



# CHAPTER THREE

## THE HISTORICAL SECURITY COUNCIL OF 1956

### Members of the Historical Security Council of 1956:

Australia	Iran, Islamic	United States of
Belgium	Republic of	America
China	Peru	United Kingdom
Cuba	Union of Soviet	Yugoslavia
France	Socialist Republics	

### About the Historical Security Council

The 2007 American Model United Nations Historical Security Council (HSC) will simulate the events of the world beginning on 1 July 1956. The key international security concerns of this time revolve around the situations in the Middle East, with the Palestine question and continuing Arab-Israeli hostilities; South Africa, including the race conflict and issues with people of Indian origin residing in that country; colonial issues in Algeria, Cyprus and many other areas seeking independence; and continued disputes and recognition issues between the two Chinas. The Cold War struggles between the United States and the Soviet Union continue as a constant undercurrent in the world of international politics.

In 1956, Dag Hammarskjöld was the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dwight Eisenhower the US President and Nikita Khrushchev the Soviet Premier. The Shah's government was in power in Iran, Batista's Cuba was in the American sphere of influence, and the Republic of China (on Formosa/Taiwan), rather than the mainland People's Republic of China, was officially represented in the United Nations. Cold War tensions were progressively growing at this time, and decolonization, its creation of many new States and subsequent expansion of the United Nations, was moving into full swing. Issues of "Palestine" revolved around continued violations of the armistice which followed the 1948 war, and the only issues involving "Palestinians" were their status as refugees. There were "internal" conflicts in many countries in this time period (South Africa, Algeria, Morocco, etc.), but most never reached the Security Council, or were discussed with no action taken, due to the powerful patronage of one or more of the Permanent Members.

AMUN's HSC is unique not only in its topics, but also in its treatment of those topics. History and time are the HSC's media and those media are flexible. In the simulation, the HSC will preempt history from the time the Council's simulation begins. History will be as it was written until the moment the Council convenes, 1 July, 1956. From that moment forward, however, *Council members exercise free will based on the range of all the choices within their national character and upon the capabilities of their governments.*

Effective role playing for an HSC Member State will not be just a rote replay of national decisions as they evolved in 1956. Indeed, the problems of the era may not transpire as they once did, and this itself will force active evaluations - and reevaluations - of national

policies. Beyond this, it cannot be said that the policy course a government made in 1956 was necessarily the most wise. While rote replays must by definition be in character, it is not a guarantee that, given a second opportunity to look at events, any given national government would do things exactly the same way twice. History is replete with the musings of foreign ministers and heads of state pining for "second chances."

It will be the job of Council Representatives to actively involve their countries' national policies and national capabilities in solutions to the problems and issues which may not have had adequate contemporary resolutions. There is almost always more than one alternative choice in any situation.

In particular, the international community has often chosen not to actively involve itself in many regional disputes or political crises where it might have shown greater involvement. The UN itself has often been but a bystander to regional or international conflict. This inability or unwillingness to actively work toward solutions of crises was rarely more evident than during the late years of colonialism and early years of the Cold War. Representatives will need to decide what changes, if any, could have been made to the Security Council's posture on the various issues.

While national governments often scoffed at international "meddling" in what they felt to be national policies or disputes, this in no way lessens the responsibility of Council members to make the effort and find ways to actively involve themselves in crisis solution. Accomplishment of this task, however, must come without violating the bounds of the Member States' national characters. This year's simulation will have the dichotomy of many regional crises being treated as "internal" by the superpowers, and other crises which are so global in nature that the UN must become involved.

Representatives should approach these issues based on the events that led up to mid-1956, and should do their research accordingly. In studying their role playing assignments, *it is strongly recommended that research be done on these topics using timely materials.* The world has changed dramatically in the past 50 years, but none of these changes will be evident within the chambers of the HSC. While histories of the subject will be fine for a general overview, Representatives should pursue periodicals from early- to mid-1956 to most accurately reflect the world view at that time. These periodicals, which can be easily referenced in a *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature* or the *New York Times Index*, should provide a much better "historical perspective" and "feel for the times" than later historical texts.

The HSC simulation will follow a flexible timeline based on events as they occurred, and modified by the Representatives' policy decisions in the Council. The Secretariat will be responsible for tracking the simulation and keeping it as realistic as possible.

In maintaining realism, Representatives must remember that they are role playing the individuals assigned as their nations' Representatives to the UN. Each person may have access to the up-to-the-minute policy decisions of the country, or may be relatively "in the dark" on the country's moment-to-moment actions in the world.

In this area, the AMUN Simulation Staff will frequently consult with HSC members. Representatives are welcome and encouraged, as their nation's spokesperson, to make whatever declarative statements they like. Declarative statements would include any comments or actions (including real or implied threats or deals) that an individual at the UN could normally make.

Representatives **must**, however, **always** consult with the Simulation Staff before making **ANY operational statements**. Operational statements would include announcements of the movements or actions of military forces, as well as any other actions which would have an effect **outside** of the UN. In these cases, the staff will act on behalf of the actual "home office" of your government.

### Other Involved Countries

From time to time, other countries will be involved in the deliberations of the HSC. Delegations representing these countries

will be notified in advance by the Secretariat, and should have one or more Representatives prepared to come before the HSC at any time. Because these countries will not be involved in all issues, it is **highly recommended** that the Representative(s) responsible for the HSC also be assigned to another committee/council, preferably with a second Representative who can cover that committee/council while they are away. A floating Permanent Representative would also be ideal for this assignment. These delegations will be asked to identify their Representative(s) to the HSC at registration, and to indicate where they can be reached if/when needed.

Some of the delegations which may be called before the HSC during the 1956 time frame include: Israel, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, South Africa, Algeria, Greece, Morocco, Hungary and India.

### Background Research

The following are brief synopses of the main international situations facing the Security Council on 1 July 1956. The prominent events of late 1955 and early 1956 are discussed, as well as some questions which will face the Security Council in the latter half of the year. This research is intended merely as a focal point for Representatives' continued exploration of the topics.

## Issues in the Middle East

The Palestine question dominated discussions of the Security Council in 1955 and early 1956. Among the issues were numerous violations of the 1948-49 General Armistice Agreements (GAA) by all sides, continued armed hostilities, and increasing numbers of Palestinian refugees. Secretary-General Hammarskjöld's trip to the Middle East in April and May of 1956 set the stage for continued Security Council negotiations in this area, including calls for renewed efforts at cease fires and compliance with the Armistice Agreements.

### The Palestine Question: Incidents on Lake Tiberias

Incidents on the disputed Lake Tiberias, located along the Armistice line, were the basis of conflicts between Syria and Israel in 1955 and early 1956. In December, 1955, Israeli armed forces attacked Syrian civilians and military personnel on the shores of Lake Tiberias from both the land and sea.

These attacks were documented by United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) personnel stationed in the region. The UNTSO reports noted that Israel deliberately violated provisions of the GAA by engaging in government-authorized military operations in the lake region. The report also noted, however, that Syrian authorities had, over the past year, interfered with legitimate Israeli commercial and civilian activities on the lake in violation of the GAA provisions. Israel claimed this violation as the basis for its military actions in December, but was rebuked by both the UNTSO report and the Security Council.

On 19 January 1956, the Security Council passed Resolution 111 (S/3538) condemning Israel for its attacks on Syria and calling for a cessation of hostilities and return to the terms of the GAA. The resolution passed unanimously, and all members of Council also

verbally condemned the Israeli attacks. While hostilities remain high in the region, no further attacks have been noted through 1 July.

### The Palestine Question: Status of Compliance with Armistice Agreements

The most difficult question facing the Council in 1955/56 involved the overall status of compliance with the GAA, in particular issues arising along the Egyptian and Israeli borders. Throughout 1955, the Council discussed several aspects of this portion of the Palestinian Question, focusing around Israeli and Egyptian military incursions into the Gaza Area, which was formally laid out in the GAA as a demilitarized zone (DMZ).

On 29 March 1956, the Council passed Resolution 106 (S/3378) which condemned recent attacks by the Israeli regular military against Egyptian regular military forces in the Gaza area. With tensions heightening, on 30 March the Council also passed Resolution 107 (S/3379), requesting the assistance of the UNTSO Chief of Staff in consulting with the governments of both parties on ways to lessen the strain in the area and maintain the Armistice provisions. Following the apparently successful efforts of the Chief of Staff in negotiations with Israel and Egypt, the Council on 8 September also passed Resolution 108 (S/3435), calling for a cease fire - which had already been accepted by the parties - and the free movement of UN observers in the Gaza area. While steps taken by the Council in 1955 led to verbal declarations of lessened hostility, actual levels of tension along the lines of demarcation remained high moving into 1956.

In 1956, the Council held discussions throughout March and April on the compliance with Armistice Agreements. Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria were all invited participants in these discussions. The general consensus at this time was that steps to reduce tensions taken in 1955 had not been carried out, and that further actions were needed. On 4 April 1956, the Council adopted

Resolution 113 (S/3575) on these issues. This document requested the Secretary-General's (SG) assistance in completing an "enforcement survey" of the GAA provisions, and in seeking discussions by all parties to adopt already accepted GAA measures. It also requested the withdrawal of all forces to demarcation lines, the continued freedom of movement of observers, and the creation of local arrangements, in each area, for the prevention of future incidents. The Council realistically noted the improbability of full compliance with the GAA, but stressed the importance of all parties' attempts to comply whenever possible.

From 10 April through 3 May 1956, SG Hammarskjold traveled to all of the countries involved in the Armistice Agreements, seeking the cooperation requested by the Council. In his reports of 2 May and 9 May, the SG noted that he regarded his mandate to include negotiations between the parties to reestablish full compliance with the Armistice Agreements, and he also reported generally positive results. While the Council had not specifically sought to include the SG in "negotiations," they did respond positively to the results of the trip.

The SG's reports noted that, while all parties accepted the GAA provisions as in their overall best interests, political and practical circumstances had led to the current state of affairs in the region. Namely, mutual mistrust, combined with an inability to guarantee compliance by any given party, was contributing greatly to tensions which all parties stated they would rather avoid. The SG received personal assurances from each party that they would unconditionally observe the cease fire clauses in the GAA and subsequent Council resolutions, reserving only the right to self defense. This specifically included the idea that the parties would not respond with military force to anything less than an attack by the regular military of another party.

As a show of good will on this issue, the SG also reported that Egypt and Israel, on 18 April, both sent orders which served to relieve tensions along the Gaza demarcation line. Additionally, Egypt and Israel provided specific assurances that they would seek to actively prevent crossing of the demarcation lines, including both the Gaza DMZ and the contested El Auja region, in which both sides had a military presence in violation of the GAA provisions.

The SG noted two key issues left unanswered by his trip. The first was the issue of Egyptian interference in Israeli shipping through the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran. This issue was first raised in September 1951, and was still on the table through early 1956. Both the harassment of Israeli vessels and the possible cut off of this vital shipping lane by Egypt were noted as potential sources of tension in the future. The second unanswered issue involved a recent Israeli plan for diversion of the Jordan River, which would be disastrous for Jordan and another likely precursor to renewed conflict in the region.

On 4 June 1956, the Council passed Resolution 114 (S/3605), commending the SG on this report, endorsing the view that full compliance with the GAA provisions as the key to peace in the region, and asking the SG to continue his Good Office efforts to ensure the cease fires and bring the parties closer to full Armistice compliance in the future.

## Issues in Africa

### The Situation in Algeria

The situation currently existing in Algeria involves possible threats to peace and flagrant violations of human rights undertaken by France in the colonial area of Algeria. This extremely contentious question is the most violent of many colonial situations occurring in 1956. At issue is the right of France to govern its territory of Algeria as it sees fit, including the violent repression of uprisings when needed.

In April of 1956, seventeen Asian and African Member States brought before the Security Council a request to discuss the situation, which was ultimately not brought to the floor. The question within the Council revolved around the body's competence to discuss an issue described by France as a domestic jurisdiction issue completely within France's sovereignty, versus its description by opponents as a threat to peace, flagrant violation of human rights, and question of legitimate self-determination for the peoples of Algeria.

In debate prior to bringing the topic to the floor, discussion revolved around France's policy of repression and extermination of the Algerian people, including a possible question of a violation of the Genocide Convention. The significant increase of French troops in Algeria in 1955 and early 1956, from approximately 150,000 to reports in excess of 400,000, was noted as the significant "threat to peace" in the area.

On the opposite side, France argued that the consideration of the situation in Algeria would violate the UN Charter, seeing the situation as an internal French matter. Incorporated as a department of France since its conquest in 1830, France thus considered Algeria an integral part of France rather than a mere colony. The French government asserted their occupation of Algeria began at a time when no other government was recognized as having sovereignty over the territory, and that no other State had challenged the legitimacy of the occupation for over 120 years. Thus, they asserted, it was their right to govern the territory in accordance with French law.

By a vote of seven to two (Iran, USSR) with two abstentions (China and Yugoslavia), the Algerian question was not included on the agenda in June 1956, although the situation continues as described.

### The Situation in South Africa

The treatment of peoples of Indian origin in South Africa is one of two issues in this area being confronted by the UN. With most discussions on the issue taking place in the General Assembly, the possibility of increased violence makes this an issue of interest for the Security Council. The key question revolves around the oppression, both official and incidental, of Indians remaining in South Africa following the colonial period. India made several attempts in the GA to resolve the issue, but South Africa felt strongly that this is a two party issue to be resolved between India and South Africa, with no outside intervention necessary.

A related question facing the UN in South Africa involved the policy of Apartheid officially practiced by the South African government, and its possible international repercussions in the region. Once again, the GA has been the main body to discuss Apartheid, but the Security Council keeps apprised of events as they occur. The deteriorating racial situation in South Africa, combined with the government's public refusal to redress the issues, creates a difficult

situation for the UN. South Africa went even further in formalizing Apartheid through various laws, including the Bantu Education Act of 1953, limiting and separating educational opportunities, and the Separate Registration of Voters Act of 1951.

There are three main schools of thought among UN Member States on the best way for the international community to deal with the Apartheid issue. The first holds that the General Assembly (and potentially the Security Council) should exert influence to encourage the removal of Apartheid policies. A second group doubts the GA's competence to discuss the issue, and seeks an International Court of Justice decision placing the Apartheid under the competence of the GA or the Council. A third group feels that a more conciliatory approach is needed, stressing negotiations without the need for formal condemnations or pressure, which they feel would be counterproductive. To date, outside of debating the issue, the UN has not gone further than attempting to create an atmosphere which would facilitate resolution of the matter through diplomatic discussions.

## Issues in Asia

### The Question of the Representation of China

Since the inception of the United Nations, the Republic of China has held the official Chinese seat at the UN, including in the Security Council. The rise of the People's Republic of China on the mainland, however, has raised an issue of legitimacy concerning this representation. This issue has been most strongly stressed by the Soviet Union in discussions before the Council. The discussion was first raised in January of 1955, when the Council invited a representative of the central government of the Peoples Republic of China to participate without a vote in its discussion of the issue. Complicating this issue are continued acts of violence between the forces of the two Chinas, particularly in the seas surrounding the island of Formosa/Taiwan. To date, the Council has decided to take no action on seating mainland China, and a representative of the Republic of China remains in the UN seat.

### The Situation in West Irian (West New Guinea)

West Irian (West New Guinea) is one of many colonial disputes in the world accompanied by minor international hostilities. In this case, West Irian, a colonial possession of the Netherlands, nevertheless its political status is currently an object of contention between the Netherlands and Indonesia. Indonesia feels that West Irian should either be ceded to Indonesia, or given the right of self-determination, and some hostilities have arisen over the issue.

## Other Issues

### The Situation in Cyprus

Cyprus is another colonial territory embroiled in a dispute over the right to self-determination. This colony of the United Kingdom, with a significant Greek population, is currently seeking independence from the UK. This has so far been denied due to the island's

significance as a military base in close proximity to the Middle East. Incidents which most concern the Security Council in this situation include a rise in terrorism on the island, apparently incited by Greece against the UK government on Cyprus, and continued calls by Greece and peoples inside Cyprus for the right to self-determination.

## Admission of New Member States

With many former colonial territories gaining their independence, and more expected in 1956, the Security Council has been dealing with the issue of admitting new member States to the United Nations. In 1955 alone, Resolution 109 (S/3509) of 19 December recommended the admission of sixteen new members to the UN: Albania, Jordan, Ireland, Portugal, Hungary, Italy, Austria, Romania, Bulgaria, Finland, Ceylon, Nepal, Libya, Cambodia, Laos and Spain. The question was addressed once in 1956, with Resolution 112 (S/3546) of 6 February recommending the admission of Sudan. The recent independence of Morocco and Tunisia may also lead to their request for admission in the near future. It should be noted that, following the submission of a request for admission to the Secretary-General, potential Member States must be recommended by the Security Council before they can be accepted into the UN by a vote of the General Assembly.

## Other Open Issues

Any issue on the world scene in 1956 will be fair game for discussion in the Historical Security Council. Representatives should have broad historical knowledge of the world situation as it stood through 1 July 1956.

## Bibliography:

Please note: The books and documents listed below provide both contemporary and historical information on the years 1955 and 1956. Any information provided for dates after 1 July 1956 will not be considered factual or appropriate in debates before the Council. It is strongly recommended that representatives to the Historical Security Council consult contemporary materials, especially periodical sources from late 1955 and the first half of 1956. These might include the *UN Chronicle*, the *New York Times*, *Time* magazine, and similar sources to get a better "feel" for the time in which the simulation occurs.

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SC Res 109 (S/3509): Admission of New Member States  
SC Res 108 (S/3435): The Palestine Question  
SC Res 107 (S/3379): The Palestine Question  
SC Res 106 (S/3378): The Palestine Question

## UN Documents, 1956:

SC Res 114 (S/3605): The Palestine Question  
SC Res 113 (S/3575): The Palestine Question  
SC Res 112 (S/3546): Admission of New Member States  
SC Res 111 (S/3538): The Palestine Question  
S/3609: Letter of 13 June from thirteen member States concerning Algeria  
S/3596: Report of 9 May by the Secretary-General on Compliance with Armistice Agreements  
S/3594: 2 May progress report of the Secretary-General  
S/3589: Letter of 12 April from seventeen member States concerning Algeria  
A/3120: Letter from Greece to the GA concerning Cyprus