

War Games 1

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The war games are unlike any learning model I have ever come across, and quite possibly my favorite. Everyone loves learning new things, but when it comes to the education system I feel that it is ruined by the whole testing system, I probably don't fully remember what I took in chemistry the past fall semester or what vapor pressure is because I was forced to memorize it for my test, but I will definitely remember what I researched and what I read about on my sector and specialty in order to become an expert at it. This is a great method of learning because one would be fueled by one's will to learn and the hope of excelling at their field. Every time I would read an essay and report I would want to learn more about it, know what its flaws were, the general consensus and the debate about it, so that way you can defend it or attack it efficiently. These war games especially combined two of my favorite things, the environment and debating. In high school I did model united nations religiously and the whole set up of the war game closely resembled it, except you don't have to be as formal which to me was great, because that meant more freedom in terms of the debate and arguing with different sectors.

For this war game my sector was energy and my specialty was policy and negotiations, which to me was the perfect fit, since energy is a powerful sector that heavily affects climate change and since policy-making and negotiations is what I see myself doing in the future with my civil and environmental engineering degree. In terms of research what I researched was the Indian policy on energy and how they want to enhance that sector, what flaws they currently have and what their future plans are, this set the basis of my sector's presentation because that way we knew what general direction we were going in and what we should ask and not ask from other sectors. Another thing I researched was the existing energy negotiations between

surrounding countries and India, which later on proved to be quite controversial (but more on that later) and finally all the international policies in place, united nations resolutions and other energy related organizations such as the IEA (International Energy Agency). The final thing I focused on which was not really relative to my specialty, but I thought would be important to our overall argument is ways to enhance existing energy sources, as well as the potential renewable energies have in India.

My role for the war game was the team leader for session 2. However the way I saw the war games go, was that the two assigned positions which actually did their function were the presenters for both sessions 1 and 2, but when it came to the technical leader, secret negotiator and team leader for session 2, everyone kind of did that, it was not just one person speaking, but rather the entire group talking.

The first session it was just the groups giving presentations, and what my group did was take note on all their demands and the facts they used. The unreliable wifi came through for this session, so that allowed us to research some of the things they said in their presentation and allowed us to further validate it or sometimes attack what they said and point out the flaws in that. For our presentation professor Ganguly made a “news flash” announcement attacking the sector, luckily I had a small piece of paper with a few quotes, facts and a case study which seemed to perfectly address what he said, and that was done at the end as a press conference type of thing. All sectors in the first session seemed to have reasonable demands and it seemed that we would all reach consensus pretty fast, but everything is not what it seems. The second round was that of the secret negotiations, for that my expectations were that we were going to form a strong alliance with water considering the whole water-energy nexus that professor Ganguly talked about which was also heavily referenced in the water sector’s presentation, but we found

ourselves forming a strong alliance with agriculture, where we negotiated the land use for renewable energy sources, in return we would pressure industry into giving agriculture what they want. Industry was the next meeting on the agenda and they were against a lot of things we mentioned and all they wanted was quick fixes and short term solutions, we somewhat agreed on a research and development fund, but they only seemed interested in the solar potential India has to offer with 300 days of sun, they also really wanted their corridors to work so they were somewhat willing to compromise a few things for that, we also discussed the whole electricity trading with Bangladesh with that sector and they seemed on board. The third and final set of secret talks was the water sector where we pretty much agreed on everything and did a recap of all our negotiations and discussed how we are going to make industry loosen its stance on things.

Each group did a short presentation of all their demands, which seemed concordant with what was agreed on in the secret negotiations, and the whole process of voting on the policy started, at first everything went smoothly, there wasn't much arguing it was more clarifying questions and general inquiries, but then things started unfolding, a lot of debate rose over exchanging electricity with Bangladesh. The argument for that was that the energy sector is looking for rural electrification, so how are they going to do that if they are going to give part of their electricity to Bangladesh in exchange for natural gas which is a pollutant. What most of them didn't realize was that this policy was already in motion and we were only pointing that out to further enhance it. Another huge argument started over the water agreement policy, where the industry sector felt it was too broad and would limit industry's potential. No one knew what the main pillars of the agreement were so professor Majumdar was there for the rescue to clarify it. That still didn't make the argument break and what made it even worse was the water sector's statement: "Now that we are looking at the policy we realize we have compromised so much that

nothing really benefits us.” This was a major setback because that meant we would have to re-negotiate policies and add new clauses, which we did and sectors seemed to compromise some of their demands for the greater good of India, except for the industry sector where they now changed the initial agreement with our sector on research and development in all fields of renewable energy to just solar energy exclusively. By the end of it we seemed to reach consensus on the majority of the things which was great considering how heated the debate was by the end of it and how war-like it actually was.

Both as a spectator and a participant I really enjoyed these war games, whether it was watching people argue with each other passionately or the news flashes, it was a great end to this course. What made me prouder of the outcome of what we all did was professor Ganguly saying this is what the real war game should look like. By the end of it I was looking forward to the next war game since it was going to be countries, and that means the possibility of actually declaring war!