



# **Manlius Pebble Hill Model United Nations**

## **Conference October 2020**

Disarmament and International Security (DISEC)

Chairs:

Max Fung

Jack Sullivan

## *Preface*

Welcome to DISEC at MPHMUN 2020! Your chairs for this committee will be Max Fung and Jack Sullivan. Max attends MPH and enjoys playing soccer, golf, and basketball, and also plays the drums and violin. Jack also attends MPH, and enjoys playing golf and tennis in his free time. This committee will be run resolution-style, so delegates should prepare resolutions for both topics before committee begins. In order to be eligible for an award, delegates must submit a position paper for at least one topic and resolutions for both topics to [disecmphmun@gmail.com](mailto:disecmphmun@gmail.com) by 11:59 PM on Thursday, October 22nd. Guidelines for submission can be found [here](#). **Anything received after this time will not be accepted.** This year, our conference will be run virtually. For more information on this, please refer to our website [here](#). We look forward to being your chairs in committee! Please do not hesitate to email us with any questions you may have.

Max Fung & Jack Sullivan

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### ***Introduction to Committee***

The Disarmament and International Security Committee, or DISEC, is the first committee of the United Nations General Assembly. It aims to achieve world peace and security, and it deals with topics including arms regulation, combat prevention, and increasing cooperation between nations. DISEC was created in 1945 following the conclusion of World War II. It held its first conference in 1946 with the “Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy” set as its topic. Each member state of the UN is invited to take part in DISEC's annual meetings beginning in the third week of September.

## **Topic 1: Responding to Civil Unrest**

### ***Introduction***

Civil unrest, also known as civil disorder, is a tool used by civilians to try to enact change within a state. Civil unrest can take the form of protests, riots, strikes, or other acts of disobedience against authority. These protests can be either peaceful or violent, and the response to protesters is often the source of controversy. The issues of police brutality and the poor treatment of protestors have been brought to the forefront of international affairs due to recent protests around the world against institutionalized racism and protests in Hong Kong demanding increased political rights. Both of these protests have been met with a large display of force from law enforcement officials, which has sparked international outrage. Nations around the world lack a unified approach in responding to protests, leading to law enforcement officers acting erratically and violently against both protestors and bystanders. Dozens have died as a result of the protests in the United States, leading to increased outrage and anger from the protestors which has exacerbated the issue. As protests continue to happen around the world, DISEC needs to work towards devising mechanisms for responding to civil unrest that ensure the safety of civilians.

### ***History***

In order to mitigate the use of violence when responding to civil unrest, many nations began to develop non-lethal weapons. Non-lethal weapons, also known as less-than-lethal weapons, are any “weapons and munitions designed to be used without a substantial risk of serious or permanent injury or death to the subject on whom they are applied.” The use of

pressurized water cannons is considered to be one of the earliest forms of non-lethal weaponry that are still widely used, originating from Germany in the 1930s. Since then, numerous varieties of non-lethal weaponry were created to continue to deal with civil conflicts that emerged globally.

Elsewhere in Europe, beginning in the 1960s, Northern Ireland saw over three decades of conflict, which would later be known as the Troubles. The conflict arose following the appearance of a civil rights movement of Catholic nationalists protesting a government dominated by Protestant unionists. The aim of the protesters was to reunite Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland, as they felt that the current government discriminated against them due to their Catholic faith. When tensions between the Catholic nationalists and the Protestant unionists rose, the UK sought a method of controlling the violence without harming either party. In 1970, the British Ministry of Defense created non-lethal rubber bullets in order to suppress conflicts that arose during these protests. Rubber bullets didn't cause any casualties until April of 1972 when Francis Rowntree was struck in the head by a stray bullet. With continuous signs of permanent damage, the rubber bullet was widely replaced with plastic bullets in 1975. The plastic bullet proved less harmful than its rubber counterpart, but it still showed the potential to be lethal. Since then, new non-lethal ammunition such as the flexible baton rounds, or bag rounds, were invented. When the conflict was resolved in 1998, following the Good Friday Agreement, the total number of deaths caused by rubber and plastic bullets had risen to 17. With rubber bullets continuing to cause serious harm due to misuse and inaccuracy, their use on civilians was banned in the UK and many other countries.

When riots and protests grew in size, chemical agents previously used in warfare were then used on civilians. According to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), riot control agents or RCAs are defined as chemicals “not listed in a schedule which can produce sensory irritation or disabling physical effects rapidly in humans and which disappear within a short time following termination or exposure.” Aerosol RCAs such as tear gas was used throughout the duration of both world wars as well as many other armed conflicts. While there are many different varieties of tear gas, the two that are the most widely used are CS gas and CN gas. CS tear gas inflicts a burning sensation throughout the respiratory tract for a small duration, whereas CN tear gas is used to cause temporary loss of vision when sprayed into one’s eyes. While the intended effects of tear gas are meant to fade shortly, continued exposure to tear gas can cause several long-term health problems. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that it is not uncommon for eye problems such as glaucoma, cataracts, and corneal scarring to occur when one has been exposed to tear gas in an enclosed area or for prolonged periods of time. In some instances, people who had developed asthma from exposure to tear gas later died of respiratory failure. In 1997, the Chemical Weapons Convention became effective and prohibited the use of tear gas, amongst other chemicals, in warfare, but not when controlling civil unrest. Thus, many nations are barred from using tear gas in armed warfare, but not when attempting to respond to the unrest of their own civilians. There is great controversy surrounding whether or not tear gas should be allowed to be used for combatting civil unrest due to its comparative risk. A study done by the National Center for Biotechnology Information on 93 subjects showed an increase in several different respiratory complaints and in some cases weakened pulmonary functions, many of which could be dangerous for civilians with

pre-existing respiratory conditions. The history of responding to civil unrest is complicated, and many of the controversies surrounding crowd control tactics still exist to this day.

### ***Current Situation***

Recently, there have been a number of protests that have erupted across the world. The most widespread and prominent protests began in 2020, over the death of George Floyd, police brutality, and systemic racism as a whole. During an arrest on May 25, American police officers pinned George Floyd, using excessive force to kneel on his neck and killing him as a result. This sparked a series of protests first in Minneapolis, where Floyd was killed, but eventually all around the United States and the world. Other nations, including the UK, New Zealand, Israel, Sudan, and Brazil, have seen civilians take to the streets in solidarity with United States protestors. Other nations such as Iran and China have also condemned the United States' response to the protestors, and around the world, people are showing their support for protestors. The response to these protests in the United States has been extreme, and in several cases, the military and the National Guard has become involved. The police have used tools such as tear gas, rubber bullets, pepper spray, and flashbangs to disperse protestors, often causing serious or even permanent injury. The use of tear gas is especially dangerous with the coronavirus pandemic, as protestors are much more likely to discard their contaminated masks or not follow social distancing guidelines when exposed to tear gas. The International Crisis Group stated that the police used "excessive force" in responding to the protestors, and the current United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, stated that "all police officers who resort to excessive use of force should be charged and convicted for the crimes committed."

However, so far there has not been accountability for many members of law enforcement, and protests continue. The United States is not the only nation to recently have issues due to civil unrest, and protests in Hong Kong have shaken one of the world's most powerful countries.

Hong Kong is perhaps the best example of extreme responses to civil unrest. There, protests have been going on for over a year, starting when a bill was passed to allow criminal extradition from Hong Kong to China. After the police responded to the protests violently and allegations of police brutality surfaced, the protestors began calling for increased democracy and political reform. Police have used crowd suppression tools such as tear gas extensively, while also beating protestors both in the street and while in custody. Stories of police torturing protestors in prison have also arisen, which have caused international outrage. The United Nations has called for investigations into these allegations, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has condemned violence on both sides. Recently, an attempt by China to impose national security legislation has led to a new surge in the protests. On May 28, 2020, China passed legislation that would try to prevent any attempts at secession, including preventing foreign interference. This law punishes "secession, subversion, terrorism, and collusion with foreign forces" with up to life in prison. In early July over 600,000 citizens of Hong Kong cast a vote in protest against these laws in an attempt to push a pro-democracy candidate into the Hong Kong legislative council. With the authoritarian nature of these laws and general discontent among those in Hong Kong, tensions in the region remain high and a resurgence of protests is not unlikely.

Protests have also occurred in the Philippines, where President Rodrigo Duterte has tried to pass an anti-terrorism law which increases surveillance and expands the definition of



terrorism. However, many believe that the law will be used to restrict free speech and protests have erupted in opposition to the law. The response to these protests has also been violent, with President Duterte giving an order to police to shoot protestors during the quarantine. In Iran, anti-government protests have been occurring with a reignition in November of 2019. Death tallies differ, with Tehran claiming only 225 deaths, while Amnesty International claims at least 304, and a Reuters report claims 1,500. The internet was also shut down for five days in response to the protests in November, which essentially removed all outside contact with the country. Law enforcement has used tear gas to disperse protestors, and opposition leaders have been detained for several years. More recently, protests have flared up in Belarus over controversy surrounding the legitimacy of the reelection of President Alexander Lukashenko. While the situation is still developing, thus far, protests have been met with violence. Human Rights Watch has denounced the aggressive response to mostly peaceful protests and has reported that authorities have restricted access to the internet, detained thousands of protestors daily, and have thrown stun grenades directly into crowds, exposing non-violent protestors to injury. Considering the international prevalence of civil unrest and the commonality of protests, it is DISEC's responsibility to ensure that protestors remain safe and that a unified approach is taken to address this issue.

### ***Questions to Consider***

- What methods of crowd control should be allowed when regulating protests?

- At what point do protests escalate to riots? Should there be a difference in response between the two?
- How can law enforcement effectively temper aggression from protests without suppressing the overall movement?
- Should international guidelines for quelling protests and riots be introduced? What actions would these guidelines prohibit? Which actions would they encourage?

### ***Further Reading***

1. An article on the effect mob mentality has in turning peaceful protest violent  
<https://guardianlv.com/2014/08/mob-mentality-why-they-riot/>
2. An article which highlights the economic impact that civil unrest has on the global economy  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/ajimpact/civil-unrest-world-impacting-financial-markets-191024182736887.html>
3. An article that examines the roots of many protests as well as the factors which contribute to their growth and severity  
<https://www.asisonline.org/security-management-magazine/articles/2020/02/global-civil-unrest-challenges-security-professionals/>

## **Topic 2: Combatting Cartel Violence in Latin America**

### ***Introduction***

As the Latin American Drug War spreads and cartels continue to grow, the violence that they emit increases, harming more civilians. A Drug War is a conflict between law enforcement and those who traffic illegal drugs. Since the early 20th century, Latin America has been a leading provider of illicit drugs for countries around the world. While the illicit drug trade from Latin America continues to expand, it invites the international growth of other illegal activities associated with the drug trade such as money laundering and corruption. Additionally, it also causes crimes such as extortion, kidnapping, people smuggling, human trafficking, and murder to grow within Latin American countries. According to the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, although Latin America only accounts for 8% of the world's total population, it accounts for 38% of the world's total homicides, one-quarter of which are due to violence associated with the drug trade. Latin America is the only region in the world with a continuous increase in its homicide rate from previous years. Mass corruption in both law enforcement and politicians is one of the contributing factors for high crime rates in Latin America. A study done by Latinobarómetro in 107 Latin American countries showed that one-third of citizens admitted to bribing law enforcement officers at some point. While the effects of the drug trade are visible through all of Latin America, they are intensified in the areas of extreme poverty in which 10% of Latin Americans reside. While these effects of the drug trade are not a recent development, the number of regions plagued by increasing cartel violence continues to rise.

## *History*

Latin American drug trade began in the late 19th century when Americans gained interest in the coca plant and one of its derivatives, cocaine. After years of decrying coca as an example of Latin America's strangeness and savagery, scientists and travelers started to see its uses. Entrepreneurs began to implement coca into their products, with the energy drink "Vin Mariani" one of the first examples. Medical professionals and pharmaceutical companies also began to use coca for its anesthetic properties, and a market started to grow for coca. A huge boost for the coca trade was the development of Coca Cola by John Pemberton in 1886, which used cocaine as a response to prohibition. Cocaine was used extensively in Coca Cola until the early 20th century when anti-cocaine and drug sentiment began to grow. The flavor of Coca Cola was only necessary with the dried coca leaf, and the actual cocaine was removed from the drink. By 1920 cocaine was banned in the United States, and the US led an unsuccessful drive to place an international ban on cocaine.

Peru was the first major hotspot for coca growth and cocaine production, and by 1905 over two dozen cocaine factories had been created. Cocaine became one of the most important parts of the Peruvian economy, and elites supported the trade as a legitimate national industry. However, when cocaine began to lose popularity in the United States and other countries such as Japan and the Netherlands began to produce cocaine, Peru struggled with cocaine as a legal national export. At the same time, an illicit drug trade in Mexico was beginning with opium and marijuana as the major products. Even though these drugs were prohibited in Mexico, corrupt politicians and law enforcement officers were both involved in the drug trade. The illicit drug

trade also spread to Columbia in the early 20th century with marijuana as the major export and Cuba rose as a major transit point. Throughout the mid-20th century, the Latin American drug trade solidified, and Havana became a “post-war global sin capital” where drug use ran rampant among the wealthy until the Cuban Revolution reduced the drug trade. Demand for Latin American drugs steadily rose in the Americas throughout the 1960s and 1970s giving rise to the war on drugs and the establishment of cartels. Cartels are associations of organizations that sell drugs, which aim to consolidate the illegal drug trade and eliminate competition. Cartels are usually very well organized, funded, and their practices often lead to extreme violence. One of the most famous cartels, Pablo Escobar’s Medellín cartel, grew large enough that it was able to create elaborate factories for drug production, obtain fleets of aircraft for transportation, and even buy a Caribbean island. The Medellín cartel is estimated to be responsible for about 4,000 murders, including about 200 judges or government officials and presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galán right before a speech. In an attempt to kill another presidential candidate, Cesar Gaviria Trujillo, the Medellín cartel placed a bomb on an airplane that killed 107 people in the most deadly criminal attack in Colombian history. Competition between cartels has led to violence and destruction, for members of the cartel but also for civilians caught in the crossfire.

There have been a variety of initiatives attempting to reduce drug use and sale in the Americas, ranging from the US and Latin American national policies to UN resolutions. The war on drugs, instituted by the United States, increased funding for agencies aimed at controlling the drug trade and increasing treatment. President Ronald Reagan expanded upon these policies by increasing punishments for drug use and trade, leading to an 800% increase in arrests for nonviolent drug possession from 1980-1997. Latin American nations have also worked to

prevent drug trade and use. Former President of Mexico Felipe Calderón declared a war on drugs in 2006, and he took extensive measures to try to crack down on the drug trade including using the military instead of police he believed to be corrupt. Later presidents have tried to change these policies but military force is still a very prominent tool in the drug war. The United Nations has also worked to try to curtail the drug trade, with the establishment of the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs. This convention attempted to increase cooperation between nations in fighting the drug trade and tried to reduce cartel violence. However, despite these measures, a large drug trade prevails with high homicide rates.

### ***Current Situation***

Since late 2013, Latin America has begun to see an unparalleled rise in illicit drug production. Latin America produces most of the world's cocaine and marijuana as well as much of its amphetamines. In 2015, the Mexican army seized a total of 1116.9 tons of marijuana at the border between the United States and Mexico. It was reported by US customs that 99.9% of all marijuana and 99.8% of all methamphetamine seized in the US in 2015 had come from Mexico. It was also reported that 61% of all cocaine seized had come from Columbia through the western coast of the US. In 2017 as more states in the US legalized marijuana, the number of illicit drugs seized had decreased by 44%. However, while the seizures of marijuana decreased in 2017, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported an increase in the number of seizures of cocaine grown in Columbia by 20% as well as an increase in the amount of cocaine produced by 17%. Evidently, cartel adaptability allows drug trafficking to remain a prominent issue within Latin America.

Mexico holds the three most powerful drug cartels in Latin America, The Sinaloa Cartel, The Gulf Cartel, and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, operating in the north-west, north-east, and west of Mexico respectively. The Sinaloa Cartel and The Gulf Cartel traffic cocaine and marijuana, while The Jalisco New Generation Cartel trafficks an assortment of synthetic drugs. Of these three, Jalisco New Generation Cartel is known for being the most violent. Cartels such as these, often look to juveniles when they are in need of new members. In an NPR interview, an interviewee stated that juveniles are an easy target for cartels because “they're young and poor and disposable.” These young cartel members are often provided with much higher pay than that of a temporary minimum wage job, which makes up 28.8% of the labor market in Columbia. Thus, youth are drawn to drug cartels as they see it as a way to make ends meet. Many Latin American countries have increased their military spending in order to better combat the drug trade as cartels continue to grow in size. While increased military spending helps combat the drug trade, it can retract from spending that could have otherwise been put towards the welfare of citizens. With one-fifth of all Latin Americans living in poverty and one-tenth of Latin Americans living in extreme poverty, the allure of being part of a well-paying drug cartel often outshines the risks and danger associated with the illicit business.

As Latin American countries continue efforts to combat the drug trade, prison occupancy rates are growing and reaching alarming numbers. On average, prisons in Latin American have an occupancy rate of 162%, but some nations have occupancy rates greater than 350%. Many occupants of these prisons are non-violent drug users and lower-level drug dealers who are easily replaceable by cartels. Government policies that encourage the mass incarceration of lower-level drug dealers ultimately have been proven ineffective in the long term due to the availability of

impoverished people looking for any source of income. Policies such as these are especially unhelpful in nations that are deemed ineffective at fighting corruption. According to the 2020 Capacity to Combat Corruption Index, one-third of Latin American nations fell into this category. When governments succeed in capturing or eliminating leaders of large cartels, a time period of internal power struggle within the cartel is often entered, the result of which is the creation of micro-cartels. For example, the Independent Cartel of Acapulco cartel was created from the Beltrán Leyva Cartel in this way following the elimination of Arturo Beltrán Leyva by the Mexican Army.

Conflicts between competing drug cartels, gangs, and the military are major contributors toward measured violence within a Latin American country. In 2015, El Salvador was the most violent country in the western hemisphere with a homicide rate of 103 per 100,000 people. These record numbers were reached after the truce between rival gangs MS13 and Barrio 18 was broken. Since then, there has been a steady decline in El Salvador's homicide rate until April of this year. Over a four day period, there were 76 homicides reported, averaging 19 homicides per day, which was more than seven times greater than the average of 2.5 homicides per day measured prior to this period. Homicide rates also saw a rise in many Mexican states during late 2019 due to an increase in cartel violence. In the northern state of Sonora, there was a 57% increase in homicides following the arrest of one of Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman's sons. Internal conflict between El Chapo's sons and the suspected leader of the Sinaloa Cartel, Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, has also added to the homicide rate. Two central states Hidalgo and Aguascalientes also saw increases in their homicide rates, Hidalgo by 49% and Aguascalientes



by 32%. While drug cartels and the violence that accompanies them are not newfound issues, their vast presence and growth continue to harm Latin American society.

### ***Questions to Consider***

- Should individual nations or the international community as a whole be responsible for fighting the Latin American drug trade?
- How can collaboration and cooperation be encouraged between Latin American states in order to most effectively combat this violence and drug trade?
- How can the leaders of large organizations and cartels be targeted instead of low-level members and customers?
- Should solutions be focused on preventing the growth and spread of the drug trade or on fighting already existing cartels?
- How can violence and conflict be prevented when fighting the Latin American drug trade?

### ***Further Reading***

1. An interview with Juan David Ochoa, a former member of the Medellin cartel  
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/drugs/interviews/ochoajdo.html>
2. An in-depth look at Plan Colombia, an attempt by the United States to curb the drug trade in Latin America  
<https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Mejia-Colombia-final-2.pdf>
3. A graphical approach to understanding the extent of the drug trade  
<https://www.as-coa.org/articles/weekly-chart-drug-production-and-eradication-latin-amer>

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