



SECURITY COUNCIL

Chairs: Yuhong Liu, Beckett White

Topic 1: The Issue of Separatist Movements

Videos: China and Taiwan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQTtwh2GRME>

Catalan: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__mZkioPp3E

Kurdish: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZB9HqoHaaU>

Articles: Catalonia: <https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/06/if-catalonia-goes-independent-these-places-could-be-next.html>

China and Taiwan:

https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/03/world/asia/trump-taiwan-and-china-the-controversy-explained.html?_r=0

Kurdistan: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29702440>

Overview:

The Issue of Separatism: Taiwan

Taiwan is an island off the southern coast of China that has been governed independently from mainland China since 1949. The *People's Republic of China (PRC)* views the island as a province, while Taiwan—a territory with its own democratically elected government supported by the United States—believes that it is an independent and sovereign state. The ongoing dispute is essentially an extension of the “two China” problem, which involves three powerful parties- China, Taiwan and the U.S. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the issue, the priority task is to understand each side's position. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, the independence of Taiwan is a question left over by the civil war in China, and it is purely China's internal affair. However, the United States does not accept Beijing's contention that the island of Taiwan, or its government and people, is parts of China. However, it should be noticed that the current President Trump has made a phone call with PRC's chairman Xi Jinping and made a clear statement that the United States would honor the “One China” policy. Though the issue is intricate in international relation arenas, the recognition and legitimization of Taiwan's independence is possible to achieve through a two-state solution.

The Issue of Separatism: Catalonia

The Catalan Independence movement is a political process historically derived from Catalan nationalism, which seeks independence from Spain. In 1979 Spain made official a constitution that gave Catalonia a considerable amount of autonomy, but made it illegal for any region to secede. Historically, the Catalans have sought more autonomy in finance and language from the rest of Spain. However, in recent years the focus has shifted on being a recognized independent nation. In 2010 the Spanish Supreme Court ruled that 14 points within the proposed statute of autonomy of 2006 were unconstitutional. The consequent struggle by the central government and Catalan nationalists, fueled by austerity measures and the global market crash of 2008, led to the political movement that exists today. Several symbolic referendums for independence have been held. In 2017 a non-binding resolution took place, which showed 90% of Catalans wanted independence, but with only a 40% turnout. A more demonstrative figure is the one of the regional elections held in 2017, which showed 48% pro-independent votes (71 seats in parliament) and 52% constitutionalist votes (64 seats). Although the current pro-independence parties actively seek a referendum that is binding, the Spanish constitutional court says that it is illegal to redraw political boundaries and declares any attempt as “rebellious” or “seditious” behavior, punishable by law. Currently the “transition laws” passed by the Catalan government are also declared to be illegal, but form the base of the pro-independence “legal” framework supported by pro-independence parties such as CUP, JuntsPerCat and ERC. For now it has remained a matter of internal politics in Spain, without any past UN resolutions making any reference. The relevant players in this issue are Spain, Catalonia and the EU, which is a major barrier to Catalan independence. It is uncertain what the consequences of a solution are.

The Issue of Separatism: Kurdistan

Although the Kurdish people are split across four different countries in the middle east (Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey), only in Syria and Iraq do Kurds have autonomy. Iraq is the only country where the Kurds have held a referendum regarding independence (2017), with a 72% turnout and 92% of voters saying “yes.” The referendum, like the Catalan one, was both non-binding and not recognized by the constitution of given country. Both the KRG (Iraqi Kurds) and the Rojava (Syrian Kurds) have their own armies (Peshmerga and YPG/YPJ respectively) and already have a high level of control of their own affairs. They sell petroleum and run their own social services, barely relying on their respective central governments. It can be said that both regions are *de facto* independent in many ways. However, as seen this year with the Iraqi independence referendum, any push for unilateral independence in the future will likely bring a response: economic isolation, the establishment of a no fly zone or even military intervention. The situation in Syria is more difficult, as Bashar Al Assad’s government is currently embroiled in a civil war and cooperates with the Kurds occasionally, as seen recently against Turkey. It is

unclear what Al Assad will do once the war ends, but it is likely that Rojava will continue to act semi-independently without being a sovereign and recognized nation. The Kurds do have some strong legitimacy for achieving independence. Using UN criteria for the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the Kurds can claim to have suffered genocide, qualify for the right to self-determination, and the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation (all of which show legitimate claims to become an independent nation). For the UN to recognize Kurdistan is highly unlikely in the foreseeable future: an independent Kurdistan would have many enemy nations and little leverage in being recognized globally. It is important to note that some countries actively support the idea of an independent Kurdistan, such as Israel, and others provide material support but do not support independence, such as the United States. Also, the Russian Federation sees an independent Kurdistan as a threat to its regional allies (Iran and Syria).

Topic 2: The Militarization of Outer Space

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjLns8uREz4>

Article: <http://www.globalissues.org/article/69/militarization-and-weaponization-of-outer-space>

Overview:

“The exploration and use of outer space... shall be for peaceful purpose and shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development” advocated by the UN. However, today, the world is faced with Space Arms Race; outer space --- generally taken as everything higher than 100 km above the earth’s surface --- is becoming an emerging arena for technological advancement including development and deployment of military weapons. Outer space has been militarized since the earliest launches of communication satellites, which can be employed to arrange prompt global strike capability - the ability to deliver a precise weapon airstrike anywhere in the world with a short time interval. To counter such potential war, the United Nations has made the prevention of an arm race in outer space a priority on its agenda. However, even though the UN has established a legal framework regarding to the issue, it should be recognized that the existing legal regime does not guarantee the prevention of an arm race in space. Meanwhile, another issue with the prevention of militarization of outer space is that the term “space weapon” is difficult to define - GPS is great for locating when one’s lost, but it can also be used by militaries to target and bomb other countries. Thus, to effectively target the issue, the term must be defined and agreed upon member states.

Topic 3: Addressing the Issue of Widespread Violence in Latin America

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3NTUJVwTIw>

Article: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Overview:

In Latin America, crime is a major obstacle to social progress. Millions of victims are attacked with firearms, predominantly in major cities. There is a literal state of lawlessness. Mostly revolving around illicit activities, crime in Latin America is operated from within impoverished communities. Apart from toll of human life, the rise in crime and violence has imposed significant social consequences. Currently, the world's most violent city is San Pedro Sula in Honduras. Leading media sources label it the "murder capital of the world." It is tragic that some Latin American capitals have a higher murder rate per day than some war zones around the world, demonstrating the magnitude of the pandemic. Government response to organized crime has varying degrees of success, such as but not limited to, the sending of the military which triggers massive firefights on the streets. As impoverished communities rely on the money made from the drug trade in order to survive (governments can barely provide and support ghettos and less economically developed regions) an high crime rates (the violent nations in Latin America are a major problem for economic reform). Foreign governments, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, order their citizens not to travel to certain Latin American nations because of the issues previously raised. The presence of major crime in Latin America is the main reason why the nations of the bloc are struggling which is why UN intervention is necessary to establish sustainable development goals.