



The Question of National Sovereignty and the place of the UN in Localised Development

Introduction

Since the inception of the United Nations the question of its part to play in local development has been one of remarkable dispute. The experienced MUN-er as well as the novice will be familiar with the refutation of action on the grounds of an infringement of national sovereignty, and so, in-line with the conference's theme, the Special committee will be questioning to what extent is the interfering helping hand of the UN, a beneficial one?

The delegate is to be tasked with introducing a resolution that balances the humanitarian needs of the people and the future prospects of independence of the nation.

The Current Perspective

The late UN Secretary General stated this on the case of Sovereignty and its importance soon after the Kosovan war: "I believe it is essential that the international community reach consensus—not only on the principle that massive and systematic violations of human rights must be checked, wherever they take place, but also on ways of deciding what action is necessary, and when, and by whom."

It is typically the case that sovereignty comes into question when action is sought to be taken, but the extent to which is scrutinised so as to not redefine the nations values and natural course of personal progress. The two outcomes to an extreme route



taken on either side of this dilemma have been observed in the past and both have negative effects, the influence of which is still debated.

It was the case throughout the Rwandan Genocide that the wider world was blamed for too little intervention to prevent the existential crisis that was taking place and the horrific loss of life. Measures could well have been taken by external superpowers to limit the tragedy, yet a policy that saw a far too isolated aid supply most definitely allowed the worsening of an already deteriorating situation. In this case, International involvement was not provided to the extent was required and much regret has ensued since the event.

A recent case of particular note regarding the infringement of national identity is the aggressive plans enacted by China. China has been seen to spend huge sums of money on developing the ports and infrastructures of strategically located areas so as to better develop their international position and future prospects. This has been particularly prominent in Eastern African nations such as Ethiopia as well as central Asian countries like Pakistan. It is no doubt that the livelihoods of the people have been improved but the independence of the nation itself has been greatly diminished, with its future being ever narrowed un towards a reliance on China

An interesting example of national sovereignty is the case of the Sentinelese peoples. These indigenous members of the Andaman Islands have been untouched by the modern world and have observed a policy of zero external contact with the outside community. When communication has been attempted, violent reaction has been provided by the Sentinelese, leading to the killing of several intruders to their islands, including two fisherman whose



boats drifted close to the shore of the archipelago. It is of course the case that the livelihoods of these people could be greatly developed with external help, such as the introduction of basic medicines, technology, sustainable food and water supplies, education and the potential to create links with other nations yet India has applied a policy of complete isolation, agreeing to leave the peoples in peace without involvement. It is in cases such as these where the delegate must question the costs and benefits that would result if outside contact were to be made.

Questions to consider

- Should national Sovereignty be respected at all costs, or the immediate needs of the people?
- What legislation can we pass so as to prevent radical policies, such as that of China, from becoming widespread and thus widening the gap between the most powerful countries and the least?
- Where do we draw the line on acceptable help versus personal ventures?
- How should we react to a crossing of these lines? With military force or one of economic nature? Which will have the most productive effect?