

OMUN V



**The Special Political and
Decolonization Committee
(SPECPOL)**



Letter from Chair

On behalf of the Dais, I would like to welcome you to both the 5th Annual Ontario Model United Nations and SPECPOLI. For those new to Model UN as a whole, I assure you that these conferences can be life-changing and help you uncover a passion you never knew you had—I hope your experience at OMUN achieves this. I welcome you all and I hope you have a wonderful experience.

Let me first begin by introducing myself, my name is Sameer Jessa, and I look forward to serving as your committee chair. I am in Grade 12 at UCC and enjoy watching Peaky Blinders, playing rugby and watching the Maple Leafs.

My co-chair, Adrian Hui, is in Grade 11 at UCC. He is on our Model UN team, traveling to universities such as McGill and Harvard to compete in their prestigious conferences. Outside of Model UN he plays football, basketball and rugby and enjoys filmmaking.

This year, you will have the opportunity to discuss two topics that span the wide range of subjects under the purview of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee: the outer space exploration, and the ongoing issue of Venezuela. Both topics will require you to think creatively and develop collaborative solutions to problems without clear answers. As you reflect upon the priorities of the nations you represent while keeping in mind the particular decolonial lens of this committee, I hope you will all have the opportunity to learn from one another and engage meaningfully with these global problems.

As you prepare for the conference, I suggest you use this background guide as an introductory step into your own research on the topics of this committee. Although the background guide will be an invaluable starting point, you will have the best experience at a conference if you have a strong understanding of your nation's position on both topics. Thorough preparation will empower you to participate fully in the work of this committee. Whether this is your first experience with Model UN or you are veteran delegate, I encourage you to be thoughtful, detailed, and open-minded to your peers in both discussion and debate.

Sameer Jessa
Head Chair



TOPIC A: Demilitarization of Space

Background Information

With the conclusion of the second World War, there were only two superpowers left standing: the United States and the Soviet Union. In an attempt to deter each other from advancing militaristically, as well as for propaganda reasons, each country began extensive development of military hardware, including that of weapons of mass destruction, including atom and hydrogen bombs. On August 29th, 1949, the Soviet Union successfully tested their first atomic bomb, and the arms race shifted focus, instead becoming the Space Race. Whereas previously the main goal was to develop military arms as a show of brute strength, here, in the Space Race, the goal was to showcase the intellectual capabilities of your country.

The Space Race is said to have officially begun with the launching of the first Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) by the Soviet Union on August 21, 1957. Capable of travelling incredibly long distances and maintaining accuracy, the R-7 Semyorka was a message to the U.S.: space belongs to the Soviets. In the following months, the Soviet Union would make several more advances in the Space Race, being the first country to launch an artificial satellite into space with the launch of Sputnik 1 on October 4, 1957. The Soviet Union then immediately followed it up with the launch of Sputnik 2, sending the dog Laika into space, being the first country to place a living organism in space. The consecutive launch of Sputnik 1 and Sputnik 2 sent the United States into a frenzy, as the country collectively came to the consensus that they were far behind the Soviet Union in terms of both missile development and space infrastructure. The U.S. attempted to launch their own satellite, but it was a pathetic failure, exploding shortly after takeoff. To ease public perception and to consolidate their efforts, the United States Congress passed legislation establishing the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). NASA was created with the intent of showcasing the United States' commitment to the Space Race, and fostering a sense of intellectual growth. In the months following the establishment of NASA in 1958, the Soviet Union went on to take the first photo of the far side of the Moon, as well as to make the first impact on the Moon with Luna 3 and Luna 2 respectively. On April 12, 1961, the Soviet Union launched the first human in space, and the following month, President of the U.S. John F. Kennedy made it a goal for the U.S. to put a man on the Moon by the end of the decade. On July 20th, 1969, this became a reality, as NASA placed the first humans on the moon - Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, effectively ending the Space Race for good, with the United States as the winner.

Amidst the fervor of the Space Race, the powerful countries of the world came together to sign the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, otherwise known as the Outer Space Treaty, a U.N. Treaty. Signed by over 120 countries on October 10, 1967, the Outer Space Treaty does not prohibit the militarization of space. Rather, it placed safeguards around the hot



topic at the time: nuclear weapons. The Outer Space Treaty expressly prohibited placing any sort of nuclear weapons in outer space, including launching them from outer space. The Outer Space Treaty also prevents utilizing outer space to test any sort of advanced military hardware as well.

However, there is a key exception made in the Outer Space Treaty - there are absolutely no safeguards against the usage of typical military weapons in space. Whereas nuclear weapons were banned, conventional military weapons were not. This allows for missile bombardment and kinetic bombardment to still be feasible from outer space. The Outer Space Treaty also places safeguards against nations claiming sovereignty over any celestial resources, such as the moon or planets such as Jupiter, Mars, or Venus. While the OS Treaty provided no definitive rules against space mining, the United States passed legislation in 2015 making space mining for commercial profits legal, and several other countries, all members of the U.N, such as Luxembourg, Japan, China, India and Russia followed suit. Several other conventions and laws have been passed following the passage of the Outer Space Treaty, including the Rescue Agreement of 1968 and the Space Liability Convention of 1972. Running concurrently with the Space Race was the establishment of United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, an ad hoc committee sanctioned by U.N. Resolution 1472 and is responsible for all the treaties that have been passed regarding space, including the aforementioned Outer Space Treaty. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space still exists, acting as a body for both space militarization and protection against asteroids and whatnot.

Current Situation

On December 20th, 2019, the United States, a country with a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council, passed legislation creating an independent branch of the U.S. armed forces, the U.S. Space Force. Created with the intent of protecting the U.S. from potential space aggressors and protecting U.S. interests in space, the U.S. Space Force has plunged the diplomatic world into disarray, leading to doubts on whether there can be a peaceful Outer Space. Already, major countries have responded to the creation of the Space Force, considering it to be a sign of aggression, with Russia stating that there will be a “tough response” to the creation of the Space Force. Russia also threatened to withdraw from the Outer Space Treaty, and assured that several other nations will follow suit. With the creation of the U.S. Space Force, the second Space Race has begun, with each country moving toward the militarization of space. The question remains -how can it be prevented?

Possible Solutions

Both the United States and Russia have made it clear that moving forward, they are not willing to step down unless the other backs down first. The situation of the world has now come to mirror that of the Space Race decades ago.

Of course, the existing U.N. Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Space has the authority to pass legislation regarding militaristic uses of space, but their scope and authority can prove to be limited in the eyes of the big 5 on the Security Council. The potential of mining trillions of dollars worth of resources from asteroids will also prove to be alluring, and must be addressed if



there is to be a resolution on this topic. Many of these countries run on a capitalistic economic system, and the trillions of dollars laying there will be adequate incentive for war in space. Finally, the rapid advancement in technology will occur as well, in order to make sure that space can properly be militarized. War has always caused the rapid advancement of technology, and proper safeguards will have to be made against such advancements in order to protect the world, and subsequently, the universe.

Questions to Consider

- How can the resources on asteroids be utilized to promote peace in space?
- What safeguards can be made to fortify the Outer Space Treaty, to ensure that it can be long lasting and future proof?
- How can the United States and Russia be appeased in their quest for space domination?
- Should there be limits placed on the rapid advancement of technology when it comes to space militarization?

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TOPIC B: Venezuela in Crisis

Background information:

Nicolás Maduro rules a Venezuela in crisis. With hyperinflation reaching almost 1,000,00% and a refugee crisis emanating from the economic disaster within Venezuela, the nations of the world look with concern about how to best mitigate and contain the collapse of a formerly wealthy power in South America. An ever expanding refugee crisis where millions of Venezuelans have fled to Brazil and Colombia for economic opportunity is putting severe pressure on neighboring nations, and the need for a solution is ever more important. The situation is untenable and demands a solution. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee must find a way to mitigate the crisis for the benefit of the continent without pushing Venezuela over the edge of economic and political collapse. Such a solution should be peaceful and non-violent, however dangerous situations may call for dangerous solutions...

History of the Problem:

The economic crisis in Venezuela arose between 2012 and 2013, and across the years it has shown that it is not only an economic but also an institutional, political and social crisis. The road to the crisis started during the presidency of Hugo Chavez, and continued with the now President Nicolas Maduro, who maintains the same policies of his predecessor. The crisis unfolded with the rising of different problems in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, such as the increase of unemployment, the financial crisis and the lack of essential food, hygiene and health products. Shortages in Venezuela resulted from the economic mismanagement of the economy by the government. The UN and several other organizations have offered food aid to the country, but Venezuela refused, which exacerbated the migration crisis while murder rates in the country rose substantially. The hunger in Venezuela, the lack of credits in banks, political corruption, lack of local productivity and the high dependence in oil export prices are the factors that contributed to the aggravation of the situation. Meanwhile, the concentration of power in the executive branch and the erosion of human and political rights have let the government intimidate, persecute and criminally prosecute opposition members. Even though international help has been offered, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has refused it since the government doesn't want the international community intervening in its managing of the country. Meanwhile, several countries have signed the Lima Declaration, which declares that Venezuela is no longer a democracy and condemns the violations of human rights in the country. The international community fears that the crisis will continue to get worse, living conditions will further fall, authoritarianism will deepen and the mass emigration will intensify. All of these problems affect both the internal security of Venezuela and also the surrounding Latin American region. Given that Venezuela has the largest oil reserves in the world, foreign powers are also closely following the situation. For the benefit of Venezuela and the whole international community, a solution to this crisis should be reached before it continues to deepen.



Corruption:

Anyone who tried to expose Chavez's corruption were jailed or silenced. The government wasted billions on providing free oil transfers to Cuba, buying weapons, and propping up failing businesses, and its officials, around 1,500 party elites, have stolen 95 billion dollars under Chavez's watch . Corruption has not slowed down since Chavez's death. While Maduro may claim to be tough on corruption, it is not clear what arrests are for justice and what are for consolidating power and jailing political and economic opponents. Luisa Ortega, who was the former chief prosecutor in Venezuela was fired and then fled for her life after she accused the President and other government officials of corruption. After her declaration, an arrest warrant was put out for her husband on charges of extortion. This issue of corruption must be addressed, or else Venezuela cannot hope to progress into a modern, stable, and transparent economy. Protests Sadly, protests have become a part of daily life in Venezuela, as thousands of dissatisfied citizens take to the streets in anti government demonstrations. Serious protests started in January 2016, when the Supreme court alleged that there was potential voter fraud in the election victories of three opposition legislative members and one ruling party member. As a result, the court suspended their election . The opposition parties claimed that the court was attempting to weaken their political position by preventing the election of their members and decided to swear in their legislators despite the court's decision. In response, the Supreme Court claimed that the National Assembly was acting illegally, and all of its new legislation and decisions would be ignored and invalid. Eventually after more legal disputes the Supreme Court decided that it would take over the legislative powers of congress on March 30, 2017. This sparked large protests that enveloped Caracas the following day, and continued daily for months despite the court reversing its decision. Protesters were not satisfied with the Supreme Court, controlled by the ruling parties, "attempted coup" and called for political change to ensure it would not happen again. The strength of the protests was bolstered as more and more citizens joined in to protest the dire economic situation the country was in. As shortages for basic needs like food and medicine worsened, and currency value fell, the protests grew larger and larger. Deadly clashes with police and soldiers has only enraged the opposition and protesters alike. Crime Crime and poverty were at an all-time high in 2017, as reported by the Venezuelan Violence Observatory. 7,479 murders were committed in one year alone. The new hunger and poverty led to more crime and murder which only worsened the situation and gave even more reason for the citizens of Venezuela to protest. As of December 10, President Maduro declared that the opposition parties that boycotted the election were no longer a part of the Venezuelan government and are barred from being a part of the presidential elections. Maduro has also recently placed one of his political enemies, Antonio Ledezma, under house arrest on charges of attempting to overthrow the Government. Venezuela is more fractured than ever. It faces protests, shortages and political war with no end in sight.

U.N. Involvement:

In November 2018, the United Nations and their partners managed to earn US\$220 million in order to help 406,000 people in need across Peru, Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia, along with the \$17.2 million distributed by the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). Moreover, in September 2018 a humanitarian response plan has been launched by the UN and now this plan



is led by all the countries involved, in order to provide essential goods. For example, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has distributed in September hygiene, domestic, and kitchen kits to several Venezuelans in Brazil and also water purification tablets in Ecuador. In the same month, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Peru has provided almost 2,000 baby kits to Venezuelans living in Tumbes. By the end of September 2018, World Food Programme (WFP) has distributed hot meals, prepaid cards for the purchase of foods, food kits and school meals to Venezuelan refugees in Colombia and Ecuador

Possible Solutions:

Clearly, the situation in Venezuela is less than ideal. With the current presidency contested between Maduro and Guaidó, there is a lack of stability within the nation. Given the importance of Venezuela in Latin America, there are many countries that are interested in the presidential dispute. A pro-American candidate may help to allow the country's oil wealth to be exploited while Maduro is strongly against US intervention. Guaidó, despite having the support of US imperialism, Colombia, Brazil, the OAS and the European Union, is not an inch closer to sitting in the Miraflores presidential palace. The reactionary opposition is split down the middle, with one section negotiating with the Maduro government, while Guaidó has been linked to far-right paramilitary Colombian thugs, marred by corruption scandals and abandoned by his own supporters. As a committee, delegates must decide how to respect national sovereignty while giving the people of Venezuela the aid they long for. Last, but certainly not least, there must be measures which will make sure that the poverty-stricken Venezuelans have access to basic goods and that in general there are no shortages concerning consumer goods. Moreover, it is vital that the diplomatic tensions between the bordering countries of Venezuela are terminated. More explicitly, while countries like Brazil and Colombia used to be major trading partners of Venezuela, in recent times that is not the case. Delegates must research ways with which tensions could be resolved and a new partnership is formed, which would not only benefit the economy of Venezuela, but also the economy of the greater region. Finally, delegates could also consider the solution of removing the currency controls currently in place, to help the exchange of products with other countries.

Questions to Consider

1. What economic options does Venezuela have to recover from their crises?
2. Is Venezuela in need of new leadership? If a change is necessary, what is the best way to achieve it?
3. Is the structure of the Venezuelan government in need of change? Are there any government policies that need to be removed or adopted?
4. Could Venezuela benefit from international intervention? How should international aid be distributed or regulated?