

8th Annual Conference
13th-15th February

HCC

BACKGROUND GUIDE



Wesgreen International School
Model United Nations

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Welcome Note

Dear Delegates,

It is the Historical Crisis Committee's (HCC) utmost pleasure to welcome all delegates to this year's Wesgreen International School Model United Nations (WESMUN) 2025. MUN is an educational experience that engages in collaborative and interactive debates, discussions, and negotiations between delegates to raise awareness of world problems and propose resolutions. Our goal is to ensure that all delegates have a thrilling experience in the HCC committee and out of the WESMUN event.

This committee focuses on historical occurrences that led to significant regional or worldwide disruption in the 20th century. The goal of this committee is to allow delegates to handle and resolve these crises within the historical framework in which they occurred. Delegates must use the resources at their disposal, but they must be innovative in how they utilize them.

The Historical Crisis Committee (HCC) will force delegates to understand the complexities of history and the interconnectedness of decisions. You will engage with intricate themes such as diplomatic negotiations, power dynamics, and conflict resolution. All members should keep in mind that they are expected to approach discussions as though they are actively operating within the historical context and time period of the committee.

This background guide should be used as a helpful guide rather than as your primary source of knowledge because it is meant to give you a quick overview of the topics that will be covered at committee sessions and a solid basis upon which to build your future research. We urge that each of you will need to go further into the subject matter and develop a solid grasp of the MUN protocol. Please be notified that you can use this email to contact us with any questions or concerns (hcc.wesmun25@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

Chairs of HCC committee (Nadine Tohamy, Yousif Sohaib, Fairouz Tlili)

Topic 1: The Vietnam War and Its Global Implications

Introduction:

The Vietnam War (1955-1975) stands as one of the most complex and contentious conflicts of the 20th century, leaving an indelible mark on the global political landscape. What began as a struggle for Vietnamese independence evolved into a proxy war deeply entangled in the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. This conflict not only redefined the boundaries of international intervention but also exposed the limits of military power in achieving political objectives. The Vietnam War's origins can be traced back to colonial struggles, particularly the French Indochina War, which highlighted Vietnam's aspiration for self-determination. However, as the Cold War intensified, Vietnam became a critical battleground for ideologies: communism and capitalism. The U.S., driven by the Domino Theory, committed vast resources to prevent the spread of communism, while the North Vietnamese forces, led by Ho Chi Minh, garnered support from the Soviet Union and China.

Beyond its immediate impact, the war had profound implications for global governance, diplomacy, and international law. It challenged the efficacy of alliances like NATO and SEATO, questioned the legitimacy of interventionist policies, and underscored the need for mechanisms to address war crimes and protect civilians. Moreover, the war catalyzed a global movement for peace, with protests and dissent reshaping democratic societies and redefining the citizen's role in foreign policy. The Vietnam War was also a testament to resilience—both at the national and individual levels. The Vietnamese endured immense devastation but emerged as a unified nation, demonstrating extraordinary perseverance against overwhelming odds. Similarly, the war compelled global powers to reassess their approaches to conflict resolution and diplomacy.

This topic invites delegates to explore the Vietnam War's historical intricacies, its humanitarian and geopolitical consequences, and its lessons for managing contemporary conflicts. As the committee deliberates, they must consider: How can the international community ensure resilience amid modern conflicts while respecting sovereignty and human rights? What frameworks can prevent ideological rivalries from escalating into devastating wars?.

By engaging with these questions, delegates will contribute to the broader understanding of resilience as a cornerstone of global peace and stability.

Analysis:

The Vietnam War (1955–1975) stands as a powerful example of how conflict can shape nations and redefine global dynamics. What began as a fight for Vietnam's independence evolved into a proxy war between communism and capitalism, reflecting the Cold War's ideological battles. For the U.S., intervention was driven by the Domino Theory and a desire to contain communism, while for Vietnam, it was a struggle for self-determination. This clash of local and global interests prolonged the war, illustrating the dangers of imposing external ideologies on deeply rooted local conflicts. Militarily, the war highlighted the limits of conventional power against asymmetric tactics. The United States' technological and logistical superiority could not overcome the North Vietnamese forces' resilience, adaptability, and local support. The conflict demonstrated the importance of understanding the social and psychological dimensions of warfare, particularly in contexts where local populations play a pivotal role.

The humanitarian consequences were devastating, with millions of civilian casualties and long-term environmental and health crises caused by chemical weapons like Agent Orange. Globally, the war raised critical ethical and legal questions about civilian protection, the conduct of war, and the need for stronger international frameworks to address such challenges.

Domestically, the war reshaped political landscapes, particularly in the United States, where public dissent and anti-war movements undermined trust in government. Internationally, it weakened alliances, energized global peace movements, and demonstrated the power of public opinion in shaping foreign policy. Vietnam's recovery after the war is a testament to resilience, with the nation overcoming immense devastation to rebuild and modernize. Its experience offers lessons for post-conflict recovery, emphasizing reconciliation, sustainable development, and the importance of inclusive governance. For the global community, the Vietnam War serves as a reminder of the costs of war and the need for diplomacy, preventive measures, and respect for local realities in resolving conflicts.

History:

The Vietnam War (1955–1975) was a protracted and devastating conflict that had profound implications for Vietnam and the global community. Rooted in Vietnam's struggle for independence from French colonial rule, the war evolved into a central theater of Cold War tensions, symbolizing the ideological battle between communism and capitalism. After World War II, Vietnam sought independence from France, leading to the First Indochina War (1946–1954). The conflict ended with the Geneva Accords, which temporarily divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel: the communist-led Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) under Ho Chi Minh and the U.S.-backed Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) under Ngo Dinh Diem. This division, intended as a temporary measure, became the foundation for a larger conflict.

As the Cold War intensified, Vietnam became a critical flashpoint. The United States, fearing the spread of communism in Southeast Asia, adopted the Domino Theory and provided military and financial support to the South Vietnamese government. Simultaneously, North Vietnam, with backing from the Soviet Union and China, sought to reunify the country under communist rule. The Gulf of Tonkin Incident in 1964 marked a turning point, leading to direct U.S. military involvement.

The war was characterized by unconventional guerrilla warfare, high civilian casualties, and the extensive use of chemical agents like Agent Orange. Despite its superior military resources, the United States struggled against the resilient North Vietnamese forces and the Viet Cong, who capitalized on local support and knowledge. The Tet Offensive of 1968 shattered U.S. confidence in a quick victory, leading to growing domestic opposition and global criticism of the war.

Internationally, the Vietnam War exposed the limitations of Cold War-era alliances and interventionist policies. It highlighted the complexities of sovereignty, the ethics of warfare, and the need for diplomacy. Domestically, it fueled anti-war movements and reshaped public trust in governments, particularly in the United States, where the conflict became a symbol of political and social division.

The war ended with the fall of Saigon in 1975, marking the reunification of Vietnam under communist rule. However, its aftermath left scars that persisted for decades, including economic devastation, lingering health effects, and millions of displaced people. Despite these challenges, Vietnam's recovery and eventual modernization are a testament to the resilience of its people and the potential for reconciliation and reconstruction after conflict.

The Vietnam War remains a pivotal moment in global history, offering enduring lessons on the consequences of war and the importance of resilience in the face of adversity.

Questions a resolution must answer:

- **Resilience and Recovery:** What frameworks can be established to strengthen national resilience in the aftermath of war?
 - **Addressing the Humanitarian Impact of War:** What measures can be implemented to ensure the protection of civilians during conflicts?
 - **International Law and Accountability:** How can international law be strengthened to regulate the conduct of war and hold violators accountable?
- **Role of Regional Diplomacy:** What strategies should regional organizations and neighbouring nations adopt to address ideological and political differences before conflicts arise?

Subtopics:

1. The role of foreign intervention in escalating the Vietnam War
2. How the Vietnam War became a battleground for Cold War rivalries between the United States, the Soviet Union, and China
3. The Domino Theory and its influence on U.S. foreign policy during the Vietnam War
4. The role of regional cooperation and international support in Vietnam's recovery
5. How the Vietnam War affected U.S. alliances with Southeast Asian nations

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Topic 2: Discussing the implications of the Iran-Iraq in the Middle East

Introduction:

The Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988) stands as one of the most devastating and transformative conflicts of the late 20th century, fundamentally altering the Middle East's geopolitical dynamics and leaving a legacy of destruction, political tension, and unresolved grievances. Triggered by territorial disputes and ideological rivalry, the war was rooted in Iraq's ambitions to assert dominance over the region and Iran's revolutionary aspirations following the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Over eight brutal years, the conflict devastated both nations, resulting in millions of casualties, widespread economic ruin, and the use of internationally condemned tactics such as chemical warfare.

The war's origins lay in Iraq's withdrawal from the Algiers Agreement of 1975, a treaty that settled disputes over the Shatt al-Arab waterway but was later undermined by Saddam Hussein's perception of Iran's vulnerability amidst its post-revolutionary chaos. Saddam sought not only territorial gains but also the containment of Iran's revolutionary ideology, which threatened to inspire Shi'a uprisings within Iraq and across the Gulf. For Iran, the conflict became a rallying cry for national defence, religious fervour, and revolutionary unity.

While ostensibly a bilateral conflict, the Iran-Iraq War attracted significant foreign intervention, transforming it into a proxy war reflective of Cold War-era rivalries.

Iraq received backing from the United States, the Soviet Union, and regional powers such as Saudi Arabia, while Iran aligned itself with Syria, Libya, and non-state actors like the Kurdish Peshmerga. The war's global implications extended beyond the battlefield, challenging international law, humanitarian norms, and the mechanisms of conflict resolution.

This topic compels delegates to examine the intricate causes, conduct, and aftermath of the war while addressing pressing questions: How can the international community address the consequences of ideological and territorial disputes? What frameworks are needed to protect civilians and prevent the use of banned weapons? By engaging with these questions, delegates will contribute to a broader understanding of resilience and diplomacy in resolving modern conflicts.

Analysis:

The Iran-Iraq War offers critical insights into how deeply entrenched territorial disputes and ideological rivalries can spiral into prolonged and catastrophic conflicts. The war was marked by distinct phases, each highlighting different dimensions of resilience, military strategy, and international involvement. Initially, Iraq's invasion of Iran in September 1980 aimed to capitalize on the perceived instability of the newly established Islamic Republic. However, by mid-1982, Iran had regained its lost territories, turning the tide of the conflict.

One of the war's defining characteristics was its brutality and protracted nature. Trench warfare, mass human wave attacks, and extensive bombing campaigns devastated both nations. The humanitarian toll was immense, with estimates of up to two million deaths, countless wounded, and millions displaced. Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iranian forces and Kurdish civilians underscored the war's disregard for international conventions. These violations not only tarnished Iraq's global reputation but also highlighted the failure of international mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable.

Despite its military disadvantages, Iran demonstrated remarkable resilience. The war became a unifying force for the nascent Islamic Republic, strengthening its revolutionary ideology and consolidating domestic support. This resilience, however, came at a significant cost, as Iran's economy suffered under blockades, and its infrastructure was severely damaged. Iraq, on the other hand, relied heavily on foreign aid to sustain its war effort. The support of the U.S., the Soviet Union, and Gulf states like Saudi Arabia underscored the role of Cold War dynamics in escalating and prolonging the conflict.

The global implications of the war were profound. The conflict demonstrated the limits of international organizations like the United Nations in preventing or resolving such disputes. UNSC Resolution 598, which called for an immediate ceasefire, was ultimately ignored for years as both sides pursued total victory. Furthermore, the war highlighted the dangers of proxy warfare, as foreign powers armed both sides without regard for the long-term consequences.

Economically, the war destabilized the Gulf region, disrupting oil production and contributing to global price volatility. The conflict also exacerbated sectarian divides, with Iran's Shi'a revolutionary message challenging Sunni-dominated regimes, particularly in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. These tensions sowed the seeds for future conflicts, including Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the subsequent U.S.-led intervention in the region.

In the post-war period, both nations faced immense challenges in rebuilding. Iran emerged as a more isolated but resilient power, while Iraq, burdened by debt and international condemnation, set its sights on regional aggression, leading to the Gulf War. The Iran-Iraq War serves as a sobering reminder of the costs of war and the importance of diplomacy, humanitarian protections, and post-conflict recovery in maintaining global stability.

History:

The Iran-Iraq War was rooted in both historical territorial disputes and the geopolitical transformations of the 20th century. The conflict's immediate trigger was Iraq's withdrawal from the 1975 Algiers Agreement, which had temporarily resolved disputes over the Shatt al-Arab waterway. However, deeper causes lay in the ideological clash between Saddam Hussein's secular, nationalist Baathist regime and Iran's Shi'a Islamic Republic, led by Ayatollah Khomeini.

The war officially began on September 22, 1980, when Iraq launched a surprise invasion of western Iran. Saddam Hussein aimed to capitalize on Iran's post-revolutionary instability and assert Iraqi dominance over disputed territories. Early Iraqi advances stalled by late 1980, and by mid-1982, Iran had regained all its lost territory, shifting the war onto Iraqi soil.

The war was characterized by its sheer destructiveness and disregard for international norms. Iraq's use of chemical weapons, Iran's reliance on human wave attacks, and the targeting of civilian infrastructure highlighted the conflict's brutality. Both nations employed propaganda to rally support, portraying the war as a fight for survival and ideological dominance.

Proxy forces played a significant role. Iran supported Kurdish insurgents in northern Iraq, while Iraq fostered ties with opposition groups within Iran. Both nations also received substantial foreign aid: Iraq from Western and Arab states, and Iran from countries like Syria, Libya, and North Korea. This foreign involvement prolonged the war, turning it into a Cold War-era battleground. The war ended in 1988 with a ceasefire brokered by the United Nations, following the adoption of Resolution 598. Neither side achieved its objectives, and the conflict is widely regarded as a stalemate. However, its aftermath left deep scars on the region. Iraq's economy was crippled by war debts, leading to its invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf War. Iran, though resilient, faced years of economic hardship and international isolation.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

- **Humanitarian Protections:** How can international frameworks better address the use of banned weapons and protect civilians during conflicts?
- **Conflict Prevention:** What mechanisms can prevent territorial and ideological disputes from escalating into prolonged wars?
- **Proxy Warfare:** How can the international community regulate the involvement of foreign powers in regional conflicts?
- **Post-War Recovery:** What strategies are necessary for rebuilding war-torn societies while fostering reconciliation and stability?
- **International sanctions:** Should there be any consequences for the reports of excessive torture or weapons of mass destruction used by either side?

Subtopics:

1. The Algiers Treaty of 1975
2. The rights of either Iran or Iraq to claim control over regions of Shatt al-Arab
3. The influence of Cold War dynamics and foreign intervention in prolonging the conflict.
4. The economic and geopolitical consequences of the war for the Gulf region.
5. How the war eventually led to the invasion of Kuwait and later the US invasion in Iraq
6. The treatment of Shi'a within Iraq during the war
7. The mass deportations of Kurds from Iraq

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