



Students from across the globe gather in Toronto for simulated United Nations

By Shelly Weisfeld

It has been said that university life can be isolating from the real world. This was certainly not the case at a recent simulation of the North American Model United Nations (NAMUN). The simulation was organized by York University student Kevin Talbot, with the help of Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate studies, D.B. DeWitt, York students Henry Morton, Karen Manarin, Michelle Agar and members of U of T's political science department, and presented a mirror image of a successful UN forum. There were moments of anguish, frustration, glory, and when most needed, humor in what was seen as a truly well-rounded educational experience.

More than 400 students participated in NAMUN from universities in British Columbia, Alberta, Boston and London, England. The objective of the simulation was to give students an opportunity to assess the role of the United Nations. Each school was assigned a country which was then represented through students roleplaying diplomats. At the end of the weekend any resolutions proposed by the delegates from the 57 nation states in attendance were open for debate.

Thursday, February 13, 1986

Talbot, Secretary General to NAMUN, officially opened what was later to prove to be an exciting, informative replica of what UN sessions consist of.

Former Canadian Permanent Representative to the UN George Ignatieff joined the opening ceremonies by addressing issues of intergovernmental organization, common ground and the nature of facade. Ignatieff also spoke on the issue of nuclear war as being the major threat to human survival. Later in the evening the General Assembly Committees met for the first time.

The 57 nation General Assembly was divided into five committees. The Political Security Committee, often the loudest of the five, had a broad mandate to discuss issues of international security. This committee experienced severe tension especially in their discussion of the Iran-Iraq conflict. The administration of an immediate cease fire in the Gulf, proposed by several countries, was seen as impractical by both Iran and Iraq.

Growing tensions emerged when Iraq claimed to have presented Iran with a peace offer in 1983, yet Iran would not acknowledge that any such offer had ever been made.

Within the Special Political Committee there was a lot of internal conflict due to the controversial nature of the topics of apartheid and hijacking. Some members of the committee felt the discussion of



Organizers of the NAMUN—Standing (left to right): Tracey Goldman, Henry Morton, Kenny Lipson, Matthew Rotenberg, Elisa Morton, Sheryl Peterson, Michelle Agar. Seated: Kevin Talbot, David Saffer, Krishna Balkisson.

apartheid would result in rhetoric instead of productive solutions. However, later in the afternoon the first resolution on apartheid was proposed by Mozambique and was passed.

The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee was faced with issues of environmental disposal of toxic wastes and the new world communications and information order. Also, the delegate from India suggested that clarification for an international journalistic code of ethics was needed.

The Economic and Financial Committee concentrated on multinational corporation issues and on General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

The Disarmament Committee discussed the possibilities of weapons in outer space and chemical weapons.

Aside from the five General, there were two special committees. One was the Security Council, which concentrated its efforts on the withdrawal of South African forces from Namibia, and called for a more independent Namibia with UN supervised democratic elections. Secondly, there was the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Cases presented included the legal implications of the sovereignty dispute over the Falkland-Malvinas Islands between Argentina and the United Kingdom. The agent for Argentina, dominated the lively opening of the ICJ, presenting her argument very persuasively despite the multitude of questions from the ICJ judges.

The second court battle was between the USSR and the United States' claim for compensation for the destruction of Korean airlines Flight 007 in August of 1983. The claim of the US rested largely upon transcripts of radio transmissions which the Soviet agent unsuccessfully argued were inadmissible as evidence.

Friday, February 14, 1986

The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee considered journalistic codes of ethics. Any proposed

legislative code was opposed strongly by France, USA, and Israel although they did express an interest in a voluntary code which would help to at least define an ideal to which journalists should strive. A suggestion from Denmark stated that a non-binding appeal agency could be set up to hear cases of journalists that feel mistreated.

The Disarmament Committee adopted a definition of chemical weapons that was to be incorporated in an unresolved proposal. During the proceedings, Saudi Arabia, Mozambique, Iraq, Sudan, Ethiopia and Pakistan walked out in protest when Israel took the floor.

The Economic and Financial Committee put forth a resolution for the protection of infant industries. They felt it would be advisable to set up a non-tariff barrier committee and an advisory board with non-binding judgements and requests.

The Political Security Council tried to focus their interest on a specific area of Middle Eastern countries. The representative from the USSR, Silvina Civant from the London School of Economics, was later commended for initiating a focus on the treatment of political prisoners.

The ICJ, set up in a court room fashion, completed the Falklands/Malvinas case and announced that a decision would be released at the closing Plenary session held on Sunday. The next case study for the ICJ was the shooting down of the Korean Flight 007. The lawyer representing the USSR, Julian Ozanne, argued that every state has exclusive rights over their own air space. Ozanne added "sovereignty gives right to use of force."

Friday's events concluded with a dinner honoring Canada's Ambassador to the UN, Stephen Lewis.

Saturday, February 15, 1986

This morning proved more interesting than many had expected, especially for those representatives who were awakened as early as 5:45 a.m. to an emergency session. After only a few short hours of sleep, members of the Security Council were gathered

after receiving news that a TWA flight leaving New York to Tel Aviv was diverted in international airspace to Tripoli by Libyan planes.

The news of the hijacking came as a surprise to everyone as it flashed across the monitor systems in all of the delegates' rooms. A mock news report compiled by a local TV network was so effectively staged that two students from NAMUN thought it was real. One girl, terrified of the possibility that her brother who was departing for Tel Aviv via New York on the same morning, phoned home long distance for confirmation of her brother's safety. It wasn't until the American student reached her family that she realized the broadcast was only part of the simulation.

Henry Morton, Executive member of NAMUN, extended an immediate apology in the NAMUN newsletter, following the reaction of some of the delegates.

Later in the day Latin American countries walked out of the Special Political Committee five minutes before adjournment in protest of the committee's lack of recognition of the problems facing Nicaragua.

Before the Economic and Financial Committee was finished for the day, a letter was sent to the representative of Libya. It stated "a bomb will be placed by the headquarters of the Liberation Peoples Republic tonight or tomorrow." The letter was signed by the "Kill Kadaphy Klub (KKK), The Movement for a White Africa (MWA), and the Liberation Organization of Arabs from Africa (LOAA). An eyewitness stated that the letter was later seen flying across the room, making a perfect landing into a basket marked 'waste.'

Sunday February 16, 1986

Resolutions proposed during the previous three days were brought to the attention of all the delegates from the General Assembly, the Security Council and the ICJ.

After announcing the agreements passed, Talbot closed the ceremonies with a speech stating "the purpose of NAMUN was to strive for a better understanding of the UN and its communications of sovereign states in the world." Talbot added, "We have simulated with both administration problems and real world events."

After his speech, Talbot, with the directors of each committee, presented citations to those people who best represented their country.

For the Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee, the outstanding awards went to Ethiopia represented by Guelph, India represented by Regina, Cuba represented by Windsor, and Denmark represented by McGill.

Economic and Finance awards went to Kenya and Lebanon, both represented by Trent, the Federal Republic of Germany represented by Tufts, and

to the USSR represented by the London School of Economics.

Political Security awards went to Iraq represented by U of T, Iran represented by Victoria, and the USSR represented by the London School of Economics. Honourary mention went to Saudi Arabia represented by Western.

Special political awards were extended to South Africa represented by York, Libya represented by Tufts, Israel represented by York and the USSR. Honourary awards went to Nicaragua represented by U of T and India represented by Regina.

The Citation of Excellence for the Security Council was presented to Egypt represented by Simon Fraser and the USSR.

The verdict of the International Court of Justice recognized sovereignty of Argentina over the Falkland—Malvinas Islands. In the spirit of debate between the Soviet Union and the US, the court found the Soviet Union in violation of shooting the 007 airline down, but due to negligence of the Korean plane, no compensation was requested from the Soviet Union. Both students representing lawyers from the US and the USSR received an award.

Finally, the award for outstanding delegation went to the London School of Economics for best representing the USSR. According to spokesman Julian Ozanne, the team prepared themselves in less than three weeks, leaving most of their research until the week before their arrival in Toronto. President of the General Assembly, Matthew Lotenberg said some delegations had less than a week's worth of preparation due to late registration.

Two representatives who made their presence noticed, included Francis Furter from the University of Montreal and York's South African representative Gali Lapid.

Furtier, roleplaying a member of the Republic of Germany, adapted a German accent that never left his voice for the entire weekend. Furtier said "the success of simulation lies in the concrete impression of the institute itself. By talking in an accent or dressing the role as some reps did, one brings more life to a simulation and creates an ambience of its own." Furtier added, "One should get prepared on matter not only intellectually but culturally in all aspects of a country."

This was the case for Lapid who said, "It was difficult to engage in an academic exercise and hide true emotion and feeling on an issue. Lapid felt that he had to practice great moral restraint to support his role of a representative of South Africa. His personal view on apartheid was summed up in his statement "blood only comes in one colour."

Quotes of the weekend as recorded in NAMUN's daily news journal:

"The United Nations provides a multi-lateral route to sanity."

"As far as we're concerned, these transcripts are bogus."

"That's not a point of order, it's a point of view."

"I have a question I'd like to direct to the rep from Libya. I'd like to question their competence."

"Kenya has a rapidly expanding Italian restaurant industry."

"We are looking for a new economic order, not a new economic disorder."