

**Houston Area
Model United Nations
Standard Committee**



DISEC

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Foreign Political Intervention

DISEC Background

The United Nations General Assembly First Committee (the Disarmament and International Security Committee [DISEC]) is a key element of the General Assembly, or GA. All countries are represented within the DISEC, as it is part of the General Assembly.

Topic #2 Background: Foreign Political Intervention

Professor Christopher Coyne of George Mason University defines foreign intervention as “the use of the discretionary power of a government in one society to address perceived problems in foreign societies.” There are many different types of foreign interventions which can be understood in the distinction between ‘soft power’ and ‘hard power.’ Soft power refers to the use of persuasion to achieve the desired ends, while hard power refers to the use of force or coercion. Examples of soft power include the dissemination of certain information, or cultural products, as well as monetary aid. Examples of hard power include military occupation and the removal of government regimes through force.

Past UN Action

On June 26, 1945, nations convened in San Francisco to sign the United Nations Charter. One of its most notable provisions was Article 2(4), which required members to “refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.” This was a significant and unprecedented prohibition.

After the inception of the United Nations, the Assembly has utilized its powers to prevent unilateral, direct military action on other military states, instead, utilizing peacekeepers and other multilateral action to aid in the presence of conflict and other needed intervention. Since then, the world has seen strides made in the prevention of direct foreign political intervention.

However, as states become more interconnected, it has become clear that more action is needed to define, declare, and prevent other methods of covert action on other member-states. Some of the important areas of which include, but are not limited to: manipulation in elections (whether that be manipulation of votes, intimidation, disinformation), financial dominance over domestic affairs by foreign actors, amongst others.

Most recently, the Assembly has made it clear to international actors and member-states that foreign political intervention in the Libyan conflict is unacceptable, taking a strong stance that such intervention will not be tolerated.

Current Situation

Recently, foreign political intervention has presented itself by way of direct interference in a state's elections. Global powers have utilized telecommunications to manipulate the independent electoral processes of smaller democracies in order to sway opinion in favor of their own governments' interests, whether those be monetary, political, or other.

While politically motivated direct military intervention does remain a problem, as the United Nations continues its work on such action, more covert methods of interference are becoming a larger issue which must be dealt with in order to protect flourishing democracies globally. It is up to the work of the Disarmament and International Security Committee to locate these weaknesses, theorize potential solutions, and create a long-lasting framework which can solve for these weaknesses going forward.

Many of the current conflicts on the global radar have been motivated by foreign political intervention. Conflicts like the Yemeni Civil War, Syrian Civil War, Russian Intervention in Ukraine (and subsequent occupation of Crimea by Russian forces) all highlight the importance of limiting foreign state intervention in conflicts.

In the mentioned conflicts alone, the human cost of war has reached over 1 million in the past decade alone. This highlights the importance of both lessening the effects of foreign political intervention and increasing the culpability of states which engage in such action.

It is crucial to understand the ways in which states intervene. In terms of military intervention, there is both direct action and indirect action. In the case of the Syrian Civil War, we notice both sorts of action. States like the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Iran, Turkey, and others are very public about their intervention and which groups they directly support. However, indirectly, states are less public about which militias and other action groups they support. Many of these militias are the subject of international attention due to their dubious funding and oftentimes drastic military action without regard for human life.

Much of the issues raised by direct military foreign political intervention are humanitarian. Because of this a major point of action must be humanitarian aid to those states which have been directly affected by such action. This includes direct



humanitarian aid like foodstuffs, medical aid, and other life-saving aid needed in the status-quo.

However, in terms of foreign political intervention, trends that should also be on the radar for the Disarmament and International Security Committee include the increasingly prevalent presence of election manipulation by state actors. Most prevalent in recent times are claims of Russian Federation governmental interference in the elections of the United States of America, Ukraine, and others.

Legal frameworks must be established to ensure stiff penalties for state actors and state-sponsored militias for both electoral interference and direct military intervention.

Resources

[As Foreign Interference in Libya Reaches Unprecedented Levels, Secretary-General Warns Security Council 'Time Is Not on Our Side', Urges End to Stalemate | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases](#)

[Unintended consequences? Foreign intervention, polarization, and conflict in MENA](#)

[The United Nations and the Accidental Rise of Covert Intervention](#)

[Peace and Security | United Nations](#)

[Maintain International Peace and Security | United Nations](#)