

THE FOURTH ESTATE

SBSMUN2016

“

... nations
compete,
co-operate,
but do not
confront.

”

- Gopalaswami Parthasarathy
Opening Ceremony

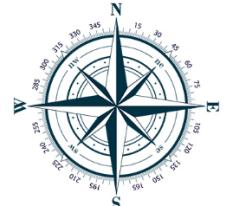
30th July 2016, #2

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Opening Ceremony

By Naina Atri



As tradition dictates, the conference was inaugurated by an opening ceremony; a spiritual beginning followed by several speeches. It ended with the members of the Executive Board being handed gavels, thus declaring the conference open.

The ceremony featured two speeches: presented each by the key-note speaker, Mr. G. Parthsarathy, as well as the Secretary General of the conference, Siddhartha Rai Tandon.

Mr. Parthasarathy has held many important positions at a diplomatic platform, amongst which are the Ambassador of India to Myanmar, the High Commissioner of India to Australia, and the High Commissioner of India to Pakistan.

Mr. Parthasarathy's speech contained a variety of themes. It started off with expressing the importance of reasoned argument and maintaining peace, while balancing competition and cooperation. He stressed that "confrontation and conflict is dangerous".

He then elaborated on the circumstances that led to the birth of the United Nations (UN) in 1945. It was born from the massacre

of millions of innocents, as well as wastage of precious resources.

This theme ended with the speaker emphasising on the fact that "progress cannot be confined".

He moved on to focusing upon the achievements of the UN; democratisation and decolonisation. He also mentioned the reasoning behind the presence and involvement of a colonised India in the UN before it attained independence in 1947. He also mentioned quite a few examples of India's transformation due to its involvement in the UN.

Mr. Parthasarathy did not ignore the flaws found within the UN despite stressing upon its utmost importance in maintaining order in the world. The overall theme of his speech was of the promotion of conscience by the UN.

His speech was followed by the Secretary General's speech, which concluded the ceremony. It focused on how morals and ethics are superseded by profits. In this dark world, he believes that the United Nations is a 'symbol of hope' for the youth.

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MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2016



As Delegates Played the Blame Game, China Took Up the Fight for Global Health

By Imran Batra



As the seven countries present at the UNSC developed an emergency response mechanism for the hypothetical event of an epidemic, foreign policies came into play and cooperation was dominated by confrontation.

The International Health Regulations (IHR) are legally binding regulations that aim to do two main things. The first is to assist the cooperation of countries to save lives endangered by the spread of diseases and other health risks. The second is to avoid unnecessary interference with international trade and travel in times of crisis.

Amongst the many issues talked about by the UNSC was the implementation of IHR.

The delegate of Russia stated the importance of giving special attention to the Sub-Saharan Area and reiterated how the implementation of IHR was delayed because of a lack of funds.

The delegate of France mentioned a lack of trained hands and suggested an increase in investments in order to train people. Collaboration with the WHO to ‘upgrade’ a country’s capabilities was suggested as a possible method to implement the regulations. However, the Executive Board swiftly countered this argument by asking how they planned to assure its uniformity worldwide.

The delegate of China suggested better implementation and a lack of funds. The delegate of Russia replied by asking what China had done to help Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDC). In response, China said the investment in scientific resources was being used to try and create a preventive measure.

The delegate of France brought up an outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in China, and how China refused to disclose information to WHO. China said that the country did not think it would help, as IHR hadn’t been revised, and pointed out the example of the H7N9 outbreak that took place after IHR were revised when China gave all information to WHO. The Executive Board mentioned how China had the highest population and was vulnerable to epidemics. China replied by saying that the country had been trying to strengthen coordination between provinces.

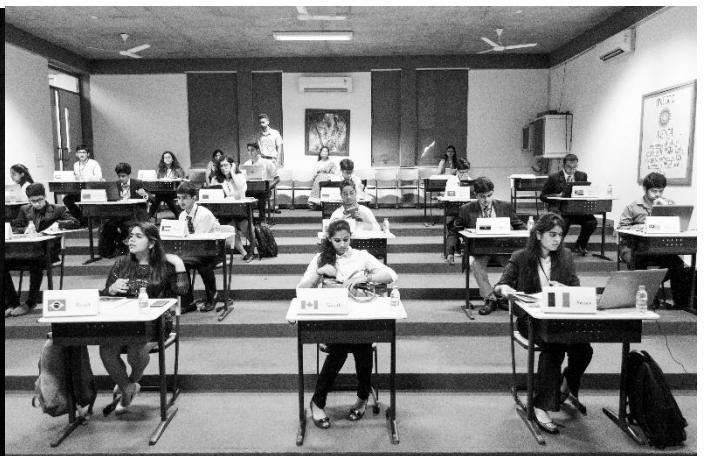


An observer soon pointed out the culling of animals done in China in order to prevent epidemics and what has China done to prevent a situation like this beforehand? The delegate of China replied by saying that a lot of the time the actions were taken is spontaneous, but China prevented them whenever it was possible.



Soon, when an update came of the arrival of unidentified rodents in the Chinese city of Hang-Zhou coinciding with symptoms of what could potentially be a world-threatening disease, fingers were pointed again. The SARS outbreak was mentioned once again, as the delegate of Russia suggested the possibility of inaccurate monitoring and China not being comfortable with sharing information.

This constant blame-game led to a decrease in the number of potential solutions being talked about. Although there were solutions being talked about, countries weren't trying to cooperate and come up with solutions as a whole. By the end of the second session, the confrontation continued while the cooperation was nowhere to be seen.



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Corruption cripples Countries, price of 'wealthy' indifference paid by the poor

By Naina Atri



The Right to Privacy is a human right and an element of various legal traditions, which may restrain both government and private parties from threatening the privacy of individuals.

But, a pertinent question to ask right now is, how much power does this right possess? Maybe we should ask how much power *this right should* possess.

Does the Right to Privacy overwhelm in importance the right of citizens to exist in collective harmony?

Mossack Fonseca & Co. is a firm that has a confidentiality agreement with its clients. It was this agreement that was the premise for several of its clients. This firm came under fire for not reporting the crimes of its clients to the authorities. They argued that it never knowingly allowed the use of its companies by individuals with questionable backgrounds, or those who were associated with suspicious activities.

The firm insisted that it was quick to report such activities and cooperated with the authorities through the investigation. In response to the allegations that the firm was an accessory to numerous crimes, it denied offering solutions to those seeking refuge from consequences of their crimes.

Yet, if the firm's words hold any credibility, how does it explain the leaked documents? Were all the connections and paper trails purely coincidental?

As one follows the false invoices and suspicious paper trails, a deeper crime is found. A crime that has existed for too long: the rich get richer at the expense of the impoverished.

While moving beyond the broken laws and the exposed, it was found that yet again, the ones who don't have a voice suffered the most. The selfish acts and confidentiality agreements have led to far too many deaths. But perhaps this death toll is not high enough to open people's eyes. Perhaps the cries for help are not loud enough to penetrate through bubbles of ignorance, ego, and narcissism or the thick walls of the wealthy and influential of the world.

'Coincidences' - Consequences of Corruption

As bombs of destruction and calamity fell from the sky, the once beautiful landscape of Syria witnessed unprecedented death, damage and terror. Under the guise of ousting rebels (labeled as terrorists by the government of Syria), the Syrian Air Force bombarded their own country with these bombs that left no one unscathed. This arsenal of weapons now being used against their own population was fueled by numerous accounts, most of which found the home in Mossack Fonseca & Co. It must be a coincidence right?

The second coincidence finds the home in Russia, specifically, in the Russian sex-trafficking circles.

Girls and women from varying ages and backgrounds find themselves in the vicious and empowered hands of the rich. Now, how would a Panamanian firm have any relation to the death of thousands of dreams, ambitions, and lives?

It gets involved when one of the primary ringleaders was found in its clientele.

This time, it is the pure lack of interest that held back the justice those girls deserved. After all, the firm wasn't *legally* obliged to report to the authorities.

The most important coincidence that came to light was found in Uganda.

A company wanted to sell a prospective oil field. However, money had to reach the right pockets. Hence, Mossack Fonseca & Co. was approached to help avoid 400 million dollars in taxes. That's more than the African country's national health budget.

Simple paper work pushed the country further into poverty. Resources would never find their way to the bottom of the barrel. This led to an alarming increase in death rates, ranging from the lowest to highest age groups.

Corruption cripples countries, common people

"It abuses human rights," John Christensen, Director and Co-founder of the U.K.-based Tax Justice Network, tells *Newsweek*. "The victims are ordinary people, like you and I. It goes back to the simple rule of law—if the rich and powerful pay less tax, then the rest of us end up paying more. And there is evidence of that, look at what has happened in Britain. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer, we see an increase in VAT and we lose much needed public services."

Uganda's government is fighting battles each day, families are dying each day while the rich go on vacation and figure out schemes to fill their bursting pockets.

Global efforts to help developing countries, such as Nigeria and Malawi, are also severely hindered by tax evasion. Tax evaders often route money through countries that they know have lax taxation control—which also tend to be the poorest countries in need of foreign currency to strengthen their economic situation. The lack of tax revenue in these havens translates to lack of funds to invest in public infrastructure like healthcare, education and safe roads.

Tax revenue that should be helping to fund public services in Malawi and other poor countries is disappearing at an alarming rate.

As much as 30 percent of all African financial wealth is estimated to be held offshore in tax havens, costing an estimated US \$14 billion in lost tax revenues every year. This is enough money to pay for healthcare for mothers and children that could save four million children's lives a year and employ enough teachers to get every African child into school.

Charities funded by tax evaders and laws made by criminals aren't going to help lift countries. Blaming the 'system' won't get anything done. On the other hand, trying to convince people to pay their dues is becoming seemingly futile.

Has the world come to such a standstill that governments must now rethink the power of rights?

Has the world come to such a dark place that rights and privacy conquer lives and survival?

How far will people go to fulfill selfish desires and at what cost?

You can blame circumstances and fate all you want but at the end of the day, each country drowns further into poverty. There will eventually come a time when the humankind finally breaks down into oblivion.

The question arises, would the blood of our future exist on our hands?



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Cultural Heritage and its preservation, hardly saw light in UNESCO

By Gopika Kohli



The whole conference revolved around the agenda of Preservation of Cultural Heritage in the Middle East.

The conference started with many topics like suicide bombings, the crisis of ISIS, natural destruction and the definition of culture amongst others.

After hours of debates, multiple Points and facts stated by various delegates, the Culture was defined as: It is not about facts or the religion of the majority of the people living in that country, but it's about the art, customs, monuments, style of speaking and the way one behaves.

There was a head to head debate between USA and 3 other countries on the basis of feminism and gender equality. Canada along with Russia remarked that although people wanted gender equality, they themselves said that women should be given more rights. UAE raised an issue about people saying that

the women of Iran were not considered equal to men because of the burka system, though most didn't know that there was a dress code for men too. This debate continued with other countries pitching in.

The next most important topic to catch the attention of the delegates was the importance of culture and heritage sites in the society along the lines of the present day definition of Culture. Palestine felt that sometimes issues regarding heritage sites could be prevented by the government.

The delegate believed that the culture must bring a sense of history so that the memories wouldn't fade away. Issues and facts faced by Russia, Qatar and Afghanistan revolved around the same topic: the crises created by Taliban and ISIS. They believed that they should counter them and adopted different methods to reduce these problems.

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The Case for Sedition

By Simran Singh from the Ad hoc Committee of the Indian Parliament



As the Indian parliament assembled to discuss the scope of sedition, it was clear that the opinions of the representatives were severely divided.

Numerous ministers felt that sedition was against the very idea of democracy and that it did not allow for the citizens of the country to even criticize its government. They underscored several times how the very core of democracy allowed its citizens to have freedom of speech, which includes the ability to question the government.

On the other hand, the rest of the representatives argued the exact opposite. They believed that sedition protects democracy, as it curbs anti-nationalist sentiments. They also defended sedition saying that it is in fact not restricting the right to freedom of speech. They claimed that sedition is only applicable when someone excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the Government, as stated in the Section-124A of the Indian Penal code, 1860.

Several ministers reasoned against this, citing several examples where sedition charges were slapped unnecessarily. Kedar Nath Singh, Indra Das and Dr Binayak Sen's sedition cases were stated often.

The Parliament eventually moved on to analyse the sedition law in more detail. Representatives questioned the law's relevance in today's India, and many raised their concerns over the ambiguity of its wording. The disparity between the rulings of lower and higher courts in cases relating to sedition was highlighted and, the vagueness of the law was pointed out.

Mehbooba Mufti, Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, brought up the draconian nature of the law, which states that offenders may be imprisoned for life.

All these factors led the representatives to unanimously agree that reform of the law is necessary.

However, just when it looked like the organization was picking up again, the deputies went back to discussing the basics- whether the sedition law was democratic, or the opposite. With such inconsistencies in the organization's performance, one can only hope that the quality of discourse will steadily improve, and eventually lead to viable solutions.



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George H.W. Bush's Cabinet: Do We Need to be Aggressive with the Aggressor?

By Ananya Kaushik



As the Crisis Committee started, there was immediate enthusiasm amongst the delegates to be decisive and have a fruitful debate during their three days in committee. They immediately launched into negotiations towards the final outcome.

The committee began with the delegates acknowledging the crisis at hand. However, there was a stark difference between the optimism expressed in the beginning and the opinions about further actions.

Mr. Robert M. Gates, Director of the CIA, had some very strong opinions about what the United Nations should do regarding the invasion of Kuwait. He emphasised the need for immediate attack without any further need for negotiations, as well as, reforms that would be undertaken by the US, such as a false flag operations undertaken in the Syrian Arab Republic, in order to create international tension around Iraq. Mr. Gates also regarded the policy provided by the President as a 'utopic policy', since he felt

that a 'tyrant' such as Saddam Hussein cannot be dealt with in a diplomatic manner. His policy favoured illegal operations to deal with this invasion.

On the other hand, Mr. Brady, the Secretary of the Treasury, called for peace negotiations before the US leads the world into an all-out war along with Mr. Cheney, the Secretary of Defence, who called for the 'great' United States to adopt legal methods as opposed to Mr. Gates.

Mr. Baker, the Secretary of State, stated, "A final warning needs to be given. He [Saddam Hussein] is aggressive but we do not need to be the aggressor to put our point across."

The Committee went on to be argumentative on whether they should use legal or illegal methods and concluded that they would use legal methods. But in case legal measures were unsuccessful, illegal measures would be adopted.





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ISIL's War: An Attack on History, Identity and Civilization

By Vedika Himatsingka

"The destruction of heritage is inseparable from the persecution of people. This is why we consider the protection of cultural heritage today as far more than a cultural issue. This has become a humanitarian imperative, and a security issue," stated UNESCO's Director-General Irina Bokova in The Hague during the Europe Lecture 2016.

Cultural heritage is a vital expression of one's history and society. Societies have safeguarded their cultural heritage for millennium. In the midst of war and conflict, it becomes all the more imperative to preserve and protect cultural heritage.

An attack on cultural heritage is an attack on history, identity, and civilization. The ISIL's past has been closely linked with the destruction of symbols of cultural identity, the most devastating being the attacks on Palmyra and Mosul.

The ISIL set out with the motive to eradicate other cultures, destroying ancient priceless artefacts, dating back to the 9th century BCE, in Mosul. There was the burning down of the Mosul library that contained thousands of rare books and manuscripts. Not only have they been ruthless in their endeavour but are also pillaging certain art houses to sell artworks in black to fund its operations. These acts of destruction of cultural heritage have now been deemed as war crimes.

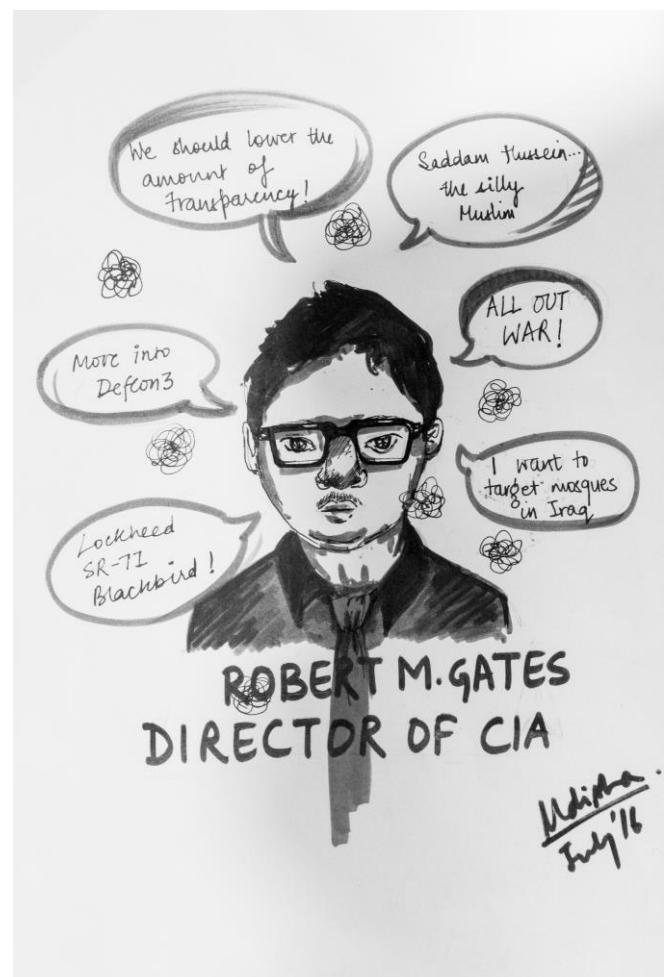
The site of Palmyra was a beacon of solidarity that people of religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam protected for over 2,000 years. The ISIL obliterated the Baalshamin Temple to the grounds; the now-destroyed temple was seen as one of the most important archaeological sites in the world.

The ISIL wishes to remove not only the symbols of other faiths but also anything valued by those who follow Islam in a different way. Therefore, references to pre-Islamic history that could distract the faithful are anathema.

"The deliberate destruction of cultural heritage is a war crime, which is used as a tactic of war, to disseminate fear and hatred. Violent extremists target culture because they know it

weakens the social fabric and damages the capacity for resistance," said UNESCO's Director-General Irina Bokova.

The basis of our history is embedded in our culture. Culture is a source of identity for many. Civilizations are made in tandem to different cultures. The basis of people's existence is in harmony with their ethnicity that absolutely needs to be guarded. All the countries now wait in anticipation as to what fate lies ahead for their cultural heritage.



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‘All nations are volatile when it comes to Biological Weapons...’

By Ishani Singhal



The first day of SBSMUN2016 glided by productively. Delegates introduced topics such as threats posed by ‘Biological Weapons and its classification’ for Moderated Caucuses, leading to fruitful debates. As noted by the Executive Board, though relevant points were expressed on the floor with respect to ‘what has been’ and ‘what is’, they lacked a direction for a solution. As revealed in an interview, likewise was felt by the Delegate of France amongst others.

According to the Delegate of France, the discussions could have been more focused on solutions if better research was done. However, most important nations such as China and UK were confident about what topics they wanted to discuss.

The committee did not come close to specifying the ‘volatile nations’, but focused more on the aspect of

Bioterrorism and numerous ways to prevent threats caused by it.

France strongly believed that Biological weapons should be banned in all its forms, and chemical weapons should not be used at all.

During an interview, the Delegate of France said, “France doesn’t believe in pinpointing any particular state which is said to be volatile against biological weapons. What France thinks is that all countries are volatile when it comes to biological weapons because if a country makes biological weapons either covertly, or openly, it causes harm to the entire peace making system.”



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