended to shape the speech in accordance to what is being discussed in regards to the committee.
- Points of information (POI's) can be brought up during GSL speeches. (Points explained below)
- If the delegate finishes their speech before their speaker time ends, the delegate can yield the remaining time in four ways -
 - a. Yield to the Executive Board - In this case the Executive Board may decide on how the time can be used.
 - b. Yield to Questions - In order to allow questions from the committee.
 - c. Yield to Comments - In order to allow comments from the delegates present in committee.
 - d. Yield to another delegate - In this case the delegate can yield their remaining time to another delegate, for their own benefit.

Moderated Caucus:

- In a moderated caucus a more specific line of speeches is followed in relation to a sub agenda or subtopic.
- It is time sensitive, which means that it will elapse.
- Points of information and yielding will **not** be allowed in a moderated caucus.
- Points of orders will be entertained in a moderated caucus.
- These speeches made by delegates carry a high weightage compared to all the other speeches in committee.
- The time limit cannot be more than 2 minutes individual speakers time, and 20 minutes for total, but can be extended by half the time of the previous moderated caucus.
- If the delegate is not recognized to speak, a delegate can send in their points through substantive chits.

Format of substantive chits:

Substantive Chit

To : Executive Board

From : The delegate of (portfolio)

(Include points not being brought up in committee in the chit)

Unmoderated Caucus:

- Delegates engage in more informal discussions, usually get up and talk to each other and without chairperson intervention.
- Usually used for discussion regarding the Draft Resolution, Resolution, Working Paper or to come up with a road-map for the committee.

- Time sensitive, which implies that it also lapses.
- ‘The Delegate of XYZ would like to suspend formal debate and motions to move into an Unmoderated Caucus for a total time period of _____ minutes. (not more than 20 minutes)
- Can be extended by half the time of the previous Unmoderated Caucus.

Points:

- Point of Information – Used to ask questions on the speech that just ended. Follow-ups may be granted according to the discretion of the Executive Board. The delegate must present the question to the Executive board. For example, “The delegate of xyz stated quote ‘insert what the delegate said in their speech that you have a question on’. The delegate of (your portfolio) would like to ask the delegate of xyz ‘your question’.”
- Points of Order – Used to point out a flaw in a delegate’s speech. It will either be a Factual Inaccuracy or a Logical Fallacy. A Point of Order of Factual inaccuracy would be pointing out any factual flaws in the delegate's speech. These must also be raised to the Executive board. An example would be, “The delegate of (your portfolio) would like to raise a Point of Order, Factual Inaccuracy/Logical Fallacy. ‘State the incorrect fact stated or the flaw in logic’.”
- Point of Personal Privilege – Anything regarding yourself and the environment. (Going to the bathroom, Switching off the fans, etc.) This is the only point that can trump anything else in committee, i.e. you can interrupt speeches, etc. if you are raising this point.
- Point of Parliamentary Enquiry – Questions regarding the flow of committee and rules of procedure.

Documentation:

- Working Paper (Draft Resolution but not in format)
- Draft Resolution

- Substantive chits

Resolution:

- A resolution can contain only the solutions which are being brought about during committee sessions.
- Sponsors – Usually the authors of the DR/R. Must vote in favour of the document when put up for a vote. They CANNOT become a signatory to any other resolution.
- Signatories – Neither support nor agree with the document, but would like to see it presented in committee. Have no obligation to vote for the document and one delegate can be a signatory to multiple resolutions. Every DR/R must have at least 1/3th of the total members of committee as signatories to even be presented.
- Clauses – Preambulatory and Operative
- Amendments – Non-Substantive and Substantive → Friendly and Unfriendly and additions, Modifications or Deletions
- Voting → Yes, Yes with Rights, No, No with Rights, Abstention.

Introduction to the Committee

Special Political and Decolonization Committee, otherwise known as SPECPOL, is the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations. SPECPOL is the combination of the Decolonization Committee as well as the Special Political Committee and was established in 1993. These Committees were merged in 1990 when the United Nations declared the time period between 1990-2000 as the ‘International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism’.

This was brought to importance as 750 million people lived in colonised territories at that time. Currently over 80 former colonies have declared independence since 1945. Today, due to the workings of the Fourth Committee it can be put forth that approximately 2 million people still continue to remain in colonised territory. SPECPOL has made it a priority to address this for the betterment in the long run.

Additionally, SPECPOL also covers a broad spectrum of issues including a cluster of five decolonization-related agendas:

- A. Effects of atomic radiation
- B. Questions relating to Information, peacekeeping operations as well as a review of special political missions
- C. the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
- D. Israeli Practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs in the occupied territories
- E. International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Bodies that channel through the Fourth Committee include:

Committee on Information

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)

Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34)

Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24)

Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for State of Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR)

All 193 member states of the United Nations have permission to attend the meetings of SPECPOL. Meetings take place every year between the months of September to November. The committee takes part in all decisions and related passing of resolutions of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

Introduction to the Agenda

The clash of narratives fuels the modern age, constant competition between countries to promote their own version of events, ideologies and values at the global level. The ability to influence and attract others through persuasion and appeal rather than force or coercion is referred to as soft power. This is currently being weaponized to achieve specific strategic and political goals, igniting a battle of influence with public opinion as the battleground and narratives as the arms.

Soft Power Weaponization has become a common means to resort to international distress.

- Propaganda and Information Warfare: Social media platforms are exploited to spread misinformation and propaganda, fueling regional tensions.
- Amplifying Desired Messages: Using platforms to promote specific viewpoints and suppress dissenting opinions
- Specific Target Audience: Disinformation campaigns are tailored to influence specific demographics
- Exploitation of Cultural symbols: Use of cultural elements to promote a distorted image of a nation
- Suppression of cultural expression: Restriction of cultural freedom to establish control and prevent nation-wide dissent.
- Utilising Economic Influence: Withholding economic benefits and imposing sanctions to pressure other countries to comply with demands.
- Pressurising dependencies: Making other countries reliant on economic aid or trade to gain leverage.
- Data Theft: Stealing sensitive information to gain a strategic advantage or to discredit opponents.
- Cyber espionage: Using cyberattacks to gather intelligence and disrupt critical infrastructure.
- Hollow Pretences: Making empty promises to gain acknowledgment or to deceive the international community.
- Public shaming: Using public diplomacy to embarrass or isolate other countries.

With the decline of massive superpowers, emergence of a networked regional order and the Weaponization of nuances comes forward the israel-palestine conflict.

A. Origins

Israel: The Holocaust as a catalyst for Jewish statehood, historical Jewish importance to the land and the creation of the land of Israel as a legitimate responsibility to Arab rejectionism and attacks

- a. Palestine: Displacement and dispossession of Palestinians during the creation of Israel, and occupation and denial of Palestinian human rights

B. Nature

- a. Israel: Characterization of the conflict as a struggle against existential terrorism against the Jewish land and the security challenges Israel faces
- b. Palestine: Deems the struggle as a national liberation movement against colonialism with emphasis on Israeli policies and their impact of human cost

C. Religion

- a. Israel: Cite biblical narratives to justify territorial claims as Jews have a deep historical and religious tie to the land of Israel
- b. Palestine: Highlight the importance of Jerusalem and other holy locations for Arabs as well as Palenstinians due to the presence of both Islamic and Christian heritage

D. Peace-making

- a. Israel: Wish to recognise Israel as a Jewish state and require security guarantees
- b. Palestine: Wish to establish an independent Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem, an end to occupation and the right of return to other refugees affected by the conflict

Historical Analysis of the Agenda

I. Ancient Civilisations

- A. The spread of Hellenistic culture was a means by which Greek influence was established. Romans employed the dissemination of Latin and imposed the Roman Laws to project an image of superiority and assert dominance
- B. Achaemenid Empire expanded its influence using cultural exchange, diplomacy and infrastructural development namely the construction of the Royal Road

II. Middle Ages and the Age of Empires

- A. The Catholic Church shaped societal norms, political allegiance and education systems. These efforts were used for the gain of the “church” while using missions to suppress locals, establish colonialism and eventually fight a war without taking a part in it
- B. The House of Wisdom in Baghdad was established under the Abbasid Caliphate and was a paramount for all scholarly learnings and teachings throughout the world

III. The Modern Era

- A. The British Empire laid down the groundwork for post-colonial influence by the spread of the English language, Legal systems and education, in turn amounting to the strengthening of the British Imperial control
- B. The US with English, Hollywood, and Pop culture has shaped the global outlook of the United States. However, employed the same means to promote propaganda in the Cold War and World War II.
- C. The Soviet Union launched its own propaganda to counter US soft power with the sole purpose of undermining Western ideology through communist ideologies.
- D. Nazi Germany perfected the art of propaganda using mass media to demonize enemies and re-educate a population to justify aggression

IV. The Modern Age and Information Age

- A. China has asserted dominance throughout the expanse through the Confucius Institutes and rose as a global power.
- B. Russia has employed disinformation to undermine the West and influence Elections (2016 US Presidential Elections)
- C. Israel and Palestine rely on soft power to garner international support respectively. Palestine has adapted to the narratives of oppression to gain sympathy while Israel has used their image as a progressive nation as a barter.

D. K-pop has significantly brought South Korea to a higher position however the government has used this as a leverage to distract the global community from domestic turbulence.

Historical Analysis of the Israel-Palestine Conflict

Balfour Declaration

Balfour Declaration, (November 2, 1917), statement of British support for “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” It was made in a letter from Arthur James Balfour, the British foreign secretary, to Lionel Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild (of Tring), a leader of the Anglo-Jewish community. Though the precise meaning of the correspondence has been disputed, its statements were generally contradictory to both the Sykes-Picot Agreement (a secret convention between Britain and France) and the Husayn-McMahon correspondence, which in turn contradict one another.

The Balfour Declaration, issued through the continued efforts of Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Sokolow, Zionist leaders in London, fell short of the expectations of the Zionists, who had asked for the reconstitution of Palestine as “the” Jewish national home. The declaration specifically stipulated that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.” The document, however, said nothing of the political or national rights of these communities and did not refer to them by name. Nevertheless, the declaration aroused enthusiastic hopes among Zionists and seemed the fulfilment of the aims of the World Zionist Organization.

The British government hoped that the declaration would rally Jewish opinion, especially in the United States, to the side of the Allied powers against the Central Powers during World War I (1914–18). They hoped also that the settlement in Palestine of a pro-British Jewish population might help to protect the approaches to the Suez Canal in neighbouring Egypt and thus ensure a vital communication route to British colonial possessions in India.

The Balfour Declaration was endorsed by the principal Allied powers and was included in the British mandate over Palestine, formally approved by the newly created League of Nations on July 24, 1922. In May 1939 the British government altered its policy in a White Paper recommending a limit of 75,000 further immigrants and an end to immigration by 1944, unless the resident Palestinian Arabs of the region consented to further immigration. Zionists condemned the new policy, accusing Britain of favouring the Arabs. This point was made moot by the outbreak of World War II (1939–45) and the founding of the State of Israel in 1948.

Economic Impacts In Wars

Wars often cause immense economic damage. In war sites, the capital stock, which comprises economic assets such as machinery and buildings, is destroyed. At the same time, economic output, on average, falls by 30 percent and inflation rises by about 15 percentage points over five years. Yet, non-belligerent third countries also bear high costs, especially the neighbouring countries of war sites: here, output falls by, on average, 10 percent after five years while inflation rises by 5 percentage points over the same period. Wars have significant negative external effects on neighbouring countries. For countries further away, however, the effects can be positive: wars also create winners and losers in the global economy.

These findings are based on a new study by researchers at the Kiel Institute and the University of Tübingen, which is summarised in the Kiel Policy Brief “The Price of War” and methodologically substantiated in the corresponding Kiel Working Paper (Federle et al., 2024). The publications are accompanied by a new online tool that can be used to calculate the economic costs of hypothetical wars (Price of War Calculator, PCALC, see below).

Ukraine—what the war could cost by 2026

Based on the experience from past wars, the authors estimate that the Russian invasion will lead to an output loss in Ukraine of about USD 120 billion by 2026 and a concurrent reduction in Ukraine's capital stock of more than USD 950 billion. At the same time, the economic costs on non-belligerent third countries are also substantial with a GDP loss of about USD 250 billion, USD 70 billion of which are borne by countries of the European Union and about USD 15–20 billion by Germany alone. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an unmitigated catastrophe for global peace and particularly for peace in Europe. But the war also greatly compounds a number of preexisting adverse global economic trends, including rising inflation, extreme poverty, increasing food insecurity, deglobalization, and worsening environmental degradation. In addition, with an apparent end to the peace dividend that has long helped finance higher social expenditures, rebalancing fiscal priorities could prove quite challenging even in advanced economies.

To begin by stating the obvious, war-torn Ukraine is in a state of severe economic distress. In addition to the destruction of physical capital, millions have fled the country, and countless thousands have been killed or maimed. This comes on top of a generalised rise in economic distress around the world as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the World Bank, the number of people living in extreme poverty rose by roughly 100 million to nearly 700 million; a significant share live in conflict regions.

For the global economy, fuel and food shortages caused by the war are exacerbating post-pandemic inflation that had already reached multi-decade highs in most of the world. To say that the causes are well known would be an exaggeration given that the ultralow inflation of the 2010s still puzzles academic macroeconomists. But the main drivers are apparent. First, governments and central banks were slow to unwind unprecedented peacetime macroeconomic stimulus. Certainly, record early stimulus greatly helped cushion the first stage of the pandemic, but in some cases, it persisted too long and proved excessive after the unexpectedly sharp rebound in advanced economies and some emerging markets. In the United States, in particular, the combination of a \$900 billion fiscal stimulus at the end of 2020 followed by a \$1.7 trillion package in March 2021 proved too much, too late.

Supply chain disruptions have also been a major contributing factor to inflation, although some of the strain on supply should really be traced to the sudden surge in demand. Across advanced economies, more than half (including the United States and the euro area) had inflation rates of over 5 percent even before hostilities, so that the war made an already difficult situation worse. Prior to the conflict, Russia and Ukraine combined accounted for a quarter of global wheat exports, and Russia is a major supplier of fossil fuels, especially to Europe. Disruptions to supplies of these commodities are driving up prices.

Deglobalization Risk:

Risks of deglobalization have also risen markedly since the invasion of Ukraine. Already after the start of the pandemic, there was much discussion of making supply chains more resilient and trying to rely less on imports for public health necessities such as vaccine and antibiotic production, not to mention the semiconductors that are the foundation of the digital economy. The exit from Asia's zero-COVID policies is still increasing supply disruptions, providing a glimpse of what temporary deglobalization could look like.

Russia, of course, looks set to be isolated for an extended period, but the real hit to globalisation will happen if trade between advanced economies and China also drops, which is unfortunately possible in some scenarios. A major realignment of the global economy can hardly be good for geopolitical stability. Since Montesquieu, political economists have argued that countries that trade with each other are less likely to go to war, with the main modern nuance being that indirect trade through common partners and networks also helps.

In the near term, deglobalization would surely be a huge negative shock for the world economy. Whether long-term effects could be as severe is less well understood. The substantial trade literature on this topic yields surprisingly (to me) small estimates. Canonical quantitative trade models yield an estimate of about 2–3 percent lower GDP for the United States and perhaps 3–4 percent for China. The baseline numbers are similarly modest for financial globalisation.

Importantly, these rough guesses depend on myriad assumptions, including how easily countries can substitute domestic for imported goods or trade with other partners. Moreover, to the extent that trade deglobalization leads to higher markups by local monopoly suppliers, and less “creative destruction” in the economy, the costs can be significantly higher. Globalisation may have dynamic effects that existing models do not take into account, not to mention positive effects on a country’s institutional development. Also, just as there can be big losers from globalisation even if the winners gain much more, the effects of deglobalization are likely to hit some sectors much harder than others, which can in turn amplify the aggregate effects.

Returning to inflation, there is a strong case to be made that globalisation is the secret sauce that made the job of bringing down inflation immensely easier in the 1990s and 2000s, so that deglobalization could easily exacerbate upward inflation pressures for an extended period.

Recently, Charles Goodhart and Manoj Pradhan forcefully argued that adverse demographics in east Asia and eastern Europe will persistently increase global price pressures, just as the rise of China has been a disinflationary force. I made a similar argument in my 2003 Jackson Hole conference paper, “Globalization and Global Disinflation,” saying that while the advent of central bank independence helped, it cannot be given all the credit for the decline in inflation in the 1980s and 1990s.

International Humanitarian Law in the world

International humanitarian law – known as the laws of war – establishes what can and cannot be done by parties to an armed conflict. These laws seek to minimise human suffering and protect civilians as well as combatants who are no longer taking part in hostilities, such as prisoners of war. The main treaties of international humanitarian law are the 1949 Geneva Conventions, adopted after the horrors of World War Two, and their additional Protocols.

Even so, many of the gravest human rights violations are committed in war. These include using rape as a weapon of war, recruiting children to serve on the frontlines, launching direct attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks. Warring parties may also try to weaken communities as retaliation by obstructing humanitarian aid, such as food and medicine, even using starvation as a weapon of war.

Under the laws of war, civilians may not be deliberately targeted, although they may still be killed or injured if this happens as part of a proportionate attack on a military target. All parties to the conflict must take measures to minimise harm to civilians and “civilian objects” (such as residential buildings, schools and hospitals), and must not carry out attacks that fail to distinguish between civilians and combatants, or which cause disproportionate harm to civilians.

Some of the most serious crimes under international law are committed during armed conflicts. These include:

War crimes – serious violations of international humanitarian law that include wilful killings, direct attacks on civilians, torture, use of prohibited weapons, the murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war or others who have been captured, surrendered or injured and crimes of sexual violence.

Crimes against humanity – crimes committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack by or on behalf of a state or an organisation against a civilian population during peace or wartime. There are 11 crimes against humanity including murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation or forcible transfer of a population, torture, rape and other serious forms of sexual violence, enforced disappearance and apartheid. Crimes against humanity may be committed in armed conflict or in peacetime.

Genocide – certain acts committed with the intent to destroy, completely or partially, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Genocide may be committed in armed conflict or in peacetime. Over time, the international community has established specialised courts to hold perpetrators of crimes under international law to account, such as the ad hoc tribunals for the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. International justice is also served by the International Criminal Court (ICC), which recorded its first conviction in March 2012 against Thomas Lubanga, the leader of an armed group in Democratic Republic of Congo.

Jus Ad Bellum

Jus ad bellum refers to the conditions under which States may resort to war or to the use of armed force in general. The prohibition against the use of force amongst States and the exceptions to it (self-defence and UN authorization for the use of force), set out in the United Nations Charter of 1945, are the core ingredients of jus ad bellum (see the box titled "On the Prohibition against War"). Jus in bello regulates the conduct of parties engaged in an armed conflict. IHL is synonymous with jus in bello; it seeks to minimise suffering in armed conflicts, notably by protecting and assisting all victims of armed conflict to the greatest extent possible.

IHL applies to the belligerent parties irrespective of the reasons for the conflict or the justness of the causes for which they are fighting. If it were otherwise, implementing the law would be impossible, since every party would claim to be a victim of aggression. Moreover, IHL is intended to protect victims of armed conflicts regardless of party affiliation. That is why jus in bello must remain independent of jus ad bellum.

Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem: 1917-1947 (Part I)

Introduction

The question of Palestine was brought before the United Nations shortly after the end of the Second World War.

The origins of the Palestine problem as an international issue, however, lie in events occurring towards the end of the First World War. These events led to a League of Nations decision to place Palestine under the administration of Great Britain as the Mandatory Power under the Mandates System adopted by the League. In principle, the Mandate was meant to be in the nature of a transitory phase until Palestine attained the status of a fully independent nation, a status provisionally recognized in the League's Covenant, but in fact the Mandate's historical evolution did not result in the emergence of Palestine as an independent nation.

The decision on the Mandate did not take into account the wishes of the people of Palestine, despite the Covenant's requirements that "the wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory". This assumed special significance because, almost five years before receiving the mandate from the League of Nations, the British Government had given commitments to the Zionist Organization regarding the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, for which Zionist leaders had pressed a claim of "historical connection" since their ancestors had lived in Palestine two thousand years earlier before dispersing in the "Diaspora".

During the period of the Mandate, the Zionist Organization worked to secure the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The indigenous people of Palestine, whose forefathers had inhabited the land for virtually the two preceding millennia felt this design to be a violation of their natural and inalienable rights. They also viewed it as an infringement of assurances of independence given by the Allied Powers to Arab leaders in return for their support during the war. The result was mounting resistance to the Mandate by Palestinian Arabs, followed by resort to violence by the Jewish community as the Second World War drew to a close.

After a quarter of a century of the Mandate, Great Britain submitted what had become "the Palestine problem" to the United Nations on the ground that the Mandatory Power was faced with conflicting obligations that had proved irreconcilable. At this point, when the United Nations itself was hardly two years old, violence ravaged Palestine. After investigating various

alternatives the United Nations proposed the partitioning of Palestine into two independent States, one Palestinian Arab and the other Jewish, with Jerusalem internationalised. The partition plan did not bring peace to Palestine, and the prevailing violence spread into a Middle East war halted only by United Nations action. One of the two States envisaged in the partition plan proclaimed its independence as Israel and, in a series of successive wars, its territorial control expanded to occupy all of Palestine. The Palestinian Arab State envisaged in the partition plan never appeared on the world's map and, over the following 30 years, the Palestinian people have struggled for their lost rights.

Case studies

1. Information Warfare and Disinformation Campaigns:

Russia's Interference in Western Democracies: Russia has been accused of using social media platforms and state-sponsored media to spread disinformation and sow discord in Western countries. This undermines trust in democratic institutions and creates divisions within societies.

China's "Wolf Warrior Diplomacy": This aggressive diplomatic style, characterised by assertive rhetoric and online trolling, aims to shape global narratives and deter criticism. It leverages social media to amplify Chinese perspectives and discredit opponents.

2. Cultural Appropriation and Soft Power Projection:

Confucius Institutes: While ostensibly promoting Chinese language and culture, these institutes have been criticised for serving as propaganda tools and influencing academic freedom in host countries.

Bollywood's Global Reach: India has used Bollywood to enhance its soft power, but critics argue that it often reinforces stereotypes and overlooks social issues.

3. Economic Coercion and Leverage:

Debt-Trap Diplomacy: Some countries, notably China, have been accused of using debt to gain influence over smaller nations, forcing them to comply with political demands.

Boycotts and Sanctions: Economic pressure can be used as a tool to punish countries for their actions, but it can also be weaponized to influence public opinion and isolate target nations.

4. Cyber Espionage and Influence Operations:

- 1) **Hacking and Data Theft:** Cyberattacks can be used to steal intellectual property, disrupt critical infrastructure, and undermine trust in digital systems.
- 2) **Social Media Manipulation:** Foreign actors can use social media to influence elections, spread misinformation, and manipulate public sentiment.

5. Implications and Countermeasures:

- 1) **Critical Media Literacy:** Developing critical thinking skills to discern fact from fiction is essential in countering disinformation.
- 2) **Strengthening Democratic Institutions:** Robust democratic institutions can better resist foreign interference.
- 3) **International Cooperation:** Collaborative efforts to address disinformation, cyber threats, and economic coercion are crucial.
- 4) **Promoting Cultural Exchange:** Genuine cultural exchange can foster mutual understanding and reduce the risks of cultural appropriation.

It's important to note that soft power is a complex tool with both positive and negative applications. While it can be used to build bridges and cooperation, it can also be weaponized to achieve harmful ends. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for navigating the challenges of the 21st century.

5. Italy:

- 1) **Economic Leverage:** Italy's influence within the European Union can be seen as a form of soft power. Economic incentives or disincentives can be employed to sway the opinions of other member states.
- 2) **Cultural Diplomacy:** While primarily used positively, there have been instances where Italian culture has been strategically employed to build alliances or influence public opinion in specific countries.
- 3) **Migration Crisis:** Italy's handling of the migration crisis has been a complex issue. While there have been efforts to present the country as a compassionate and welcoming nation, there have also been instances where the crisis has been used to garner political support or influence European policies.

6. North Korea: Soft Power as a Propaganda Weapon

North Korea is a master of weaponizing soft power to maintain its regime and project a distorted image to the world.

- 1) **State-Controlled Media:** The North Korean government meticulously controls all media, crafting a narrative that glorifies the regime and demonises its enemies.
- 2) **Cultural Control:** Traditional North Korean culture is carefully curated and exploited to reinforce the regime's ideology.
- 3) **Hostage Diplomacy:** The abduction of foreign citizens is often used as a bargaining chip to gain international recognition or concessions.
- 4) **Cyber Warfare:** North Korea has been accused of using cyberattacks to steal information, disrupt critical infrastructure, and influence public opinion.

In essence, while Italy's weaponization of soft power is often subtle and indirect, North Korea's is overt and aggressive, serving primarily as a tool for control and coercion.

7. China:

Confucius Institutes are non-profit public institutions funded by the Chinese government with the stated aim of promoting Chinese language and culture worldwide. They are often established in partnership with foreign universities and cultural institutions.

Key Features and Objectives:

- 1) **Language Teaching:** Primarily focused on teaching the Chinese language at various levels.
- 2) **Cultural Exchange:** Organise cultural events, exhibitions, and workshops to promote Chinese culture.
- 3) **Academic Collaboration:** Facilitate research and academic exchange between China and host countries.
- 4) **Soft Power:** Often seen as a tool for enhancing China's global standing

5) **Controversies and Criticisms:**

While Confucius Institutes have been successful in promoting Chinese language and culture, they have also faced criticism and controversy:

- Lack of Academic Freedom: Concerns about censorship and restrictions on topics related to Chinese politics or human rights.
- Government Influence: Allegations that the institutes are influenced by the Chinese government and do not represent a neutral perspective.
- Propaganda Tool: Some argue that Confucius Institutes are used as propaganda tools to shape foreign perceptions of China.

Due to these concerns, several countries have closed or restricted Confucius Institutes on their territories.

8. Russia

Russia's deployment of soft power has evolved from cultural diplomacy to a strategic tool for advancing geopolitical interests. Rather than fostering mutual understanding, Moscow has increasingly weaponized its soft power to undermine Western democracies, sow discord, and project its preferred narrative globally. The Kremlin's strategy involves a calculated blend of disinformation, propaganda, and cyber operations, often targeting vulnerable populations and exploiting existing social divisions.

A prime example of this is Russia's interference in the 2016 US presidential election. Through a combination of social media manipulation, fake news, and hacking, Moscow sought to influence public opinion, undermine confidence in democratic institutions, and exacerbate political polarisation. This case highlighted the Kremlin's ability to exploit the digital landscape to achieve its objectives. Beyond electoral interference, Russia has also employed soft power to bolster its image as a defender of traditional values against Western decadence. State-funded media outlets like RT and Sputnik have been instrumental in disseminating anti-Western propaganda, often focusing on issues such as LGBTQ+ rights, immigration, and alleged Western hypocrisy. By portraying Russia as a bastion of conservative values, Moscow aims to resonate with like-minded audiences in Europe and the United States, while simultaneously undermining Western unity.

Moreover, Russia has leveraged its cultural influence to advance its geopolitical agenda. For instance, the country has hosted high-profile events such as the Sochi Olympics and the FIFA World Cup, using these platforms to showcase a modernised and assertive Russia. However, underlying this image of a resurgent power is a concerted effort to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty. Through propaganda, disinformation, and covert operations, Russia has sought to destabilise Ukraine, erode its Western aspirations, and ultimately bring it within Moscow's sphere of influence. This case underscores how Russia's weaponized soft power is inextricably linked to its hard power ambitions.

9. France

France, a global cultural and diplomatic powerhouse, has often been lauded for its soft power capabilities. However, beneath the veneer of cultural diplomacy and '*laissez-faire*' charm, France has also strategically deployed its soft power to advance national interests.

A prime example is France's role in shaping the global Francophonie. While ostensibly a cultural and linguistic alliance, the Francophonie has served as a platform for France to maintain influence over former colonies in Africa and other regions. Through initiatives such as cultural exchange programs and development aid, France has cultivated a sense of shared identity and dependence on the French language, thereby strengthening its political and economic ties.

Moreover, France has leveraged its position as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council to project its values and norms globally. By championing human rights and democratic governance, France has positioned itself as a moral authority, influencing international opinion and policy. However, this moral leadership has often been coupled with strategic interests, such as promoting French economic and political influence in target regions.

The French fashion industry is another area where soft power is weaponized. By setting global trends and cultivating a luxurious image, France has enhanced its national prestige and attracted tourists and investors. However, this industry has also been criticised for perpetuating stereotypes and promoting consumerism, raising questions about the ethical implications of such soft power projection.

In conclusion, while France's soft power is undeniably influential, it is essential to scrutinise its underlying motivations.

Key Areas of Concern:

Confucius Institutes: Often criticised for promoting a specific narrative of China and exerting undue influence on academic freedom. They have been accused of serving as propaganda tools rather than purely cultural centres.

Media Influence: State-owned media outlets like CCTV and Xinhua have expanded their global reach, often disseminating information that aligns with the Chinese government's agenda. They have been accused of disinformation campaigns and influencing public opinion in favour of China.

Economic Coercion: China's economic might has been used as a tool to pressure other countries to comply with its demands. This is often termed "economic coercion" and is seen as a form of soft power weaponization.

Debt-Trap Diplomacy: By providing loans to developing countries, China has increased its influence. In some cases, these loans have been termed "debt traps," suggesting that the countries become reliant on China and are compelled to comply with its political demands.

Cyber Warfare and Espionage: While not strictly soft power, these activities are often linked to broader influence operations and can be seen as an extension of China's efforts to shape the global narratives

Questions A Resolution Must Answer

(QARMA)

- 1) What comprehensive and enforceable international legal structures can be instituted to decisively prevent the manipulation of diplomatic and economic influence, ensuring these instruments are harnessed for the preservation of global peace rather than the perpetuation of conflict?
- 2) How can the global community swiftly detect, expose, and dismantle attempts to wield economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure as tools of coercion and control, particularly in the context of the volatile Israel-Palestine conflict?
- 3) What multifaceted strategies can be implemented to shield vulnerable civilian populations from the devastating impacts of economic and diplomatic manoeuvres, without compromising the global community's ability to hold aggressors accountable?
- 4) In what ways can international diplomatic frameworks be reengineered to eliminate the strategic exploitation of economic and diplomatic tools, and how can the authority of neutral mediators be fortified to enforce equitable and lasting resolutions?
- 5) What pivotal roles must international organisations, including the United Nations, assume to proactively identify and counteract the misuse of diplomatic and economic power, ensuring that these tools are wielded in the service of global stability and justice?
- 6) How can a united global front be mobilised to deliver a cohesive and robust response against the manipulation of diplomatic and economic influence, particularly in regions where such tactics threaten to ignite or exacerbate conflict?
- 7) What concrete measures can be enforced to ensure transparency, accountability, and ethical standards in the deployment of economic sanctions and diplomatic actions, safeguarding these tools from being hijacked for destructive purposes?
- 8) How can the critical lessons drawn from the Israel-Palestine conflict be institutionalised as global best practices, to prevent the recurrence of similar abuses of power in other international crises?

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