

Prevention of Illicit Arms Trade

The illicit trade of small arms and light weaponry threatens the safety and security of nearly every nation and civilian in the world. Small arms and light weapons can be defined as weapons such as handguns, rifles, light missiles, and landmines. While the majority of arms trade is done legally and successfully between states, it is estimated that around 10-20% of small arms trade is done illegally. Not only do small arms and light weapons conflicts take the lives of millions of innocent people, but it hinders nations' abilities to further develop their governments to properly serve and meet the needs and demands of their civilians. Additionally, small arms, especially when possessed by gangs and terrorists, make conflicts last longer, more deadly, and prevent national stability. Thus, the current spike in internal conflicts across the globe in conjunction with the rising levels of illicit arms trade, the cycle of violence continues to escalate and threaten the lives of innocent civilians, and there seems to be no end in sight.

Given the massive international threat the illicit arms trade poses to the safety of individual states and their civilians, the United Nations has made many efforts to address this spiraling threat. In 2001 all UN member states adopted a Program of Action (UNPoA) that seeks to "counter the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and control the negative consequences of small arms and light weapons." It encourages member states to enforce stricter trade laws in order to halt the progression of the illegal sale of weapons through strictly monitoring both the export and imports of weapons. Additionally, in 2005, the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) agreement was implemented which adopts a plan that requires states to keep records about the illicit small arms and weapons that are found being trading within and across their borders. While many agreements surmounted as a result of talks between member states, perhaps one of the most successful discussions resulted in the UN resolution adopted in 2013 known as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The goal of the ATT is to prevent the mounting human rights abuses and war crimes committed as a result of illicit weapons by making it difficult for "human rights abusers, criminals and arms traffickers" to get access to weapons. The treaty explicitly states that there are "prohibitions against arms transfers that would be contrary to international legal obligations, or where the State knows the arms would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity and certain war crimes."

However, despite the actions of the UN, not only has the illicit trading of arms continues, but the problem has been exacerbated in countries with weak government structures such as those in Latin America and the Middle East. Additionally, one of the biggest manufacturers of small arms, the United States of America, has pulled out of the treaty because their relationship with the National Rifle Association which promotes the unconditional trading of weapons to nations regardless of the consequences under the guise that it is promoting the right of all people to bear arms for means of self-defense.

The ultimate goal of the Disarmament and International Security Committee is to promote cooperation among the international community in an attempt to secure peace and security. Any treaty that is drafted requires adherence to current international laws concerning

the trading of small arms and light weaponry, such as the Arms Trade Treaty. Through this committee, the participating nations must reach an agreement surrounding legitimate and transparent arms trade that all member states can agree upon in order to reduce the amounts of human rights abuses and war crimes committed as a result of illicit arms trading.

Throughout the debate within this committee, delegates are encouraged to consider the following questions when formulating potential agreements: What measures can be implemented to combat the root causes of armed violence? How can we achieve increased data and transparency regarding SALW? How can greater transparency be achieved within countries with unstable and corrupt governments?

Resources:

<http://unrcpd.org/conventional-weapons/poa/>

http://www.poa-iss.org/InternationalTracing/ITI_English.pdf

http://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/att/att_e.pdf

Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space

As a result of significant technological advancements made post-WWII, the threat of an arms race in outer space has become a pressing issue that all nations must address in order to achieve global safety and security. According to a draft theory proposed by China and Russia, the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT) the militarization of outer space is defined as “any device placed in outer space, based on any physical principle, which has been specially produced or converted to destroy, damage or disrupt the normal functioning of objects in outer space, on the Earth or in the Earth’s atmosphere, or to eliminate a population or components of the biosphere which are important to human existence or inflict damage on them.” A possible arms race is a global and humanitarian threat in that “weaponization of space will destroy strategic balance and stability, undermine international and national security, and disrupt existing arms control instruments.” One dangerous implication of destructive weapons and even the peaceful exploration of outer space is the threat that debris pose to active satellites and the overall health of the environment. Therefore, the exploration and weaponization of space is an issue of high importance that impacts the safety and security of nations globally.

Past actions and treaties have been taken by the United Nations to regulate the exploration of outer space. In 1967 the Outer Space Treaty was enacted and outlined broad laws concerning space and asserted that all nations have the right to peacefully explore space. Additionally, the Liability Convention, which was put into force in 1972, states that member states are to be held liable if they put something into space and it causes damage. A few years later, in 1976, the Registration Convention was enforced which states that member states are required to notify the UN about all space objects that are put into orbit. While the majority of these treaties concern the exploration of space, the Moon Agreement of 1984 addressed the militarization of space and bans the military use of natural objects in space. One of the main reasons that this agreement failed is because it states that if a country removes a natural object from space, then it must be shared with all members.

The majority of agreements concerning the militarization and exploration of outer space are outdated and in need of amendments that make them relevant to recent developments concerning the exploration of space. Throughout this committee and debate, delegates are encouraged to consider the following questions when drafting resolutions in order to regulate and prevent the threat of an arms race in outer space: What provisions can be created to ensure the preventions of a possible arms race in outer space? How can member states be encouraged to be transparent with their discoveries and cooperate with international guidelines for the exploration of space? What new amendments can be created that comply with existing treaties concerning the peaceful exploration of space but also address the threat of an arms race in outer space?

Resources:

https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-74/jfq-74_110-115_DeFrieze.pdf

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/fact-sheets/critical-issues/5448-outer-space>

<https://www.un.org/disarmament/topics/outerspace/>

Foreign Intervention in War

Over the past decades, conflicts and wars have transitioned from being fought across national borders to being contained to within a state's borders. These intrastate conflicts often result in weakened government structures that create power vacuums which can be dangerous if the wrong group of people gain state legitimacy. As a result of the vacancies in leadership that internal conflicts create, states may be motivated by their own self-interests to influence the new power structure that controls a state so that the invader state is able to attain regional control. On the other hand, third party states may be discouraged to intervene in another states conflict if they have no regional interests, despite human rights violation that may be committed by the warring states' government.

As of today, there is no UN legislation that has the power to prevent or encourage nations to intervene in intrastate conflicts. However, in the UN Charter chapter six it explicitly states that intervention is necessary if there is a threat to national security, humanitarian need based, and the state which the conflict takes place requests international interventions. One problem with this chapter of the Charter is that the permanent members of the security council (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) are the members that decide on an international peacekeeping operation. Therefore, if any one of these nations has a bias against the state experiencing the conflict or they themselves in a position to gain regional power from the ongoing conflict, they can veto a peacekeeping intervention.

This issue is relevant to the question of moral interventions since the number one nation that involves itself in military interventions is the United States, which is quickly followed by Russia. In the case of Syria, a conflict which Russia is highly involved, although the government has clearly violated human rights, so long as Russia refuses to support peacekeeping missions in Syria, there will be no solution in sight. Similarly, in cases such as Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan, which are all conflicts that the United States has been involved in, UN intervention is unlikely because of the interests that the USA has shown to have in the Middle East. Therefore, it is very unlikely that civilians who experience humanitarian abuses from their governments and rebel organizations are going to be aided by peacekeeping missions from the United Nations.

Despite the complex nature of foreign interventions in wars, this committee encourages delegates to draft a resolution, in compliance with existing agreed upon international laws, that addresses how to prevent self-interested intervene in internal wars but also how to encourage peacekeeping efforts in states that commit human rights violations against their citizens. Throughout this committee and debate, delegates are encouraged to consider the following

questions when drafting resolutions: Do nations have the right to intervene in another sovereign nation's conflicts based upon their own self interests? When is the UN obligated to intervene in a civil conflict? How can the UN best serve countries that need help during an internal conflict without infringing on a nation's sovereignty?

Resources:

<https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-vii/>

https://cgsmun.gr/wp-content/uploads/Study%20Guides/12th/GA1_1_PT.pdf