

Reflection on War Games #2

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The second war games yanked me out of my comfort zone and dropped me in a basin of new knowledge. At the end of June 21st, I filled with questions about how our world works and why it works like this. When countries are in debt to one another what happens? Are they paid back like a bank loan or does it forever loom over a country's head? What is really happening in China? How does GDP get broken down into separate sectors? What is the history of US-India dialogues?

Researching for the Second War Games proved to be much more overwhelming than that of the first games. The variety of sub-topics made it hard to tie them together. Then as we were tying them together we had to bring it back to the focus of team United States. We also had to learn about the relationships the USA had with other countries. Learning about the history and current relationships between countries within a week was not an easy task. Each of our team members took responsibility for one country with two members working on the US-India relationship. We then came back to team meetings with the new found knowledge and shared it amongst ourselves.

When one hears the word refugee, it is easy to immediately think of political and religious oppression and war. One of the topics I had to learn and present to my group was environmental refugees. There has been a significant amount of studies conducted and papers written on environmental refugees but not a lot of recognition from governments.

Environmental refugees are not recognized as their own sect of people even though they account for almost half of refugees today. I am fascinated in learning how countries are going to deal with people displaced by climate and how it will effect countries' relations when migrants cross borders. Leaving your home is an experience no one should have to go

through especially for reasons so out of an individual's control. For their recklessness with our climate, governments need to look at environmental refugees as a non-negotiable responsibility. Environmental refugees can no longer be ignored.

Another difficulty we faced was deciding upon focuses. Some team members thought we should expend most of our research and presentation on emissions while others thought we needed to focus more on multinational companies, funding for research, and what type of future dialogues were needed. All of these issues need to be discussed and decided upon but what did we want to make our anthem? Our team decided to focus on emissions, humanitarian aid and funding for research. We wanted to have specific negotiations with each country on emissions and attempt to compromise on this. To take on responsibility we offered funding for humanitarian aid especially for victims of climate change and research on sustainable practices. These offers were broad but we wanted the countries to where the funds were going to dictate where they needed the money.

The obstacle I found the most difficult and my answer for Dr. Iacono's question "What made you uncomfortable today?" was my lack of experience in these types of debates. I wish I had the room in my curriculum to learn about economics or had joined Model United Nations in high school as it would have helped me in this situation. I had the tools I had learned from life and the internet to prepare. My team learned an incredible amount through the research for this war game and our previous war game experience but it did not prevent my team from making a mistake in this war game. During one of our late night meetings we found a graph online. The X-axis was a list of countries including India, the US and China and the Y-axis presented emissions to GDP ratio. India and the US's bar were dead equal. This felt like a huge success and turning point in our research. On the day of the war games we presented the

benefits of looking at emissions per GDP. Simply put, this was not a huge success. After presentations, the United States was called to a private meeting with the current Clinton Administration. In the meeting, our members were told “Even the Bush Administration wouldn’t suggest looking at emissions per GDP.” My stomach sunk immediately realizing we were more extreme than the Bush Administration and by 11 AM I had disappointed Hilary Clinton.

Although these ending of these war games felt less conclusive than the first ones, I felt as though I have never and will never learn more in one day. I learned more about the complexities of international politics, the vastness of what climate change impacts and that I need Hilary Clinton’s approval. The war games sparked my interest on topics such as global economics and current research on energy efficient technology. I am looking forward to using this new found knowledge in my future classes and work.