

An SMUN 2015 Publication

TORCH



Monday, 8 June 2015

Issue No. 1



2015

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Directors' Welcome Message

Dear Delegates,

We are SMUN's very own in-house team of editors providing the entire scoop on 2015's conference. As committees pass resolutions and crises unravel, we will report the breadth, reveal the depth and respond to the latest in international developments.

We've witnessed significant tumult on the global stage the past few months – from the suffocating gag orders issued to US reporters in the wake of the Ferguson Riots and Eric Garner's death, to the spontaneity of the #JeSuisCharlie rallies, and the blood-curdling beheadings of journalists by ISIS.

The UN remains a critical organisation – crossing borders and beliefs – in assisting all to overcome this prejudice and hate; striving for international security and stability. Her many interlinked organs will be given the comprehensive coverage in our Press Corps' daily TORCH publication.

As Directors of SMUN Press & Publications, we urge all of you to utilise the platforms of your specific committees to the fullest. Investigate the array of international issues, comment on your fellow delegates' submissions and contribute to debates... we'll only be too excited to document your moments of glory before the gavel falls and resolutions are passed.

Recently, journalists around the world have been taking the "Blindfold Pledge", in light of Austin Tice's disappearance after reporting about developments in Syria. The symbolism lies in how we become blind when journalists are silenced. It is against this blindfold that the SMUN Press Corps encourages you to write – about the diversity of delegates, the plurality of opinion, and most importantly, in embracing the freedom of expression!

Sincerely,

Ephraim Tan & Laura Goh

Directors, SMUN Press & Publications 2015

On behalf of the Editorial Committee



TORCH 2015

by Ephraim Tan

Having inherited our namesake from predecessors, the SMUN 2015 editors were honestly unsure of what TORCH meant and where we should bring the publication. We briefly toyed with the idea of breaking away from tradition, renaming TORCH with a MUN pun: GentleMUN, MUNity Centre, MUNDAY even. Needless to say these names were tossed out pretty quickly.

While reinvention may be a good thing (just look at the semi-centennial Madonna, with her career surviving the last 50 years), sometimes it is better to understand our roots before moving forward. Singapore, with her slogan of SG50 for this year's jubilee, has too entered the golden years. Equally, National Day Parade (NDP) Organisers have elected to revisit classic Singaporean songs when conceiving the medley "Our Home, Our Heart, Our Singapore"; instead of fishing out new techno tunes for our annual NDP theme.

From this conference's unique Historical Security Council to Minister Shanmugam's sharings about precarious histories of small nation-states, a contemplated reevaluation of past to present appears apt in context of SMUN too.

SMUN is in its 12th year running, and TORCH has been the title of SMUN's official publication from the conference's very incipience. With this proud history under our belts, we thought it best to relook TORCH and refine the direction of our publication in 2015.

This year, we've envisioned TORCH as the one stop point for all things SMUN! We will report the debates and reveal the dish on the delegates! Over the next 5 days, we will shed light on the range of international issues and the variety of conference perspectives.

TORCH - accompanying you through SMUN 2015 and setting your conference ablaze!!



Duties of joining the Dais: An Editor's Perspective

by Soon Hao Jing

Some time ago I faced a dilemma: join the Crisis team, or the Press Corps? As much as I would have loved to chair a committee instead, my two options opened to me rather different potential experiences.

On the one hand, I've a background as a student journalist, written for school and MUN newsletters before, and even added a short story to an anthology. Writing to capture the soul of a committee debate and portraying it to readers is no less than a form of art.

On the other hand, Crisis teams get to blow things up in multiple ways - escalate crises to insane proportions and engulf entire conferences of student diplomats in explosions and mini-armageddons that would make Michael Bay of Transformers fame (or ill repute?) proud.

Needless to say, I married them both. Why give one up when you can have the best of both worlds?

Hence I now enjoy the best of both worlds - twice the amount of work. Besides managing the Wikileaks News agency at the Press Corps, writing editorials and guiding press delegates, I'll be working furiously at my laptop on other assignments.

Stay tuned to what your Chairs will project onto your screens during the conduct of the crisis. I'll be your Crisis correspondent.

'See you at the conference' is what I would normally say, but I'd prefer you to 'read me.'

Have a good one!



Secretary-General: Jonathan Lee

by Soon Hao Jing



At 7pm on Sunday evening at the ground floor lounge of Tembusu College, SMUN 2015 Secretary-General Jonathan Lee stood up to deliver a pep talk to secretariat members ahead of the flag-off for SMUN 2015 today, thanking secretariat members for their hard work building up to the event. Close to midnight, I wandered into the lounge again after grabbing a snack for supper from the Cheer's outlet on UTown, and found Jonathan still at work behind a desk with our Deputy Secretary-General Cheryl Ko helping newly arrived international delegates, suitcases in tow, check in to their lodgings at Tembusu College. I had a chat with Jonathan to understand how he came to be in the thick of things here at SMUN, and how SMUN is different for him.

Hao Jing: How did you first get involved in MUNs? And what led you to SMUN?

Jonathan: I started a few inter-school Model ASEAN and MUN conferences in secondary school, but really got involved in the MUN circuit proper in SMUN 2009. What drew me to the format was the challenge of holding fast to the position of a state on an evolving theme, while engaging with other different perspectives which might not necessarily synergise so quickly with yours. MUN offers a taste of diplomacy and [requires] one to communicate as well as to problem-solve.

HJ: How is SMUN different from the rest of the MUNs?

Jonathan: First of all, SMUN has prided itself as the flagship MUN conference of Singapore. For over a decade, we have established a name for ourselves in the region as a MUN conference of choice. This is a MUN which is remembered for its academic quality, which is why we have decided to expand the conference to 5 days this year to broaden the scope of engagement, as well as its depth.

HJ: What's the theme for SMUN 2015? Can you tell us more about it?

Jonathan: The focus of SMUN this year is on emerging issues of diplomatic discourse in the century ahead. We think this is rather exciting and also rather apt, given that it is the youth who would be the future leaders of society who might inherit these issues in time to come. This year's conference has taken both a regional and international approach to this in covering issues from ASEAN



to the EU, and even the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. In doing so we will be diving into rich topics from the Islamic State, to the arms race in Asia as well as income [in]equality and corruption.

HJ: Do you have any words of advice for the delegates ahead of the conference?

Jonathan: Approach your issues with an open mind - there is often more than a few ways to address a challenge. Be structured, but not to the extent of being rigid. Also, don't be afraid to speak up. Formulating a strong policy is only the first step - the next is to convince others that they should subscribe to yours.



Under Secretary-General (Academics)

Ingmar Salim

by Ivan Hong



“So, what are your plans for not getting drunk this year?” I ask with a grin as he sat down across me, wearing a rainbow-striped colour run t-shirt and shorts. “You make it sound like my default state is drunk!” he laughs, from behind his usually straight demeanour. My impressions of MUN chairpersons were coloured with images of straight-laced, bespectacled prefects from my secondary school days. Ingmar Salim is the Under Secretary-General (Academics) for the 12th Singapore Model United Nations (SMUN), and I spoke with him about his thoughts for this year’s MUN:

Ivan: Any opening words?

Ingmar: Finally. It’s here.

Ivan: What are you looking forward to this MUN?”

Ingmar: Getting on with it! (laughs). Wait, is this going down on record?

Ivan: Yes! (laughs)

Ingmar: Okay, okay, I have to think of something politically correct: I look forward to this year’s MUN being a time of rigorous and intellectually engaging debates...

Ivan: You don’t have to be politically correct! I never am either.

Ingmar: Haha, fair enough! I’m really excited just to meet up with old friends and making new ones. In terms of the debates, the quality of this year should be better than the last because the delegate selection for the councils were more systematic and rigorous. And I know a few of them who are really good.

Ivan: Is there a particular topic of interest or council that you will be following?

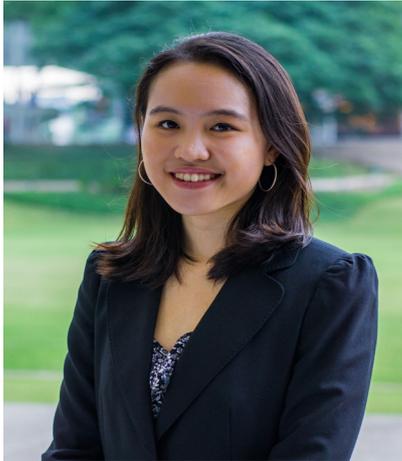
Ingmar: Definitely the Historical Security Council, as I’m a History major, and also because of the quality of the delegates attending it.



Under Secretary-General (Academics)

Marian Chia

by Goh Jing Yi



chairs and add a human touch to SMUN 2015.

Her message to the Chairs and Delegates is that she will be a bad cop by enforcing the Rules of Procedure and bringing any disciplinary issues to order. On a lighter note, she wants to thank the Chairs for their cooperation and how wonderful it has been for her to get to know them. Cheekily, she adds, “I’ll still be a bad cop though if need be”.

12.47AM. Marian’s email pops up. The busy Under Secretary-General (Academics) has been buzzing around the conference all day, but patiently sat to reply my interview questions.

Marian introduces herself as a Literature major who is highly passionate about the subject. Her interest in language and its usage in constructing power in politics aided her to see the strong relationship between Literature and MUN. Falling in love in MUN was a drawn-out process for her, which started in her first ever MUN experience, SMUN 2014. She served as an assistant chair in the Historical General Assembly then. Fondly remembering their ice-cream and dinner dates, Marian’s most memorable experience was forging close bonds with her fellow committee members last year. Besides seeking to build on her existing friendships, she hopes to make friends with the



Liaison Officer: Shaun Tay

by Cassandra Pee



part of a committee that seeks to ensure the welfare of the delegates here, as he explained: “some might be tired and cranky after a flight, but it is important to see how they react, and react accordingly”.

To sum up the interview, I asked Shaun if he had any words for the delegates in the upcoming conference. He quipped his trademark, “Hi guys, I’m your delegate liaison officer Shaun!”

With the time to spare only for a short interview, the Delegate Liaison officer Shaun Tay was found tired and sweaty at 10p.m. still helping a foreign SMUN delegate out. I approached Shaun expecting him to be cranky from having negligible time for proper rest over the past two days receiving delegates, but he was still smiling enthusiastically.

Shaun revealed that he has been involved in SMUN as the Delegate Liaison Officer previously in 2014 as well. When asked about his motivation to return as the delegate liaison again for SMUN 2015, he smiled and said, “it was fun, getting to interact with all the delegates and I enjoyed it”.

On a more serious note, Shaun remarked that his most significant takeaway from being Delegate Liaison Officer would be people skills, which he felt were greatly polished by the interactions he had with the SMUN delegates. Shaun sees himself as



Knowing the SMUN Press Corps

by Ephraim Tan

The press has always been a crucial conduit for the public to gain access and understanding about issues – domestic, regional and global. Arguably, the mission is to provide objective reportage, unobstructed by political or personal bias. Yet more often than not, news agencies tend to cover controversies from select angles, push certain agendas, and spin stories to their benefit.

The UN has added its voice to the range of opinions in the international community with the United Nations Correspondents Association (“UNCA”), better known as the UN Press Corps. The Association represents a colorful myriad of international publishers, broadcasters and major news networks. Constant communication is maintained with the UN Secretariat, so agencies can assist the Secretariat in coverage, discussion and deliberation of pressing global issues amongst more stakeholders. With a larger audience involved, it has therefore become even more of a priority to protect the freedom and upkeep standards of press prestige.

In 2010, the UN Security Council limited news coverage by UNCA press members – as the Council’s decisions and deliberations were deemed unsuitable for reporting. These supposed “safety measures” to regulate the outflow of sensitive state information were denounced; clearly counter the UNCA’s aims of upholding press freedoms.

It is in light of such limitations that reportage has gone rogue in form of Wikileaks’ exposés and other fringe agencies’ news stories. Edward Snowden – one-time CIA system administrator and now notorious for leaking classified National Security Agency (NSA) information to mainstream media – has applied for asylum from “any country that believes in free speech and opposes the victimization of global privacy”. This comes in the aftermath of him compromising American security interests for the “principled” goal of freedom to knowledge and expression. However these curtailed rights to reportage does not mean that all is lost, for many in news still work towards informational transparency.

Clearly, reportage is a fine balancing act between the many interests – that of the agency’s audience’s, and even countries’ and corporations’. Delegates will take on this challenge of ensuring that leaders and decision-makers are kept on their toes – as one agency shielding them from public scrutiny doesn’t mean others will cease investigations.

From Al Jazeera to Fox News, the plethora of news agencies assembled in SMUN 2015 reflects this exact reality, where views diverge over a spectrum of conservative to liberal. These diverse voices have only been accorded more notice as the advent of social media accelerates the process of publishing news stories. SMUN equally encourages Press Delegates to utilise these platforms – by publishing articles on the SMUN Press Corps website, or giving Twitter commentary live from committee debates.



Regardless of reporting angle, it is during SMUN that Delegates get to simulate this entire experience of taking each news story to the press. And with the continual emphasis on “freedom of expression”, each Press Agency’s unique perspectives – regarding the UN and her decisions – can shape tomorrow’s international landscape.



Wikileaks News' Press Statement

by Goh Yu Ning Esther, Press Delegate

As a proud representative of Wikileaks I firmly believe people should be entrusted with the power to decide for themselves what is right and what is not, in the spirit of true democracy. Knowledge is power. I will strive to make information accessible to all, so the common man on the street will be able to pass his own judgment on the global affairs happening around him. I believe that governments withholding information – no matter how “well-intentioned” – are violating the freedom of access to information that everyone has.

Since October 2006, Wikileaks has greatly impacted the international arena with its journalism. Notable examples include the explosive international reaction to the publishing of the Syria Files in July 2012 and the release of drone-strike footage from the 2007 Baghdad airstrike.

The power the fifth estate wields should never be belittled. With Wikileaks' sources from across the globe, we prise open the dark secrets deliberately hidden from the populace by states. Though the mainstream press may deride us as ‘unorthodox’, Wikileaks has been impartial in reporting, favouring no faction, government or organisation. Our releases are solely in the public interest. Moreover, the authenticity and credibility of the documents we publish speak for themselves. We are a progressive news agency unlike any other; our existence itself will usher in a new era of journalism, delivering the unvarnished full truth.

I have chosen to cover the United Kingdom's

alleged violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). I believe the advancement in nuclear technology in recent decades is a double-edged sword. The topic of nuclear technology, especially its weaponisation, immensely interests Wikileaks. Our agency has disclosed numerous revelations pertaining to nuclear technology, such as the exact numbers of United States nuclear warheads in 2009, India's nuclear weapons status as of 2012, and Iran's technical capability to produce nuclear weapons in March 2009. Many countries' positions in the nuclear arms race are not fully known, and even the NPT's terms on nuclear disarmament are vague. How, then, can world citizens know about their countries' nuclear development agendas and programmes?

I will shine light on the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) trial to determine if the UK has indeed breached the terms of the NPT. Besides focusing on the verdict of the ICJ, I hope to unearth hidden information regarding the UK and other nations' capability in the field of nuclear technology, their stances on nuclear testing as well as other covert activities they have engaged in. I want to challenge the conventional wisdom that a nuclearised world is safe, and will go to any lengths to dispel the darkness shrouding governments' nuclear agendas.



BBC's Press Statements

by Jong Ching Yee, Press Delegate

Regarded as the world's oldest broadcasting station and largest broadcaster, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is publicly owned and represents the interests of the British.

Our mission is to enrich people's lives with programmes which inform, educate and entertain. We believe in safeguarding everyone's right to credible information, regardless of their social status, race or gender.

Our strong relationships with various countries are manifested in our ability to maintain 50 foreign news bureaux with more than 250 correspondents. This extensive network positions us as a credible news agency in delivering news quickly and presenting a broader perspective of issues, hence playing an indispensable role in shaping the global security outlook.

We are particularly interested in the issues surrounding ISIS and the Russia-Ukraine rebel conflict, since the UK occupies an important position in the UN and the Commonwealth.

We are supportive of reporters being on the ground to gather information first-hand, especially from the victims and possibly ISIS militants. We are keen on following the discussion undertaken by the UNSC on this issue and look forward to reporting on a resolution. We understand that other news agencies exercise different broadcasting methods and possess various opinions, hence we are willing to collaborate with them to provide a more comprehensive news coverage.

In this conference, my aim is to deliver objective

by Wang Xun Jie, Press Delegate

and, as far as possible, unbiased reporting that provides a deep insight into the issues of our day. I am particularly interested in the developments within the Historical Crisis Committee (HSC) as it seems set to be the most high-strung and exciting topic at hand. There is a pressing need for reporters to provide a broader perspective of the issue to even the delegates of the council. The prospect of playing the fourth estate (albeit a neutral one) is one that strongly appeals to me.

I am particularly interested in the Yom Kippur War and am able to appreciate the complex interplay of the parties involved - the Israeli interlopers, the Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian aggressors, as well as background parties such as the USA. Having noted the bloody payout of the conflict and its detrimental political effect to the Middle Eastern peace proceedings in the following decades, I hope to use the power of information (and retrospection) to help nudge the delegates of the crisis council towards a more amiable and future-friendly conclusion to the conflict. Such an opportune time may occur during talks for territorial designation between the Jewish state and its Muslim neighbours, as it is identified as a serious point of contention and future conflict.



Al Jazeera's Press Statement

by Zoe Deborah Tauro, Press Delegate

The 18th of December 2010 heralded a new 'revolution' in the Arab World, with the fight for democracy spreading from Tunisia and Egypt to Libya and Yemen. By February 2012, these countries had successfully dethroned their dictators. However, many other countries in the Arab region still face the fallouts of ideological splits and related domestic strife.

Syria, is one of these countries - having gone through the Syrian Civil War and subsequent inter-rebel conflicts. This has led to a temporary pause in the 'fight against the regime'. Instead, Syria, Iraq and neighbouring Arab countries have allied against such rebel groups - notably the radicalist Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Syria's president, Bashar Hafez al-Assad, has portrayed his government's fight against ISIL in a bid to save his political seat. However, war efforts are limited and Syrian refugees obtain little help from the government. Our agency believes that the people of Syria are being denied their basic human rights and this problem should be solved quickly and permanently for the benefit of the economic growth of the country.

Based on current calculations, 3,979,560 people are documented as Syrian Refugees and an estimated 220,000 people are dead due to this war. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has built various Refugee Camps to assist displaced Syrians, however these measures have come with limited success. The UNHCR's appeal of more than 4 billion dollars has only been com-

pleted by 20%. Our agency plans to observe the debates in the UNHCR closely, in hope that more can be done by the UN, as governments of the world muster more effort to resolve this problem and bring a sustainable peace to the Middle East.

US so far has decided to refrain from joining the war efforts. However in the near future, US may be forced by circumstances to intervene. Iraq, having gone through its own civil war since 2003, has faced rising violence after US troops withdrew from Iraq in 2011. UNICEF has also been making global aid appeals for the Syrian children. Just this week, 160 makeshift tents in Lebanese refugee camps caught fire due to unsafe conditions, taking the lives of 6. The refugees currently live in dire conditions. Our agency believes that the US, being actively involved in resolving Arab League issues, can play a part to further resolve this conflict as talks alone don't resolve issues. As the saying goes, action speaks louder than words.

In line with the aim of "giving voices to untold stories, promoting debate, and challenging established perceptions", our agency wishes to get its readers to understand this inhumane and disheartening issue that requires immediate resolution. Many countries do not see the immediate importance of this.

However the threat of ISIL persists, causing Syrians to be scattered across the Arab world. World powers who have many a times "meddled" with



the Middle East now seem to be passive. Our agency urges all delegates to take the front wheel on this issue in the UNHCR!

Finding the perpetrators of these radicalised ideologies might lead us to find the answer to our problems. The Syrian refugees, especially the children, deserve a better future. Would you deny an innocent person his or her rights to live?



Fox New's Press Statement

by Ryan Cheong, Press Delegate

Considered by many Americans to be “fair and balanced”, the Fox News Channel is a subsidiary of 21st Century Fox that has charmed audiences - home and abroad - since 1996. Fox News believes that it has an obligation to feed the growing appetite of Americans for pressing news stories, especially the latest in international developments.

Be it is providing 24-hour news coverage on the September 11th 2001 attacks or covering Presidential Elections, Fox News has stood firm in its views on “Real Journalism” by providing the most accurate and timely information to Americans.

Fox News finds the latest issues discussed by the United Nations Security Council to be the most pertinent to her viewership. The threat of the Islamic State of Syria (ISIS) to Global and Regional Security as well as the presence of Boko Haram compromising Trans-National security remain hot topics that Americans desire to understand.

Fox News strongly believes that potential resolutions achieved at the UN would have far reaching consequences for America and the rest of the world. It is thus Fox News' responsibility to report on the depth and breadth of the issues at hand.

Fox News plans to observe international developments - specifically whether other state actors are equally willing to adopt America's stance of

riding terrorism from the world. Either in form of ISIS or Boko Haram, terrorism is a global endemic and no country is truly safe from its claws. America alone has the necessary intelligence and military might to overcome terrorism effectively and other nations who wish to see a stronghold of terrorism (namely ISIS) crushed, should join the American coalition to destroy such militants.

It is the view of this correspondent that America has an obligation as a superpower to rid the world of terrorism and as such, Americans have the right to know the developments on such issues. It is also the view of this correspondent that the delegates in these committees should do their best to keep their personal biases to a minimum, while working out a sustainable solution, and in so doing supporting actions proposed by the US.



Fox New's Press Statement

by Prasha Maithani, Press Delegate

This delegate is thrilled to be a member of the SMUN Press Corps; being tasked with covering the debates and probing further into the range of international developments.

Fox News, launched in 1996, now boasts an international subscription of 17 million and a massive American following numbering nearly at 100 million. Along with providing extensive coverage on American events, the FNC (Fox News Channel) analyses international happenings as well.

Issues that capture this delegate's attention include the presence of foreign military bases that certain countries have established, and this comes under the Disarmament and International Security (DISEC) committee. Nations such as France, India, Russia and the United States are amongst these parties - having installed several foreign military bases across the globe.

However, the nation with arguably the most powerful military force, the United States of America, tops the list with the largest number of foreign military bases dotted across the world. Other countries of notable mention include

Bulgaria, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan and South Korea as they house significant numbers of military bases. The presence of these bases overseas allows the USA to maintain multilateral ties with several countries, and assist them in keeping the peace. This situation also allows nations with foreign military bases to provide immediate help to any of its ally nations in event of conflicts - domestic or international.

U.S. Rep. J. Randy Forbes has asserted, 'Military bases overseas are a vital part of American security', and this delegate remains interested in handling this issue - specifically how the debates allow for exploration into the relations between countries who deploy bases and those who host them. Probing the depths of the discussion will also give the American audience further insights into the world's most powerful military contingent and USA's pivotal role in keeping the peace.