Committee: United Nations Security Council

Agenda: Maintaining Irish Peace and European Unitedness amid Brexit Situation

I. Agenda Introduction

Ireland’s complicated history and political mismanagement led to an unsuccessful resolution of the Irish question of the 1920s, providing backgrounds for The Troubles (the three-decade conflict between nationalists and unionists in Northern Ireland) in the 1960s. Although the entire conflict can be shortened in the form of religious division and divisions that originated from the fundamental religious reforms of Protestants, the substantial division of politics and factions has been prevalent since Northern Ireland attained its autonomy. Especially in the 1970s, clashes between the police and the IRA aided paramilitary groups were extremely escalating, naming the region as ‘the last disputed area’ in Western Europe during the Cold War. The turmoil, paired with the suspension of Northern Irish autonomy, negatively affected British politics. For instance, members of the Sinn Fein, a nationalist party promoting unification agendas, were elected to take place in parliament, but never attended the meetings - a symbol of lawful resistance. In fact, the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, deployed active forces in Northern Ireland, making the political dilemma even worse. Increasing resistance from the feedback loop of governmental oppression demonstrated that a solution that could suffice the demands of both parties would be essential in guaranteeing security.

With the introduction of the Good Friday Agreement and the establishment of the European Union, disputes were temporarily settled. Economic ties between the north and south became more intimate than ever, and Great Britain was also actively managing such close relations. Major factions of the IRA renounced violent actions and Sinn Fein, the party that also operated fighting forces gave up on such movements. Although the peace process was completed in the 1990s, the comprehensive unity and salvation of safety concerns were established as the EU increased its influence over the British Isles in the new century. By the 2010s, more than 90% of security forces of the UK had returned to Great Britain, further securing the stability in that region.

However, in 2014, an independence referendum in Scotland started to imply some changes coming. Although the issue was denied, the states of the Kingdom were all trembled since it was one of the most modern acts of independence that could actually lead to a substantial upheaval inside the union triggering other states to attempt so. Such a separatist movement developed into a national one, which the United Kingdom had to endure as a whole. British Prime Minister David Cameron, who exploited the opportunity of the Brexit referendum to
extend his career, unfortunately had to end it with no clear exit plans provided. Although the initial intention for the referendum was to reaffirm the British people’s support for European Union and alleviate the rising Euroscepticism induced from low resilience it showed to economic despairs and external crisis like Syrian Civil War, the entire process turned out to be a political gamble that led to an unprecedented set of problems.

The successor, Minister May came up with a hard Brexit plan, which would have altered the UK's relations with the EU similar to any other nations in other continents, but had to reverse it due to the shock it would bring and maintenance of the Kingdom, including the Irish backstop. As soon as the referendum’s results were declared, Scotland, for example, voiced demands to put another referendum for independence, and Northern Ireland’s old agenda of reunifying with the Republic of Ireland revived. Along with these nations, the other European nations skeptical about the union's policy and actions also attempted to make a referendum or were replaced with new governments promoting such stances.

Therefore, the Brexit situation poses not only a great threat of border control and security but also tensions inside continental Europe about the perpetuation of the union, which has met the goal of maintaining peace inside but failed to solve domestic problems of each member state. When expanded, other regions currently in bond with the central government may potentially take action to gain autonomy or independence, which destabilizes the order in that region. Any further division of states within the current European order could eventually lead to an unstoppable series of events. Furthermore, with various historical events involved, the solution for the agenda would require the consideration of multiple viewpoints on the crisis.

When Yugoslavia was dissolved and ethnic conflicts rose, Europe had no choice but to watch the atrocities such as repatriation and genocide occurring under a government immature to commit to admistirational affairs that could mitigate divisive order of various ethinicities. The current crisis, if not addressed properly, will also likely escalate into further tragedies. It is critical that a sophisticated resolution that could extend the era of peace be devised.

II. Definition of Key Terms
The Irish Question

The Irish question is an issue regarding the Irish independence movement that swept across Ireland during the early 20th century. Due to various political failures and misdoings - which will further be explained in this report - the British government succumbed to the movement, and finally recognized its sovereign rights and position in international society in the late 1920s. Although Ireland was fully liberated of British control after World War 2, the northern region which decided to remain became another trigger for further disputes in later years. This implies how susceptible British politics is to the Irish question, which poses both diplomatic dilemmas and long-held historical disputes.

Irish Free State

Irish Free State refers to the result of the independence movement during the 19th century. After World War I, Britain had no more choice other than allowing autonomy due to parliament voting power’s unbalance. However, the term, being limited to administrative rights, rendered the diplomatic status of Ireland as a dominion subordinated to the British Commonwealth. Eventually, the Irish people shifted away from the influence of British monarch and successfully constituted a republic. Britain, although it refused its change to a republican state at first, recognized the Republic of Ireland secession from the Commonwealth in 1949.

Irish Republican Army (IRA)

Irish Republican Army, also known as the IRA, is an active paramilitary (though the distinction differs) group that seeks for the complete unification of Ireland supported by the
leadership of the Republic of Ireland. Its radical support for Irish nationalism has provoked countless acts of terrorism over the British Isles since the beginning of the independence movement. When the northern region was the only area left in British control, its main goal shifted from achieving political freedom to expelling all British armed forces from Ireland. Its’ formation, leadership and doctrines have continuously changed, and 10 Downing Street, which, although the Northern Irish representatives exist in parliament, officially views this organization as a terrorist group threatening British security, implying that the British is taking on a hard-line stance.

The United Kingdom, British Isles, Great Britain, England, Ireland, and Republic of Ireland

The United Kingdom, British Isles, Great Britain, England, Ireland, and Republic of Ireland all refer to different masses of land. The British Isles consists of two distinct islands: Great Britain and Ireland, which each compose of three—England, Scotland, and Wales—and two—Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland—countries. In the international community, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Island represent the United Kingdom, ruled by the Queen residing in the capital city of London. Therefore, the Republic of Ireland, although located inside the British Isles, currently has no hierarchical ties with the United Kingdom nor with mainland England. Also, other nations that are part of the United Kingdom do not send delegates to the United Nations, while it still has a degree of autonomy symbolized by regional parliaments established in each of the regional capitals.

The Troubles

Also known as the Northern Ireland conflict, The Troubles stands for almost three decades of British history of the post-World War. Rooting from a religious background, Northern Ireland failed to flexibly control tensions between the religious groups, which eventually led to conflict between stances over the unification of Ireland. With the formation of the IRA, the conflict turned into a constant combat between the public security forces and militias that sabotaged infrastructures all over the British Isles. During the 1970s, with the inauguration of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, actual quelling through force was actively done, invoking more responses of Republicans violently avenging. By restoring autonomy and allowing free border control inside Ireland, Northern Ireland was finally stabilized in the late 1990s with policies by the Northern Irish themselves implemented to the region. Still, some of the radical IRA members continue to spread the idea of reunifying Ireland through force and civilian casualties continue to occur, only on a smaller scale than the past.
Separatism

Separatism refers to the advocacy or practice of separation of a certain group of people from a larger body. Often originated from a wide variety of topics, including nationalism, ethnicity, religious beliefs, cultural backgrounds, and tribal relations, such movements rage fierce emotions within communities. Although separatist activists have mostly been accepting the rule of their central governments since WW2, with the acceleration of governmental integration, there have been substantial divisions of regions from all around the world. Especially in the case of Europe, historic backgrounds have been the cause of conflict and political turmoil within states. Numerous autonomous authorities erected from differing regions have been taking chances in referendums to achieve independence, but nearly all attempts so far have been rejected by the central government and its stakeholder nations that fear the spread of separatism.

“Hard Border” and “Soft Border” (Irish Border Question)

“Hard Border” and “Soft Border”, also known as the Irish border question, are the two key degrees of border control that were proposed after the implementation of Brexit. As the Republic of Ireland still remains in the European Union, the Irish border crossing the island serves as the external border of the union, imposing higher regulations on travel and trade. If the hard border were to be rebuilt, the UK security forces that left Ireland are due to return again. Such prospects have caused wide resistance amongst the Northern Irish. The “Soft border” policy, although supported by the EU as an alternative that could sustain Irish peace, has been rejected by the UK Parliament in fear of the dilution of goals brought forth by Brexit.

IV. Background Information

Historic Process

Tyrannical rule of the British government over Ireland caused discrimination against the Irish and major famines that undermined basic industrial capacities. Although Ireland was considered to be one of the mainland regions, it received treatment as harsh as that of colonies. Liberals within England politics and Irish republicans formed a coalition that led a legitimate withdrawal of southern Ireland. On the other hand, the IRA combated with British forces and committed terror attacks across the isles. Due to the religious differences that have existed ever since before the Irish Problem emerged, there exists obstacles for the entire island to leave the Kingdom. With the northern region still under British control, autonomy was introduced rapidly and the Westminster Charter of 1931 accelerated such movements. It only took about sixteen years for the Irish to declare
complete independence from the Kingdom after gaining autonomy. The UK was negative about the stances, but succumbed to the resistance after World War 2 when the empire was losing its territories globally.

However, the problem still remains due to religious disputes that expanded in the 1960s: the persecution of pro-Irish Catholics from pro-British protestants. The series of ethno-religious disputes that followed are called The Troubles. Actions of violent groups and overall resistance have been decreasing since the Irish independence. Yet, it was the British forces themselves that ignited harsher responses from the Irish corps. In 1972, airborne troops of Britain landed in Northern Ireland and quelled protesters. In this process, the troops killed 13 and injured much more. Fierce actions were triggered from the incident. In 1979, British royalty was murdered, leading to a drastic decrease in British investment for Northern Irish security. Civilian casualties also increased, worsening global views toward the regional conflicts. As the first intense conflict ever in the developed Western world after the Cold War, the Troubles attracted much attention from international society. While the Cold War had ended and Eastern Europe was liberated, the IRA and UK forces were still under conflict.

The Northern Ireland peace process was a series of steps to end the Northern Ireland conflict, or The Troubles. After the escalation of tensions over Northern Ireland, British authorities suspended its autonomy and directly governed the regions, which sparked even more violence and resistance. Although the conflict revolved around Ireland and the United Kingdom, it still remains in the form of civil wars from which the Unionists and Sinn Fein collided. With the United States mitigating the conflict between Unionists and Republicans within Northern Ireland after the end of the Cold War through deployment of special envoys, the IRA declared ceasefire in 1994, amid the deteriorated public opinion on the prolonged violence. Both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom joined the European Union, also reducing the amount of violence. The entire process was concluded with The Good Friday Agreement of 1998, which agreed on the reduction of UK security forces and restoration of autonomy by the Northern Irish.

Political Circumstances

Irish Backstop was a proposal presented by the May Cabinet, which actually modified the original question of referendum, leaving Northern Ireland within the European Union’s influence. A part of the Soft Border policy, Irish backstop implied that the EU's stance over the issue overwhelmed the British, which led to an absolute refusal by the parliament. Backstop also meant that an external border between Great Britain and
Ireland would be across the ocean. Due to such political failures, Minister May resigned and Boris Johnson replaced the place, and led a complete *de jure* withdrawal from the EU; still leaving *de facto* border across the Irish Sea. With the new proposal agreed upon by the EU, Johnson finished the Brexit process on 31st of January, 2020.

Although the undecided backstop is resolved and now clear, the system requests of the Northern Ireland parliament to decide whether to remain inside the buffer zone or not every four years. In other words, whenever the region decides to leave from British control, it is completely possible for another period of independence movement and suppression to begin again. Within this fragile structure, the Brexit final deals are still going on to decide on future relationships that the UK will have with the European Union. Although the authority to determine the direction of international politics lies within British cabinet, the most active moderator is actually the Northern Irish Parliament. The indefinite status of the border is certainly destined to create conflicts in the days to come, as it did in the past. Therefore, the region requires preemptive measures that could prevent the crisis that might arise. Combined with modern terrorism evolving, basic security enforcements are also required.

V. Position of Key Member Nations

*United Kingdom*

As the most responsible and related nation of the crisis, the responsibility that the British government owns is very heavy. Historic ties and responses involved with the British government can imply much to the nation-states entangled with ethnic disputes. Although the agenda is distinctively limited to the European Union, since the organization networks of such independence movements are expanding, it is also the UK's responsibility to present policies to effectively control domestic turmoils and prevent them from spreading outward to other regions of the world. In the debate, it is highly likely that the UK will take a role in providing key topics to be debated and also show recommendable solutions that the Western Hemisphere has used historically..

*Ireland*

Ireland currently is proved with no ties to the IRA or other organizations that actually support Irish unification. Ireland has retracted its constitution article about promoting forceful unification after the peace process was completed. However the public still supports the IRA and even aids them, therefore causing an alienated government stance. The moment this crisis can turn into a serious dispute between two
distinguished sovereign nations is when the public shows outrage against each other, and Ireland has always been on the verge of doing so. Maintaining internal affairs and safely securing border stability will be criteria for political success in this issue.

United States

Special envoy was deployed to Northern Ireland during the peace process, and this simply shows how much interest the United States have on the region. The UK and US are tied with a term called Special Relationship, which both call the other the most trusted security and informational ally. It would be a diplomatic failure if the US fails to placate the region since a portion of NATO forces staying in Europe for defense also stay inside the British Isles. As a historic mediator, and a nation that has its root on both ethnicities, suggesting brief outlines on how the Brexit dilemma will be resolved is recommended.

Spain

In 2017, Catalonia attempted to establish an independent government of its own, causing the central forces to quell such social activism immediately. Other than Catalonia, various regions that have been annexed by Spanish regimes also seek for independence. Demonstrations on a massive scale have been prevalent in many streets across the nation. Therefore, its stance on separatism and divisive nature combined with the agenda can surely provide a fresh view from an experienced country that has already gone through one.

Serbia

As one of the member states that once constituted Yugoslavian Union, it has gone through enormous conflicts after its dissolution. Due to the complicated political nature of Balkans, multiple ethnicities with various religious backgrounds competed to form a new government of their own. Kosovo, a part of Serbia, still fights to gain independence from Serbia. Its domestic affairs are still unstable, and many powers are still involved with the regional dispute in this region.

Belgium
The north and south each originate from completely different history and language; both already are under separate autonomous systems. Every time a general election is held, the nation goes under into a long period of mediation to officially form a cabinet that is functioning. Its capital Brussels has a role of housing all the core organs of the European Union, standing as both the most vulnerable and the most vital part of European politics and peace maintenance.

VI. Conclusion and Suggested Solutions

Many modern international political disputes-ranging from ethnic to religious conflicts-of the West are a part of this agenda. From separatism to border security, keeping the humanitarian and social crisis to its minimum and also keeping the stability of European order is extremely required. A wave of radical nationalism that could emerge from contemporary status can threaten the entire European community. Regular political conferences between the political parties of Northern Ireland, a border control policy based on the security militias of the citizens autonomously created, British forces intervention only in limited times, and constant supervisions of other nations concerned about the British Isles will sure help the risks to be controlled.

The United Nations’ goal of ensuring security and prosperity and repelling any inhumane actions that might happen needs to be pursued more than ever. Considering that the tragedies of modern warfare all originated from ethnic and regional disputes, it also aligns with preventions for bigger conflicts that can threaten the security of all continents. With more radicalism appearing in various nations across Europe, the vulnerability of politics and diplomacy is also rising. Before witnessing another set of catastrophes of genocide and massacre, Security Council’s resolution should now go forward and take actions.
VII. Bibliography

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