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DOC India CC Science
6/5/14

Climate Change Policy War Game 2 - China

As part of this Climate Change Policy War Game, representatives from a group of countries (India, China, U.S., and the rest of South Asia), with guidance from the United Nations, discussed foreign policy related to climate change mitigation and adaption and green house gas reduction. As part of the China team I was the one responsible for researching about ancient India and China, and how any cultural differences between the two countries may affect negotiations overall. Having previously traveled to China and being thoroughly knowledgeable on Chinese culture and current politics, I used my own past experiences to inform the group of China's wants and needs. This allowed us to assume a more realistic stance during negotiations, despite the limited amount of research time we were allocated for this war game.

Important knowledge on cultural implications needed in order to effectively represent China at a negotiation table include the concept of keeping face in society. Therefore, China does not want to seem like an agitator nor a pushover in the eyes of other nations. China does not want conflicts and is willing to negotiate bilaterally with another nation to achieve agreement. China, along with India, is very status oriented, demanding respect from others.

Consideration of economic and political issues are also important in order to correctly represent China. China may have the world's second largest economy, but believes it should be treated as a developing country in order to divert responsibility of climate change to already developed nations. China accepts it is the largest emitter of pollutants into the atmosphere, but believes development should not be sacrificed in mitigating the effects of climate change. China believes it has the right to develop at all costs and that developed nations have already had their chance. Also, China does not want to be forced into reducing emissions (or do anything they

deem unfair) by an outside force, making China unwilling to accept UN imposed sanctions. They believe that anything done on their territory is ultimately their decision and their decision only, and that others do not have the right to become involved. If problems arise, other countries should consult any disagreements directly with China and not involve other parties.

Aside from development however, China's main goal is to maintain social and political stability. As a one-party authoritarian regime, the Chinese Communist Party seeks to maintain power by all means. Unfortunately, heavy smog and other pollutants endanger the livelihood of their citizens. While China wants to keep developing as rapidly as possible, it also has to reduce emissions for its own sake. Increased pollutants in the atmosphere are not only dangerous to the people, but to the economy and the well being of the government as well. Protests have already taken place in Beijing, Shanghai, and other heavily polluted cities in regards to climate change and the severity of the pollution. The Chinese people overall believe in climate change and seek governmental imposed restrictions on industry in order to mitigate atmospheric damage and health risks. The Chinese government is being forced to change by its own population, something that it must do to maintain power. China is tackling environmental issues at their own pace, and does not want other countries or international agencies like the U.N. to butt in.

Aside from contributing knowledge about Chinese culture and economic and political issues, I also spread knowledge about China's topography and location of agricultural production, and the idea implementing an industrial park in India. Our argument was modeled after Suzhou Industrial Park, a city I have visited in the past, as an alternative for India's development. The industrial park model shifts development from the traditional downtown core of a city and strives to create a sustainable new urban center, concentrating resources and development in the rapidly expanding suburbs. This would help solve overpopulation, lack of resources, and unsanitary conditions in urban India by implementing a new transportation network connecting the new city and the old city.

Setting my involvement in team China aside, I felt negotiations between countries flowed well. Since the focus of this war game was Indian policy and how the Indian government can improve mitigation of adverse effects of climate change, other aspects of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions between countries were dismissed. If India wasn't placed as our overall focus, countries like the U.S. and China would fight over greenhouse gas emissions and blame one another for the effects of climate change. If this occurred, India would have become ignored and the overall idea of the war game would have been lost.

Something I found surprising was the role U.N. played in our negotiations. I expected the U.N. to be more directly involved in all our negotiations. It was shocking to witness firsthand the lack of power the U.N. had over the nations represented, not being able to force any country to address the problem at hand for the greater health of the world environment. During the war game, the U.N. was forced to play a passive role by encouraging the establishment of a global agreement. However, the U.N. had no power to enforce any new protocols and ensure their livelihood. This is partly why the Kyoto Protocol failed, as it essentially became more of a moral code and not a requirement punishable by law. The U.N. offered to help, but could not get the support of the U.S. or China. Since these two countries play an important part in global emissions, agreements made through the U.N. become overall inefficient in addressing climate change on a global level.