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 allows

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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 article 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 or 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 Na-

tions (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 tremendous 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 THI-

MUN 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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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 the registration, conference outputs (such as badges and certificates) process. Conferences around the 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 mununi@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 UNDPI is working with MUN partners around the world. UNDPI 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.

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 THIMUN Qatar or Best Delegate offices. 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 Northwestern Film Festival will be 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 filmmakers 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.

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Welcome Back, cont.

Want The Olive Branch delivered straight to your inbox? Click here to sign up, or visit 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, NOSSMUN, King’s Academy MUN, Arriyada 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 resolutions. 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!

By Mariana Najm

WITH A SMALL shovel and a lot of snow, one needs to put in a whole lot of time and effort to get all the snow out of the way, or just get a bigger shovel. In Lebanon, do we 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, 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, 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 resolutions. 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!

The Olive Branch

Founded in January 2013

Kevin Felix Chan and Ryan Villanueva, Best Delegate Co-Founders
Lisa Martin, Online Model United Nations Director/Co-Founder
Cameron Janzen, Head of THIMUN Qatar

Julian Bao, Lead Editor
Brilliant Bao, Editor
Staff Writers/Contributors: Shreepna Balachandran, Jeremy Kinsman, Marina Najm, Darby Sinclair, Shambhavi Tiwari

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All of us at the Olive Branch wish you a successful 2013-14 school year.
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Having the sample resolution facilitates discussion. One or a small group of member states may have a strong interest in an agenda item, and they will be interested in pushing the item forward by suggesting draft resolutions before formal meetings and working on them during informal meetings.

Big Difference #4: Educational Purpose

For the UN, the purpose of Model UN is to simulate the real UN. This means representing the member states that comprise the UN, discussing the same agenda items that the UN discusses, and simulating accurate practices and procedures followed by the UN.

Conversely, this also means MUN does not teach what the UN is about; for example, having appointed chairs instead of elected ones. The UN is significant in this only as an example of non-UN bodies, including regional organizations, national cabinet, and crisis committees, which have their own practices and procedures.

At the end of the Korea Camp, KFC and I organized a 1-day MUN conference, and we ran both high school and middle school-level committees, each with about 25 delegates. The day before the conference, delegates in both committees elected a President of the General Assembly, a High School Committee Chair, and a Middle School Committee Chair. During the conference, KFC and I served as Secretaries, and we provided Chairs with working documents for organizing their committees. We simplified the flow of debate, and had all opening speeches take place during Formal Meeting — meaning every delegate got a chance to speak — and then proceeded into one long Informal Meeting (essentially unmoderated caucus or lobbying).

I served as Secretary for the middle school committee, which discussed Sustainability and Energy. Before the election began, I wondered if a middle school delegate would be able to chair the Formal Meeting. I also wondered if the Informal Meeting should go on as long, leaving delegates to be disengaged. But the results pleasantly surprised me.

The middle school chair was capable of managing a committee of his peers, with the help of his script and guidance from me sitting beside him. During the Informal Meeting, delegates first formed separate resolution groups, as it typical during moderated caucuses or lobbying sessions. But then they did not give in to the “wax” and got down to business. Delegates moved into a breakout room, re-arranging chairs to form one big group, and they started negotiating a single draft resolution.

UN4MUN, cont.

Despite the big differences between Model UN and the real UN, the things that truly matter remain the same. Model UN is still a way to show students the world and their role in it. Model UN is still a vehicle for teaching global leadership and lifelong skills. Model UN is still a community of students and teachers that attracts the best and the brightest from every school and every country. These truths are why the real UN is for Model UN — and on that, I believe we have a consensus.

Join our workshop at the Qatar Leadership Conference on how to be a staff writer for the 2013-2014 school year!

Regional News
OwNE ONE OF THE Key strategies in preparing MUNers for debate and resolution writ- ing is to develop an understanding of the spectrum of opinion about the topic be- ing debated. Chemical weapons are one of the basic opposing views of the issue, they can better determine on which side and to what extent their assigned nation supports or opposes one of the two main views. Each month, Opposing Views will outline a debate taken from the website Debata- base.org. This month's debates outlined in an easy-to-use format, 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鸳鸯 from around the Middle East. It is now clear that intervention from outside the country, beyond the provinces where Assad's forces will only have a chance to win 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 was we see a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized. That would change my calculus. That would change my equation. Chemical weapons are not just the last possible line that has yet to be crossed in the brutal civil war. They are one of the most difficult and dangerous weapons to destroy and there is some concern that chemical weapons may be used in the coming weeks.

The US Department of Defense, 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 in Syria.

Either way, the international community must be considering what it will do if these weapons are 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 by forking a bit of the civil war, has 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:

- **Name and Intervene**: 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 any international legal code as binding even on those who have not signed.

- **Not making a reaction will enable the regime**: Not responding to Syrian moves to use chemical weapons would 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 combination of the two chemical precursors, isopropyl and methylphosphonofluoridate, needed to weaponize sarin gas. It means that "Physically, they've gone 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.

- **The difference in escalation**: 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 air dots, 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, in bringing peace to Syria. It has to be ac- cepted, however, that if Assad's regime is determined to use chemical weapons then any are likely to get through, how much is prevented is largely de- pendent on intelligence.

- **Intervening in chemical weapons during transport and bombing the storage facilities can make it much more difficult to move the weapons to be easiest to accomplish. But if chemical weapons are about to be used then attacking the de- liverv vehicles would be necessary; any intervention would have overwhel- ming air superiority so would prevent the option of aircraft and helicopters being used to deliver the weapons.

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

Syria has never signed up to "If a State is manifestly fail- ing to protect its populations, the inter- national community must be prepared to take collective action to protect pop-ulations," 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.

**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, and their use makes inter- vention 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 conven- tional weapons. They can kill immense numbers quickly and indiscriminately. The use of chemical weapons is an escal- ation 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, tak- ing more destructive action and costing lives could not make much of a differ- ence in terms of the numbers of people the Assad regime is killing. It is morally inconsistent to consider chemical weap- ons 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 dif- ference 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 pre- vent 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 Lav- rov has explicitly stated, "We'll not al- low the Libyan experience to be repro- duced in Syria." When Obama said that chemical weapons use was a red line, Xinhua, China's state news agency, re- sounded, "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.

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.

A daily snapshot of the activities of the UN and its impact of the world. Purpose: To provide readers with a daily snapshot of the activities of the UN and its impact of the world. Content: Free

A snapshot of a UN Wire news page

Type of Resource: Electronic

Quote of the Day:

"This resolution is like a donut — it is big and useless." — Mahak Tulsiani

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

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

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

"This resolution is like Santa — a good Claus." — Mahak Tulsiani

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

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.

Analogies: “Model UN is like a...”

By Mahak 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 a 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 Smolari — 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.
**Symbaloo: An Organizer For Your "Favorites"**

By Lisa Martin

**BACK IN JUNE,** feeling overwhelmed by web page favorites and bookmarks and struggling to organize an increasing list of "must save" material, I asked a friend if she had a convenient method for pulling up large quantities of bookmarks in one easy-to-manage page. She suggested Symbaloo, which has turned out to be a great solution for my work.

![Image](http://www.symbaloo.com/)

A convenient research tool, Symbaloo allows you to fashionably accumulate and organize your research links on a single web page.

Symbaloo is a nifty little tool for storing loads of links and feeds. It's a fancy bookmarking system that can be shared privately or publically, as well as one that can be arranged and personalized to meet a number of needs. By default, your Symbaloo webmixes (the page of tiles that house your links) are private, meaning that you have to manually configure your page to either a person-to-person sharing feature or a public setting. These are used to define which audience can access your page. I have used each successfully. For example, in THIMUN O-MUN's rapidly growing mansion of multiple online conference rooms, moderator links, participant links, and playback links, my favorites bar was becoming too unwieldy. To counter this issue, I created a Symbaloo webmix and color-coded my rooms: red for Asia, light blue for peace, and so on. I labeled each tile so I could differentiate between moderator links and participant links. My Symbaloo page is pulled up when I open my Google Chrome browser, so I always have instant access to all my room links.

But for delegates and teachers, there is another great way to use Symbaloo: as a place to house links for delegate research. To show how easy it is, I made a public mix of UN websites that would be helpful in delegate preparation. My middle school MUN class has this mix bookmarked on their computers, so when I want them to visit the UN Maps or the GA Resolution page on the United Nations website, those links are all there on the mix waiting for them. Even better, webmix pages can be embedded onto webpages, as on our THIMUN O-MUN website here. You can even pull these links in RSS feeds. The UN Wire feed tile is in the lower right hand corner, and when you click on it, the Google search box tile in the center is handily replaced with UN Wire's RSS feed.

So delegates, I urge you all to go make a Symbaloo page for your research. Throw on pertinent links, invite others to help you, or create your own secret page of links. Go crazy with the colors, stickers and layout, and create a Symbaloo masterpiece. If you make a Symbaloo page related to Model UN that you would like to share with others, email me the public link, and I will share it on our Facebook groups and on our website.

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**Starting a Conversation: MUN Leaders and the Need for Academic Dialogue**

By Lisa Martin

**ONE OUTGROWTH** of the 2012 Qatar Leadership Conference (QLC) was a discussion relating to the need for professional discussion surrounding Model United Nations. Directors and students alike have always been passionate about this program and what they have felt the impact and outcomes of participation bring. Generally missing, however, has been a serious discussion of a more academic nature regarding the academic strengths and effectiveness of Model UN, both in its educational relevancy and lasting impact the program plays in the long run.

At the conference, a doctoral student pointedly asked how to couch discussions surrounding Model UN. Did it fall within gaming theory, which was the claim that Model UN fell within current educational theory, and if there were studies program, what does MUN share with other classes in the field? Additionally, when Model UN directors fight for their programs and scrabble for funding, there is little credible data to back up claims as to the effectiveness of the program. And to both of these queries, the answer appeared to be a simple "no."

It became clear that Model UN currently lacks an academic language that transfers beyond teachers and delegates. At the conference, a doctoral student pointedly asked how to couch discussions surrounding Model UN. Did it fall within gaming theory, which was the claim that Model UN fell within current educational theory, and if there were studies program, what does MUN share with other classes in the field? Additionally, when Model UN directors fight for their programs and scrabble for funding, there is little credible data to back up claims as to the effectiveness of the program. And to both of these queries, the answer appeared to be a simple "no."

Rather, in many nations, can the outcomes of a Model UN student be measured? And finally, above all, does participation hurt or lessen the program's legitimacy? I raise these questions to give you a sense of how non-educators and others outside the MUN community potentially view the program. Most of us are familiar with this; no, we have to explain, Model UN is not the same activity as the drama club, where students are simply acting out a play or novel. If it falls within the humanities or a social studies program, what does MUN share with other classes in the field? Additionally, when Model UN directors fight for their programs and scrabble for funding, there is little credible data to back up claims as to the effectiveness of the program. And to both of these queries, the answer appeared to be a simple "no."

A year ago, I started a small group on LinkedIn called the MUN Leadership Initiative to begin not only to promote discussion around our programs and some of the issues mentioned above, but to also make us aware of similar discussions taking place that have direct bearing on Model UN. Should MUN be more like the UN, for example, or does the profit motive within MUN conferences destroy its integrity? I propose that directors and MUN thought leaders proactively engage the academic community in discussions surrounding our programs and intuitively know to be one of the most impactful programs in secondary education. Let's start the discussion today!

Lisa will be at the QLC 2013, and looks forward to holding this conversation with directors and conference participants. You are also invited to join the Model United Nations Leadership Initiative on LinkedIn.
By Cameron Janzen

THIS YEAR, the Point of Order column will focus on the values and principles that underlie 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 reality is that delegate behavior 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 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 fashion; 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 global opinion. Resolutions have a strong academic value in helping learn about problem solving, complexity of all 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 Nation’s 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 strengthen 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 all should be respected. Delegates engaging in debate understand that if there is an expectation that 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 established 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.

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 emotions, and intense questionnaires 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 was common among our Model UN. Often times, 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 effective and non-effective communications, and the give and take and compromises needed to broad consensus. The resolusions process teaches participants the need for respected and effective authority.

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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.

THIMUN procedure emphasizes delegates are rewarded for creating mechanisms to minimize the use of force and strengthen 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 all should be respected. Delegates engaging in debate understand that if there is an expectation that 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.

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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. 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 indicator (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 observing 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.

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**For more information:**
- **Human Development Index**: [UNDP Data Explorer](https://hdr.undp.org/en/
- **Model UN**: [Taipei American School](http://www.tas.edu.tw)
- **Human Development Reports**: [UNDP](http://hdr.undp.org/en/)
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 showed that in times of crisis and disruption, most people choose peace and security over justice. Egyptians turned 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 is that what we have been witnessing these past weeks.

The sociologist Saad Edin Ibrahim is a courageous human rights advocate who 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 US for coddling Mubarak, part of a frequent tendency of the West to prefer the appearance of 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 separation of the state present 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 vest 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 stall, stall, and then stall backwards 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 is now 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 Middle East 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 doing so, 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 US 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 Mor si 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 US 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 experimental "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.

For them, we, the outside democrats, come across as callow and shallow, flippant 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 on course of 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.

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 Baccalaureate 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