

I-HMUN

**Security Council
(UNSC)
Chair Report**

Agenda: The Right of control over the
Bosphorus Strait

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[About UN]

The United Nations (UN) is the largest intergovernmental organization that aims to maintain international peace and security, protect human rights, deliver humanitarian aid, promote sustainable development, and uphold international law. It consists of 193 member states, with the latest addition of South Sudan in 2011.

The United Nations took its first step in April 1945, when 50 governments met in San Francisco to start drafting the UN Charter. As it was adopted on 25 June 1945 and took effect on 24 October 1945, the UN began its operations. It has been the center of discussion for multilateral issues such as general disarmament, international security, multilateral cooperation, international economy, human rights affairs and sustainable development. The United Nations is operated under six major organs and has also assigned other specialized agencies in reach for international peace and security.

Sessions of committees pertaining to the United Nations carry heavy responsibilities of perpetuating peace and humanitarian rights. Delegates of member states represent their designated nation and form an international consensus on numerous agendas.

[About Committee]

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is a major council of the United Nations. It was founded in 1945 and consists of 5 permanent members: the United States of America, the People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the French Republic, and 10 non-permanent members. Non-permanent members work as part of the council for two years, until the end of their term of office. They cannot be re-elected successively and 5 new non-permanent members are elected each year.

Each member has one vote on a certain Agenda. However, since there is a veto system based on the principle of the Unanimous vote of the permanent members, at least nine members including all five permanent members should agree to the agenda at hand.

Under the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council has a special status of authority. In reviewing, mediating, and coordinating disputes that threaten international peace, the council can recommend countries in conflict to stop disputing. If the recommendations are ineffective, they may engage in compulsory and active intervention.

[Agenda Introduction]

Bosphorus Strait, located in northwestern Turkey, is a waterway that connects the Black sea with the Mediterranean seas via the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean Sea. Traversing the metropolitan city of Istanbul, it forms part of the continental boundary between Europe and Asia. The geopolitical value of the Bosphorus and its environments has been significant since ancient time, as it has been the strategic key terrain where the sea route and land route converge.

The Bosphorus is the only way for Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Ukraine, and Russia to reach the other seas via the Mediterranean Sea. Sovereignty over the straits is also an important issue for the riparian countries besides Turkey. Russia is one of the most vocal nations among the parties involved. Due to their geological misfortune, Russia owns few exits inconsistent with its substantive global leverage, which has made them long for securing an international ice-free port. And the best option is to get through to the Mediterranean seas via the Black Sea and the Bosphorus. Russia has conflicted with Turkey since the 1500s to gain the way out. Now, Turkey allows all civil ships and warships smaller than cruisers to pass through. Delegates to this committee will discuss whether or not it is necessary to fully open the Bosphorus Strait, or whether we need to and how we will form additional international agreements so that we could be able to distribute rights appropriately.

[Key Terms]

Security Council

The Security Council is one of the committees within the United Nations with a stated purpose of “maintain(ing) international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations.”

Leverage

Leverage refers to *the ability to influence what people do*. Under this agenda, it would simply mean the power or the range of influence of a certain nation.

The Black Sea

The Black Sea is a body of water and marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean between Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Western Asia. It is supplied by a number of major rivers, including the Danube, Dnieper, Southern Bug, Dniester, Don, and the Rioni. The watersheds of many countries drain into the Black Sea beyond the six that immediately border it.

The Riparian Countries

The term ‘Riparian’ refers to *growing in, living in, or relating to areas of wet land near to a river or stream*. Under this agenda, the term ‘the riparian countries’ will be used to indicate six countries bordering the Black Sea: Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, Turkey, Ukraine, and Russia.

Cruiser

Cruiser is a type of warship and the term is often used for the classification of warships. Cruiser is a ship with a displacement that is smaller than that of a battleship but bigger than that of a destroyer.

[Historical Background]

Russo-Turkish War(1568~1918)

Russo-Turkish War consists of 13 big and small wars between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire, from the 16C to the early 20C. In the early days of the Russo-Turkish War, which broke out in the sixteenth century, the national power of the Russian Empire was inconsequential compared to the Ottoman Empire. After Peter the Great, however, Russia became extremely powerful with radical westernization. Highly strengthened, Russia had conquered numerous territories around the Black Sea. Russia kept assaulting the Ottoman Empire to dominate the Constantinople area where the present Istanbul is. Consequently, as the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire transformed into the Soviet Union and the Republic of Turkey respectively due to World War I, their conflicts ended. From the end of World War I through the Cold War Era to World War II, the tension between the two had become a part of the confrontation between the liberalist camp and the communist camp. The tension without great armed clashes continues even now, except for a few skirmishes in the Syrian Civil War areas.

The reason the empires were in bad terms with one another was mainly because of geopolitical values. The Russian empire wanted ice-free ports which were essential for their expansion, and the Black Sea and the Bosphorus was the most viable answer for it. On the other hand, the territory around the Black Sea and the Bosphorus was indispensable for the Ottoman Empire to keep their influence over Europe and Asia. The collision was inevitable.

Montreux Convention(1936)

The Montreux Convention regarding the Regime of the Straits is a 1936 Agreement that gives Turkey control over the Turkish Straits (the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits) and regulates the transit of naval warships. The Convention guarantees free passage of civilian vessels in peacetime and restricts the passage of naval ships not belonging to Black Sea states. The terms of the Convention have been a source of controversy over the years, most notably concerning the Soviet Union's military access to the Mediterranean Sea. Signed on 20 July 1936 at the Montreux Palace in Switzerland, the Convention permitted Turkey to remilitarise the Straits. It went into effect on 9 November 1936 and was registered in the *League of Nations Treaty Series* on 11 December 1936. It remains in force. The proposed 21st-century Kanal Istanbul project may be a possible bypass to the Montreux Convention and allow greater Turkish autonomy for the passage of military ships (which are limited in number, tonnage, and weaponry) from the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara.

several clashes in 21C

Small and tiny, yet nontrivial clashes owing to the number of its incidence in nearby regions continue to be in 21C. It is reasonable to think the Syrian Civil War triggered most of those conflicts. Currently, the Syrian Civil War seems to have waned compared to its early stages, when taking into

account the Northern Syria Buffer Zone - namely, the “safe zone” - and more measures similar to it. However, it is still premature to think that everything is orderly, considering missile strikes against Syria of the USA. The Syrian regime’s attacks in Idlib can be a good example explaining why one may argue so. Due to the attack, at least 33 Turkish soldiers died in a Syrian government attack in opposition-held northwestern Syria, in a major escalation of the conflict.

[Past Actions by Nations/NGOs/Organizations]

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which gained force in November 1994, has prompted calls for the Montreux Convention to be revised and adapted to make it compatible with UNCLOS's regime governing straits used for international navigation. However, Turkey's long standing refusal to sign UNCLOS has meant that Montreux remains in force without further amendments.

The safety of vessels passing through the Bosphorus has become a major concern in recent years as the volume of traffic has increased greatly since the Convention was signed: from 4,500 in 1934 to 49,304 by 1998. In addition to self-evident concerns about the environment, the Straits bisect the city of Istanbul, with over 14 million people living on its shores. Therefore, maritime incidents in the Straits pose a considerable risk to public safety. The Convention does not, however, make any provision for the regulation of shipping for safety and environmental protection. In January 1994, the Turkish government adopted a "Maritime Traffic Regulations for the Turkish Straits and the Marmara Region". A new regulatory regime "to ensure the safety of navigation, life and property and to protect the environment in the region" was introduced, without violating the Montreux principle of free passage. The new regulations provoked some controversy when Russia, Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Ukraine, and Bulgaria raised objections. However, the regulations were approved by the International Maritime Organization because they were not intended to prejudice "the rights of any ship using the Straits under international law". The regulations were revised in November 1998 to address Russian concerns.

[Status Quo]

Nowadays, since the Syrian regime’s attacks on the civilians of Idlib and the deaths of several Turkish soldiers this month, tensions have escalated between Turkey and Russia over the regime. In this situation, the dispute over the Bosphorus Strait will be aggravated. According to the recently updated news of Russian newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, Turkey may soon totally close the Bosphorus Strait to Russian warships in order to prevent them from resupplying the military of the Syrian regime.

On the other hand, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan came up with his solution to this dispute - the “Canal Istanbul.” His “Canal Istanbul” project is to make an artificial waterway that crosses the European side of Turkey. He strongly believes that this project will help Turkey to avoid fights over the Bosphorus Strait. However, unlike its objective to push past the conflicts over the strait, controversy concerning this project is building. Most citizens strongly opposed this project, as thousands of people in Istanbul queued for hours to sign a petition protesting against Erdogan's canal

plan in freezing rain. People emphasize the damaged historical value of the city of Istanbul and impacts on the environment.

[Stances of Major Countries (and NGOs)]

United States of America

The United States of America will be vying to keep the expansion of Russia. American-Russian relations, which have been long since ruined by several severe conflicts, heavily influence the position of the US. The Syrian Civil War, above all, played a big role. The Russian Government objected to the intervention of the USA in order to keep their weapons sale regular: the Syrian Government is a constant purchaser of the weaponry. Contrarily, the US has been exacerbating the situation by launching air raids. Even though Donald Trump is vaguely friendly to Russia and a small détente arose from COVID-19, the USA is keeping Russia in check. Here, the USA would be highly likely to insist on disallowance of the warship pass on the side of Turkey.

Republic of Turkey

The main goal of the Republic of Turkey is complete control over the Bosphorus Strait. For the Republic of Turkey, the Bosphorus Strait is necessary not only for blocking Russia from expanding but also for the bridging function of the strait: the Bosphorus connects Turkey and Europe directly. According to the Montreux Convention signed in 1936, Turkey could gain most control of the Bosphorus as for giving rights to riparian countries. Now, Turkey will want to establish strict warship crossing standards or at least keep the current situation to wield considerable influence over the Bosphorus. Furthermore, if possible, Turkey will be highly likely to put tolls on the Bosphorus with newly legislated regulations.

United Kingdom and France

Spearheading NATO and Europe (EU), the United Kingdom and France are inclined to follow the position of the USA. The military strengths of Europeans cannot compete with that of Russian. Thus, the security of Europe depends on the USA. Furthermore, Russia has harbored an ambition of subjecting Europe to its sphere since the Russian Empire was established. That is why Europe has traditionally been keeping a careful eye on the Russian Federation. Recent issues like the Russian Kaliningrad missile deployment have added fuel to the fire. Therefore, the United Kingdom and France would be highly likely to focus on a check to the expansion of the Russian Federation.

Russian Federation

Russia is the most vocal and resolute country agitating for the allowance of free warship crossing without interference. The Russian Federation owns few ice-free ports, which may be considered inconsistent with its substantive power over the world. To enforce their influence, Russia will attempt to amend the current regulation that prohibits warships bigger than a cruiser from passing through the Bosphorus in one way or another.

People's Republic of China

The Chinese-Russian relations are relatively friendly. As this relationship is a calculative alliance formed to hold the USA in check, both countries will try hard to preserve the link if there is no unforeseen issue. Hence, the People's Republic of China, not FOR the Bosphorus *per se* but to predominate over the international community through the Bosphorus, will be speaking up for the Russian Federation and a wide revision of regulations. However, it is hard to say that China has a direct connection with conflicts over the Bosphorus Strait. Therefore, China is likely to cling to their position, which is still for Russia but more passive than Russia.

[Possible Solutions]

As long as the Bosphorus is located in the domain of Turkey, the distribution of rights was accomplished in the form of giving rights to administer to Turkey. This kind of distribution is reasonable considering agreements about national borders and territorial limits. Therefore, solutions in the form of Turkey having the total right and giving the riparian countries choices seem desirable. Candidates for solutions can be categorized into partial full open and regulating merchant ships. There can be some more possible solutions too.

1. Partial Full Open

Partial Full Open means allowing Russian warships to pass through the Bosphorus under special conditions. Here, the term 'special conditions' implies that Turkish government opens the waterway for warships only when corresponding advantages are offered. For example, placing tolls on the Bosphorus is one of the simplest types of special conditions. If Turkish government employs this Partial Full Open policy and requests corresponding - which would be considerable - benefits to the Russian Federation, Russia will agonize over whether owning a permanent pass of the Bosphorus making a big loss or just keeping the status quo.

2. Regulating Merchant Ships

According to the Montreux Convention which is still valid nowadays, warships bigger than the cruiser are absolutely not allowed to pass but every merchant ship is allowed, wherever they belong, whenever it is. In this situation, since the waterway via the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea is the only waterway that the riparian countries substantively use, this unconditional allowance will be contributing a lot to the countries' economy. Here, imposing stricter regulations for merchant ships and loosening regulations over warships may help distributing rights, giving countries choices.

[Questions to Consider]

- How would the United Nations Security Council minimize or prevent the conflicts that might damage the world peace?

- How would the United Nations Security Council mediate between the USA and Russia, which is clear to be opposing, peacefully during the convention?

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