

War Game Review

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Yesterday was the first war game, pretty much taking up the whole day, but with good reason because a set of recommendations were being hashed out to propose to the Indian Prime Minister so India could be better prepared for climate change. How the war game works is a group of people is split up into groups, or in our case, sectors, and they become “experts” on their specific field and are seen as the protectors of their industry. The five sectors were agriculture, healthcare, water, energy, and industry and one student is set aside as the moderator of the whole discussion. Climate change is happening and will cause people to have to change their lifestyle so the point was to realistically come up with a list of explicit steps that each sector could agree or compromise on as a whole for the good of India, while protecting their sector so they could sell the policy to their shareholders.

The actual “war” part did not take place ‘til the last 3-4 hours because that is when secret and public negotiations were made and where the policies were discussed. The first part of the day was spent listening to each sector and hearing their wants, needs, and constraints. In my opinion, an easy way to split up the war game so people have more energy during the more argument-prone, heated discussions at the end is to have all the sector presentations given the day before the actual war game. This would then provide more mental capacity during the latter part of the game, taking place on the next day, resulting in a more defined policy that actually had numbers or percentages of the government budget, making the end result more clear.

The water team stated that India has 18% of the entire world’s population with only 4% of the world’s water resources. This limiting factor creates a huge problem in India, since all the other 4 sectors pretty much rely on water. Agriculture needs water for the crops, healthcare needs sanitary water for people in general, energy needs water for hydroelectric energy and to cool off nuclear energy sources, industry needs water indirectly through energy, and just in general people just need a good water supply to live a healthy life. Interesting enough though, water did not seem

to hold much power throughout the war game. Industry was the one sector everybody seemed to look to for approval since that is where the resources lie.

The advantages of holding a war game are specialization of primary interests that helps the war game play out to a realistic result. Just dividing into five sectors creates specialization in that way but further dividing into focused areas within each sector is the real key. Specialization of primary interests means that people assigned to each sector need to protect and defend their sector so they can actually sell the policy to their state holders. If this balance is compromised, then the war game will quickly become unrealistic because some problems, no matter what compromises are made, are going to be nonconsensual. Not saying each sector can be selfish and not compromise, because that would be just as ineffective as well, but there has to be this give and take relationship.

The disadvantages of holding a war game are cultural misunderstandings and biases that are natural to one's being. For example, concerning Americans acting out a war game for India. Yes we can read into Hinduism and Indian culture that can help shape the mindset of a Indian businessman, farmer, or healthcare professional. That can only go so far though. We have learned that Americans are more independent and risk taking, while Indians are generally dependent and risk preventative. This is something of course one can keep in mind, but it is not the natural instinct of an American usually.

My team was the agriculture sector and we decided on roles suitable for each person to carry out during the war game. We had a team leader 1, team leader 2, technical leader, negotiator, and team representative. Everybody in our group had a preference based on their personal skills, so it worked out almost evenly which roles would be filled by whom. The two people that did not mind what they were just chose between the last two roles available after preference was given. Team leader 1's role was just to present the 30 minute PowerPoint that informed the other sectors what the situation was like pertaining to agriculture and what we as a sector needed. After the PowerPoint's given from each sector, it was private and public

negotiating time. So the negotiator and team representative led the discussions with the other teams when creating compromises. When everybody came together for the last part of the war game, team leader 2's role was to present the compromises and solutions that were created during the negotiation time and the technical leader helped support team leader 2 with facts. Then all the sectors voted on each policy and it either belonged in the consensus category or the non-consensus category.

All five group members contributed to the informative PowerPoint slides. The five sectors within each sector are climate change science, engineering adaptation for resilient cities, critical infrastructure security, international policy and negotiations, and US-India Collaborations. So each person naturally made 3-5 slides on their specific topic within the overall subject of agriculture. Additional slides were then created collectively about how climate change specifically affects the agriculture sector and how this translates to the storyline of climate change. Then we decided to talk about the government and the importance of a government to protect its people, and in India's case, invest and protect the agriculture sector.

One thing I am unclear on when it comes to a war game is the implications of them. From what I've understood, countries will invest so much money flying in negotiators, scientists, economists, and translators from different countries around the world for role-playing. Does the outcome though actually get proposed to anyone? I know war games usually have a lot of press coverage, but is that the extent of the end result? It seems like a big investment, monetarily and time, for the outcome to not affect anything directly. I think it would be very interesting to read an article about the influence of a war game on an actual policy, if that has happened.

I think the war game was an efficient way to gather a lot of information at one time because of the intensity and specialization that the game entails. Since everybody had a specific sector to hone in on, that resulted in selfish interests, which created passion and therefore heated discussions. It kept the game exciting, which kept the focus up, so a lot of information could be

stored. Overall, I think the first war game was a success and was a dynamic activity that resulted in a well thought out policy.