

2021 TOPIC: SPACE ARMS RACE

Topic Summary and Background:

Since the dawn of space exploration, space militarization has been not far behind. As the major military and scientific powers of the 1960s, the USSR and the USA, both countries raced one another for a leg up on space exploration and discovery- and thus a leg up on the military capabilities of Space. Throughout the later half of the 20th Century, the US, USSR, and other developed nations strove to put their military technologies in space in the form of offensive and defensive systems such as satellite based missiles or shielding technologies.

Why this is important?

Even though there are specific treaties banning Weapons of Mass Destruction from space, there are no limitations on "conventional" weapons of war from being stored in or used in space. While the UN does have a standing committee on maintaining peace in space from member nations, there still stands the risk of the next world war being fought in, by, or over Space. Since the 1960s, the UN and other member nations have sought to maintain peace and forbid war in Space, however the number of countries with technologies capable of being in space has only continued to grow- as well as the number of countries with weapons in space.

Issues to be addressed in a Resolution:

1. What threats exist with Space Based weapons that do not exist in ground based weapons systems?
2. How can Peace be preserved in space?
3. How would nations without space defense feel about space based war?
4. If space is without an owner, does that make it a free-for-all or a no-man's-land?

Resources

UN Committee on the Peaceful use of Space

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/copuos/index.html>

Opinion from USA Concerned Scientists on Space Missiles

<https://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear-weapons/us-missile-defense/how-space-interceptors-work>

Opinion from Raytheon on Space Missiles

<https://www.raytheon.com/news/feature/space-based-missile-defense-absolute-must>

Proposed USA Space Force

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Space_Force

India's new Space Military Programs

<https://www.foxnews.com/science/india-becomes-4th-country-to-use-anti-satellite-weapon-in-demonstration-of-its-space-power>

UK and USA allege Russian Space Weapons Use

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53518238>

India Space Missile Test and Space Arms Race

<https://www.asme.org/topics-resources/content/the-race-for-space-weapons-speeds-up>

USA Space Based Particle Beam Laser

<https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2019/03/pentagon-wants-test-space-based-weapon-2023/155581/>

2021 TOPIC: RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

Topic Summary and Background:

Roughly 1 in every 6 people on the face of the earth go day in and day out without electricity. For those in the industrialized world, that may seem impossible to believe. However, for many, an outlet in their home or electric light in their place of work would be a dream come true. Of the nearly 1.2 Billion people worldwide that go without electricity, many are focused in certain regions of the world. In North America, nearly every single person has access to electricity, but in Sub-Saharan Africa nearly 60% of people go without- with only 5% of citizens of South Sudan having access to electricity. Those who go without electricity suffer large disadvantages in almost every function of daily life such as quality of education, productivity of industry or business, or quality of medical care. In large parts of the world, many are living without the benefits of not only smartphones and supercomputers, but without electric light, paved roads, or household appliances. Billions of people are living as if it were the 1890s and not the 2020s.

Why this is important?

Just as simple machines, steam engines, and crude oil all revolutionized the world in the time period that they came about, so too has electricity changed the world. As those in industrialized nations continue to take leaps and strides forward, those living in nations without reliable or broad electricity service are left “in the dark” of advancement, connectedness, and the conveniences of modern living. Education, transportation, medicine, communication, and journalism are all significantly aided by electricity and many are left behind.

Issues to be addressed in a Resolution:

1. How do you bring electricity to areas where electricity is scarce?
2. Are renewable sources of electricity viable options to electrify rural areas?
3. Is there a way of creating sources of communal or shared electricity (like a city charging stations or battery station)?
4. Is electricity a necessity for life?

Resources

Washington Post Article

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/world-without-power/>

List of countries with scarce electricity

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/countries-with-the-lowest-access-to-electricity.html>

Rural Electrification Act of 1936- example of legislated rural electrification

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rural_Electrification_Act

Map of places with least access to electricity

<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/mapped-billion-people-without-access-to-electricity/>

General Electric (GE) Survey on living without Electricity

<https://www.ge.com/news/reports/more-than-a-lightbulb>

Rural Electrification and Sustainable Energy Concerns

<https://www.who.int/news/item/21-05-2019-more-people-have-access-to-electricity-than-ever-before-but-world-is-falling-short-of-sustainable-energy-goals>

2021 TOPIC: GLOBAL EXCHANGE RATES

Topic Summary and Background:

Since the dawn of civilization, currency has been created and exchanged among merchants, government officials, and common everyday folks. Currency was often exchanged in barter for goods or services- such as cases of Tea for silver coins. However, currency eventually began to be traded for itself- currency in exchange for the currency of another country. It was difficult to establish the value of money for money, so a standard had to be set. Until the 1920s, the Gold Standard was used: determining the value of an ounce of gold in each currency unit, and simply exchanging based on how much "gold" one would possess. Nations without vast access to gold, and the financial turmoil of WWI, eventually led to the downfall of the gold standard system, and led to the International Exchange rate marketplace. This is where exchange rates are set day in and day out much like stocks being traded in a traditional market. Some currencies values change each day based on a multitude of factors. Other nations, rather than fix their currency value to a material value, like Gold or Silver, have fixed or "pegged" their currency value to that of another country's currency, like the US Dollar.

Why this is important?

The exchange rate is set by groups of elite investors who trade in the exchange marketplace- the most elite traders and stakeholders around the world get to buy and sell in the exchange marketplace. The value of money all around the world changes every day at the hands of the world's richest investors. Financial planning, progress, and power all around the world is set by an incredibly small group of incredibly wealthy people. The daily fluctuation of international exchange rates, and thus the value of currencies all around the world, creates uncertainty. Uncertainty affects the trading of stocks and buying of bonds all around the world in global markets. Certain nations face financial losses due to the fluctuation of their currency's value on the international exchange market. Other nations, through no fault of their own, have their own currency devalued due to the fluctuation of another nation's currency if they are pegged together. When a currency becomes devalued, it reduces the buying power that that currency has, which puts strain on the users of that currency as they attempt to buy and sell goods.

Issues to be addressed in a Resolution:

1. How can the global currency exchange system be stabilized?
2. What dangers occur when currencies values are "pegged" to one another?
3. Should the currency exchange system be standardized or attached to a material value?

4. How should the value of currency be determined? Is bartering enough?
5. Is money universally good everywhere?
6. Is there a need for “exchanging” money?
7. How does the ranking and valuing of money suppress economic power of nations?

Resources

Exchange rates attached to the US Dollar

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/forex/061015/top-exchange-rates-peqqed-us-dollar.asp>

How are Exchange rates set?

<https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/forex/how-forex-exchange-rates-set.asp>

How are rates set?

<https://www.britannica.com/story/how-are-currency-exchange-rates-determined>
<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-determines-an-exchange-rate-1147883>

The Value of Money (From 1969)

<https://fee.org/articles/the-value-of-money/>

Hyperinflation in History

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/personal-finance/122915/worst-hyperinflations-history.asp>

2021 TOPIC: MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Topic Summary and Background:

Many events of the 20th Century forced millions of people worldwide to become displaced from their homes- whether that be by way of asylum, refugee status, or as immigrants/emigrants in search of something new or better in their adopted homeland. Events such as religious conflicts and wars throughout the world, brutal totalitarian regimes, famine, genocide, natural disasters, economic opportunities, and urbanization have all played their part in the immigration experience in the last 100 years. Now, more than ever before, people all around the world are "global citizens". Not only are they part of a growing interconnected world via a global marketplace, but they are also part of ethnic heritages that no longer align with the places they currently live, and they choose to marry or live with those from different cultural backgrounds as themselves. For example, it is now possible that a Korean Professor and an Irish architect can get married and live in the United States, raising children who are "Irish-Korean-Americans". 100 years ago, this combination was almost unthinkable- yet now in the midst of the 21st Century, is a common suburban family.

Why this is important?

The rise of nationalism in the early 20th Century is another of the causes of the rise in global immigration seen in the last 100 years. Unfortunately, that air of nationalism has yet to clear and is even making a resurgence now in the early 21st Century. There are conversations around the world about "ethnic identity" and the intentions of newcomers. With the United States wanting to build a wall to keep others out, tens of thousands marching towards a better life in "caravans" or, even when nations of Europe blocked refugees from the Syrian Civil war leading to the drowning deaths of hundreds in the Mediterranean sea, the conversation and rhetoric about refugees and immigration is taking a skeptical and close-minded turn for the worse. To maintain status as a global community and global citizenship, the tide needs to turn on this conversation.

Ideas for discussion:

1. What can the UN do to keep borders open to those in search of a new home?

2. How can policies be made to be equitable to refugees wanting to enter any nation of the world? Is there a way to achieve “reciprocity” between nations and their immigration policies?
3. Should there be a distinction between asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants? If so, what is the importance of that distinction?
4. Generally, asylum seekers and refugees are granted temporary access to their new homes- how can they be integrated into a new culture or community if there is an expiration date on their welcome?
5. Is there an economic, political, or diplomatic challenge to immigration policies?
6. Does global migration have an environmental impact?

Resources

UN International Migration Policies

https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/policy/international_migration_policies_data_booklet.pdf

How Other Countries Handle Immigration

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/6/130630-immigration-reform-world-refugees-asylum-canada-japan-australia-sweden-denmark-united-kingdom-undocumented-immigrants>

The Case for Open Borders

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/01/immigration-wall-open-borders-trillion-dollar-idea/>

2021 TOPIC: BUILDING A LASTING PEACE

Topic Summary and Background:

This year, the 2021 topic of the Model United Nations Global Forum is “Building a Lasting Peace.” It is evident that there is discord and disarray throughout the world: in Hong Kong, China, and North Korea, in Iran, Iraq, and Syria, and in other smaller pockets throughout the world gripped by terror groups, hyperinflation, and political tensions all of which are only made worse or more complex by the COVID-19 Pandemic and the financial and medical hardships it brings to families around the world. This year, the global forum is calling upon member nations to work through these challenges to find a solution for permanent peace throughout the world. The topic of peace will be looked at by the eyes of several committees: Economics, Education, Diplomacy, Human Condition, and Security. Each of these committees will look through their lens to find a solution in the pursuit of lasting world peace.

MISSION OF THE GLOBAL FORUM

The Global Forum is an official body of the United Nations. The Global forum, since its organization in 1999, has served as a sounding block for governments across the world to come together and take a deep dive into specific topic areas. Since the 1999 Global Forum on “Reinventing Government”, other topics taken into consideration have been “Building trust in Government”, and “E-Government”. The Global Forum mainly tackles the workings of government and how governments can do more for citizens in accordance to the values of the UN, but also on how to make the government more accessible to average citizens. The Global Forum is held on location throughout the world to bring together leaders in settings that provide context for the mission at hand. The forum also looks through the lenses of committees, such as economics and education, to see solutions on different levels of the problem.

COMMITTEES

Human Condition

Many throughout the world, especially within areas affected by diplomatic breakdowns and lasting conflict, experience a decline in human condition. Food insecurity, poverty, disease and lack of health care, as well as a loss of security as conflict marches to the front door, are all experienced by those in conflict zones around the world. *How can increasing the human condition for those around the world lead to a lasting peace in the global community as a whole?*

Economics

As was the case in the famed French Revolution of the 1790s, there has been a lasting class warfare in the world throughout much of history. Conflict around the world has often

been a tale of the “haves” and the “have nots”. As was the case in the caste system of India (and seen in the lasting social conflicts since the 1948 overturn of the caste system) and in many other nations, there is a lasting struggle between the rich and the poor. Even if it is not directly leading to armed conflict, there is no secret that the 1% are richer now than they have ever been before, while the poor are still poor. With the number of Billionaires growing and the hoarding of wealth becoming a sign of economic success, millions are left throughout the world with basic daily needs being either forgone or only partially met. *Is there an economic avenue for creating a lasting global peace?*

Education

Education is oft considered the most critical for the formation of a citizen and of a nation, yet for the same reasons has also been an item most frequently restricted. Education has been barred to many throughout history based on class, gender, race and ethnic group, as well as membership in powerful institutions like the clergy or the nobility. The UN considers education a fundamental right and critically important to all people everywhere. Should education be controlled or not? *Is there a way that education can be used as a tool for peace? Likewise, is education being used as a tool of war?*

Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the most obvious way that war is ended and peace begun. Many nations have set on a course of diplomacy in the 21st Century with commitments to having positive working relations with the rest of the world. However, not all nations are UN members, nor are there any nations that have ambassadors in all other nations of the world. Without a complete network of diplomats around the world, how can any nation expect to maintain peace with everyone? *How can member nations use diplomatic action to achieve a lasting global peace? How can nations make sure that a positive relation is maintained with all nations?*

Security

Security is too often linked with offense than defense. Superpowers continue to build their nuclear arsenals, strike first advantage, and strike back capability. Seldom are nations truly concerned with being “secure.” Many are doubtful of the possibility of a lasting peace in a world full of such widespread military buildup. *How can military powers use their security systems in the name of peace rather than in the name of aggression?*

2021 TOPIC: WAR JUNK

Topic Summary and Background:

It is no secret that a nation at war has an increased demand for certain goods compared to a peacetime economy. Many factories increase the production of their goods for the exclusive use of their military. Other companies shut down production and switch to an entirely different product to accommodate the demand for goods during the war. In the United States, the government has the ability to seize control of manufacturing facilities to meet the heightened demand for goods during wartime, called the Defense Production Act. Many of the goods produced are done so knowing that they will be destroyed during war such as airplanes, tanks, and ammunition. Others can be repurposed after the war if possible and are often sold to the public as "surplus." However, the surplus is only what made it back from the warzone that the military chose to pack up and take back. Often, there is so much made during a war that it is simply impossible to remove all of it once the war is over.

Why this is important?

The United States alone, following the Iraq war in the 2000s, left an estimated \$6 Billion worth of military supplies behind. These supplies were deemed "non-essential" and "non-classified" that they were no longer needed by the military, but were not worth the effort it would take to transport back to the US. There is a significant burden of removing this "War Junk" from warzones placed on the country where it was all left. Much of the junk, especially old military bases or camps, gets left behind as some kind of a ghost town left to rot and disintegrate back into the earth- at a major environmental strain to that area. In other instances, people are disposing of munitions and other sensitive materials that are not trained to do so, at a risk of life and limb to all those nearby.

Ideas for discussion:

1. Who is responsible for "cleaning up" after a war?
2. Should War Junk be disposed of differently than regular trash or waste?
3. What is the environmental impact of war and its waste?
4. How should the determination between waste and surplus be handled? When/where should that decision take place?

Resources

US War Junk in Afghanistan

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/scrap-heap-of-war-billions-in-equipment-being-left-behind-in-afghanistan>

Iraqi War Junk in India

https://www.upi.com/Business_News/2004/10/21/Iraq-war-junk-gets-dumped-in-India/85871098388255/

War Junk from WWI in France

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jw_oFPBiHIs&list=WL&index=36

2021 TOPIC: ELECTION SECURITY AND REFORM

Topic Summary and Background:

Throughout the Cold War Era, the US and USSR attempted to expand their spheres of influence in international and domestic issues by building up their own military capabilities as well as that of their allies. Both superpowers also attempted to expand their influence by meddling in elections throughout the 1960s and 1970s via coups, proxy wars, elections tampering and rigging. By interfering with the elections of other countries, primarily in Southeastern Asia and South America, these superpowers forced their wills upon other countries, and stripped those citizens within those countries of the exercise of free will and democracy.

Why this is important?

It is apparent that elections are of international importance and so is the sovereignty of each member nation of the UN to monitor and secure their own elections. Recently, Russia has expressed interest in the elections of other UN member nations- especially the United States. The infamous "Russia Probe" in the United States has revealed Russian capabilities to hack elections in other countries as well as the vulnerabilities of the US election system. Elections are at the core of democracy and global citizenship and are not to be mishandled or tampered with from outside influences.

Ideas for discussion:

1. What level of clearance should be allowed to foreign observers of elections?
2. What characteristics make up a "free and fair" election process
3. Should foreign entities be allowed to endorse candidates in other countries?
4. Should multinational corporations be restricted in their campaign contributions?

Resources

US Elections Meddling

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/07/the-us-has-a-long-history-of-election-meddling/565538/>

French interference in US Elections

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/foreign-election-interference-founding-era>

Crooked Elections

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/most-rigged-and-corrupt-elections-in-modern-world-history.html>

Hello Garci Scandal – 2004 Filipino Election

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hello_Garci_scandal

2021 TOPIC: CREATING GLOBAL CURRENCY

Topic Summary and Background:

Since the dawn of civilization, items of all shapes, sizes, and uses have been assigned a value. Regardless if they were bartered for or exchanged, or purchased in exchange for money, all items have been assigned a worth. In the last 400 years or so, most goods have been exchanged for currency. Currency often derived its worth from the amount of precious metal that each piece contained, usually gold or silver. However, in the last 50 years, most global currencies have been removed from a metal standard and no longer derive their value from anything more than the trust of those who use it. Currencies are exchanged each day and their values fluctuate all day long- thus changing the buying power and worth of everything within that nation on a whim.

Why this is important?

Nations lose economic power and stability as their currencies are traded and exchanged around the world. Many nations are at risk of instability due to the exchange rates not necessarily working in their favor. Others place themselves in jeopardy of an international economic crisis as many nations compare their currency against that of another country such as the US Dollar or the Euro. Given the popularity and international acceptance of only a few currencies as “standards of trade” the international marketplace is not as diverse as one would think. For the sake of economic stability and avoiding a new 21st century market collapse or financial panic, the investigation of a global currency is of utmost importance.

Ideas for discussion:

1. Would a global currency stabilize international economic relations?
2. Is a global currency a realistic expectation?
3. How would a global currency derive its value?
4. Would a global currency be better served in an electronic—or cryptocurrency—format?

Resources

European Currency Unit

<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/european-currency-unit.asp>

What is Crypto Currency?

<https://www.coinbase.com/learn>

Could a Global Currency work?

<https://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0310/one-world-one-currency-could-it-work.aspx>

Why is the US Dollar the international standard for currency?

<https://www.thebalance.com/world-currency-3305931>

Using a global currency

http://www.nbcnews.com/id/30047877/ns/business-answer_desk/t/what-if-world-all-used-same-currency/#.XZTzaEZKq2w

Arguments against a global currency

<https://thecontrol.co/why-there-wont-be-one-global-currency-f86a5934eeff>

2021 TOPIC: PLASTIC WASTE IN OCEANS

Topic Summary and Background:

Prior to the 20th Century, items were packaged and stored in simple containers that were biodegradable or had an obvious purpose to be reused- often both. Our worlds were smaller back then as well. The butcher was only a block or two away, and meat would be wrapped in wax paper- butcher paper- and transported only a short distance back home. Likewise, flour was bought in paper or burlap sacks, and butter was made in the home and stored in a short stoneware crock with a stoneware lid. Things were not so quickly thrown away because they were not so quickly made as they are today. In the modern age, items are transported all over the world and are stored for much longer periods of time than was thought possible in the 1900s. Packaging has also changed considerably- with most items in a common supermarket or warehouse being packaged or shipped in plastic- an industry that was not born until the early 20th Century. With the invention of Bakelite in 1907, a new industry was born. Since then, the food that we buy, packages shipped in the mail, and even the water we drink is contained in plastic. This reliance on plastic has created a plastic surplus in the 21st Century. Plastic is difficult to recycle, and the sheer volume of plastic used each day, has led to a massive epidemic of littering- which has led to massive pollution of our global waterways and oceans.

Why this is important?

With viral videos of birds making nests from plastic litter, or sea turtles getting plastic straws stuck in their noses, it is more evident now than ever that humans use too much plastic and do not recycle nearly enough. The United States alone wasted 33.6 Million tons of plastic that could have been recycled last year alone. Many member nations of the UN are spending money and time to solve the crisis on going green and reducing plastic consumption. However, there are other member nations of the UN that willingly and knowingly discard garbage in the ocean and pollute precious water resources. The impact on humans and marine life is very clear and if something is not done in the next generation, it is feared that the damage done to the ocean and global marine ecosystems will be irreversible.

Ideas for discussion:

1. How do we incentivize recycling or make it more acceptable?
2. What penalties should there be for those who pollute the ocean?
3. How can viable alternatives to plastic packaging be implemented to reduce plastic waste?
4. Should the UN rely on the actions of volunteers to rid waterways and oceans of litter?
5. How should garbage separation and recycling education be spread around the world?
 - a. What about countries with a standardized trash collection program?

Resources

Infographics on Oceanic Plastic Waste

<https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/plastics-in-the-ocean/>

Mumbai Beach Cleanup

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/05/22/asia/mumbai-beach-dramatic-makeover/index.html>

Floating Pacific Garbage Patch

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pacific_garbage_patch

How did the Pacific Garbage Patch Form?

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/science/2018/09/07/great-pacific-garbage-patch-where-did-all-trash-come/1133838002/>

Dumping Garbage in the Ocean

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/hannahleung/2018/04/21/five-asian-countries-dump-more-plastic-than-anyone-else-combined-how-you-can-help/#4ae9959f1234>

Plastic Packaging Alternatives

<https://www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2018/07/02/13-plastic-packaging-alternatives/>

2021 TOPIC: GLOBAL HUNGER & FOOD INSECURITY

Topic Summary and Background:

Recent figures from the United Nations report that food insecurity and global hunger are on the rise with nearly 1 Billion people reporting hunger around the world. These trends have been on the increase since 2015. The areas that have long been hit with food insecurity, shortage, and hunger, have always been in areas where food is difficult to produce due to weather and climate (such as in sub-Saharan Africa) or in areas where food is difficult to come by due to economic conditions (such as rural parts of southeastern Asia). The trends continue to show that these areas are continuing to feel the impact of food insecurity as numbers are on the rise.

Why this is important?

The global population is expected to increase by nearly 20 percent by the year 2050. It is also estimated that global food production will not be able to increase with demand for food by the year 2050, so global hunger and food insecurity are expected to increase in the coming decades. Furthermore, the majority of the global population growth is expected to occur in areas that are already experiencing food shortages: Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeastern Asia. It is absolutely dire that this issue be addressed before it is too late.

Ideas for discussion:

1. How can food resources be evenly distributed so that there are no over concentrations of food security?
2. How can food production increase to meet expected demand?
3. In what ways can food production be optimized in areas already experiencing shortage?
4. How will future effects of climate change impact agricultural practices in the coming decades?
5. What possibilities exist in urban and suburban regions for food production?

Resources:

World hunger statistics:

<https://www.worldhunger.org/world-hunger-and-poverty-facts-and-statistics/>

Global hunger on the rise:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/11-09-2018-global-hunger-continues-to-rise---new-un-report-says>

Food insecurity in the US:

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx>

Food insecurity and COVID-19

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/coronavirus-hunger-research>

2021 TOPIC: BIOLOGICAL BLACK MARKET

Topic Summary and Background:

While often joked about as a means of making quick cash, selling a kidney is not funny at all. There is a global market for buying and selling organs- quite possibly valued worldwide at 1.2 Billion US Dollars. Thousands of dollars are paid for organs as a means of bypassing the long waits experienced by those on organ donor lists all around the world. The Black market for organs has ties to organized crime, refugee crisis, and even correctional institutions around the world as executed prisoners are used to fill demands for organs.

Why this is important?

The process of buying and selling organs is incredibly dangerous, and completely illegal in almost every nation in the world except for Iran. Black market organ transactions and transplant surgeries are often done by those who are poorly equipped to perform the surgery, or who are not knowledgeable to solve any complications that may come about during the procedure. This process is illegal and dangerous for all of those involved. Organized crime rings often kidnap teenagers, kill them, and then harvest their organs to sell on the black market. Even Syrian refugees are being offered passage to Europe (and thus their safety) in exchange for their organs. This process is incredibly risky for the entire medical community as complications from these procedures are quite frequent and thus bog down the medical care system.

Ideas for discussion:

1. How can legal organ donation be incentivized to eliminate the black market?
2. In what ways can organ supply become equal to organ demand?
3. How can illegal organ donation and trade be tracked? How can current laws be better enforced?
4. What strain does illegal organ transplant put on the current medical system?

Resources:

Warnings about purchasing organs

[https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health Information/Health Topics/Documents/Facts about Buying Organ Overseas.pdf](https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health%20Information/Health%20Topics/Documents/Facts%20about%20Buying%20Organ%20Overseas.pdf)

Aftermath of selling organs:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2016/01/05/the-market-for-human-organs-is-destroying-lives/>

Organ trade: Unethical practice

<https://www.bmj.com/rapid-response/2011/10/29/market-organs-unethical-under-any-circumstances>

General information on Organ trading:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organ_trade

USA National Organ Transplant Act

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National Organ Transplant Act of 1984](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Organ_Transplant_Act_of_1984)

2021 TOPIC: EXTRADITION AGREEMENTS

Topic Summary and Background:

It is believed that some of the first extradition agreements in history were negotiated over 3000 years ago by Ramesses II, pharaoh of Egypt. Extradition is the process of sending criminals from one jurisdiction back to the jurisdiction in which they are wanted for committing crimes. Extradition can be done domestically from one state or province to another, or it can be done internationally from one country to another. Between international partners, these Extradition agreements are generally legitimized by treaties.

Why this is important?

Not all extradition agreements are created alike. No one member nation has a universal extradition agreement. The United States has extradition with the most countries, but still is missing several to make a complete list. Other nations have policies that they won't extradite their own citizens to other countries for prosecution. Other nations still will even bypass extradition and attempt to kidnap fugitives and bring them back for prosecution. The recent protests in Hong Kong have reignited the international extradition debate. It is evident that this is a hotly debated issue and one that carries international consequences.

Ideas for discussion:

1. How can member nations become encouraged to ratify extradition agreements?
2. How can the extradition system be made more uniform across member nations?

Resources

What is Extradition?

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-extradition>

United States extradition treaties

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/71600.pdf>

Extradition

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extradition>

2021 TOPIC: MILITARY ALLIANCES

Topic Summary and Background:

For hundreds of years, wars were fought with friends- military allies- formed through a series of treaties, quid-pro-quo agreements, and familial ties between ruling persons or families. This was quite evident in 1914, when seemingly overnight, all of Europe was plunged into a Great War that most nations did not have a hand in starting. Several intricate alliances were formed during the Second World War, and those alliances became solidified as both sides dug in for the long haul during the Cold War. The NATO countries, aligned with the United States, began on a large scale military buildup to square off against the Soviet led Warsaw Pact nations in the East. These alliances led to several smaller proxy wars throughout the second half of the 20th century, and continue to impact foreign policy around the world to this day.

Why this is important?

The Warsaw Pact-NATO showdown from the 1940s through the 1990s was an amazing sight to take in. However, since the end of the Cold War and the prevailing power and influence of the United Nations over international peace, it has become evident that military alliances don't carry the same requirements as they once did. While the Warsaw Pact disbanded in the 1990s, NATO still carries on largely without a clearly defined mission or enemy. Many Cold War military alliances still exist as rebels without a cause as there is no longer a Cold War to arm against. These military alliances seem misguided and dangerous should there ever be an international conflict in the 21st Century. Military alliances are the remaining piece of Cold War era foreign policy that have yet to be updated or deleted in this post-Soviet "end of History." These military alliances, as they currently exist, present a giant threat to international peace and foreign relations.

Ideas for discussion:

1. Are military alliances now obsolete?
2. Should member nations of an international peace organization be allowed to enter into Warhawk military alliances?
3. Can nations be barred from being a part of competing military alliances?
4. What purpose do military alliances serve? What needs do they meet?

Resources

Are military alliances Meaningful? – 1969

<https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.uwrf.edu/stable/pdf/1037284.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Af22967d7a2f445af4df4a68e65b0c87a>

NATO Explained

<https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2017/05/25/nato-the-world-s-largest-military-alliance-explained/>

List of Military Alliances

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_military_alliances#Current_military-security_alliances

2021 TOPIC: CONTROL OF SPACE

Topic Summary and Background:

Since the dawn of time, mankind has been fascinated by outer space. Technological developments made since the 1950s have allowed for exploration of space to take place in ways never before imagined. Space has been explored, other galaxies photographed, and the moon walked on. Now, there is continued research in the fields of space colonization on other planets.

Why this is important?

As space becomes more populated with people, weapons, industry, and scientific discovery, there will soon be many competing interests in outer space. Only 130 member nations of the UN have signed the "Space Treaty", meaning that many others have not. The Space Treaty is the only piece of comprehensive space law. However, there are many that have found loopholes within the treaty. Without a clear resolution on the boundaries of space and ways that it can be managed, the issue will only become more convoluted as space becomes crowded.

Issues to be addressed in a Resolution:

1. What counts as "Outer Space?"
2. If no one can "own" space under current law, can anyone therefore profit from space?
3. Where does airspace end and space begin?
4. What access can member nations who have not signed onto the "Space Treaty" have to outer space?
5. Can real estate in space be bought and sold?

Resources

Who owns what in outer space?

<https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2018/06/12/who-owns-what-in-outer-space>

Who owns space?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-34324443>

Lunar Real Estate

<https://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2019/06/13/space-travel-moon-resources-000899>

Space Law

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties.html>

2021 TOPIC:

ARTIC TRADE ROUTES

Topic Summary and Background:

The adventure of blazing a new trail has always motivated spirited inventors and innovators since the dawn of time. The shipping industry has always been a seasonal adventure in the arctic north as shipping lanes and ports freeze over in the winter months. However, ice breaking ships have turned shipping into a year-round sport thus changing the way that international commerce is carried out.

Why this is important?

Russia has laid specific claim to its shipping routes through the Arctic Ocean. However, man-made climate change has led to significant melting and recession of the Arctic Ice caps, thus making arctic a viable shipping opportunity. Many nations are looking to cash in on the new opportunities for a northern shipping route, however, that would only lead to the further depletion of the polar ice cap. A decision needs to be made on whether a polar ice cap is more important than an arctic shipping lane.

Issues to be addressed in a Resolution:

1. What takes priority: new shipping lanes or preservation of polar ice caps?
2. What environmental impact do ice breaking ships have on the arctic ice?
3. What opportunities exist for international commerce with an arctic shipping lane?
4. What alternatives exist for bypassing an arctic shipping route?

Resources

Ice melt opens new shipping lanes

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/28/melting-arctic-ice-opens-new-route-from-europe-to-east-asia>

<https://globalsecurityreview.com/arctic-new-maritime-shipping-route/>

Transpolar Passage

<https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/the-arctic-shipping-route-no-one-s-talking-about>

Northern Sea Passage

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Sea_Route

Container ship breaks through Arctic Ice

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-45271766>

Sulfur in Marine Fuels

<http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Sulphur-2020.aspx>

Shrinking Polar Ice Caps

<http://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews/2021/01/ho-ho-ho-hum-december/>

2021 TOPIC: PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF RELIGIOUS SOURCES

Topic Summary and Background:

Religious demonstrations have been a part of social and religious life (and even political life) in countries around the world for centuries. Regardless of continent or theological belief, many have gathered for the sake of commemorating a theological event. Each year, these celebrations draw spectators from miles around- sometimes even from around the world, to take part in these celebrations. Many of them are wildly popular, such as Mardi Gras or Carnival. These traditions are old and are part of the social fabric of the regions where they are held.

Why this is important?

The world has become increasingly secular in the 20th and 21st centuries. Religious practices and public celebrations have come under increasing scrutiny from bystanders. Catholic parades or Muslim head coverings are being held with more disdain and criticism than ever before. While all can believe in and practice whatever faith they choose, there is increasing concern over whether those demonstrations have a place in town squares and in public places. Is it possible to have a uniform policy or statement on religious observance from the UN? Is the public sphere truly secular?

Issues to be addressed in a Resolution:

1. How can public displays of religious beliefs be tolerated in a secular government system?
2. Do religious displays interfere with non-establishment clauses?
3. Are religious displays protected under free speech?
4. Can religious observances or practices be legislated or prohibited by law?
5. Should religious symbolism or dress be allowed in government photo ID?

Resources

Religious Headwear in US Congress

<https://www.rollcall.com/news/politics/hats-congress-religious-qarb-exception>

Canadian Ban on Religious Headwear

<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-maimona-quebec-ban-religious-symbols-public-workplace-muslim-hijab-20190621-story.html>

European “Burka Bans”

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/14/headscarves-and-muslim-veil-ban-debate-timeline>

Corpus Christi Parades

<https://cruxnow.com/church-in-europe/2019/06/20/german-catholics-attend-corpus-christi-parades/>

Via Dolorosa

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_Dolorosa

2021 TOPIC: MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL BOARDERS

Topic Summary and Background:

Borders between regions, territories, kingdoms, or simply other groups of people have long been noted and fortified by parties on either side of the division line. Boundaries help us to compartmentalize our world. We know where we live, where we're going, and what we own all by how it falls on a map. These borders all around the world are noted on maps and globes and are studied by students and scholars around the globe. In recent years, the complexities of these borders has been noted and photographed for the world to see. Border policy and maintenance around the world has many different approaches and ideologies at stake.

Why this is important?

Border maintenance is a necessity to determine what government oversees pieces of territory and groups of people with laws and law enforcement. However, not all borders are monitored alike. The United States and Canada border is one of the longest international borders in the world without any sort of military supervision. However, the United States border with Mexico is a third of the length, but one of the most heavily fortified and controversial borders in the world. Organizations such as the European Union pride themselves on the flexibility and openness of their international borders, while other countries pride themselves on their ability to barricade themselves within their borders. International borders are subject to so many different methods and ideologies of security, that the current system is very confusing for travelers and citizens alike.

Issues to be addressed in a Resolution:

1. Should there be a uniform system for maintaining international borders?
2. Is it productive to run international borders through urban areas? Should borders exist in rural areas?
3. Are open border policies difficult to maintain? Do they threaten domestic security?
4. What protocols should exist to maintain border security? How can illegal border crossings be prosecuted?

Resources

Images of international borders

https://www.boredpanda.com/international-borders/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=organic

Border walls around the world

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/05/24/border-walls-berlin-wall-donald-trump-wall/553250002/>

EU Border Policies

<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/the-beginning-of-the-end-of-open-borders-in-europe>