Olive Branch of Peace, Tree of Knowledge

By Cameron Janzen

WE HAVE decided on a name for our monthly newsletter: The Olive Branch. The name, suggested by Todd Haines, an international teacher in Qatar, was seen as a good reflection of the goals that we have for this publication.

Tradition
At the heart of MUN programs is the belief that we can solve global issues through education, dialogue and discussion without resorting to violence. The olive branch has been used as a symbol of peace throughout history, found in every major culture and religion in the Mediterranean region. This symbol is said to have originated in the story of Prophet Nūh/Noah which is held in common by Muslims, Christians, and Jews. After a great flood, a dove with an olive branch in its mouth appeared to Noah as a sign of the restoration of peace between God and man and new peace on earth.

Physical Symbolism
An olive tree, called shajarat zaytun in Arabic, is very hearty and long-lived, even in the harsh conditions of almost total neglect. The secret of the olive trees survival is its massive underground root system that can extend over twenty feet. The roots are so extensive and strong that in times of drought, when other trees die, the olive tree is still standing because it draws from deep within the ground. With conflict present in many countries in our region it may appear that peace has no chance of survival or there are no other options other than the use of force. Yet the deepest rooted peace within the people of the region allows for deep seated conviction that advocates of peace and justice will be victorious.

The olive tree is also not especially remarkable in appearance or stature. It is not the tallest tree, nor is it particularly valuable, for its timber has a withered and dry look that gives it an aged presence. Those of us who work in education and

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DIAMUN + OMUN = Security Council Crisis Excitement

By Farhan Farouqui

OVER THE course of three days, Dubai International Model United Nations’ Security Council discovered, through a series of top-secret Wikileaks briefs, that nuclearorea was then lost, and the Council was left to ponder the implications of such behavior. With fears mounting, the Council convened to resolve the pressing issue that could, if the situation got ugly, change the face of the planet. Participants in the session included all current Security Council nations, but also included special envoys from DPRK, Bulgaria, Japan, the IAEA and South Korea. In a first for DIAMUN, these special envoys joined from their ‘remote locations’, via O-MUN’s online classroom, and debated with delegates in the physical SC room. The online delegates, logging in from India, Taiwan, Australia, the United Arab Emirates, helped to add an exciting twist to the dramatic crisis scenario. The Deputy Secretary-General, Farhan Farouqui, gave the

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Mighty Bell

By Lisa Martin

FOR AN educational site with such an odd name, you might be excused for giving this wonderful technology tool no more than a passing glance. Mighty Bell, however, is a very powerful and useful site that O-MUN has been using as a focal point for delegate research. Not only is it a great resource, but it’s also very easy to use. But first, a bit of background on this unique educational resource. O-MUN needed a way to focus delegate discussion and research in an accessible location and not on Facebook. As we’ve grown, Facebook has gotten too busy, with announcements and topics competing for attention all at once. Discussions on the issue got lost quickly. The idea of a Mighty Bell site was to develop a single page that delegates could post research links, Chair reports, informational videos and other media in a dedicated place, without the distractions of posts and social banter.

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Congeniality of peace, tree of knowledge; in the Middle East, it is no different

The olive branch has been widely regarded as a symbol of peace throughout history, for example, at this year’s Harvard National MUN Conference (HNMUN), I debated Security Council Reform as the representative of the United Kingdom to the Security Council. For my very first speech, I said something similar to the following:

“Thank you, honorable Chair, and good evening, fellow delegates. Now, the United Kingdom views the larger topic of Security Council Reform as comprising three smaller issues. First, membership expansion; second, the veto; third, working practices.

Regarding membership, the United Kingdom supports the G4 plan, which gives permanent non-veto seats to Germany, Japan, India, and Brazil. Moreover, we are flexible regarding the number of non-permanent seats to be added.

Regarding the veto, the United Kingdom believes that any conversation on this issue will deadlock progress on actual reform. The members of this committee know that the Permanent 5 will not give up or grant to others their veto power.

And regarding working practices, the United Kingdom wants to incorporate informal practices into the formal rules of procedure, particularly the Arriva Formula. We think that non-state actors should be allowed to address this body.

That is the United Kingdom’s position on membership expansion, the G4 and working practices. Thank you very much, and we look forward to working with all of you this weekend.”
2nd Annual Qatar MUN and Film Leadership Conference in Doha

By Cameron Janzen

SEPTEMBER 2012 saw over 50 international and national MUN leaders come together in Doha, Qatar to present workshops and provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and develop partnerships among nearly 400 participants. Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar, Northwestern University in Qatar, and THIMUN Qatar have begun the process of preparing for the Second Annual MUN and Film Leadership Conference from September 26th-28th, 2013. Workshops provide an opportunity for MUN and media leaders to present their work in a focused way and to have discussions of particular topics of interest to the community. Conference organizers are hoping to attract a wide variety of workshop proposals related to the development of leadership and advancement of MUN programs. Both students and teachers are encouraged to submit proposals. If you are interested in presenting at the conference, please complete the following application. The deadline for the submission of proposals is April 25th, 2013.

You can see a copy of last year’s conference program for further information about topic areas and examples of workshops.

Steve Jobs and HIAMUN

By Omar Eldarawy

HAYAH INTERNATIONAL Academy Model United Nation’s 3rd Annual Conference has been crowned a “huge success” by the prestigious HIAMUN13 Secretary General, Malak Saleh. From February 21st to 24th with about 188 participants attending, HIAMUN13 ranked as a milestone in many participants’ lives. “My bro Steve Jobs once told me that the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do, so I joined HIAMUN,” said one of the banners around the theater in the opening ceremony. From just the opening speech, HIAMUN Director, Mr. Karim El Dib, advocated for “never being silent.” Everyone else to “never be silent”. Some believe that silence is golden, but here in HIAMUN, “saying anything” is measured in the long term.

Symbol of conflict versus symbol of hope

Jews for Justice for Palestinians, estimates since 2001 Israel through its military and settler actions in the West Bank and Gaza have uprooted, burnt and destroyed 548,000 olive trees. These trees had provided a sense of belonging and economic activity for Palestinians for hundreds of years and have become a powerful symbol of the Israeli occupation. However, this peace advocacy group is determined that olive tree remains a symbol of hope within Palestine. The Olive Tree Campaign (OTC) seeks to plant and replant sponsored olive trees in areas trees have been uprooted and destroyed by Israelis.

Since the campaign was launched in 2002, its objective has been replanting more than 80,000 olive trees in hundreds of fields in the West Bank and Gaza, many of which are already bearing fruit for the farmers and their families. The trees have helped the farmers to steadfast on their land and confront unjust practices. The OTC believes that through replanting olive trees, people will be encouraged to keep hope alive and reaffirm their commitment to work constructively toward peace-building. “We also hope The Olive Branch plays a small part to this end.

Steve Jobs and HIAMUN

The Olive Branch Origins, cont.

in MUN programs are not the strongest or most powerful members of society. Many directors and students volunteer hundreds of hours with no financial or public recognition for their efforts. Like the olive tree, our contribution to society is measured in the long term.

Steve Jobs and HIAMUN

The Olive Branch Origins, cont.

in the Middle East because of the war and our concept of Arab world as this negative place” says Andrew Newman. “I had such a positive experience over there that I really wanted to share with the students.” And now, the students are sharing their experiences. “I hope that people understand that if they see someone who is overweight or dealing with an eating disorder not to judge them and just try to think about what they’re going through,” says Ahmad.

Who knows? Maybe that kind of perspective can take you halfway around the world.

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Qatar Academy MUN Student Gets Leadership Experience in Beijing

By Lisa Isom

Each year, the Qatar Academy MUN team heads to the Beijing THIMUN Conference, otherwise known as BEIMUN, hosted by the International School of Beijing. Students, mostly in grades 10 and 11, attend the conference prepared to debate resolutions based on a precursed theme. Most of these students travel to China as delegates, but Qatar Academy’s Noor Ahmed had the honor of being the UN’s new ambassador. As the assistant president of her General Assembly (GA) committee, a position normally filled by students from the host school, she felt this to be a huge honor.

Noor, a well-spoken and confident student, convinced the organizing committee that she had what it would take to help lead the General Assembly in China. Speaking in reference to the application process before she left, Noor said, “The head of the committee placed upon what I felt I had to offer the BEIMUN community, as well as what I was looking to gain from it. My past leadership opportunities provided me with organizational skills, which I was able to use in order to lead a committee room. I also put forth the fact that I was, and am, enthused about having a platform to help young people cultivate their voices, and learn how to make use of its power.”

In an interview prior to the conference, Noor expressed her expectations on the GA: “My main purpose will be to work as a head chair of General Assembly Security Council (GASC). I am particularly glad that I will be delegating with their resolutions on the topic that I researched (the Eurozone Debt Crisis), as well as selecting those resolutions that will provide a strong argument to be debated. I will also be working with my fellow presidents to regulate the debate so that each participant feels that their words have been heard, and so that potential solutions to the issues are validated.”

When asked after the conference if she had accomplished all she wanted and if most things went as planned, Noor replied, “It all went better than I expected. I had never been to China before and the people were really nice. It was easy to resolve problems and the whole event was well organized. The highlight for me was chairing the plenary session of the GA. I had watched the delegates at work over the previous days and I felt like I had a good idea who to select as the session speakers.”

When asked if she will choose to continue the resolution that she could take home from the conference, Noor replied, “I learned how to be approachable to delegates by maintaining control of the conference at the same time. As a delegate, it can be easy to be intimidated by the whole process, but having friendly and approachable leaders can make a conference that much more successful.”

Noor Ahmed has now set her sights on the 2014 THIMUN Qatar Conference. “I would like to apply for the Secretary General or Deputy Secretary General positions at our conference next year — or perhaps President of the General Assembly. I really feel like I could bring something new to the whole process, based on my experiences in Beijing.

By Omar Eldarawy

March has been a busy month for MUN in Egypt. Hayah International Academy Model United Nations’ 3rd Annual Conference was a “huge success” according to the Secretary General of HIAMUN, Malak Saleh, who saw over 180 delegates attend. Likewise, the Deputy Secretary General hailed the conference as “a learning avenue for future leaders.” However, the quote that stayed in many minds went as follows: “My bro Steve Jobs told once that when the people are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do, so I joined HIAMUN.”

After Hayah’s conference, it was back to International School’s turn. This conference, attended by 170 delegates and officers, managed to establish and keep up the competition between the MUN programs’ here in Egypt. The American International School Model United Nations then followed with their conference. The Secretary General of AIS-MUN, Yousef Katamish, stated that “AIS-MUN strives to uphold the tradition of excellence in debate, venue, substance, and experience.” It was then time for the British International School of Cairo’s Junior Model United Nations, and finishing out the month, the Schurz American School Model United Nations held its MUN conference. The past ‘MUN month’ managed to keep all delegates amazed for it was one conference after the other. It’s going to be difficult to forget our MUN vocabulary. From ‘Point of Informations’ to ‘Yielding the Floor’, there’s no question that we, delegates in Egypt, will never forget this month of MUN mayhem. Personally, I have crowned this month the ‘PERIOD OF SUCCESS’!

Noor Ahmed has now set her sights on the 2014 THIMUN Qatar Conference. “I would like to apply for the Secretary General or Deputy Secretary General positions at our conference next year — or perhaps President of the General Assembly. I really feel like I could bring something new to the whole process, based on my experiences in Beijing.

Metaphors: “Model UN is like a...”

By Numair Mujeeb

Anyone who has spent any time at a Model UN conference will quickly note the use of analogies in debates when delegating. The use of analogies as a tactic for adding clarity to their speaking points, and other delegates use analogies as tactice to create inter est in themselves. However, origi nal Model UN metaphors can make any speech, idea, or delegate memorable. Below is the third assortment of analogies that I have heard at MUN conferences.

“Model UN is like my ex-wife: it won’t work and yet will still take all of your money.” – Adwait Padyov, UBCESE

“Model UN is like the European Union: it’s all fun and games, but at the end of the day, nothing still gets done.”

“Model UN is like France: it’s calling for yet another invasion.” – Robin Han

“The conference is like One Direction: only silly little girls vote for it.” – Sung Jing

“This conference is like a pineapple, its tough to get into at first but you have to admit it has very good points.”

“This conference is like an eclair: it’s filled with delightfully creamy clauses!”

This conference reminds me of a McDonalds Happy Meal: it has all the things that would make someone happy, fries, a shake, and the delici ous burger to properly tackle this conference.

Advait Padyov

The Olive Branch

Want The Olive Branch delivered straight to your inbox? Click here to sign up, or visit bestdelegate.com/middle-east-middle-east/
Zones of Conflict, Zones of Peace: Journey to Rwanda

By Cameron Janzen

Since 2008, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service Qatar has been taking students to zones of conflict, political, and religious conflict, with the goal of bettering understanding of both the causes of conflict and the difficult process of reconciliation. From March 1st, a group of Georgetown students and other Education City students and staff participated in the program. The intense weeklong trip included meetings with politicians, journalists, community organizers, victims and perpetrators of the genocide. The trip was with visits to important genocide sites and other points of historical interest. The following are extracts taken from some of the participants' blogs. If you would like to learn about the trip, you can go to the trip blog here.

Aya Elwadi — On Sunday, March 3rd we visited the Naramata and Nyamata Memorial Sites, which were two of the major genocidal sites we’d visit that week. Both sites are located in the Northern Province of Rwanda. The Naramata Church was a local Catholic church before the genocide, which has now turned into a memorial site. During the genocide, scores of Tutsis came to the church seeking refuge, where over 5,000 of them would be killed in and around the church. The second church we’d visit that day was the Nyamata Memorial Site, where more than 21,000 people were killed in less than 3 days both in and around the church premise. Unlike the Naramata memorial site, the burial sites of these churches are complete and full (i.e., closed). Here we saw a collection of remains, skulls, clothing and mass graves — all of which would leave us silent. It’s ironic how the worst acts of humanity are committed in the most beautiful of places.

Andrea Quevedo — Our visit to Murambi Memorial site was for a great amount of members of our group, a visit of great impact in various levels. To begin with some background information, the memorial site in Murambi was a boarding school under construction in 1994. At the time of the genocide, the school was surrounded by the streets flooded to the facilities where they received shelter, food, and clothes. But on April 21st of that year, within the time span of 24 hours, 50,000 people were killed in Murambi and their bodies were dumped into mass graves. As part of the memorial site, Murambi is composed of a museum, mass graves, a room with clothes from the victims, and rooms that have preserved bodies in the postures they were killed (something particular to the Murambi memorial). When going to see the bodies, our guide made it clear that we should not show pictures of the bodies to Rwandans given that it is obligatory for Rwandans to go and see the bodies. The bodies are preserved for mainly two reasons. Firstly, they demonstrate evidence that the genocide of 1994 actually happened (as the guide mentioned: “The world can see what happened in Rwanda”) and it provides the opportunity for research. Secondly, it brings the memory of the genocide back to Rwanda and spreads the message of “never again.”

Aminah Kandar — On Wednesday March 6th, 2013, we met with the University Student Survivors Group. The moment we arrived to meet our fellow Rwandan students outside their school stadium, we were greeted by heavy tropical-like rain. As we brunched off into smaller groups, most of us meeting one-on-one with students, we had the opportunity to engage and learn about their stories. Shadi and I had the opportunity to speak with a young and timid female student by the name of Alice. After introducing ourselves and telling her about our background, we quickly learned details of her past that I am not sure she had planned to share. Reluctantly, she offered us a glimpse into the horrors that she and her family endured. She was only five years old when she lost her father and four brothers in the genocide. Her mother and sister survived. It was very difficult to hear her pain. Alice decided to study agriculture and horticulture because her family’s crops were destroyed in the genocide and her mother had no knowledge of how to re-store them. Now, Alice is learning not only how to help with their own crops, but is proud to be helping Rwandans learn how to produce local crops that will be of benefit to their families and the Rwandan economy. It is very profound to see that even studies, 19 years later, are affected by what happened in 1994. We asked Alice if she had a message to the community, particularly for students and she said to us: “Avoid all things which can lead to war. Genocide has many consequences. Have love between yourselves. Work hard. We had to do so to compensate for everything we lost.”

Emilio Ocampo — Thursday, March 7th, 2013 was the day we visited a survivor’s village that was part of an initiative to augment the reconciliation process. The village was inhabited by survivor’s of the genocide who had lost most of their material possessions during the war and by other members belonging to the poorest strata of society. The village, completed in just two years, was made up of houses constructed by perpetrators of the genocide, those who had admitted to their crimes and had been sentenced to community service. It was the community’s way of deciding how these people could give back to society after having robbed from it. The visit to the village was one of my favourite parts of the trip. It allowed me to meet people who had been directly affected by the genocide, in particular a woman who was handicapped and widowed in 1994. In many ways it was a distressing event. But it was also an educational one. To meet with someone who had lived in unimaginably altered in just a matter of months, and in the most horrific of ways.

For additional student reflections, please visit Student reflections taken from the Georgetown Zones of Conflict Zones of Peace Blog here.
**Curriculum Corner**

By David Taylor

**FOR FULL-TIME teachers facing daily marking and lesson prep loads, it can get difficult to also keep track of each individual MUNer and their particular progress. Whether you have 20 or 200 in your MUN club, you likely find that different participants are engaged at different levels, on different tasks, and on different timelines from each other as they prepare for their various roles and conferences. I’d like to share how we are using easily accessible technology to help bring close supervision and monitoring to the process.

**Enter Google Docs**

Proper template and made available and shared to each individual allows teachers to not only have the final product when they want to see it, but also monitor “live” the step-by-step progress of research and document creation.

Here is an example: our middle school Model UN division is currently preparing for the MYMUN middle-years conference in Kuala Lumpur. Each delegate has been provided a variety of files in Google Docs into which they must enter their preparations. They have a document for country research, topic research, policy (position) paper, and draft resolutions. Of course, this can be tailored to include more or fewer, or combined if you wish.

**Delegate productivity is amazing,** and students are enthusiastic about this system. They know that their MUN Director will be checking and they are keen that they should. They want to impress, so be sure to offer both constructive feedback and praise.

The basic essentials start with an editable document. The usual fields can be set up as a table. Using country research as an example: fields could include delegate’s name, country, flag, map, geography, political, history, economy, culture, and anatomy. This information can be added as priorities, alliances, conflicts/disputes, interesting facts, and any other criteria deemed important. This is all consolidated into one location.

Next, set up the Google account with appropriate folders and sub-folders, upload the document, replicate enough for each MUNer, set the permissions so that the invited can edit, then share with the students via email.

Try this out with your MUN. I also use this with written assignments with regular classes to good effect.

**iTunes U: Korean International School Launches Online MUN Videos**

By Kevin Duncan

**IF YOU ARE searching for a great resource on how to train young delegates on all things Model UN related, look no further than MUN 101, a completely student-created course on iTunes U! Including resources on research, lobbying, resolution writing, giving speeches, making and delivering points of interest in multiple formats. The Korean International Court of Justice (ICJ), MUN 101 includes both conventional tools as well as new ones — and many additional resources in between, which can help any new delegate quickly become an experienced debater.**

Featuring over 50 videos and documents created by Korea International School student officer team and former ICJ advocates, MUN 101 can help students from around the world learn the basics of how to be successful in the world of Model United Nations. These resources are specifically designed to guide delegates through both the basics and details of Model UN. And best of all, all of these resources are free for downloading purposes.

While the course can be found on iTunes U (at least the US store) by searching for “MUN” or “Model UN” the easiest way to access it is through this link.

After opening that link, go to iTunes and then hit “subscribe” underneath the logo on the left to access all of the materials.

The creators of MUN 101 hope this program will help international students for around the world as they seek to find solutions for the world’s most pressing problems and develop their skills as future world leaders.

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**Point of Order**

By Cameron Janzen

**SOME OF THE BEST advice that I ever received was that a good leader is already thinking for me.**

One of the biggest challenges facing MUN programs and conferences is the when a dynamic, self-sacrificing MUN director leaves their school. Too often we hear MUN directors say, “That use to be a great conference, but then so-and-so left.” It takes a devoted, committed individual to push forward a new idea or program but if the program remains personality driven it will fall back. MUN programs. One of the greatest legacies an inspired MUN director can leave for their students is to construct institutional support for their MUN program. This involves long term planning, patience, and constant advocating to school administration.

**School Program**

The step is to develop a clear idea of what type of program that you are trying to create and what will work best within your current school context. There are general classifications of MUN programs within schools:

1. MUN is an after-school club where participants are voluntary and take part in outside of regular classroom contact hours.
2. MUN is taught as a class or part of the curriculum/instructional plan.
3. MUN is a large program encompassing a range of activities from community service activities, debate, leadership training and/or hosting and attending conferences.

Be clear in your planning what type of a program that you would like to create, the resources that you will need to achieve your goal, and the time frame that will be needed to implement your plan. Once you have a clear vision in mind, begin the lobbying process of making this program part of whole school planning. It is vital that the vision and implementation of the program becomes part of the school identity and formal narrative within your school (year end reports, strategic planning, public relations, curriculum plans).

**Commitment to Staffing**

I often compare the Model UN programs to athletic programs in schools. There are a number of institutional support to ensure proper long term staffing of the program.

The final model is when staff resources are built into job description and hiring practices. In this model the MUN program is a contractual arrangement, and is part of the work an employee does for the institution. Programs that develop MUN classes, have large conferences, or have extra-curricular stipend system often use this method.

**Budget Recognition**

The final key step in developing the groundwork for institutional support for your program is budget recognition. The saying goes that you can tell what people value by what they spend their money and time on. Make sure your program is valued. Resources are tight in any school but it is vital to your program that it receives budget line recognition. The amount isn’t even as important as the financial recognition that an MUN program exists within the school and is receiving funding. A dedicated budget line is the best way to ensure support most schools give extra-curricular sporting activities to academic ones like MUN. This is not an anti-athletic opinion piece; instead I think it is important to try replicating the success of the extra-curricular athletic programs with our academic ones. Athletic organizations have recognized the need to have institutionally assigned staff to support their program. Schools assign PE teachers to support sport programs and hire athletic directors and support staff to organize events, and provide stipends to staff who coach within the program. Some schools, however, may not realize the importance of this institutional support to ensure proper long term staffing of the program.

There are a number of institutional staffing models that can be selected to best suit your school. The first model is the multi-staff member model. In this model the tasks of MUN are divided among a large number of staff members. Various staff members will take areas of responsibility to lessen the load and ensure continuity.

The second model is when the institution provides administrative support to the program, but the staff member takes care of items such as travel arrangements, conference registration and budgetary items. This may be done through an athletic and activity director or through an assigned office support staff member.

The final model when staff resources are built into job descriptions and hiring practices. In this model the MUN program is a contractual arrangement, and is part of the work an employee does for the institution. Programs that develop MUN classes, have large conferences, or have extra-curricular stipend system often use this method.

**Want to be the Best Delegate?**

Best Delegate will teach MUN workshops for students and teachers in the Gulf region this September and October. If interested, please email THIMUN Qatar Director Cameron Janzen at cjanzen@sf.org.qa or Best Delegate Co-Founder Ryan Villanueva at ryan@bestdelegate.com.
MARCH 2013 EDUCATION/STRATEGY MIDDLE EAST MUN

Opposing Views: The United States Invasion in Iraq

By Nick Bibby

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 main views. Each month, Opposing Views will outline a debate taken from the website Debatabase. With hundreds of debates outlined in an easy to use format, this is a great resource for MUNers.

This month marked the tenth anniversary of the US led invasion of the Iraq. With an estimated 110,000 deaths and ongoing civil strife, opposing views put forth the motion: This House Believes that the War in Iraq was Worth the Cost. The following debate was authored by Nick Bibby.

Points for the Motion

Point: Saddam Hussein is gone and Iraq is now functioning as one of very few democracies in the Middle East.

It’s important to be clear that this debate is looking at the results of the Iraq war and, by any definition, Iraq is in a much more stable and secure position than it was in 2003 when international troops arrived in the country.

Whatever one thinks of the initial justifications for the war, there is no doubt that the country, the region and the world are better and safer places without Saddam Hussein. It is easy to criticize the allies but it is worth bearing in mind that the alternative was leaving in power a man who had committed genocide was a vicious and brutal dictator under whose regime extra-judicial execution and detention, mass-murder and torture.

Although there has been a huge cost in human life, the alternatives may well have been worse: Saddam had made quite clear his intention to hand over power to his sons. Without intervention, there is little doubt that Saddam or one of his still-more-murderous sons would be running Iraq. Even though there were no WMDs, it seems reasonable to assume that neither Saddam nor his sons would have ignored Iran’s attempts to secure fissile material and develop a bomb. Iraq had attempted to build a nuclear reactor in the 1970s, but it was destroyed by Israel in 1981. Likewise, Iraq and Iran had fought a war for most of the 1980s for political dominance in the Gulf and for the Shi’ite-Sunni religious divide. So we would now be watching an arms race in the Middle East between the two with Israel on a hair trigger.

This wasn’t just about removing one tyrant; the regime had dynamic ambitions, and a failure to act would have created the equivalent of North Korea. However, this particular hermit kingdom would have been sitting on top of the second largest reserves of oil in the world. It would, therefore, have the capacity to create the sort of fear and chaos Kim Jong II can only dream of.

His removal provides stability and security not only for Iraq but for the Middle East as a region.

The Middle East is a tinder box at the best of times. Having an unpredictable megalomaniac sitting in the middle of it was dangerous; not only for Iraqis, but for other peoples in the region. Hussein was a danger to the Middle East; this was proven through his invasion of Iran. This was followed only a couple of years later in 1990 by an invasion of Kuwait, which sparked the Gulf War, and his use of scud missiles on Israel, which was otherwise uninvolved in the conflict.

It was better to remove this threat than risk being drawn into a multiplayer conflict when he next attacked a neighbor.

Points Against the Motion

Point: The war was illegal and the removal of Saddam should have been left to the Iraqis. Yet another puppet regime is not what the Middle East needs.

Event from the Arab Spring have demonstrated, more graphically than anything else could have done, that Arab peoples are more than capable of dealing with their own dictators and do not need to be patronized by fading imperial powers.

Imagine what the situation in Iraq would be now following a genuinely democratic uprising rather than the imposition of yet another puppet regime by the West. Since the creation of the state of Iraq as a modern state by the British in 1932, a succession of rulers, of various stripes of dictatorial ruthlessness, have been brought in to ensure that the oil wealth continues to flow to Washington, London and other foreign capitals.

The allies were never interested in Iraqi freedom, this was yet another grab for oil and the results look set to be the same round of misery and tyranny for the people of Iraq.

An entire generation has been turned against the West and fundamentalist clerics have gained enormously in influence. The aftermath of the war has fostered an atmosphere in which people have no reason to love the West and more than 100,000 reasons to hate it, as a result of an estimated 105-115,000 dead. The country is teetering on the brink of civil war, with the leader of the Sunni block having said Iraq is heading towards a “sectarian autocracy that carries with it the threat of devastating civil war”. Unemployment is rife, and the reputation of the “liberators” lies in tatters.

It is not hard to see how this combination is likely to lead to chaos in Iraq and insecurity for the West. Millions of young people with a perfectly justifiable abhorrence of the West are more likely to produce violence, terrorism and instability.

Even if the outcome is a stable democratic Iraq, the war was still a costly, illegal, ideologically-driven mistake.

The cost of the Iraq war has been astonishing both in the lives and resources spent as well as the resentment and chaos stored up for the future. Even if the result had been Switzerland on Si- nai, it would still not have been worth it. There have been more than 100,000 Iraqi deaths. It has been the most expensive US war other than WWII in constant 2011 dollars, costing more than $400 billion more than Vietnam. And, the only thing left to show for it is a failed state in the making.

The war was poorly conceived, recklessly enacted and devastatingly concluded. The Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, wanted the war fought “on the cheap”, using a much smaller force than the Pentagon or independent analysts thought was necessary. With the allies now withdrawing from Iraq, the world’s best hope is that the US and its allies will be sufficiently cowed by public opinion as to never try such folly again. That, perhaps, would be a benefit.

For more information, this debate in its entirety and supplementary materials can be viewed here.

The original version of this article first appeared in Debatabase.
Resource Corner: Choices Program

By the Qatar Academy MUN Executive Team

WITH A WIDE variety of activities and resources, The Choices Program offers support to both Model UN clubs and classrooms. Although many of the resources address issues that stem from an American perspective, these are quality resources grounded in scholarship that raise awareness of issues that can be adapted to differing national perspectives.

The Choices Program is an educational initiative developed at Brown University’s Watson Institute for International Studies. It develops curricula on current and historical international issues and offers workshops, institutes, and in-service programs for high school teachers. Course materials place special emphasis on the importance of educating students in their participatory role as citizens. Example thematic units such as Dilemmas of Foreign Aid, Global Environmental Problems, The Challenge of Nuclear Weapons, or International Trade, which are also broad topics that are popular topics debated frequently at Model UN conferences, too. Overall, it is a comprehensive collection of material that is sure to aid any delegate’s research.

The one aspect of the Choices resources that I particularly find extremely useful is its option section in both its Teaching with the News and Curriculum Units resources. By making use of these resources, students are given multiple policy options to consider and choose to use in debate. Students are given an outline of the key arguments for each policy option. This allows them to have a solid understanding of the topic’s potential solutions, and also facilitate the next step: creating their own innovative solutions.

Framing a Speech, cont.

The Choices Program, developed at Brown University, provides information about global issues from past to present.

For example, in their Teaching with the News resource “Debating Drone Policy,” the Choices program outlines three main policy options: continue to use drones whenever needed, use drones under strict restrictions, or end targeted killings.

The Choices program has a vast number of resources that are made available in a variety of formats from print orders, video, e-books or iTunes podcasts. Finally, there are workshops and online training seminars for those teachers who would like professional development in using these resources more effectively. This resource is ideal for the Model UN program or class that wants to outline my country’s position, and I remembered a bunch of stuff from my research, but for the most part, I improvised a minute-long speech based on these three words. See my post on “Making It Up.”

A logical structure helps the listener follow what you’re saying, which also means that they’re more likely to listen. Have you ever fallen asleep listening to another delegate drone on and on? You probably thought of this other delegate’s speech as boring. There are likely three reasons for this: 1) you didn’t care anyway, 2) you didn’t like listening to the other delegate, i.e. he or she had poor delivery, or 3) you couldn’t follow what they’re saying, i.e. the speech lacked structure.

In short, you want to be the second speaker. Assuming your audience cares, then you want excellent delivery and interesting things to say. Having a structure helps you say interesting things. Most importantly, framing can help you look like a leader. The committee can’t find solutions if it doesn’t know the problems. By breaking up the larger topic into smaller issues, you are showing the committee the problems, which implies that you can lead the committee towards the solutions.

Framing helps delegates and staff remember you. If people like the way you broke up the topic, then other delegates will say something like, 'Just like the United Kingdom said, we have three issues to deal with: membership, veto, and practices.’

Of course, different delegates can present different frames. This is an advanced MUN concept, but the ‘strongest’ frame will win out, meaning that the committee will collectively like one delegate’s frame better than those of other delegates. In another post, I can write about “dismantling” other frames. But for more information, you can read George Lakoff’s book Don’t Think of an Elephant or the Wikipedia page on framing (social sciences).

Framing is most useful for speeches, but it can also be used in resolutions. A resolution can comprise any number of operative clauses. If you have 10+ of them, then you need some way in which to organize them. How to do so? Frame it. I’ll discuss this in a separate post on resolution writing.

In closing, think of framing as coming up with a list. What are your 3 favorite places in the world? What’s your Top 10 Favorite Movies? Who’s in your Fave 5? However you form these lists from the myriad number of places, movies, and friends you’ve known— that’s framing.
Speak UP!

By Usama Ghani

THIS MONTH, I interviewed two students with two very different MUN experiences. Marina Najm is a delegate from Lebanon who has gained most of her Model UN experience through O-MUN. She is a junior at St. Joseph’s in Beirut and has recently become an O-MUN moderator. Farhan Farooqui is a junior at Dubai International Academic, the DSG for the recent Dubai International Academy’s Model UN conference (DIAMUN), and O-MUN’s current Community Development Officer.

Which conference in the Middle East has been your favorite so far, and why?

Marina: Considering the fact that I have gained most, if not all of my experience from O-MUN, I have enjoyed the Middle East and Africa regional of November 2012. I was a tally moderator, the cycle was smooth, and I had previously gotten to know many delegates who participated in the debate. Also, I was familiar with the topic which helped me to get comfortable during the debate. After about two years of O-MUN, I finally felt relaxed and at ease.

Farhan: I have only been to DIAMUN, which is a THIMUN affiliated conference in the United Arab Emirates. It has been quite a pleasant experience. The people are warm and hospitable.

Have you been to a UNAUSA style conference? Which style do you prefer more?

Marina: I have not been to a UNAUSA style conference, but I had been informed of it before I joined O-MUN. I prefer the THIMUN rules and process since I feel that it is more direct, organized, and less complicated. It also requires less paperwork preparation, which helps delegates focus on the topic and research instead of being taken up by the preparation.

Farhan: I have been to Harvard Model United Nations, which follows a strict UNAUSA style of debate. While I like this style, I feel it is too informal and can lead to unproductive debate sessions, especially during unmoderated caucuses. I like THIMUN procedures, as they are concise and keep the debate timely.

Besides the actual debates themselves, what else attracts you majorly to MUN conferences?

Marina: The active interaction with people of different backgrounds but similar interest attracts my attention. The communication before and after the debates strengthens my personality and enriches my knowledge. Moreover, the common purpose and method of thinking increases confidence as well as responsibility.

Farhan: There is so much to look forward to in a Model UN conference, and debate is just one of the facets. I love socializing and making new friends, and as in any overseas conference, the food is always delicious. Additionally, each conference has its own unique social event.

What is the one thing that you feel Middle Eastern conferences are lacking?

Marina: Knowing that I have only participated in Online MUN conferences, I have noticed that delegates are sometimes reluctant to participate enthusiastically. A suggestion would be holding an orientation session every period of time or when new delegates surge into the community. This session would introduce delegates to debate procedures, and provide them basic knowledge of how to formulate speeches, points of information, amendments, resolutions, and motions. Delegates could become more comfortable with debate procedures. On the other hand, setting five minutes aside after the reading of the resolution might give the delegates the time to prepare their speeches and amendments.

Farhan: After my trip to Harvard MUN in Boston, Massachusetts, in the United States, I feel that Middle Eastern conferences lack a little bit in the quality of debate. My experience as a chair has also shown me that in the Middle East, the speakers wishing to take the floor can become stagnant. Overall, though most Middle Eastern MUN conferences are on par with other conferences in the world.

Is there any significant language barrier you have seen for Arab delegates trying to get their point across?

Marina: This aspect depends on the delegate’s ability to express himself or herself. In turn, this is affected by the school and country in which he or she resides. Some delegates have difficulty finding the right words, but they eventually get their point across if their pronunciation is clear. Also, most delegates have come in contact with have been debating very actively with no problem. An Arab delegate will definitely not have the same fluency in English as a delegate living in a country where English is the first language. The accent of some Arab delegates sometimes poses a problem more difficult than the language barrier.

Farhan: I have quite a lot of Arab friends who take part in Model UN conferences, and they are fully on par with me with respect to their speaking capabilities. So, I wouldn’t say that they have that much of a difficulty in trying to get their points across. I’d say that they face a certain prejudice from other delegates, however, as they are often expected to represent their home country, especially in Middle Eastern conferences.

Wonderful World of Mighty Bell, cont.

At the beginning of the debate cycle, a MB site is set up and named after the debate topic. The chair and moderators become hosts, and the site with a dozen research links to get delegates going. As students register, we invite them to this private space and encourage them to share research as well. The chat and comment features also turn the static page into a discussion board. The chat can be used for a number of purposes, including changes to the resolution, if the paper is still in the drafting stage. Delegates post clauses, comment on them, lobby each other and continue to post links, all in this closed environment. We pull the resolution in to the site as soon as enough delegate preparation, but also that my students’ contributions can be used by other delegates in the future.

It takes about three minutes to set up a MightyBell site. Use it for your conference, class, or individual student project. Reminder that students should be 13 or older to create an account.

For examples of all our MightyBell sites, visit here.