

POSITION PAPERS

WHAT ARE POSITION PAPERS?

The purpose of position papers is to ensure that debate in committee is highly substantive and to assist delegates in assembling their research into an organized policy statement. Individual position papers are a crucial part of the preparation process, and further information about their format and content is provided below. In addition, each school must provide the Director-General with a single **bound copy** of the country position papers (to be turned in at Conference registration). If a school is representing multiple countries and/or specialized agencies (ex. the Security Council), one bound document with position papers for all countries is fine. In addition to position papers, the bound document should include a **delegation factsheet**, a copy of which should also be **mailed** to the Director-General prior to the Conference. This factsheet should provide general information on the following aspects of your country: population, major imports and exports, geography, history, government, culture, social class structure, religion, economy, major principles and interests in foreign policy, and your nation's relationship to the UN. Participants on Specialized agencies do not have to include a separate delegation factsheet, rather much of the aforementioned information should be incorporated into position papers, when applicable.

In each committee Background Guide, the Director has provided questions on each topic generally and as it pertains to individual delegations specifically. Delegates' position papers should be concise, accurate, and well written. The Research and Preparation Questions found succeeding the topic papers have been specially formulated to lead the delegates in a logical progression through the topic and policy paper. It is important that delegates directly answer these research questions. A good position paper should:

- Clearly outline the country's policies on the topics and what factors contribute to these policies
- Integrate indigenous national factors into the responses
- Refer to domestic and international documents and correctly site the sources
- Deal with the in-depth issues of the topic areas as well as the overt topic issues
- Provide suggestions of solutions that address the problem areas
- Answer all *Research and Preparation Questions* posed in the Background Guides

The staff looks for the demonstration of the following skills in evaluating the papers:

- a) original and critical thinking
- b) true understanding of the dynamics of your nation
- c) functional and applied knowledge of the topics

Please note that under no circumstances will plagiarism of any portion of policy papers be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as the usage of material from another source without appropriate citation. Plagiarism includes both word-for-word borrowing of text and material, and paraphrasing of material without citation. All material acquired from existing sources, including text quotations, charts, graphs, diagrams and data must be cited. Please note that **plagiarism of the Background Guide provided by your Director is equally unacceptable**. Plagiarism violates your agreement as a NHSMUN delegate to present an original policy paper that represents your own work. It is equivalent to stealing, and will thus be treated very seriously. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact your Director or the Director-General, Jerry Guo (dg@nhsmun.org).

HOW TO WRITE A POSITION PAPER

It is important to recognize that the amount of information available for use in your position paper will vary according to the size, level of development, and age of your country. Your Director's topic choices will also affect the amount and type of research you will be able to find. Do not be discouraged by the limitations of your resources. If you are representing a newly formed country or looking for information on a topic that has only recently been in the public eye, you will experience many of the same problems that confront actual UN delegations. Remember that diplomats must look to their governments at home for direction and information. Where you have trouble developing a coherent policy, they probably do, too.

No matter what country you are assigned to represent, there is some information out there for you; it is your responsibility as a NHSMUN delegate to find it. The best place to start is with your nation's basic political structure, history, allies, trading partners, and level of development. NHSMUN encourages delegates to include an introduction to their position papers, outlining some of the information contained in the fact sheet for the school's bound copy of their papers. Even if you are unable to find information on your committee's topics, knowing your country's traditional allies and general cultural, economic, religious and political background will help you to formulate a policy. This type of information can be found in general encyclopedias, history books, or by making a request to your country's embassy or UN consulate. If such an introduction is included, it should be followed by a portion of the paper devoted to *each and every* topic that the committee's Director has chosen.

The second step of research extends beyond general information and will lead you to more specific, detailed information about your country and its policies on the issues you are preparing to discuss. Speeches by your country's delegates are among the best sources of information and are available through UN depositories, UN offices, and online UN sources. Another way to assess your country's position on a certain topic is to look for resolutions or other documents that have passed in the UN on those issues. Knowing whether or not your nation is a signatory to these documents is crucial to the positions you should be taking in committee, and can also help you to avoid an unpleasant surprise when another delegate asks you to explain your "no" vote on a resolution you don't know about.

A successful position paper will provide the following information:

- 1) Discussion of the importance of the topic and the problems that will be encountered in finding a solution
- 2) Your state's general position on the topic, including resolutions that it has or has not signed and reasons for previous votes on these measures
- 3) Answers to the Director's questions, not necessarily in the order in which the Director presented them, but as they fit into the structure of the paper
- 4) Relevant bloc positions and discussion of possible allies on committee (this may include specific information on a state that has traditionally voted with yours, or it may discuss general groups of nations that tend to vote together, such as more developed state, African nations, oil-producing states, etc.)
- 5) Suggestions for reaching a compromise (where applicable: sometimes a state's position is that the UN should not be discussing the topic because it is not of international concern. If this is the case, it is an extremely valid position to take, and this position should be stated and explained)

Certain specialized agencies have alternative position paper formats or guidelines (the World Bank, the NGO Forum, the Historical IMF, the Press Corps, the ICJ, and the CTED). In such situations, more specific guidelines are provided in the committee Background Guide

For more information on research, consult the Research and Preparation guide available under the Delegate Resources section of the NHSMUN website.

POSITION PAPER LOGISTICS

Position papers should be (at minimum) 4 double-spaced, 12-point type pages with 1" margins **per topic**. Any academic citation style is acceptable (NHSMUN Background Guides use a modified version of MLA style). The delegation factsheet (sent to the Director-General) and position paper copies (sent to individual committee Directors) are due on **16 February 2009**. Papers without an official extension, post-marked after the 16th will be considered late and penalized accordingly. Only Faculty Advisors can request group or individual extensions. All extension requests must be made to the Director-General by **1 February 2009**. NHSMUN Staff will not consider e-mail submissions as an adequate substitution unless prior arrangements are made with the Director-General. Delegations that do not submit position papers **will not be eligible for awards**. Director addresses are available in the Research and Preparation coversheet in all Background Guides.

SAMPLE POSITION PAPER

Note: For demonstration purposes, this paper is **much** shorter than an actual NHSMUN position paper should be. This paper exemplifies the appropriate tone, research skills, and citation style necessary for a successful position paper.

Historical Security Council

China's Position on the Situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (1991)

Introduction

Mr. Tsiang, China's representative on the Security Council, asked, "The Council at this juncture must answer two questions: What can the United Nations do for the Republic of Congo, and how do we do it?" ("Report" 17). Invoking Article 99 of the UN Charter, Hammarskjold articulated three goals for the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC): "First, the Force had to help expel the foreign military and paramilitary personnel not connected with the UN cooperation; second, it had to prevent civil war, using force if necessary; and third, it had to protect the territorial dignity of the Congo" (Lefever 72). China agrees with the Secretary-General in these requirements, and pledges to abide by them.

China's History

Due to China's history, we realize the importance of acting cautiously but firmly when dealing with the Congo situation. The self-established dynasties before 1644 became absorbed into what is presently known as Chinese culture. Such reigns include the Ch'in (when the Great Wall was built), Han, Sui, T'ang, and then the Sung dynasty. Succeeding this, the Manchu from Manchuria asserted themselves. Although this was not a colonial power, they joined the Manchu-Chinese civilization in a manner similar to a colonial power taking control of another nation.

Current Situation in Congo

Presently, 300 Swedish troops are stationed in Elisabethville in Katanga, functionally replacing the Belgium troops that once held order before Congo's independence (Lefever 40). Patrice Lumumba, party president of the national, non-ethnic Mouvement National Congolais (MNC), felt that this action was inadequate and deployed troops of his own, aided by the Soviets (McDonald 50). Struggle for control of the Congolese government began between Lumumba, the first president of Congo, Joseph Kasavubu, and the Army Chief of Staff, Joseph Mobutu. (McDonald 56). Internally, the level of conflict in Katanga has risen, as Tshombé, the leader of the main Katangan party, fought with Katanga's largest tribe, the Baluba. Both the UN and the Congolese Congress have been attempting to ease tensions since then, such as ONUC's efforts in launching Operation Rumpunch. The UN also called for the arrest of Tshombé, which resulted in battle (Lefever 65). The fact remains that Belgium and Tshombé have prevented the UN from accomplishing the ideals that have previously been set forth ("Letters" 2). China vehemently opposes "any perpetuation or revival of any form of colonialism whatsoever in the Congo" (Report, Mr. Tsiang 18).

Proposed Actions and Solutions

One of the most important tasks pointed out by Prime Minister Cyrille Adoula is working out a draft constitution. The founding principles of *Loi fondamentale* will have to be slightly revised, as the present principles are now grounded on a nationalistic feeling, not, as before, where the health of the nation depends on foreign forces. Mr. Adoula is pushing for “a Congolese constitution which will harmonize with the Congolese spirit, one which will adopt political structures suited to the aspirations of the Congolese people and which will be established by the Congolese themselves” (“Speech” 77).

China firmly believes that peacekeeping forces, (namely ONUC) should be employed in Congo. As long as the requirements of impartiality, acceptance of the host country, and opening fire only in defense are held accountable, the UN has grounds to confidently assert itself to diffuse the tension building in the Katanga region. China empathizes with Congo’s need to ensure their sovereignty and hopes to uphold this to the utmost. ONUC should only enter as a peacekeeping force, which by definition must have the consent of both parties involved.

It is imperative that in the quest to maintain humanitarian dignity, the logistics of financing the entire operation be kept at the forefront. As representative Mr. Carduso from Congo (Leopoldville) has pinpointed, “The truth must be told: ONUC is beginning to run out of money” (“Congo’s” 18). China and Ceylon have both supported an influx of financial assistance to Congo; however, as Mr. Tsiang noted, China “favours channeling such aid through the United Nations . . . [and] opposes any direct aid from individual Governments to the Congo” (“Report” 18). In including such a clause, international rivalry and conflict arising from unilateral aid will be bypassed.

Conclusion

China firmly believes that “There is no reason to quit; there is all the more reason for persisting in our course of actions defined in the resolutions which we have already adopted” (“Report” 17). The progress that has to this point been made in Congo is commendable, and China sees that with the aid of the Republic of Congo as well as the United Nations, that more can be done to alleviate the problems that have been attacking especially Katanga in the past three years. China looks forward to the day when Congo is firmly established with a working constitution, when the children are being schooled and the army fights as it would in any other country. As Mr. Tsiang stated, “I am instructed by my government to uphold here [in Congo] the political independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of the Congo”; Congo should now walk towards these new worlds.

Works Cited

Congo – UNOC. <http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKP/Missions/onuc.htm>. 30 December 1998.

Lefever, Ernest. Crisis in the Congo: A United Nations Force in Action. The Brookings Institution: Washington D.C., 1965.

Letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council; Letters from the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics addressed to the President of the Security Council. Official Records, NY, NY. 14 January 1961.

McDonald, Gordon. Area Handbook for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo Kinshasa). U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1971.

Official Records. Security Council. United Nations, Official Records: Sixteenth Year. November – December 1961.

The 2010 National High School Model United Nations
Delegate Preparation Guide

Report of the Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Operation in the Congo to the Secretary-General Relating to the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions S/4741 of 21 February 1961 and S/5002 of 24 November 1961. Document S/5053.

Report to the Secretary-General from his Action Special Representative in the Congo Concerning the Situation in Katanga and United Nation Action in Implementation of Security Council Resolution S/4741 of 21 February 1961. Official Records. Security Council. United Nations: Sixteenth Year. 15 April 1961.

Second Report of the Secretary-General On Certain Steps Taken in Regard to the Implementation of Security Council Resolution S/4741 of 21 February 1961. Official Records. Security Council. United Nations: Sixteenth Year. 17 May 1961.

Speech Made on 2 August 1961 to the Two Houses of the Congolese Parliament by the Prime Minister, Mr. Cyrille Adoula. Security Council. United Nations, Official Records: 2 August 1961.

United Nations. Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics: 1961. New York: United Nations. 1962. 52-59.

POSITION PAPER SUBMISSION

You are responsible for sending a copy of your paper to the Director of your committee. Additionally, your delegation is responsible for bringing a bound copy of all of the position papers—one for each committee to which your school has been assigned—to NHSMUN 2010 (to be submitted during registration). Each delegation must prepare a brief summary statement on the basic economic, political, and social structures, as well as the international policy of its country to be included in the bound copy. Specific requirements of the bound copy have been sent to the faculty advisor/club president. All copies should be **postmarked** no later than **February 15th** and mailed to:

Jerry Guo, Director-General
Hinman Box 658, Dartmouth College
Hanover, NH 03755

Committee Director (specific address found in
committee's Background Guide)

(Country Summaries)

(Individual Position Papers)

Delegations are required to mail **hard copies** of their papers to the Director-General and Director. **NHSMUN Staff will not consider e-mail submissions as an adequate substitution.**

Delegations that do not submit country summaries and/or position papers will be ineligible for awards.