COMMISSION GUIDE

IMO



International Maritime Organization

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1. Presidents' Letter

Dear delegates,

We, as presidents of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), are honored to welcome you all to this commission. As some of you may already know, we are Alejandro Llanos and Juan Pablo Hernández, two twelfth grade students from the Colegio Colombo Británico. As your presidents in the upcoming version of CCBMUN, we are delighted to have you all as our delegates, for which we will ensure this model is the best you've had yet. IMO, being a mixed school commission, may be somewhat complex to newer delegates, but we guarantee we'll effectively guide you through all of the necessary elements of the model and commission.

As often described, the CCB Model United Nations is an event which provides students with the opportunity to inform themselves about real-life global issues and situations, which are then discussed and debated through the perspective of a nation, or in some cases, a person/organization. This, in turn, provides all participants with useful research, organization, and public speaking skills, which can be applied in other areas in life. For this reason, we believe it is of the utmost importance that all of our delegates succeed in the whole process of the MUN. Furthermore, ensuring that you delegates have a good experience here at this year's model will hopefully motivate you to join the next version of the MUN (if possible) and to improve your skills even further.

To wrap up this brief introduction, we'd like to point out that the overall flow and direction of the debate, and therefore the commission, depends upon you, the delegates. Because of this, we highly recommend that every single one of you comes as best prepared as possible, as this will allow you to participate throughout the three days, and will, in turn, result in a fluid debate and enjoyable commission. Remember that this model is an opportunity to develop lots of skills, learn many things, and meet all kinds of people. If you have any questions, doubts, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at the provided email. We hope you enjoy the eighteenth version of the CCB MUN!

Kind Regards,

Alejandro Llanos and Juan Pablo Hernández IMO Presidents



2. Commission Information

i. History

International Maritime Organization (IMO)



Figure 1: IMO flag
(https://www.autonomousshipshq.com/imo-screening-regulations-autonomous-ships-operations/imo-logo/)

The International Maritime Organization was created by a convention adopted in 1948 at the UN Maritime conference. However, the convention would only come into force on March 17, 1958, after it was approved by 21 nations, amongst which 7 had to have at least one million gross tons of shipping. This specialized agency went initially by the name of the *Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization*, IMCO, which was later changed to the *International Maritime Organization* in 1982.

The United Nations created this specialized agency with the purpose, as described in Article 1(a) of the convention, "to provide machinery for cooperation among Governments in the field of governmental regulation and practices relating to technical matters of all kinds affecting shipping engaged in international trade; to encourage and facilitate the general adoption of the highest practicable standards in matters concerning maritime safety, efficiency of navigation and prevention and control of marine pollution from ships". (IMO, N.D) It is important to highlight that the IMO has the capacity to deal with administrative and legal issues that are related to these purposes, principally those related to liability and compensation.

IMO's Work

Looking into the past, IMO's first task was completed in 1960; it consisted of creating and implementing a new version of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), the most important treaty of maritime security. After this, IMO changed its focus to matters mostly related to trading, such as the facilitation of international maritime traffic, load lines, and carriage of dangerous goods. Years later a new issue, pollution, emerged and with it came new challenges to face. However, maritime safety always remained as IMO's most important responsibility. The amount of oil being



transported by the sea and the size of the tankers was a major concern; the Torrey Canyon disaster of 1967, in which 120,000 tons of oil spilled into the sea, showed the scale of the issue.

From that moment on IMO also began working on measures to prevent similar accidents from occurring, resulting in the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships of 1973, also known as MARPOL, which was later modified in 1978. Additionally, IMO also had the task of creating a system of compensation for those who have been affected by pollution, resulting in the creation of 2 treaties (1969 and 1971) which were modified and improved in 2000.

IMO also created the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO) in the 1970s, a system that greatly improved radio provision and messaging in ships. It also created The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) in 1982 but began to be used in 1992, until becoming fully operational in 1999. This system guaranteed assistance to every ship in case of an emergency, even if the crew didn't report the incident. Additionally, in 1998 the International Safety Management Code came into force as a result of the importance of the human element in shipping. In the 2000s it also created conventions relating to the marine environment, and in 2004 IMO created a new security regime for international shipping which includes the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code.

ii. Structure

The International Maritime Organization consists of an assembly, a council, five main committees, and seven subcommittees.

The Assembly is the highest governing body, consisting of all member states. It usually meets every two years but may meet in an extraordinary session if necessary. The assembly is in charge of approving the work program, voting the budget, and determining the organization's financial arrangements. It also elects the council.

The Council is elected by the assembly for a period of two years after the regular assembly meetings. It acts as IMO's executive organ and supervises the work of the organization. In terms of its functions, the council basically has the same as the assembly except making recommendations to governments on maritime safety and pollution prevention, which is a function only the assembly has.

The five main committees are the Maritime Safety Committee, Marine Environmental Protection Committee, Legal Committee, Facilitation Committee and Technical Cooperation Committee. Each of these committees is in charge of dealing with a specific topic on IMO's agenda and they all consist of all member states of the Organization.

Lastly, we have the Secretariat which consists of IMO's Secretary-General, at the moment Mr. Kitack Lim from the Republic of Korea, and 300 international personnel at the London Headquarters. The Secretary general is elected for 4-year terms.



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Topic 1: The effects of COVID-19 on overseas trade, transportation and the integrity of Seafarers

i. History/Context

Since December 2019, the whole world has been under a constant threat of a deadly disease, COVID-19, which heavily impacts and compromises the previously safe IMO operations around the globe. Given the characteristics of the virus, crucial maritime systems and practices, such as product trading (importation and exportation) as well as overseas transportation have been heavily affected, to the point where necessary valid actions must be taken. The International Maritime Organization, since the initial development of the virus, has begun analyzing, measuring, and considering the implications and consequences that arise from these situations. (IMO, 2020)



(http://www.imo.org/en/mediacentre/hottopics/pages/coronavirus.aspx)

Given the overall novelty of the situation, there isn't much historical contextualization to be found, but only the corresponding responses surging across the globe in the face of the ongoing pandemic. Shortly after the initial surge of the disease, the International Maritime Organization itself has presented countries with a wide range of protocols, regulations, and recommendations regarding operating under the risk brought by COVID-19. However, numerous uncertainties still exist which must be addressed, as IMO operations still need to be carried out. Furthermore, given the rapid spread of the disease, it has become clear that any proposed change or solution will have to cover the long term, as this pandemic is not expected to end in the near future. Additionally, there even exists the possibility that IMO operations will forever change (even after the pandemic, as a means of further prevention), as newer and safer methods of carrying out said operations appear.

ii. Current Situation

Sometime after the initial outbreak of COVID-19, its alarming rate meant that the International Maritime Organization began to analyze the situation, coming up with new, temporary regulations which could be subject to change as the situation evolved.

First and foremost, before even beginning to propose any of these regulations, the International Maritime Organization realized that numerous governments had already begun to implement their own respective travel restrictions, which in consequence, greatly affects IMO operations, as they heavily rely on the access to nations across the world. Because of this, the IMO has to acknowledge the already existing travel regulations in nations before imposing a course of action. The International Maritime organization is not allowed to override these restrictions without consent.

As the pandemic spread, some major countries, such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom began to restrict some of IMO's operations, namely in international overseas travel, since they acknowledge the risk involved in international overseas transportation of goods and people. This, whilst being a safe start to begin preparing for the pandemic, really hinders IMO operations, as countries similar to those previously mentioned are taking similar actions. The problem develops when it becomes apparent that the interruption of the procedures of the International Maritime Organization bring forth numerous repercussions, in both socioeconomic as well as political aspects. However, it must be carefully noted that in no way should IMO operations compromise the national safety of any given country. Any proposed solution to the current situation should take into account each country's rights to protect their own citizens, meaning that future IMO actions must take this factor into account. Based on the previous statement, it is evident that IMO operations must not stop, but rather, be adapted to the global pandemic, taking into consideration all the new regulations countries impose which are completely outside IMO's control.



(Figure 1: Seafarer meeting during the establishment of new protocols)

As an immediate response, the IMO decided to call upon all participating States to designate all seafarers as key/essential workers, providing them with the opportunity to freely travel around their workplaces as well as their countries of residence.

Furthermore, the recognition as essential worker further guarantees the support coming from member nations to these types of workers which need it most. Given the nature of IMO operations, it has become more apparent that seafarers depend on the permissions given by nations in order to maintain operations efficiently running. By wrongly hindering the IMO's operations, countries are causing major consequences to the industry of overseas trade and transportation, as crucial processes such as importation and exportation, but most importantly, the repatriation of essential workers is being negatively affected. For example, some seafarers from the country of India, under their respective SEA (seafarer employment agreement) are being denied repatriation back to their home country, as of April 14th, 2020^[3]. Cases of COVID-19 were found aboard some of the ships, which in turn, caused the Indian government to deny the seafarers' right of repatriation. This, apart from the evident socioeconomic impact, also has a major repercussion over the seafarers themselves. The travel restrictions mean that most of these essential workers are left stranded in a foreign country, which opens up the possibility that they may not receive the necessary medical assistance, even if it is urgent. However, there still are cases of countries supporting the repatriation right of seafarers. For example, nations such as Turkey and the Philippines have continued to support their seafarers' repatriation back to their home country. [4] In the middle of June, a total of 128 seafarers native to the Philippines were allowed repatriation from Turkey back to their home country. This process was made possible thanks to the cooperation between the governments of both countries and the acknowledgement of the IMO guidelines. All in all, it is entirely possible that countries support seafarers' rights, by following the appropriate regulations agreed upon by the IMO.



(Figure 2: Medical attention provided to essential workers in IMO operations)



As the situation continues to develop, new measures are being enforced, and new protocols are being put in place. The International Maritime Organization has contacted every single Member State, to which, each responded with one or multiple *circular letters* (IMO, 2020) regarding the measures agreed upon and the future management of the overall situation. Furthermore, numerous press briefings ^[1] have been released, in which, key aspects of the pandemic are discussed, and their respective responses are being thoroughly evaluated. Additionally, many circular letters ^[2] have been officially issued, in which specific details such as changes discussed by the United Kingdom in the International Maritime Virtual Summit, or changes presented in the Singapore Crew Change Guidebook, are shown to the public. Nevertheless, as evident from the responses of numerous Member States, the COVID-19 pandemic is presenting itself as a major inconvenience to all IMO operations and to its respective operators; for this reason, the IMO asks for the utmost cooperation from all involved nations, to ensure the safety of all participants, whilst still maintaining the socioeconomic balance created through overseas trading and transportation.

iii. Key points of the debate

- The current and future implications of the COVID-19 disease over any and all IMO operations across the world.
- The evaluation and examination of any country's practices regarding maritime operations during the pandemic.
- The disagreement between nations who may or may not opt to comply with certain recommendations regarding IMO operations, therefore compromising them.
- The importance and significance of all workforce involved in IMO operations amid COVID-19.
- The human resources (seafarers and workers) management systems in practice, and the modifications required to adapt to the pandemic.
- The clear danger of leaving this situation unresolved, given the nature of the virus and the necessity of ongoing IMO operations.
- The development of possible plans of actions and their implementation on any given country, taking into account possible complications.

iv. Participating Organisms

- The International Maritime Organization
- The World Health Organization
- United Nations Law of the Sea Convention
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- United Nations Commission on International Trade Law



v. Guiding Questions

- 1. How much does your country depend on / benefit from all forms of IMO operations across the globe (Including, but not limited to, overseas exportation and importation of goods)?
- 2. How has your country been affected by the pandemic's negative impact on overseas transportation, trade, and its workforce?
- **3.** What changes has your country made in response to the Covid-19 pandemic regarding overseas operations?
- **4.** How does your country acknowledge seafarers as essential workers whose rights, integrity and overall safety must be protected?
- 5. Is your country cooperating with the current IMO regulations and other nations to ensure current operations are as safe as possible? Why or why not?
- 6. Which permanent regulations and/or practices is your country willing to adopt in response to the possibility of future pandemics?
- 7. Which course of action does your country intend to follow or propose as means of avoiding future COVID-19 outbreaks within maritime operations as well as any other similar repercussions?

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<u>DbNMmyVQJ0HtvFd6iK6NTvJw0QWG9ZY pQ1ZXDYkY1yRoBkGF7OUKGaV7XL 0Nr2h p9FL5D3NMctVe8708lGy9yFsDdHLSBjxeb8QuwXlbvElleWRj1qE5NELoyuPUEZthTfGfCFYz5xP8G9bMn7VMwo5Rng3DI-w73Krqp4Ufr09geB5YTN5msAZoSkSDIFanE</u>



5. Topic 2: Chinese Militarization of the Indian Ocean

i. History/Context

The Indian Ocean Region, also known as the IOR, refers to the Indian Ocean and land surrounding it. This ocean represents 20% of the earth's water surface, whilst the land that surrounds it includes countries from Africa, Asia, and Oceania, consisting of 28 states that represent 17.5 percent of the global land area (LKI, 2018). The IOR is a very important region as it contains some of the major trading routes between Africa, Middle East and East Asia with Europe and the Americas; this makes the region of high geopolitical importance, as it contains around 80% of the world's seaborne trading routes (MERICS, 2019). Additionally, around 40% of petroleum-related products are traded from the Indian Ocean, and the trading routes of this region act as the backbone of most international economies. (ModernDiplomacy, 2020). Lastly, the Indian Ocean is host to 23 of the world's most important seaports.

Overseas military bases in the Indian Ocean are not a new phenomenon. In 1973 the USA and UK built a joint military base on the island of Diego Garcia, which is still active.



Figure 1: Indian Ocean Region (LINK)

Since 2008, China's military activity in the region has been increasing after the country started the anti-piracy patrol. Additionally, it has been reported that China has been cooperating with other ally states in the region, for instance, by strengthening its overseas bases and providing military equipment to other nations. As a result of this military expansion, it is expected that in a short time China will be capable of intervening in a military capacity in this region. This poses a threat to many other nations of the region, but mainly to Indonesia and India, since both still have unresolved border conflicts with China, and China's military expansion could become a threat if tensions grow.

Current boundaries Area ceded by Package of the Color of

India and China Border dispute

India and China have been disputing a 2200-mile border for decades now. As a matter of fact, this dispute even led to a brief war in 1962 and has been the cause of multiple conflicts, mostly border transgressions, between both nations. In relation to this topic, the border dispute is the main cause of India's unconformity with China's naval expansion on the Indian Ocean, as the overseas military bases could represent a threat if the dispute gets worse.

Figure 2: India and China dispute border (https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2012/02/08/fantasy-frontiers)

Indonesia and China border Dispute

Just like India, Indonesia also has a history of conflicts with China over an area of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), a zone near the Natuna Islands, located in the South China Sea. Up to now, there have been multiple reports of Chinese vessels entering Indonesia's EEZ without permission and China has also claimed on multiple occasions that the islands belong to China. It is said that the intention behind this claim comes from the fact that the area is believed to have large amounts of oil, natural gas, and fish. As a matter of fact, there have even been standoffs between both nations' armies in the disputed area, which has raised tensions between both countries.

ii. Current Situation

Since the end of 2019, reports have shown increasing military activity in the IOR (Indian Ocean Region), linked to the presence of Chinese military vessels in the region. In addition to this, it has been reported that Chinese vessels have been nearing certain countries' exclusive economic zones, mainly those of Indonesia and India. This has resulted in rising tensions between nations and the movement of military vessels from other nations such as India, France, United States and Indonesia. These nations claim that it is necessary to keep watch on the PLA (People's Liberation Army of China) vessels in order to ensure their presence does not generate regional instability that could potentially lead to armed conflicts. India, the United States and France are some of the countries which have deployed troops to the area.

The main cause of this issue is the lack of a maritime security architecture, which has driven major powers to compete for the control of this region's resources and trading routes. As these countries compete to control the region, the tension between them also increases, which could ultimately threaten the openness of major sea routes and even lead to the disruption of sea trade.



Furthermore, focusing on the most affected countries, Indian officials have reported the presence of Chinese vessels nearing India's EEZ (exclusive economic zone). An EEZ refers to an area of the ocean that is under the jurisdiction of a coastal state, which assumes ownership of the area. For instance, in early January of this year, two Indian senior officials reported the presence of Chinese fishing boats, escorted by military vessels, near India's EEZ, and at the end of 2019, a Chinese research vessel entered India's territory.



Figure 3 Chinese aircraft carrier: (https://www.forbes.com/sites/hisutton/2019/10/15/chinese-navys-rapid-aircraft-carrier-fleet-expansion-fueling-new-arms-race/#1dd7d5f6306e)

Other reports have shown that China has been strengthening its overseas military bases in the region. For example, the Chinese military base in Djibouti, established in 2017, has been improved to be able to dock an aircraft carrier. Furthermore, the Chinese navy has expressed its intention of acquiring 5 or 6 more carriers and has also increased its submarine fleet. China has also expressed its collaboration with its ally Pakistan, which is also in conflict with India, to whom China will supply military equipment and ships with anti-ship, anti-submarine, and air defense weapon systems. This has raised skepticism in the region, as it is believed that the real intention behind this collaboration is countering India's military power in the region, since it has the greatest naval power up to now. As a result of these, India has also been increasing its military presence with the construction of a base in Seychelles. There has also been an increasing interest in financing and controlling overseas ports, for example the Chabahar port in Iran, which can be used for Indian military purposes if needed.





Figure 4: Map of overseas bases in the IOR:

(https://www.gisreportsonline.com/washington-poised-to-become-new-delhis-partner-in-the-indian-ocean,defense,2399.html)

Considering the ongoing border conflict between China, India, and Pakistan, India has also interpreted the military presence of China in the region as a possible threat, and fears the overseas military bases and military vessels may serve as strategic attack points in the case of the border conflict escalating. However, China has argued that its naval expansion serves primarily the purpose of defending its overseas interests and fulfilling anti-piracy missions, mostly those related to oil, as around 80% of China's oil imports come from the Malacca Strait, considered to be the busiest choke point in the region. A maritime choke point refers to a narrow channel of water that connects two larger bodies of water where there are high levels of shipping. As there are many large ships trying to pass through the choke points, this can cause delays in transit, and leaves ships more vulnerable to piracy.



Figure 5: Strait of Malacca Map: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy in the Strait of Malacca

In addition to these, China's expansion has also been represented as a threat to Indonesia, as both nations are involved in a border dispute regarding Indonesia's EEZ. As a result, Indonesia's security and sovereignty could be in danger, as the expansion of the Chinese military could eventually give it enough power to take control of the disputed territory, which is believed to contain large amounts of oil and natural gas. After a Chinese coast guard vessel entered Indonesia's EEZ while escorting a fishing boat,

Indonesia has increased its military presence in the disputed zone with the intention of stopping other Chinese vessels from committing the same mistake.

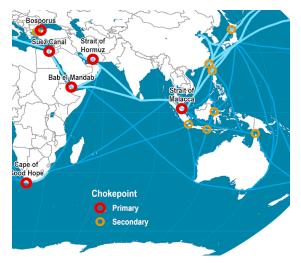


Figure 6: Main trading routes and ports: (https://transportgeography.org/?page id=2067)

Passing to a more general focus, countries in Europe and America fear that the increasing military activity may affect international seaborne trade, as freedom of navigation may be limited as a result of the military vessels intercepting cargo ships. An example of this is the multiple incidents in the Gulf of Oman, in which Iran has threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz to international shipping, and where it is also suspected that Iran's navy

has been involved in the interception and destruction of multiple oil tankers.

Some countries fear that, just like Iran, once China has enough military power in the area, it may have the capacity to control the major sea lanes and limit the freedom of navigation, which could lead to economic problems in the affected countries, as well as the loss of resources. If goods do not arrive at their destinations, it would create insecurities for European and American businesses with regard to their Asian market, leading to a complete failure in the European-Asian trading system.

At the moment, France has been the only European country to directly address the issue, since it has a military base in Djibouti. In 2019 it stated in its security paper on the Indo-Pacific, that it was determined to "[uphold] the multilateral order against major powers" that favor "power-based relations, generating anxiety and unpredictability worldwide" (Merics, 2019). However, it is expected that other countries will join France in its initiative to balance the power in the region by increasing their own presence in the IOR, as their economic interests could be affected if the situation isn't addressed.

The United States, who has a strong naval presence in the region has also increased its military activity. It has established an alliance with other countries in the region, such as India, Australia, and Japan, which together plan to limit China's military expansion and balance the distribution of power in the region. Together, these countries form the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD or Quad), a strategic forum in which these countries exchange information and make military drills. On top of this, the USA has also deployed for the first time in three years 3 aircraft carriers (USS Ronald Reagan, USS Nimitz and USS Theodore Roosevelt) to patrol the Indian Ocean. These vessels have been welcomed by their allies who at the moment find themselves unable to deal with the Chinese due to lack of military power and due to COVID-19.



Up to now, although many nations have tried to solve the current issue there has been no efficient solution to reduce the overall militarization of this region. On the contrary, most solutions have been military related which has further increased the tension between countries in the region and have increased the total number of military vessels in the area.

Lastly, it seems that China's main purpose to militarize the area is related to its "String of pearls" strategy, driven by China's need to protect its oil imports and trading routes that are essential to its development. In fact, the only way to accomplish this, according to China, is by increasing its presence in the region, which is the reason why China has invested in the construction of ports all along the IOR but also improved its overseas military bases. By doing so, China is able to directly protect the main trading route that connects the Middle East to China, a critical route for oil trading. However, China's will to expand its military presence in the region is the main concern of several countries that fear the possible consequences of the shift of power from the traditional Indian control of the region.

iii. Key points of the debate

- Regulations regarding military vessels on international waters.
- Overseas military bases and their benefits and problems.
- Seaborne trading routes and freedom of navigation.
- Balance of power in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- The importance of a maritime security architecture for the region.
- Violations to the UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on The Law and Sea) by military vessels in the region.
- Sanctions against countries that have entered into others' exclusive economic zones.
- Multilateral security efforts in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

iv. Participating Organisms

- The International Maritime Organization.
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
- United Nations Commission on International Trade Law.

v. Guiding Questions

- 1. Does your nation have overseas military bases on the IOR? If so, what is their purpose?
- 2. Does your nation have active military vessels in the IOR? If so, how many and what are they used for?
- 3. What type of interest does your country have in the IOR? Economic, Diplomatic, Military, etc.
- 4. How much of your country's trade passes through the IOR?
- 5. Does your country have allies in the region, and if so, which?
- 6. Does your country import or export goods to countries in the region?
- **7.** What is your nation's perspective on shipping security in the indian ocean region? How is it acting in order to protect its trading vessels?
- 8. What is your country's point of view on the topic and how has it responded to the increasing military presence in the IOR? Does it have any solutions to propose?

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