

Reflection on the 68th session of the Far West Model United Nations

Model United Nations of the Far West



The 68th session of the Far West Model United Nations took place in San Francisco during April 20-24, 2018. It was focused on the topic of strength to the powerless: protecting vulnerable populations. The first lesson that I learned was of the importance to ensure that the resolutions we passed were focused on that topic. The reason that the topic exists was to provide us with the opportunity for consideration of a special group as we discussed resolution topics. I had the opportunity to serve as the representative of Japan to the General Assembly of the United Nations. There were many important lessons that I learned as I worked to represent Japan to the world. On Friday evening, we immediately started into sessions. Following dinner, we began with a motion to reorder the docket and discuss the world drug problem first. Though an interesting turn of events, the delegations were far less divided on exchanging sentiments within this topic. In the first unmoderated caucus, system I immediately approached Japanese allies such as Australia, the United States, and New Zealand. The opportunity to talk with the Deputy Consul General of Japan, Mr. Nagayoshi before our meetings was valuable because I knew better the allies that I should turn to to help me establish Japanese foreign policy. After meeting with regional allies, we formed a coalition and began searching for other countries that would be in line with our policy priorities. As we learned from Japanese diplomat, his nation enacts such foreign policy priorities as like the stimulants control act that criminalized illegal activity related to drugs, thus promoting stopping illegal drug manufactures, distributors, and users. In the end, I was able to include an operative clause that addressed such concern with the language decided by myself.

Our coalition then approached other allies that were interested in working in collaboration within the framework established by our Pacific partnership. In this part of the simulation, I learned more about the importance to have regional allies within the United Nations. If I had gone around to other countries as a single country, I would not have had much sway within the General Assembly. After discussion with Asian Pacific partners, we had built a coalition of about 20 countries, a voting bloc with significant power to adopt or discredit other resolutions. It was with this coalition that we approached the representative of Turkey, who had been gaining traction in a European coalition. After combining resolution, primarily focused on the counteraction against drug trafficking we had built a voting bloc with about 40 countries. Initially, the body was divided between approaching drug trafficking from the perspective of rehabilitating people or by stemming the flow of drugs by attacking distributors. However, after another round of negotiations we were able to unite our Asian Pacific-European coalition with the Africa-Latin American coalition to gather under one resolution that was built upon consensus. Although we talked in class how to build resolutions upon by consensus, I did not realize, however, how it was difficult to have

negotiations to draft a document that is agreed upon by consensus. Basically, the lessons learned are that adoption by consensus is not easy and requires intense negotiations even before a document created that is agreed in that way. These negotiations went through Friday and Saturday.

On Sunday, we submitted our joint resolution and then proceeded into the General Assembly's high-level event. The event for this year was to create a ministerial document on the topic of protecting refugees from international terrorist threats. The process of creating a ministerial document is complex and much more difficult to pass. This is because of a necessity for ministerial document to be passed entirely by consensus. The President and Chairs of the Assembly began by dividing each country into their regional blocs. The assigned groups were the Asian Pacific Group, Western European and Others Group, Latin America Group, and the African Group. Each group discussed the major points that they would like to see in a declaration, then we combined all of them and went through each paragraph one-by-one voting on each paragraph. Where there was not consensus, the body was then able to discuss among themselves the adaptations and amendments they would like to adjust to promote a consensus document. In the beginning, only 1/10th of the entire document was approved but through an intense channel of negotiations between the different regional groups we were able to pass a document that was adopted on entirely by consensus. In this phase of the simulation, I also learned the importance of reaching consensus among regional groups. Once I was able to establish the parts of a ministerial declaration that Japan and the Asian Pacific group agreed, I was better able to approach negotiations with the other regional subgroups. In the end, the document was a comprehensive declaration that addressed the both threats of international terrorism and the protection of refugees and other vulnerable populations. The most interesting part for me was to see how nations come together despite differences to create a comprehensive declaration that addresses challenges of changing international dynamics.

On Monday, the General Assembly finished the final topic on the agenda that addressed the Responsibility to Protect. This topic was much more difficult as nations have much different views about this topic. The blocs were able to come over in the end and create a comprehensive resolution that addressed the issue. During the caucus, the delegate of Sweden and I pushed a different, side resolution that dealt with limiting the vetoing power of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). During this process, I learned the need to cater a support from five Permanent Members (P-5 nations) of UNSC when dealing with many issues in the UN. We had to bring each of the P-5 nations one-by-one and have intense dialogue between those countries and the 6 countries that were pushing for this positive change being approved by the Security Council. In the end, our coalition was able to pass a resolution with the agreement of the P-5 and almost the entire body of the General Assembly.

Throughout the process of simulation during three days of the conference, I learned that my strengths lie in negotiation and compromise with other countries. I was able to negotiate with a variety of other nations from different backgrounds and with different perspectives. My weaknesses were in learning how my country does procedural motions seeing as Japan is a developed nation with essentially a policy of maintaining political neutrality in foreign affairs while expanding economic relations wherever possible and I was not quite sure ~~quite~~ how it ~~they~~ would react to procedural motions like those.



Utah Valley University team during the conference. Andrew Jensen holds Slanczka Achievement Certificate for representing Japan

Overall, this was a great experience that opened my eyes on working within the United Nations and I am excited to investigate careers and internships offered through the United Nations. While I am aware that it was only a simulation, I very much enjoyed the opportunity to find solutions to challenging issues that affect a wide range of vulnerable populations worldwide. I very much felt that through the process of interacting with my peers from many part of the United States, I learned how to empower the powerless. I am grateful for the opportunity to attend this year's conference on the United Nations.

Andrew Jensen, Utah Valley University student