Following the end of both World War I and World War II, the world was thrown into chaos with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the British Empire and the creation of dozens of newly independent countries. After finally releasing their claim to their former territories, the last thing that the former powers did was to divide the territory themselves, instead of allowing those that live there to settle the matter. The result of this division led to ethnic or religious groups being divided amongst state lines, causing tension between the minority and the majority. While some regions gained autonomy from their host countries, others began to lose rights, including territory and personal freedom. However, there are some separatist movements that stand out more than others. These include Palestine, Tibet and the autonomous region of Kurdistan.

**Palestine**
Following the end of World War II, the Palestinian territory was divided between the Palestinian Arabs and European Jews, who were seeking a homeland following centuries of persecution in Europe. After the establishment of Israel in 1948, multiple conflicts and wars erupted between Israel and its neighbors, including Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Syria. During each conflict, land was claimed by the Israelis, thus causing the Palestinians to lose land that had been allotted to them under the UN mandate. Over the twentieth century the Palestinians have made the case to the International community for the right to an independent Palestinian state, with full rights granted to them for sovereignty from Israel.

**Tibet**
The relationship between China and Tibet has been a long and tumultuous one. In 1949, the People’s Liberation Army of China marched into Tibet and took control of its Eastern Provinces. Then in 1951, the People’s Republic of China forced the Tibetan government to adopt the 17-Point Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. As a result of this, the Tibetan people revolted but were crushed in 1959. Consequently, His Holiness the Dalai Lama was forced into exile, as well as over 140,000 other Tibetans. The Central Tibetan Administration serves the as the voice of the Tibetan people. Violence and protests have taken place throughout the occupation of Tibet, including the self-immolation of Buddhist monks.

**Kurdistan**
The Kurdish people are an ethnic group, spread between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. The Kurdish people originate from Indo-European origins and follow the Islamic faith. The Kurdish people have suffered discrimination from their host governments. During the Iran-Iraq War, Iraqi and Iranian Kurds were targeted and brutally murdered at the hands of Saddam Hussein’s Ba’ath Regime. Turkey incorporated Kurdish Anatolia following the end
of the Turkish War of Independence. As a result, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) was created as a means to help Kurdistan gain independence. Many Kurdish separatist movements have turned to violence as a way to gain independence. Relations between the Kurds in Turkey and the Turkish government have begun to improve as a result of Turkey’s petition for admittance to the European Union.

Questions to Consider:
What is your country's stance on separatist movements and what are they willing to do to help these people toward gaining independence?
What would be the benefit of independence for these semi-autonomous regions?
What would be the consequence of independence for these separatist movements and how would the host government react?

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