

Casey Mullane
War Game Session 1 Review

War Game I: Climate Change and Policy in India

Upon completion of the first round of the climate war game, I have a few topics and statements about different stages of the war game. I wish to discuss each phase from individual research, group meetings and preparations, initial presentations, secret and open negotiations, and the consensus building process. While a few suggestions for improvement in some categories can be made, overall, the war game was a very exciting culmination of research and topics learned over the time leading up to the war game. I enjoyed the fact that the war game acted as a different way to judge each participants understanding of their individual sector and how they were able to use their knowledge effectively in the war game. This was found to be much more exciting and interactive than a simple test or exam that is often the final evaluation in a class.

For background, the focus of the first war game focused on what India should do, relating to policies, in order to adapt to and/or mitigate the effects of climate change. The sector that I was assigned to was the energy sector and more specifically, I was to become the expert on civil infrastructure in this sector. While at first I was a bit confused about what critical infrastructures I should focus on, as I completed more research the ideas became more clear. I started by researching infrastructure relating to energy in general and then researched more specifically on India. I learned about India's major issues in distributing power effectively and also issues within existing infrastructures associated with hydroelectric power. After the group visit to the US Consulate, I read and took notes on the PACE Initiative between the US and India.

Our group initially came together to share ideas and information, but then we each composed our own set of four or more slides on our specialized topic. I took this as an

opportunity to compose slides that address the current issues that energy infrastructure in India faces. For example, one slide covered the inadequate distribution of electricity to many rural areas. From here, I felt that it was important to try and offer a potential solution to this issue. One of the presentations that our dialogue had seen included a short video on a company called SELCO. SELCO focuses on selling solar panels to individual households or communities and then providing a maintenance system that made sure the installed panels were kept up and any future issues could be resolved. Pushing for a policy that would aide small start-ups like SELCO seemed like the most feasible solution to expanding electricity to rural areas or “rural electrification”.

The energy group then regrouped to put the slides together, make edits and compromises to some of the ideas, and developed a cohesive power point from that. While it may take a bit more time commitment, I think it may be a better idea for groups in the future to create the PowerPoint together instead of breaking up the slides individually because we spent a good amount of time reorganizing, formatting, and deleting information that was stated more than once.

The initial presentations went well overall. Our group found it somewhat difficult to know what to specifically focus on in order to follow similar topics and compete with the presentations of other sectors, but I think that was part of the unknown factor that a real-life war game would include. Twenty minute presentations seemed like an ample amount of time for each sector to present and I believe that holding questions until the end and having a limit of ten minutes was both an efficient and effective way to get through all five sectors within a reasonable amount of time. One suggestion I could make for this part of the war game is to have a very, very short break in between each presentation to allow the next presenter time to get set

up and to allow those watching the presentations to get a period to reflect, finish-up writing notes, and have a break even if just for five minutes. What I learned from this section of the war game was that allowing each sector to present all of their thoughts and ideas gave me a more specific idea of how each sector could work with the energy sector, where we would have to fight the hardest to get our policies put into place, and where we may have to compromise. I was pleasantly surprised that, overall, we seemed to be in agreement with a lot of what the other sectors were saying and that they also seemed to be in alignment with many of the ideas that fueled our policy recommendations. For example, it seemed that the water sector was in support of expanding the renewable energy market in India instead of increasing hydroelectric power. Also, the agriculture sector seemed to be very open to the idea of expanding renewable energy sources to rural areas in order to help the agricultural-based population in rural areas.

I would say that the one component of the war game than needs the most clarification is the idea of “secret negotiations”. It was agreed upon that I would be the secret negotiator for the energy sector. However, we did not realize that the “secret negotiations” would take place during the lunch break of the war game, that they would be one group meeting with another group, and that they would be limited to a ten minute meeting. I appreciated that fact that we were able to choose which groups we wanted to meet with, but I feel that it might have made the game more exciting if there was a period where the secret negotiator talked to another secret negotiator and then reported back to their team. It seemed that a majority of the ten minute time limit was used as different members of the teams meeting tried to convey ideas to all the members of the other team in the negotiating room.

I think that having one chosen representative from each group going and talking to another group would be ideal and would have made the negotiations more about negotiating and

less about all ten people in the room trying to talk and prove a point at once. An interesting thing I learned from the process of the secret negotiations was that it is easy for disagreement to occur even amongst teammates and that it is also sometimes easy to strike deals with other groups that were working to overcome the power and influence that seemed to be dominated by the industrial sector. I was also somewhat surprised that the water and agricultural teams seemed to agree with many of our requests easily and did not seem to really think of the energy sector as a force of power over Indian policy. These sectors mostly talked to us about the efforts needed to convince the industrial sector to compromise with their policies and plans.

Finally, we came to the last section of the war game, which was a recap from each group on final statements after the secret negotiations took place and an open discussion on what the final policy recommendation should be. It was difficult for our group to create slides in the ten minutes we had between the end of the secret negotiations and the beginning of this section of the war game. We settled on creating about four slides that focused on the specific policies relating to energy that the other sectors had agreed to. This included expanding small scale renewable energy to rural areas and maintaining current hydroelectric power without expanding it further.

I really thought that it was interesting listening to some of the debates that went on amongst the sectors. It was also interesting to me that some things that seemed to have been worked out during the secret negotiation period amongst different groups were put up again for debate when all the sectors got together to talk. I suppose that this goes to show that secretly negotiating with one sector on a policy does not mean that the policy recommendation will get a unanimous vote when all the sectors are put together to hash each recommendation out. One suggestion that I would make is to have a stronger moderator influence over this portion of the

war game. When the water sector brought up a complaint about water policy being left out, the moderator could have stepped in a given the water sector five to ten minutes to fully explain their policy recommendation and complaint. It was interesting however to think about how real-life negotiations could and probably do dissolve a bit when conflicts similar to this arise.

When the war game was completed, I felt as if there were components from each sector within the overall policy recommendations. I was satisfied that the energy sector seemed to meet a lot of our goals, which included agreement with industry to invest in research of solar energy, agreement with the water sector on continued but modified use of hydroelectric power, agreement with the agricultural sector on land use and increasing renewable energy on agricultural land, and overall agreement to continue subsidies already given to renewable energy projects within India. It would have been especially important to talk about distribution of funding amongst all of the policy recommendations, but given the time constraints and lack of knowledge prior to the research, presentation, and secret negotiation process it would have been difficult to decide on monetary allocation.

These are the final thoughts that I had about what I witnessed over the process of the war game. I would say that most of the work really went into the research and preparation to present on the energy sector in India and the policy recommendations, but that the more interesting part of the war game was trying to figure out what compromises needed to be made to create a comprehensive policy recommendation for India without sacrificing all of the needs of the energy sector and while keeping the people of India and their needs also in the forefront of our thoughts and negotiations.