DELEGATE GUIDE TO POSITION PAPERS

POSITION PAPERS
Once you have completed your preliminary research, you are ready to write your position paper. Pine Crest requires delegates to write one single-spaced page paper for each topic area.

Each position paper has three basic parts: your country’s national interests, your country’s national policies, and your opinion on potential resolution components.

- National interests are what a country would like to see happen in the world (e.g. Cameroon, a lesser developed country troubled by terrorism, wants to reduce the incidence of terrorism to stabilize its government). These interests are not subject to compromise, but instead generally idealized goals or methods of solving specific problems.
- National policies are the country’s attempts to secure its interests (e.g. Cameroon, in an effort to combat terrorism, has sought to enter into new extradition treaties). These policy positions are usually open to negotiation.
- Your opinions on potential resolution components are your responses to the “Proposed Solutions” and “Questions A Resolution Must Answer” sections of the Study Guide. Although these sections provide flexibility, you need to keep in mind the interests of your nation. Possible resolutions must be consistent with your country’s national interests and current national policies (e.g. Cameroon feels that any resolution on the prevention of terrorism must assign to the injured state the right to try the terrorists. In addition, Cameroon would not be averse to the establishment of an international information network on terrorism. Cameroon, however, will not support any resolution that allows terrorist acts to be protected from extradition under the political offense exception doctrine).

Writing your Position Papers should make you think about the information you have researched and help you to express ideas concisely and clearly, making you better prepared for the conference.

HOW TO WRITE A POSITION PAPER
The structuring of the Position Papers is intended to elicit responses from the delegates that provide a clear picture of a nation’s stance on a particular topic area. By providing an outline of a Position Paper, we hope that delegates will be able to illustrate clear knowledge of their country’s policies and interests instead of simply regurgitating parts of the Study Guide. However, all delegates should also read the section on Position Papers in their study guides and heed their director’s specific instructions.

A Position Paper should include three sections, outlined below:

A. Background of the Topic
   • In your country’s opinion, what are the main elements of the problem?
   • What are the roots of those elements?

B. Position taken by your delegation
   • What are your national interests in the situation?
   • What are your nation’s policies on the topic?
   • What steps would you like to see taken to deal with the problem?

C. Justification
   • What are your main reasons for supporting these positions?
   • What do you predict will be the main opposition to your proposals?

Position Papers should roughly adhere to the following form, with the Country, the Committee, and the Topic included at the top.

Please limit each topic area to one single-spaced typed page.
SAMPLE POSITION PAPER

Committee: Disarmament and International Security
Topic A: Nuclear Test Ban
Country: The Republic of Sierra Leone
School: Pine Crest School
Name: First Last (EmailAddress)

A. The nuclear test ban issue has been the first item on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament since 1978 with good reason. In 1963, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the USSR entered into the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT), which prohibited testing in the atmosphere and underwater. In 1974, the United States and the USSR entered into the Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT) which placed an upper limit of 150 kilotons on nuclear tests.

The next logical step, a comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT), has been long overdue. Nuclear weapon testing allows the arms race to continue and even escalate. The implementation of a test ban would slow down the development of new nuclear weapons and thereby slow down the arms race. Furthermore, a CTBT would not, as some states have claimed, threaten the stability of the policy of nuclear deterrence, on which both superpowers rely. In fact, a CTBT would maintain stability by preventing innovations and developments which could potentially give one nuclear state a unilateral advantage. Moreover, the increasing use of super-computers has essentially eliminated the need for actual testing.

B. The Republic of Sierra Leone believes disarmament to be crucial for the maintenance of worldwide security and considers a nuclear test ban to be an important step in the process of reaching that goal. Sierra Leone is not a nuclear power nor does it aid other countries in producing nuclear weapons.

Our policy in the past has been to work diligently toward a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. We wish to accomplish this goal through negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament. In accordance with this policy, the Resolution 485 banning nuclear testing in Africa and Resolution 781 banning nuclear testing in Southeast Asia received wholehearted support from Sierra Leone. Furthermore, our government received glowing reports from the international press for our stance on the issue. The African Journal wrote that “To maintain the fundamental principles of Africa, the UN needs more nations like Sierra Leone” (Volume 48, 1993, pp. 12).

C. The Republic of Sierra Leone supports the following proposals for a nuclear test ban treaty: The treaty must be a comprehensive and permanent one. Although Japan’s proposal to have a progressive lowering of the threshold limit until it reached zero is an interesting idea, not only does this legitimize nuclear weapon testing, it also delays a true resolution of the problem. In addition, it gives the nuclear states a greater opportunity to escape their obligations through inevitable loopholes in the treaty.

Although peaceful nuclear explosions could potentially bring about beneficial results, the nearly insurmountable difficulty in differentiating between nuclear tests for weapons and nuclear tests for peaceful purposes makes such a distinction infeasible. The proposal that a state must provide the Secretary-General with all relevant data about the planned explosion is laudable, yet proper assurance of the peaceful nature of a test would require a degree of monitoring to which most nuclear states would not agree.

States can rely not only on all national means of verification which are consistent with international law, but also an international verification system. Current seismic monitoring systems, such as the Norwegian Seismic Array (NORSAR), are sufficiently advanced to determine whether states are complying with a CTBT. In addition, the 1984 experiment involving the World Meteorological Organization/Global Telecommunications System (WMO/GTS) illustrates the viability of an international seismic network. As per the Ad Hoc Group’s report, Sierra Leone is in favor of an international network of seismic monitoring stations which would send their data to International Data Centers (IDCs) for analysis. These IDCs would automatically give out type I data (basic information) with type II data (data subjected to more advanced analysis) available upon request. Of course, even after the conclusion of a CTBT, there should be further research into the development of even more sensitive and accurate seismic monitoring equipment and analysis techniques. If the test ban treaty involved the gradual reduction of the threshold limit, then that limit should reflect current seismic monitoring technology. In addition, on-site inspections should be allowed.

Regarding compliance, a test ban treaty is of such paramount importance that violators should be punished. Yet the fact remains that embargoes would most likely have little if any effect on most nuclear states. Perhaps compliance measures will eventually rely on first convincing the superpowers, and any other nuclear states, to enter into a CTBT and then getting the superpowers themselves to ensure that their allies abide by the treaty.