



THE OLIVE BRANCH

MODEL UNITED NATIONS NEWSLETTER



VOL. I ISSUE VI

SEPTEMBER 2013

ONLINE EDITION

Conference Calendar

Upcoming Dates:

9/26-9/28
Qatar MUN and Film Leadership Conference

9/29-10/8
Training Circuit

10/25-10/27
CAC Cairo

Online MUN:

9/21
O-MUN Global Debate

9/28
O-MUN Middle East/Africa

9/29
uniO-MUN

9/29
O-MUN Pacific

Welcome Back: The Start of the 2013-2014 MUN Calendar

By Cameron Janzen

ANOTHER school year has started! This year promises to



be another exciting year for Model UN in the region. With a large slate of conferences and a host of programs, students

and teachers are privileged to have some of the best MUN activities and conferences in the world.

Below are a couple of highlights for the 2013-14 school year.

Leadership Conference

The second annual Model United Nations leadership conference will take place from September 26-28 in Doha. With over 70 speakers from around the world, this will be an exciting weekend for learning and exchanging ideas. Expert speakers will provide

participants with training on every aspect of running a quality Model UN program back at home. Check out the impressive array of speakers at the [THIMUN Qatar](#) website. If you are interested in attending, there are still a few spaces available.

THIMUN OMUN

THIMUN OMUN is an ideal opportunity for your students looking to participate in a THIMUN-quality MUN conference from the comfort of your home or for those looking to add additional MUN

experiences for club members. THIMUN OMUN is a unique online debating platform, open to any high school student with internet connection and a desire to collaborate and discuss our world's most pressing issues. The 2013-14 school will be the first year where OMUN is a full THIMUN partner. In addition, this year, THIMUN OMUN has increased their Blackboard classroom capacity to meet their ever-growing demand. They now have a license to offer unlimited classroom and conference space which al-

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Greetings from THIMUN-OMUN

By Lisa Martin

WE HAVE a very busy debate schedule planned for September, starting off with our Security Council Debate on September 1, and finishing the month with our Middle East/Africa regional debate. We will also be holding our second online ICJ towards the middle of the month, under the guidance of ICJ delegate and veteran, [Akash Vinod](#). All of our debate topics are taken off of the THIMUN H, THIMUN Q or THIMUN S agendas, so our goal is to assist in your delegates' preparation whenever and wherever possible. Our

master calendar for this year can be found [here](#).

I've created a compilation of United Nations links to resources to assist with delegate preparation. Please feel free to share this with your delegates. It can be found on our website [here](#).

Be sure to sign up for the best Model United Nations magazine in our community, the *Olive Branch*! While the conference coverage focus is on the Middle East, there are many articles discussing curriculum, technology, trends in Model UN, and of course, happenings

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UN4MUN: Comparing MUN to the Real UN

By Ryan Villanueva

IS MODEL United Nations supposed to be a simulation of the real United Nations?

To someone outside of the MUN community, the answer may seem like an obvious yes — this is, after all, the “model” UN. But to those who are part of the MUN community, you know that the answer is not so obvious — this is actually one of the biggest questions facing the activity.

MUN may have strictly been a simulation of the UN when it first started over sixty years ago (longer, if you count the Model League of Nations). But MUN conferences today feature simulations of non-UN-related organizations. If you read this summer's *New York Times* ar-



Nearly one hundred delegates attended UN4MUN this year to learn the differences between MUN conferences across the globe.

title on [“The Dog-Eat-Dog World of Model UN,”](#) then you know how far away Model UN has gotten from being a strict simulation of the real UN.

The overwhelming majority of MUN conferences and committees, however, are still

simulations of UN bodies and related organizations. But if you have ever researched how your committee work, or have actually studied UN practices and procedures, then you know

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O-MUN Partners with THIMUN for Online Debates

By Shreshta Balanchandar

AS OF September 1st, 2013, The Hague International Model United Nations (THIMUN) and Online Model United Nations (O-MUN) have partnered together to offer online debates for students around the world, and the program is called “THI-

MUN O-MUN.” Founded by Lisa Martin in 2010, O-MUN seeks to keep access to online debates open to anyone, encourage student leadership and learning, promote cultural diversity by bringing together students from around the world into a single platform, and even offer the opportunity

for students to go on trips to THIMUN conferences.

When asked about the partnership with THIMUN, Lisa Martin said “Partnership with THIMUN allows O-MUN to keep its focus on student leadership and the high quality debating that the organization is known for. It is also a tremen-

dous honor to be offered the opportunity to take the THIMUN program to students all over the world who will never have the opportunity to travel to a THIMUN conference. Those of us who worked incredibly hard last year to build a truly global program are gratified by The THIMUN Foundation's

endorsement of the online program.” Maryam Al-Ammari, the Secretary General for THIMUN O-MUN, was equally excited about the partnership, and had this to say about the partnership. “It means our program will be able to reach more

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allows schools to host their own virtual conferences using the OMUN/Blackboard platform. Easy-to-access virtual classrooms, an integrated network of social media, and free online programs create the online debate's universe. Virtual classrooms and conferences rooms are available for schools to use. For more information or to register, please visit our [link](#).

MUNIS

This year, the THIMUN Foundation is pleased to announce the launch of a new service for schools and MUN conferences. Last year, THIMUN Foundation partners commissioned the creation of a customized database and online registration system. This application is a huge timesaver for MUN conference organizers as it automates registration, conference outputs (such as badges and certificates) and invoicing.

Conferences around region are welcome to use the application for a nominal fee. If you would like more information about this application, please feel free to contact or email us at munis@thimun.org.

UN 4 MUN

2013-14 will see even greater support from the UN toward Model UN programs. Over the summer, the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI) held two conferences focusing on giving MUN organizers a greater understanding of how the UN operates and how this can be best transferred to Model UN conferences. Recognizing the importance that MUN plays in promoting the values and work of the United Nations, the UNDPPI is working with MUN partners around the world. UNDPPI now provides detailed information on recommended Rules and Procedures, the discussion and action phases of GACOMmittee meetings, information on drafting resolutions, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the UN Secretariat and General Assembly officials. Read more about this important UN initiative in Ryan and Kevin's post ("[UN4MUN: Comparing MUN to the Real UN](#)") in this month's *Olive Branch* and complete program and preparation documents [here](#).

Training Sessions

2013-14 will see an expansion of training camps offered by Best Delegate within the region. Close to 30 schools will be participating in MUN training sessions this October. This spring, Best Delegate will be returning to offer more training to schools within the region. Sessions range from three hours to three day boot camps. If you are interested in scheduling a training session this spring for your students, please contact the THIMUN Qatar or Best Delegate offices.

Regional Conferences

Our region is fortunate to have many

quality MUN conferences in almost every country during virtually every month of the school year. If you need advice or information on selecting a conference near you, don't hesitate to contact the THIMUN Qatar or Best Delegate offices.

THIMUN Qatar Conference

In January 2014, the Qatar National Convention Center will once again play host to 1300 young students from around the region for the third annual

THIMUN Qatar Model United Nations conference. The registration deadline for the January 28-31 conference was September 17. For more information, please visit us at our [website](#).

Film Festival

The annual THIMUN Qatar North-western Film Festival will held on April 17-19, 2014, at Northwestern University and St. Regis hotel. Last year saw a record number of submissions from students around the world. 40 young film

makers were nominated to take part in three days of workshops, social activities and the gala awards night. The submission deadline for this year's festival is February 14. If you are interested in submitting films for this year's festival, please check out the THIMUN Qatar Film Festival YouTube channel to see past nominations or view a short film explaining the festival.

All of us at the *Olive Branch* wish you a successful 2013-14 school year.

THIMUN-OMUN, cont.

at THIMUN O-MUN. Sign up here, and share this with your delegates.

[National THIMUN O-MUN programs](#) will begin their debating programs soon. If you live in Egypt, Turkey, France, Palestine, Taiwan or Singapore, expect to have additional debating opportunities for your students. Not from one of these countries and want to develop a national program at your school? Contact me! I'd love to speak with you! And for French speaking delegates and schools? We are on our way to holding our first orientation for students. More information to follow.

We look forward to working with during this upcoming debating season.

Want *The Olive Branch* delivered straight to your inbox? [Click here](#) to sign up, or visit [bestdelegate.com/model-un-middle-east/!](http://bestdelegate.com/model-un-middle-east/)



Monthly Report from Jordan

By Shambhavi Tiwari

THE ACADEMIC year 2013-2014 for Jordan is filled with various exciting Model UN conferences, including the THIMUN-affiliated AMMUN, NESMUN, IAA MUN, NOSMUN, King's Academy MUN, Asriyya School's MUN, and MASMUN. These conferences have already been held every year for a few years, so all young MUNers are excited for a new start! Although all delegates have their own favorite conferences, the

conferences with the largest attendance rates from national and international delegates are ABS' AMMUN and King's Academy's KAMUN. For example, delegates from over 15 countries are attending AMMUN! In these schools, students prepare for Model UN as they do for school, so the debates are taken very seriously!

Jordan's MUNers are a small and well-known group, and the close-knit group is looking forward to collaborating once again to create excellent resolu-

tions. Leadership positions have already been assigned, and presidents and chairs are working hard on the topics of their forums. Soon, delegates will be chosen through a strict system of interviews or essays. Already, supervisors are counting down the days until conferences, and organizers are making sure to book venues and account for expenses. The leadership teams are anxious for success and are working around the clock. I, too, am eagerly waiting to see the outcome of their hard work this year!

Lebanon Country Report

By Marina Najm

WITH A SMALL shovel and a lot of snow, one needs to put in a whole lot of time an effort to get all the snow out of the way, or just get a bigger shovel. In Lebanon, we do have a lot of brilliant delegates, not snow. We can't enlarge the country. We can only work as hard as we can to show what we are capable of, especially concerning MUN.

One of the biggest local conferences is the GC LAU MUN conference. On a yearly basis, delegations from many schools get together and share the MUN experience. Preparations vary from one school to another, and that definitely shows in the conference. What is the proof? Delegates from the same

school earn over 90% of the awards. Unfair? Maybe. Not everyone can get good training or resources.

We have a relatively low number of delegates in Lebanon. Some are the ideal delegates, others do it for fun. Some others enjoy it while it lasts then forget about future debates. Lebanese high school students first need to know about MUN. It has only reached a few schools, and there are many potential delegates out there who could benefit if they had the appropriate preparation and people around them.

For this coming year, competition is rising. The fun part of the conference comes first. We have dances and costumes of each represented country. We have speeches and meetings. Then there

is the conference that sucks the energy out of all the delegates (just kidding, but the delegates at my school don't show up to class the following day). These should be getting better and better with each experience.

The delegates will keep on working hard. The outstanding ones will have the chance to participate in international conferences. Some of these were at New York and Georgetown.

I hope that any Lebanese student will be able to participate in MUN if he/she desires. With this number of delegates, one huge conference is enough. I hope that the number keeps on rising. More delegates and conferences will be possible by then. By this, we would be getting a bigger shovel.



Founded in January 2013

The Olive Branch

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UN4MUN, cont.

that even these “traditional” MUN conferences and committees do not simulate the UN accurately. The UN itself [pointed this out](#) in its response to the *New York Times* article.

Questions about the differences between Model UN and the real UN have existed for a long time. Questions like: why should Model UN simulate the real UN? How would MUN conferences simulate the UN more accurately? In fact, what are actual UN practices and procedures?

And these are the questions 100+ MUNers from around the world came together to discuss last month at the United Nations.

Enter the UN4MUN Workshop

Last month, KFC and I attended the [UN4MUN](#) Workshop hosted by the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI) at UN Headquarters in New York City from August 26-29, 2013.

About 100 people participated, coming from as far away as India, Bangladesh, Paraguay, Ghana, Kenya, the Netherlands, Iran, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Aruba, as well as New York City and across the United States. Most participants were university students involved in organizing MUN conferences in their home countries, but there were also teachers and organizers of high school, middle school, and even elementary school MUN conferences.

Led by UNDPi organizers Nathalie Leroy and Bill Yotive, the objective of the workshop was to teach participants about UN practices and procedures — and how they differ significantly from current MUN conferences. The workshop was structured around small group discussions on the key questions on the differences between the real UN and Model UN. Discussions were followed by presentations from UN officials on real UN practices and procedures, including Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson.

The scope of our discussions mainly focused on the General Assembly, although GA practices and procedures are followed at other UN conferences and meetings, and we also discussed the Security Council. The workshop also intended to focus on university-level MUN, but we also discussed high school, middle school, even primary school-level MUN.

The discussions allowed participants to learn the differences between Model UN conferences across the globe, and it was wonderful to see how diverse an activity MUN actually is. The presentations showed us how the UN actually operates, which yielded several surprising insights; I was surprised to learn how the founding principles written in the UN Charter, such as sovereignty and equality, are actually applied today. And between the discussions and panels over the course of 4 days, we could see many differences between Model UN and the real UN, and four big differences in particular.

Big Difference #1: Leadership Structure

At nearly all Model UN conferences, the Chair and other committee leadership positions (Vice Chairs, etc.) are appointed by the hosting school or organization. They are referred to as the Dais, and they are responsible for committee substance (e.g. background guides) and

procedure (e.g. running committee). Chairs are viewed as an all-powerful authority figure in committee; they are typically older and from higher grade levels (university students chairing a committee of high school students, for example). This description of the Chair may seem like such an obvious and needlessly stated fact of Model UN — yet it is actually contradictory to the founding principles of the UN.

In the UN, Chairs and Vice Chairs are elected by the member states at the beginning of the annual General Assembly session in September. They are referred to as the Bureau and they are active in building consensus (i.e. merging resolutions). GA Plenary is led by a President, not a Chair. And all of the leadership positions are distributed regionally; every [regional group](#) is allocated a certain number of Chair and Vice Chair positions, and the member states of that group decide who gets the position.

And the Bureau (i.e., Chairs and Vice Chairs) is not solely responsible for substance and procedure. Each committee has a Secretary — someone from the UN Secretariat who is under the chain of command of the Secretary-General — who supports the Chair with running committee. The Secretary prepares scripts ahead of the committee meeting for Chairs to follow. The Secretary also prepares presentations for the committee and determines whether and how resolutions impact the UN’s budget.

In UN committees, the Chair still has power and authority, but ultimately the Chair serves the member states. The Chair is a delegate elected by fellow delegates, and the Chair is obligated to them. For example, the Chair does not rule motions “dilatatory” — every point or motion raised by a member state is considered seriously. This practice of the Chair being a servant of the member states reflects one of the founding principles of the UN: sovereignty. But this also means that the current practice of MUN conferences, where the Chair is appointed and viewed as a higher authority than delegates and the member states they represent, actually contradicts the spirit of the UN.

Big Difference #2: Rules of Procedure

Many MUN conferences have Rules of Procedure (ROP). Sometimes they are referred to as parliamentary procedure, or they claim to be modified from Robert’s Rules of Order. Most conferences have various points that delegates can raise, including the ubiquitous “point of (parliamentary) inquiry.” At some conferences, motions need to be seconded, as they are at various legislative bodies. New delegates and advisors often view ROP as one of the biggest obstacles to learning MUN. Experienced delegates attempt to use ROP to their advantage (motioning for moderated caucus, for example, in order to gain speaking time).

Like the Chair, this description of ROP may also be taken for granted by MUN conferences. Many are aware that ROP differs from conference to conference (and especially so between American-style and THIMUN-style conferences). Yet current ROP at MUN conferences gets parts of the UN backwards. Firstly, the UN is not a parliament and does not use parliamentary procedure. The UN follows its [own procedure](#) that reflects its founding principles. UN ROP Procedure is actually simpler than ROP at

most MUN conferences.

There is only one point: Point of Order. All other points (Inquiry, Information, Personal Privilege, etc.) fall under Point of Order. To make a motion, delegates make a “T” with their placard and their hand. And there is no seconding of motions — seconding actually contradicts the principle of sovereignty, because it would mean that a member state could not make a motion on its own and needs another member state’s permission.

At North American conferences, debate goes back and forth between speakers list, unmoderated caucus, and moderated caucus. At THIMUN conferences, debate typically starts with lobbying, moves into speakers list, and then multiple resolutions are debated one at a time. Both formats are guided heavily by ROP. But at UN conferences, the real work takes place outside the confines of ROP. Delegates have “formal meetings” that are guided by ROP — these are essentially the equivalent of a speakers list. Then they meet during “informal meetings” that do not have to follow any ROP — these are like unmoderated caucus or lobbying.

These “informal meetings” take up the vast majority of conference time. Think of it like one long unmoderated caucus or lobbying session for the rest of committee until a single resolution has been merged together and ready to be adopted by consensus. Therefore, motions are not even in order for most of the committee time, nor is there formal debate on each resolution.

The right of reply is used at UN conferences, but it’s not about insults; it is actually used to substantively reply to a speech. Delegates only have one chance to make a formal speech on each agenda item, unless they request a right of reply; if granted, they are allowed to speak at the end of the day.

On resolutions, there is no minimum number of sponsors and no such thing as signatories — these MUN practices actually violate the UN’s founding principle of equality among sovereign states. In the UN, if a member state submits a resolution, that resolution is taken seriously, no matter how big or small, rich or poor the state is, and no matter how

motions and resolutions. Yet in the GA and other UN bodies, voting is avoided. Motions and resolutions are usually adopted by consensus. During informal meetings, delegates identify differences between draft resolutions and attempt to compromise in order to achieve consensus. When it’s time to “take action” (i.e., vote) on a motion or resolution, the Chair says, “If there are no objections, this resolution will now be adopted by consensus.”

Big Difference #3: Resolution Negotiations

At MUN conferences, when delegates start writing resolutions during unmoderated caucus or lobbying, they try to find delegates with similar policies, although oftentimes they look to work with friends or familiar faces, or any delegates sitting or standing next to them. Most resolutions are vague when it comes to funding their solutions; at THIMUN, discussions of funding are actually prohibited according to their ROP. At North American-style conference (i.e. those that have caucusing), resolutions must be written at the conference — “pre-written resolutions” are considered cheating (although pre-written resolutions are okay at THIMUN conferences). And once a resolution has been drafted, the sponsors attempt to get “their” resolution passed by seeking support from a majority of the committee’s delegates.

But in the real UN, member states meet in regional groups first to develop common positions on agenda items and topics. The member states of each regional group attempt to reach consensus on agenda items and draft resolutions. Regional groups are a big part of UN practices, as many practices are determined by region, including who can be President of the GA, Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Secretary-General.

Discussing how a resolution impacts the UN’s budget is a big part of negotiating resolutions. When resolutions are being discussed, the Secretary determines how the resolution might impact the budget; these are called “programme budget implications” (PBIs). The 5th Main Committee of the GA (Admin-



KFC leads a group discussion at UN4MUN

many states support the resolution.

There is no such thing as friendly versus unfriendly amendments. Usually every country is part of the same resolution and negotiates all the clauses up front before taking action (voting or adopting by consensus) on them.

Here’s a big procedural difference: almost all MUN conferences vote on

istrative and Budgetary) reviews PBIs across the resolutions that are passed in other committees and makes a recommendation to the GA Plenary.

And “pre-written resolutions” are expected at UN meetings. In fact, when a member state submits an item (i.e. topic) to be considered on the agenda, they typically include a sample resolution.

Opposing Views: Syria and Chemical Weapons

ONE OF THE key strategies in preparing MUNers for debate and resolution writing is to develop an understanding of the spectrum of opinion about the topic being debated. Once delegates understand the basic opposing views of the issue, they can better determine on which side and to what extent their assigned nation supports one of the two main views. Each month, *Opposing Views* will outline a debate taken from the website Debata-base. With hundreds of debates outlined in an easy-to-use format, this is a great resource for MUNers. This month's column will focus on the topic of military intervention in Syria if chemical weapons are used.

Background

In Syria, there have now been almost three years of conflict between the Ba'ath Party of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and a fractured Arab Spring inspired rebellion that incorporates a broad Syrian National Coalition, Kurds and Mujahideen from around the Middle East. It is now clear that intervention from outside the country, beyond the provision of weapons, will only happen if there is a major change in the situation on the ground. NATO and the United States have shown little inclination to intervene in any capacity on their own while Russia and China prevent any UN action that they believe might be open the way to overthrow President Assad's regime.

The United States, however, says that it does have red lines, which if crossed, will result in more US action. In August Obama stated, "We have been very clear to the Assad regime, but also to other players on the ground, that a red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized. That would change my calculus. That would change my equation." Chemical weapons are about the last possible line that has yet to be crossed in the brutal civil war.

There are of course significant difficulties with the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government being a red line that triggers intervention or some other form of reaction; most particularly how do we know when they are used? The use of chemical weapons may not be easy to spot from a satellite, and reports from either side on the ground would be inevitably biased if there are to be such consequences.

The State Department, however, says, "We believe Syria's chemical weapons stockpile remains secured by the Syrian government" and that they "found no credible evidence to corroborate or to confirm that chemical weapons were used." So for the moment we still do not know if chemical weapons have been used or not.

Either way, the international community must be considering what it will do if it becomes clear that chemical weapons have been used or if they are used more widely. Syria is thought to have one of the biggest chemical Weapons arsenals in the world, and may well also have biological weapons. It probably has large quantities of VX, and before the start of the civil war, had at least four large chemical weapons production facilities.

If chemical weapons are going to be used, or have been used, should there be

intervention?

Points for Syrian Intervention:

Point: Intervention would be legitimate.

If Syria uses, or looks as if it is about to use, chemical weapons then this would be a clear escalation that would require action. Syria has never signed the Chemical Weapons Convention but it should be considered to be a part of customary international law so binding even on those who have not signed.

The use of chemical weapons would also clearly be an attempt to cause huge numbers of casualties and large scale suffering. In 2005 with the United Nations World Summit the nations of the world signed up to "If a State is manifestly failing to protect its populations, the international community must be prepared to take collective action to protect populations." So any intervention would be fully justifiable, and indeed should occur as Syria would be demonstrating that it is "failing to protect its populations" by using chemical weapons on them. There is no doubt that the world has a moral responsibility to prevent atrocities in Syria, and these atrocities are already happening, the world cannot stand by while the Syrian government escalates their scale through the use of chemical weapons.

Not making a reaction will embolden the regime.

Not responding to Syrian moves to use chemical weapons will be enabling the Syrian government to use chemical weapons. It has already been reported that some chemical weapons are being made ready for use such as the combining of the two chemical precursors, isopropanol and methylphosphonyl difluoride, needed to weaponize sarin gas. It means that "Physically, they've gotten to the point where the can load it up on a plane and drop it". If there is no response to this then Syria will be more likely to use weapons.

If there is no response to the limited use of chemical weapons, such as the use of Agent 15 in Homs, then there the regime will be encouraged to think that there will be no response to larger uses of chemical weapons. Syria would slowly escalate to see what it can get away with, an escalation that US officials think could "lead to a mass-casualty event" without the appropriate response.

No fly zones and bombing could eliminate the threat of chemical weapons.

More difficult to destroy are ballistic missiles, and particularly artillery but even these are much easier to One of the reasons why there has not been an intervention in Syria already is the difficulty of doing so. Preventing or limiting the use of chemical weapons however does represent a defined objective that is smaller, and therefore easier, than bringing peace to Syria. It has to be accepted, however, that if Assad's regime is determined to use chemical weapons then some are likely to get through and how much is prevented is largely dependent on intelligence.

Interdicting chemical weapons during transport and bombing the storage facilities to make it much more difficult to move the weapons would be easiest to accomplish. But if chemical weapons are



Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has been the target of Western criticism for possession of chemical weapons — but is he really innocent?

about to be used then attacking the delivery vehicles would be necessary; any intervention would have overwhelming air superiority so would prevent the option of aircraft and helicopters being used to deliver the weapons.

hit than infantry would be. In the conflict against Gaddafi precision guided weapons to destroy tanks and artillery were successfully used. Moreover, an intervening force would not need to destroy every missile and artillery brigade, but find only those that are being issued with chemical weapons.

Using chemical weapons is dangerous escalation.

All killing is abhorrent. and one life is worth as much as any other. But while the lives lost are the same, it is not true that the use of chemical weapons to kill is the same as conventional weapons; the difference is that one is banned and the other is not, their use makes intervention possible in a way it is not during a conventional conflict. The threat from chemical weapons is also of an order of magnitude greater than that of conventional weapons. They can kill immense numbers quickly and indiscriminately. The use of chemical weapons is an escalation that must not be allowed to happen.

Points against Syrian Intervention:

Do chemical weapons really make a difference?

Chemical and biological weapons are among the most horrifying weapons ever created by man; therefore, it is with good reason that they are banned. How-

ever, if there have already been over 100,000 people killed by the conflict in Syria then the use of chemical weapons, unless it was on a massive scale, taking more destructive action and costing lives could not make much of a difference in terms of the numbers of people the Assad regime is killing. It is morally inconsistent to consider chemical weapons somehow different if they are not changing the scale of the killing. It is human lives that matter, or rather does not matter as has been made clear by the unwillingness to do anything, not the type of weapon that kill those people. If Syria kills a few thousand more by using chemical weapons, then what is the difference to killing thousands more using conventional weapons?

The use of weapons may not change the diplomatic situation.

Through Security Council action, Russia and China have been vetoing UN action on Syria throughout the crisis. It is precisely the intervention to prevent a massacre that the Russians and Chinese are trying to avoid, for fear that this would simply be a pretext for regime change as happened in Libya. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has explicitly stated, "We'll not allow the Libyan experience to be reproduced in Syria." When Obama said that chemical weapons use was a red line, Xinhua, China's state news agency, responded, "Obama's 'red line' warnings merely aimed to seek new pretext for Syria intervention," urging continued negotiations instead. While the use of chemical weapons is odious and would make Assad even more of a pariah than

Syria, cont.

he already is, it likely will be seen as a sufficient reason to change political positions.

Intervention could not prevent the use of chemical weapons.

No intervention could prevent the use of chemical weapons of the Assad regime had they decided to use them. No outside forces could ever be certain they know where all Syria's weapons are and destroy them in time if those weapons were distributed for use. Even full scale air strikes might not be enough; the Pentagon thinks it would require 75,000 troops to secure the arsenal in the event of Syria's collapse. The Chair-

man of the Joint Chiefs, Martin Dempsey, admits that even if acting before the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government, the United States would not be able to stop their use. "The act of preventing the use of chemical weapons would be almost unachievable... because you would have to have such clarity of intelligence, you know, persistent surveillance, you'd have to actually see it before it happened, and that's — that's unlikely, to be sure." There is little that could be done to repair any harm created if Syria has and abuses chemical weapons. If widespread chemical weapons use has already occurred then the intervention could hardly be to prevent

their use in the first place, but to punish their use. Responding to the use of chemical weapons would seem to be pointless; the deaths will have occurred already and it would be unwise to take away more lives. Syria may have more chemical weapons in its arsenal still to use, but an attack would simply make them more likely to use everything they have.

Conclusion

You can read the entire debate and access more resources on the topic of Syria and chemical weapons on our website [here](#).

Analogies: "Model UN is like a..."

By Mahek Tulsiani

ANYONE WHO HAS spent any time at a Model UN conference will quickly note the use of analogies in debate. Some delegates use analogies as a tactic for adding clarity to their speaking points, and other delegates use analogies as tactic to stimulate interest in themselves. Either way, original Model UN metaphors can make any speech, idea, or even delegate memorable. Below is this month's collection of analogies that were accumulated from recent conferences — enjoy!

"This resolution is like Snorlax — it is big and useless."

"This resolution is like Glee — it has some good ideas, but its execution is sloppy."

"This resolution is like a broken pencil — pointless."

"This clause is like Santa — a good Claus."

"This resolution is like sitting on a pineapple — it hurts at first, but it has good points."

"This resolution is like a donut — it's sweet, but it has large hole in the middle."

That wraps up this month's collection of analogies! Be sure to send your favorite analogies to me at mun.analogies@gmail.com, and I will be sure to include them in the next issue.

Resource Corner: UN Wire

By Cameron Janzen

UN WIRE is a free service provided by the United Nations Foundation. UN Wire is a news aggregate news services providing headlines of United Nations news from *The Wall Street Journal*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and other leading sources. With a daily publication schedule, this resource allows readers to skim UN headlines in quick glance and access to more in-depth information if desired.

An additional service provided by UN Wire is that it breaks news headlines into specific global issues. Each issue begins with the top UN news stories of the

current day and then follows with other topics that have been in the news for the day (i.e., Health and Development, Women & Girls, Peacekeeping and Security).

Other interesting feature is the ability to quickly share any item with others. Each item has linked in services that enable you to connect to your favorite social media tool.

Other services include links to other UN information sites such UN Dispatch, UN Foundation, and all major UN organs. If you aspire to work at the UN, there is a daily update of positions available within the UN in the Job Dispatch section.

A note of caution: it appears that most of the news sources that are being used in UN Wire are from US or European news media which may lead to bias in the information being provided.

Type of Resource: Electronic
Purpose: To provide readers with a daily snapshot of the activities of the UN and its impact of the world.
Cost: Free
Subscription Page: https://www2.smartbrief.com/signupSystem/subscribe.action?pageSequence=1&briefName=un_wire

The screenshot shows the UN Wire website interface. At the top left is the 'UN WIRE' logo with the tagline 'News covering the UN and the world'. To the right is the 'UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION' logo. Navigation links include 'SIGN UP | FORWARD | ADVERTISE | DONATE'. The main content is divided into three sections: 'Top Story' featuring a headline about a UN ban on chemical weapons attacks, 'Quote of the Day' with a tweet from @UNFoundation, and 'UN Dispatch' with a news snippet about a Security Council emergency session. A 'United Nations' section at the bottom lists various news items like 'UN peacekeeping force aids reconciliation in Mali'.

A snapshot of a UN Wire news page

Point of Order

By Cameron Janzen

THIS YEAR, the Point of Order column will be focusing on the values and principles that underline the purpose of MUN programs. MUN programs take a lot of time and effort from our students, teachers and schools. While there are tremendous academic benefits that result from MUN participation, the goal of MUN programs is to also impact individual's perception of the world and their corresponding actions.

Every MUN delegate quickly learns that the resolution is the core activity around MUN conferences. We learn about the background of a country so our resolutions can more accurately reflect our assigned country's position. We read background guides, read about global issues, interview ambassadors and other dignitaries and spend countless hours drafting, merging and debating resolutions. At the end of this process, the ultimate success for some delegates is to see their resolution pass through the General Assembly.

Every year, I will have a soon to be

graduated senior student who has been very involved in MUN ask in rhetorical tone; What is the point? No one every reads or use MUN resolutions. It is not as though these resolutions really matter.

In one sense my seniors are right. MUN resolutions don't matter. They don't get enacted into laws or shape globe opinion. Resolutions have a strong academic value in helping learn about problem solving, complexity of issues, and understanding global issues. However, there are also ethical values attached with the resolution writing process.

Resolutions convey the message of the importance of the rule of law in society. "Rule of law" is one of the core concepts at the heart of MUN and the United Nations work and mission. The United Nations was established in the aftermath of a terrible war to ensure that relations among nations would be grounded in international law. Disputes and relations can be governed through principles of force or by rule of law. Throughout human history, we have struggled with

creating mechanisms to minimize the use of force and strength rule of law institutions. By engaging students in the process of resolution writing, we are modeling the importance we place on the rule of law.

What is the rule of law? The rule of law refers to a principle of governance in which all persons, public and private institutions, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are consistent with international norms and standards. The actions of delegates in MUN programs demonstrate principles of equality and the concept that laws agreed by society are to be respected. Delegates engaging in debate understand that if there is an expectation that if this resolution becomes "law" then conditions of accountability have been created. There is an understanding that there is a collective that should not allow grave violations of law go unpunished.

The MUN process also teaches us about the conditions needed in establish rule of law. Delegates begin to understand the importance of societal consent in the drafting laws. The process teaches the give and take and compromises

needed to broad consensus. The resolutions process teaches participants the need for respected and effective authority.

Finally MUN teaches us that the difficulty and problems facing society in the implementation of the rule of law. Legal inequalities, the difference between morality and legality, violations of the spirit of the law versus the letter of the law, and difficulty with compliance and enforcement are just few of the challenges MUN participants regularly face. Delegates quickly realize that laws are biased and mechanisms for making legal challenges are often controlled by those to whom the laws favor. Delegates come to the realization that laws are not absolute and are in constant state of change. It is this realization that delegates are often inspired to go out a try to make these necessary changes.

While great MUN resolutions may not be enshrined into international law, the process enforces the values of the rule of law within the MUN participant.

Lessons from Model UN Summer Programs: Confidence, Bullying, and Meta-Learning

By Kevin Felix Chan

I SPENT my summer teaching at the various Best Delegate Model UN Summer Programs and the experience provided several insightful lessons into contemporary Model UN. I'd like to share my biggest takeaways for individual delegates, for groups of delegates, and for the global Model UN community.

1. Individual Lesson: Confidence can be built. I knew confidence could be developed in people because I went through that process as a Model UN delegate myself; I started off as a shy delegate who'd visibly shake in front of an audience but eventually became confident enough to introduce Ban Ki-moon in front of 2,400 people in the General Assembly. What I wanted to learn was how to replicate that development process in a compacted schedule.

The Best Delegate Model UN Summer Programs had a strong emphasis on leadership development and we had the students get real with each other. Students went through exercises that helped them learn about their personal strengths and weaknesses as well as emotionally intense exercises that helped them develop a stronger sense of self and community. The result was that almost 100% of students reported an increase in confidence on their post-camp surveys.

2. Group Lesson: Model UN has a bullying problem. I had many opportunities to observe delegate behavior inside and outside of committee during the Summer Programs, and what all of our staff realized was that bullying is common across all of Model UN. Oftentimes, students are not cognizant that they are bullying others — sometimes this behavior is even encouraged when they see Power Delegates be rewarded

for being a bully and in some situations the students are merely emulating the behavior of family and friends.

Our Summer Program addressed bullying with lessons on social dynamics, gender roles, the difference between Power Delegates and Best Delegates,

ran our Summer Programs using three different rules of procedure: North American procedure for all US-based camps, THIMUN procedure for most international camps, and United Nations procedure (newly rolled out by the UNDP's UN4MUN initiative) at the

delegates spend most of their committee time amending resolutions until a 51% vote.

United Nations procedure focuses on building consensus through Informal Meetings until one resolution can be adopted by all countries with 100%



Meta learning: the rules around us define what we think of as success, and in Model UN the three different rules of procedure affect how delegates learn Model UN.

through group feedback, and with individual feedback including some stern talks with delegates. Students are often taught skills and substance, but Model UN seems to be lacking in education on negative behaviors and styles. I personally think the issue of addressing bullying — a problem that delegates across all camps globally can relate to — will become a bigger crusade of mine as I become a better teacher of social dynamics and leadership in the future.

3. Global Lesson: Meta Learning through Rules of Procedure. We

WFUNA Youth Camp Korea. Now that I have had a chance to directly compare and contrast the different rules of procedure, I have realized that the rules affect meta learning — how students learn to what to learn in Model UN. In other words, the different rules of procedure that we grow up in teach us different definitions of success in Model UN.

For example: North American procedure is mostly a negotiation game through unmoderated and moderated caucuses until a group of sponsors reach a 51% vote.

THIMUN procedure emphasizes debate on the quality of solutions as del-

non-disagreement (voting is frequently not necessary when consensus has been reached).

We'll be presenting more about Meta Learning at the Qatar Leadership Conference. Practically, we'll also continue to provide training in the two dominant rules of procedure as well as the new UN rules of procedure for organizations and conferences that wish to simulate the real United Nations accurately. I personally think that each procedure teaches different valuable skills and that the best delegates should experience each one for a well-rounded Model UN education.

Redefining Poverty: A Lesson in Evaluating Approaches to Addressing Poverty

By Darby Sinclair

IT IS SAFE to say that students who choose to participate in Model UN desire to be global citizens and strive to find ways to make an impact on communities that suffer from issues relating to poverty. When teaching international relations and tackling the issue of poverty it often remains an abstract concept that is completely foreign to many students. From a pedagogical perspective, it is important for students to understand the nuanced differences in how development theory approaches the question of how to address poverty and how this has rapidly been redefined in the past few decades.

Creating clear definitions of poverty becomes a necessary starting point. Our mainstream westernized understanding of poverty is based on monetary wealth. This orthodox viewpoint recognizes poverty as a situation where people do not have the money to buy adequate food or satisfy other basic needs. Traditionally, the way to solve poverty from this perspective is to further integrate the global economy. However, students should be challenged to consider alternative definitions of poverty that emphasizes not only monetary wealth, but community ties and availability of common resources.

Since the early 1990's, the UN Development Programme has worked to extend the concept of poverty to distinguish between income poverty and human poverty. This definition of poverty has begun to slowly be adopted by non-government organizations, United Nations agencies, and grassroots movements. The focus of defining poverty is through the language of human rights, considering issues such as political empowerment, participation, and self-determination. By creating a universal definition, approaches to finding and implementing solutions then become much more tangible.

Students at Taipei American School have worked towards changing their paradigm of how they understand poverty. The 2011 and 2013 Human Development Reports, "Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All" and "The Rise of the South" (full reports available online) act as helpful resources for students to identify global challenges and the interlinking role that communities and governments must play together in allowing for human development progress in the world's poorest regions.

One of the best available resources for students and educators alike to evaluate the multifaceted nature of defining poverty is the Human Development Index and the [UNDP Data Explorer](#). This resource allows students to create graphs that compare national data by cross-referencing various demographic in-depth statistics from health, education, gender, sustainability, etc. through a longitudinal perspective. This invaluable resource allows students to understand the complex nature of poverty and the interrelationship between the various indicators and the changes that have occurred over the past three decades.

In the International Relations course, students are required for their final unit of study on development to complete an NGO Critique and Solution Paper. Students are asked to identify two NGO's that appropriately address a chosen in-

dicator (i.e., primary school enrollment rates) from the Human Development Index. They research two approaches (mainstream traditional and the alternative United Nations approach) to addressing this issue of poverty and provide a critique for what they believe to be the short term and long term effectiveness of these approaches. Students are then challenged to consider alternative solutions that encourage empowerment, support participatory democracy and address the need for an ecologically

sustainable approach. Solutions that students propose may either be narrow or wide in scope. The challenge is for students to emphasize solutions that most effectively meet the desired outcomes using an alternative approach that is inclusive and participatory. They must evaluate how addressing one aspect of poverty can influence other aspects as well.

As students become more critical evaluators of the "solutions" to poverty they begin to shift their paradigm ob-

serving issues of poverty, sustainability and development in the interconnected web through which these challenges exist. Understanding the significance of defining poverty from a human rights perspective is a key component to creating more effective and inclusive solutions to challenges facing the 21st century.

Darby Sinclair is the high school Model United Nations director at Taipei American School.



How the West Failed Egypt's Democracy

By Jeremy Kinsman

THE DEATH toll in Egypt's summer of anger makes you wonder how dumping Hosni Mubarak two years ago could possibly have been worth such a cost.

International surveys repeatedly show that in times of crisis and disruption, most people choose peace and security over justice.

Egyptians turfed out Mubarak in a quest for justice. In the process, they lost security. What went wrong? And what now?

Getting rid of a dictator is relatively easy compared to the task of constructing democracy from the ground up.

Democracy is not a short-term process that can be downloaded from the outside world. It has to rely on behavior that is built up over time, where the building blocks are civil society and its habits of give and take. Egyptians, under successive dictators, had no opportunity to build these vital capacities, and the result of that is what we have been witnessing these past weeks.

The sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim is a courageous human rights advocate who was once jailed for speaking out against Mubarak. Looking now at the way in which the revolution he sought has turned into a battle between his fellow countrymen, he asks for patience. "You gave Mubarak 30 years. Give us some time."

Ibrahim had long criticized the U.S. for coddling Mubarak, part of a frequent tendency of the West to prefer the apparent stability of a useful dictator over basic democratic values.

Three power bases

Today, power in Egypt has been dispersed to a triad of distinct bases.

One is the faith-based Islamist parties of which the Muslim Brotherhood—long banned from politics in the Mubarak era, but always present as a social service provider — was elected to office in 2012, only to be deposed by protest and the army.

Another grouping comprises the many elements of the "secularist" and democratic opposition that was the spearhead in toppling Mubarak. This group is probably equal in aggregate support to the Brotherhood, but lacks the unity of organization and common purpose of the Brotherhood.

Then there is the army. It presents itself as the guarantor of the nation's integrity with its self-appointed role as broker between these other two groups. But it also has vast economic interests of its own that it wants to safeguard.

Supporting cast members here include the very tough internal security agencies that are anti-Brotherhood, and the courts, which are largely Mubarak-appointed and which, with ardent support from the network of old-regime business cronies, try to protect the remnants of the former status quo.

Beyond them all are the tens of millions of Egyptian poor along with the country's frustrated urban professionals chafing at the economic disarray.

The missing ingredients

In reviewing the experience of countries that attempted and (in most cases) succeeded in making the transition from authoritarian societies to democracy in the wave that began with Portugal and Spain in the 1970s and swept through



Eastern Europe (after the Communist collapse in 1989), Latin America, and many countries in Africa and Asia, many scholars point to the necessity of what's called "pacting" among the contestants for power.

Normally, the incoming revolutionary order seldom wins a clean sweep, and there needs to be some kind of tacit agreement with the old order not to turn everything completely upside down. Without such agreement, a country will stagger forward and backward in unresolved, polarized conflict where "democracy and dictatorship live side-by-side."

All societies are pluralist. But institutions must be inclusive. That is the most important rule of democracy. One of the West's early misplaced emphasis was the belief that generally free and fair elections was what democracy was all about. In reality, it is what happens after the elections that most determines democratic success or failure. Will winners, who may be an ethnic, tribal, or sectarian majority, include electoral minorities wholeheartedly? Or will they judge them only as political adversaries?

In Egypt's case, once the Muslim Brotherhood won power, it didn't seem to have a clue about the need for truly "pacting" with any of the opposition groups, which is why the army toppled them from power.

But it now is making precisely the same mistake.

Missed the signs

For decades, the U.S. and most other Western countries got Egypt (and Tunisia, and Libya, etc.,) hopelessly wrong by allowing our desire for allies in the "war on terror" and for the Mideast peace process to override the need to understand what repressed people in those countries wanted for themselves. Our understanding today falsely aligned our Egyptian hopes with that country's so-called secularists because our own political system is undeniably secular.

In so doing, we failed to see that virtually all Egyptians possess deep religious faith, their differences being over the degree of pluralism guaranteed by Egypt's laws and political process.

After Mohammed Morsi was elected president a year ago, the U.S. Embassy in Cairo worked hard to persuade the

Obama administration and the United States Congress to accept the new regime while trying to influence the Morsi government to be more tolerant and inclusive. At the same time, these diplomats tried to maintain the neutrality of the Egyptian army, in part by the promise of U.S. military aid.

But that delicate balance has since collapsed. Morsi had no experience with the essential compromises of political life, and could not seem to see that being Egypt's first-ever democratic winner did not entitle him to call all the shots.

Today, democrats look on aghast as democracy's laboratory in the Middle East is exploding with an experiment gone fatally awry. Not only will Egypt now need a generation to heal the wounds it has inflicted on itself, but even if it should come to some temporary accommodation, young Islamists everywhere, having seen democracy denied, will be its enemies from here on.

For them, we, the outside democracies, come across as callow and shallow, flippancy with our sound-bite formulas like "the army's intervention is the least bad solution." We blew it by looking on bewildered and sort of bothered when we should have been supporting that initial democracy through a massive plan of economic reconstruction, conditional of course on inclusive governance to see it through.

Is it too late now? Without decisive intervention to support reconciliation and inclusivity — democracy will have taken a grievous blow. Its failure for a great and deserving people will be a cautionary tale for many others for years to come.

Jeremy Kinsman is a former Canadian ambassador and co-author of the Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy Development Support. You can read his original article [here](#).

OMUN-THIMUN Partnership, cont.

people. It is also the ultimate seal of approval and support from THIMUN, one of the most important organizations in Model UN."

Meanwhile, the THIMUN board is equally pleased with the partnership. Fran Laughlin, Co-Chair of the THIMUN Board of Directors, stated "It has been THIMUN's mission, since its early conferences nearly 50 years ago, to spread the word about the work of the United Nations, for students to learn about contemporary world issues, and to learn the procedures for formal debate and negotiation. Until now this has been done through our four (soon to be five) international conferences and our more than forty affiliated conferences.

Developments in technology have allowed us to continue this program, and the THIMUN foundation is delighted to welcome O-MUN (Online Model United Nations) to its family. We welcome this opportunity, which enables students across the world, especially those who are not able to attend conferences, to participate in debate and negotiation while stepping into the shoes of another country. We are particularly grateful to Lisa Martin, whose energy and vision made O-MUN happen."

Congratulations to both THIMUN and O-MUN for a wonderful partnership that will bring Model UN to more delegates and teachers from around the world!



2013-2014 Schedule of THIMUN Events and Affiliated Conferences



Qatar MUN and Film Leadership Conference	September 26-28	Doha
Training Circuit	September 29-October 8	Region
CAC Cairo	October 25-27	Cairo
Amman Bacculaureate School	October 30th-November 4th	Jordan
Bayan Bilingual (applicant)	November 1-2	Bahrain
DCMUN	November 14-15	Doha
THIMUN Singapore	November 16 – 23	Singapore
THIMUN Qatar	January 28-31	Doha
THIMUN Hague	January 26-31	The Netherlands
Submission Deadline TQ Film Festival	February 14	Doha
Georgetown MUN	February 20-23	Doha
AISMUN	March 7-10	Cairo
DIAMUN	March 19-22	Dubai
Qatar Academy MUN (Arabic)	March 28-29	Doha
THIMUN Qatar Film Festival	April 17-19	Doha