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War Game I Individual Reflection

Preparing for the Climate Science War Game and acting as an advisor to the government acting on behalf on India's industry sector required more than research and preparation. I was tasked with helping to create a sensible proposal, which not only propagated the desires of my team of advisors and our stakeholders, but also placated the advisory teams representing the healthcare, water, energy, and agriculture sectors. As daunting as these obstacles seemed, I was able to maintain confidence and positivity after coming to a simple, yet significant, realization: I understood and shared the concerns and suggestions that the other groups would present. They, however, would fail to prepare for our vision. This vision, which I will describe later, leveraged the desires of our stakeholders in such a way that the result of our success would be a victory for the people of India. Our team found it vital to convey our goal of becoming liberators of the Indian people, rather than profiteers of misery, by seeking to ease the burden of the intense work of laborers. This was required to convince the other representatives of our benevolent intentions.

Ultimately, the proposal contained the principles of eco-modernism, industrialization, increased focus on nuclear power, and emphasized the formalization of the Indian economy. Five university students who had traveled to the other side of the planet in order to learn about and address the monumental issue and challenge that is climate change were preparing their attempt to convince their classmates to support a plan radically different from those supported by traditional environmental activists. I was taken aback.

Reflecting on the experiences I had gained during the two weeks in India prior to the war game, I began to understand that our plan was not so shocking after all. I had experienced extreme poverty in the streets of Kolaba and as well as in the Dharavi Slum. Energy and infrastructure deficiencies had not only been clear to me,

but they were also striking and disturbing. However, the reality that most altered my views on the developmental needs of India was the sheer lack of employment opportunities. To have seen workers who made the decision to leave home for the so-called opportunity to work in Dharavi spoke endlessly about the lack of options available to workers in both rural and urban India. Reconciling these new experiences with economic theory led to my support of the ideals expressed in our proposal. As the team member charged with detailing the specific policies our team hoped to see supported at the negotiations, I do not regret any of my decisions or policy recommendations.

The war game itself was a mixture of frustration and elation. It was wonderful to see most of the policy proposals I had spent hours researching be agreed upon by consensus amongst the teams. The experience of leaning on the technical knowledge of my teammates who study science and engineering to answer certain questions which extended beyond my basis of knowledge as well as the experience of building trust between members were unforgettable learning experiences and trust building exercises. Though at times grueling, it was enjoyable to negotiate and debate with the various sectors represented at the war game as we tried to determine which initiatives best suited India's needs. The joy that my teammates and I were able to derive from the experience came from the fact that each sector was passionate about solving the real-world challenges facing the nation of India, and slight disagreements over how to best solve these challenges could not detract from the nobility and thoughtfulness of each sector. The most negative point of the daylong negotiations came during the debate period, when our integrity as a team was attacked in a manner that we felt was senseless and inappropriate. I assumed responsibility for addressing the questionable remarks, and I believe I did so effectively by detailing the importance of the industry sector to the well being of the Indian people and the other sectors represented at the war game. If I were given the opportunity to relive the moment once more, I would like to have inquired as to why the remarks were made at such a time as they were.

This opportunity afforded me an understanding of the complexity of meeting a nation's needs, a respect for the difficulty of governmental negotiations, and a

knowledge of the various ideas about sustainability and what that means in the context of developing nations. It also offered a chance to hone my research and debating skills, both of which are arts that must be practiced frequently. While my team and I were reluctant to agree to a few proposals that were ratified by the group as a whole, I am confident that the suggestions ratified at the end of the negotiations would be beneficial to India and her people.