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BACKGROUND PAPER

Topic: “Addressing Conflicts Arising from Religious and Ideological Tensions between Western Powers and Eastern States.”

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Security Council

Chair and Moderator names

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Committee Background

The United Nations Security Council, one of the six principal organs established by the UN Charter in 1945, holds the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Its first session was held on 17 January 1946 at Church House in Westminster, London, and since then, it has taken permanent residence at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. Composed of fifteen members, five permanent with veto power and ten non-permanent elected by the General Assembly, the Security Council can convene at any time whenever a threat to peace arises. Its initial approach to a dispute is to encourage peaceful resolution, often by recommending negotiations between the parties.

The Council may also propose principles for settlement, conduct investigations, engage in mediation, dispatch diplomatic missions, appoint special envoys, or request the Secretary-General to use his good offices to facilitate a peaceful resolution. When disputes escalate into armed conflict, the Council's priority is to end hostilities as swiftly as possible. It may issue ceasefire directives, send military observers, or deploy peacekeeping forces to reduce tensions, separate warring parties, and help establish conditions for lasting peace. In more severe cases, the Council has the authority to impose enforcement measures such as economic sanctions, arms embargoes, financial and travel restrictions, severance of diplomatic relations, blockades, and even collective military action. In today's context, these powers are crucial for addressing conflicts rooted in ideological or religious tensions.

Introduction of the Topic



In today's global landscape, conflicts driven by religious and ideological tensions between Western and Eastern regions remain a pressing challenge for the international community. While globalization and diplomacy have promoted greater interconnectivity, deep-rooted differences in belief systems, political ideologies, and cultural values continue to fuel division and instability. These differences often manifest in conflicts that are both political and religious in nature.

Contemporary examples highlight the complexity of this issue. The ongoing war in Gaza has reignited global debates on religious identity, territorial rights, and the role of Western powers in predominantly Muslim regions. Tensions between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran exemplify the clash between Western liberal-democratic values and religiously rooted governance systems. Additionally, ideological rivalries between the West and countries like China or Russia reflect broader struggles over political models — democracy versus authoritarianism, secularism versus religious influence, and individual freedoms versus collective control.

These conflicts are not merely political or territorial; they are often underpinned by narratives of historical injustice, cultural resistance, and competing worldviews. In this context, the role of the United Nations and international diplomacy becomes crucial in fostering dialogue, protecting religious freedoms, and promoting peaceful coexistence amid ideological diversity.



Evolution of the Topic

The relationship between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran is an illustrative example of how religious and ideological tensions can shape international conflicts between Western and Eastern regions. While the two countries were once close allies, their relations collapsed after the 1979 Iranian Revolution, marking the beginning of more than four decades of confrontation.

The conflict between the United States and Iran started in 1979 with the Iranian Revolution, when the pro Western government of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was replaced by the Islamic regime of Ayatollah Khomeini. This change created a confrontation of ideas, Iran's new system rejected Western values like secularism, democracy, and capitalism, while promoting a government based on Islam and independence from foreign control. On the other hand, the United States wanted to protect its liberal, democratic model and its influence in the Middle East.

During the 1980s and 1990s, both countries acted according to these beliefs. The U.S. supported Iraq during the Iran vs Iraq War and used economic sanctions to limit Iran's power, seeing it as a threat to Western interests. Iran presented itself as the center of Islamic resistance, supporting groups like Hezbollah and calling the U.S. a symbol of corruption and domination.

Even the nuclear issue in the 2000s and 2010s reflected this same ideological struggle. The U.S. wanted to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and keep global stability, while Iran defended its right to develop nuclear energy without foreign pressure. The 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA) brought some time of calm, but when the US broke the deal in 2018 tensions grew again.

Nowadays, the conflict is both political and ideological. It represents a fight between two very different worldviews, Western democracy against Islamic theocracy. This deep difference between faith and modernity, control and independence continues to build the relationship between the countries.



Evolution of the Topic

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict dates back to the early 20th century. In 1917, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, supporting the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, then under Ottoman control. This was later endorsed by the League of Nations in 1922, granting Britain a mandate to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home. However, the declaration did not address the rights or national aspirations of the Arab Palestinian population, leading to growing tensions.

Between 1936 and 1939, violence erupted between Jewish settlers and Arab Palestinians, culminating in British proposals to partition the land. Though these plans were initially abandoned, in 1947 the newly formed United Nations voted to partition Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. The Jewish community accepted this plan, but Arab states and Palestinians rejected it, leading to conflict upon Israel's declaration of independence in 1948.

The 1948 Arab-Israeli War resulted in Israel's establishment and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. The West Bank came under Jordanian control and Gaza under Egyptian administration. Subsequent wars, particularly the Six-Day War in 1967, saw Israel occupying Gaza, the West Bank, and other territories, intensifying the conflict.

In Gaza, the rise of Hamas in 2007 and the imposition of blockades by Israel and Egypt have led to repeated cycles of violence. Key recent escalations include the 2014 "Operation Protective Edge," where over 2,200 Palestinians died most civilians and 73 Israelis were killed. The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire, with restricted access to essentials and widespread suffering, especially among children.

Tensions further escalated in 2017 with border closures and the US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, provoking protests and deadly clashes in 2018. In 2021, confrontations intensified around Jerusalem over evictions and access to holy sites, sparking one of the worst flare-ups in years.

The conflict reached a new peak in October 2023 when Hamas launched a surprise attack from Gaza, followed by Israeli airstrikes, causing significant casualties on both sides. Violence in the West Bank has also surged to its highest levels in decades.

This ongoing cycle of violence and humanitarian crisis underscores the urgent need for Security Council action to protect civilians, ensure humanitarian access, and support efforts toward a sustainable two-state solution.

External Actions

External actions have a major role in conflicts driven by religious and ideological tensions between Western and Eastern. These actions often involved diplomatic efforts, economic sanctions, and military interventions. These interventions are often carried out by international powers and organizations such as the UN, NATO, and the EU.

In many cases, Western countries especially the United States have intervened in the Middle East and parts of Asia to defend democratic values, protect human rights, or prevent terrorism. Examples include United States actions in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), NATO's involvement in conflicts like in the Balkans during the 1990s. These interventions were often justified as efforts to promote liberal democracy, but in many Eastern societies they were seen as cultural or religious interference, increasing suspicion between both sides.

At the same time, Eastern powers such as Russia, China, and Iran have taken actions to resist Western influence. Russia's support for the Syrian government in the civil war, China emphasis on state sovereignty in international forums, and Iran's support for regional military forces has reflected a very clear rejection of Western liberal ideals. These countries often present themselves as defenders of traditional values, and resistance to Western cultural dominance.





Committee Focus

Under the United Nations Charter, the functions and powers of the Security Council are:

- to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;
- to investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;
- to recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;
- to formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;
- to determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;
- to call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;
- to take military action against an aggressor;
- to recommend the admission of new Members;
- to exercise the trusteeship functions of the United Nations in "strategic areas";
- to recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary General and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.



Conclusion

It is very evident that Western and Eastern Europe have political, economic, moral, and religious conflicts that have caused clashes for decades. Religious and ideological tensions remain a major cause of international instability. The differences between the liberal worldview of the West and the religious and traditional values of the East have led to conflicts that persist to this day.

When examining these conflicts, it is essential to understand the history of each country and the reasons why they defend their position, from their religion and beliefs to their type of political organization.

Although the international community has tried to resolve conflicts through agreements, sanctions, or diplomatic negotiations, the results have been limited because the roots of the conflict are not only political, but also cultural and related to identity. And this is not just one case, there have been several that have occurred and continue to occur throughout history, for example, the conflict between the United States and Iran, and also the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



Countries Position

Iran: Iran is a defender of Islamic values and sovereignty against Western influence. It criticizes foreign intervention in Middle Eastern affairs and promotes resistance through regional alliances. It supports movements that share its ideological and religious vision, arguing that Western policies threaten its cultural independence and national dignity.

Israel: Israel frames its position around its right to exist as a secure Jewish state. It considers itself a democracy surrounded by hostile actors and defends its military actions as measures of selfdefense. It maintains a close alliance with the United States and perceives Iran and some neighboring countries as direct threats.

USA: The United States considers itself a promoter of democracy, human rights, and stability in the Middle East. It intervenes diplomatically and militarily in regional conflicts to protect its interests and its allies. However, many countries perceive its actions as an imposition of Western values on societies with different cultural and religious foundations. The United States maintains a strong alliance with Israel and seeks to curb the spread of extremism and nuclear threats.

Palestine: Palestine has faced political, territorial, and religious tensions with Israel for decades. It advocates for the recognition of its state and its right to self determination. It believes that Western intervention has historically favored Israel, hindering negotiations. Palestine supports international dialogue but insists that its cultural and religious identity be respected as the foundation for achieving a just peace.

Russia: Russia maintains a firm stance against the West, defending conservative, nationalist, and Orthodox values. Russia perceives Western powers as attempting to impose their political and cultural model, particularly through international organizations such as NATO. Russia promotes a world order in which each nation preserves its sovereignty and identity. Furthermore, it supports Middle Eastern countries, such as Iran and Syria, with the aim of countering Western influence in the region.

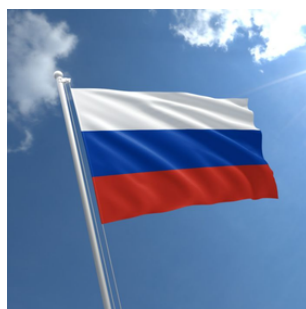
Participation List



Germany



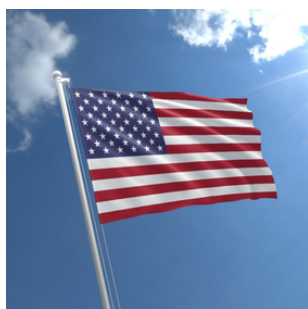
France



Russia



United Kingdom



USA



Israel



Afghanistan



Palestine



China



North Korea



Ethiopia



Iraq

Participation List



Saudi Arabia



Pakistan



Syria



El Salvador



Iran



Japan



Turkey



India



Mexico



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