



CENTENNIAL HIGH SCHOOL MODEL CONGRESS CONFERENCE 2016

HOUSE – FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COUNTER-TERRORISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ITS ALTERNATIVES

By Amy Guo and Eddy Choe

Dear delegates,

My name is Amy Guo. I am a junior at Centennial, and I will be serving as your chair for the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs committee at the very first Centennial High School Model Congress conference (CHSMC). I currently serve as the fundraiser for our Model Congress club, and this is my second year of Model Congress. After first falling in love with Model United Nations, I quickly joined Model Congress, a similar but equally as exciting simulation of political affairs and events. I look forward to working with all of you in action-packed and informative debate.

My name is Eddy Choe, and I am a senior at Centennial. I will be working with Amy to act as co-chair for this committee. Currently, I am the secretary of Centennial's Model Congress club. I've always had an inkling for politics, and after going to my first Model Congress club meeting last year, I had met my people. Model UN never suited me but, when it came local, domestic, or national issues, I always felt at home (no pun intended). I hope that this conference will be as fun for you guys as it was for us planning it.

In this committee, we will be discussing the topic of counter-terrorism in the Middle East and its various alternatives. The United States has been criticized for many years for its controversial measures against terrorism, which have unintentionally produced more terrorist groups and organization than it has subdued. Organizations such as the Islamic state have readily escalated terrorist acts and have further promoted such acts through advents of social media. Direct action must be taken apart from simple military measures towards Middle Eastern nations in order to prevent future attacks on our nation and preserve the safety of American people. The goal of this committee is to address the U.S.'s current counter-terrorism efforts and provide alternatives to armed intervention in the Middle East.

Please read this background guide to its entirety, as it will provide you with necessary information to embark in committee session. After reading this guide, we strongly advise you to further familiarize yourself with additional research on your own from other sources. We will provide you with various questions and thoughts you should consider in your position paper and individual research. Though this is a serious topic to debate, don't forget to have fun! Committee will be filled with lots of interesting and spontaneous events, but it is up to you guys to make it a truly memorable experience. If you have any questions, feel free to email us at centennialmodelcongress@gmail.com, amycguo@gmail.com, or eddylchoe@gmail.com. Please include in the subject "House Foreign Affairs" and your representative's name. We look forward to seeing you all in April!

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs, or the House Foreign Affairs Committee, is a standing committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. The committee addresses and considers legislation including but not limited to foreign assistance, the Peace Corps, national security developments affecting foreign policy, treaties and executive agreements, international law, and the promotion of democracy. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs may conduct oversight of any matter with respect to the jurisdiction of the Committee, as stated in the Rules of the House of Representatives. Its conduct of matters must be assigned and put forth with respect to affiliated agencies and organizations like the United Nations.

Versions of the Committee of Foreign Affairs have existed since 1775; the names of the committee have frequently varied, but the goals have remained consistent. In the 114th Congress from the years of 2015 to 2016, the House Foreign Affairs Committee is composed of twenty-five Republicans and 19 Democrats. The Chairman is Representative Edward R. Royce of the state of California, and is affiliated with the Republican party. The Ranking Member is Representative Eliot L. Engel of New York in the Democratic party. The Committee has passed numerous bills and legislation to uphold jurisdiction of programs, organizations, and policies to promote foreign affairs and relations with other nations around the world.

INTRODUCTION

Terrorist attacks, no matter where the location, can serious detrimental effects on the people, often taking innocent lives or causing the general public to lose faith in the government. Though the United States has succeeded in many aspects concerning counterterrorism, independent terrorist groups are steadily increasing, posing new challenges to the federal government. Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the Bush administration enacted many measures to try and stabilize means of counter-terrorism, and President Barack Obama established a national security machine to target terrorist groups. Much of this involves working with other countries to identify suspected terrorists. When U.S. armed forces are unable to arrest terrorists and hold them for questioning and such, drones are utilized to kill those individuals immediately.

The United States has been very successful in counter-terrorist measures against the terrorist network of al Qaeda, targeting different groups around the world and halting high-profile leaders in their efforts. This has made it more difficult for terrorists to advance their spread around the globe to gain more followers.

The secretary of state specifically lists five Middle Eastern states as typical sponsors for terrorist organizations, called the “terrorism list,” including Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Sudan. The Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 also names Afghanistan as a part of the terrorism list, as the nation has previously been uncooperative with counter-terrorism measures taken by the U.S.

Categories of Terrorism

Three different types of Middle Eastern terrorism must be addressed by Congress in order to properly determine courses of action necessary to combat these issues. The first, **state terrorism**, involves governments conducting terrorist acts on its own account and for its own good. Rather than individual terrorist groups, the nation itself organizes agents and means by which the groups function. State terrorism has recently declined in the Middle East, and there is no evidence of Iraq or Syria planning or going forth with international attacks. Iran, however, continues to engage in acts of state terrorism, primarily targeting Iraq. Libya has not embarked in any recent campaigns of state terrorism.

The second category of terrorism is **state-assisted terrorism**, in which nations' governments aid terrorist groups through material assistance and help to carry out violent attacks. State-assisted terrorism is far easier than state terrorism to deny, as it is nearly impossible to identify whether a state has sponsored a terrorist organization directly. There have been various accusations against Middle Eastern countries for state-assisted terrorist acts, but nations like Iran have continued to deny such affiliations. The United States government has attempted to remove deniability of state-assisted terrorism from such nations. The nation has become aware of the links between nations sponsoring terrorist groups and those groups, Using this substantial information to its own use in future counter-terrorism measures.

The final category is **independent terrorism**, involving organized terrorist groups with little or no aid from their national governments. The terrorist network led by Usama bin Laden represented the first of many independent terrorist organizations. Bin Laden utilized his personal wealth to sustain and finance the organization al-Qaeda easier than other organizations could. Many other terrorist groups cannot thrive once state funders cut off finances, leaving them less powerful and sufficient. Bin Laden's organization was able to sustain nearly three thousand fighters to travel among east and north Africa, and Middle East, and east and central Asia. Since Bin Laden's death in 2011, it has been difficult for other terrorist groups to replicate al-Qaeda, as independent wealthy individuals do not frequently become terrorist leaders. Therefore, the United States' counter-terrorism measures have been more readily focused on state-assisted terrorism and state sponsors. Distinctions must be made by the U.S. between state sponsorship and state involvement in terrorist actions. The federal government should offer certain incentives or motivations for state sponsors to name terrorist organizations or for terrorist groups to name their sponsors. These policies must be fairly flexible to account for various circumstances and situations.

United States Strategies to Prevent Terrorism

The United States has been attempting to reinstate alliances with other nations around the world, as it is crucial for the international community to work together in addressing the threat of terrorism. Additionally, it is necessary to strengthen counter-terrorism measures in other areas of the world as well as in our own nation to confront terrorist acts in all regions.

Local authorities are especially needed to identify and address potential terrorist threats at the smaller levels, thus preventing many terrorist attacks from occurring. The U.S. has promoted civilian law enforcement,

good governance, rule of law, and delivery of public services to the general population. Police officers, prosecutors, border officials, and others must be properly trained to address possible situations involving terrorism.

Congress and the federal government must be able to authorize national as well as local leaders to go against extremist terrorist views through funding, training, and programs. Other organizations such as NGOs and private businesses are capable and useful partners at local levels. The U.S. must also strengthen policies concerning law enforcement, the judiciary, security services, and other institutions. Resistance against violent extremism at local capacities will be a key role in countering terrorism in the United States.

Overarching Goals

In the United States international effort for counter-terrorism, the primary goal is to protect the American people, homeland, and interests. All measures taken against terrorism and terrorist groups must always uphold this concept by eliminating threats to the peace and security in America.

Terrorist organizations and groups must be disrupted and prevented from continuing in future violent extremist measures against the wellbeing of Americans and citizens around the world. Their messages must also be rendered irrelevant.

Nuclear terrorism increasingly becomes a more prevalent threat to global security, and it is the government's duty to prevent terrorist groups from using such weapons of mass destruction. The United States should work together with other nations to disrupt terrorist organizations from obtaining weapons through smuggling or theft. Biological and chemical weapons are also increasingly becoming more common in use among terrorist groups, and through cooperation, the international community should reinforce measures to ensure that these groups never acquire such tools and weapons.

Terrorists currently rely on various safe-havens as sanctuaries to train or plot for future terrorist attacks. These are frequently located in territories which have poor or no governance. The U.S. continues to diminish the prospect of safe-havens for terrorists by increasing political engagement in these affairs.

Foreign alliances and cooperations with surrounding nations are essential in the path to eliminating terrorism. Other countries should be aware of the shared threat of terrorism and should assist the U.S. in its effort to counter it. By strengthening the rule of law and building strong partnerships, terrorist organizations all around can be rightfully punished and justified.

With partnerships between the U.S. and other nations, terrorist movements will be more closely monitored and destabilized. By diminishing links between terrorists and their adherents, the government can more readily diminish their capabilities to carry out their agendas.

To stop the spread and continuation of many extremist values and views, the nation must counter their ideology and prevent future generations of extremists. Such efforts will limit the development and recruitment for further terrorist organizations.

Terrorist groups still continue to receive funding and support from donors in the Middle East and other areas of the world. Some even use ransom or exploitation in order to gain the funding they desire. The U.S. will

work together with others in order to increase the ability to identify terrorists, isolate them, and thereby prevent the travel and flow of financial resources. Overall, diplomatic outreach and international relations are among one of the most important keys to diminishing the efforts of terrorist organizations and spreading counter-terrorism measures.

CONGRESSIONAL ACTS

USA PATRIOT Act

After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, President George W. Bush signed this act into law. This act allows for government agencies to expand their jurisdiction, such as the FBI searching phone and financial records without a court order in the name of national security. On June 2nd, 2015, the act was revised and expanded to 2019.

Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) Act

Signed a week after the 9/11 attacks, this act allows the President of the United States the authority to use all “necessary and appropriate force” against whom the president determines is a terrorist threat against the U.S. As of December 2015, this act is still in effect and provides Congressional authorization for the use of force against ISIS and other militant extremist groups.

USA Freedom Act

This act revised the F.I.S. and P.A.T.R.I.O.T. acts to limit the amount of data collected by agencies such as the NSA and FBI. Such data includes, but are not limited to, phone metadata, internet histories, and C.C.T.V. footage.

This list is in no way exhaustive. There are many more bills and acts regarding the topic of counter-terrorism; those mentioned above are among the most recent and/or relevant to the topics of this committee.

BLOC POSITIONS

Conservative View

The world which the militant extremist groups strive for and the Western world cannot peacefully coexist. These people have proven to be, and still are, a threat to the U.S. and the world. In the last two decades alone, armed extremist groups have attacked Americans and American interests, whether they be here or abroad. These terrorists must be stopped, and their progress must be halted. Ideally, these groups must be destroyed with no trace in order to completely eradicate the threat and bring peace to the modern globe.

Liberal View

America has overstepped its boundaries. It is to be expected when the U.S.A. goes and meddles with problems that are none of their business. Terrorist events such as 9/11 were caused only because of America's arrogant foreign policies. This war on terrorism was exaggerated and hyperbolized in order for former President George W. Bush to gain a political advantage during election season. America must stop angering other countries and care more for its own citizens.

Presidential View

President Obama ran on the platform that he will remedy the errors that the Bush administration committed in regards to international politics. He has removed most U.S. soldiers from Middle Eastern territories. With the new nuclear deal with Iran, Obama is trying his best to soften relations within the Middle East. However, instead of the boots-on-the-ground method, the Obama administration has been using drone strikes at an alarmingly high rate in order to counteract the lack of U.S. troops in order to combat terrorism in these regions. Obama still has not gone through with his promise to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay, which he mentioned at the beginning of his campaign.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. To what extent should the U.S. go to stop or impede terrorism?
2. How much authority does the U.S. have to meddle in these affairs?
3. Is there anything that the Obama administration has done effectively concerning acts of counter-terrorism so that Congress can model future plans in a similar way? Why should we keep those methods?
4. Is there anything we should do differently to address the threat of terrorism?
5. How effective are drone strikes in diminishing the threat of terrorism? Should we continue using them to eliminate high-priority targets? Should we use other alternatives?
6. With other nations now joining the fight against counterterrorism (due to recent terrorist attacks such as those in Paris, France), can the United States afford to take a step back from the spotlight?
7. Are the vast amounts of data being collected by the NSA, CIA, and other government agencies truly useful against terrorism?

CONCLUSION

Terrorism affects all nations around the world and is an issue which must be solved through various counter-terrorism measures. Direct military action has been utilized by the United States, but other solutions must be formed. Through alliances and relations with other nations, the U.S. will be able to readily diminish the threat of terrorism and the spread of terrorist organizations. Various congressional actions have been passed to address this issue, but state and state-assisted forms of terrorism are still prevalent in Middle Eastern countries today. When taking counter-terrorism actions, Congress and the federal government must continue to uphold the prospect of protecting the American people at all costs. Thus, this committee must develop comprehensive yet flexible solutions and actions to diminish the effects and spread of terrorism across the globe and the United States.

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