



THE GOENKA MUN' 23

SUSTAINING IDEAS | CREATING CHANGE



UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

“ DELIBERATION ON THE REDEFINING OF
TERRITORIAL LANDSCAPE WITH
REFERENCE TO HISTORICAL
BACKGROUNDS.”

BACKGROUND GUIDE

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Greetings!

With immense pleasure to serve as your Executive Board, we welcome you to the simulation of the United Nations General Assembly, held at The Goenka MUN 2023. Our committee shall discuss a dynamic agenda:

Deliberation on redefining territorial landscapes with references to historical backgrounds.

The major aim of this document is to serve as a course of your understanding and further research, but it is not restricting creation of new horizons and expanding the scope of the debate. This agenda seeks theoretical as well as logical attention and we request you to sincerely read the document so that all delegates at least have a common ground of understanding.

Further we request you all not to treat this guide as a source of citations in the committee as the guide is a mixture of arguments and facts at times constructed to ease up the understanding. The agenda items in hand have been long discussed in different phases of history and in the present scenario, we as general global citizens are trying to ponder upon the same. Keeping this agenda, we as the Executive Board wish to see this conference not any generic platform but as an applicability of reality.

Researching is the key element for the committee rather than just “Googling up”. Try to apply your rational and logical approach rather than submitting directly to the resort of picking up random words and speaking to them. This background guide is not exhaustive in nature. All delegates are encouraged to go beyond the confines of this document. Please feel free to reach out to any of us for doubts or guidance- we’d be more than happy to help in every way possible to make this an unforgettable learning experience for you. We shall, to the best of our abilities, ensure that a fair simulation is conducted and there is ample scope for fruitful and meaningful discussion. Wishing you all the best! Happy researching!

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Yours sincerely,

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IMPORTANT POINTS TO BE KEPT IN MIND

1. Information contained in this research brief does not possess any evidentiary value, nor does it qualify as proof of the occurrence/non-occurrence or existence/non-existence of any fact. The brief is meant only to provide the participants with a modicum of information upon which further research can be built and does not in any manner whatsoever reflect the views or political leanings of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson or Rapporteur. They shall at all points in time maintain neutrality and do not have any political affiliations.
2. There would be a Zero Plagiarism policy followed by the Executive Board for all written communications (Chits, Documents, etc). Kindly note, however use of citations would not qualify as plagiarism and would thus be permissible.

PROOF/EVIDENCE ACCEPTED IN THE COMMITTEE

1. News Sources: a. REUTERS – Any Reuters article which clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council. (<http://www.reuters.com/>)

b. State operated News Agencies – These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any Country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are, i. RIA Novosti (Russia) <http://en.rian.ru/> ii. IRNA (Iran) <http://www.irna.ir/ENIndex.htm> iii. BBC (United Kingdom) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/> iv. Xinhua News Agency and CCTV (P.R. China) <http://cctvnews.cntv.cn/>

2. Government Reports: These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. a. Government Websites like the State Department of the United States of America (<http://www.state.gov/index.htm>) or the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (<http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm>)

b. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India (<http://www.mea.gov.in/>), People's Republic of China (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>), France(<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/>), Russian Federation(http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/main_eng)

c. Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Reports <http://www.un.org/en/members/> (Click on any country to get the website of the Office of its Permanent Representative) d. Multilateral Organizations like the NATO (<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>), ASEAN (<http://www.aseansec.org/>), OPEC(http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/),etc.

PROOF/EVIDENCE ACCEPTED IN THE COMMITTEE

3. UN Reports: All UN Reports are considered credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the Security Council. a. UN Bodies: Like the SC (<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/>), GA (<http://www.un.org/en/ga/>), HRC (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/HRCIndex.aspx>) etc.

b. UN Affiliated bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency (<http://www.iaea.org/>), World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org/>), International Monetary Fund (<http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>), International Committee of the Red Cross (<http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp>), etc.

c. Treaty Based Bodies like the Antarctic Treaty System (<http://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm>), the International Criminal Court (<http://www.iccpi.int/Menus/ICC>)

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA

Redefining territorial landscapes with reference to historical backgrounds involves a comprehensive examination of geographical boundaries and territories in a region, taking into account historical events, cultural heritage, and past territorial disputes. This process aims to address historical grievances, promote peaceful resolution of conflicts, and foster cooperation among communities and nations. This process can be complex and politically sensitive, as it touches upon identity, sovereignty, resources, and the distribution of power among various communities and nations.

DEFINITION OF TERRITORIAL LANDSCAPE

Territorial landscape refers to the physical and geographical features of a particular region or area that define its boundaries and jurisdiction. It encompasses the natural and human-made elements that contribute to the demarcation and identification of a specific territory. Territorial landscapes can vary significantly in size and complexity, ranging from small, localized territories to vast, multinational regions.

IMPORTANCE OF HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

Historical backgrounds play a crucial role in shaping territorial boundaries, as they provide the context and rationale for how borders have been defined and evolved over time. The importance of historical backgrounds in this process can be understood through the following aspects:

- 1. Colonial Legacy:** Many of today's territorial boundaries are the result of colonial history. During the era of colonialism, European powers often drew lines on maps to divide territories among themselves, often disregarding the existing ethnic, cultural, and tribal divisions on the ground. As a result, post-colonial states inherited these artificial boundaries, leading to potential conflicts and challenges in nation-building.
- 2. Ethnic, Cultural, and Linguistic Factors:** Historical backgrounds often reveal the demographic and cultural aspects of a region. People sharing common ethnic, cultural, or linguistic identities have historically inhabited specific areas. Territorial boundaries are often drawn to include or exclude certain ethnic or cultural groups based on historical settlements and migration patterns.
- 3. Conquests and Wars:** Throughout history, conquests, and wars have played a significant role in shaping territorial boundaries. Victorious nations would expand their territories, while defeated ones might lose land or be forced to cede territory as part of peace treaties. These historical events have a lasting impact on current borders.
- 4. Treaties and Diplomacy:** Diplomatic agreements and treaties between nations have been instrumental in defining territorial boundaries. Historical treaties, like the Treaty of Versailles, Treaty of Tordesillas, or the Sykes-Picot Agreement, have defined borders in different parts of the world and have had far-reaching consequences on the geopolitical landscape.

IMPORTANCE OF HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

5. Shifts in Political Power: The rise and fall of empires and states can lead to significant changes in territorial boundaries. As political power shifts from one entity to another, borders may expand, contract, or be redrawn based on historical conquests and territorial ambitions.

IMPACT OF COLONIALISM AND IMPERIAL POWERS

The impact of colonialism and imperial powers on the current geopolitical landscape is profound and far-reaching. Colonialism refers to the practice of establishing and maintaining colonies in other territories, often with the aim of exploiting their resources and dominating their populations. Imperial powers, on the other hand, are countries or empires that sought to expand their influence and control over other regions.

Here are some key impacts:

Territorial Borders and Boundaries:

Colonial powers drew artificial borders that often disregarded existing ethnic, cultural, and historical divisions among indigenous populations. The arbitrary division of territories led to the creation of nation-states with diverse and sometimes conflicting identities, resulting in long-standing border disputes and ethnic tensions.

Cultural and Social Fragmentation:

Colonialism disrupted traditional social structures and cultural practices in many regions, causing fragmentation and loss of indigenous identities. Forced assimilation and cultural suppression were common practices, leading to a legacy of cultural disconnection and identity crises among affected populations.

Resource Exploitation and Economic Imbalances:

Colonial powers exploited the resources of the territories they colonized, leading to economic imbalances that persist to this day. Many former colonies still struggle with economic dependency and unequal trade relationships that were established during colonial times.

ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS-TERRITORIAL DISPUTES

International organizations play a crucial role in addressing territorial disputes between countries. These organizations serve as platforms for diplomatic engagement, conflict resolution, and the promotion of peaceful settlements. Their involvement can significantly contribute to reducing tensions, preventing escalation into armed conflicts, and fostering cooperation among nations. Here are some key ways in which international organizations play a role in addressing territorial disputes:

- 1. Mediation and Negotiation:** International organizations often act as mediators or facilitators in negotiations between conflicting parties. Their impartiality and expertise in conflict resolution can help create an environment conducive to productive dialogue and finding mutually acceptable solutions.
- 2. Legal Arbitration:** In some cases, territorial disputes may have legal dimensions, and international organizations can provide mechanisms for legal arbitration. International courts or tribunals may be called upon to interpret relevant treaties or international law to determine the rightful ownership of disputed territories.
- 3. Normative Frameworks:** International organizations can offer normative frameworks and guidelines that guide the behavior of nations involved in territorial disputes. These norms promote peaceful resolution, respect for sovereignty, and adherence to established rules and principles.
- 4. Confidence-Building Measures:** International organizations may recommend and facilitate confidence-building measures between disputing parties. These measures can include joint development projects, cultural exchanges, or military de-escalation to build trust and foster cooperation.

OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT TREATIES AND CONVENTIONS RELATED TO TERRITORIAL BOUNDARIES

The international community has developed various treaties and conventions that address issues related to territorial boundaries and the delimitation of national territories. These agreements seek to provide a framework for resolving disputes, promoting peaceful coexistence, and upholding the principles of international law. Below is an overview of some relevant treaties and conventions in this context:

Interpretation, and termination of treaties between states. It establishes rules Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969):

The Vienna Convention is a cornerstone treaty that governs the creation, and procedures for treaty-making and helps regulate the process of defining territorial boundaries through agreements.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (1982):

UNCLOS is a comprehensive treaty that addresses various aspects of ocean governance, including territorial sea, exclusive economic zones (EEZs), and the continental shelf. It provides rules for delimiting maritime boundaries between neighboring states and aims to prevent conflicts over marine resources.

Geneva Conventions :

The Geneva Conventions comprise a series of international treaties that establish rules for humanitarian treatment during armed conflicts. While not directly addressing territorial boundaries, these conventions have provisions concerning the protection of civilians in occupied territories.

Paris Peace Treaties :

The Paris Peace Treaties were a series of agreements signed after World War I and World War II to settle territorial disputes and redefine national boundaries in Europe and other regions affected by the wars.

CASE STUDY 1:

THE BALKANS

The breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s led to the redrawing of territorial landscapes in the Balkans. The historical context of ethnic and religious tensions, along with the legacy of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires, played a significant role. Several new countries emerged, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia, each defined by their historical and cultural backgrounds. However, the process was not without challenges, as ethnic divisions and disputed territories in regions like Kosovo continue to be sources of tension.

CASE STUDY 2:

SOUTH SUDAN

The secession of South Sudan from Sudan in 2011 is another example of redefining territorial landscapes. The division was the result of decades-long conflict between the predominantly Arab-Muslim North and the predominantly African-Christian South. Historical borders drawn by colonial powers contributed to the tensions, leading to a referendum in which the people of South Sudan voted for independence. Despite achieving sovereignty, the new nation faces numerous challenges, including internal conflicts and issues of nation-building.

CASE STUDY 3:

ISRAEL-PALESTINE

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a long-standing example of redefining territorial landscapes with deep historical roots. Both Israelis and Palestinians have historical connections to the land, and the borders have shifted multiple times due to wars and peace negotiations. The complexities of historical and religious ties make finding a mutually acceptable resolution to the territorial dispute extremely challenging.

QUESTIONS TO KICKSTART YOUR RESEARCH

Q1. What are some of the challenges faced in the redrawing of territorial landscapes, and how can these challenges be addressed to ensure a fair and just outcome?

Q2. How do economic considerations, such as access to resources and trade routes, influence the redefinition of territorial boundaries?

Q3. How can the international community support nations and communities affected by territorial disputes during the process of redefinition?

Q4. How can lessons from successful cases of territorial redefinition be applied to ongoing conflicts and disputes in different parts of the world?