



THE HISTORICAL SECURITY COUNCIL OF 1956

MEMBERS OF THE HISTORICAL SECURITY COUNCIL OF 1956

AUSTRALIA

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IRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF

PERU

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

SERBIA

UNITED KINGDOM

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

YUGOSLAVIA

HISTORICAL SECURITY COUNCIL OF 1956

The Historical Security Council (HSC) of 1956 will simulate the events of the world beginning on 1 May 1956. At the time, Dag Hammarskjöld was the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Historically, the key international security concerns at this time revolved around situations in the Middle East, the situation in South Africa, enforcement of armistice agreements, the right to self-determination, the effects of colonialism and post-colonialism, and disputes over United Nations representation for China. However, the Council may discuss any issue involving international peace and security. Representatives should have a broad knowledge of the world and world events as they stood on 1 May 1956. The Security Council can, at its discretion, involve other States or parties to the dispute on a particular topic. Possible parties to the dispute may include Israel, Jordan and Egypt.

The brief synopses presented here offer merely introductory coverage of prominent international issues that can direct representatives' continued research and preparation.

For each topic area, representatives should consider the following questions, which should assist them in gaining a better understanding of the issues at hand, particularly from their country's perspective:

- How did this conflict begin?
- Is this a new conflict or a re-ignition of a previous conflict?
- How have similar situations and conflicts been peacefully resolved?
- What State and regional actors are involved in this conflict? If there are non-State actors involved in a conflict, are there any States supporting them? If so, which ones?

THE PALESTINE QUESTION

With the assistance of UN mediation, the 1948 Arab-Israeli War officially ended when Israel, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt signed the 1949 Armistice Agreements. Pursuant to the agreements, Israel controls over 70 percent of the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River; Jordan controls the West Bank and East Jerusalem; and Egypt controls the Gaza Strip. The City of Jerusalem was intended to be an international city, but, at the end of the conflict, the Western half of the city was controlled by Israel, and the Eastern half was controlled by Transjordan, with neither side wanting to cede control of their portion. The parties intended that the Armistice agreements were only interim agreements until they could be replaced by a permanent agreement. A Palestinian state, as was originally part of the United Nations plan creating the Israeli state, was not established, and Arab states have since refused to grant recognition of Israel.

In 1949, the Security Council passed Resolution 73, to monitor the armistice and establish the United Nations Truce Supervision

Organization in Palestine (UNTSO). Despite the Armistice, armed conflict and political tensions continue in the region amid numerous violations of the agreement. Palestinian guerillas have made repeated incursions into Israel from the Gaza Strip, and Israel has responded with retaliatory attacks into Gaza. A major concern for Israel has been Jordan denying access to holy sites in East Jerusalem and Mount Scopus, in violation of the Armistice.

Meanwhile, on 11 December 1955 Israeli forces attacked and seized Syrian positions on the Northeast Corner of Lake Tiberias (also known as the Sea of Galilee). Israel claimed that the attack was an attempt to stop artillery attacks on Israeli fishing and police boats. On 19 January 1956, the Security Council passed Resolution 111 condemning the attack and calling for both sides to comply with their obligations under Armistice agreements with respect to the demilitarized zone.

In an effort to avert an Arab-Israeli arms race, the United States, United Kingdom and France entered the Tripartite Agreement in May 1950, committing to action both within and outside of the United Nations to prevent the violation of boundaries or armistice lines. Goals include preventing further violence, preventing stoppages of oil production and stopping the spread of Soviet communism to the region.

In response to the 750,000 Palestinian refugees that left Israel between 1946 and 1948, the United Nations General Assembly created the United Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in 1949. Currently, there are approximately 900,000 Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt.

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THE SITUATION IN EGYPT

In the aftermath of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Egyptian military suffered from inefficiency and corruption in the higher ranks, which contributed to low morale. By January 1952 tensions between the ruling Egyptian government and the military and the civilian population led to demonstrations and riots breaking out in Cairo. Demonstrators demanded an end to the British military presence in the country, the presence of foreigners and the government of King Farouk. In response to the violence, King Farouk ousted his Prime Minister, Moustafa El-Nahas, in January 1952. Despite attempts to appease the military and demonstrators, by 23 July the military had taken power, forcing King Farouk to abdicate his throne to his infant son, Prince Ahmad Fuad.

In the aftermath, a civilian cabinet was created, political prisoners were released from jails, censorship of the press was ended, elections were called for and plans for land reform were in the works. At the heart of the new government was the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) led by Lt. Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser, who became the president of Egypt in November 1954. A new constitution was ratified in 1956, giving the Egyptian president extraordinary powers.

In 1954, the United Kingdom and Egypt signed the Anglo-Egyptian Settlement of 1954, which called for the removal of all British military personnel by June 1956. The agreement does allow the UK to base forces in Egypt in an “emergency situation,” such as an attack on an Arab state or Turkey.

Complicating the relationship between the United Kingdom and Egypt is the Egyptian Government’s proposed project for the High Dam at Aswan, which would provide Egypt with a cheap source of electricity and allow cultivation and irrigation of new areas for expanded agricultural production. Despite the promise of economic benefit, the Egyptian government has been unable to finance this project on its own and has turned to the United States and the United Kingdom for financial assistance. Despite an Egyptian weapons deal with the Soviet Union, denouncements by the West and continued belligerence with the Israelis, the United States and United Kingdom have agreed to help finance the dam. The United States has been discussing providing \$1.3 billion to support the project that is estimated to take up to two decades to build. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has also made an offer of financing for the dam.

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THE SITUATION IN ALGERIA

On 1 November 1954 fighting broke out in the French territory of Algeria between Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), an Algerian separatist group, and the ruling French government. In response, French Prime Minister Pierre Mendes France ordered three battalions of French paratroopers into the territory to quell the violence. French newspapers immediately began suggesting that other Arab states had instigated the attacks.

By early December, the French military presence had swelled to over 70,000 personnel under the pretext of protecting the Algerian people against terrorism. By August 1955, FLN forces began conducting attacks on civilian targets. The French and their civilian para-military allies, the Pied-Noir, conducted retaliatory attacks that have left between 1,200 to 12,000 dead.

On 4 January 1955, Saudi Arabia formally asked the Security Council to consider the crisis. France considers this issue a domestic matter and any discussion of the situation in Algeria by the United Nations to be a violation of the Charter. They attempted to stop discussion of the issue in the Council by having allies such as Colombia remove the item from the agenda, but lost by one vote, and the issue was addressed in October 1955. France has indicated that they might leave the United Nations over the matter.

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THE QUESTION OF THE REPRESENTATION OF CHINA

The Republic of China is one of the original members of the United Nations, having ratified the United Nations Charter on 28 September,



1945. When the Chinese civil war ended in 1949, the Communist Party of China prevailed, establishing the People's Republic of China, claiming to be the legitimate government and controlling much of the mainland territory. The Republic of China retreated to the island of Taiwan and also claimed to be the legitimate government of all of China. The Republic of China continues to represent China in the United Nations; this has raised issues about the legitimacy of the Republic of China's representation of China at the United Nations.

In 1955, the Security Council invited a representative of the People's Republic of China to participate in the Council's discussion of the issue of UN representation and address the possibility of an invasion of Taiwan. Since then, there has been continued conflict between the People's Republic of China and the Democratic Republic of China, including shelling, air raids and anti-aircraft action, and competing claims of legitimacy.

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DECOLONIZATION

Following the Second World War, an increasing number of nations and peoples sought to exercise the right to self-determination laid out in the United Nations Charter. Through the late 1940s and early 1950s, a number of former colonial territories sought and obtained independence, spurring many non-self-governing peoples to also seek independence. These trends continued into the early months of 1956. Sudan became independent on 1 January 1956, and as of May, Cyprus, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria are seeking independence.

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ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS

In addition to its function of maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council recommends the admission of new Member States to the General Assembly. This is a critical step in the process of admitting new Member States into the United Nations. The admission of new Member States also helps the United Nations and the Security Council maintain international peace and security. As such, during both times of relative peace and those of international unrest, the Security Council may be required to review applications for potential Member States and may pass resolutions recommending admission of the applicant state to the General Assembly. As colonial territories gain independence, the Security Council's task of admitting new members to the United Nations remains a critical function of the Security Council. The recent increase in Member States has escalated regional tension over Council representation. The General Assembly experienced deadlock during non-Permanent Member Security Council elections over

whether The Philippines or Yugoslavia would replace Turkey on the Council. The deadlock broke on 20 December, 1955, when Yugoslavia won the election, months after the original balloting.

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