

Going into this war game, I was hoping for it to be more straightforward after already having gone through the first war game. However, I think this war game turned out to be much more difficult for my team and me.

One of the most difficult parts for me was figuring out how to assume the United States identity and understand the United States perspective on many different issues. Searching “US climate policy” and “India climate policy,” I pulled up as many articles as I could. However, I have very little background in politics and economics, so frankly I struggled to understand most of what I was reading. Factually most things made sense (i.e. “The US did not sign the Kyoto Protocol because developing countries such as China and India were exempt”) but at the same time, to be completely honest, I didn’t even really fully understand the fundamental concepts of carbon caps and carbon credits until the day of the war game. So first off, there was a struggle to figure out what policies were actually in place. But another disadvantage of having little background in politics and economics was not knowing what kind of stance the US would have on different, and perhaps new issues and proposals, and what kind of image the US would portray. After our presentation, Professor Ganguly talked to our team privately telling us essentially that we were representing the US incorrectly by appearing too mean and aggressive, and that instead the US generally is more friendly and “soft” with other countries in international climate negotiations. It didn’t even occur to me the night before when our team was coming up with our proposals and stances that a carbon cap controlled by GDP would be so detrimental to developing and smaller countries. I knew that a per capita metric was negative for the US, simply because our per capita emissions was so high in comparison to other countries. When Professor Ganguly told us that this was a very extreme stance that almost no politicians in the US would take, I realized that when coming up with our proposals we thought we were playing our role by considering what would be the most beneficial to

the US. However, by doing this we were not necessarily portraying what or how the US would actually act in the scenario (I still don't think I really know).

Another instance of misunderstanding US perspective was when the United Nations team proposed UN inspections on emissions of each country... and I thought, well why wouldn't the US agree to that? I thought we'd be a generally open country to that sort of thing, and not like countries like China or North Korea with blatantly terrible things to hide. Oops. Apparently agreeing to that was not at all what the US position for that would be, because of our stakeholders in the private sector who are highly resistant to regulations. As a result, for me the difficulty with assuming the role of the United States was again more difficult because of my lack of political and economic knowledge, although I know there were many people who struggled more to keep their personal viewpoints separate. (One example I thought was pretty comical was when the China team had a few slides on Tibet as being a "disputed" territory- even bigger oops!) Lack of background led to a similar frustration that I had last time, in which I felt like many of our proposals, due to limited research and backgrounds all around were fairly arbitrary. An example of this occurred when China came up with a debt repayment proposal to us. We were so disoriented and surprised by it... and frankly I didn't even understand the concept of one country having "debt" to another until Dr. Iacono explained the very basics of it after the war game.

Going off of the idea of the United States as wanting to appear friendly to other countries, I also noticed that I had unconsciously been thinking of the war games as competitions. I remember during the first war game we were nervous about getting asked questions after our presentation because we thought that people would be asking questions to unsettle us rather than procure more information for their own sector. And it did seem like that a little bit but less than we thought, although we did get a fact checking question that didn't seem particularly relevant. I think it was particularly important this war game, and also for our US team especially, to not view it as a competition. Of course we were all representing our respective countries' interests, but I realized that thinking of a negotiation as a

competition is actually fairly detrimental. From my limited understanding and experience, a negotiation is a way to meet multiple countries' interests in a fair way:- we shouldn't be looking to be the "winner." Additionally, we were continually reminded to assume our roles in asking questions that our country would actually ask. For example, having a personal skepticism of the implementation of dams would not be worth asking a question for if that wasn't actually an issue the US would have a particular stake in, even if it would make the presenters uneasy. As such, I had to think harder after each presentation to think of questions that would be pertinent to US interests and not just questions that I personally was curious about.

Beyond actually making the fundamental mistake of thinking it would be okay to propose a GDP basis for the carbon cap, dealing with the consequences of that mistake was by far one of the most stressful times of this dialogue for me. Reflecting on the situation, I feel like I take it more personally than most when many people don't like me, and I'm also a pretty non-confrontational and conflict avoidant person... so this was again, definitely out of my comfort zone and not my favorite dialogue moment. It was frustrating not only trying to make our way out of the GDP hole but also being the only developed nation represented at the war games, making it difficult to come to consensus on issues that are divisive between developed and developing nations. The major example here was the fact that a per capita basis for a carbon cap would be highly beneficial for developing countries with growing populations like India and China, but much less so for developed countries like the US and those in the EU. However, despite the stress, in retrospect I feel like the experience was really good for me- putting together those "press releases," and messing with the phrasing and tone of those in order to navigate back into positive waters with the other groups.

Although the day was exhausting and stressful, I definitely learned a lot, both about policies (which I expected to learn about) and also about articulating and maneuvering out of a disadvantageous situation. In addition, even though I knew my background in policy and economics was pretty terrible to

begin with, our team's fumble with the whole GDP mess has made me resolve to make a concerted effort to learn more on my own. When I go home, I am going to look for some videos explaining basic economics concepts and try to follow the news more intentionally, particularly policy related news. For a long time I've avoided politics, staying in my comfort zone in the sciences and engineering area, but this class and war game experience has made me recognize and feel the weight of the fact that nothing can be achieved without policy. Even though I still will never be a policy maker or work in politics, I do feel more personal responsibility to have an awareness and basic knowledge of the current issues and economics. I'm very grateful for my chance to participate in these war games.