Dear Delegates,

My name is Peter Zhang and I have the pleasure of serving as your Director for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC. I am a junior at St. George’s School and have been attending MUN conferences since Grade 7. Along with my Chair, Alishba Irfan, and Assistant Director, Emmalyn Tsang, I am excited to meet and work with you all over the course of the weekend.

MUN is a wonderful platform to be able to explore complex real-world issues and to be able to discuss them from different perspectives. Through intense debates, I have gotten to understand the world—and the countries that constitute it—so much better. With MUN, I have found confidence in public speaking, garnered the ability to articulate my thoughts and arguments, and above all, I have learned to listen to the perspectives of others and make compromises with them.

The two topics for UNODC are Legislation Surrounding Drugs and Fighting Terrorism on New Frontiers. These topics are relatively large in scope and broad in potential solutions. Nonetheless, they are pertinent to every single country: you will find your vested interest in solving the problems illustrated under these two topics. I hope all delegates will have something to contribute to the discussions and am confident that the committee will find itself creating successful solutions to both topics in no time.

I wish you luck in your research and am excited to see what developments will occur over the course of our weekend together. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to find me at unodc@vmun.com.

Best,

Peter Zhang
UNODC Director
Position Paper Policy

What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is a brief overview of a country’s stance on the topics being discussed by a particular committee. Though there is no specific format the position paper must follow, it should include a description of your positions your country holds on the issues on the agenda, relevant actions that your country has taken, and potential solutions that your country would support.

At Vancouver Model United Nations, delegates should write a position paper for each of the committee’s topics. Each position paper should not exceed one page, and should all be combined into a single document per delegate.

For the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, position papers are not mandatory but highly recommended, and required for a delegate to be considered for an award.

Formatting

Position papers should:

— Include the name of the delegate, his/her country, and the committee

— Be in a standard font (e.g. Times New Roman) with a 12-point font size and 1-inch document margins

— Not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders

— Include citations and a bibliography, in any format, giving due credit to the sources used in research (not included in the 1-page limit)

Due Dates and Submission Procedure

Position papers for this committee must be submitted by midnight on February 7th, 2020. Once your position paper is complete, please save the file as your last name, your first name and send it as an attachment in an email, to your committee’s email address, with the subject heading as your last name, your first name — Position Paper.

Please do not add any other attachments to the email or write anything else in the body.

Both your position papers should be combined into a single PDF or Word document file; position papers submitted in another format will not be accepted.

Each position paper will be manually reviewed and considered for the Best Position Paper award.

The email address for this committee is unodc@vmun.com.
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The Illicit Drug Trade

Overview

For decades, the use of drugs has garnered controversy in cultures and societies around the world. Today, most drugs are used for their medicinal and palliative properties, such as reducing symptoms of debilitating chronic illnesses and, in some cases, treating or preventing diseases previously thought fatal. Conversely, a growing number of people are using drugs recreationally to achieve a “high”—a feeling of pleasure or euphoria. While many drugs are derived from naturally-occurring plants, these substances can also be synthetically produced in laboratories; an augmented ability to manipulate these substances, while beneficial to medical fields, has unfortunately aided the growth of the world’s illicit drug trade.

Despite their benefits, drugs can also pose serious health risks to their users. Regardless of whether their consumption is for recreational or medicinal purposes, inappropriate or excessive drug use can induce unwanted implications to its users. Substances that have become commonplace, such as alcohol or tobacco, have drastically increased the susceptibility of individuals to contract cardiovascular, respiratory, and cognitive diseases. Furthermore, the side effects of many drugs can seriously damage an individual’s mental stability and memory. Therefore, most governments around the world attempt to control drugs to protect the public.

The debate around drug legislation is contentious because of the perceived benefits of controlling illicit substances. Proponents of drug legislation argue that enacting legislative measures will minimize citizens’ contact with dangerous drugs while subsequently generating social stigma surrounding drug usage; it is thought that if drug usage is condemned by the law, it would prompt a negative public opinion that would discourage individuals from using these substances altogether. However, governments who enacted legislation against recreational drug use often found the matter to be far more complex. In reaction to legislation, the illicit drug trade resorted to going underground and governments instead found thriving black markets operating within their countries. Particularly within more economically developed countries, a high demand for drugs—typically opiates and psychoactive substances—fuels substantial growth in what most refer to as the drug trade.

Still, differences exist between decriminalization, as is the case with Portugal, and legalization, as it is with Canada. Decriminalization involves the reduction or removal of prison sentences and criminal records for those who would have previously been convicted of crimes related to a specific drug—individuals can no longer be prosecuted for the possession or use of previously banned substances. However, decriminalization typically does not allow for the sale or commercial production of drugs, with restrictions placed on these activities. On the other hand, legalization fully allows for the production, sale, transportation, and use of certain drugs, with less regulation or restriction involved.

The policies that governments have enacted to combat the drug trade have had far-reaching consequences both domestically and internationally. In order to tackle the issue holistically, many underlying issues such as border security and the complexities of international smuggling must be addressed. Furthermore, the drug trade is

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entwined with the lives of many individuals worldwide. From the financial reliance of farmers in developing
countries to the plight of drug addicts and the inaccessible nature of rehabilitation, legislation aimed at regulating
drug usage may sometimes hurt more individuals than it helps. As part of the UNODC’s mandate, there is a
responsibility to assist nations in creating comprehensive legislation, both domestic and foreign policy-related,
that will not only address all these concerns but also prevent those implicated by the drug trade from becoming
collateral damage.

Timeline

2000 BCE — The earliest physically evidenced use of drugs by humans, most notably hallucinogens, in the
ancient civilizations of China, India, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Central America.²

1611 — Ottoman Sultan Murad IV bans tobacco, alcohol, and coffee on pain of death. Similar laws are enacted
around the same time period in Russia, Persia, the Vatican, Denmark, Austria, France, and Bhutan. This
coincides with King James I of England’s publication of the Counterblaste to Tobacco in 1604.³

1690 — The Distilling Act is passed in England, lifting restrictions that prevented individuals from distilling grain
spirits in the country. Duties are levied upon sales to help fund the Nine Years’ War.

1839 – 42 — The First Opium War occurs, in which the British force upon China what the latter has declared as
an illegal opium trade.

January 29, 1919 — The 18th Amendment constitutionally outlaws the production, transportation, importation,
and sale of alcohol in the United States.

1920 – 1933 — The Prohibition era takes place. The sale of alcohol is banned in the United States, though
possession is still legal in some states.

June 18, 1971 — In a media address, President Nixon declares drug abuse “public enemy number one,” calling
for Congress to divert more funding towards the prevention of addiction and the rehabilitation of drug abusers.
As a result of this policy, African American and Latinx individuals have been disproportionately targeted by
police and have subsequently been subjected to higher incarceration rates than other American citizens.⁴

July 2001 — Portugal decriminalizes all illicit drug substances in an effort to reduce drug-related injuries, crimes,
and deaths.

March 4, 2014 — Washington, D.C. decriminalizes marijuana use and possession. In 2016, the State of California
follows suit and legalizes the drug as well.

² Will Dunham, "High Times in Ancient China Revealed in Funerary Cannabis Discovery," Reuters, June 13, 2019,
idUSKCN1TD2E9.
war-mass-incarceration-and-race-englishspanish.
October 17, 2018 — Canada legalizes recreational cannabis use in the country, and introduces bills to commute the sentences of some serving time for cannabis-related crimes.

Historical Analysis

For centuries, humans have been consuming substances like alcohol, tobacco, hallucinogens, and psychoactive substances. Archeological digs have found evidence of the use of a mushroom—amanita muscaria—and cannabis in ancient China. In India, hallucinogenic substances were found in a sacred beverage known as soma or haoma. Indigenous peoples in the Americas have long used peyote, a spineless cactus species, for its psychoactive properties. However, unlike its standard uses today, the original historically documented use of drugs in ancient civilizations was for religious and cultural purposes. During various religious and cultural ceremonies, individuals would consume plants that were known to contain high amounts of psychoactive compounds. The user, typically an elder, religious leader, or cultural figurehead, would then experience hallucinations that ancient peoples believed could provide the individual with insight into the world.

Throughout history, various substances—most notably alcohol, tobacco, and opioids—have been introduced, popularized, and then controlled or banned due to their negative effects. In England, the Distilling Act of 1670 was enacted to encourage individuals to distill their own beer and low spirits. When alcohol-related crimes spiked in cities such as London, this was attributed to the increased availability of unregulated alcohol in England. Consequently, in 1698, a subsequent Act was passed to regulate and restrict distillation practices. After tobacco was introduced to Europeans in the 15th century, the popularity of the substance gave rise to a new lucrative trade. The undeniable economic profit from the trade of both these substances only served to further propel its popularity, and by the 16th century, both tobacco and alcohol had become commonplace in European society. Nonetheless, some deviant nations saw the prolific rise of these substances not as an economic opportunity, but as a threat. The Ottoman Empire, for example, became proponents of the drug ban, drawing justification for it based on religious teachings. Individuals living in the Ottoman Empire were to abstain from the use of both alcohol and tobacco. According to the Ottoman authorities, alcohol was explicitly banned by Islamic scripture, and tobacco, with its mind-altering properties, is analogous to alcohol and necessitates the same abstinence.

Prohibition

In the late 19th century, the Prohibition Party was established in the United States to further the temperance movement—a social campaign that rallied against the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Throughout its tenure, the Party succeeded in petitioning many states and municipalities to ban the sale of alcohol. Its crowning achievement may very well have been the passing of the 18th Amendment: a constitutional ban on the production and sale of alcohol. The Prohibition era, as it was called, lasted for 13 years before finally ending with the Amendment’s repeal in 1933.

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6 Ibid.
7 Quran, 2:219.
Prohibition is widely regarded by historians as a failure in policy; critics of the Prohibition Party noted the lack of concrete evidence towards its policies' efficacy. The laws were structured to still allow alcohol owned prior to the ban to be stored and consumed by individuals. Furthermore, in reaction to the ban, bootlegging and related forms of organized crime ran rampant through many major cities. The pervasiveness of bootlegging severely jeopardized the safety of the general public; because it was so widespread, the federal government took to poisoning supplies of industrial-grade ethyl alcohol to make it toxic to humans. As alcohol continued to be produced and consumed, an estimated 10,000 people died of drinking denatured alcohol during the Prohibition era.

Consequently, the outlawing of legal alcohol sales redirected individuals to purchase alcohol illegally from organized crime outfits. These sales were then used to fund supply gangs and criminal activity, depriving the government of much-needed tax revenue. Prohibition policies were poorly planned and caused far more detriment than it was able to reduce alcohol consumption in the United States. The policies gave rise to criminals like Al Capone and severely undercut the government’s budgeting, while doing next to nothing in decreasing the availability of alcohol to individuals that were intent on acquiring it.

Decriminalization in Portugal
More recently, new research in the field of substance abuse has influenced many governments, urging many to reform drug legislation in their country. By the end of the 20th century, Portugal was suffering from a heroin crisis, where as much as one in every ten Portuguese were addicted to the drug. In response, Portugal decriminalized all drugs in the nation in 2001 and almost instantly saw a subsequent drop in overdose rates, HIV infections, and drug-related crime. The specifics of Portugal’s policy involved reduced and rehabilitative sentencing, commuting those who were already incarcerated for drug-related crimes, and legalizing the possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia. According to Susana Ferreira of The Guardian, the shift of Portugal’s statistics from despairing to promising merely reflects a cultural and social shift in the perception of drugs and drug use in the country. Addiction was no longer seen as a war to be waged, but rather as an epidemic that needs to be treated as a health crisis. The policies and initiatives that ensued followed this line of thought, and it empowered local organizations to further their efforts in harm reduction, rehabilitation, counselling, and therapy.

Cannabis Policies in Canada and the Netherlands
The Canadian government legalized cannabis in October of 2018. The federal government cited concerns with increased youth contact with marijuana and a flourishing illicit trade of the drug across the country as the chief stimulus behind this controversial piece of legislation. Although there remains competition in prices with surviving illegal dispensaries, online government-licensed retailers have opened to legally sell marijuana in various provinces. Because illegal marijuana dispensaries are of relatively low priority for law enforcement, there

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8 Wayne Hall, "What Are the Lessons of National Alcohol Prohibition in the United States, 1920-1933?" Addiction 105, no. 7 (June 8, 2010.

is an unlikely chance for crackdowns of illicit marijuana stores. As a result, the potential for gaining revenue from taxing marijuana sales is limited when illicit dispensaries are allowed to continue operating.

Amsterdam, widely known for its liberal and progressive policies, has seen a drastic reduction to the number of operating marijuana stores—known locally as “coffeeshops”—in the past twenty years. The number of shops has halved since 1995, largely a byproduct of the adoption of stricter regulations regarding where shops may operate in the Dutch capital. These restrictions were part of a scheme to clean up the city, with an emphasis on reducing the vast number of coffeeshops in Amsterdam’s red light district. The policy was put forth to placate conservative lawmakers in The Hague, while maintaining a sufficient reservoir of legally operating storefronts to keep citizens from resorting to illicit street deals. Especially in a city where many tourists come for the sole purpose of enjoying their time in said coffeeshops, law enforcement and public health officials have been concerned with recent developments in the illicit market and the dangers that accompany unregulated marijuana use. Other countries have also begun to reform their drug policies by favouring harm reduction over punishment; these efforts have been met with varying degrees of success.

The policies that surround drug use in countries around the world are complex and often lead to unintended consequences. On one hand, allowing drug use can provide governments with a greater ability to regulate and tax dangerous substances. In the Netherlands or in Portugal, this has given governments a greater capacity to address growing opioid addictions in cities. On the other hand, there are concerns that the permeation of drugs throughout society can increase their exposure to youth and vulnerable populations. In Uruguay or Canada, for example, youth have greater and freer access to substances such as marijuana. Ultimately, countries must find a unique balance that is tailored to their own societies for the optimal regulation or restriction of these substances.

Past UN/International Involvement

On behalf of the UN, the UNODC in particular has passed a number of resolutions on the topic of drug legislation and the control of illicit substances. Cognizant of its mandate, the committee has focused on advising its member states’ governments on how to best accomplish their goals in regard to drug legislation. The traditional focus of drug legislation has been prevention and punishment; however, more recently, this focus has shifted to harm reduction and rehabilitation. Decades of research and experience have informed authorities that drug abuse is systematic, and it is a deep-rooted problem that requires more active engagement to combat. The various resolutions of the General Assembly and the UNODC have attempted to tackle regional and transnational obstacles in fighting against drug trafficking and abuse.

Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)
The Economic and Social Council established the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 1946 to address the widespread distribution of narcotics around the world. The CND acts as the governing body of the UNODC and as its primary decision and legislation-making body. In addition, it publishes reports on the state of affairs of

drugs and controlled substances and the danger they pose to societies. The CND has piloted and managed several international agreements, including the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. In these cases, the conventions set the framework of global counter-drug trade efforts, especially in facilitating transnational discussion and cooperation.

UNODC Resolution 58/3
In Resolution 58/3, the UNODC put forward a focus on protecting children linked to illegal drug sales, noting their particular vulnerability and impressionability. Children and youth are especially prone to becoming involved in the drug trade in countries of production and even more so in destination countries, where gangs actively recruit youth to aid the distribution of drugs. In accordance with these conditions, the Resolution has encouraged member states to enact legislative and social change with regard to drug accessibility. Furthermore, since the advent of the internet and social media, children and youth have been empowered to access drugs far more easily and covertly than ever before. The Resolution aims to raise awareness about drug abuse in families, schools, and other social settings to proactively prevent children and youth from seeking access to drugs and illicit substances. Additionally, the Resolution underscores the importance of working with postal couriers, mobile banking software, banks, and the various mechanisms and institutions involved with the drug trade to enact measures that curtail organizations’ unintentional participation in the distribution of drugs.

UNODC Resolution 60/9
In Resolution 60/9, the committee advised various authorities on drug smuggling prevention measures, including educating border officials, training law enforcement, and, to an extent, offering material support in the form of laboratory equipment and drug testing kits. Specifically, the Resolution encourages countries to dedicate more resources to the specialization of law enforcement officers that specifically combat drug trafficking and distribution. Furthermore, authorities are encouraged to collaborate with international and national bodies to conduct joint training and support for law enforcement officials.

UNODC Resolution 60/2
Due to the international and oftentimes covert nature of many drug-related activities, world governments would most effectively combat the problems faced in regards to the drug trade through collaboration. In Resolution 60/2, the UNODC advocated for international cooperation against the illicit drug trade, particularly in helping those nations most affected by narcotics trading (e.g. Colombia, Mexico, Honduras, etc.). It is also worth noting that most nations—from “consumer” nations to “production” nations—contribute to the drug trade in some form, be that in the form of supply or demand. The CND has operated on a principle of mutual or shared

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responsibility, in that every nation not only carries a share of the responsibility for the existence of the global drug trade, but also a share of the detrimental societal impacts of drug abuse and narcotics trafficking.\textsuperscript{15}

**UNODC Resolution 61/11**

Social perceptions relating to drug use are also of paramount importance in combating stigma and sourcing protection and a greater range of services for those struggling with drug abuse and addiction. Through Resolution 61/11, the committee has pushed for member states to adopt non-stigmatizing attitudes towards substance abuse and encouraged countries to offer more services such as therapy, counselling, and supervised injection sites to aid their citizens in recovery and rehabilitation. The Resolution stresses the importance of social perceptions in either causing or adding to the dangers of drug abuse; factors such as isolation, depression, mental illnesses, and financial instability can all augment an individual’s propensity towards drug addictions.\textsuperscript{16} Given the convoluted nature of substance abuse, Resolution 61/11 directly calls on member states to seek out the opinions of drug users and abusers to determine the best course of action for rehabilitation and harm reduction services. In addition, this Resolution takes into account the varying cultural and societal norms or traditions that may have a direct impact on drug legislation and perception. For example, the legislation that might exist in more progressive and drug-tolerant societies would obviously differ from those in more socially conservative environments. This is not to say that change cannot occur in both situations: progressive countries are expected to push for more drug-conscious policies that benefit users and addicts, while conservative societies may be expected to increase drug literacy and health awareness.

**Current Situation**

All around the world, countries are facing drug-related crises that could be better addressed at the legislative level. Arguably, a sizeable portion of modern drug legislation has roots in historical pro-religious movements that advocated for strict anti-drug regulations in society. However, these policies have largely been ineffective, sometimes even harmful to drug users and abusers. The characterization of drug users in previous decades has been one of scorn and disdain; this notion has generally been dispelled in more recent times as society begins to view substance abuse as more of a medical issue than the consequence of illicit activities. Although the narrative has somewhat shifted from one of derision to one of empathy in more progressive and liberal nations, socially conservative or religiously-devout nations are often more restrictive and less forgiving in their drug policies, a notion that mirrors the views of their societies and cultures.

Nations such as Canada, the Netherlands, Portugal, and even US states such as California, are among those who stand at the forefront of legislative reform with drugs. However, it is important to recognize that these legislative changes are organic and stem from a broader societal awareness of the causes and consequences of drug abuse. In contrast, countries like Russia and China still have strict legislation surrounding drugs, and citizens are often convicted and given hefty sentences as a result of drug-related crimes without exception. Similarly, drug traffickers, dealers, and—to an extent—users, are often punished far more severely in those nations since their

\textsuperscript{15} UNODC/RES/60/2, https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/CND_Sessions/CND_60/CNDres_2017/Resolution_60_2_60CND.pdf.

actions are portrayed as a societal disservice. This stigma, usually the result of a lack of awareness, shuts out the possibility of helping addicts and justifies such unforgiving legislation.

Drug policy is often used as a legal tool in those same tough-on-crime countries to give sentences to political enemies and dissenters. Given the clarity by which drug laws are defined and the relative severity of those punishments, courts can be manipulated to directing the harshest punishments for political gain and posturing. In April of 2019, China made headlines for re-sentencing Canadian citizen Fan Wei, where the Chinese government changed the appealed sentence for drug trafficking from jail time to the death penalty; the incident coincided with the estrangement of Chinese-Canadian relations over Canada’s decision to arrest the chief financial officer of a prominent Chinese company. In Russia, draconian drug laws have been used in the past to charge journalists and political activists, with police sometimes even planting “evidence” on political dissenters. Estimates place Russia’s imprisoned drug offenders at nearly a quarter of a million, while conviction rates for these offenses are nearly 100 percent. Some are legitimate convictions, but the majority of sentences are lengthy for relatively mild transgressions. Although drug use is becoming more widespread in China and Russia, especially amongst youth with increasingly liberal views on drug use, the stigma surrounding drugs is still one that negatively portrays drug use as a rampant societal problem that threatens social order.

Additionally, the rise of the internet has contributed to a greater proliferation of narcotics globally. The ease by which individuals, especially youth, can access contraband substances has been greatly facilitated by the growing prominence of the Internet. Because the Internet can also provide anonymity and protection to drug dealers, it has become particularly difficult for law enforcement personnel to accurately and effectively apprehend those involved. Furthermore, in places like Canada where government-licensed brick-and-mortar stores are few and far between, provincial sellers often use online mechanisms to distribute their wares. This further decreases the ability to effectively regulate the marijuana trade in Canada, as nearly anyone can have the ability to acquire marijuana legally. Governments have, to some extent, tried to combat the Internet’s emergence as a platform for the drug trade, but specific legislation can also aid the efficacy of law enforcement efforts. For example, possible action includes forcing data companies or search engines to restrict access to suspected drug-running websites, or to be legally able to flag those who visit such websites for investigation.

In nations such as Afghanistan, Honduras, and Colombia, drug production is deeply integrated into the economies and the livelihoods of local populations. Thus, it is not enough to simply target drug abuse, regardless of its causes, with legislation—for a number of reasons. Firstly, the legislative issues regarding drug abuse do not pertain as significantly to drug-producing nations as it does to drug-trafficking nations. Consequently, the economic and societal incentives for locals to continue to engage in drug production are often far more enticing than abiding by legal bans. Because law enforcement forces are often scarce, these nations do not even have the means to enact legislation to a deterrable degree. In Honduras and Colombia, for example, drug cartels hold a large amount of political sway because they are able to bribe law enforcement and outbid local governments for power. In some cases, even politicians are under the payroll of drug-trafficking organizations.

Additionally, the United States directly intervenes in foreign affairs and conflicts in an attempt to curtail the ability of foreign actors to export drugs to the US. The country has blindly supported belligerents of civil conflicts that would be the most likely to crack down on drug production and has used its military aircraft to scatter herbicides over South American fields in an effort to deter the production of coca and marijuana production there. The coca plant is the most commonly grown drug plant in regions of Central and South America, particularly within rural communities that have become economically and socially dependent on the drug derivatives of coca. These communities have grown the plant for thousands of years as part of their cultural practices; their use of coca has been an integral part of religious and traditional cultural ceremonies. To ignore their social dependency on the plant (to draw a distinction from the more potent drug derivative, cocaine) would be an affront to their cultural beliefs and millennia-old traditions.

In contrast, drug cartels, driven by the demand found in countries like the United States, have conveniently employed those same communities to supply the drug. The deep-seated influence of cartels in drug-producing countries, coupled with a lack of training, support, and expertise of law enforcement, have enabled these gangs to prosper for the past few decades. A similar phenomenon can be observed in Afghanistan, where farmers have begun growing poppy flowers in unirrigated arid desert regions that previously held no agricultural value. These flowers thrive in regions largely devoid of water and offer an alternative source of income to local populations; since opium derived from poppies is more profitable to trade than traditional crops, farmers in Afghanistan are incentivized to grow the drug instead.

More often than not, the profits derived from drug production directly return to the organized crime and extremist groups who control the drug trade. Profits from the transport of Colombian cocaine and heroin by Mexican cartels directly allow them to purchase weapons and expand their network of contacts and support in neighbouring countries. Profits from opium in Afghanistan fund the activities of the Taliban, allowing the group to continue their terrorist activities. Ultimately, the difficulty of tackling this issue stems from the pervasive influence of these cartels and drug-trafficking groups, and the undeniable economic benefit to individuals participating in the drug trade.

Possible Solutions and Controversies

Legalization
In countries where drug use has been normalized and the incidence of drug abuse has decreased over time, the preeminent aim should be to further refine legislation such that it reflects societal changes. Many proponents of legislative reform, for example, push for the commutation of sentences for those already charged with low-level drug crimes. Nevertheless, social stigma persists and needs to be addressed through legislation as minorities and rural populations are often unable to access rehabilitative support. Given that minorities are disproportionately prone to drug abuse issues, states should pursue legislation that caters to the protection of these vulnerable groups. Additionally, it would be important to create specific legislation that shifts public perception via awareness campaigns and encouraging greater dialogue surrounding the realities of drug abuse.

Diminishing Reliance on Drug Exports
In countries where drug production is widespread and has become systematically integrated into the economy, it is extremely important to be cognizant of the degree to which illicit drug trading has permeated society.
Nations such as Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, and Brazil require major upheavals to law enforcement programs that improve their efficacy in combating drug-related crimes.\textsuperscript{19} In Afghanistan, for example, the economic dependence on poppy farmers and the Taliban’s ties to the drug trade creates a difficult situation to manage. Legislative change may do little to address the regional influence of the Taliban, but alternative sources of income for poppy farmers may deter them from producing the drug plant altogether. Additionally, given the lackluster state of law enforcement in these nations, implementing legislative mandates or oversight councils could further the accountability and efficacy of law enforcement authorities. Providing farmers with profitable alternatives to poppies, as well as increasing the irrigation infrastructure available to facilitate the planting of these alternative crops will reduce their incentives to continue planting the drug crop.

**Drug Trade Prevention**

Due to the increasingly international nature of the drug trade in recent years, collaborative efforts between countries are even more prevalent than before. It is important to establish programs and policies that deter or disrupt the global drug trafficking network. In particular, more restrictive domestic drug-distribution policies will help reduce the overall demand for narcotics and therefore starve criminal organizations involved in the drug trade. The growing prevalence of the illicit drug trade focusing on more contemporary and recreational drugs—such as marijuana, which has been proven to involve fewer dangers to the human body in the long term compared to “hard” drugs—is a major motivator for the liberalization of these substances. Through proper legislation, governments can control the distribution of the product through partnerships with local businesses and large chains. As a result, the black market faces a setback as it tries to compete with legal and safe distributors.

**Awareness and Support**

In some instances, drug abuse has formed from a growing opioid dependence. This takes the form of prescription medications that have been distributed liberally by physicians treating patients with chronic illnesses and pains. Healthcare professionals were at one point unaware that drug abuse could be applicable to prescription drugs and the use of such drugs could lead to a dependence on opioid medication that would be extremely difficult to overcome.\textsuperscript{20} For some, a monthly dose of an opioid like morphine is enough to prevent chronic pain, but as tolerance to these substances grows, a patient will require more and more to feel the effects of the drug. Legislation is needed to provide greater oversight surrounding prescription medications that are addictive in nature and to ensure physicians exercise more prudence when prescribing medication.

Although legislative change is commonly reflective of societal change, policies and initiatives can influence the public to change their perception of drugs as well. Given that common harm reduction methods such as supervised injection sites or health counselling have been proven to be effective, governments should begin to more actively seek support measures that can combat stigmatization by normalizing rehabilitation. Campaigns on various media platforms and specific curricula within education systems can inform the public, especially young children and youth, about the potential harms and risks about drug experimentation. Supervised injection sites and needle disposal boxes can assist with individuals using drugs safely, while also allowing the aforementioned services to identify those at risk and redirect them to counselling. When visibly and politically


endorsed by officials, this enforces the narrative that harm reduction is far more important than punishment when combating drug usage. With an approach to public policy that views the plight of drug addiction as a disease and not a choice, the general stigma and feelings of disdain from society begin to wane.

**Bloc Positions**

Bloc positions can generally be categorized by the types of society and relationship with the drug trade each country has. Nations that engage in the production of drugs en masse are likely to have different interests and focuses than “destination” countries, which are often more focused on preventing the unregulated importation of drugs from foreign nations. Given this distinction, countries can also be categorized according to shared characteristics such as political alignment. Each country should consider the moral and social implications of their drug legislation: if a nation has hardline stances against drugs and is adamant about preventing drugs from reaching citizens, then its legislation should reflect the views its society. Conversely, if a state is more progressive and recognizes the merits of harm reduction and rehabilitation in combating drug usage, their policies should reflect those aspects of their culture. Nevertheless, the issues of drug trafficking and cross-border smuggling can be agreed upon by the vast majority of nations: they cannot be allowed to continue. Nations can implement more stringent laws or create a commission to assess different nations’ abilities to combat drug trafficking. In addition, close monitoring of internet usage and coordination with postal couriers can reduce the ability for individuals to easily acquire narcotics through online shipping.

**Anti-Drug Societies**

Countries like China and Russia with harsh existing policies may be loathe to begin legislative change, especially given the legal privileges afforded to the government by those policies. These nations will be unlikely to support radical policies—such as legalization—that contradict long-standing government narratives. These countries should instead support and further develop cooperative efforts between governments to better combat drug trafficking. With greater contact online with people around the world, younger generations in countries like China have also experienced increased contact with various illicit substances that are poorly regulated and enforced. To prevent their youth, especially, from acquiring illegal substances, these nations would support more stringent drug policies and perhaps increase the funding necessary to enforce those policies. In other contexts, deeply conservative societies view drug use as a social taboo and are likely to mirror the actions of those nations mentioned above.

**Western Powers**

The United States and other powerful actors are able to exercise their will to a greater and more intrusive extent than most. These actors are able to intervene in the drug trade through military action and the deployment of border patrol guards that deter cross-border drug smuggling. Given a vested interest against drug proliferation from Mexico, the United States has taken extraordinary measures to prevent drug smuggling from occurring along its southern border. Nevertheless, this bloc would support further international cooperation to curb drug smuggling and may also consider offering their services and support to other nations. Given a history of resorting to intervention in the conflicts of countries like Honduras for the purpose of fighting drug cartels in de facto control of the country, the United States would likely support similar anti-corruption and anti-narcotics programmes in other nations.
It is worth noting the extent to which countries like the United States are overly interventionist in the world today. Determining an acceptable foreign policy that will be embraced by other nations is also a key factor in how the United States should move forward. As an example, the US’ support of belligerents in the Honduran civil war was one that was motivated by drug prevention and not political legitimacy. American participation drastically altered the events of the conflict and arguably escalated the tense situation in Central America.21

Progressive Countries
Nations that have already decriminalized or legalized certain drugs can offer technical support and advice to those who are currently debating the issue. Their experience in establishing harm reduction methods would also be beneficial to counties currently suffering from high overdose and HIV rates. It is important to increase the regulation of legalized substances, especially to protect youth and vulnerable populations. If prices in the illicit drug trade are lower than those of government-licensed sellers, the same issues with the illicit drug trade persist. Additionally, limiting the access for foreign individuals who travel to these nations and purchase drugs is also a legislative contention. Where drugs may not be used responsibly outside the country, these nations have a responsibility to ensure that drugs purchased inside their borders remain contained within. Even though these countries’ domestic policies have loosened regarding the illegality of drugs, they must respect the legislative and societal independence of other nations. Failure to do so may result in setbacks in the progress of other countries in tackling illegal drug use.

Drug Production/Transport Nations
Also known as “transit countries,” nations through which a large proportion of drugs move through, have the additional responsibility of preventing smuggling both into and out of the country. Even without pressure from prominent countries like the US, they should still instate policies that will inhibit drug smuggling within their borders. Given that cartels hold significant power in many of these states, it is difficult to comprehensively eradicate their ubiquitous influence. Legislation should prioritize strengthening law enforcement and seeking out international expertise and support in reforming policies surrounding drugs. Legislatively, Mexico and Brazil are unlikely to support widespread policy changes.

In nations where drugs are produced en masse and where authorities have largely allowed for illicit substances to proliferate, states can most effectively curb the exportation of illicit drugs by strengthening law enforcement. However, the protection of culture is also incredibly important in nations like Colombia; nations may consider adopting exceptions for those who use psychoactive substances for cultural or religious purposes. This involves a classification of indigenous or minority cultures for whom these substances have social value, and for transparent communication between authorities and the cultural or ethnic groups using the substances. These states also have, to some degree, a responsibility to maintain border security and to employ measures necessary to deter cross-border smuggling. Given that drugs are produced or moved within and across their jurisdiction, it is important for these countries to act—or in the case that they are unable to, seek help in acting—against drug traffickers.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do people willingly continue to abuse drugs and how can these individuals seek help?
2. How does the demand for drugs in developed nations negatively impact developing nations?
3. How have societies shifted their perceptions of various drugs over time?
4. How has social stigma impacted drug-related legislation?
5. What factors prevent countries from enforcing their drug policies or fighting against cartels?
6. To what extent should countries such as the United States intervene in the affairs of other countries in the interest of drug trafficking prevention?
7. What incentives are there to address drug trafficking for nations less involved?
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New Approaches to Counter-Terrorism

Overview

Terrorism has been a longstanding threat to global peace and security and has always been a concern for intelligence agencies worldwide. While the global coalition against the Islamic State (IS) in the Middle East has gradually regained all the territory lost to the jihadist militant group, terrorism has become increasingly prevalent in other areas around the world. Individuals angered at these recent territorial losses of IS have been impelled to carry out terrorist attacks within their own communities. Consequently, cells operating under the name of the Islamic Caliphate in conflict regions all over the world, from Libya to Chad to Afghanistan, have become more common. As a result, many nations have gradually shifted their attention towards the prevention of domestic terrorism by strengthening efforts to combat the recruitment and funding mechanisms of local terrorist groups.

Mass shootings fueled by xenophobia, toxic stereotypes, and fear have become more and more common in the past decade. Particularly in the United States, where gun ownership rates are high, shootings motivated by ideological differences have become pervasive. On the other side of the globe, in March 2019, a gunman opened fire in two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, killing 51 mosque-goers in an act provoked by white supremacy and Islamophobia. Car bombings have become increasingly prevalent in regions such as Afghanistan and in the jointly administered Kashmir province of India and Pakistan. Waves of violence and new jihadist cells similar to Boko Haram have sprung up in many countries in the Sahel, a region directly south of the Sahara. Failing to address these security concerns, local governments often resort to deploying ethnic militias who are excessively brutal in their methods. As a result, vulnerable individuals are forced to protect themselves from ethnic violence by joining these jihadist groups instead.

Developed countries such as the United States and various European countries have been enacting their own measures of prevention for instances of homegrown terrorism. For instance, after the September 11 attacks, the United States Congress enacted the USA PATRIOT Act, which gave the nation the ability to track citizens for the sake of public safety. Such domestic legislation is also regularly updated to combat homegrown terrorist attacks. Intelligence organizations around the world are partnering to share information on potential international security risks, and they have achieved varying degrees of success—from Russia successfully preventing terror attacks in late 2019 with intelligence from the United States, to missed warning flags ahead of the Las Vegas shooting in 2017. Finally, in the age of the internet, individuals have become isolated from real-world interactions and are becoming radicalized—as the Christchurch mosque shooter was—by extremist media outlets online (e.g. 4chan, Facebook, sites on the deep web, etc.). Overall, there needs to be a shift in focus from

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the conventional warfare tactics against organized terrorist groups, to prevention of the sporadic uprisings and incidents that are becoming increasingly violent and damaging to societies across the world.

**Timeline**

**September 11, 2001** — Two planes, American Flight 11 and United Flight 175, are flown into the two towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. American Flight 77 is flown into the Pentagon, and United Flight 93 crashes into a field en route to Washington, D.C. This tragedy is considered the single deadliest terror attack in history.

**October 7 – December 17, 2001** — The United States invades Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, due to their refusal to extradite Osama bin Laden, who is suspected of being the mastermind behind the September 11 attacks.25

2006 — A series of terrorist attacks, most notably several suicide bombings, occur in Afghanistan. They have been attributed to the Taliban insurgency that has risen to prominence.

2009 — The Islamic State in West Africa, also known as Boko Haram, stages a series of armed attacks and begins an insurgency against the Nigerian government. The fighting spreads to neighbouring countries and displaces millions of civilians.26

**June 29, 2014** — After taking over cities including Raqqa, Mosul, and Tikrit, IS announces the creation of a new caliphate in the Levant.

**October 31, 2015** — Metrojet Flight 9268 explodes mid-flight over Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula, an attack claimed by the Islamic State.

**November 13, 2015** — Several coordinated terrorist attacks linked to the Islamic State take place across Paris and Nice in France.

**June 12, 2016** — A gunman opens fire at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida, killing 49. He pledges allegiance to IS and claims the attack is in retribution for the killing of an IS commander in Syria by American forces.27

**June 6 – October 17, 2017** — After 4 months of battle, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) reconquer the city of Raqqa, the de facto capital of the caliphate, from IS.

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**February 9 – March 23, 2019** — The Battle of Baghouz strips IS of its last remaining territory, effectively ending the war against IS in Syria and Iraq.

**March 15, 2019** — Shootings take place at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. The attacks were supposedly motivated by radical Islamophobia.

**April 21, 2019** — On Easter Sunday, bombs are detonated at hotels and churches in Sri Lanka. These terrorist attacks were suspected to be in retaliation to the mosque shootings in Christchurch.

**Historical Analysis**

In 1979, Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan in support of the communist government fighting against the mujahideen—anti-communist guerillas. The mujahideen eventually came to be backed by the United States, whose involvement in the war indirectly led to the creation of al-Qaeda.\(^{28}\) By the time the Soviets left in 1989, the United States had been training mujahideen fighters in Afghanistan for some time, and American influence in the region had been cemented. On September 11th, 2001, Al Qaeda-linked terrorists hijacked four American planes, flying two into the World Trade Center, one into the Pentagon, and one failed attempt to fly into Washington, D.C. These attacks were undoubtedly a tragedy, but they were also a terrible awakening for the international community on the threat of terrorism.

Soon after the attacks, the US invaded Afghanistan to dismantle the Taliban government that controlled over 90 percent of the country. Supported by the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and anti-government forces in Afghanistan, the US began a successful campaign to remove the Taliban from power. Nominally a political party, the Taliban quickly reverted into an insurgency group that waged war against a US-supported interim government. The Taliban have resorted to terrorist attacks, especially on government buildings and offices, to draw attention to their cause.\(^{29}\) The Taliban’s attacks have been consistent and long-lasting, and the group has been known to target foreign embassies and consulates in their campaign against the internationally-recognized government at Kabul.

**Islamic State**

The Islamic State (IS) grew out of al-Qaeda cells in Syria, quickly rising to prominence as a result of instability in the region. As the Syrian civil war erupted, IS established itself and took hold of key strongholds in Syria and Iraq. Both governments diverted large amounts of spending and manpower to retake cities captured by IS, and were, especially in Syria, supported by a western coalition established against IS. The IS took cities from both Syrian government forces and Free Syrian Army (FSA)/Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) positions alike and gained territory steadily. In 2015, however, IS lost key positions along the Turkish border and in Iraq and began to slowly decline. As a result of heavy involvement from the US-led coalition, IS had lost 95 percent of all its

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\(^{29}\) Anne Stenersen, "Are the Afghan Taliban Involved in International Terrorism?," *CTC Sentinel* 2, no. 9 (September 2009), https://ctc.usma.edu/are-the-afghan-taliban-involved-in-international-terrorism-3/.
territory by the end of 2017.\(^{30}\) IS’ last pocket of territory lay near the eastern Syrian town of Baghouz, on the banks of the Euphrates river. One last push by coalition forces effectively eliminated all IS-claimed territory.

**How the area under IS control has shrunk**

![Image](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/timeline-the-rise-spread-and-fall-the-islamic-state)

_Areas under IS Control — BBC, 'IS Caliphate Defeated But Jihadist Group Remains a Threat.'_  

Around the same time, bomb blasts were reported at major hotels in Sri Lanka during the Easter long weekend. 250 were killed, with another 500 injured. These attacks were apparently in retaliation for the loss of territory suffered by IS in Syria.\(^{31}\) These types of attacks are not uncommon. For example, IS’ Egypt cell detonated a bomb on a Russian plane flying over the Sinai Peninsula in 2015, which killed over 200. In November of the same year, IS-affiliated terrorists attacked numerous locations in Paris, killing a combined 130 and injuring a further 300. In June the following year, a gunman pledging allegiance to IS killed 49 people at a nightclub in Orlando, Florida, declaring that the attack was in retaliation for American airstrikes in Syria.

**Other terrorist groups**

At the height of IS’ prominence, several groups were established in countries outside of Syria and Iraq. In Nigeria, Boko Haram began an armed insurgency against the government, and declared allegiance to IS in 2015. Fighting has spilled over into neighbouring Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. Hundreds of thousands were displaced, and the militant group has gained support in local communities even while IS itself was being pushed back by the international coalition in Syria and Iraq. In Somalia, the presence of al-Shabaab militants rendered severe instabilities to local security and geopolitics. Linked to al-Qaeda, the group was also alleged to have been supported by state actors such as Qatar and Iran.\(^{32}\) These groups have been increasing their activities in their respective regions, while the West has largely been less involved in these conflicts as they have been in Syria. Military action has been taken against these groups, typically by local governments and with the support of

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foreign state actors. Despite significant actions taken against militants, these groups still have the capability to deal severe damage to local populations and heavily contribute to security risks inside many of the countries mentioned above.33

After the Taliban was ousted from power in 2001, it began an insurgency campaign that has generally continued persistently. It carried out a series of terror attacks in various cities across Afghanistan, most notably in Kabul. In 2016, a peace deal was signed between the internationally-recognized government and a Taliban ally, Hezb-e-Islami, that promised an end to hostilities. However, Taliban military and political activities continued and were concentrated in areas still controlled by the group, such as their stronghold in Helmand province.

Past UN/International Involvement

UN involvement in countering terrorism began largely after the September 11 attacks in New York City. With Resolution 1373, the UN established a 15-member subsidiary committee under the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) known as the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC).34 The CTC’s primary responsibilities is to act as a broker between states capable of helping in counter-terrorism activities and those who were in need of assistance. Additionally, the CTC focuses on criminalizing and enforcing terrorist financing prohibitions, and

34 S/RES/1373
through Resolution 2178, the CTC has established guidelines regarding foreign terrorist fighters who travel out of their countries to fight for a terrorist organization.\textsuperscript{35}

The UNSC has been heavily focused on the condemnation of various terrorist attacks in different places around the world. It created the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to oversee the implementation of counter-terrorism strategies by individual member states. The CTC and CTED work closely together on issues related to terrorist activities and on enacting prevention mechanisms including, but not limited to, strict border controls, enhancing legal instruments, and clarifying the domestic legislation of countries. The Security Council sub-committee also partners with the International Criminal Police Organization, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, other multinational organizations, and a large number of private sector companies involved with information and communications technologies. These partnerships operate to effectively carry out 19 sets of legal instruments used by the CTC and UN to counter terrorist activities.\textsuperscript{36}

The General Assembly passed Resolution 60/288 on September 8, 2006, which defined the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The plan of action enclosed included the following:

“[The member-states of the United Nations] resolve to undertake the following measures aimed at addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, including but not limited to prolonged unresolved conflicts, dehumanization of victims of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, lack of the rule of law and violations of human rights, ethnic, national and religious discrimination, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization and lack of good governance, while recognizing that none of these conditions can excuse or justify acts of terrorism [...]” (Annex I)\textsuperscript{37}

The Strategy highlights the importance of addressing the root causes of terrorism and of preventative measures to deal with the threat of terrorist attacks. Where the focus has previously been on responding reactively to terrorist attacks such as those on September 11, 2001, the UN recognized the importance of adopting proactive and preventative measures. The Secretary-General of the General Assembly at the time, Kofi Annan, submitted such a report in 2006, promoting his recommendations in a document titled "Uniting Against Terrorism."

In addition to this, the UNODC has created its own Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) to address terrorist issues in a more practical manner. The TPB has been a key UN entity in providing technical and legal assistance to member states in need of support in counter-terrorism activities.\textsuperscript{38} It operates branches in Central and Southeast Asia, West and East Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa. Each branch contains experts who provide regional insight, and can effectively implement counter-terrorism measures that are suited to regional geopolitics and the nuances of each country requesting assistance. If member states request help from the TPB, the Branch will provide assistance in adopting universal counter-terrorism legal frameworks. Furthermore, the UNODC is well-suited to providing legislative and administrative assistance because terrorism

\textsuperscript{35} S/RES/2178
\textsuperscript{37} A/RES/60/288
is intertwined with other areas of focus for the UNODC, such as money laundering, corruption, illicit trafficking of goods and arms, criminal justice, and organized crime.

The TPB has been involved in several counter-terrorism initiatives over the years. For example, in addition to legislative assistance and building awareness, the UNODC has also expanded its work in countering the use of Internet and social media for terrorist and radicalization purposes, countering terrorism financing, and offering support to victims of terrorism. In one particular instance, the TPB set up a national workshop in Bamako, Mali to train local forces in interagency cooperation for counterterrorism operations. The UNODC’s initiatives have also been drawn into international agreements that facilitate cooperation between member states.

International involvement in combating terrorism have typically taken the form of coalitions of Western states. These coalitions use military action to counter terrorist activities, most notably with the involvement of the US-led coalition against IS in Syria. Foreign actors have also been operating against Taliban forces in Afghanistan, al-Shabaab fighters in Somalia, and Boko Haram militants in and around the Lake Chad area. Their involvement has likely contributed to greater security and stability in the regions in which they operate but may have also increased violence and hatred towards foreign actors—an antagonism that likely pushed many individuals to join these radicalized groups in the first place.

Current Situation

As noted, IS has largely been eradicated in terms of its territory in Syria and Iraq. However, the fight against fundamentalism in the Middle East has not yet been finished. Even in Syria, SDF officials are dealing with an immense number of surrendered IS fighters whose countries of origin do not wish to repatriate them. These fighters, numbering tens of thousands, are held in makeshift jail cells, with their families—wives and children—held in similar conditions in overcrowded camps. Humanitarian assistance has been largely insufficient in providing aid for all the captured fighters. If this persists for long enough, the SDF may have to start releasing IS fighters simply because they lack the resources necessary to hold so many prisoners.

Additionally, as a result of the recent territorial losses in Syria, militant groups elsewhere have been increasing their activity in their own regions. As so-called vengeance for the loss of Baghouz, the National Thowheed Jamath group, which has links to IS, detonated multiple explosives in major cities in Sri Lanka. Around 250 died in the attacks, which targeted non-Muslim populations by attacking hotels and churches. Sri Lankan officials also noted that the attacks may have been in retaliation to the two previous mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand. In Afghanistan, a suicide bomber attacked a wedding in Kabul, killing 80 and injuring more; IS has

39 Ibid.
claimed responsibility for the attack. It’s important to note that although IS has been defeated nominally, the radical views many of its fighters held are still promulgated throughout the world.

Boko Haram is an organization that holds many similarities in ideology with IS. The group is highly active in Nigeria and the surrounding region. With a large expanse of land and systematically-crippled governments running the countries they operate in, Boko Haram has grown in power and influence significantly. Ethnic minorities such as the Fulani, whose anti-establishment views are exacerbated by police brutality and rising rates of crop failures, have increasingly been recruited by terrorist groups such as Boko Haram. In Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, and in the Sahel region, over 5,000 have been killed by Boko Haram’s activities in 2019 alone. Although there has been an international presence in the region, with more and more foreign troops operating there, these militant groups continue to wreak havoc.

Local governments are unable to stop the bloodshed themselves due to poorly trained and underfunded militaries. They often hold only nominal control over the remote areas of their countries, with warlords and militias vying for regional power with violent tactics. The governments have instead turned to ethnic militias that have already been operating in their countries. This has exacerbated a vicious cycle of violence where outside militant groups would attack a village, and local militants from that region would respond in another show of violence. These militias are so brutal in their methods that, although sometimes supported by governments who see it as a cheap alternative to counter-terrorism efforts, people are actually driven—for fear of not being able to defend themselves—to join the jihadists. These ethnic militias, largely centred in Mali, operate extrajudicially and carry out systematic killings of opposition groups. Finally, factors such as poverty within these countries has caused desperate men from rural villages to join the ranks of militiae as well.

In addition to this, a local culture against women and lack of security or legal authority has driven up the rate of sexual violence. This is especially prevalent in refugee camps, where overcrowdedness often results in an increase to the number of sexual assaults against vulnerable individuals. Some individuals are women who have escaped or been rescued from Boko Haram, and others are individuals who have fled their hometowns to avoid the violence of the militant group. Yet, many are returning to their former captors who, despite forcing women into marriage and selling them for sex, are often able extend greater freedoms and protections than refugee camps. Surprisingly, this may be why so many have joined the jihadists forces in the Sahel; for many, life is comparatively better with the protection of jihadists, than it is in villages where the possibility of a brutal execution by roaming ethnic militias lingers every day.

45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
In Afghanistan, the Taliban has still been active in carrying out major terrorist attacks, perpetrated by individuals pledging allegiance to the anti-government movement. Afghanistan as a country has also become a breeding ground for terrorism, especially for IS fighters and their affiliates. In the southern Helmand province, a Taliban stronghold, the officially recognized Kabul government is still unable to exercise full control. A large part of the Taliban’s efforts have been in response to “American invaders,” who the Taliban see as foreign actors that have wrongfully intervened in a civil conflict.49

Finally, a growing number of domestic, homegrown terrorist attacks have occurred in various countries around the world. These attacks are unfortunately far more publicized than those occurring in Africa, or in Afghanistan, but it is necessary to address them as a committee as well. Although government leaders sometimes label them as other types of crimes, many of these attacks and mass shootings are undoubtedly terrorist attacks. After attacks in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio, authorities in the US have labelled mass shootings as ‘domestic terror’ events.50 After the mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand, many blamed rising Islamophobia and xenophobia as major fuel for radical far-right movements.51 A large part of these mass shootings were arguably linked to social media, which has been a tool for radicalization and communication between potential terrorists. An increasing number of individuals are being radicalized and recruited by acquaintances and propaganda they were exposed to on social media platforms; many individuals even post manifestos onto their social media pages even just minutes before carrying out an attack.52 Although companies such as Facebook and Alphabet are working to take down much of this content, too many are still able to access posts that inspire further violence and attacks.

Possible Solutions and Controversies

Many solutions may overlap because they must work in tandem in order to produce effective resolutions; these solutions involve both proactive and reactive initiatives that will help individual countries better prepare themselves for the threat of potential terrorist attacks. To some extent, these solutions assume that the radicalization of some people is inevitable and that terrorist attacks may still occur no matter the pre-emptive measures taken; however, there are methods to reduce the number of potential extremists and prevent an increase to the number of terrorist attacks experienced by the world.

Military Intervention

It is important to acknowledge how effective military confrontation has been in combatting organized extremist groups such as IS. It is only through the support of an international coalition, with regular airstrikes conducted against IS targets, that the group was largely driven back and controlled. However, even though this idea of

military confrontation against militant groups may have been effective in the case of IS, it is also necessary to
gauge the negative impacts that fighting IS has wrought to foreign countries. For example, compared to sporadic
terrorist attacks that deal with relatively low amounts of infrastructural damage, full-scale armed conflict against
militant groups—and the airstrikes that come with them—can often result in many more casualties than non-
combatant approaches. Furthermore, the involvement of foreign state actors such as the United States may have
actually incited more individuals to join jihadist groups in the Middle East and Africa, and prompted more
individuals to conduct terrorist activities within the United States in retaliation; even some of the U.S.-trained
mujahideen fighters in Afghanistan later joined anti-American militant groups.

Addressing Underlying Internal Factors
Local governments are sometimes incapable or lacking in the necessary resources to counter radical insurgency
movements. Such is the case with several Sahelian nations such as Cameroon, Chad, Somalia, and even Nigeria.
These countries are unable to exercise full control over all regions within their borders, and often are unable to
act on a federal level against these insurgency groups. Their reliance on ethnic militias instead have largely
backfired, with more and more individuals joining the ranks of jihadist groups such as Boko Haram to be
protected from the brutality of the militias. A solution then would be to first disarm these militias in order to
prevent them from continuing the cycle of retributive violence. In the case of Mali, this would manifest in the
government retaking control over the country’s security forces and mobilizing them in lieu of militiae. The next
step would be to crack down on corruption and state complicity, to be able to divert more funding towards
combating these groups. Finally, it is important to address the root causes for why many join these militant
groups in the first place: conflicts over diminishing food and resource supplies, as well as low amounts of
economic activity, have forced individuals to turn to crime as a mechanism for survival.\textsuperscript{53} Greater economic
stimulus is required to strengthen law enforcement and other government institutions to effectively prevent
terrorism and other forms of violence. Poverty is obviously incredibly difficult to eradicate, but organizations
such as the TPB may be able to assist in creating long-term initiatives that tackle what is considered one of the
root causes of terrorism.

Governmental Cooperation
Governments must hold domestic terrorism to a higher priority. Whether it is encouraging cooperation between
government intelligence agencies or even between various governments, the globalized threat of terrorism
warrants a greater, more united response. Regulating social media and information sharing platforms may need
to occur to limit the spread of extremist propaganda online. In addition, new legislation may need to be enacted
on a case-by-case basis, depending on the location and specific needs of each country. A controversial example
of this is the \textit{USA PATRIOT Act}, which gives the US government enhanced, warrantless surveillance rights over
citizens. The apparent benefit is greater security and the ability to identify potential threats before they occur,
but the erosion of privacy rights is also dangerous for citizens globally; member states will need to carefully weigh
counter-terrorism efforts against the human rights of its citizens.

\textsuperscript{53} “The West Is Fighting a Forgotten War against jihadists in Africa,” \textit{The Economist}, May 2, 2019,
https://www.economist.com/leaders/2019/05/02/the-west-is-fighting-a-forgotten-war-against-jihadists-in-africa.
Bloc Positions

Global powers are generally aligned with their views on terrorism; however, many state actors do make concessions to terrorist groups in an effort to further their own political agendas as well. For one, countries such as the United States, who is currently waging the “War on Terrorism,” heavily crack down on potential threats both domestically and abroad. On the other hand, the US has been known to be involved in supporting the mujahideen, who now, with American training, carry out attacks and create instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

United States and Europe (including Russia)
The official policy of the United States and its NATO allies is that they are heavily against terrorism and will make no concessions in combatting terrorism both at home and overseas. The US’ surveillance programs were designed for identifying security threats, and it has been at the forefront of campaigns against IS in Syria; however, this has also made the US a target for retributive terrorist attacks. The US’ Western European allies also experience this threat. The United States has been involved in negotiations with the Taliban in Afghanistan for some time, pledging to withdraw troops from the country if the insurgency group severs links with al-Qaeda.

In Russia, terrorism has also been experienced as a result of Russian participation in attacks on jihadist militants. A lot of fighting has been concentrated in the Russian North Caucasus regions of Chechnya and Dagestan, where both IS and local radical Islamist organizations are active.55 Because most of these countries are financially capable of funding military efforts, these countries would likely pursue stronger—and more military-focused—options in eradicating terrorist cells, both domestically and abroad.

Saudi Arabia and Iran
Saudi Arabia has been at the forefront of counter-terrorism initiatives, including being granted full membership of the Financial Action Task Force, which is responsible for combatting terrorism financing and money laundering operations. However, Saudi Arabia has also been accused of state-sponsored terrorism in the past, including funding groups such as the Taliban and the al-Nusra Front. Iran is similar in that its special forces corps have been designated by the US as a terrorist organization. In addition, Iran has been accused of training and financing terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and Hezbollah.

Nigeria, Somalia, and Others
Countries such as Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Burkina Faso, and Somalia are all experiencing the threat and ramifications of extremist insurgencies within or near their borders. These governments often are simply unable to deal effectively with the crises at hand, with growing influence and power pouring into extremist militant

organizations. Instead, these governments have traditionally resorted to allowing ethnic militias to fight against the jihadists. This tactic has backfired, though local governments may lack the political capital and manpower to enact any real change, especially in the most remote regions in which these militants operate. It would be important to focus inwards on strengthening the power of government institutions and restoring public order before being able to effectively counter these violent insurgencies.

Discussion Questions

1. How has Western involvement in conflicts inflamed terrorism in Western nations?
2. How do conflicts over resources impact the circumstances of extremist militants?
3. Why have terrorist attacks been carried out instead of searching for political solutions?
4. How has the debate over surveillance versus privacy played out in the United States? Elsewhere?
5. How can individual governments better prevent radicalization and home-grown terrorism in the age of the internet?
6. In what ways can the UNODC prevent individuals from joining terrorist groups for the protection and economic benefits these groups can provide?
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