



HARVARD
MODEL UNITED NATIONS
CHINA 2020

Thursday, March 19 to Sunday, March 22



A Background Guide in Brief

for the

United Nations Security Council

This Background Guide in Brief is an abbreviated version of your committee's Background Guide, and should provide you with a roadmap for important themes and topics as you begin preliminary research on the committee topic. This document is simply one resource available to you as you prepare for HMUN China, and all delegates are strongly urged to read and study the full Background Guide for their committees. Background Guides will be released on 1 November, 2019. Good luck with your preparation!

In Central Asia lie the “forgotten” republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. They are “forgotten” because of their relative geographic, political, and economic isolation in the last few centuries under Persian, Chinese, and Russian rule. These former Soviet republics share many characteristics besides geography and the last four letters of their names, such as history, culture, and religion. For this reason, these “stan” countries are often grouped together and constitute a unique geographical, political, economic, and cultural region. Afghanistan, while also technically a landlocked country in Central Asia, is often excluded from this group due to its divergent history. This is partly due to the fact that Afghanistan was never a member of the Soviet Union, although it felt much Soviet influence, even enduring an invasion.



Figure 1: Central Asia

The period of Soviet rule brought the development of infrastructure to the region, but at terrible costs. The levels of social and cultural repression fluctuated from time to time

but remained high nevertheless. As a result, when the Soviet Union collapsed, the Central Asian republics were compelled to face a daunting social, economic, and political transition. Decades years later, many political analysts agree that these former Soviet republics have emerged, with varying degrees of success, from the systemic transitional period through major socioeconomic overhauls. However, these nations are in the process of entering, or are still waiting to enter, the democratic transitional period. The events of September 11th 2001 further recast much-needed attention to a previously neglected region.

The people of Central Asia are in a quandary over whether to be thankful for the latest world focus on their region in the years following 2001. This new focus may have brought new economic opportunities as well as increased attention to the deplorable state of human rights from which the region suffers. Conversely, the United States “War on Terror” may have encouraged regional dictators to abuse and manipulate anti-terrorism policies to their advantage, by employing more repressive policies against their citizens in order to “control” not only Islamists, but any threats to their power. In this way, Islamic extremism may have been fueled in the end.



Figure 2: Map of the Soviet Union containing central asia

The Central Asian states are multiethnic, and this in itself poses a unique problem for democratic governance. Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tatar, Turkmen, Uighur, and Uzbek—Turkic languages—as well

as Dari, Pashto, Persian, and Tajik—Iranian languages—alongside Russian, are all considered the lingua franca and are spoken throughout the region. Eastern Orthodox Christians must coexist with Sunni Muslims and ethnic Russian “settlers” must do the same with “local” ethnic groups. Because the tendency of politics in the region is leaning towards clan politics, the potential for an increase in interethnic violence and repressive government measures threatens the democratic outlook for this part of the world. Finally, these problems may pose a greater threat to the rest of the world since the region’s abundant corruption, repression, and lawlessness, combined with its vast, mountainous geography, actually have the potential to facilitate the perfect geopolitical haven for new sources of conflict.

Finding solutions to the topics facing the Security Council today is crucial for the fulfillment of the mission of both this body and the United Nations as a whole. Delegates are called to grapple with complex issues, which could change the already delicate balance of power in the world. I am looking forward to hearing your suggestions and am at your disposal to answer your questions. Good luck with your research, see you in March!