

Common Grounds on Controversial Questions

Security Council to discuss the situation in Afghanistan in its 5828th Session

“As in Cold War.” This was the evaluation of the delegate of the United States concerning the two preceding days of intense discussions in the Security Council. This negative view was not quite in line with the generally very cooperative atmosphere of the sessions, in which the delegates showed a broad variety of diplomatic conduct. The topic of the situation in Afghanistan was discussed controversially, however, there was still a broad common ground. One prime intention of all members of the Security Council was to eradicate drug cultivation and trafficking, as one main reason for instability in the war-torn country. The ideas how to tackle this issue were diverse. There was the Western group, comprised of the present members of the EU – Belgium, Slovakia, the United Kingdom and the United States as well as Peru. These states followed a concept of ‘sticks’ and ‘carrots’. There should be incentives given to the Afghan farmers to cease the cultivation of poppies. Under administration of the Counter Narcotic Drugs Fund, an agency for Alternative Cultivation Programs should be initiated, giving training to local farmers as well as providing agricultural equipment and financial compensation for the money they lose ceasing poppy cultivation. If the incentives are not accepted, the international community should not hesitate to punish farmers, who continue poppy production. “It is an ultimatum, but they can decide on their own.” (United States)

The “other group” consisting of the Russian Federation, China, Indonesia, Brazil, Libya and Iran followed a different approach. They also regarded poppy plantation as a problem of utmost importance, however the delegates rather aim to redeploy the already existing foreign forces and to include regional actors such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The coalition wants to strengthen



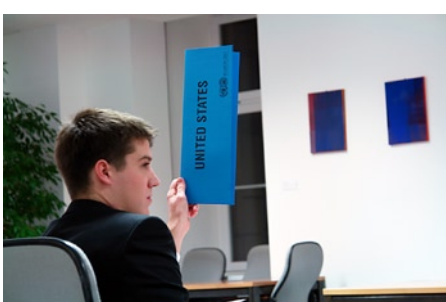
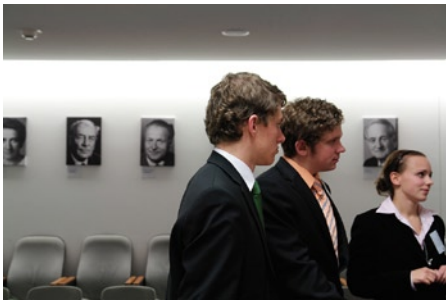
Formal sessions were characterized by constant ups and downs.

the efficacy by combining the mandates of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Operation of Enduring Freedom (OEF) into one single mandate. Although not all countries admit this point openly, they aim to minimize American influence. “Their forces do not stick to international law”, scrutinized the Russian delegate. Therefore, the rule of law should be reassured. At the same time the countries emphasize that the sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan should be respected. Another crucial topic was the financing of external support, because “money is a strict limited resource” as Qatar reasonably stated.

The breaking news of the helicopters shot down in Southern Afghanistan killing nine American soldiers shocked the council. However, all delegates agreed that nonetheless the deretoriating of the situation, one should not forget the progress already achieved during the session and once more keep on working for a comprehensive solution.

Commentary

The issue of Afghanistan seems to be as complicated as a Gordian Knot. And that is barely surprising when you look at the ties worn inside the only organ that can actually make binding decisions: The Peoples’ Republic of China wears a red one, the Delegate of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya chose a shining green, the tie of South Africa is almost black (according to him, it is the first time in his long diplomatic career that he wears a suit, after all). Belgium is in character as well. It is this 80s break-dance style of Central European countries that you can call retro, if you want. And America’s fabric is as blue as the sky over Texas. What’s behind the ties, you ask? Hard to tell. The first two days, some delegates seem to hide behind their conduct, and some behave like “Decorum” was a village in Mexico. There is still a lot to learn, guys, but you so far, you are doing great!



Quotes of the Day

“Honorable stair, honorable delegates ... “
– Delegate of Qatar

“We look forward to destructive discussions”
– Delegate of Slovakia taking negotiations seriously.

“South Africa is a non-committed country!”
– Delegate of South Africa, completely in line with Slovakia.

“Iran – to which potion do you rise?”
– Mme President dreaming a Freudian dream.

“You have you in your working group!”
– Delegate of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya responding to the inquiry of the United States: “You have Iran in your working group.”

“Todays session was great and interesting because Iran did a lot of work and also Belgium had chocolate and cheese, whereas in the United States this is not appropriate”
Cadavre exquis by the delegates of the United States and Peru concerning Saturdays session.

„The International community shall cease to support the cultivation of puppies.”
– Delegate of Belgium, concerned about the fundamental rights of animals.

“Yes and No”

As one of the Arab and African countries the *Libyan Arab Jamahiriya* was expected to be more or less an outsider. However, its involvement in the negotiation process showed a quite different image.

How do you perceive the current situation?
The situation is very complicated. There are now two different working papers with partly some good ideas.

Do you think that a common solution can be found?

Yes, if all sides aim for fast and sustainable solutions this would be possible. But this definitively depends on the motivation of all delegates. If everyone is willing to make concessions it might be possible.

How do you experience the atmosphere?
It is less confrontative than expected. I think this is due to the seriousness of the topic. Everyone knows that we have to react to the situation in Afghanistan.

Which delegation do you regard as less cooperative?

The United States is a problem. It does not even discuss certain issues, such as the mandate of the Operation Enduring Freedom.

Conversely, which delegations are your favourite negotiation partners?

Regarding this situation, China and Russia are very cooperative.

Do you think that stable allies are necessary?

Yes and no. On the one side, it can be productive to have ad-hoc coalitions to react quickly and to be more flexible. On the other hand due to its historical background Libya has always had stable allies and it is very important for the country to have reliable partners.

Has the news of the shooting down of the helicopters in Southern Afghanistan change the situation?

Yes and no. On the one hand, the situation is deteriorating. On the other hand, attacks like this should not be overestimated as they happen very often.



Treat me under Chapter VIII!?