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War Game 2 Individual Reflection
United Nations

Beginning the process of the second war game, I found myself caught between two conflicting emotions. Having already gone through it once, I felt more confident and had a greater awareness of how the day's proceedings would go. Yet at the same time, I felt lost. In the first war game, my scientific background gave me more understanding of the subject matter, but what did I know about policy? How was I supposed to accurately represent the United Nations having such little knowledge about policy negotiations?

Pushing these thoughts aside, I got to work with my individual research. As an engineering major my schoolwork is taken up much more with math than history, so I was excited to have the opportunity to read into ancient India and how it related to climate change negotiations. In my exploration I found that in the recent past there has been a big focus on researching the Indus Valley Civilization and the connection between climate change and their survival. The apparent cause of their collapse was a weakening of monsoons, combined with their inability to adapt to new climatic conditions. The Harappans originally began settlement in the Indus Valley when the monsoons weakened just enough to create the perfect environment for permanent agriculture. However, when the monsoons began to weaken even more and the valley became increasingly arid, the Indus Valley people were not able to adapt. Rather than developing new technology such as rainwater harvesting systems and irrigation, the Harappans picked up and moved. This dispersion was not conducive to urban settlements and their cities began to collapse. Although it is a trite expression, history does repeat itself. I find it fascinating that India is now finding itself in the same position that the Indus Valley Civilization was in 3,500

years ago. With the changing climate and uncertain monsoon patterns coupled with India's reliance on these yearly rainfalls, India has two options: to adapt or to fall.

With this new understanding of the historical context surrounding India's relationship with climate change, it was time to join forces with my team and look at policy negotiations from our assigned perspective: The United Nations. Despite my apprehensions surrounding my inexperience with policy, I found myself enjoying the learning process. I think this was due to how much new knowledge I was gaining from my teammates. This knowledge covered information about the Indian government, such as Modi's Make in India plan, as well as United Nations programs such as the UN Development Programme and the UN Development Assistance Framework. I also learned more about international cooperation regarding climate change under the UN, expanding my familiarity with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Though I had learned a lot from my teammates, when it came time to actually begin the day of negotiations I still felt unsure. I was not incredibly well versed in the policies of other teams and was uncertain about how the day's events would proceed. When things got started though, I felt myself understanding the process of the war game itself much better. In the first war game, I found it very difficult to immerse myself in my role and truly represent my stakeholders. My personal concerns kept getting in the way. During this game however, I made it a point to think about each issue as a United Nations representative rather than an individual. Instead of focusing on how I felt about an issue, I thought about how it would affect each of the countries involved, and in turn how the United Nations would feel about the solution.

There were a few occasions throughout the day where I found it especially challenging to look at it through this lens. There were times in which all I wanted to do was raise my hand as an individual and insert my personal opinion on a topic. There was one occasion in particular, when the Chinese delegation was advocating for free trade in Asia and the construction of a Trans-Asian railroad. I was unsure if I had missed the relevance and in my mind free trade throughout Asia would have highly negative consequences for the environment. I wanted to interject and inquire about this point, but as a representative of the United Nations, I knew this was not an issue I should be bringing up. On other issues we learned as we went along the intricacies of representing the United Nations. During the discussions about whether or not to measure emissions on a per capita or per GDP basis, we originally advocated for per capita as means of supporting the developing nations. However once we realized that this approach would never effectively gain support from the developed G7 nations, we adjusted our viewpoint and advocated for the addition of another metric into the emissions cap calculations. We knew that as the UN, we would need to back solutions that would be mutually beneficial to all of the parties involved, especially because it is so important to have the support of nations such as the United States.

Overall, I felt like the second war game gave me a better understanding of international policy and the complexities that come along with working as an intergovernmental body. I gained a more expansive knowledge of not just how climate change affects India, but also of the international programs and relationships that are key in coming to consensus on the issues.