



# Time Capsule

## *Background Guide*

### EagleMUNC

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[www.EagleMUNC.org](http://www.EagleMUNC.org)

**EAGLEMUNC**

## Letter from the Chair

Hello Delegates,

Welcome to EagleMUNC VII! My name is Matthew Spana, and I am a Junior at Boston College majoring in Computer Science. While this is my second year as a member of EagleMUNC, I have been involved in Model UN since early High School and believe it offers the most fun and engaging academic activities available to a student. I have always enjoyed the unique experiences and stories only found at Model UN conferences, and I hope you will all leave this committee with one to share.

Our committee offers you delegates the unparalleled ability to experience each committee at EagleMUNC this year, and to weave their stories into the larger narrative you collectively drive. Being a futuristic conference inherently tied with history gives us the best of both worlds: the freedom to construct an original timeline and the backing of real-world events to ensure the committee is relevant and grounded. I am excited to join you all in making this committee a memorable one. Feel free to reach out at any time with questions, and I will see you this Spring.

Good luck!

Matt Spana


## **Introduction**

In 2090, the United Nations Security Council has approved a groundbreaking project in investigative journalism. An elite team of journalists from a broad range of media companies has been formed by the United Nations to be the first to use cutting edge technology to travel through time and observe moments in the past that have impacted our future.

## **The State of the World**


Life on Earth is in a fragile state—the environment is crumbling, human rights abuses are rampant, and the world is edging towards irreparable disaster. Recently, the last rhinoceros on Earth died, sending the species into extinction. Rainforests across South and Central America have dwindled to near total destruction. Across the world, natural disasters wreak havoc due to increasingly severe weather from climate change as well as a general decline in the infrastructure that ensures communities are protected from disaster. In the Mediterranean, a massive earthquake devastated the region, completely destroying the Italian city of Genoa. Human rights and freedom of the press are on serious decline in countries like Colombia, which is being torn apart by a vicious civil war, Italy, and Russia. In the United States, political instability and partisan fighting reached a fever-pitch with the assassination of a Tennessee congressman named Jack Bellamy. All over the world, communities are falling apart and civilizations are plunging into war.

**The UN Special Press Committee**



These reporters make up the United Nations Special Press Committee and will act with journalistic integrity and investigate the events of the past as they would if they were occurring in the present. They will then work together to release a series of joint press statements back to the UN Security Council and the general public of their own time period and opinion pieces exposing the individuals, interest groups and events of the past that altered the world in ways that resulted in the current state of affairs, whether positively or negatively. The goal of these pieces will be to successfully argue for intervention (or lack thereof) on the part of the United Nations Security Council to take measures to alter events in the past in order to protect their future. Sovereign governments of various nations, private companies, and NGOs can also contribute to the restitution of the past by contributing money to fix past economies, food to prevent past famine, or covert military to win past battles, measures that can be suggested and argued for by the Special Press Committee. Delegates will determine the degree of change that can legally be suggested by the journalists and enacted by the outside bodies.

The journalists' investigations will center around the impact of natural disasters and efforts to prevent and prepare for them, environmental crises stemming from climate change, human rights around the world, and key moments of betrayal throughout history. They will visit assigned committees, councils, and cabinets as they meet to discuss the important issues of their time period and determine which key events or committees had the largest impact on the future with respect to disaster intervention, environmental protection, human rights, and historical betrayals. Since the time travelling technology that makes these journeys back through time possible requires a massive amount of energy and takes many weeks to reset after being used, the UN has only allowed the Special Press Committee to use this technology exactly as many times as the number of committees




they are tasked with visiting. This means that the groups of delegates viewing any particular committee will be the only delegates to visit that committee, and they will only visit it once. They will need to gather all the necessary information in one visit, and if changes are suggested for the committee they visited, the Time Capsule Committee will receive updates on the changes in the Time Capsule Committee itself. Time is of the essence in this committee, for with each passing moment the likelihoods of environmental disaster, human rights abuse, and nuclear war loom closer. A threat level indicator will be present in committee at all times as a visual representation for the UNSC to communicate the impact of the Press Committee's actions on the present, with higher numbers meaning increasing disaster. If a threat level of ten is reached, the Press Committee's mission has failed, and the world is beyond saving.

Individual reporters may also choose to release cartoons depicting political situations or debates in the committees they visit in the form of an image to make a larger statement about the debate. They may choose to individually, or as an individual news agency, release opinion pieces that explore a debate or a committee from a particular, biased point of view, or feature articles focusing in on a very specific aspect of debate. These will be released to the public in order to stress a particular idea that may not have been communicated in the press release. These individual pieces must adhere to the standards of journalistic integrity.

Despite their different backgrounds, views and agendas, this team of journalists must bridge the divide between them and work together to reveal all of history's distinct perspectives to provide the necessary truth for the sake of the future.

## **Rules**



Due to the sensitive nature of the investigative work required, and the desire to preserve the overall course of history by respecting the past, it is imperative that the journalists on this distinguished team keep their identities a secret. When arriving in foreign time periods and other committees, delegates should appear to be nothing more than outside observers living in the same time period as the delegates of the committee they are visiting. If they conduct interviews or ask questions of the host delegates, journalists should take care not to reveal any knowledge whatsoever of events that take place after the time period of the committee they are in. A journalist who reveals his or her cover to other delegations outside the Time Capsule Committee could potentially damage the timeline by introducing situations to the past which have unforeseen, negative effects on the present and future.

A reporter for the Special Press Committee is absolutely not allowed to alter or attempt to alter events in the past themselves. The only intervention in the past will be done by the United Nations Security Council *upon request* of the Special Press Committee through their press releases, if the Security Council chooses to take up these requests. Any reporter caught attempting to alter events themselves will be reported to the Security Council, the authorities of his or her own country, and the Society of Professional Journalism's board of Ethics.

The Special Press Committee itself will have to set guidelines on a more specific code of conduct, such as how much change they can suggest to the Security Council in their press statements. They will have to decide, for example, if it is ethical to request the Security Council go back in time and assassinate an historical figure for some effect on the future, or if intervention should be limited to exclude all acts of violence. Likewise, it will be important for them to consider if their statements to the Security Council can or should promote the success or decline of existing


countries, or even companies. Is it ethical to write a statement asking the Security Council send people back in time and hinder the development of a nation that exists in real time, with people inhabiting it?

Conduct with the delegates they are visiting will also be important to consider. The Special Press Committee will have to decide how to address the natives of the time periods they visit, how many and what type of questions they are allowed to ask in an interview, and how to respond to questions about their own identities.

### **Standards of Journalistic Integrity**

The Society of Professional Journalism emphasizes accuracy, source identification, and ethics in their basic rules of Journalistic integrity. As a journalist, you will have to adhere to certain standards to maintain the trustworthiness of your news agency, your profession, and the Special Press Committee at large. Here are the four main points of journalistic integrity as outlined by the SPJ:


1. Seek Truth and Report It
  - a. Be as accurate as possible
  - b. Provide context
  - c. Represent all sides of an issue
  - d. Identify your sources unless it carries the risk of putting them in serious danger
  - e. Attribute all quotes, outside information, and sources
2. Minimize Harm

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- a. Be sensitive when investigating. Recognize the potential harm you may cause to the sources or subjects involved.
  - b. Be compassionate to people who may be affected by the story, especially children or the victims of crimes.
  - c. Assume innocence until proven guilty in the case of persons accused of a crime
3. Act Independently
    - a. Avoid conflicts of interest
    - b. Refuse gifts, favors, or payments from sources
    - c. Do not engage in collaboration with special interest groups such as private corporations
  4. Be Accountable and Transparent
    - a. Acknowledge mistakes
    - b. Explain ethical decisions
    - c. Expose unethical journalism

### **Topic 1: Disaster Intervention**


Whether man-made or the result of nature, disasters have always loomed over humanity, causing a constant need to prepare for and respond to them. Famine, flood, disease, chemical toxins, and warfare still plague the future as they plagued the past that delegates will observe. Delegates will visit the UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Peace Conference, and the Government of Flint, Michigan to gather information on the crucial issues that threatened the survival of millions in throughout history.






The UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction was mandated by the General Assembly in 1999, and focuses on reducing the likelihood and impact of various disasters. Delegates visiting this committee are encouraged to report on the debate over technological and manmade hazards, the disproportionate effect of disasters on women, and the efforts to educate and inform citizens of the world about disaster prevention. Their goal will be to report on if this committee properly fostered the prevention of disasters worldwide and equally, and determine to what extent the actions of these delegates influenced the journalists' present. Since the reporters are coming from a world heavily and detrimentally impacted by frequent disasters, they will have foresight knowledge on how effective the education of the public on disaster risk reduction was in actually reducing disaster risk.

The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 followed World War I, and aimed to facilitate rebuilding the world, as well as preventing another conflict of this scale. In the world of the reporters, tensions among nations are high and various media outlets and political experts are expressing concern over the possibility of a third world war. The UN and the various governments who have participated in the journalism project have expressed strong interest in revisiting the Paris Peace Conference, since it was ultimately ineffective at preventing World War II, to hopefully learn how to improve peace efforts for their own time period. Central themes of this committee that reporters will be investigating include reparations demanded from participating nations, rebuilding in the wake of the war, handling conflicts elsewhere in Europe such as the Russian Revolution, redrawing borders and territories, and, perhaps most importantly, preventing future global warfare and therefore disaster. Of special interest to reporters visiting this committee will be the actions of delegates like Woodrow Wilson, George Clemenceau, Vittorio Orlando



Nicholas Pasic, Eleftherios Venizelos, Ion I.C. Bratiano, and David Lloyd George as they were the leaders of various nations present at the Paris Peace Conference. Interviews with these delegates or reports on their specific actions would have implications on the roles of individual nation states in preventing world war.

Flint, Michigan became the subject of national debate and outrage between 2014 and 2015 after it was revealed that there was serious contamination present in the city's water supply. A city that had long been troubled by violence and poverty, Flint switched its water source to the Flint River in 2014, and residents began to notice signs of poor quality in their drinking water. It was found to contain high levels of lead, a substance which accumulates in the human body with toxic effects. The availability of fresh drinking water has rapidly decreased in the future as the world becomes more polluted, and the lead contamination in Flint is considered to be an event that marked the overall decline in the world's drinking water and in the way it is distributed among members of society. In the time period the journalists come from, water sources in both developing and developed nations have been found to contain dangerous levels of substances like lead, cadmium, pesticide runoff, and radioactive waste. Delegates are encouraged to investigate the Flint committee as a man-made disaster, uncovering the social roots of Flint's water problem, and the actions or lack thereof taken by the city's government to prevent this crisis, and to handle it once it occurred. The United Nations' hope is that the journalists can use the events they witness in committee to effectively convince the governments of modern nations to intervene and solve this crisis retroactively to prevent the downward spiral in Earth's drinking water. The Flint committee will center around the possibility of protests regarding the water quality, the vulnerability of the city's backup water supply, and the impact of lead poisoning on education. Note that the delegates




of the Flint Committee are operating in the specific time frame beginning on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015 and are *not* aware of events regarding this issue following that date. Delegates of the Time Capsule Committee should take special care not to reveal their identities during investigation by only discussing events prior to or on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

### **Topic 2: Environmental Protection**

The world the journalists come from looks very different than it did in 2019. Temperatures are skyrocketing, and air quality is plummeting. Dozens of major keystone species are going extinct every year. The UN has tasked the journalists with visiting three past committees with huge impacts on the environment to determine the major causes of their current climate and prevent global ecological collapse.

The World Food Program was founded in 1961 to provide food to developing nations through the UN. They provide accessible food to millions of schoolchildren worldwide to curb malnutrition and promote sustainable agriculture in varied and changing climates. In 2015, the United Nations Development Program passed the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda aiming to eradicate world hunger by 2030, and the WFP uses this agenda to drive many of their strategies for promoting sustainability. The goals of the UNDP and the WFP, however, were far from met by 2030 and in fact, the situation only worsened. Mass starvation and strained resources have become more pressing issues in the future, worsened by extreme weather and temperatures brought on by climate change, and the journalists are encouraged to determine the ways in which these




problems could have been mediated or resolved in the past, saving millions of lives. The focus of this committee will be sustainable development in the face of environmental changes that affect agriculture. Journalists should also investigate the social implications of environmental effects on food distribution, especially the implications for farmers and the poor with already limited access to food.

The African Union is an intergovernmental organization of African nations founded in 2001 with the aim of coming together to create a better Africa. Developing nations in Africa have long been severely impacted by disasters such as war, oppression from outside nation states, famine, and disease epidemics. It is also a continent with a rich natural beauty and cultural history- one that is under threat from poaching and environmental change. In the future, African nations have been especially hard hit by species extinction and loss of biodiversity due to the high levels of poaching for exotic game. The African Union committee will be discussing efforts to ensure peace and security to the continent, promote gender equality and advance women's rights, improve infrastructure and energy, and preserve the continent's natural beauty. There is pressure from the UN to investigate the specific causes and effects of poaching, desertification, and drought in Africa and how environmental stress on this biodiverse continent affects the ecological stability of the rest of the world. Of equal significance is ensuring that the energy development promoted to help African nations thrive is clean energy that will not increase carbon emissions and harm the future environment.

Though it was far in the past, the UN has interest in the Qing Dynasty and sent press to report on the ripple effects of the massive cultural and political advancements that took place during this era.

The Qing Dynasty was China's last imperial dynasty, reigning from 1644 to 1911. Rulers of this




dynasty emphasized the “natural laws of harmony” and a strong sense of tradition, but they came to face threats from other nations that forced them to modernize. The UN journalists will be viewing the Qing in the late 1800s, the middle of the Industrial Revolution, when conflicts with Japan and Great Britain, and internal rebellion push for modernization in this traditional nation. Because China becomes one of the most industrially influential countries of the modern age- and also one of the biggest contributors to pollution -the UN has tasked the journalists with exposing how the actions of such a powerful dynasty embedded in the roots of China’s history affect its future environmental impact on the world.

### **Topic 3: Reinforcing Rights**

Many groups have experienced oppression and injustice throughout history. The fight for equality is continuous, and in the current age, it is far from over. The world the journalists come from is plagued by war, disaster, environmental collapse, and tyrannical dictatorships, which have all severely diminished human rights across the world. Civil rights, women’s rights, and LGBTQ+ rights are under fire, and the UN has assigned the journalists to investigate committees emphasizing these aspects to ensure that equality is preserved in the future.

Now more than ever, women’s rights matter and need to be continuously emphasized despite progress that has been made in the past decades. The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), formed in 1946, will focus on equal political representation and pay between the genders, protection systems for vulnerable women, and education for women as a means of social empowerment. The UN journalists will be viewing the 63rd annual session of the CSW in March of 2019, when the participating nations and several UN affiliates and NGOs will gather in New York City to discuss the agenda for gender equality.



The Human Rights Campaign, formed in 1980, aims to protect the rights of all LGBTQ+ individuals and this committee will focus on the importance of lobbying in support of these rights even when doing so creates a challenge and could lead to controversy. The UN has sent in press to this committee's meeting in 2019 to observe the HRC deliberate on the 2020 election, LGBTQ+ discrimination in schools, transphobic violence, and protecting vulnerable LGBTQ+ youth. With the United States 2020 presidential election approaching these delegates after a contentious election in 2016 that resulted in an administration that ultimately scaled back some LGBTQ+ rights, the actions of this committee are especially important to the future of the LGBTQ+ community.

The NAACP Committee, founded in 1909, aims to reinforce civil rights, promote racial equality and achieve legal justice. The UN has focused the press on the Board of Director meetings of 2019 as they discuss topics such as NFL protests, criminal justice inequities, education gaps, voter discrimination, and the debate over the NAACP Image Awards. At a time of racial tension and increased division, it is especially important to focus on the implications of political and business policies and their effects on people of color.

The cabinet of Cuba during the 1990s, the special period, is struggling with a crippled economy. After relying on its communist ally, the USSR, for years, Cuba has rejected the help it received and trade relationship it had with the USSR in favor of strengthening Cuba's economy internally. This caused a period of severe economic recession and wage cuts that led to famine and an overall increase in mortality for the Cuban people. This pattern is not specific to Cuba. The practice of furthering the political or economic goals of the country at the expense of the people has continued throughout history, and modern times are no exception. The UN has sent journalists into this


committee to investigate it in the broader context of political suppression of human rights for economic gain.

#### **Topic 4: Historical Betrayals**

When all perspectives are not treated equally, conflict may arise and loyalties may be tested ultimately resulting in betrayal. In modern times, a succession of dictators threatens the political stability of nations across the world, and politicians are constantly being assassinated, leaving room for corrupt or tyrannical rulers to take over and further the political turmoil. The UN has focused on key periods of intense political betrayal in history to attempt to reverse the pattern of backstabbing and resentment that festers in their world.

In 1819, King Kamehameha I of Hawai'i has just died after becoming the first king to unify all the Hawaiian islands, leaving behind his son Liholiho and his favorite wife Ka'ahumanu to rule the islands together. With this political turnover, the new rulers of Hawai'i have to deal with old systems of tradition, new trade deals, Western influence, and maintaining peace as various interests vie for a spot in the power vacuum that Kamehameha left behind. Their ability or inability to work together will have serious effects on the survival of their culture in the face of Western intrusion, and will leave behind a legacy of either cooperativity or betrayal.

Also of interest to the UN in the area of betrayals is the ancient Roman Senate, featuring the feuds of Cicero and Catiline, an impending famine, and the rise of Julius Caesar. Since the Roman Republic and later the Roman Empire become models for government all over the world even through the modern age, the actions of the delegates in the Roman Senate committee will have an impact for generations to come. The journalists have been assigned to investigate whether the political betrayals between powerful senators and the rise of dictators like Caesar contributed to



totalitarianism and oppressive regimes in the modern world, and if this outweighed the influence the Roman Republic had on developing the modern Western concept of democracy. The Roman Senate around 64 BC hovers on the edge of disaster in the form of political instability. Roman senators Catiline, an advocate for the Roman working class, recently lost the powerful seat of consul to his chief enemy Cicero, sending the two into a political rivalry as they vied for power in the Senate. Julius Caesar schemes to form an empire as he rises to prominence with the Triumvirate- a powerful alliance between himself, Crassus, and Pompey Magnus. Ultimately if the Roman senators in this committee choose to follow a democratic route, the effect on regimes throughout history will be the formation of largely democratic governments, but if the senators choose to embrace political betrayal and tyranny, then the future leaders of the world may follow suit.

The Safavid Empire was known as an empire of military power due to their use of gunpowder. However, the Empire faces challenges and conflict between the Turks and the Tajiks that may escalate into personal conflict between players as well. The empire ultimately collapsed with the fall of Isfahan in 1722. Clashes in religion and land divided the empire. The Qizilbash force had formerly protected the empire militarily. However, many fights took place between the Qizilbash factions and tension arose. Cultural clashes also took place between the Ottoman and Safavid empire with an emphasis on religion and tension between the Shiites and Sunnis.

Chilean President Salvador Allende alienated many foreign countries, including the United States, under his rule but did so in order to fortify Chile's economy, especially through taking over the copper industry. His Cabinet thus focuses on failed reform programs, economic woes, instability, and nationalization of businesses among others. While President Allende was democratically



elected by the people he served, there were many factions at various levels of society including government, the church, and the military that actively worked to subvert his rule and the principles of democracy in Chile. It will be important for press representatives to investigate the ability to compromise in this committee for the sake of democracy, even while there are betrayals lurking in the halls of the administration.



## Questions to Consider:

### Topic 1-Disaster Intervention:

1. Are the actions of the committees focused around preventing future disasters strong enough to effectively prevent disaster?
2. How do the attendees of the different committees create a legacy of either world war or world peace?
3. Which committee(s) and specific actions have the most direct impact on disasters that occur in the future?
4. How could the actions of a committee be altered to successfully prevent disaster in the future?

### Topic 2- Environmental Protection:

1. What major factors are to blame for climate change and environmental degradation?
2. What do the delegates of the various committees do or not do to preserve the environment for future generations?
3. How can the information be presented effectively to get modern governments and UN bodies to contribute resources to fix past environmental decisions?

### Topic 3- Reinforcing Rights:

1. What specific groups are suffering under the oppression of their rights, and at whose hands?
2. Are the actions of committees like the CSW, HRC, and NAACP in the past strong enough to make a positive impact on women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people of color in the future?
3. What changes should be made to the decisions of these committees to ensure equal rights for everyone in the future, and how should they be made?

#### Topic 4- Historic Betrayals:

1. How do the specific betrayals of the various committees represent a broader context of political instability and violence?
2. How do any of the committees affect the future?
3. How can the information be presented to official bodies convincingly enough to prompt concern over the issue and an effective response?

#### Bloc Positions:

**Linear:** Delegates representing linear views will advocate for the least amount of change to the past as possible. For them, the past is a blueprint for the future. They believe in focusing more resources and efforts towards progress in the future and working to solve the problems of their society in the present instead of investigating the past. Linear delegations will take a hard-line stance to the rule of not interfering in other committees, and may even object to publishing opinion pieces that will be released to outside committees. Their investigative reporting will tend to focus more on how we can learn from the past to move forward instead of casting blame; they are *effect* focused, rather than *cause* focused. The topic of particular interest to the linear group is Disaster Intervention, because it is the most useful in constructing further plans to prevent future disasters.

**Interventionist:** Delegates representing interventionist views will advocate for a higher amount of change to the past. For interventionist delegates, the past is a house that needs to be rebuilt. Outright interference is expressly prohibited, but they will be more apt to publish anonymous opinion pieces in the various committees to try and *indirectly* influence the past, and less likely to focus on plans or directives for the future as it stands now. Interventionist investigative reporting and interviews will tend to focus on specific interest groups, individuals, and events that altered

the course of history; they are *cause* focused. Topics of particular interest to interventionist delegations are Environmental Protection and Reinforcing Rights, because mistakes made with regards to these topics had the most impact on disasters and conflicts in the future.

**Corporate:** some delegates are rumored to secretly represent corporate interest groups. They will also be designated as either conservative or liberal, but in addition they will be advocating for the better place of a specific companies in the past. Corporate delegates representing a corporation that did some damage to the past tend to advocate for lower interference and lower investigation into the areas they feel they could be held accountable for. Corporate delegates representing a corporation that did some benefit to the past or who held a strong influence may advocate higher interference (as permitted) and higher investigation into the areas they feel they impacted. Delegates who are corporate representatives are acting in violation of the rules of the UN Special Press Committee, and will thus keep their affiliation a secret.



