



SPECPOL

**TrojMUN '25 SPECPOL Study Guide
Addressing foreign interference with elections.**

Chairs: Ilian Gergišák and Natálie Babáková

Contents

I. Get to know your chairs.....	1
II. What is SPECPOL?.....	2
III. Country matrix.....	2
IV. Topic overview.....	3
V. Key terms.....	3
VI. Timeline.....	7
VII. Key players.....	9
VIII. Resolution considerations.....	11
IX. Citations.....	12

I. Get to know your chairs

Ilian Gergišák

Hey, I'm Ilian and I've been doing MUN for roughly 3 years now. I love debating and I am very passionate during debates, due to it being one of my favorite interests. I enjoy approaching debates in more unorthodox ways, and making the debate more interesting for both me and my fellow debaters. Natalie and I chose to chair SPECPOL because we both enjoy debating about this topic and are eager to chair the committee and share our knowledge with our fellow delegates. During our time as your chairs, we will ensure that even first time debaters get a chance to speak, and although some delegates might not want to speak, we highly encourage everyone to participate, at least a little, towards the end resolution. We hope to make the conference both fun, yet formal, and we hope to make it a memorable experience. We also hope you will enjoy our committee and the punishments we have ready for you 😈. Be prepared and cautious :) If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask, no matter what. I wish you all good luck and I can't wait to see all of you soon!

Natalie Babáková

Hello everyone, I'm Natalie and I am very excited to be the chair of SPECPOL. I have been attending MUN debates for about 3 years and my love for debating has been growing with each conference I've participated in. MUN has become one of my favorite hobbies and I am beyond thrilled to chair after only being a delegate. Ilian and I will do our best to not only make the committee sessions fun and entertaining, but also help all the first-time delegates and encourage everyone to speak and participate. I am greatly interested in this topic and I can't wait for all the amazing arguments and debates that I'm sure all of you will come up with. I hope our

study guide will help and guide you with your research and we are excited to meet all of you. Good luck and get ready for some good punishments and debates :)

II. What is SPECPOL?

SPECPOL, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, is a committee within the United Nations (UN) which deals mainly with a broad range of issues covering a cluster of decolonization-related agenda items. It was established in 1993 when the Decolonization Committee (formerly the fourth committee) and the Special Political Committee merged in 1990 after the UN announced that they wanted 1990-2000 to be the “International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.” This was extremely important as 750 million people lived in colonized territory. As of now, the number has decreased drastically to around 2 million, which SPECPOL have yet to eradicate.

III. Country matrix

Within this committee, there will be no observers, non-governmental organizations, nor any countries holding veto powers. All countries will have equal votes. The country matrix consists of the following countries:

The Commonwealth of **Australia**

The Federative Republic of **Brazil**

The Dominion of **Canada**

The People's Republic of **China**

The Federal Republic of **Germany**

The Republic of **India**

The Islamic Republic of **Iran**

The State of **Israel**

The Republic of the **Philippines**

The **Russian** Federation

The Kingdom of **Saudi Arabia**

The Republic of **South Africa**

The Kingdom of **Spain**

The **Syrian** Arab Republic

The Republic of **Türkiye**

Ukraine

The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

The **United States of America**

IV. Topic overview

If you haven't been living under a rock for most of your life, or if you're not completely dense, you've probably heard the term "election" before. Although elections are widely broadcasted and a large interest for people worldwide, many are unaware of the fact that there can be some external interference in them. Election interferences have been a thing since roughly 49 BCE, when Julius Caesar paid off people who supported his views, but foreign election interferences are relatively new. The first genuine foreign interference was in 1796, when France attempted to influence the U.S. elections by spreading propaganda in favor of Thomas Jefferson, and thus was a way to sway the outcome of a democratic vote. Nowadays foreign interferences are more complex, but still stemming from the 1796 interference.

Foreign interference mostly occurs due to 4 main things: political Influence, ideological goals, strategic advantages, and destabilization (these terms will be explained further in Section V). All of these factors are main targets for countries, as all countries usually want what's best for themselves, hence foreign interference taking place. In order to minimize foreign interference, some countries take preventative measures (if possible), such as the increasing of cybersecurity to prevent cyberattacks, setting laws to prevent any illicit things from happening, etc.

V. Key terms

Every single topic in the world, whether it's MUN, science, etc., has terms specific to it. Since the topic is mainly about elections, this section will summarize important election-based terminology you might have to know to outsmart your enemy in case your country is absolutely in the wrong. At the end, there will also be a few links which have every single election term just in case you feel like perusing through them.

Absentee Ballot

A ballot which is submitted by a voter who cannot be present at a polling place / voting center.

Ballot

The official document, or electronic form, which is used to cast a vote.

Ballot Box

A secured container into which voters place their marked ballots.

Campaign

A series of actions designed to influence voters in an election.

Candidate

A person running for political office.

Congress

The legislative branch of the U.S. government, made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Congressional District

A political subdivision for electing U.S. representatives.

Constituency

All the voters of a particular district.

Convention

A formal meeting of party members to nominate candidates.

County

A major unit of local government.

Crossover Vote

A vote by a member of one party for a candidate of another party.

Deepfake

Digitally altered media used to mislead or manipulate public perception.

Electoral College

A group of representatives chosen to elect the president and vice president in the U.S.

Electorate

Those eligible to vote in an election.

Electors

Individuals chosen by voters to formally elect the president and vice president.

Electoral Fraud

Illegal interference in the election process, such as vote tampering.

Federal

Of or describing a union of states having a central government.

First-Past-the-Post (FPTP)

A voting system where the candidate with the most votes wins.

Foreign Interference

Efforts by foreign governments or entities to influence an election.

Franchise (Suffrage)

The right to vote in elections.

General Election

A nationwide or statewide election to choose government officials.

Gerrymandering

Manipulating district boundaries to benefit a particular party.

Gubernatorial Election

An election to choose a state governor.

Incumbent

The current officeholder running for re-election.

Independent Voter

A voter who does not belong to a political party.

Partisan / Nonpartisan

Associated / not associated with a particular political party.

Nonpartisan Election

An election in which candidates are not identified by political party.

Party

An organization working to gain political power or control.

Party Platform

Statement of the principles or beliefs of a political group.

Plank

A stance on an issue by a political party; planks comprise a party platform.

Political Affiliation

The party in which a voter is registered.

Propaganda

Information used to influence public perception, often misleading or biased.

Proportional Representation (PR)

A voting system where seats are allocated based on the percentage of votes received.

Runoff Election

A second election held when no candidate wins a required majority.

Senate

The upper chamber of Congress with two members from each state.

State House, Senate, and Legislature

In some states, the legislature meets biennially; state house members and state senators serve fixed terms.

Voter Suppression

Tactics used to discourage or prevent certain groups from voting.

Voter Turnout

The percentage of eligible voters who actually vote.

Helpful links:

https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/glossary_files/Glossary_of_Election_Terms_EAC.pdf

<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/laws/glossary.shtml>

<https://outliermedia.org/election-glossary-terms-definitions/>

If you've gotten this far, write an email to ilian.gergisak@gmail.com or nataliebabakova6@gmail.com telling us who your favorite band/artist is, or what your favorite movie/show is!

VI. Timeline

1917 - The first registered interference by Germany in Russian elections; even though, at that time there were no formal elections in Russia, Germany's action and their aim to destabilize Russia to serve German interests are often considered as a form of foreign interference in elections. German support for Bolshevik leaders and help in getting Vladimir Lenin to travel back to Russia along with significant financial support played a big role in the Bolsheviks overthrowing the Provisional Government in November.

1948 - The Soviet Union's interference in many Eastern European elections, which included Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Eastern Germany; this is often referred to as "Sovietization". The aim was to transform a majority of Eastern Europe into a bloc of communist states by stationing the Red Army in most of the countries listed, political repression, spreading media and propaganda, and economic pressure through COMECON.

1948 - During the Cold War era, the elections in Italy determined whether Italy was going to be aligned with the Western bloc, NATO, or the Soviet Union. The US attempted to get Italy on the Western bloc by leveraging the Marshall Plan, giving financial aid to the Christian Democrats (DC), spreading propaganda, and using the CIA to spread misinformation about Soviet intentions.

1953 - Interference in Iran's elections by the USA and the UK is commonly known as the 1953 coup d'etat or Operation Ajax. The newly elected Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadegh wanted to nationalize Iran's oil industry, which was a British-controlled corporation; Britain did not want this to happen as they would lose a great deal of control over their oil industry. Furthermore, the US and the UK feared the Prime Minister's policies would leave a potential opening for Soviets to gain power. USA and UK used the CIA and MI6 to spread propaganda and they bribed politicians and military officials, which finally resulted in the arrest of Mossadegh.

1970-1973 - The US involved itself in the Chilean elections and later made efforts to destabilize the government of Salvador Allende due to their concern of the spread of socialism and communism in many Latin American countries and worry about the nationalization of industries, which the US had made major investments to, and land reforms. USA had involved itself by having the CIA plan a military coup, spreading mass propaganda campaigns, restricting economic aid to Chile, and funding Allende's political opposition.

1980s - The Soviet Union interfered in numerous foreign elections held in numerous Western countries in an attempt to undermine NATO countries and delay, eventually hopefully even terminate, US leadership in the West. The USSR used the KGB to spread disinformation and propaganda, gave financial support to communist parties in the Western region, and even targeted and attempted to undermine elections in specific countries such as, the United Kingdom, West Germany, and France

1989 - The US interfered in the Panama elections in efforts to put Manuel Noriega, a long-time CIA agent that had fallen out of favor with the US, out of power. They used financial aid, propaganda, and even military intervention - Operation Just Cause.

1996 - The US intervened in Russian elections to support Boris Yeltsin getting power over the communist party with the leader Gennady Zyuganov; they did this by using financial and economic aid alongside with spreading propaganda and media control. Moreover, the US focused on manipulating the public into fearing communist parties. The US's tactics had worked in their favor and Yeltsin had won the elections leading to closer alignment between the West and Russia

2000s - Russia spread its communist influence and interfered in numerous elections in former Soviet States, including Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, and Moldova. Russia used numerous tactics in an attempt to spread their sphere of influence such as propaganda, cyberattacks, economic pressure, political funding of pro-Russian parties, and military threats.

2016 - Russia attempted to influence the presidential elections at the time in favor of Donald Trump. They did this by hacking the DNC and state elections systems, spreading fake news about the opposition - Clinton, and cyber attacks. These actions changed people's belief in the US democracy and as a result Obama imposed sanctions on Russia.

2018-2023 - During this period of time, many countries including Russia, China, Iran, and Turkey interfered in numerous elections held primarily in the US, Europe, or former Soviet States. They used tactics varying from cyberattacks and spreading propaganda on social media to providing financial aid, economic pressure, and election fraud allegations.

2020-2024 - In these years there was mass cyber influence in elections with the key players being Russia, China, and Iran. Main targets were once again democracies in Europe and the US.

This increased cyber interference in elections led to increased defensive measures in numerous countries including international collaboration and better cybersecurity systems.

VII. Key players

P5 countries, whatever countries interfere the most (roughly 2-3) iran, israel, turkey

P5 countries: P5 countries in this topic are extremely important, since P5 countries are the countries which have the most influence on elections due to their immense power, as well as victims (e.g. US presidential election interferences). Since all the P5s have different experiences, we can't group them altogether and speak on them as a whole, but the general idea stays the same.

United States of America: The United States has a very large role in this debate, since they have a long history of both covert and overt election interference. A few examples of this are the following: The 1973 Chile interference, the 1996 Russia interference, and the 2014 Ukraine interference. Because the US has been open about some of the ways they interfered with elections, we know that they used sanctions and CIA operations to do the things that they did.

Russia: The Russian Federation plays a significant part in this topic given its long history of attempting to spread its communist ideologies across numerous countries; this can be clearly seen in the years of Sovietization around the 1950s. Russia used numerous methods and tactics to confluence foreign elections, including cyberattacks, propaganda campaigns, hybrid warfare, and social media manipulation.

China: China's influence in foreign elections has been growing as they aim to strengthen their geopolitical relations by attempting to support candidates and politicians favorable to China. The most recent example of this is Chinese hackers violating the US telecommunication systems, and getting access to text messages and phone calls of the two presidential candidates in 2024, Trump and Harris. Other than that, China also uses propaganda and disinformation campaigns to influence the public view in different nations.

United Kingdom: There are very few cases in which the United Kingdom attempted to influence, or merely got accused of getting involved in, foreign elections. One notable case was in 2024, when the UK got accused by Donald Trump's campaign of having the Labour Party interfere in the presidential elections; however, this very case was seen as very complex and controversial.

France: France supports EU-wide efforts to counter foreign election interference, but they have, however, interfered in a few elections before, specifically elections in former African colonies. Although they used to be very into interfering, they have participated less and less in these actions, mainly due to a change in the government. France has been the target of Russian cyber attacks before, for example the Macron leaks in 2017. This is another reason why France supports the efforts to counter the interferences, as well as sanctions against Russia for foreign interference.

Iran: Iran plays a very large role in this debate, both as an interferer, and as a country which had their elections interfered with many times. When Iran interferes with elections, they mainly use cyber operations, disinformation campaigns, and proxy groups to create chaos in the elections, and alter the views of those voting. In 2020, Iran used deepfake, fake accounts, and so on to create anti-Trump and anti-Biden narratives. Some more examples of Iran interfering are the ongoing interferences with Syria, Lebanon, and Israel. Iran has had their elections interfered with in the past, but the most memorable are the 1953 CIA & MI6 Overthrow of Mossadegh (interference from the U.S.A. and U.K.), and the 2019 protests caused by the U.S.A. and Israel.

Israel: Israel is undoubtedly a country which interferes the most out of any other, and that is mainly due to one thing. The Gaza strip. Since Israel believes that they own the strip, they do anything and everything in their power to manipulate their way to get it. This is why their most known election interferences are with the U.S.A. (influencing American elections to ensure bipartisan support for Israel), using cyber attacks to destabilize the Iranian regime, and trying to weaken Fatah in the Palestinian territories. Since Israel mostly has enemies due to the Gaza strip, both Iran and Russia have allegedly attempted to sway public opinion through misinformation (cyber attacks). Many middle eastern countries (the Arab World) have used their media to promote anti-Israel narratives, and the Palestinian groups, such as the Hamas, have received foreign backing to challenge Israeli-backed candidates in local elections.

Turkey: Turkey's main reason for interfering in elections is to expand its influence in Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia. They also interfere to keep, or ensure, power which is exceptionally beneficial to them. This was mainly implemented by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Turkish president. Turkey is constantly interfering with Northern Cyprus (which is Turkish occupied), to maintain its power and control over the area. Other interferences such as the Germany & Netherlands interferences in 2017, and the ongoing Syrian interferences are for pro-Turkey leadership, as well as promoting Turkish people to vote for Erdoğan. Turkey has been a target multiple times, but almost every interference is to remove Erdoğan as a president, or weaken his rule. This was mainly in the 2016 Coup Attempt, as well as the European sanctions. The U.S. and EU have also been accused of supporting Kurdish political groups against Turkey.

VIII. Resolution considerations

As a MUN resolution has many aspects to it, here are a few key points you will need to know when constructing one. Resolutions are often prepared and completed during committee sessions in the so-called “unmoderated caucus.” During this debate you need to negotiate to come to an agreement with a majority of the delegates for your resolution to pass within your committee. The main part of your resolution will be held up by your operative clauses. Constructing these clauses usually generates conflict and tension - coming to an agreement upon those usually requires good negotiating skills and a solid temper. We advise you to take a look at some of the questions listed below. The resolution should address these considerations in order to solve the issue at hand.

How can the resolution encourage nations to take action in limiting foreign election interference?

Should there be a mechanism/agency which would ensure and monitor said implementation of the resolution?

Should the resolution include a system that would ensure absolute elimination of election interference, and if so, how?

How can the resolution help with combating mass propaganda and the spreading of disinformation?

How can nations effectively determine whether or not foreign interference is taking place towards their elections?

What is the proper way that corrupt governments can deal with foreign interference from larger powers?

Should foreign interference in elections be punished? If so, how?

IX. Citations

Works Cited

America's Cyber Defense Agency. "Election Security."

<https://www.cisa.gov/topics/election-security>. Accessed 3 February 2025.

Britannica. "1953 coup in Iran." <https://www.britannica.com/event/1953-coup-in-Iran>. Accessed 30 January 2025.

Cambridge University. "Re-thinking American intervention in the 1948 Italian election: beyond a success–failure dichotomy." *Cambridge University Press*, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/modern-italy/article/abs/rethinking-american-intervention-in-the-1948-italian-election-beyond-a-successfailure-dichotomy/1BF2C98295B5449978091FA2EBF77383>. Accessed 29 January 2025.

Carnegie Endowment. "Is the U.S. Hypocritical to Criticize Russian Election Meddling?"

<https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2018/03/is-the-us-hypocritical-to-criticize-russian-election-meddling?lang=en>. Accessed 2 February 2025.

European Union Institute for Security Studies, et al. "The future of democracy: lessons from the US fight against foreign electoral interference in 2024."

<https://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/briefs/future-democracy-lessons-us-fight-against-foreign-electoral-interference-2024>. Accessed 3 February 2025.

Federal Bureau of Investigation. "RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN 2016 U.S. ELECTIONS."

<https://www.fbi.gov/wanted/cyber/russian-interference-in-2016-u-s-elections>. Accessed 3 February 2025.

New York Post, and Ryan King. "Hackers tied to China targeted Trump family and Harris-Biden aides' devices: report."

<https://nypost.com/2024/10/29/us-news/hackers-tied-to-china-targeted-trump-family-and-harris-biden-aides-report/>. Accessed 4 February 2025.

Office of The Historian. “The Allende Years and the Pinochet Coup, 1969–1973.” *Office of The Historian*, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/allende>. Accessed 1 February 2025.

Office of The Historian. “Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, Western Europe, Volume III.” *Office of The Historian*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v03/d475>. Accessed 29 January 2025.

Reuters. “France, Germany, others urge EU Commission to protect elections in Europe from foreign interference.” <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/france-germany-others-urge-eu-commission-protect-elections-europe-foreign-2025-01-30/>. Accessed 3 February 2025.

“SPECPOL: Special Political & Decolonization Committee.” *IMUNA*, NHSMUN, <https://imuna.org/nhsmun/nyc/committees/specpol-special-political-decolonization-committee/#:~:text=The%20Fourth%20Committee%20of%20the,and%20the%20Special%20Political%20Committee>. Accessed 14 1 2025.

United Kingdom Government. “Foreign interference: National Security Bill factsheet.” 19 August 2024, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-security-bill-factsheets/foreign-interference-national-security-bill-factsheet>. Accessed 4 February 2025.

The University of Arizona, and David A. Strickland. “Overriding Democracy: American Intervention in Yeltsin’s 1996 Reelection Campaign.” *Footnotes: A Journal of History*,

<https://journals.uair.arizona.edu/index.php/UAHISTJRN/article/view/23567/0>.

Accessed 2 February 2025.

U.S. Department of Justice. “Justice Department Disrupts Covert Russian Government-Sponsored Foreign Malign Influence Operation Targeting Audiences in the United States and Elsewhere.”

<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-disrupts-covert-russian-government-sponsored-foreign-malign-influence>. Accessed 3 February 2025.

U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. “Senate Intel Committee Releases Bipartisan Report on Russia’s Use of Social Media.” *Press Release of Intelligence Committee*, https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/press/senate-intel-committee-releases-bipartisan-report-russia%E2%80%99s-use-social-media?utm_source=chatgpt.com. Accessed 3 February 2025.