

São Paulo Forum



Background Guide

Letter from the Secretary-General and Director General

Hello delegates, advisors, parents, and teachers,

On behalf of us, your Secretary-General Isabella Balbi Masso and Director-General Alexandria Cerini, and all of our Secretariat, we would like to welcome you all to the 37th iteration of the Florida International Model United Nations Conference! This upcoming FIMUN will continue to be held at Florida International University's beautiful Modesto A. Maidique Campus from March 14th to 16th, 2025.

This year we have selected the theme of "Diplomacy in a Divided World," where delegates will be prompted to show diplomacy during challenging and engaging scenarios in a wide variety of General Assembly, Specialized, and Crisis Committees. Both of us originate from opposite sides of the ocean and have seen the division of the world, especially in our modern day. We are strong believers that every person, even young students, have the ability to show diplomacy and change the world. Being able to act with diplomacy in cases of adversity, disadvantage, and injustice is a skill that every person should learn and harness to make the world a better place, not just for themselves but for everyone.

We are working hard to provide every delegate with a committee that they will love, and an unforgettable experience where they will make new friends, learn new skills, and discover the amazing world of Model UN! This year we will be hosting 15 committees each one focusing on a different current, historical, or fantasy issue, with an amazing staff who are prepared to make this FIMUN the best one yet!

We are incredibly honored and excited to welcome you all to our amazing campus and conference this March, and cannot wait to see each and every one of you succeed!

See you soon,

Isabella Balbi Masso and Alexandria Cerini
ibalb007@fiu.edu and aceri008@fiu.edu
Secretary-General and Director-General
Florida International Model United Nations 37

Letter from the Under-Secretary General

Dear Delegates,

My name is Carlos Ricaurte, and I have the privilege of being your Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Specialized Committees on this iteration of FIU Model UN's High School Conference, FIMUN 37. I am a Senior currently double majoring in Political Science and International Relations, with a certificate in Latin American Studies. Last year I had the opportunity of being your Committee Director for FIMUN 36's UNSC Committee focused on the 1961 Congo Crisis, through which I learned the deep value and importance that FIMUN represents for you all and our team here at FIU.

I was born and raised in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, and I came here to the United States as an International Student in Spring 2022. Ever since I joined the FIU Model UN Team the year after that, in Spring 2023, I haven't regretted it one bit, knowing the immense value it has brought to me as a speaker, researcher, and person. A value that, with the amazing and creative work brought on to you by this year's Secretariat, CDs, Staffers, and many others, I know will see itself greatly reflected onto you all. Within our SPEC Committees, we once again ascertain FIMUN's commitment to having fun and learning about critical, real-world issues through constructive and entertaining debate. Everything from discussing matters of technology and development within our Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and UN Office of Legal Affairs (UNOLA) to a stroll into the world of competitive Football with FIFA, this year's committees have it all. We take a deep dive into the historical struggles of Latin Americans through the Sao Paulo Forum, the similar struggles of native fauna within the Everglades via our Council of Critters, and how we report on all these things happening, through our intrepid UN Correspondents Association, or Press Corps.

As we move ever closer toward FIMUN 37, I am excited to see your creativity, leadership, and debate released onto these committees. We as the FIMUN Secretariat remain committed to this, ensuring you get to enjoy yourselves within a framework of mutual respect, diplomacy, and cultural awareness. In the end, you are representing real people with real, systemic struggles after all. Remember that through any challenges you might face, Secretariat and your CDs are here to help. Should you have any questions, doubts, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your Committee Directors, Chairs, or me, your USG.
¡Buena suerte!

Carlos Ricaurte
crica017@fiu.edu
Under-Secretary-General for Specialized Committees
Florida International Model United Nations 37

Letter from the Director

Hello everyone,

Welcome to the Sao Paulo Forum committee at FIMUN 37! My name is Angie Zuleta and I will be your Director for this weekend. I am a sophomore at FIU pursuing a degree in Political Science, International Relations, and Philosophy on the pre-law track with a focus on Central America.

I've been involved in Model UN since the 8th grade, and I was a delegate at FIMUN 32 and 35. I'm now happy to participate as a Director in the legacy this conference makes evident each year. I've been an active member of the FIU Model UN Team since my first day of class and after a year of traveling and writing way more directives than one should be forced to create in a lifetime, I am proud to serve as a Head Delegate for the team this year.

The Sao Paulo Forum is the culmination of left-wing fears in the face of a world (or in this case, a wall) falling to capitalism and facing the prospect of a Western-controlled world. Part GA and part crisis, I want you all to manage the forum's goals as you develop a plan to progress your objectives through crisis notes. Will you wreak havoc or create an entirely new world system with your notes and clauses? **My advice: BE CREATIVE!** This committee will test delegates' abilities to problem solve, think on their feet, and debate the international implications of government ethics and revolutionary ideals.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or Marek for help. We were once high school delegates too and know just how complex research and committees can get. Happy researching, and good luck this weekend. Paws up!

Kind regards,

Angie Zuleta
azule004@fiu.edu
São Paulo Forum Director
Florida International Model United Nations 37

Letter from the Director

Hello delegates,

I am pleased to be your director and welcome you to the Sao Paulo Forum Committee.

My name is Marek Kong. I am the program coordinator for the FIU Model UN program. I graduated from FIU with a bachelor's in International Relations in 2023. I have been competing in MUN for 6 years and I have been Program Director for another year on top of that. My time in MUN was never defined by one type of committee or another. I have competed in all types of GAs, crisis committees, and of course my favorite: specs. Specialized committees provide unique insights into the world of politics, history, and society. Besides MUN, I love to learn new languages and read. I am currently focusing on improving my Chinese but I also speak Spanish and Portuguese.

As a South Florida native, the Sao Paulo Forum committee is a topic that touches close to home. There is no greater blend of Latin American and Caribbean cultures then right here in South Florida. I hope this topic will give you greater insight into the LATAM+Carb region by doing something unique, which is representing political parties rather than a country or a person. These political parties are loosely united by their more progressive stance. Do not let this coalition fool you, there is plenty of struggle and conflict amongst the political parties.

The topic of coups is a pressing issue and one which has plagued the region for decades if not centuries. There has been a coup in every country in the region. There a variety of types of coups but whether it is a military take over or a political power grab, there is always a struggle between opposing forces to direct the future of a country. This committee will task you with figuring out how to deal with coups both as parties that would want to coup their own governments and as parties that have been victims of coups.

I will end my introduction with a piece of advice in the form of a quote that I always tell my delegates: "Who are your friends? Who are your enemies? This is a question of first importance to the revolution!"

With comradely love,

Marek Kong
mkong@fiu.edu
São Paulo Forum Director
Florida International Model United Nations 37

Letter from the Chair

Hello everyone!

I am Natalie Alguera, your chair for the Sao Paulo Forum at FIMUN 37! I am a first-year student double majoring in Business Administration and Management and Public Relations, Advertisement, and Applied Communications on a Pre-Law track here at FIU.

I've been doing Model UN since the end of my junior year. I, too, have participated in previous FIMUNs before, being in your exact spot, participating in a specialized committee, one year ago today! This is my first year on the FIU Model UN team, but I have already traveled and familiarized myself with the college circuit! I look forward to the great years ahead being on this fantastic team!

When addressing the topic of coup susceptibility in the Sao Paulo Forum, remember to recognize the multiple factors of influence. You can start from there, and engage in resolutions that address such factors. Delegates should consider whether there is a moral right to revolution in cases where governments are corrupt or oppressive. It's crucial to evaluate the context. I value creativity and cooperation: party values should be integrated and common ground should be found in clever manners. Be adaptable, influential, and think of witty ideas to get your plans across.

If you have any questions, please reach out to me. Remember to be confident in yourself and cooperate with others, have fun! Look forward to seeing your work and research come to life. Good luck and paws up!

Kind regards,

Natalie Alguera
nalgu002@fiu.edu
São Paulo Forum Chair
Florida International Model United Nations 37

Sensitivity Statement

FIMUN 36 has a zero tolerance policy on racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia. If delegates are found to be engaging in any such actions or rhetoric are open to disqualification from awards.

We ask all delegates to be conscious of the histories and context of their countries or characters for their committees. Many of our committees focus on the stories and topics relating to historically oppressed and marginalized communities and regions. While these committees are simulations, the histories behind them are real, and disrespect towards the histories and existences of people represented in our committees will not be tolerated.

On our website, we have an anonymous report form if delegates encounter such actions. While we hope to avoid the need for such, this form will be checked regularly by our Secretariat to ensure that all delegates at FIMUN 37 can enjoy their weekend comfortably.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that our university is located on the ancestral homelands of sovereign Native nations, including the Tequesta, the Calusa, and today, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. We pay our respects to the traditional custodians, the Elders past and present, by fully recognizing Indigenous sovereignty as well as the historical and contemporary relationship between Indigenous peoples and their traditional homelands. It is within our responsibility as an academic institution to uphold knowledge about the history of our institution with the original stewards of this land that we live, learn, and work on. We encourage our delegates to read and learn about ways to support our local Indigenous communities in their efforts to preserve Seminole and Miccosukee land and water rights, cultural practices, and the conservation of the environment.

Consistent with our University's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, FIU is working towards creating an academic environment that is inclusive of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff who have often been rendered invisible due to structural discriminatory practices. At FIU, we hold ourselves accountable to serving local, regional and worldwide Indigenous communities through academic policy-oriented research, education, partnerships, community service, as well as enrollment initiatives to overcome the effects of Indigenous exclusion and erasure in our own academic institution. It is our hope that acknowledging the land helps us to better understand that harm has been done and address the legacies of violence in our communities in order to create a pathway to true healing

Rules of Procedure

Motions

Motion to Open/Resume Debate

Opens the floor for debate. Delegates may now begin to provide further motions.

Motion to Open Speakers List

Opens the Speakers List, wherein delegates can deliver speeches without a set topic.

Motion for a Moderated Caucus

Opens a set speakers list for debate on a specified topic. Total time and speaking time must be specified within the motion.

Motion for an Unmoderated Caucus

Opens time for unregulated working time for delegates to work within their blocs on working papers/draft resolutions/directives.

Motion for a Round Robin

Opens a Round Robin, where every delegate in the room delivers a speech for a set time without a designated topic. Will start from the delegate that motioned and will either go clockwise or counterclockwise at delegate's discretion.

Motion for a Gentlemen's Unmoderated/Consultation of the Whole

Similar rules as to a normal Unmoderated Caucus, however all delegates must remain in their seats.

Motion to Introduce Working Papers/Draft Resolutions/Directives

Opens the floor to begin formal procedure on papers. Order of address if not specified will default to order in which each paper was introduced.

Authors Panel

Generally motioned for alongside the introduction of Working Papers/Draft Resolutions. Involves a Reading Period for Delegates to read papers, an Introduction where a panel of Delegates present the paper, and a Question and Answer portion, where sponsors of the paper are asked questions by fellow delegates about the paper.

Motions for For and Against Speeches

Opens a short speakers list where (generally speaking) 2 delegates are called to speak for and against a given working paper/draft resolution/directive.

Motions to Enter Voting Procedure and Voting Methods

Goes alongside a motion to end debate when in General Assembly and certain Specialized Agencies. Delegates will vote on papers on the floor. If no voting method is specified, committee will default to placard vote.

Placard vote operates the same way as votes for procedural matters. Delegates raise their placards to vote For, Against, or to Abstain if they stated they were Present.

Roll Call vote will have the chair call Roll Call once more, and when delegates are called they will state whether they vote For, Against, or if they Abstain.

Votes by Acclimation involves calling for general consensus, where the paper will pass unless anyone votes Against. Then placard vote is in order.

Points

Point of Inquiry

General question regarding committee or the conference

Point of Order

Question or correction regarding parliamentary procedures

Point of Personal Privilege

Personal request unrelated to committee. (e.g temperature in the room or seating issue)

What is a Crisis Committee?

Crisis committees are dynamic committees that differ substantially from your typical General Assembly. You might be asking yourself, what exactly is this difference? The difference is that, unlike in General Assemblies, where everything is taking place in one setting (your committee room), there are “two rooms” in a crisis committee. One room, which is your committee room, is where you will be debating on recurring issues plaguing the committee and its “setting.” The other room consists of your crisis director and their staffers, where they are responding to the committee’s crisis notes and engendering crisis updates, which can either be delegate or staff driven. Delegates are welcome to prepare not only a public policy but also a composition of their own private interests to pursue through personal notes to the crisis staffers.

How do I begin to prepare for a crisis committee?

There are many ways you, the delegate, can prepare for a crisis committee. However, for the purpose of this guide, a standard that is generally widely used by delegates will be written here for your convenience. To start, reading your committee’s background guide written by your crisis directors will help you get a kickstart on your preparation efforts. The background guide, while it gives plenty of context to your topic, should not be the only research you bring to the conference. Rather, it should be giving you an idea as to how you would want to research for your committee. Not just for historical context, but also for your crisis arcs, speeches, and directives.

What is a Crisis Arc?

A crisis arc is the story that you are going to be writing to your crisis staff through crisis notes. Crisis arcs are the most integral aspect of your research and preparation for a crisis committee. They consist of every single idea that you plan on showcasing to your crisis staff through your crisis notes in order to influence your committee. When crafting a crisis arc, you should keep it secret from every other delegate in your committee, even if they ask! The best crisis arcs are typically the most creative and most detailed. As a result, these arcs will be the most likely to be brought to the committee’s attention by your crisis staff. Think of making a crisis arc like you’re writing a story or a movie script. This plan is top secret and will allow you to pursue personal interests and ulterior motives to impact your committee room.

What is a Crisis Note?

A crisis note is what you write to your crisis staff in order to influence action in your committee. Crisis notes should be written with some form of action. The better prepared your crisis arc is, the better your crisis notes will be in regards to the action(s) you want to take behind the scenes. Your crisis notes should be kept “secret” from other 2 delegates in your committee, unless you are collaborating with another delegate to influence action in the committee. The more detailed your crisis notes are, the more likely you are to get a crisis update from your crisis staff. Like the aforementioned crisis arc-story analogy, think of your crisis notes as the chapters to your story (crisis arc).

What is expected of the committee?

A crisis committee is very atypical in conflation with a General Assembly, but it is still a very fun experience that you will soon come to embrace! When you walk into committee, you are expected to be ready to debate on pressing issues and write crisis notes! Prior to the start of committee, the chair and crisis director will give you their specific expectations. The crisis director and their staff will walk into the committee to give the first crisis update. Afterwards, the crisis staff will return to the crisis room, and the chair will take a roll call, then will look for motions to, usually, discuss the crisis update in a moderated caucus, or your own unique motion! Once committee officially starts, you are expected to either be debating about finding a solution via a directive, or composing your top secret crisis note, which will be collected by your crisis staff.

What is a Crisis Room?

The crisis room is where your crisis staff will be for the majority of the conference. Unless it’s under a circumstance where someone from the crisis staff and or the crisis director wants/needs some clarification on a crisis note, delegates are not allowed to be in this room. In this room, the crisis staff will be responding to crisis notes. As these crisis notes are responded to, the crisis director will choose the best of the actions in the round of notes to incorporate into a crisis update

What is a Directive?

A directive is the resolution that you are deriving in response to the crisis update. Directives are basically General Assembly resolutions, except that they are much more 3 concise and to the point. In a moderated caucus, you are discussing the ideas that you have in your directive that you feel would be best to solve the problems given in the crisis update. When comprising the directive, feel free to give it a creative name! In an unmoderated caucus, you are meeting with the other delegates in your committee to merge these directives, especially if your fellow delegates had a similar idea to yours. Once these directives are merged, you would read through each and vote for them just as you would a General Assembly resolution. It is also worth noting that the best directives are usually incorporated in crisis updates by the crisis director.

Rules of Procedure

Structure

This committee is a UN Security Council equivalent intended for experienced delegates as it will contain both General Assembly and Crisis elements throughout the competitive weekend.

Delegates will begin with General Assembly on the first day of committee and will be expected to pass a resolution paper based on the committee topic. Unlike a regular GA where a resolution paper will often surpass 20 pages, the Resolution Paper for the Sao Paulo Forum will simply require a 5-page minimum to streamline the voting process. Delegates will then conduct an Author's Panel and vote on the passing of their resolution paper(s). On the second day of the committee, delegates will transition to full-crisis mode. During the crisis portion, delegates will deal with a coup in Latin America. The specifics of this crisis will be based on the clauses outlined in the Resolution Paper. Furthermore, delegates will be expected to craft a crisis arc relevant to their assigned position, committee topic, and crisis updates provided throughout the committee sessions. Delegates should be adaptive in their arcs based on the results of the General Assembly session and the directors' discretion.

Committee Expectations

Each member of this committee will represent a different political party and is expected to follow the political and historical character of the party. This committee simulates a meeting of the member parties in the Working Group. You are expected to work collaboratively to develop a resolution paper to address the issues of coups, government integrity, and political stability in the Latin America and Caribbean region. These papers are not binding documents to the member parties but instead, act as a guideline for how parties should act and how governments should respond to possible coups and chronic instability.

The Resolution Paper must address historical challenges of political stability including peaceful transition of power and constitutional protections, as well as recognize the political and ideological goals of the member parties. Delegates are encouraged to include any provisions or solutions to the Resolution Paper they believe are necessary to the success of the forum.

FIU Model UN is driven to provide inclusivity, appropriate conduct, and quality procedures at all times. This committee will emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability throughout the FIMUN competitive weekend will not be tolerated and can result in immediate disqualification.

History of the São Paulo Forum

The first Sao Paulo Forum was held in 1990 but the roots of the organization lie in the political history of the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region itself. Since the struggle for independence from Europe, the LAC region has been a major target for international actors from mercantilist trade to imperialism domination the region has struggled to express its full economic, political, and social independence from the global north. This is important to note because the Sao Paulo Forum was a product of the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union.

Since the end of World War II, the U.S. and the USSR had struggled for ideological and economic influence in the world and this disproportionately affected the LAC region. The U.S. has a long history of domination of the region, in fact, 1973 marked 150 years of the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine was a U.S. policy that outlined the US's assertion of influence over the western hemisphere. This doctrine was the basis for U.S. policy in the region which emboldened the U.S. to act without restriction and left the region crippled by foreign debt, corporate domination, and consistent and widespread coups/political instability. Some of the U.S.'s first military actions after the Civil War were battles and wars in the LAC region such as the Spanish-American war (1893) which saw the U.S. take Puerto Rico from Spain and claim it as a territory where it has remained for over a century (Bras) (1).

While the Russian Empire was a relatively backward country compared to the much more developed US and European markets, the Soviet Union quickly pushed past this and in 1960 represented 20% of the global economy. The USSR's growing political and economic prowess eventually led them to seek opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Soviets supported militant Marxist organizations where it could but it also established deep economic ties with the largest economies in the region. By 1980, the USSR was the largest buyer of grain from Argentina which was one of Argentina's largest exports besides beef and corn.

There were two major regional factors that made the USSR such an attractive trading partner. The first reason was that the region was worried about overt or intensive reliance on the US which had been the norm for decades. The second was a major debt crisis that had developed in the late 1970s/early 1980s.

1. Marisabel Bras, *In search of a national identity: Nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Puerto Rico: Articles and essays: Puerto Rico at the dawn of the modern age: Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century perspectives: Digital Collections: Library of Congress* <https://www.loc.gov/collections/puerto-rico-books-and-pamphlets/articles-and-essays/nineteenth-century-puerto-rico>

The Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s, often referred to as the "Lost Decade," was a financial crisis that affected economies across the region but in particular the largest economies including Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil due to their inability to repay large foreign debts accumulated during the 1970s. This crisis was triggered by a combination of factors, including rising global interest rates, falling commodity prices, and the over-borrowing by Latin American countries to finance development projects. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), under the leadership of the United States, played a central role in addressing the crisis. The IMF offered financial assistance to indebted countries but imposed strict austerity measures as a condition for its support. These austerity reforms, known as structural adjustment programs, required countries to implement policies such as cutting public spending, privatizing state-owned enterprises, deregulating markets, and opening up to foreign investment. While these measures were intended to stabilize economies and restore growth, they often led to social unrest, increased poverty, and economic hardship for many people in the region. The policy of structural adjustment along with a push for commodity-focused private production and foreign capital investments were the foundation of Neoliberalism which the Sao Paulo Forum formed in order to oppose.

With the rapid deterioration of the Soviet Union and thus the only major economic/political competitor of the U.S., the new leftist, progressive, people-democratic parties of the LAC region came together to create a cohesive general policy to oppose neoliberalism and U.S. domination in the region by promoting democracy and sovereignty. In July 1990, a meeting was held in Sao Paulo, Brazil where 48 parties across the left political spectrum convened to discuss these exact issues. The product of this meeting was a multilateral declaration that outlined the principles of the SPF including anti-imperialism, anti-neoliberalism, and pro-sovereignty in the region.

Today, the São Paulo Forum is composed of 123 member parties from 27 countries which represents a coalition of Latin American and Caribbean political parties and movements. It holds annual meetings and has a Working Group that convenes periodically. The Forum is divided into three regional departments: the Southern Cone department, based in Uruguay; the Andean Amazonian department, temporarily based in Colombia; and the Mesoamerican and Caribbean department, headquartered in El Salvador.



The Sao Paulo Forum of 2018 held in Havana, Cuba

The Executive Secretariat of the São Paulo Forum, located in São Paulo, is responsible for implementing decisions made during the annual plenary and regional meetings, as well as by the Working Group. The annual meetings also host guests from social movements and political organizations from other continents. Key activities include general plenary sessions, and sectoral meetings focusing on issues like Women, Youth, African Descendants, Indigenous Peoples, and the Foundations and Schools Network, among others. Additionally, thematic workshops cover topics such as Media, Anticolonial Struggles, and Progressive Governance, along with the Training School.

The São Paulo Forum engages in ongoing dialogue with representatives of the continent's social movements and organizations to develop shared agendas and initiatives, such as the World Day against Imperialism and the Hemispheric Day for Democracy and against Neoliberalism. It also maintains exchange and cooperation relationships with political and social forces globally and has participated in several World Social Forum meetings and other international and regional events.

Defining a Coup

Translated from French as a “stroke of state,” “blow of state,” or “strike against the state”, a coup d'état is traditionally classified as the sudden, forcible, or illegal removal of a government by another group or entity (Han 2023, 1) (2). It is a mistaken concept that coups require military force; judicial powers and other government means can be weaponized to forcefully institute a new head of government.

In general, coups tend to be odd and varied in terms of execution. Many times, scholars find it difficult to define what exactly is considered a coup. For example, democratically elected officials have been deposed by their military, while other countries see foreign intervention forcefully instituting change in their governments. Regardless of variety, scholars agree the definition of a coup relies on context and situation.

It is important to keep in mind when discussing coups in LAC that a lack of proper countermeasures and a skewed balance of power between this region and the U.S. have proven to be a cause of concern for government stability across LAC. Coups often find their foothold through the forceful intervention of foreign nations in domestic affairs. Albeit through proxy wars or for personal gain, foreign nations use coups to more often than not further their own goals at the expense of fledgling nations. While general definitions are provided for coups, the fluid nature of coups demands a fluid application of the word in real-world circumstances. An internationally recognized definition of “coup” may help provide better guidelines for countries to follow.

2. Danielle Han, An overview d'état: Are coups democracy in action? (JSTOR Daily, 2023) <https://daily.jstor.org/an-overview-detat-are-coups-democracy-in-action/>

Elements of a Coup

Throughout history, there have been hundreds of coups across empires, countries, states, provinces, cities, and all other kinds of government formations. The basic idea of a coup is the forceful taking of power over a ruling government. While this may seem relatively straightforward there are some key elements of a coup that create a wide variety of outcomes and examples. In political science, the definition of a state is normally based on the centrality of the monopoly of power. Vladimir Lenin described a state as "a special organization of force: it is an organization of violence for the suppression of some Social class.". In order for a coup to take place this organization of violence has to be surmounted, replaced, or co-opted for the opposing party.

The organization of violence is not just the military. It is also the perception of the people that this violence is upheld by legal, political, and economic systems, The military, public/civil position, and economic control are some of the key elements of a government that a coup would seek to control in order to be successful. Often times it is a combination of these elements alongside lesser variables like historical claims, legal arguments, and manipulation of democratic processes that will also determine the outcome of a coup.

In Latin America, we have seen different trends in coups through different decades. Much of the mid-twentieth century was dominated by military coups and in particular officer coups where middle-level officers would come together to overthrow higher-ranking officials and overtake the government. This was the case in countries like Peru under Juan Velasco Alvarado and the Dominican Republic under Rafael Trujillo. It was the view of these military leaders that democracy had failed to create effective presidents and so it was the duty of the military to take over. It was a common occurrence for military juntas to be established and take over large parts of the economy and civilian sectors.

More recently we have seen a major rise in political coups in the region. These political coups often do not seek to overturn the democratic systems in place but instead, contest elections. Even in these political coups, the military plays an important role in deciding the outcomes of these contested elections. In most cases, these coup attempts come after a recent election and in some cases, the opposition group will use constitutional claims to back up their goals as was the case with Juan Guaido who attempted to take power from Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela. These attempts are often convoluted for everyone involved. In 2022, a political coup attempt against Pedro Castillo in Peru was combatted with a "self-coup" where Castillo dissolved the Congress which had wanted to remove him. For the past 15 years, Peru has struggled to have a stable presidency and has had over 8 presidents during this time.

Early Examples

Historically speaking, the earliest coups in Latin America began at the turn of the 20th century. One significant example is the Mexican coup of 1913, famously referred to as “La Decena Trágica.” From February 9-19, 1913, a multi-day coup was enacted in Mexico City against democratically-elected President Francisco I. Madero. Hailed as the “Apostle of Democracy,” he enacted reforms in 1911 to institute democratic institutions following the 3-decade dictatorial regime he usurped. Working with the full support of the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Henry Lane Wilson, Mexican Federal Army general Victoriano Huerta led a revolt against President Madero, killing Madero 4 days after his capture and instituting himself as leader at the recommendation of U.S. Ambassador Wilson (Muse 2023) (3).



Troops pictured during La Decena Trágica

Additionally, the Brazilian coup of 1930 was the first in a series of long institutional changes for the country. For 40 years, Brazilian states Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais ruled the country by alternating Presidential successors with each other. In 1930 however, the oligarchy had a fallout when President Washington Luis from Sao Paulo declared his successor to be Julio Prestes,

also from Sao Paulo. In opposition, Minas Gerais would create an alliance with Rio Grande do Sul to back opposition candidate Getulio Vargas. Minas Gerais would go on to denounce the Brazilian election of March 1930, declaring Prestes’ presidential election fraudulent. On October 3 of that year, the Brazilian state Rio Grande do Sul officially rebelled, with Minas Gerais allying shortly after the revolution. On October 24, a military junta was formed to deter a civil war, and after negotiations, Vargas would officially take power on November 3. He would then enact another coup in 1937, upheaving the government system by instituting a new constitution he and his allies created to consolidate all the power to the presidency. He would name this new era the *Estado Novo* in 1937.

3. Tyler Muse, *The Coup & Assassination of Francisco Madero*. (History Oasis, 2023), <https://www.historyoasis.com/post/assassination-of-francisco-madero#:~:text=his%20moderate%20pace.,What%20is%20this%3F,later%2C%20murdered%20on%20Huerta's%20orders.>

Susceptibility to Coups

Across LAC, certain regions are more susceptible to coups depending on their circumstance. From political to economic, these factors can play major roles in determining a country's susceptibility to coups.

Countries with poor economic structures and leaders who allow companies to bypass laws and control their nation in favor of gaining money at the expense of the country's population are susceptible to coups. Throughout the mid-1900s, the Central American region underwent intense control by being forcefully turned into Banana Republics. Under the control of the U.S.-based United Fruit Company, economically disadvantaged countries would undergo neocolonialist schemes to have the UFCO control their local economy. In subsidizing the region's markets, land, and transportation networks, UFCO created an unchecked system that stripped Latin American resources and redistributed them into Western markets.

Guatemala would try to break free from this control in 1953 when democratically-elected President Jacobo Arbenz enacted Decree 900, a land-reappropriation policy removing 200,000 acres of unused arable land from the UFCO and redistributing it to farmers and citizens. In opposition, the UFCO would call upon the CIA to enact Operation PBSuccess, a CIA-backed coup that forcefully removed Arbenz from office and removed Decree 900 from the legislation (Han 2023) (4). This political instability led to the bloody Guatemalan Civil War that caused an estimated 200,000 deaths.



Political cartoon depicting the United Fruit Company operations in Guatemala

4. Daniella Han, *Fruit Geopolitics: America's banana republics*. (JSTOR Daily, 2023), <https://daily.jstor.org/fruit-geopolitics-americas-banana-republics/>

The relationship between multinational corporations, international sovereignty, and economically disparaged countries displays a clear susceptibility to coups, but what about other regions in LAC?

Across the 20th century, the effects of the Cold War and Roosevelt's Monroe Doctrine were becoming all the more clear when dissecting international politics and the effect it can have with coups. In Latin America, regions with leftist values faced purging, persecution, repression, and outright declarations of illegality in this new environment of the Cold War and fears of Soviet influence in LAC. Examples of such instances include Chile in April 1948, Costa Rica in 1948, and again in Brazil in January 1948, when far-leftist congressmen were expelled. In Venezuela, the democratic triennium ended on November 24, 1948, and Marco Pérez Jiménez's dictatorship began, lasting ten years; in Colombia, Laureano Gómez was overthrown in June 1953; in Guatemala, Jacobo Árbenz was overthrown in June 1954. In Peru, Bustamante suffered a coup d'état in October 1948. By 1954's end an estimated 11 dictatorships were in Latin America, with many of these dictatorships following after a coup removed leftist leaders (Maria Sibylla Merian Center 2022) (5).

Case Study: Bolivia

Bolivia is a unique country in the middle of South America. It is one of just two landlocked countries on the continent and has one of the largest indigenous populations in the region. Extreme political turmoil and power struggles have dominated the country from even before Spanish colonization. Pre-colonial Bolivia was one of the strongholds of the Inca empire which has had its own history of coups and conspiracies. In 1825, Bolivia gained its independence from Spain and throughout this time the history of political struggle has continued.

While there have been dozens if not hundreds of coups and attempted coups in the country, this case study will focus on one of the most recent ones which took place in 2019. What happened in 2019 was actually a series of struggles over the leadership of the country rather than a singular moment. There are a number of important elements to note for the purposes of this committee.

The start of this crisis began with a constitutional referendum which was meant to end term limits for the president. President Evo Morales assumed office in 2006 with a five-year mandate and was re-elected after this. President Morales ran under the MAS party (Movimiento al socialismo) and is widely considered to be the first indigenous president of the country. Before the end of his second mandate, President Morales pushed forward with a constitutional reform that would end the three-term limit for presidents and allow him to run again. At first, President Morales was declared the winner of the 2019 elections but this was quickly contested by the opposition parties with support from international

5. Cold War and coups d'état in Latin America (70 years after the coup d'état in Bolivia 1952). (CALAS, 2023), <http://www.calas.lat/en/convocatorias/cold-war-and-coups-d%C3%A9tat-latin-america-70-years-after-coup-d%C3%A9tat-bolivia-1952>

organizations like the OAS and EU.



Protests in Bolivia against President Áñez

President Morales escaped to Mexico under political asylum while the opposition leadership took power in the form of Jeanine Áñez who was the secondary senate president at the time. Áñez was not elected or was even running in the presidential elections but instead gained power through the power vacuum created by the election crisis. She claimed that the constitution gave her the power

to announce herself as president and assume office. In fact, the constitution did not stipulate this but instead would have allowed for the President of the Senate to take power. Despite this manipulation of the writing of the constitution, Áñez did become interim president. During her time in office, Áñez attempted to alter the election process to give her party more fodder for a potential win as well as launched a major campaign against President Morales.

In the end, new elections were held and MAS (Morales' party) once again won the presidency but this time with a different candidate; Luis Acre. Under Acre's presidency, Áñez was charged with various crimes and was sentenced to 10 years in prison. This crisis has caused significant political instability in the country and has even led to an attempted coup by the military in 2024.

Case Study: Panama

Panama has been a key country at the epicenter of foreign interest ever since the beginning of the 18th century. Panama is the southernmost country of Central America, bordering Colombia and Costa Rica. Known as a particularly "well-off country" today, Panama has struggled through its battle of neocolonialist control and foreign intervention over the past century. In particular, Panama has faced this battle with the United States as the main perpetrator of this forceful control.

Their inter-country relationship began in 1903 when the United States supported Panama in declaring independence from Colombia on 3 November 1903. As payment for their support, Panama and the United States signed the Hay-Bunau Varilla Treaty granting the United States the right to construct and control a canal in Panama, mainly for commercial purposes. Over the years, this partnership would remain steady, with Panama expressing concerns for her country to gain control over the canal and the

U.S. being agreeable to this fact with intentions of handing off control over the canal to Panama by 2000. Although Panama would see a coup in 1968, the United States brushed this off, either with President Jimmy Carter hoping to negotiate new canal treaties or President Ronald Reagan seeking to aid the Nicaraguan resistance (contras), various United States administrations found Panama's military government useful and aided in its protection.

This protection would soon hold consequences for both Panama and the United States. The 1968 coup allowed General Manuel Noriega to be instated as the Chief Military Intelligence in the new administration, and since Noriega had a long-standing relationship with American intelligence agencies acting as a key informant to the country, the United States was happy to support him. This was



Manuel Noriega under U.S. custody aboard an Air Force craft after his surrender

until the 1980s when Noriega began to consolidate enough power to become Panama's de-facto ruler in 1983 after the death of the head of the previous administration. Outed by an American news outlet for drug trafficking and supporting the Contras in Nicaragua and other Soviet-influenced movements in Central America, Noriega became the target of Operation Just Cause, a CIA-led initiative to remove Noriega from power and institute a new democracy decided by the United States. On 20 December 1989, President Bush launched the largest military invasion since the end of the Vietnam War with 20,000 troops invading Panama (Ropp 1991, 113). In January 1990, Noriega surrendered and the Panama Defense Force was dissolved by the United States, with President-elect Guillermo Endara sworn into office shortly after.

6. Steve Ropp, *Panama: The United States Invasion and Its Aftermath*. (JSTOR DAILY, University of California Press, 1991), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45316500?seq=1>

Questions to Consider

1. What are the different factors that contribute to coup susceptibility in a country, and how can a resolution bypass this issue?
2. Is there a moral right to revolution that should be considered when it comes to coups? Can one coup be deemed “more acceptable” than another based on context, corruption, and public approval?
3. How can independent party values be represented on a resolution paper based on coups?
4. How can political parties work together to determine a collective framework for how to address coups?
5. What is the role of ideology in international relations and foreign policy?

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