- **International Maritime Organization**

Chair: Jack Cisek
Vice Chair: TBD



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Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome everyone to LYMUN XI! My name is Jack Cisek (he/him) and I will be your chair in this committee. I am a senior at Lyons Township, and I am our club's head of G.A. I have been invested in Model UN since the beginning of my freshman year, and it has been a passion of mine since my first conference. Aside from MUN, I'm a member of my school's D&D club and Latin club.

My time at MUN has been the best of my time at school; I have made a lot of friends and memories. That is why it makes me extremely happy to chair a fun and unique committee.

As representatives of a variety of nations, there will be several factors to consider both when it comes to international safety and the security of your own country's citizens. Your ability to develop solutions without disrupting the livability of your country is what will be observed on the day of the committee.

You can submit position papers via email or a physical copy on the day of the conference.

Should any of you have any questions please feel free to email me at cis512733@d204.lths.net.

Jack Cisek

Best,

Jack Cisek

A Brief History of IMO

Like many other UN bodies, the International Maritime Organization was formed in response to World War II. Sea-based warfare was a major aspect of the war, and many countries believed that there needed to be oversight over the maritime restrictions that came with many proposed treaties. The IMO was officially established in 1948, and its first meeting was in 1959 with the initial task of rewriting the International Convention of Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

Since then, the IMO's responsibilities have expanded to the degree of now being involved in a majority of sea-based matters. From vessel design and technology to rescue coordination, the IMO is involved in numerous aspects of maritime security.



The International Maritime Organization has 176 member nations and has implemented over 50 protocols. Despite a long list of accomplishments and responsibilities, it is much less well known than many other UN committees.

Topic A: The Oil Industry

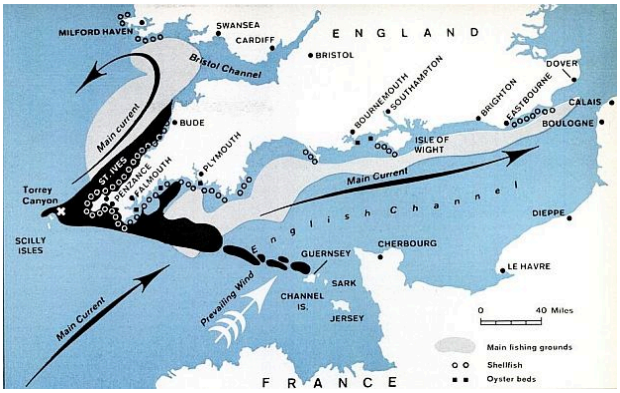


Throughout the history of our world, there have been many factors that determine international relations, but the earth's natural resources have often been one of the largest. Crude oil and natural gas are resources formed beneath the earth's crust and used in a burning process to create energy. Because of the many pockets of oil and gas centered below our oceans, several industries have cropped up supporting the concept of offshore drilling.

Topic History- The oil industry first began in the mid-19th century with the first oil well being drilled in North America in 1859, marking the beginning of the modern oil industry. As oil was increasingly recognized as a valuable resource, drilling became a practice all over the world, with wells being established in places like the Middle East, Russia, and North America.

As the oil market grew, so did our quest to find more of it. This eventually led to the development of offshore drilling technology to harvest large underground pockets of petroleum found beyond our shores. Offshore drilling did not become commonplace until 50 years after its

invention in 1896. Eventually, during the 1940s and 50s technology was advanced enough to allow for deeper drilling, making offshore efforts more profitable. As oil and gas rigs were built further from land and in harsher environments, other components such as shipping and storage logistics became required, not only making the forming industry more complicated but also more susceptible to catastrophic accidents.



One of the earliest significant instances of marine oil spills occurred surprisingly far into the existence of the oil industry. In 1967, an oil tanker off the coast of the U.K. inadvertently released around 120,000 tons of crude oil into the English Channel.

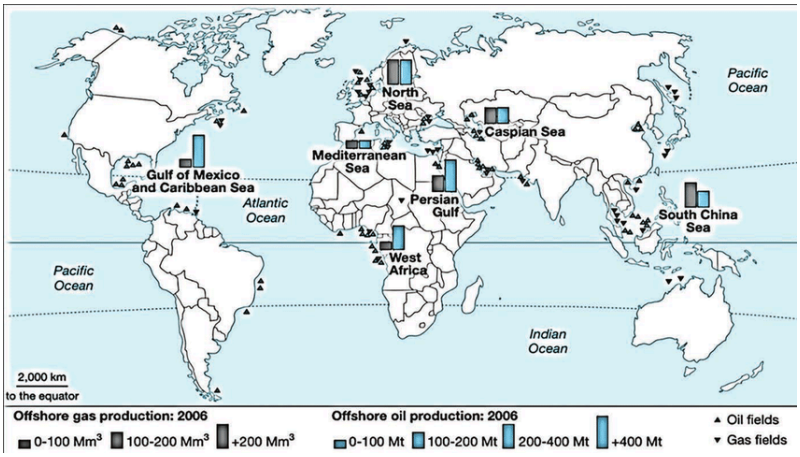
Over time, many other major oil spills have raised awareness about the environmental risk that comes with this market. The Ixtoc 1 blowout in the Gulf of Mexico, the Exxon Valdez tanker crash within the Prince William reef in Alaska, and the Castillo De Bellver spill off the shore of South Africa are just three of many examples that have resulted in a conservative 70 million gallons of oil spilled into the ocean.

In the mid 2010s came the single largest oil spill in the market's history. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill released over 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico over around 2.5 months. Not only is this considered the worst accident in the market's history, but it also had one of the biggest effects on natural ecosystems the world has ever seen.

These disasters became used as examples in the argument for increased regulation. People worldwide began to lose trust in any process that brought oil and water together. In response, authoritative bodies such as the IMO agreed that regulatory frameworks needed strengthening.

Current Situation- Around 60% of global energy comes from oil and natural gas, 30% of which is sourced from offshore drilling. To put these numbers into perspective, the offshore industry produces 1.2 trillion cubic meters of natural gas annually, and 28.9 million barrels of oil daily. With such a significant portion of the world's oil surrounding these offshore industries comes significant investment into related infrastructure and transport. Should this topic be chosen as the focus for this meeting of the IMO, a lens should be placed on every aspect of the offshore industry. Whether your solution focuses on the regulation, removal, reduction, or reform at the end of the committee the citizens you represent should be better off.

Multiple opportunities for spills present themselves when looking at every point between the drilling process and the actual conversion to energy. To begin the analysis of spills, the origin of many terrible spills over the years should be looked at first. From the initial planning to the installation, an oil rig can take anywhere from 18 months to 5 years from the first greenlight of the project. Stabilizing anchors or corrective thrusters keep an oil rig in place as it uses multiple means to farm the oil and gas below the surface. Often, oil rig placements are set up in mass groupings, commonly referred to as offshore oil fields. These fields are areas known to contain large pockets of oil and gas. The most populated fields are located worldwide, meaning that the matter isn't as simple as blaming one or two oil-producing countries.

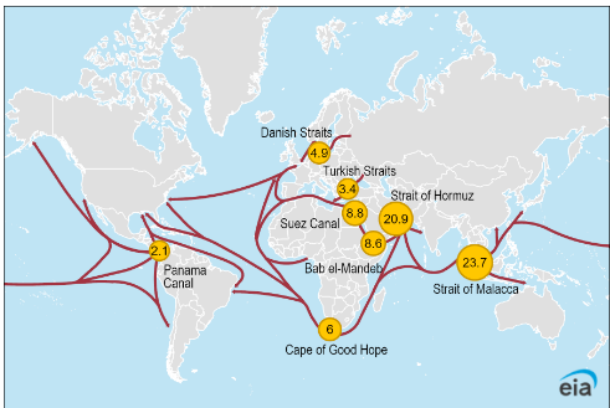


International water laws dictate that oil and gas falls under inherent ownership of whatever country it is closest to. This means that oil recovery from whatever harsh conditions it resides in falls under the responsibility of its home country. Often, this project is outsourced to companies through government contracts. Companies like Schlumberger, Petrofac, COSL, and Transocean work closely with their home governments to make a profit, often providing funding in return to keep oil as the dominant energy source. This relationship between companies and their governments is a major reason why the oil industry continues to grow and flourish in many countries.

Rig-centered spills can occur for a variety of reasons, often related to the very complex operation that drilling oil is. Blowouts, which are failures in the control systems allowing for pressure to build, are caused by mechanical glitches, releasing crude oil and natural gas from the well. Equipment malfunctions are misgivings in the physical infrastructure such as pipelines and valves. In the event of a pipeline rupture, it can be tough to repair. Finally, human-related errors, such as mistakes in procedure and common operations contribute heavily to the amount of accidents you would see on an oil rig.

Offshore rigs are not the only locations in which oil spills occur, often spills come as a result of another major point in the timeline of energy consumption. Vessels designed to ship liquids like oil, often called tankers, take oil and gas drilled beyond our shores and bring it to land to be processed. Afterward, these resources are loaded using specialized infrastructure, such as pipelines and storage tanks, to be circulated in the global oil trade. Common chokepoints like the Panama Canal, the Malacca

Figure 1. Daily transit volumes of petroleum and other liquids through world maritime oil chokepoints (million barrels per day) (2023)

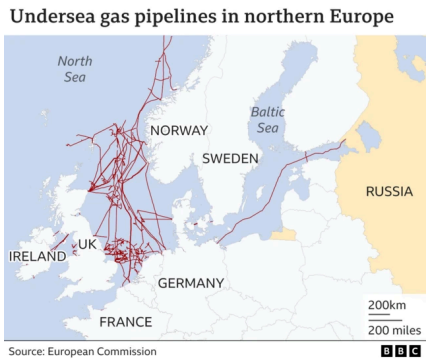


Strait and the Suez Canal are vital to the oil trade and are often useful in detecting weaknesses in the system.

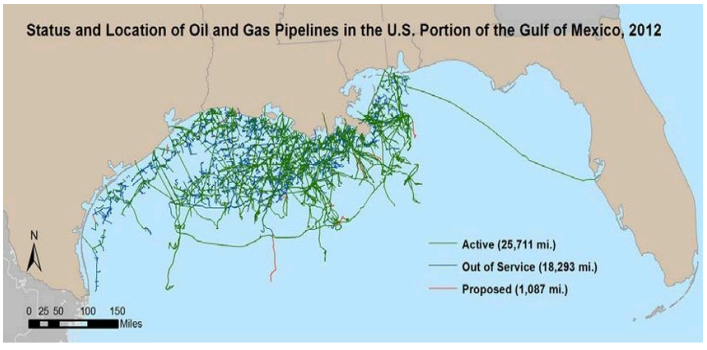
Weaknesses, oversights, or catastrophic events are most often the cause of major spills. Accidental collisions, outdated infrastructure, and human error are present in tens of thousands of ships worldwide. Talks about modernizing the fleet that makes up the oil trade are numerous; many ships have pointed out design flaws that come with ships such as the single-hull design, aging and rusting ports and vessels, and safety systems lacking in actual safety.

Mass improvements have yet to be made, a fact often blamed on the price tag associated with these changes. Many companies have dragged their feet in the interest of profits, which has left many governments hesitant to move forward with many suggestions. Should this topic be pursued, it will be up to you to decide what methods or innovations you want to argue for in committee.

Another stop that most oil takes is that of oil pipelines. Laid on or buried beneath the seabed, these pipes commonly span vast distances across deep-sea environments. Connecting many offshore drilling rigs to refineries and distribution networks, these lines play a vital role in the transportation of gas and oil.







Specialized pumps and compressors are used to keep a continual flow through the line; when working, they ensure steady and safe transport. In the event of parts of the process not working, the results can be disastrous. For example, lines over time will become corroded, trawlers and anchors may damage the line, errors in the installation occur, and pumps fail. As an extension of this issue, unmitigated design flaws are oftentimes pointed to as causes for oil spills. Inadequate protection of the pipelines leads to the faster degradation of many lines. Additionally, many have called for an increase in the inspection and monitoring of pipes; in previous talks on the regulation of pipelines, the term “lacking” is not uncommon.

There are certainly many more ways a sea spill can occur, limiting the ability of this background guide to fully cover the topic. Natural seeps, port spills, well abandonment, and illegal discharge are all possibilities. It will be your job to decide how you will balance them.

Oil, once spilled, begins to spread very rapidly across the surface of the water. Over the first few hours, several square kilometers of area are covered by often thick layers of oil. If left to sit and spread throughout the water, it will begin to emulsify and undergo multiple other chemical changes making it very hard to clean. The two most common tools used are booms, floating barriers deployed around spills to prevent spills as depicted here, and skimmers, devices meant to remove oil from the surface once contained. There are other possible means of removal, but these are the most well-known physical options.



Despite the many ways to clean a spill, the current emergency systems have many shortcomings. Rough seas, ice, and colder temperatures can make oil spread faster in some instances and make cleanup significantly harder. Cleanups are also inefficient in terms of resources and cost: they are an expensive process requiring coordination between multiple agencies. This coordination has been known to take years to fully take effect.

Specialized equipment, personnel, and vessels take hours or even days to reach spill sites, depending on the remoteness of the location. Delays prompt complications, complications prompt additional support, and additional support prompts further delays. Oil cleanup agencies include but are not limited to NOSDRA in Nigeria, Petrobras in Brazil, the AMSA in Australia, ANAM in France, the OSRL of the United Kingdom, the Japanese Coast Guard, and the MSRC in the United States.

Possible Solutions- When researching the multifaceted issue of ocean oil spills in the offshore gas and oil industry, it is important to keep in mind the large variety of factors that contribute to an issue that grows larger alongside its related industry. Many countries and companies make money off of the oil industry, so it should be considered that the representatives present on the day of the committee may not represent the opinions of the world.

That being said, if a corrective course on matters such as spill prevention, response capabilities, coordination and cooperation, preventing future corner-cutting, and modernizing failing infrastructure is not taken, our environment will continue to decline further and further.



Questions to Consider:

1. Does your country benefit from the survival of the oil industry?
2. What strategies has your country employed in the past to combat oil spills and drill oil safely, if any?
3. Are your efforts focused on scaling back the industry or increasing safety measures?
4. How do you plan to help compensate those affected by spills, if at all?
5. How might coordination and collaborative efforts be improved?

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Topic B: Protecting Trade From Armed Conflict



Comprising of over 80 percent of the world’s trade volume, sea trade routes are the lifeblood of global commerce. Most maritime pathways facilitate the movement of goods, energy resources, and raw materials across continents, making them critical for the global economy. However, in more recent years, the stability of this global system has been threatened, and the IMO is fit to debate this threat. Wars, conflicts, and armed discord, specifically in regions with

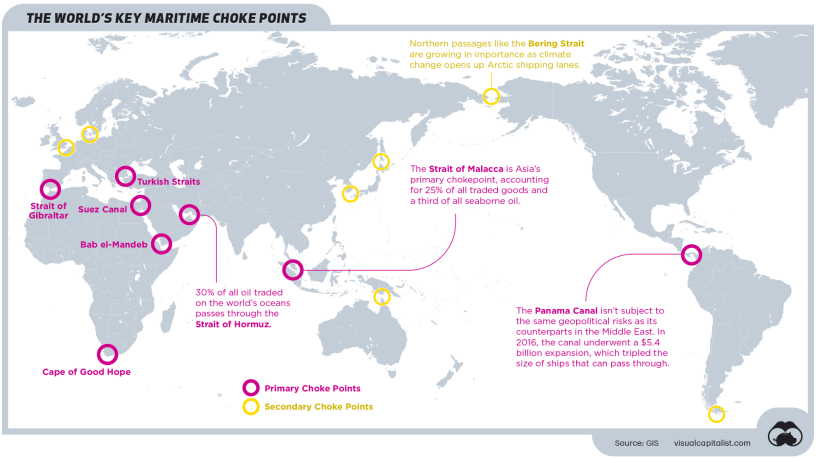
maritime chokepoints, can severely disrupt trade routes. Significant economic consequences sit on the horizon on only for directly involved countries but the global community as well.

Topic History- This topic can technically be traced back to the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans during their respective dominations of the Mediterranean Sea. Using naval might to keep trade routes secure allowed the value of maritime trade to grow substantially during their reigns.

As the age of exploration set in and more trade routes were discovered, governments realized that controlling maritime chokepoints and trade routes would lead to opportunities for further profit. This is why this became a major goal of many imperialist countries. When the IMO was created, it aimed to promote safe, secure, and efficient ocean shipping, including the protection of sea trade routes in times of conflict. In recent decades, the nature of sea threats to sea routes has evolved: non-state threats like terrorism and pirates pose many challenges, and regional conflicts complicating matters have highlighted the ongoing vulnerability of trade points in our day and age.

Current Situation- There are a great number of conflicts that can and should be analyzed. There are several strategic straits and canals that connect most bodies of water. These often small pathways are referred to by the international world as chokepoints are the key to most if not all of a country's economic stability

To emphasize the world-spanning nature of this issue, this guide will go into deeper detail about certain specific chokepoints and their related issues. Remember to keep in mind that these specific matters do not in any way make up the full extent of the issue, bringing your interests to the table is expected as the representative of a country.



<u>The Red Sea-</u> The Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and the Suez Canal are a combined set of chokepoints, one is natural and one is man-made respectively. Together, they make a ship-safe passage from the Indian Ocean through the Red Sea and into the Mediterranean. This pass is a linchpin of global trade, connecting Europe and East Asia, especially in energy and goods trade. Keeping them secure is a large part of avoiding potentially catastrophic disruptions in international trade.

Problematically, the strait is endangered by several armed conflicts in the area. In 2014, the world saw the beginning of the Yemen Civil War, a conflict between the Yemeni government and a group of rebels called the Houthis. Each is backed by its outside government forces, and the conflict has been drawn out into our modern day. During this, there have been many attacks on shipping vessels moving through the strait. Anti-ship missiles, sea mines, and explosion rigged boats are tactics seen in the past. Additionally, the Houthis have threatened to block the strait, a significant concern for maritime security in the region. The conflict has been tied to larger battles for control in the region, implicating more than just the people of Yemen.

Around 1400 miles from the Bab-el-Mandeb strait sits the Suez Canal, constructed in 1869 to connect the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea; the canal has seen economic-altering conflict in the past. In more recent years, the conflict has been fought around the canal is the Sinai Insurgency due to a number of terrorist attacks claimed by the Egyptian chapter of the Islamic State. Despite its ties to the northern Sinai region, this group's proximity to the Suez Canal is deemed concerning.

Militants in Sanai have targeted key infrastructure including pipelines and roads in the past, an extension of their operations to the canal is not an impossible thought. A successful attack on the canal or its infrastructure could have severe economic consequences.

Malacca Strait- The Strait of Malacca is a 500-mile-long chokepoint that runs between the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian island of Sumatra connecting the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea. As the main channel used to move from the Andaman Sea to the broader Pacific Ocean, the passage is considered one of the most important chokepoints in the trading world, used by many countries in the western hemisphere to trade goods. However, like many others, the Strait of Malacca is mired in conflict and tension.

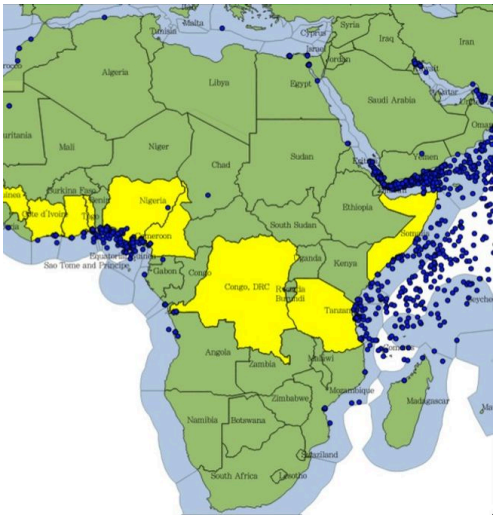
In 1895, a conflict over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands between Japan and China after an ill-defined treaty emerged, sparking a war of repeated claims and loss over the island for many years. After the U.S took control of Japan after the Second World War, China laid a claim called the Nine Dash Line which they maintain to this day. Tensions began rising after countries like the Philippines found natural resources in the sea. Since then, there have been sporadic



skirmishes over the territory of the South China Sea. If these tensions escalate, the strait will become a flashpoint for military occupation from either side, collapsing the trade moving through most of Southeast Asia.

These problems are not the sole thing that is threatening the Malacca Strait. Multiple countries have tried to increase their naval presence in the Malacca Strait. India and China have had more and more naval presence and militaristic demonstrations in the strait to establish a dominant control over the area. The United States has also placed ships near Malaysian and Singaporean shores, upsetting many A.S.E.A.N. countries with their presence. The U.S. claims that their placement is a part of their war on terror. This increase over the past couple of years raises the risk of incidents and confrontations that could have broader implications for the rest of the strait. Many countries rely on the strait for energy trade, so seeing it fall to these types of issues will be devastating.

Piracy- Armed and physical conflict does not always come from a country, and securing trade routes does not always pit two countries against each other. Piracy, the act of robbing and attacking ships at sea, is a consistent threat to many trade routes in many particular regions of the world, and where piracy is most prominent is off the coast of Africa. For example, the Gulf of Guinea, located off the west coast of Africa, is an extremely dangerous area in terms of piracy. The gulf is key for countries like Nigeria, Angola, and other oil-producing nations. Usually, the practice involves the kidnapping of crew members to be ransomed back to their home countries. This not only disrupts shipments of resources like oil, taking a considerable



chunk out of many African Countries' trade profits, but endangers the lives of seafarers trying to make a living.

On the opposite coast of Africa is an additional dangerous region when it comes to piracy. Internationally, the country of Somalia is known for its piracy problems. In the 2000s and early 2010s, the upper east coast of Africa and the nearby Gulf of Aden were the epicenter of pirate activity. Despite increased devotion to solving the issue, it is still a major problem in the trade world. The most recent incident as of writing this guide (August 2024) was in mid-April when a Bangladeshi vessel; the MV Abdullah was captured and ransomed back for a payment of an equivalent of 5 million U.S dollars.

Despite African piracy being among the most well-known instances of trade disruptions, many other areas are affected by the issue. Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand, among others, are forced to pay higher insurance premiums on their products due to pirates in the Strait of Malacca. Despite being less prevalent than in other parts of the world, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico are known hotspots for piracy disrupting trade between North and South America.



Piracy is an issue among the many in topic B, should you choose to pursue it, that has a clear, defined, and one-sided enemy. The nuance, compared to a country vs country matter, will be the innovation that will need to be brought to this long-standing issue.

There are several other modern issues facing our trade routes, each deserving of their in-depth breakdown. It is encouraged that if you and your government find these issues particularly vital in securing your trade, then you should do what research is necessary to make them known.

Strait of Hormuz- Joining the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, the Strait of Hormuz sees around 20% of the world's petroleum pass through its waters. Unfortunately, the area surrounding the strait is highly volatile. Countries in the region as well as the United States have seen rising tensions with the country of Iran. Military actions, tanker seizures, and threats to close the strait have raised concerns about the route's security.

Turkish Strait- The Turkish Strait can be broken down into the Bosporus and Dardanelles Strait, allowing ships in the Mediterranean to move to the Black Sea. Countries such as Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, and Turkiye rely on their trade. In recent years, the Russia-Ukraine conflict has threatened the Strait, and military escalation in the region could threaten the flow of critical commodities.

Strait of Gibraltar- This crucial maritime choke point connects the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. Serving as one of the most vital trade routes between Europe and the Americas, it is an important part of most European markets. Currently, the area is covered in instances of geopolitical tensions. The United Kingdom and Spain have current arguments over

the sovereignty of Gibraltar. The proximity to countries like Morocco brings migrant smuggling networks, and terrorist groups in the Sahel region threaten the strait's security.

The collapse of trade in any country can and will have a direct impact on its citizens. People will go without power, food, and water. This topic, should you choose to pursue it, will be a matter of keeping these trade routes safe. Keep in mind that the issues presented do not make up all threats to trade routes around the world. Instead, solutions should be geared toward making sure these conflicts don't harm global trade.



Questions to Consider

1. What choke points does your country rely most on for trade?
2. Does a conflict your country is in affect trade?

3. If a chokepoint were to become non-viable, how would it change your country's standard of living?
4. Is your country willing to compromise on a dispute over territory or control that it is involved in?
5. What has your country done in the past to maintain fair access to maritime trade routes?

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Positions:

1. The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria



2. The Commonwealth of Australia



3. The People's Republic of Bangladesh



4. Federal Republic of Brazil



5. The Dominion of Canada



6. The People's Republic of China



7. Republic of Cuba

8. Arab Republic of Egypt



9. French Republic

10. Republic of Georgia



11. Hellenic Republic (Greece)



12. Republic of Iceland



13. Republic of India



14. Republic of Indonesia



15. Islamic Republic of Iran



16. Republic of Iraq

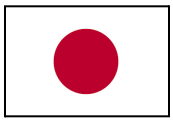


17. The State of Israel

18. Italian Republic

19. Jamaica





20. Japan

21. The State of Kuwait

22. United Mexican States (Mexico)



23. Kingdom of Morocco

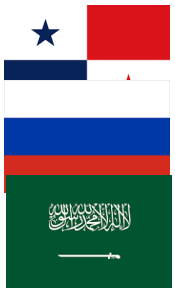
24. Federal Republic of Nigeria

25. Kingdom of Norway



26. Republic of Panama

27. Russian Federation



28. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

29. Republic of Singapore



30. Federal Republic of Somalia



31. Republic of South Africa



32. Republic of Korea



33. Kingdom of Spain



34. Republic of Türkiye (Turkey)



35. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

36. United States of America



37. United Arab Emirates



38. Ukraine



39. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (Venezuela)



40. Republic of Yemen

