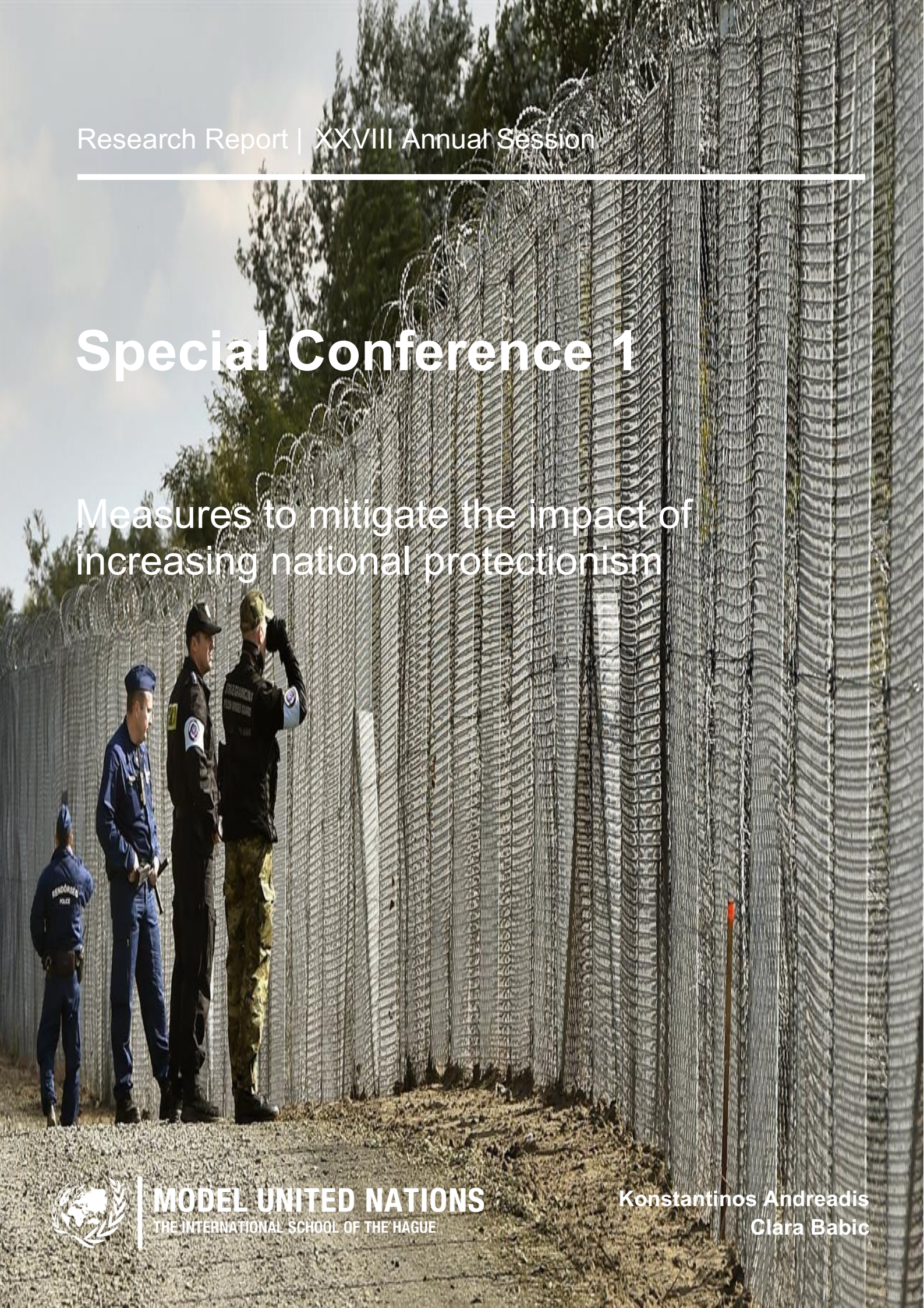


Special Conference 1

Measures to mitigate the impact of increasing national protectionism



Forum:	Special Conference 1
Issue:	Measures to mitigate the impact of increasing national protectionism
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Introduction

The slogan “America First” and its protectionist movement may be your first association when thinking about the impact of increasing national protectionism. But it is only a fraction of a development which has impacted our global trade and community very severely. For instance, physical barriers are being imposed or border control is strengthened, protecting a nation from foreign security threats (such as criminality or drugs) or from illegal immigration. Additionally, since the beginning of globalization, we have witnessed exponential changes in the way we communicate, trade and exchange knowledge and technology. We have become an interdependent society, aiming to aid each other’s economy and strengthen our bonds. However, globalization is also regarded as a threat to countries’ economies. It is said to harm domestic developments, causing foreign competition to be combatted at all costs. Thus, to protect one’s nation even further, trade restrictions and barriers are imposed. Hence, a nation shields itself from foreign influences or dependencies to foster its own development.

However, as globalization evolves, several member states wish to fulfil their duties in defending their nation, regardless of their severe consequences. National protectionism describes the state of a country when it dangerously misuses its right to protection to isolate itself from the global community. And as multiple far-right wing parties and movements in Europe have shown, the demand for more self-centred trade and security policies has increased in the past decades. For instance, various politicians have asked for a strict limit on refugees seeking asylum in a country and the criminalization of the latter, reiterating the importance of a nation’s physical borders. Brexit could be brought into connection with the issue at hand as well since it represents the “freedom” that is wished to be obtained, refusing collaboration with multinational frameworks.



Thus, barriers, economic or physical for defensive or offensive purposes to protect nations are able to cause severe damage to our world if implemented more frequently amongst member states of the United Nations.

Definition of Key Terms

Protectionism

In order to protect and foster nation's own interests (such as their economy from foreign competition or to improve national security), barriers are imposed, e.g. by means of trade restrictions or physical walls.

Globalization

It is the rapidly expanding development seen in international trade, communication, and collaboration of companies and individuals in conjunction with new means of transportation. Thus, goods and services are exchanged on a global scale, resources, investments, and workers are reallocated (often combined with outsourcing), and knowledge and technology are shared.

Trade barrier

A restriction imposed by a nation's government on the exchange of goods or services. It opposes the concept of free trade.

Quotas

A government can impose trade quotas by limiting the quantity of goods imported for a specific period to protect domestically manufactured products or services.

Subsidies

Government benefit intending to assist an economic sector by payment or tax reduction, in order to encourage its domestic development or to combat foreign competition by permitting the business or individual to offer lower prices.

General Overview

Economy

The economic aspect of the issue is of utmost importance since many recent developments such as Brexit or "Bring back our jobs" have influenced the way member



states trade on a global scale. Such demands, however, result from far-right wing parties or far-left wing parties opposing globalization and calling for policies shielding domestic from foreign economies. While the rise of populists might have not entirely succeeded in Europe, the President of the USA did achieve his goal to change some of the domestic economic policies to benefit his country. He argued that financial security is needed if conflicts arose and a dependency (e.g. through outsourcing) only harms the US's economy. Thus, higher taxes on imports were imposed and other forms of trade barriers, such as quotas, were used to shield his economy from foreign competition.

Other member states' governments have passed protectionist laws as well, either by providing more subsidies to domestic businesses or individuals or by making it more difficult for domestic enterprises to negotiate with foreign investors. Additionally, quotas and taxes are being imposed. As a study from the European Parliament has shown, only from 2008 to 2014, ~ 700 measures have been taken in order to limit trade by imposing border barriers and by other forms of restrictive measures. ("Protectionism in the G20 (2015)")

Furthermore, one significant reason for the protectionist developments of several member states is the expansion of globalization. They feel threatened by the impact it has on their economy and intend to minimize the damage by combatting interdependent (free) trade and the concept of outsourcing. Thus, they wish to offer lower prices to satisfy the increasing demand of their population and discourage foreign investors from being able to profit from their economy. In Addition, the fear of becoming too dependent on other nations leads to isolation. However, as globalization advances and our global market with its volatile prices is forced to rely on a network of member states, a nation alone cannot survive without its trade partners.

Security

During and after the refugee in 2015, border control was improved in numerous member states. In order to protect their nation, leaders enhanced the border's capability by increasing staff, quality of defense equipment or by proposing new laws allowing immigration to be criminalized and stopped. Thus, one example might be the border between the United States of America and Mexico. Despite global concerns, their President has decided to construct a physical wall, aiming to stop illegal immigration and smuggling of drugs. This decision can be related to the US's security concerns since criminality and refugees should not cross their border. Hence, protection is ensured by imposing physical barriers, however, such moves have been criticized. Pope Francis stated that "[...] in the social and civil context as well, I appeal not to create walls but to build bridges [...]", emphasizing on the importance of global cooperation instead of individual isolation. In Addition, member states have

increased their funding on their research and development industry aiding their defense, thus attempting to protect themselves in the case of an emergency. Although security is important to peace and prosperity, it can also be used to justify drastic protectionist measures.

Major Parties Involved

Israel

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine is vital to the issue of protectionism. Before, the Arab State (now Palestine) felt threatened by the creation of a Jewish State (now Israel), because they did not accept their settlements in their territory. Last, Palestine is occupying the West bank and the Gaza Strip and its borders with Israel are prone to violence between civilians as well as air strikes. Therefore, both governments disagree over issues regarding their border and its security, since bombings by radicals have increasingly posed severe threats. Additionally, the right to return of civilians remains unclear and Israeli settlements in the region occupied by Palestinians are disputed amongst local politicians.

However, as the President of the United States of America declared Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and relocated an US embassy to the latter, the conflict deteriorated. The Gaza blockade encountered many casualties and the move was criticized internationally, due to the complicated nature and history of the issue. Furthermore, as Israel and Palestine are using their physical borders as “anti-terror” fences, their concrete walls and closed/restricted areas demonstrate the strict implementation of the protectionist measures taken. Nonetheless, through multiple agreements and armistices, borders are being modified. And the Road Map for Peace once drafted by the European Union, United Nations, United States of America and the Russian Federation proposes a two-state solution in which the State of Palestine would include the West Bank and the Gaza strip alongside the State of Israel. Last, progress will also depend on foreign influences, thus countries pursuing their interests and fuelling the crisis with their support.

People’s Republic of China (PRC)

The People’s Republic of China borders the former British colony Hong Kong, often referred to as “Special Administrative Region of China”. Even though their autonomy has been granted by the Chinese government to a certain degree, protests and disputes between both governments have shaped their relation over the past few years. Hong Kong has isolated itself almost completely from mainland China by pursuing a different economy (Hong

Kong Dollar) and political system. However, they still depend on choices made by China's government and protectionism is of utmost importance to its call for independence.

India

After British soldiers were forced to leave former West Pakistan (now Pakistan) and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), the control of several North-western territories (Kashmir, for instance) still remains a controversial issue today. Furthermore, as Bangladesh has received support by China, the conflict has reached an international scale. However, India attempts to protect its interests to both bordering nations but faces difficulties as its bordering governments demand the latter as well. Thus, as India and Pakistan share territories and vital resources, and since illegal immigration deteriorated the situation additionally, protectionist measures were and are encouraged by both governments.

United States of America (USA)

As stated in the introduction, "America First" has become a popular symbol of protectionism. As the President of the United States, Mr. Trump stated that jobs need to be brought back to America since their domestic economy is being severely harmed by foreign influences. Those include globalization and outsourcing. A Tweet stating: "To protect our Country we must protect American Steel! #AMERICA FIRST" (Twitter, @realDonaldTrump on 5th of March 2018) following the alleged threat of the US depending too much on its steel imports expresses the President's policy. He wishes to end the decentralized manufacturing process and foster his domestic economy by encouraging businesses to move back to the USA. However, his concerns could be justified partly with a graph of the US Census Bureau showing the US trade in goods with China which marks a 375.23bn \$ trade deficit in 2017 between imports and exports. Thus, the USA aims to become self-sustaining and independent from other nations with Acts being signed and enforced by the President.

In Addition, as the President has promised several times to "build a wall" between the USA and Mexico in order to stop illegal immigration and the trafficking of drugs and criminality, a protectionist physical barrier is to be created. However, this move has been heavily criticized and the details of the project still remain unknown to the public.

Russian Federation

As the oil price drops and the Ukraine crisis deteriorates, the Russian Federation is facing severe financial instabilities. The dependency on its trade partners is at its peak as they attempt to favor domestic goods and services. However, they have been and remain the second most protectionist country of the G20 (2015, a study by the European Parliament).

Additionally, they do not report all decisions concerning their economy and trade with sufficient transparency, and they have proposed bans on manufacturers if they do not conform to the localization of production in the Russian Federation.

India

The government of India has imposed multiple investment barriers and even though they have, even though their export and behind-the-border measures have declined from 2008 to 2014, they continuously favor their own economy instead of collaborating freely with other member states.

United Kingdom

After the United Kingdom held a referendum and decided to leave the European Union, their plan was to foster their domestic economy without having to pay a contribution to the European Union members anymore, however, the definitive terms remain unclear and single market access is being discussed. This expresses their need for financial independence from foreign influences.

Hungary

During the refugee crisis, Hungary maintained carefully its border to prevent all illegal immigration, thus refusing to cooperate with other member states. Plans were made to renew their border with high-tech equipment, improving their border control.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

The World Trade Organization is vital to the economic national protectionism since it continuously surveys countries' economic developments and warns against protectionist measures taken by of G20 members. In a "Report to the TPRB from the Director-General on trade-related developments" published on the 4th of July 2016, it states that "the best safeguard we have against protectionism is a strong multilateral trading system." The latter reiterates their call for a global trade excluding protectionist's trade restrictions.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of Event
2015-2017	During the European migrant crisis in 2015, Hungary builds along its border a barbed wire fence, effectively blocking the route to Germany. In 2017, believing that a second fence would strengthen the barrier and hold back migrants while their asylum

applications are reviewed, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán orders its erection, further stating: "It [will be] 155 kilometers long and 3 meters high and [will be] able to stop any masses of people".

23 January 2017

On the third day of his presidency, Trump signs an executive order withdrawing the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade agreement aiming to deepen economic ties between the twelve nations (bordering the Pacific Ocean) that signed the deal, slashing tariffs and fostering trade to boost growth. He goes on to say: "The Trans-Pacific Partnership is another disaster done and pushed by special interests who want to rape our country, just a continuing rape of our country. That's what it is, too. It's a harsh word: It's a rape of our country." (at a campaign rally in Ohio).

16 June 2015

During his announcement speech, President Donald Trump of the United States announces and promises that he will build "a great, great wall" on the United States-Mexico border. This soon becomes one of his most notorious pledges, which he emphasizes throughout his whole campaign, even stating that the construction of this multibillion-dollar wall along the US southern border would be paid for by Mexico.

2012

In the early 1980s, thousands of Bangladeshis illegally moved to neighboring Indian states in search of land or employment. By 1982, the growing influx caused a major ethnic backlash in many states, like Assam, leading to the slaughter of thousands of non-Assamese, or non-Indians. In 2012, although India's long borders with Nepal, China, Bhutan and Myanmar remained virtually borderless, the Indian government decides to construct a 4,000-kilometer fence to seal the India-Bangladesh international border. The entire stretch consists of plain, riverine, and jungle. Being heavily populated, cultivation is carried out until the last inch of the border. Today, the fence stands tall. However, it is marked by a high degree of porosity and checking illegal cross-border activities has been challenging. The main problem, as it was in the 1980s, is one of illegal migration from Bangladesh into India, so the fence's main purposes still are to curb infiltration, movements of militants and enhance management on the India-Bangladesh border. The construction of this fence was seen as an outrage among the Bangladeshi public, and the government of Bangladesh has made repeated protests to the Indian government over the matter.

7 August 2014

Russia imposes a new (and politically motivated) ban on agricultural products coming from countries in the European Union having taken sanctions against Russia in the context of the Ukrainian crisis.

2 April 2009

Heads of the G20 meeting in London pledge "We will not repeat

the historic mistakes of protectionism of previous eras"

2002

Israel unilaterally began the construction of a wall separating it from the West Bank in order to “keep Palestinian attackers from entering Israeli territory”. In 2004, as many Palestinians claimed that the barrier was a tool for unlawful annexation, the International Court of Justice in the Hague deemed the wall illegal and called on Israel to take it down in 2004. However, it has spread even further instead. According to Israeli wall proponents, violent incidents have significantly gone down since the construction of the wall. These decreases are shown to have been substantially inflated.

2000

The Great Firewall of China, also known as the Golden Shield Project, is the Chinese government's internet censorship and surveillance project. Developed and operated by the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), it restricts access to many well-known social media sites in the Western world, such as Instagram or YouTube, but also search engines such as Google and Bing, and email service providers like Gmail and Hotmail, shut down by the authorities without much warning. Apart from that, a new cyber security law that imposes oppressive requirements on nearly every foreign company doing business in China was introduced. Failure to comply to these requirements means that said companies will be forced to leave China.

1995

Two of Spain's southernmost cities, Ceuta and Melilla, are extremely close to the neighbouring North-African country of Morocco, and have been controlled by Spain for hundreds of years. However, it wasn't until 1995 that Spain built its first modern fence with the specific goal of keeping immigrants out. Support for its expansion has increased in recent years due to ISIS-related fears.

3 May 1933

In an early wave of protectionist fervour, the US implements the 'Buy American' Act, which clearly lays the rules for foreign procurement by government entities in a very non-discriminatory and transparent way. In 2009, as part of his stimulus package, former President Barack Obama revitalizes this act.

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

March 25, 1957- The Treaty of Rome, which created the European Economic Community (EEC), a common market and established a customs union, is signed by Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany. Along with the treaty of Maastricht, this treaty forms the constitutional basis of the European Union.



January 1, 1994- The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is an agreement which eliminated most of the tariffs on trade between Mexico, Canada and the United States. In a tweet, however, President of the United States Donald Trump calls NAFTA "the worst trade deal ever made", then blaming it for wiping out US manufacturing jobs, claiming it allowed companies to move factories to Mexico where labor is 'immensely' cheaper.

January 1, 1995- The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an intergovernmental organization dealing with international trade. Being the largest international economic organization so far, it provides a framework to participating countries for the negotiation of, for example, trade agreements. Although not many people believe it, WTO's success at preventing trade wars far outweighs its failure to promote trade talks (e.g. Doha Round).

1995- The WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade ("TBT Agreement") was signed at the conclusion of the 1979 Tokyo Round of Trade Negotiations, but actually comes into force in 1995. Broadly, this agreement tries to ensure that technical regulations (defined as mandatory standards, they cannot be more restrictive than is necessary to fulfill a legitimate objective), standards (voluntary standards), testing and certification procedures (so, demonstrating that a certain product meets all legislative requirements) do not create unnecessary obstacles to international trade. However, under the TBT Agreement, members are still given the adequate discretion to, for example, deviate international standards where they would be inappropriate for the fulfilment of the legitimate objective (which can include national security requirements, or the protection of human health and the environment as well as other policy interests), or maintain higher standards if they are scientifically justified. Members are also not prevented from taking the necessary measures to ensure that their standards are met. By setting a Code of Good Practice, to which over 200 standards-setting bodies apply, both governments and non-governmental or industry bodies, the agreement indicates that the procedures used to decide whether a product conforms with relevant standards have to be fair. Thus, it discourages any methods which would, for example, give domestically produced goods an inequitable advantage.

November, 2001- The Doha Round, the latest round of trade negotiations among the World Trade Organization Membership, is officially launched at the WTO's Fourth Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar. Its goal was to achieve a major reform of the international trading system by introducing lower trade barriers and revised trade rules. The Doha Round can also be referred to as the Doha Development Agenda, as one of its objectives was to improve the trading prospects of developing countries. Three problems rapidly became evident. Firstly, although an atmosphere of solidarity was promoted between developing



countries, deep divisions arose, for example, between agricultural net importers and exporters, thus preventing constructive proposals for liberalization. Then, countries such as China enormously transformed themselves during the round, becoming global export powerhouses yet continuing to plead developing country status. Finally, the US (in particular) proved to be largely irresolute in taking on its own farming sector, which demanded improbable amounts of market access abroad in return for subsidy cuts at home.

February 4, 2016- The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a trade agreement between 12 countries (Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam, and the United States), whose initial aim was to lower both non-tariff and tariff barriers to trade. However, after the Trump administration withdrew the United States' signature, the agreement could not come into force.

As for physical barriers, like walls or fences, there have not been any significant summits or international laws passed concerning the construction of said barriers like there have been for trade ones, and although some peace talks have been held by disputing countries, like India and Pakistan, they have not been effective in subduing tensions.

Past UN involvement

Trade reform, removal of protectionist measures vital to economic growth. Second committee hears in debate on macroeconomic policy questions.

<<https://www.un.org/press/en/2013/gaef3376.doc.htm>>

Conference on World Financial and Economic Crisis. Dismantling of protectionist trade measures and fulfilment of aid pledges among the issues debated.

<<https://www.un.org/press/en/2009/dev2756.doc.htm>>

Possible Solutions

The impact of protectionism can be discussed from the point of view of its advantages and disadvantages, and in this sense, economists and labour groups have described many advantages and disadvantages to protectionism and its counterpart free trade. Perhaps the single biggest problem with protectionism (can also be for any kind) is its one-sided nature. Advantages of protectionism can generally be realized for the country acting to protect itself and its own interests, where it enacts measures such as import tariffs, import quotas, or production subsidies to become more competitive at the international level in a specific industry. The other side of the argument describes the disadvantages of free trade, which has resulted in the exploitation of labour, environmental destruction, and loss of domestic industry. Protectionism can be and has been a natural consequence or response to a situation perceived as unfair, such as a badly negotiated prior free trade agreement. The



arguments for and against protectionism or free trade most likely do not have a single, closed-form solution, and measures have to be considered on a case by case basis. This implies that for every protectionist measure (or conversely, for any free trade agreement) the complete trade circumstance has to be evaluated to arrive at win-win relationships.

The answer to protectionism is in win-win international trade, where balanced agreements and rational behaviour lead to clear shared benefits that would not otherwise come to exist. There are fundamental principles that should inform the analysis of solutions to efficient and balanced international trade. When these principles are not considered and enforced, protectionism is only a natural consequence. One is the principle of fairness or balance, implying that the benefits of a trade deal must apply to every party of the transaction (e.g., consumers in one country and workers in another country), and likewise implying that the risk of potential losses must also be equally distributed. This is particularly important considering lack of harmony in regulation across national boundaries, such as in laws of labour and environmental protection, which have led to irregular and one-sided exploitation. A second principle is one of shared accountability, where every party to a transaction can be held accountable for its responsibilities. A third principle is one of respect for the rights of citizens and workers, whereby parties to a transaction commit to ensure that the rights and wellbeing of workers and citizens are respected. In particular, this also requires that principles of win-win trade are not only agreed to on paper, but also that they are enforceable. A fourth principle is one of respect for cultural differences among countries party to a transaction, whereby each country commits to preserve and meet its laws, but also respect the laws and traditions of the other parties (without forcing the other party to behave in manners contrary to its laws and traditions). A fifth principle is one of respect for the environment, where all parties to a transaction have a common understanding that care for the environment is key to the long-term health of trade and nations.

Keeping in mind these 5 principles, it is essential that focus should more specifically be put in promoting transparency in trade, as well as international cooperation, developing resources, harmonizing intra-regional trade, reducing measures supporting uncompetitive production and evaluating the effects of world trade agreements on trade facilitation (cf. said strategies: Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential <http://encyclopedia.uia.org/en>)

On the other hand, the solutions to national protectionism when it comes to physical barriers, such as walls, have to be based off of some of these same principles. Although, across the world, building walls has become the political strategy favoured by nations, who are convinced that having these barriers is the only way to deal with difficult neighbours,

building walls between nations is not helpful at all. At best, they offer a temporary ease to deeper tensions, which usually remain unresolved by separation. It is true that some walls do not completely lack purpose. Building barriers to decrease the current flood of refugees in Europe could provide, as said before, temporary relief to host countries. However, separation barriers by themselves cannot fix the migration crisis; they are fundamentally a way to postpone making larger and harder policy decisions. During debate and in the resolutions it will be important to consider the sovereignty, attitude and safety of a country as stated in some of the previous principles, such as the 4th and 5th. Furthermore, a particular emphasis should be put on making sure that governments work together to ban or regulate what causes negative externalities to occur but also understand how such problems arise. Meaning that governments should try to limit the costs that are suffered by third parties, thus unrelated individuals, as a wall is built for example, but also understand that effective tools work not only at the border but also on either side of it. For instance, if a country wants to control unauthorized immigration, it should work on reducing the outflow of people by contributing to development projects in the sending countries and by creating sustainable legal processes to filter those it wants to come. On its side of the border, the country must enforce laws that for example sanction not just immigrants who enter illegally, but also those who profit from them, like their employers. Host countries should thus, instead of building walls and fences, focus on building better immigration systems, in which they would for instance effectively and efficiently handle asylum requests, in the Middle-East for example, instead of having immigrants risk their lives to get to Europe (this could also be applied to Bangladesh, Pakistan, Mexico) only to be sent back to their countries in the end. Affected countries should agree on a system that helps refugees and immigrants, by agreeing on certain conditions by which they can offer them residency (temporary or definitive) as well as a work permit for example, instead of attempting to hold them back at the borders, to only have them try to cross them illegally in a thousand different ways. By promoting development projects or assisting in any kind of help, affected countries can help reduce or even mitigate the cause of what made there be a wall in the first place.

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