GATORMUN XXIII

Disarmament and International Security Committee

Background Guide

Nathan Rubin

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Letter from the Director:

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to GatorMUN XXIII and to this extraordinary ad-hoc emergency session of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC). My name is Nathan Rubin, and I am a freshman at the University of Miami studying Ecosystem Science and Policy and Public Administration. It is an honor to serve as your committee director for this pivotal and challenging simulation. Set in January 1970, this committee convenes at a time of immense global instability. The Vietnam War has escalated into an international crisis, deeply dividing the world's powers, igniting mass protest movements, and challenging the legitimacy and effectiveness of the international system created after World War II.

This committee's purpose is not to replicate the decisions of history, but to imagine how DISEC, empowered with a broader emergency mandate, might confront this conflict. As the war continues to devastate Vietnam, consume resources, and destabilize surrounding nations, the General Assembly has empowered DISEC to explore what options remain to preserve peace, address disarmament, and uphold international law. The war in Vietnam is not just about North and South. It is about ideology, imperial legacies, superpower confrontation, and the struggle for legitimacy in a divided world.

You, the delegates, are charged with finding answers. Your debate will consider whether international disarmament is possible in a proxy war, what obligations the United Nations holds in conflicts where neither side complies with peace frameworks, and whether new diplomatic mechanisms must be created to confront asymmetric and ideological warfare. Throughout theweekend, I encourage you to think as diplomats and historians. Consider the real costs of war, the limits of power, and the possibilities for compromise.

This background guide will offer a detailed historical narrative, analysis of the blocs and actors involved, an examination of the humanitarian and legal dimensions of the war, and the procedural role DISEC can play under its ad-hoc authorization. I trust you will prepare rigorously, engage deeply, and treat this topic with the gravity and creativity it demands. The year is 1970. The war rages on. It is now your turn to write the next chapter.

Sincerely,
Nathan Rubin

Rules of Procedure

Quorum

A majority of voting members answering to the roll at each session shall constitute a quorum for that session. This means that half plus one of all voting members are present. Quorum will be assumed consistent unless questioned through a Point of Order. Delegates may request to be noted as "Present" or "Present and Voting."

Motion to Suspend the Rules for the Purpose of a Moderated Caucus

This motion must include three specifications

- Length of the Caucus
- Speaking Time
- Reason for the Caucus

During a moderated caucus, delegates will be called on to speak by the Committee Director. Delegates will raise their placards to be recognized. Delegates must maintain the same degree of decorum throughout a Moderated Caucus as in formal debate. This motion requires a simple majority to pass.

Motion to Suspend the Rules for the Purpose of an Unmoderated Caucus

This motion must include the length of the Caucus. During an unmoderated caucus, delegates may get up from their seats and talk amongst themselves. This motion requires a simple majority to pass. The length of an unmoderated caucus in a Crisis committee should not exceed fifteen minutes.

Motion to Suspend the Meeting

This motion is in order if there is a scheduled break in debate to be observed. (ie. Lunch!) This motion requires a simple majority vote. The Committee Director may refuse to entertain this motion at their discretion.

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

This motion is in order at the end of the last committee session. It signifies the closing of the committee until next year's conference.

Points of Order

Points of Order will only be recognized for the following items:

- To recognize errors in voting, tabulation, or procedure
- To question relevance of debate to the current Topic
- To question a quorum.

A Point of Order may interrupt a speaker if necessary and it is to be used sparingly.

Points of Inquiry

When there is no discussion on the floor, a delegate may direct a question to the Committee Director. Any question directed to another delegate may only be asked immediately after the delegate has finished speaking on a substantive matter. A delegate that declines to respond to a question after a formal speech forfeits any further questioning time.

Points of Personal Privilege

Points of personal privilege are used to request information or clarification and conduct all other business of the body except Motions or Points specifically mentioned in the Rules of Procedure. Please note: The Director may refuse to recognize Points of Order, Points of Inquiry or Points of Personal Privilege if the Committee Director believes the decorum and restraint inherent in the exercise has been violated, or if the point is deemed dilatory in nature.

Rights of Reply

At the Committee Director's discretion, any member nation or observer may be granted a Right of Reply to answer serious insults directed at the dignity of the delegate present. The Director has the ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY to accept or reject Rights of Reply, and the decision IS NOT SUBJECT TO APPEAL. Delegates who feel they are being treated unfairly may take their complaint to any member of the Secretariat.

Directives

Directives act as a replacement for Draft Resolutions when in Crisis committees, and are the actions that the body decides to take as a whole. Directives are not required to contain operative or preambulatory clauses. A directive should contain:

- The name(s) of the author(s)
- A title
- A number of signatories/sponsors signatures' necessary to
- introduce, determined by the Director

A simple majority vote is required to introduce a directive, and multiple directives may be introduced at once. Press releases produced on behalf of the body must also be voted on as Directives.

Friendly Amendments

Friendly Amendments are any changes to a formally introduced Directive that all Sponsors agree to in writing. The Committee Director must approve the Friendly Amendment and confirm each Sponsor's agreement both verbally and in writing.

Unfriendly Amendments

Unfriendly Amendments are any substantive changes to a formally introduced Directive that are not agreed to by all of the Sponsors of the Directive. In order to introduce an Unfriendly Amendment, the Unfriendly Amendment must be the number equivalent to 1/3 of Quorum confirmed signatories. The Committee Director has the authority to discern between substantive and non-substantive Unfriendly amendment proposals.

Plagiarism

GatorMUN maintains a zero-tolerance policy in regards to plagiarism. Delegates found to have used the ideas of others without properly citing those individuals, organizations, or documents will have their credentials revoked for the duration of the GatorMUN conference. This is a very serious offense.

Crisis Notes

A crisis note is an action taken by an individual in a Crisis committee. Crisis notes do not need to be introduced or voted on, and should be given to the Crisis Staff by sending the notes to a designated pickup point in each room. A crisis note should both be addressed to crisis and have the delegate's position on both the inside and outside of the note.

Motion to Enter Voting Procedure

Once this motion passes, and the committee enters Voting Procedure, no occupants of the committee room may exit the Committee Room, and no individual may enter the Committee Room from the outside. A member of the Dias will secure all doors.

- No talking, passing notes, or communicating of any kind will be tolerated during voting procedures.
- Each Directive will be read to the body and voted upon in the order which they were introduced. Any Proposed Unfriendly Amendments to each Directive will be read to the body and voted upon before the main body of the Directive as a whole is put to a vote.
- Delegates who requested to be noted as "Present and Voting" are unable to abstain during voting procedure. Abstentions will not be counted in the tallying of a majority. For example, 5 yes votes, 4 no votes, and 7 abstentions means that the Directive passes.
- The Committee will adopt Directives and Unfriendly Amendments to Directives if these documents pass with a simple majority. Specialized committees should refer to their background-guides or Committee Directors for information concerning specific voting procedures.

Roll Call Voting

A counted placard vote will be considered sufficient unless any delegate to the committee motions for a Roll Call Vote. If a Roll Call Vote is requested, the committee must comply. All delegates must vote: “For,” “Against,” “Abstain,” or “Pass.” During a Roll Call vote, any delegate who answers, “Pass,” reserves his/her vote until the Committee Director has exhausted the Roll. However, once the Committee Director returns to “Passing” Delegates, they must vote: “For” or “Against.”

Accepting by Acclamation

This motion may be stated when the Committee Director asks for points or motions. If a Roll Call Vote is requested, the motion to Accept by Acclamation is voided. If a delegate believes a Directive will pass without opposition, he or she may move to accept the Directive by acclamation. The motion passes unless a single delegate shows opposition. An abstention is not considered opposition. Should the motion fail, the committee will move directly into a Roll Call Vote.

Tech Policy

Technology will not be allowed throughout the course of the committee. Delegates are prohibited from using their technology inside the committee room. However, they are encouraged to do research before and during assigned breaks.

Historical Background— From Colonial Vietnam to Geneva 1954

To understand the origins of the Vietnam War and the circumstances under which this committee convenes, one must examine Vietnam's long and complex colonial history. For centuries, Vietnam was ruled by a succession of dynasties until it was gradually absorbed into French Indochina by the late 19th century. The imposition of French colonial authority deeply disrupted traditional Vietnamese society, economy, and governance. Forced labor, economic exploitation, and the suppression of local culture sparked widespread resentment among the Vietnamese population. Although nationalist sentiments persisted in various forms, they crystallized into a formidable revolutionary movement under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh.

During World War II, Japan temporarily displaced French colonial rule, but Vietnamese aspirations for independence were largely ignored by both Japanese and returning French authorities. Following Japan's defeat in 1945, Ho Chi Minh declared the independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, invoking the language of self-determination enshrined in both the Atlantic Charter and American revolutionary rhetoric. However, France refused to relinquish its colonial possession, prompting the outbreak of the First Indochina War in 1946. This brutal conflict between French forces and the Viet Minh (Vietnamese nationalist and communist fighters) lasted until 1954, culminating in a decisive Viet Minh victory at Dien Bien Phu.

The Geneva Accords of 1954 formally ended the war, dividing Vietnam temporarily at the 17th parallel. The North was placed under the control of Ho Chi Minh's government, and the South under the anti-communist regime led by Ngo Dinh Diem, backed by the United States. Elections to unify the country were scheduled for 1956, but the South, with American support, refused to participate, fearing a communist victory. This decision set the stage for the civil war that would eventually draw in global powers.

The Geneva Accords did not resolve Vietnam's fundamental divisions. Instead, they institutionalized a temporary and fragile peace that quickly gave way to renewed violence. The next decade would witness the intensification of Cold War rivalries in Southeast Asia, as both the United States and the Soviet Union saw Vietnam as a critical battleground in the broader struggle between capitalism and communism.

Ho Chi Minh and Vietnamese Royalty

Major Actors in the Conflict

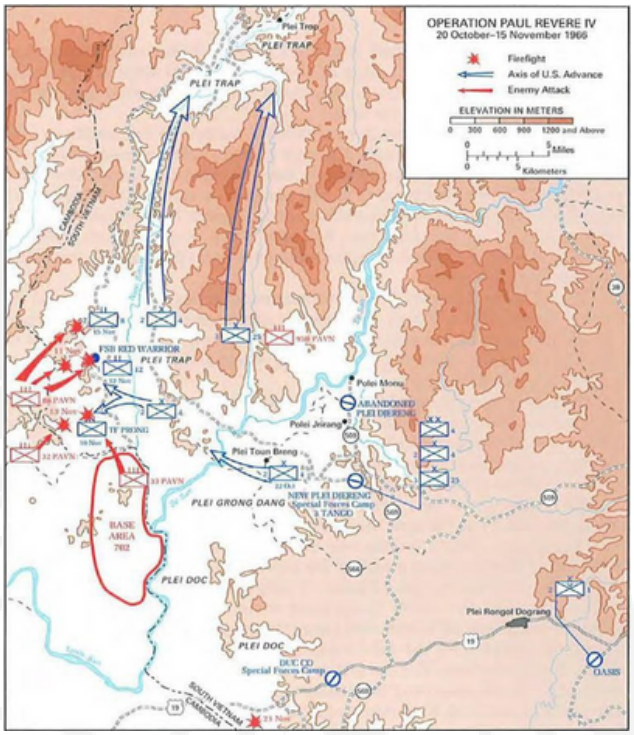
By January 1970, the Vietnam War has expanded well beyond a bilateral civil conflict. It is now a proxy battlefield where global superpowers and regional actors pursue ideological, political, and strategic goals. The array of actors involved reflects the global complexity of the Cold War, and each stakeholder brings its own interests, fears, and agendas to bear on the conflict.

In North Vietnam, the ruling communist regime led by Ho Chi Minh (and now increasingly by Le Duan due to Ho's declining health) seeks the unification of Vietnam under Marxist-Leninist principles. The government enjoys significant support from the peasantry in the North and has cultivated a powerful nationalist identity rooted in anti-colonial struggle. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam relies heavily on military and economic aid from both the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. While ideological tensions exist between Moscow and Beijing, both powers view a communist victory in Vietnam as a strategic win against Western influence in Asia.

South Vietnam, governed by the Republic of Vietnam under President Nguyen Van Thieu, faces profound internal instability. Although nominally democratic, the regime is authoritarian, marred by corruption, political repression, and weak popular support—especially among rural populations. The South Vietnamese army (ARVN) depends on U.S. military support, advisors, and funding. Efforts to implement land reform and improve governance have largely failed, making it difficult for the government to gain legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens.

The United States is the most militarily involved external power. Initially engaged as a supporter of French colonial efforts, the U.S. has dramatically escalated its involvement since the early 1960s, driven by the "domino theory" which held that a communist Vietnam would lead to the fall of other Southeast Asian nations to communism. Under Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and now Nixon, the U.S. has deployed hundreds of thousands of troops and spent billions of dollars on the war. Its position is complicated by growing domestic opposition, conscription protests, and media coverage of atrocities such as the My Lai Massacre

The Viet Cong (National Liberation Front), a communist insurgency operating in the South, forms the backbone of the North's guerrilla campaign. With support from Hanoi, the Viet Cong have embedded themselves in rural communities, waged an extensive campaign of ambushes and sabotage, and undermined ARVN control through political and military tactics. Their tactics blur the line between civilian and soldier, complicating American and South Vietnamese efforts to counter their influence without alienating civilians.



Example of Troop Positioning During a U.S. Operation

The People's Republic of China supports the North Vietnamese with weapons, training, and logistics, though its influence has at times clashed with Soviet strategy. China seeks to bolster communist resistance in Southeast Asia but also aims to prevent Soviet encroachment into its sphere of influence. The Soviet Union, meanwhile, provides advanced weaponry and technical advisors, emphasizing international solidarity with socialist movements while testing American resolve.

Several non-aligned states also play indirect roles. Nations such as India, Indonesia, and Egypt have called for peace and negotiation, emphasizing the need for regional autonomy and non-intervention. Their role is crucial in forums like the United Nations and could be instrumental in facilitating future peace frameworks.

In totality, these actors form a volatile constellation of competing powers, ideologies, and ambitions, making Vietnam the most dangerous flashpoint in the Cold War. The challenge for DISEC is to navigate this complexity and consider not just the aims of individual nations, but the larger patterns of global insecurity, militarization, and ideological entrenchment.

Military Situation as of January 1970

As of January 1970, the military situation in Vietnam is one of stalemate, uncertainty, and continuing devastation. The war has escalated into one of the most destructive conflicts of the post-World War II era. The U.S. has stationed approximately 475,000 troops in Vietnam, though this number is slowly beginning to decline under President Nixon's policy of "Vietnamization," which aims to transfer combat responsibilities to South Vietnamese forces. The American strategy has evolved from massive bombing campaigns and attrition warfare to a more cautious, politically sensitive approach in response to rising antiwar sentiment at home.

The northern forces, comprising the North Vietnamese Army (NV A) and the Viet Cong, have endured tremendous losses but continue to conduct widespread operations across the demilitarized zone (DMZ), the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and the Mekong Delta. Guerrilla warfare remains central to the Viet Cong's strategy, relying on local support networks, hidden supply caches, and a deep knowledge of terrain to strike with precision and retreat undetected. The Tet Offensive of 1968, though technically a military defeat for the communists, severely damaged American public confidence and revealed the reach of Viet Cong operations even in urban centers.

In South Vietnam, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) struggles with morale issues, internal corruption, and dependence on American logistical and air support. Despite improvements in training and equipment, ARVN's ability to operate independently remains in doubt. The South's rural areas remain particularly vulnerable, with Viet Cong forces maintaining footholds in villages and using them as staging grounds for ambushes and sabotage.

The war has spilled over into neighboring countries. Cambodia and Laos are increasingly destabilized as the U.S. conducts secret bombing campaigns to disrupt the Ho Chi Minh Trail. These actions have drawn international condemnation and risk further regional escalation. North Vietnamese troops use these territories to transport troops and supplies, effectively turning the Indochina Peninsula into a broader war theater. Meanwhile, U.S. air power continues to play a dominant role. B-52 strategic bombers, napalm strikes, and chemical defoliants such as Agent Orange have inflicted enormous environmental and civilian damage. These tactics have raised serious ethical questions about the conduct of the war and the proportionality of American military responses.

Aerial View of the Ho Chi Minh Trail

Overall, the war's frontlines are constantly shifting. Clear territorial control is rare, and success is measured not in gains but in attrition—enemy body counts, captured weapons, and disrupted supply lines. This ambiguity has led to profound challenges in both tactical strategy and public communication.

The military landscape in January 1970 reflects not a war nearing resolution, but one trapped in cyclical violence. For DISEC delegates, this situation raises important questions: Can disarmament efforts succeed amid guerrilla tactics and shifting battle lines? What role can international monitors or peacekeeping forces play in a war without clear borders? And how should the global community respond to military actions that blur the line between civilian and combatant?

Understanding this military context is vital to crafting meaningful proposals in committee. Any resolution must reckon with the war's operational complexity, the strain on civilians, and the potential for broader regional instability if left unchecked.

The Role of the United Nations and DISEC

The Vietnam War has tested the very foundations of the United Nations as an institution meant to preserve global peace and security. Since its inception in 1945, the UN has faced criticism for its inability to intervene effectively in conflicts dominated by the interests of major powers. The Vietnam War represents a particularly acute challenge, as both the United States and the Soviet Union—permanent members of the Security Council with veto power—are directly and indirectly involved in supporting opposing sides.

Because of this geopolitical impasse, the Security Council has been unable to take decisive action. Proposals for ceasefires, peacekeeping missions, or even diplomatic mediation have been blocked by vetoes and political gridlock. The General Assembly has, at times, issued resolutions urging peace, negotiations, and respect for Vietnamese sovereignty, but these have largely been symbolic, lacking enforcement mechanisms or consensus among the most powerful nations.

This context places unusual and urgent pressure on the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC). As one of the General Assembly's First Committees, DISEC has traditionally dealt with issues of global arms control, disarmament, and the maintenance of international security. It is not a body with enforcement powers, but it can wield significant influence by generating consensus, drafting model frameworks, and establishing the normative groundwork for broader action.

Members of the 60s UN General Assembly, Featuring Several Newly Created/Recognized Nations

In this ad-hoc session, DISEC is operating under an emergency mandate authorized by the General Assembly. This grants the committee exceptional latitude to explore policy recommendations, diplomatic initiatives, and frameworks for de-escalation in Vietnam. While DISEC cannot unilaterally deploy peacekeepers or impose sanctions, it can recommend coordinated multilateral efforts, propose international monitoring mechanisms, or create precedent-setting language around accountability and intervention.

One of the most compelling opportunities for DISEC is its ability to bring the voice of smaller, non-aligned states into the conversation. Many nations in the Global South, particularly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, see the Vietnam War not just as a Cold War conflict, but as a symbol of ongoing neocolonialism, militarism, and disregard for national self-determination. Through DISEC, these voices can be amplified, and their calls for peaceful resolution, regional sovereignty, and protection of civilians can influence the broader discourse.

Furthermore, DISEC's disarmament mission is directly relevant to Vietnam. The use of chemical agents such as napalm and Agent Orange, the introduction of advanced military technologies into a developing region, and the proliferation of arms to insurgent and government forces alike all raise profound questions about ethical warfare, international law, and global responsibility. DISEC can shape norms on the use and distribution of such weapons and explore enforcement through voluntary treaties or monitoring bodies.

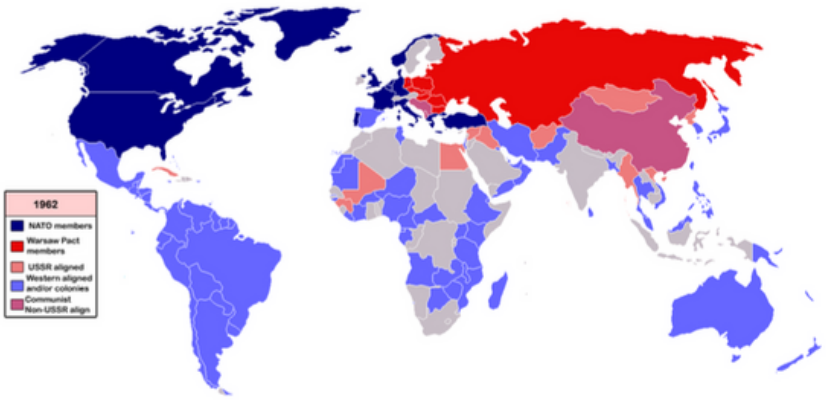
The committee must also consider the UN's limitations. Any recommendation that lacks buy-in from the major powers risks being ignored or undermined. Thus, the committee must work strategically, balancing idealism with pragmatism, proposing measures that are both principled and feasible in a divided international environment.

Ultimately, DISEC's challenge is to reassert the role of international cooperation in a time of great power rivalry. Delegates must consider how the UN can remain relevant and effective amid Cold War polarization and find ways to fulfill its mandate even when consensus among superpowers is elusive. Through creativity, diplomacy, and historical awareness, DISEC can model what multilateral action might achieve—if the political will exists to pursue it.

Bloc Positions and Alliances

As the Vietnam War unfolded within the larger context of the Cold War, it fractured the international community along sharp ideological lines. The global divide between communist and capitalist states has shaped not only the battlefield in Vietnam but also the diplomatic battleground within the United Nations and other international institutions. By January 1970, these bloc positions remain entrenched, presenting both obstacles and opportunities for DISEC delegates attempting to navigate a path toward de-escalation and disarmament.

The Western bloc, led by the United States, includes most NATO members and key allies such as Australia, Japan, and South Korea. This group has uniformly backed the South Vietnamese government as a bulwark against communist expansion. Their policy positions tend to favor state sovereignty, non-intervention in friendly regimes, and resistance to insurgencies that threaten democratic or pro-Western governments. However, fissures have begun to emerge. Western European countries, particularly France and West Germany, have expressed growing discomfort with the American war effort. While not openly breaking from the U.S., these governments increasingly support negotiated settlements and reductions in military involvement.



Map Displaying the Loyalties of Each Nation During the Cold War

The Eastern bloc, led by the Soviet Union, provides comprehensive support for North Vietnam. The USSR frames its position as anti-imperialist and presents itself as a champion of national liberation movements worldwide. Alongside material assistance to North Vietnamese forces, the Soviet Union advocates for an end to U.S. military presence in Southeast Asia. However, its alliance with China has become increasingly tense. The Sino-Soviet split, now a pronounced ideological and strategic rift, complicates coordination. China supports North Vietnam as part of its broader revolutionary solidarity, but distrusts Soviet intentions and is wary of being drawn into superpower confrontations. This disunity within the communist world presents a possible opening for creative diplomacy.

Non-aligned countries, particularly those from the newly independent states of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, offer some of the most critical and compelling perspectives on the Vietnam War. These states often view the conflict as a continuation of colonialism, with Vietnam representing the aspirations of postcolonial nations seeking independence and dignity. India, Indonesia, Egypt, Ghana, and Yugoslavia, among others, have called for ceasefires, peace negotiations, and respect for Vietnamese self-determination. These countries may be uniquely positioned to mediate or propose third-party peacekeeping missions that avoid the biases of Cold War blocs.

Latin American nations present a more mixed picture. Countries like Cuba support North Vietnam in line with their revolutionary ideologies, while others, such as Brazil or Argentina, lean toward the Western bloc. However, even pro-Western Latin American states are wary of heavy militarization and external intervention in sovereign affairs, offering nuanced positions that emphasize diplomacy and national sovereignty.

African states, many of which only recently gained independence, are particularly attuned to the language of decolonization. While official policy positions vary, many African leaders view Vietnam through a moral lens, identifying with its anti-imperial struggle. Their presence in the General Assembly lends moral weight to resolutions that criticize military aggression and call for peaceful resolution.

Southeast Asian neighbors—Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines—are directly affected by the war.

Some serve as logistical staging grounds for U.S. operations, while others fear destabilization and spillover violence. Thailand and the Philippines support U.S. efforts through security pacts, while Laos and Cambodia walk a tightrope between neutrality and unwilling complicity due to the covert bombing campaigns and guerrilla infiltration along their borders.

For DISEC delegates, understanding these alignments is critical. Bloc politics will shape voting dynamics, speech content, and coalition-building. Delegates should also consider the possibility of bloc realignment—what compromises, assurances, or diplomatic overtures might draw support across ideological lines? Which states might serve as bridges between East and West? Can non-aligned voices take the lead in proposing realistic, balanced frameworks for disarmament and negotiation?

By dissecting the positions and priorities of each bloc, delegates can better predict debate trends, identify leverage points, and craft proposals with broader appeal. Bloc politics are not immovable—they are the product of fear, ideology, history, and opportunity. A skillful diplomat can shape them.

Humanitarian Impact and Civilian Consequences

The Vietnam War has inflicted one of the most devastating humanitarian crises of the postwar era. By January 1970, the toll on civilians far surpasses even the already staggering military casualties. Civilians in both North and South Vietnam bear the brunt of combat operations, aerial bombardments, and the socio-political upheaval that accompanies war on their soil. The impact is not limited to the physical devastation of villages and infrastructure but also includes the psychological trauma, displacement, and long-term health consequences that may endure for generations.

The Horrifying Results of Biological Warfare in Vietnam

Estimates suggest that over two million Vietnamese civilians have been killed, wounded, or displaced as a result of the conflict. Villages have been razed during U.S. and ARVN search-and-destroy operations intended to eliminate Viet Cong strongholds. These actions often result in mass civilian casualties and have contributed to deepening resentment among local populations. The deliberate targeting or incidental destruction of civilian areas raises severe questions about compliance with international humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Conventions.

The use of chemical weapons, such as Agent Orange and other herbicides, has had profound ecological and public health consequences. Intended to defoliate jungles and deny cover to Viet Cong forces, these substances have contaminated water sources, destroyed agricultural productivity, and caused birth defects and cancer among exposed populations. The long-term impact of chemical warfare on Vietnam's environment and people remains incalculable.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) represent another urgent concern. Families fleeing conflict zones have flooded into urban centers like Saigon, Hue, and Da Nang, creating sprawling slums with inadequate sanitation, food, and medical care. International aid efforts are severely constrained by limited access and the politicization of humanitarian relief. Refugees have also fled across borders into Laos and Cambodia, straining those nations' fragile infrastructure and risking further regional instability.

Civil liberties have eroded throughout South Vietnam under the pressure of war. The South Vietnamese government has instituted emergency laws, censorship, arbitrary detention, and military tribunals in an effort to quell dissent and suppress suspected Viet Cong sympathizers. These tactics have alienated portions of the population and undermined international support. In the North, state control over daily life has tightened, and dissent is met with swift punishment, though the regime continues to portray its struggle as one of national liberation.

The war has also affected children disproportionately. Many have been orphaned, conscripted into militias, or traumatized by violence. Educational institutions have been shuttered or repurposed for military use. Malnutrition and disease are rampant among young populations, especially in rural and contested areas. Non-governmental organizations and faith-based missions attempt to provide relief, but their efforts are inconsistent and often under threat.

For DISEC, these humanitarian realities are central. Disarmament is not only a strategic or legal issue—it is a moral one. The tools of war deployed in Vietnam have undermined the core principles of international humanitarian law. This committee must reckon with how to prevent further abuses, protect vulnerable populations, and ensure accountability for violations. Delegates should also examine whether international humanitarian intervention is feasible or even permissible under existing UN frameworks. Can DISEC propose mechanisms for monitoring human rights abuses? Should it recommend restrictions or bans on the use of certain weapons? Can the global community be mobilized to respond to civilian suffering without triggering escalation?

The Vietnamese people, above all, are not abstract symbols in an ideological war—they are human beings. Their suffering demands action. It is up to DISEC to determine whether the international system is capable of providing relief, accountability, and peace.

Questions to Consider

As the Disarmament and International Security Committee convenes under emergency powers in January 1970, the challenges it faces are as profound as they are complex. Delegates are tasked not only with discussing technical frameworks for de-escalation and disarmament, but also with confronting the moral, legal, and political crises inherent in the Vietnam War. This section outlines the key questions that must guide committee debate and serve as the foundation for any potential resolutions.

1. **Can meaningful disarmament occur in a guerrilla war?** The Vietnam War is not a conventional conflict between two uniformed armies. Instead, it features asymmetric warfare, irregular combatants, and shifting battle lines. How can DISEC address the proliferation of small arms and the use of unconventional tactics within the context of a broader disarmament mission? Is it possible to regulate arms transfers or implement verification mechanisms in such an environment?
2. **What limits should be placed on the types of weapons used in conflict?** The use of napalm, Agent Orange, and other chemical agents raises serious concerns about adherence to international norms. Should DISEC recommend the restriction or outright banning of certain classes of weapons in Vietnam? What precedent might such restrictions set for future conflicts, and how can compliance be enforced?
3. **How should the international community respond to civilian suffering?** From mass displacement to chemical exposure and systemic poverty, the civilian toll of the war is immense. Is there a role for international humanitarian monitoring or third-party peacekeeping? Can DISEC create a framework for civilian protection without infringing on sovereignty or exacerbating tensions between global powers?
4. **Should the UN recognize a path toward Vietnamese self-determination?** The original Geneva Accords promised national elections that never occurred. How should DISEC address the question of political legitimacy in Vietnam? Is there a diplomatic solution that respects both Vietnamese self-rule and international legal norms? How can the UN support peace without appearing to take sides?
5. **Can a multilateral framework be created amid Cold War division?** With the United States and Soviet Union supporting opposing sides, traditional consensus-building is strained. Are there viable third-party mediators who could broker a compromise? Can non-aligned nations take the lead in proposing solutions, and will their voices be respected in committee and beyond?
6. **What is the role of regional actors and neighbors?** Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand face increasing spillover from the war. Should DISEC propose regional security arrangements or jointefforts to prevent further destabilization? How should the UN treat the secret and semi-secret operations being conducted in those states by both Vietnamese and external actors?

7. **How can DISEC establish its own relevance and legitimacy?** As a General Assembly committee, DISEC lacks enforcement authority. Yet its ability to define norms, shape international opinion, and recommend action is substantial. How can delegates ensure that their work leads to practical results, and not simply rhetorical statements? What mechanisms can translate committee debate into meaningful change on the ground?

These questions will shape the course of committee. They are not mutually exclusive, and many may intersect in the drafting of resolutions and working papers. Delegates must think not only as diplomats representing national interests, but also as architects of a more humane, lawful, and secure international order.

Conclusion and Guiding Philosophy

The Vietnam War is a crucible not only for the people of Southeast Asia, but for the international system itself. The failure of diplomacy, the pervasiveness of violence, and the inability of existing institutions to mediate the conflict reflect a world caught in the grips of ideological paralysis. DISEC's emergency session at GatorMUN XXIII must confront not only the symptoms of war, but the systemic weaknesses that allow such conflicts to fester and explode.

Delegates must approach this simulation not as passive observers of history, but as active agents of change. The committee's work is not confined to ceasefires or condemnation; it is a space to test new frameworks for cooperation, reconsider the rules of engagement in a divided world, and lay the groundwork for a more resilient global peace architecture. In this moment, the committee has the opportunity to move beyond the binary of East versus West, and to imagine a multilateral response rooted in justice, responsibility, and courage.

Delegates are encouraged to bring forward not only well-researched arguments, but creative, actionable, and balanced proposals. The stakes of the war—millions of lives, regional stability, and the moral legitimacy of international law—are immense. The words spoken and written in committee may not end the Vietnam War, but they can shape how the global community responds to conflict, perceives legitimacy, and defines peace.

Let this committee serve as a proving ground for those values. Let it reflect the strength of international cooperation and the unrelenting pursuit of peace. History has already recorded the tragedies. It is up to you to propose the solutions.