

United Nations Security Council

Topic: Israel's West Bank barrier

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I Committee

The Security Council was mentioned in the UN Charter. It came into being by the signing of the United Nations Charter in October 24th, 1945. The Charter indicated the Security Council as one of the six main bodies of the UN along with General Assembly, Secretariat, Economic and Social Council, International Court of Justice, and Trusteeship Council³. "Under the United Nations Charter, the Security Council is primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security."² It is the only one of the six that can authorize economic sanctions or military interventions if peace is broken without the other bodies having to ratify the decisions. This right is mentioned in Chapter VII of the Charter². This makes the Security Council the most powerful and one of the most important committees in the United Nations. 15 members compose the Security Council. Five of these are permanent. These are the allied powers in World War II, United States, United Kingdom, Russian Federation, France, and the People's Republic of China. The other 10 members are nonpermanent which "serve nonconsecutive two-year terms." They are elected on a geographical basis by the General Assembly. The presidential term of the Security Council is one month. Every country in the committee can hold it. A resolution may only pass if two conditions are met: Nine positive votes and all five permanent members have to vote in favour. This is so because the five permanent countries have the veto power². This power has sometimes stalemated the Security Council and is widely criticized. In our simulation we will have more than 15 countries so as to have more participation from the delegates.

II. Introduction and Description of the Issue

The West Bank barrier in Israel, as the name suggests, is a barrier being constructed by Israel's government along the West bank. The length of the wall approved by Israel's government is supposed to be about 703 km long. The segment of the wall already constructed consists of a concrete base with a five-meter-high wire-and-mesh superstructure. Rolls of razor wire are positioned on one side. Furthermore, the makeup of the barrier is fixed with electronic sensors; it also has an underground "trace road" beside it where footprints of anyone crossing can be observed. (BBC News, 2005) This has been a very controversial issue since 2002 when the construction first started. About 58% of the wall is complete. The barrier is expected to be done by 2010. The disagreement in the issue brings forth a series of arguments that question the

lawfulness of the construction. Many Palestinian farmers that practice subsistence farming have been cut off from their crops and other means of economic and financial survival. Another main concern is that this barrier blocks the second largest water source from a Palestinian town Qalqilya. This wall, the UN predicts, will lead to a new group of refugees and a dreadful situation for the farmers and people that were blocked access to their means of economic survival.

Points of view

There are conceivably two main points of view on the issue. There are those countries that support the construction of the wall because they believe that Israel as a sovereign nation should be able to determine the security measures they consider appropriate to ensure the safety of their citizens. Palestinian leaders clearly oppose the construction of the West Bank barriers. Many farmers have lost their lands; many citizens have lost their education due to the wall. There are also many impediments for Palestinian people to reach healthcare inside cities in Israel. Human Rights Organizations state that “the fence/wall, in its present configuration, violates Israel’s obligations under international humanitarian law.”(Amnesty International, 2004)

Israel strongly goes after the idea that the only purpose of the wall is to ensure the safety of the citizens. They argue that the number of suicide-bombing attacks have significantly diminished since the wall has been heaved. They also point out that as a sovereign nation they should be able to decide how they solve internal security issues.

On the other hand, many argue that this barrier breaks many treaties that ensure human rights.

Case Studies

United States

The United States of America view the barrier as a problematic issue. They firmly believe that having a barrier will create tensions between the people in the area. However in October 2003 when the Security Council issued a resolution that said that the wall should be torn down, the United States vetoed the decision. Even though the United States is not in favor of the wall, they diplomatically have to support Israel in its endeavors.

Canada

Canada supports Israel in their efforts for maintaining security in their country. They support the idea of respecting Israel’s Sovereignty. However, Canada believes that it was wrong to isolate Palestinian towns and to cut their water sources. They believe that Israel shouldn’t incursion in occupied territories. They believe they violate many treaties previously established.

European Union

In 2003, all of the members of the European Union voted in favor of tumbling down the Barrier, however USA vetoed the decision. They strongly condemn the Actions taken in Israel in order to 'maintain peace.' They believe that building a barrier creates tensions. It also brings forth a new issue of 'apartheid' in the West Banks.

Important Questions

- Should a country's sovereignty be placed over the individual rights of many people?
- What regulations could be applied in the barrier, in case this should be kept, so that farmers are allowed to cross freely to their farmlands?
- Should economic and military sanctions be taken into consideration if the expropriations don't stop?

Bibliography

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2. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3111159.stm
3. <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList4/F06BB484D900B227C1256E3E00324D96>