

Jake Messner Individual Reflection

War Game 1

Industry

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Industry: the sector with the most negative stigmas about climate change. My assignment to the industry team sent me thinking about how our team could overcome the negative connotations of the word — billowing black smoke and radioactive waste — to form partnerships with the other four sectors. We discussed this hurdle as a team and ultimately opted to open our presentation by admitting the flaws with industry in India using our “It’s no secret…” slide. Here we explicitly admitted flaws such as poor industrial practices, air quality in New Delhi, and river pollution such that the remaining four sectors would not be able to later introduce this information to undermine our priorities.

Participating in this war game while in India starkly highlighted the differences in both actual sustainability and the appearance of sustainability between the United States and India. While industries in the United States market their practices as “environmentally friendly” and “the most green practices”, industries in India do not cater to this appeal because it is far less common within the public. While traveling on planes and trains, we passed dozens of smokestacks spewing pitch black smoke into the air beside rivers and the sea. While in Dharavi, we witnessed a slew of informal industries — those completely unregulated by the government — dumping their waste straight into the streets and the Mithi River.

Rather than highlighting this contrast in our war game presentation, we focused on industries making efforts to display their sustainable practices in India. Companies like Siemens, Wipro, and Tata motors are among the first in India to be publicly marketing their eco-friendly

practices in order to gain public support as well as international support. This necessity in a presentation regarding an apparently “evil” sector gave me further experience presenting persuasively to gain approval of the majority. In this way, the focuses of our presentation opened other teams to negotiating with us and to trusting our propositions to improve practices.

While our team agreed that we would make concessions to improve sustainability laws, our primary objective was to advocate that India must become a fully developed nation before it can focus many resources on sustainability. This plan included measures such as prioritizing entrepreneurship, establishing tax cuts to skilled labor employers, and transitioning away from the massive informal sector in India. While all five members of our team agreed that this was the most logical path to sustainability, we faced the dilemma of pushing this plan to sectors that would surely insist immediate cuts on emissions. This was one of the most major hurdles our team had to overcome. While I believed that this plan was the most logical path to efficiency, as proven in the past by developed nations such as France and Germany, it would not satisfy consultants whose goals were immediate cuts on carbon and raising funds for additional projects.

In order to gain support for our development initiatives, we agreed as a team to support any projects proposed by other sectors that would lead to the employment of skilled laborers. This strategy created strong collaborations with the water and energy sectors in their interlinking rivers project and nuclear power project, respectively. By agreeing to these two major projects by other sectors, we were able to gain the support of these two sectors in our efficient agriculture plan to transition to gradually transition to corporate farming. Additionally, we discussed the nuclear power initiative with the healthcare sector, and we were able to come to the agreement that they would support our plan and run a public campaign proving the safety of thorium nuclear power if

we were willing to donate five percent of profits on government infrastructure projects to philanthropic work.

My role in this war game was as the presenter, so I needed to learn the material of all five group members in order to effectively convey our background information and initiatives to those at the negotiations. This was a difficult role because I was a little uncomfortable presenting information that I was far less knowledgeable about than the group member who had researched and created the slide. Additionally, I was chosen to present at the last minute after Rachel fainted on me boarding the plane to Bangalore. I spent the entire night before the war game learning the material from the people in my group and rehearsing notes for the presentation. Overall, I was confident with my presentation, given the fact that I had little time to prepare for it, and I think I successfully conveyed our primary information to the other four sectors.

At the opening to the war game, I was still unsure as to how the presentation and negotiation processes were structured. In the end, I thought the format was excellently suited to a negotiation between consultants for different sectors within a country. The opening presentations acutely displayed the wants and needs of each sector, and the negotiation process in the afternoon showcased the similarities between the needs of different sectors. Whereas a project like the interlinking rivers project may not have initially seemed beneficial to the industry sector, our negotiations highlighted that this project would employ skilled laborers like engineers and architects, a factor necessary to the transition of India towards a developed economy. Our team was able to effectively persuade the additional four sectors to support two of our major initiatives, and we were able to justify support of initiatives proposed by other sectors.