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Ukraine in Turmoil

1. What is your past Model UN experience?

I have been doing Model UN for 3 years now. I started this club at my high school as a sophomore and have watched my team grow over the past few years. As a school, we have participated in 5 different conferences so far. My partner and I won Outstanding Delegation in my first conference at the Seton Hall Model United Nations Conference representing Germany in the World Trade Organization. We also won the award for Outstanding Delegation at the Franklin Model United Nations Conferences representing Germany in DISEC. And, finally, I was awarded Honorable Mention as the Health Minister of the Nigerian Cabinet in SHUMUN. I have really enjoyed doing Model UN these past few years and have learned so much about the world around me while developing a greater appreciation for the inner workings of the UN.

I competed in the Princeton Model United Nation's conference last year and had an unforgettable experience role playing Gene Sperling in the National Security Council. This was my first crisis committee and after thoroughly enjoying that experience, I am here again for more!

2. What interests you about the Ukrainian crisis?

I am interested in the Ukrainian crisis because this event disrupts the fragile balance that was created after the Cold War. We are currently seeing the undoing of past policy with the means of aggressive tactics and brute force. This clearly demonstrates that the post Cold War policy was not durable as evidenced by the simmering tensions and long standing fissures that reached a tipping point last March.

Although much propaganda has clouded the situation, I believe that it can be looked at both ways. President Putin rightfully reclaimed the Russian dominated Crimea after the USSR dissolved and Crimea was given to Ukraine, however his modus operandi follows an outdated doctrine based on 19th century practices that I do not agree with.

3. What are some of the major factors that influence Ukraine's relationship with both the West and with Russia?

Although Ukraine is attracted towards Western democratic systems, the NATO security blanket, and general affluence, the recent European Union financial crisis has sown seeds of doubt. However, Ukraine is heavily reliant on Russian oil/natural gas and because of ethnic/historical ties, it is naturally influenced by Russia. These conflicting biases have left Ukraine, at best, ambivalent.

4. The annexation of Crimea—justifiable or a crime? Why? Be concise, be specific.

The annexation of Crimea can be understood but cannot be justified. I understand President Putin's motives behind annexing Crimea, however I foresee a bleak future for the people of Crimea. Although a referendum indicated that 90% of the people of Crimea supported Russia's involvement, it goes against the international rules and norms. President Putin has thrown the gauntlet to the West by forcing them to also engage in medieval ways of establishing authority. If this blatant transgression goes unopposed, it will make President Putin stronger and encourage him and quite possibly, other countries to also do the same.