

**Louisiana Model United Nations
2020 Topics**

General Assembly Topic 1

Neocolonialism

Neocolonialism developed from the old direct-control model of colonialism as a way for influential countries and corporations to continue economic dominance of developing nations. Due to a past of colonial rule these countries are often underdeveloped and rely on resource extraction to support their economy. Foreign corporations dominate this industry and use these nations' cheap labor and lax labor standards to boost shareholder profit while providing little economic development to these countries in return. Attempts by the governments to stop these corporations are often thwarted through violence, such as the murder of Patrice Lumumba, who was killed after expressing interest in nationalizing the mining industry in Congo so that profits would go towards national development rather than foreign shareholders.

Following the decolonization period, many nations put measures in place to ensure that their interests were still protected. The most extensive and controlling of these systems are operated by France through the *Françafrique*, France's sphere of influence in sub saharan Africa. The *Françafrique* allows France to exert control over its former colonies through methods such as currency unions—the West African CFA franc and the Central African CFA franc—wide ranging military operations, and lopsided trade deals to ensure dominance of French corporations. This has cost these nations billions of dollars in economic activity. This system has been strictly enforced by the French military, which has intervened over 40 times since the 1960s and has murdered at least 21 African leaders.

Although a vast share of neocolonial activity derives from western powers, China, with its Belt and Road Initiative, plans to drastically increase its business dealings in underdeveloped economies. Its plan calls for the Chinese Government to lend money to developing countries at unpayable interest rates, so that when the countries inevitably default on the loans, China can demand access to the countries markets and use of its infrastructure. Through this program, China gained access to a port in Sri Lanka for the next 99 years and could gain access to ports and infrastructure in Djibouti.

United Nations institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have been accused of being neocolonial institutions because of the conditions that they set on loans. They often require countries to slash spending, tighten fiscal and monetary policy, and privatize and open up industries to outside control. Many accuse the leadership of working not for the development of underdeveloped economies, but instead for already-developed powers that control the institutions.

Things to keep in mind:

How does your country relate to the extraction of resources in developing countries? ie Is your country exporting these resources? Are you receiving these resources? Are multinational corporations that are involved in this process based in or have a significant part of your economy? Is your country advantaged or disadvantaged by this arrangement?

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General Assembly Topic 2

Geoengineering

As climate change and population booms continue to damage the planet, many scientists have started to research programs to combat these damages. Geoengineering is the large-scale intervention in the Earth's climate system, intending to control the effects of global warming. Geoengineering has two main categories: greenhouse gas removal (GGR) and solar radiation management (SRM). Examples of solar radiation management would be increasing the reflectiveness of clouds so more solar heat is reflected to space. Examples of Carbon geoengineering would be building machines that remove carbon dioxide from ambient air and storing it. Most of the controversy arises with SRM since it is more dangerous and unknown while most GGR methods are a product of the Paris Climate Conference.

Whether it is putting giant mirrors in space or making clouds more reflective, these solutions will be long term commitments that countries need to make. These long term commitments require a large amount of funding. Harvard estimated that their current geoengineering program could cost about 2 to 2.5 billion per year for the first 15 years. Also, it's hard to predict the negative impacts of those programs. However, some believe this might be the only way to combat climate change. Once implemented, scientists believe geoengineering might limit our other options to save the Earth. For example, reflecting the sun's heat will significantly reduce the amount of solar power, one of the prime alternatives for clean energy. Another example would be that reflecting the sun's rays into space would alter rainfall patterns and reforesting the deserts could change wind patterns and could even reduce tree growth in other regions. More research will also need to be done to examine the effect of reducing solar radiation on plants.

Currently, Geoengineering is mainly conducted by private organizations and universities instead of the government. With the increasing projects with Geoengineering, it seems like government involvement is necessary to address the issue. Geoengineering was brought up as a topic on the United Nations Environment Assembly in March 2019. There was a Swiss led resolution that called for the preparation of assessments on Geoengineering, but it was blocked by Saudi Arabia and the US. Where did your country stand on that resolution? Has your country changed your mind since the resolution? If your country was opposed to that resolution, do they have other plans to address the topic of Geoengineering? Does your country believe that the UN should be addressing this issue, or does your country believe it should be a private matter? Has your country attempt on any Geoengineering programs? Will your country be impacted significantly by other countries' Geoengineering projects? If your country doesn't have any Geoengineering programs, does your country have alternative policies to combat climate change?

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General Assembly Topic 3

Waste Management

Waste management is defined as the collection, transportation, and disposal of garbage, sewage and other waste products. Effective waste management helps lower environmental, safety, and health hazards created by waste. There are eight major groups of waste management methods: source reduction and reuse, animal feeding, recycling, composting, fermentation, landfills, incineration and land application.

Every country generates waste, and global generation rates are rising rapidly. According to the World Bank, “In 2016, the world’s cities generated 2.01 billion tonnes of solid waste. With rapid population growth and urbanization, annual waste generation is expected to increase by 70% from 2016 levels to 3.40 billion tonnes in 2050.” Due largely to lax governmental regulation on an ever-growing chemical industry, everyday products that are used and thrown away contain more toxic chemicals than ever before. When these products end up in landfills or incinerators, the toxins pollute the air we breathe and the runoff from landfills contaminates the water we drink. Landfills are also a huge source of methane emissions, contributing to the climate change crisis.

The United States ranks third in the most annual waste per capita. Until 2018 the U.S. had been sending the bulk of their waste to China, but now that China has restricted imported recyclable waste, it has become much more expensive to recycle in the United States. Now there are two choices: pay extremely higher rates to recycle or throw it all away. In some cities recycling prices have increased by as much as 63% and landfills are overflowing because cities can no longer afford to recycle. Developing countries are impacted more heavily than developed countries by unsustainably managed waste. The World Bank says, “In low-income countries, over 90% of waste is often disposed in unregulated dumps or openly burned.” These inefficient and hazardous systems create environmental, safety, and health issues. While this issue is not as openly prevalent in developed nations, it does a serious economic toll. To be effective, waste management often must be 20-50% of a city’s municipal budget. With the ineffective systems in place to get rid of waste, countries will eventually run out of space and reach a tipping point. This tipping point will mean exacerbating the climate crisis further, creating massive contamination issues in the water supply in developing and developed communities.

Where does your country stand on waste management? How much waste does your country produce? How efficient are your country’s waste management systems? Should your country take steps toward better waste management or reduced waste production? If so, how would your country go about doing that? If your country has one of the highest waste production rates, do they have more responsibility to reduce waste?

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Eco/Soc Topic 1

Women in the Workforce

Throughout the world, women face countless challenges in the workforce. In developed countries, women are discriminated against due to their race and gender and experience things such as the lack of sponsorship and role models, sexual harassment, and the double-bind dilemma. Without sponsorship, women are less likely to succeed, and without role models, women are not positively reinforced in their positions. Statistically, women are more likely to be sexually harassed than their male counterparts, which discourages women from working, despite the belief that work is supposed to be a safe space. Women are also much more likely to experience the double-blind dilemma, which is when they are expected to fit into two separate conflicting messages, such as being a leader, but not being too assertive.

Religion, patriarchal societies, lack of access to equal opportunity, the difficulty of navigating a career alongside motherhood, and campaigns to normalize misogyny all play into women's challenges in and outside of the workforce. In some religions, women are supposed to be subordinate to men, which can lead to exclusion from positions of power. Men are more likely to experience job hirings and promotions than women, and many women inside the workforce have to juggle their job with raising their children.

Women of color deal with these challenges, as well, but they also go through gendered racism. Many women of color in the nonprofit sector feel as if they were passed up for promotions, new projects, and leadership in favor of those that were either white, male, or less experienced. The intersectionality of their lack of privilege not only comes from the fact that they are a woman, but is expounded upon because they are a minority as well.

Women are also subject to a pay gap. Some examples of countries where men make significantly more money than women are Austria, Mexico, Finland, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Israel, Latvia, Chile, Japan, Estonia, and Korea, with Korea having the largest gap when the amount of women participating in the workforce is 56%. This shows that although women outnumber their male counterparts in the workforce, they are still not granted the right of equal pay.

Women face even harsher obstacles in developing countries. There is a lack of education, stronger gender biases, such as women being defined only as homemakers, lack of maternity benefits, and the lack of safety and security at work. In some countries, it is even illegal for women to work in certain areas. There are currently 104 countries that have laws that prevent women from working in specific jobs, and as shown below, "2.7 billion women do not have the same choice of jobs as men." However, it should be noted that not every restriction is shown below.



There are constant systemic barriers in the workplace for women, and these barriers and frustrations differ from country-to-country because they are shaped by cultural and economic forces. Countries throughout the world have not been able to embrace the idea of women in the workforce, which sprouts from things such as religion and traditional values. The fact that women are struggling with equality in the workforce cannot be pinned to only one thing because several ideals intersect to create the beliefs that lead to these challenges, and countries may be fine with inequality in the workplace, due to their customs.

With vastly opposing viewpoints on this topic, does your country feel the need to progress towards gender equality in the workforce, or is your country satisfied with their current state? Does religion take a toll upon the belief of equal representation in the workforce? What can your country do to lower the rate of sexual assault and harassment in the workplace? If present, what effects does gendered racism have on your country?

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Eco/Soc Topic 2

Deforestation

Deforestation is the act of clearing a wide area of trees, and it can either be human-driven or natural. It affects wildlife, ecosystems, weather patterns, and the climate. There was an intense international outcry when it was found out that the Amazon Rainforest was being burned because it is considered the lungs of our planet. However, if a developing country wishes to become developed one day, the clearing of forests to build economic opportunities, such as increased cattle-ranching, is the way for them to get there. Deforestation is utilized to make way for increased development. The battle then becomes this: developed countries want developing countries to stop clearing the forests because of climate change and increasing global warming, but do developed countries have the right to tell developing countries to stop deforestation on their own lands? Developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom each had their own opportunities to clear forests and become a developed nation, so should the same opportunity be available for developing countries?

Forests cover about 30% of the Earth's surface, but that figure is being depleted rapidly. Ecosystems such as the Amazon Rainforest play a large part in global water cycles, and deforestation of critical areas could potentially lead to the decreasing availability of freshwater supplies worldwide. Not only are forests depended on for this, but they are also wildlife habitats. Deforestation, for example, is the primary reason that orangutans have lost 80% of their habitats and are critically endangered. In addition, in 2015, Indonesia briefly surpassed the United States in greenhouse gas emissions and also contributed to the endangerment of not only the orangutans, but also the Borneo elephants and Sumatran tigers. Also, approximately 1.6 billion people around the world depend on the forests for food, water, traditional medicine, and other secondary benefits. For instance, Malaysia and Indonesia clear vast amounts of trees to produce palm oil for global food supply.

Deforestation can also lead to soil erosion, which can result in desertification. This is the process by which fertile land becomes desert. "According to the World Wide Fund for Nature, in the last 150 years, half of the planet's fertile topsoil has been lost. Researchers report soil erosion increases pollution, causes sedimentation in rivers and streams, clogs waterways, and causes aquatic species to decline." Hence, deforestation and desertification has a rippling effect across the world. Less developed countries likely want to become more developed; however, more developed countries would be more likely to support their growth if deforestation did not have such long-term economic and environmental effects all over the world.

Becoming a potential world power starts with economic development. How does your country feel about deforestation posing a threat to the world? Are opposing countries actively combating climate change by giving alternatives to deforestation? How can the issue of deforestation be decreased AND allow countries to economically develop? Does your country encourage deforestation, or is it adamantly in opposition?

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Eco/Soc Topic 3

Reducing Infant Mortality Rates (IMR)

According to the CDC, infant mortality is defined as the death of an infant before his or her first birthday. In 2017, an estimated 5.4 million deaths in children under five were reported globally, half of these deaths occurring in sub-Saharan Africa. Most of these deaths could have easily been prevented with wider access to basic treatments. This is why the IMR is higher in undeveloped and developing countries—a lack of money to provide access for medical treatments, procedures, and professionals. Numerous infant deaths are attributed to cases like pneumonia or other respiratory infections, lack of oxygen to the baby during birth (neonatal encephalopathy), infections, and diarrheal diseases. Proper funding, the treatment of a trained health provider, vaccines, or antibiotics could avoid most of these cases.

For a developed country, the United States has an unusually high IMR at about six deaths per one thousand births, while most developed countries, such as France and Japan, only have about two deaths per one thousand births. Most of the infant deaths in the U.S. occur because of premature births, which are caused by factors such as diabetes and high-stress levels—problems not nearly as prominent in other countries. Diabetes is a common issue in the U.S. due to culturally influenced eating habits and a lack of physical activity. Being the seventh leading cause of death in the United States, diabetes is on the rise and will only contribute to more pregnancy complications if not prevented.

The IMR is a more prominent issue in third-world nations, like Africa and the middle-east, than in developed nations. For example, Afghanistan has the highest IMR rate in the world at 110 deaths per 1000 births. Other countries with an incredibly high IMR include Somalia, Central African Republic, Guinea Bissau, and Chad. All of these nations have similar issues, such as prominent terrorism involvement, human trafficking, or major drug use, making the areas much more dangerous and difficult to safely raise children. Race also plays a factor in the IMR. Black women are 3-4 times more likely than non-Hispanic white women to die along with the baby from pregnancy-related complications.

Through the power of the United Nations, we must find effective ways to battle this ongoing crisis. What actions can underdeveloped and developing countries take towards reducing their IMR? How can money for doctors, vaccines, and other basic treatments be raised or allocated? If you are a developed country, how would you further combat this issue? Would you be willing to provide aid to countries struggling with a high IMR, or would you not intervene?

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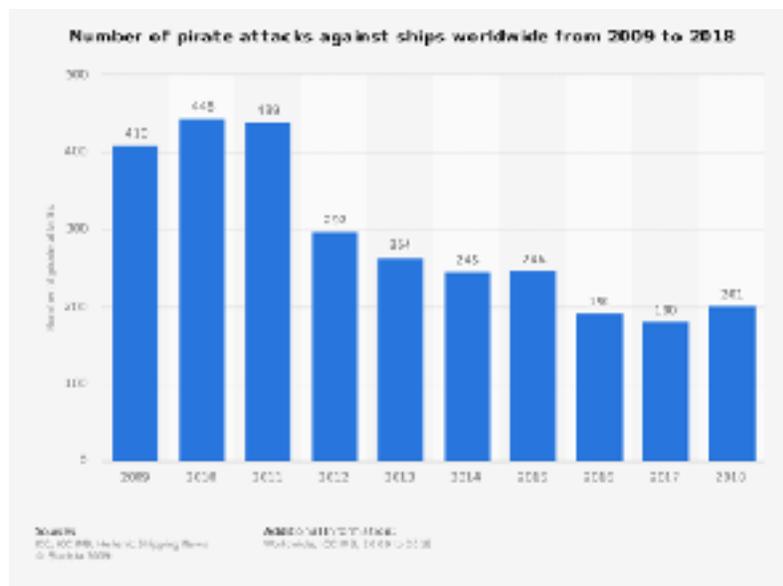
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Security Council Topic 1

Piracy

Piracy, within the sphere of this topic, is defined as, “Any criminal acts of violence, detention, rape, or depredation committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship that is directed on the high seas against another ship, or against persons or property on board a ship.” The first documented cases of piracy were conducted by so-called ‘sea people’ in 14 B.C., but the threat of piracy has grown tremendously since then. Globally, 2018 has been the first time pirate attacks are on the rise since the peak of modern Somalian piracy in 2010. Despite piracy consistently decreasing along the Eastern coast of Africa, piracy in other regions has been on the rise. In the Caribbean and Latin America, Western Africa, The Northern Indian Ocean region, and Southeast Asia, piracy has increased tremendously. The Gulf of Guinea, located on the Southern coast of the Sahara region, accounted for 40% of all pirate attacks in 2018.



Piracy is considered a \$4 billion annual business. Most of this money comes from ransoming a ship’s crew as opposed to selling the goods on board. In order to successfully complete a ransom, most pirate crews hijack large tanker ships, steer them to nearby ports, and use an expert negotiator to increase their profit and decrease the likelihood of having to use force or violence. Negotiations can last anywhere from 72 hours to 500 days depending on the methodology of the pirates and stubbornness on account of both parties.

Maritime piracy is responsible for more than 100 deaths of crew members and thousands of deaths of pirates. In most cases, specifically around the Horn of Africa and Southeastern Asia, pirates are forced against their will to rob ships, and earn a meager percentage of total profit. Faced with an ultimatum, most pirates must choose between the threat of murder on a piracy mission or the brutal deaths of their family members if they refuse.

Many countries blame piracy on the poor surveillance of waterways and push for greater security of large ships and the creation of safer trade routes. One example is NATO’s Operation Ocean Shield. This operation used naval power to safely escort ships through dangerous water-

ways and was enacted from 2009 to 2016, but the operation was abandoned due to its high cost despite its effectiveness. Other countries, however, blame piracy on the extremely poor living standards in certain regions of the World. For example, Somalia, one of the countries most infamous for piracy, has a detrimental standard of living and diminutive average yearly wage. Because of this, many governments and economists argue that Somalis are desperate for ways to make money, and piracy acts as a readily available source of income that is worth the risk.

What should be done about piracy? Should the U.N. prioritize the security of ships traveling through dangerous waterways or the socio-economic development of poor regions where piracy is a means of becoming rich? It is your job as a delegate to craft international solutions to create a World safer for all seatravel.

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Security Council Topic 2

Israel/Palestine Conflict

Since the mid-19th century, there has been an ongoing struggle between Jewish people and Arab Muslims over territorial ownership disputes. This conflict's origins can be traced back to Jewish immigration (via the Aliyahs in the 19th-20th centuries) and the intercommunal conflict in the British Mandate of Palestine, also called Mandatory Palestine (the armed struggle between Palestinian Arabs and the Jewish Yishuv). For the past 52 years, Israel has occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, leading to a worldwide conflict that has begun to have international ramifications.

Over the past decades, a long-term peace solution has been in the works but to no avail. Palestinians and Israelis have disputed over the terms of peace solutions, thus leading to the still-ongoing conflict. The United Nations have attempted to offer a solution in the past for both Palestinians and Israelis by offering both sides parts of the disputed territory. This, however, failed, as both sides continued warfare. In 1967, war between both sides led to Israel having control of both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where the majority of the Palestinian population is located.

Despite Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Palestinians have their own government, the Palestinian Authority, which administers approximately 39% of the West Bank and is currently led by Mahmoud Abbas. Palestinians want the land of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to become their own state of Palestine, garnering the support of Arab nations around the world. However, Israel, the world's only Jewish state, has garnered the support of the United States and has also garnered some support from Western nations, despite increasing criticism. Some reasons behind the continued U.S. support for Israel may be due to strategic reasons, such as arms-testing, keeping Middle Eastern countries allied with Russia, such as Syria, in check, and continued diplomatic relations. This conflict has blossomed numerous humanitarian issues that have received global attention. Currently, the West Bank is controlled partially by the Palestinian Authority, but the Israelis have a heavy military occupational presence in it, leading to battles and civilian casualties. Additionally, Israelis have been settling in the West Bank, often leading to issues—Israeli settlers in the West Bank are tried in civil courts for any wrongdoings, whereas Palestinians are tried in Israeli military courts. The United Nations has called this “de facto segregation.” Additionally, the United Nations declared settlements in occupied Palestinian territories illegal, and there have been cases of violence, including kidnappings and murders. For example, during 2018 peaceful demonstrations, 183 Palestinian demonstrators were killed, in addition to over 6,000 more injured due to live ammunition. Additionally, Palestinian and Israeli military violence has contributed to numerous civilian deaths due to bombings in civilian zones - casualty numbers for both sides are rising, especially hitting Palestinians harder.

The humanitarian issues have been exacerbated over the increase of military dispute. The Gaza Strip, controlled by Hamas (an Islamist fundamentalist party), has experienced increasing violence, as an Israeli blockade has frustrated Palestinian civilians. Unemployment rates have skyrocketed to 44%, poverty rates have increased to extreme levels, and basic needs, such as food, have become scarce, as the UN went from supporting 80,000 people on their food program to over a million.

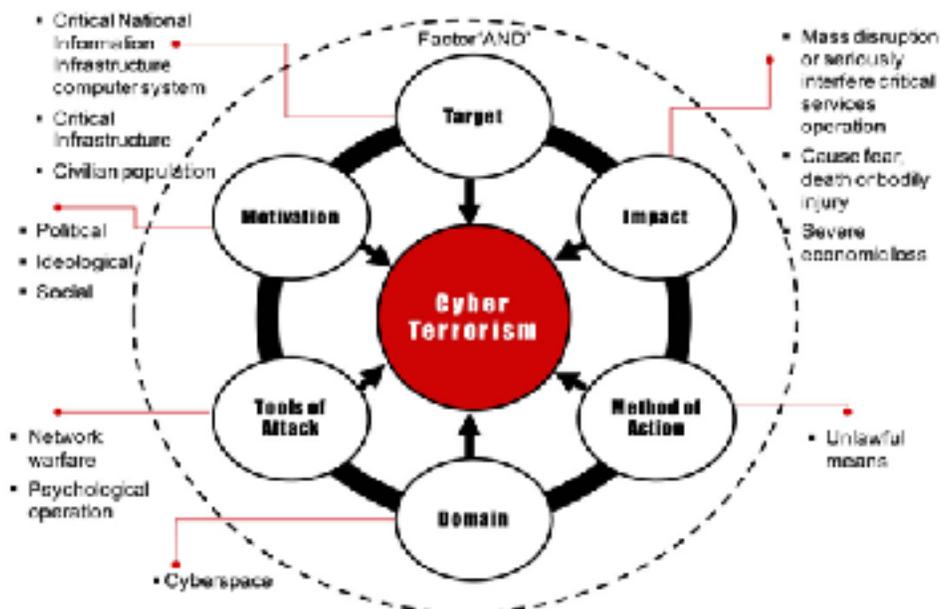
Security Council Topic 3

Cyberterrorism

Cyberterrorism is defined as “the use of computer network tools to shut down critical national infrastructures (such as energy, transportation, government operations) or to coerce or intimidate a government or civilian population.” According to James Lewis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the increasing dependence on computer communications is becoming “an electronic Achilles heel” in today’s modern world. Every single country represented at the United Nations is susceptible to an infrastructural cyber attack at any given moment. In addition to infrastructural attacks, cyberterrorism also includes the recruitment of foreign nationals to join terrorist organizations.

Governments around the world are racing to secure their critical infrastructure from aggressive cyber attacks. Cyberterrorist attacks lead to a “cascading effect,” meaning that an attack in one infrastructural location will have profound impacts on other parts of a nation’s infrastructure, including their economy. One critical infrastructure that can be compromised is a country’s healthcare system, which would put their entire population at-risk to not have healthcare coverage. Other vulnerable infrastructure includes vital utility systems and banking systems. Consequences can lead to the negative effects on market capitalization, endangerment on executive leadership, and plummeting profits and sales. IP theft has contributed to at least 25% of costs due to cyberterrorism - technology is extremely vulnerable, and with the ever-advancing weaponry of cyberterrorists, military technology can be vulnerable, as well, compromising a nation’s military efforts and potentially rupture international relationships.

Cyberterrorism has also had a profound impact in the mass recruitment of radicalized nationals to terrorist organizations. Throughout ISIS’s reign, the terrorist group mobilized over 40,000 individuals from highly developed countries over social media. As internet access becomes more readily available across Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, terrorist groups have larger spheres of influence and pools of recruitment. In 2017, France ranked 30th on the Global Terrorism Index because of their avid connection to terrorist recruitment from the Middle East.



What will you do as a delegate? Are your efforts better spent securing your country from cyber attacks or creating an international coalition to inhibit the sharing of confidential data online? Should your Nation's delegation focus on terrorist recruitment or fighting terrorism at the source? How will your country handle cyber attacks from other U.N. member nations? It is your duty to prevent the spread of terrorism over the internet while defending your country's national security.

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