

# CIMUN VI

Chicago International Model United Nations  
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## Historical United Nations General Assembly Background Guide



Dear Delegates,

It is our distinct pleasure to welcome you to the sixth annual Chicago International Model United Nations. If this is your first time as a delegate at CIMUN, you will soon realize that this will be unlike any other conference that you have ever attended. All committees at CIMUN feature a fully-integrated crisis simulation, forcing delegates to think on their feet and work between multiple committees to solve challenging problems in a variety of forums.

From the General Assembly and Security Council to the Cabinets and Regional Bodies, all committees at CIMUN are vital participants in the crisis, and successful delegations will have to work as a team to coordinate their efforts to best promote their national interests, simulating the work of actual diplomats and politicians. As a result, this background guide and the committee topics you have been assigned are intended only as a starting point. It is much more important to be familiar with the “character” and vital interests of your country than to focus on specifics, as you will inevitably be placed in many situations where you will be forced to think outside of the box and make important decisions in real-time. To assist you with this challenge, we encourage you to take full advantage of our extensive Home Government and Simulations staff and the variety of other resources that will be available during the conference.

Additionally, CIMUN employs a much different philosophy that most other high school conferences. Instead of forcing delegates to work towards unrealistic compromises and pass “consensus” resolutions at any cost, we encourage you to faithfully represent your national interests and to always place your country’s strategic motivations, both public and covert, at the forefront, even if it means being confrontational. Our crisis has been specially designed to pit the interests of key players against each other in ways that will involve every country at the conference, and we strongly advise you to always keep your nation’s own interests in mind.

This year, our historical simulation will begin on September 20, 1980, set right in the heart of the Cold War. Though historical events up to that point will still apply, everything after the start date will be solely determined by your actions, so we encourage you to think freely and not be bound by the confines of history.

We will continue to post more specifics, updates, and research materials as the date of the conference approaches. Information on Position Papers and other requirements can be found on our website in the “Position Papers” section. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or your committee dais. See you in December!

Sincerely,

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## UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### **Topic 1: Diplomatic Rights and Security**

#### **History and Background:**

The beginnings of diplomatic privilege date back to 1709, when the British Parliament voted to grant foreign diplomats immunity from prosecution. Since then, diplomatic immunity has been considered an essential facet of modern diplomacy, ensuring that foreign diplomats were free to perform their official duties without the fear of persecution. Though there have been isolated violations of these policies, the system of immunity has consistently grown stronger with the evolution of the diplomatic system.

The modern system of diplomatic intercourse was codified in 1961 by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Diplomatic Intercourse and Immunities, a body acting on the prerogative of this Assembly. The convention formalized and made legally-binding many precepts of the centuries-old system that had been previously established through bilateral agreements and de-facto understandings, and firmly asserted the rights of foreign diplomats to be free from attack or persecution. Further, the convention stipulated that it was the responsibility of the host state to ensure the security of foreign diplomats, and established the principle of extraterritoriality for foreign embassies. In the minds of the Convention's framers, all of these steps were intended to preserve friendly relations and the lines of diplomacy, even between countries with "differing constitutional and social systems."

#### **Current Situation:**

Though there have been small infractions, the greatest threat to this regime is undoubtedly the current hostage crisis in Iran. On November 4, 1979, the US embassy in Tehran was seized by a militant group of armed students, radicalized by the country's recent Islamic Revolution. Though the event was originally intended only as a peaceful demonstration, when it became apparent that the American security forces would not fire on the growing mob of demonstrators, the students entered and took control of the embassy, citing their anger at American intervention in Iran, and fears that the US diplomats were really spies working to overthrow the Islamic Republic.

Though the hostage-takers in Iran are not government sponsored, the Iranian government has publicly supported their actions, and has refused to retake the embassy or to assist with rescue efforts. Ayatollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran, has called the siege "the second revolution," applauding the students' actions against the "American spy den," and gloating that "America can't do a thing." Iran has publicly cited America's sheltering of the ousted Iranian Shah, who Khomeini has demanded be returned to Iran from trial and execution, as their primary motivation for continuing to hold the hostages.

In the international arena, Iran has insisted that the Americans being held are not legitimate diplomats, but rather spies bent on reversing the Islamic Revolution.

Since the embassy was first seized nearly one year ago, there have been several efforts to negotiate for the release of the hostages, but none have been successful due to fundamental differences between the US and Iran. Khomeini has pledged to let the matter be decided by the newly elected Iranian Majilis (parliament), and has vetoed several compromises put forth by the Carter administration, even in light of American concessions. The Iranians remain ardent that, since the embassy officials were engaging in espionage, their rights as diplomats were tacitly waived, and their fate must be decided by the Iranian people.

### **Implications:**

As the General Assembly, you are tasked with considering the implications of these new developments on the international diplomatic system. Since the seizure of the embassy, many states have voiced renewed concerns about the safety and security of their diplomats, especially in unfriendly countries. Many fear the developments in Iran will compromise the entire system, and set a dangerous precedent, which other countries may follow, leading to a breakdown in diplomatic communication between countries with a history of conflict. There are also fears that other groups may attempt to seize foreign embassies as a bargaining chip.

### **Questions to Consider:**

- Is the taking of American hostages in Iran a violation of the Vienna Convention, or do the allegations of espionage render to Convention non-applicable?
- What will be the implications of the hostage taking on the system of foreign diplomacy as a whole?
- Should sovereign nations have a right to violate diplomatic privilege when they feel their national security is being threatened?
- How can the system be reformed to alleviate the new concerns that this situation has arisen?

## **Topic 2: Self-Determination in the Middle East and Central Asia**

### **Background:**

As delegates to the 17th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, one of the agenda items that you will deal with relates with the ability for a nation's right of self determination. Self-determination is defined as free choice of one's own acts without external compulsion; and especially as the freedom of the people of a given territory to determine their own political status. The concept generally relates to any nation whose ideals have still yet to be fully recognized by the majority of the world. In this session, the focus is on the Middle East.

### **Current Situation:**

The political scene in the Middle East has been rapidly changing as events keep moving fast and at many times, unexpectedly. Thus, by the time this topic will be presented in the 17th session, the political situation may be different from the one that prevails at the moment. Yet, the factors that go into consideration remain the same. It is entirely a value debate among nations. What degree of freedom does a group entail? What level of external compulsion is the limit? In the past, within the Middle East, the Palestinian liberation movement poses the greatest issue.

The UN Atlantic Charter signatories understand the concept of self-determination, yet the argument still stands. The amount of independence on the part of a newly formed self-governing body is still limited. There is no set guideline and it lies upon the countries to decide what is and isn't applicable in the eyes of the world population.

However, the United Nations process on the rights of indigenous peoples shows that the understanding of the right of self-determination can evolve into something much more concrete, in particular due to the dialogue taking place within the context of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the many national self-government arrangements.

The international community is influenced by national political viewpoints, which generally tend to be more pragmatic and flexible than the international process. The national experiences of indigenous self-determination, or self-government, directly influences the international debate and thereby should move the debate forward. This creates a pressure for the stronger western nations to be forced to understand other perspectives.

Ultimately, the biggest issue to fall on the General Assembly is why this of utmost matter, or subsequently, why it isn't of matter. Keep in mind the issues that will be addressed from your country's perspective and the perspectives of your fellow allies, fellow opponents and the non-aligned. Work needs to be made, however, consensus isn't the main point. Cooperative understanding proves to me much more efficient than working on a process that only crosses the Es and dots the Is on a piece of paper.

### **Topic 3: States Maintaining a Policy of Apartheid**

Apartheid is the Afrikaans word that means separateness and was coined by the South African Bureau of Race Relations (SABRA) in 1930. It was used by SABRA to denote the separate development of races living in South Africa. Subsequently, the practice of apartheid was primarily associated with racial policy that is currently being exercised by the National Party government of South Africa. However, apartheid is not only practiced in South Africa according to many in the international community. The treatment of Palestinians in Israel, as well as African-Americans in the United States, and the Peking regime's actions in Tibet are just few examples where other states have been accused of following similar racially based policies.

#### **History & Background:**

The apartheid policy was implemented by the National Party government in 1948. The National Party government used three broad racial categories: white, colored, and

black. The classifications were based on an individual's skin tone and ancestry. This racial classification was the sole criterion used to determine whom one could marry, property rights, whether they could attain education, participation in sports, level of healthcare treatment, and where they could be buried. In other words, an individual's race dominated every single aspect of their daily lives.

One of the first complaints against this policy was filed by India in response to the treatment of ethnic Indians by the South African Government. The Indian complaint was based on the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and Universal Human Rights accords adopted by the United Nations in 1948. The Indian government stated that United Nations condoning the actions by the National Party government of South Africa will undermine the foundation of mutual respect among Member States. The initial complaint made little headway, however persistence by the Indian delegation and escalation of conflict within South Africa led to incremental progress on the issue in the international arena. As the decade wore on, the United Nations held seminars, conferences, and eventually formed a committee to discuss the apartheid policy in South Africa. The events of Sharpeville in 1960 led to the involvement of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The Security Council in its resolution S/RES/134 (1960) gave a strong rebuke to the actions of South African Government and called on the government to initiate measures to restore racial harmony in accordance with the United Nations (UN) Charter. As of now, the policy of apartheid still continues in South Africa while the General Assembly debates Draft Working Paper 1761 in the General Assembly.

As stated previously, some member states claim that the treatment of Palestinians in Israel constitutes the same violations of the UN Charter and Human Rights agreements alleged by India against South Africa. The primary test for the violation, according to these parties, is unequal access of the law and basic rights based on racial or ethnic origin. Along these same lines, the policies of segregation and what has come to be known as "Jim Crow" laws in the Southern United States can also be cited.

For these opponents of racially based policy, the situation in Tibet provides a unique challenge. As the regime in Beijing is not subject to the UN charter and not a signatory to Universal Human Rights protocols, discussing the issue is difficult. Another facet to this situation is that, since the Republic of China claims full legal control of all Chinese territory, does it technically or legally become their responsibility to provide for equal access and rights for Tibetans? If because a non-participant regime has control, do other UN members have less or more responsibility to address the problem?

### **Key Reading:**

The United Nations and Apartheid 1948-1994

This landmark publication chronicles the central role played by the United Nations in supporting the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. In an extensive introduction, United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali provides an overview of the Organization's contribution to South Africa's historic transformation. In addition, the publication includes the text of more than 200 key documents. These are supported by indexes, a detailed chronology and a bibliography of United Nations documentation, making this an essential reference work for anyone interested in the long fight against

apartheid or in the work of the United Nations in helping to resolve one of the major issues of the century.

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