Future of Chinese International Relations
Background Guide

Chair: Aditya Sapre
Crisis Director: Bill Su

Dear Delegates,

It is an honor to invite you to the 21st Virginia International Crisis Simulation, the University of Virginia's annual collegiate Model United Nations conference. VICS XXI will be held at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville from March 31 to April 3, 2016.

VICS offers nineteen innovative and interactive crisis committees, both historical and contemporary. We are committed to expanding the scope of what a crisis committee can do. As I write this letter in early November, our chairs are crafting their committees around topics ranging from the Space Race of the 1950s to a Summit of the American Gun Lobby. We are committed to expanding the scope of what a crisis committee can do, especially in our famous ad-hoc, the Secretary General's Good Offices, and in our pilot ad-hoc, the Directors General's Good Offices.

I can think of no better setting for the conference than the Grounds of the University of Virginia. VICS provides you with opportunities to interact with the University's rich history and with the many resources it has to offer. For example, on Friday morning, VICS encourages delegates to explore Charlottesville. VICS offers a series of tours of the city's attractions. These events extend discussion outside of committee and they give you the chance to meet members of the International Relations Organization and of the university community.

We also invite you to explore Charlottesville, one of the country's most exciting college towns. VICS hosts four social events in the city, which take you beyond a typical Model UN experience and provide opportunities to get to know delegates outside of committee.

I look forward to welcoming you to the University of Virginia and Charlottesville in March. If you have any questions, please reach out to me or the Chargé d'Affaires, Leah Day, at vics.charge@gmail.com or by phone at (703) 344-4275.

Sincerely,
Michael Treves
Secretary General
VICS XXI

Dear All Aspiring Future Diplomats,

We have bad news for you all. The world of politics is being rapidly changed, influenced, and impacted by the emergence of better ways to collect, organize, and understand information. The government is now able to collect increasing amounts of data from its citizens, not through coercion, but through voluntary contributions of private citizens to put their information online via mediums such as social media. In 5 or 10 years, everything you have learned about political analysis is going to become obsolete because governments are going to understand their citizens with unprecedented clarity, granting the government a new role within the society. This is not an imagination; it is a fact. And we are going to show you, though this committee, what the future is going to look like so you can be prepared for it.

The setting of this committee is going to be in China and we are going to use current Chinese political issues as starting points. However, you will be expected to think about those issues differently. Think about what data you can collect to assess each crisis update before taking any impulsive actions. And Yes, we are going to create a fictitious data set to support your decision making processes.

This committee is also going to change your perception of Model UN Conferences in general. All communications throughout the committee is going to be digital, and **you will be expected to have your laptop open most of the times during committee sessions.** If you do not have a laptop or will not be able to bring a laptop to committee, please contact your head delegate to switch committee as an online environment is absolutely essential for this committee.

Furthermore, you are also not only allowed, but are also encouraged to do additional research during committee to support your claims. This is simply because there are no no-laptop policies in the real world.

This committee is going to be a thrilling experience for you, so get excited, and see you in March. If you have any questions, feel free to email us at rs2bd@virginia.edu, or contact the Director General for this committee, Carter Bakkum, at vics.directorgeneral@gmail.com.

Best,
Bill and Adi

Committee Overview

As explained in the introductory letter, one of the goals of this committee is to create a fairer, fun, and realistic way of running a Model United Nation Conference. The part that is most interesting about this committee is the way we are going to discuss the issues, instead of the issues themselves. Therefore, this background guide (if we can call it so) is not going to spend a lot of time talking about contemporary Chinese issues, but rather laying out the conference procedures and providing tips regarding how to think about a political issue analytically. This is not because contemporary Chinese issues are not interesting (in fact it is a really politically interesting time in China), but the fact that all the information is easily accessible online and searching for information by yourself is much more valuable for you than me telling you everything in the background guide. Therefore, if you are looking for substantive contents in this background guide, you are in the wrong place. Instead, try asking Google.

Just to briefly layout the structure of this document, we are going to first grant a general overview of the setting of the committee and outline a few important questions to consider during your research. Then we are going to spend some time talking about thinking analytics in a political setting. Finally, I am going to talk about the conferencing procedure of the committee.

Welcome to the New China

You could consider this committee happening in an alternative universe or several years into the future. What we know is that a new government has just been established in China that is ruled by Mr. Ruoyu Su, and you are the cabinet of Mr. Su. The regime established by Mr. Su is a data-centered republic. A data-centered republic

is characterized by few attributes: First of all, all decision making processes must go through analytics. You have all available data of their citizens at your disposal to analyze, compile, and draw insights to support your decisions. Secondly, all analytics results behind a political decision must be transparent to the public in some way. Consider this a form of social contract in which citizens contribute their data to the government in order to support better decision making, but they have the right to revoke government's right of data if they find the analytic process unfair. Lastly, and probably most importantly, remember that you are in China. Even though the government seems to be more democratic and fair than the actual Chinese government, you are not in a democracy.

Per the above description of the governmental structure, Mr. Su expects two things from you. First of all, all your policy recommendations have to be supported by some form of evidence or research. Claims unsupported by any sort of evidence will be looked down upon in this new administration. Secondly, actions conducted based on personal interests will be closely monitored by both the government and the public due to increase availability of the data. Actions by any cabinet member done solely for their self interests will harm the person's reputation in the country and potentially result in removal from the cabinet. This is not to discourage you from submitting personal directives, it is just telling you that please submit them "in accordance to public interests", aka figure out how to lie discretely with statistics (a very useful skill in the real world).

Despite the fact that the governmental structure is drastically different in this new China, it faces similar challenges compared to China in 2016. Issues Mr. Su is looking for you all to solve in the committee include but are not limited to 1) slowing

down of the Chinese economy and the "Middle Income Trap", 2) Threat of terrorism from ISIS and the XinJiang province, 3) Economic and Political Relationship with the United States and finally 4) tackling corruption on a local scale.

Do Your Own Research, But Pay Attention to Those Questions

As explained in the introduction, I am not going to provide substantive contents in this background guide simply because you should not take information for granted. At the same time, because all topics explained above are kept intentionally general, it should not be difficult to find plenty of authoritative sources by yourself. However, with that said, I will give you few questions to pay attention to during your research that you may have missed or not paid attention to as a student.

Slowing Down of the Economy

Chinese economy is slowing down, which is both illustrated by the devaluation of the Chinese currency (7% against the U.S. dollar[1]) and decrease in the growth rate (slowest in 25 years[2]). The problem at hand is how can China grow fast again, or should it.

Questions:

- Why is China currently trying to create an economy based on Innovation rather than manufacturing? Hint: think about the Chinese demographic.

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[1] http://www.scmp.com/business/money/money-news/article/1907618/chinese-currency-expected-devalue-much
[2] http://www.wsj.com/articles/china-economic-growth-slows-to-6-9-on-year-in-2015-1453169398

- What is the Middle Income Trap, and is China in it right now? How should China tackle income inequality to get China out of this trap?

- What factors are preventing China from being innovative? Consider multiple factors including Cultural, Governmental, and Economical.

- Why did the stock market drop drastically after the meltdown mechanism was put in place in Jan.? How do you regulate stock market so that it does not happen again?

- What Economic indicators you would like you pay attention first when examining this issue?

Threat of Terrorism

China is constantly plagued with the threat of terrorism, primarily from separatist groups from Tibet and Xinjiang. ISIS has also kidnapped and killed a Chinese hostage recently, so China needs to reassess its stance on terrorism in the Middle East as well. Furthermore, consider threat of terrorism to foreigners in China, which raised a red alert just recently.

Questions:

- What is China's interests in the middle east? What is its current relationship with middle eastern countries, and how will it impact its policy decision on ISIS?

- Should China maintain a strong hold in Xinjiang and Tibet? Or should this control be relaxed?

- How can China more effectively prevent terrorism in major metropolitan cities using analytics?

- Should China be more actively involved in combating ISIS?

Relationship with the United States

The U.S. – China relationship has always been tricky. In this committee we are going to focus on two aspects of this love-hate diplomacy. First is the economic relationship. U.S. has recently signed the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) with countries in the Pacific Rim, most likely as an attempt to expand its influence in the Pacific. Also, the Federal Reserve has recently raised the interest rate of the United States. This measure will cause dollar to flow into the U.S and appreciation of the value of the dollar. What are some implications of those recent financial events?

Questions (Economics):

- What is current economic relationship between China and its surrounding countries? How should China strengthen it?

- How should China counterbalance TPP and reestablish financial strength globally?

- Should China be more actively control its currently to prevent it from falling too low relative to the dollar or should China just let it free float?

- Should China raise interest rate to counterbalance the interest rate hike in the United States?

The second topic is about the political relationship. We have seen increasing American presence in the Pacific, mostly to support Japan and balance China. What will China do in response to the United States' threats and establish itself as a true international superpower?

Questions (Political):

- How should China respond to the repeated harassment by the United States?

- How can China establish a strong circle of influence within Asia, or should it establish a strong influence?

- China has been changing its military structure recently, what is the change and what is the purpose of the change?

- Should China take a stronger stance in boarder conflicts with Japan, Vietnam and Philippines?

Tackling Corruption:

The current Chinese government is cracking down on Corruption. But people within China can't help to agree that even though the initiatives are effective, it is not enough. What should the Chinese government do to further tackle corruption, especially with the help of data analytics?

Questions:

- What has China been doing to tackle corruptions? Has it been effective? What are the draw backs of those initiatives done by primer Xi?

- How can China transform from a popular-opinion based society to a law-centered society?

- What role is social media playing in tackling corruption? How should the Chinese government use social media to its advantage when tackling corruption?

- How should China use analytics to further crack down on local corruption?

So What Exactly Does Thinking Using Data Analytics Mean?

In short, it means utilizing data to make political decisions instead of simply coming up with decisions out of thin air. But the reality is much more complex. It is a process of defining problems of relevance, systematically collecting data that is related to the problem, cleaning and condensing the data into a manageable scale, analyzing the data both descriptively and predictively, and finally extracting insights from the result of those analyses. Throughout the process, enormous of amount of technical skills, as well as political understandings are required for the result of the analytics to be useful and accurate. Because most of you come from a non-technical background, this committee is going to focus on the non-technical aspect of analytics while the crisis room will do all technical works for you. This step is called CRISP-DM, and I have attached an article in the additional resource section if you would like to read more about it.

Problem Understanding

This is considered the most important aspect of an analytic task, and probably something a Model UNer is already pretty good at. In this stage, an analyst defines the problem of consideration, in our case, a hypothesis regarding the crisis. However, one thing that is usually difficult to do is to define the scope of analysis and ask the correct question. A problem statement that is too broad will cause a lot of effort in later stages while providing little insights to the question that really matters. A problem statement that is too narrow may not be properly supported by data.

Therefore, after receiving a crisis, think about what problem actually caused the crisis, and come up with a specific, testable hypothesis to move towards a solution.

Useful tools of this stage may include, but are not limited to, objective tree, root cause analysis, or simple brainstorming.

Data Collection

After defining the problem, it is time to collect data. The grand question of this stage is: what data and what type of data. In general, data are divided into two types, structured and unstructured. Structured data are like your traditional column and row excel spreadsheets and usually record data that is easily recorded such as transaction data and personal information. Unstructured data, on the other hand, is slightly tricky. It may include videos, audios, or simply text files that does not make sense at first glance. An example of unstructured data would be the result of a social network analysis. For the purpose of this committee, knowing the differences between the two types of data will be sufficient because the analysis you can do on each type of data is different.

In this committee, all of the data are going to be generated for you to imitate the data collection environment. We will make all the data you need available unless the request was irrelevant to the research question. But also be very careful about requesting more data before being able to extract all insights we would like you to extract from the dataset we have provided you – it will simply overwhelm both you and the crisis team. After the data collection stage, data cleaning occurs, but because it is a very technical topic (usually takes up to 70% of the entire analytic process), all data cleaning operations will be done by the crisis team backstage.

Descriptive Analysis

Alright, now with all the data ready, let's dive into the first stage of analytics: descriptive analysis. Most of us probably have done descriptive analysis as some points in our lives, either in high school or through an introductory class in college. The goal of descriptive analysis is to figure out what has happened in the past. The result of descriptive analysis can be used either by itself to generate insights or used as a reference for predictive analysis. In this section, I am going to introduce two tools of descriptive analysis.

The first group of tools are the math instruments you have learned in high school including mean, median and standard deviation. Those instruments can be roughly divided into measurements of central tendencies (means, median, mode), and measurements of distance (standard deviation, variance, range). Also consider outlier's impact on each of those measures when deciding which one to choose for your analysis.

The second group of tools are the complex modeling algorithms. One of those algorithms is clustering. Clustering divides rows of a dataset into multiple groups so decision makers can target each segment of a population. For more information about other descriptive learning algorithms, please refer to the McKinsey Article at the additional resource section.

Predictive Analysis

If we were to describe descriptive analyses as attempts to summarize the past, predictive analyses are attempts to project the future. Attempting to project the future using past trends is enormously valuable in politics and helps decision makers predict the effect of a certain policy before it is even implemented or predict the popular trends.

One classical example of predictive analysis would be Nate Silver predicting the 2012 election few weeks before it actually took placing using just an aggregation of polling data from various sources.

Techniques of predictive analysis are usually a lot more complex than techniques for descriptive analysis. Sparing all the technicality of the algorithms, I am going to briefly touch on classification and regression, two of the simplest ones, and you can refer to the internet if you want to learn about more complex versions of those algorithms. The goal of classification is to predict the label of a data point given various attributes. For example, if I were given a pre-collected dataset of various attributes of 100 people in which 2 of them are potential terrorists, given a new person with same amount of attributes, I can predict, with classification algorithm, whether the next person is a terrorist or civilian. Regression follows a similar way of thinking, but instead of predicting a category, it predicts a number. For example, instead of predicting whether the next person is a terrorist, regression algorithms can predict how many times he has voted in past elections.

We are going to use predictive analysis quite intensively during committee so please refer to online resources to gain a full understanding of predictive analysis during your research.

Insight/Recommendations

The last step of analytics is to convert the result of predictive and descriptive analysis into actionable insights to policy makers. It is quite essential because it requires an analyst to convert technical outputs from those complex algorithms into a language that is understandable for a person that is not as technically equipped while being as

convincing as possible. During committee, all the information I will provide you will be converted in some way so that you can understand what is going on. However, you still will need to figure out best ways to convey those information to peers in your committee and the chair.

You Think You Can MUN? Think Again.

This is a document written assuming that you understand the basics of Model United Nations, if you this is your first Model UN conference, please reference Bestdelegate.com or Emodelun.com for basics of parliamentary procedure. This section is going to be divided into several parts. First of all, I am going to talk about the digital Model United Nation Platform called Emodelun.com and its role in this committee. Then I am going to talk about judgment criteria and other rules.

Introducing Emodelun.com

If you are a MUN veteran, you are probably as frustrated as I am with the current Model UN conferencing procedure, especially note passing. I created Emodelun.com as a result of this frustration. The goal of the website is to serve as a web-based platform that digitalizes all MUN communications so it can be significantly more efficient. I am working on developing the full site, but you will be able to view its prototype at Emodelun.com.

The full features of the website at the conference day is still uncertain and largely depend on how much time I have until March to finish up the website. But the basic features of the website include note passing and group messaging through a web-based

chat client, personal and committee directive submission through a forum, and finally real-time crisis updates through a blogging system.

Establishing Fair Evaluation Criteria

Another goal of this committee is to establish fair evaluation criteria for Model United Nations so that the best delegate awards does not appear to be given out "at random". Blessed by Emodelun.com, I am able to collect much more data about you than I could ever collect in a conventional Model UN conference to access your ability in multiple facets. More specifically, I am going to focus on access your ability to MUN in four primary categories.

- Presence (25%): Most Model UN delegates agree that presence is one of the most important aspect in defining a good delegate. It makes sense since if you do not speak the entire conference nor put your name on a single resolution, it is pretty difficult to know how good you are as a delegate. With emodelun.com I can very accurately measure your presence in the committee, ranging from crisis communication to in-committee participation.

- Knowledge (25%): Knowledge about the topic is absolutely essential in defining a great delegate especially when you can do research and have your computer open the entire committee. You are expected to be as knowledgeable about Chinese politics as a prudent American college student who has done at least 10 hours of research on the topic.

- Creativity (25%): This committee is a problem solving challenge for all of you. Therefore, I expect you to be creative in ways that you think about issues presented in front of you and use analytic techniques to solve those problems. The bottom line

is, the more fun the crisis room is having with your solution, the higher score you are going to get in this criteria.

- Analytic Thinking (25%): Because the primary goal of this committee is to show you how analytics can be employed in a political setting, one of the major expectation of this committee is for you to solve this problem using an analytic and systematic way of thinking. This means that you should follow the analytics process in your ways of approaching crisis and use data and evidences to support your claim.

To discourage the activity of "gavel hunting" in this committee, your overall score will also be adjusted by a final peer evaluation survey given out at the end of the second day. Bottom line, be nice to other people and help each other improve. If every delegate in the committee hates you, you are not going to win.

Other Rules

- Access to social media is not allowed during this committee, but I am not going to deliberately check whether you are on Facebook or not. I am pretty sure your performance will decrease dramatically if you are on Facebook all the time and not paying attention to other people's speeches.
- Not only are you allowed to do research during committee, you are encouraged to do so. At the same time, you are also encouraged to fact check your fellow delegates to make sure everything we talked about in the committee is factual.
- Any actions of pre-writing resolutions, and pulling resolutions from the internet will be considered an act of plagiarism and is against the UVA Honor Code. You will be removed from the committee immediately and your awards disqualified if you are discovered doing so.

My Sources and Suggestions for Future Research

A lot of the things I have explained in the background guide are based on my personal experiences as a data analyst working in many analytics projects and taking many analytics-related courses. A lot of the sources I read are too technical for a MUN conference so I would recommend using Google and Wikipedia as your primary research tool in analytics related problems. I have, however, attached two articles that I believe can help you to gain a better understanding of the topic and are easy to read. I have also attached Nate Silver's website if you are interested in learning about how analytics can apply directly to political issues. If you can finish the McKinsey article (100 pages long), you will be in pretty good shape preparing for the analytic aspect of this committee. Regarding contemporary Chinese politics, I have personally googled all related topics and there are more than enough authoritative sources to guide your research. For province-based research, Wikipedia is your best friend.

Big data: The next frontier for innovation, competition, and productivity

http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/business_technology/big_data_the_next_frontier_for_innovation

CRISP-DM Method

https://exde.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/crisp_visualguide.pdf

Nate Silver's Fifty Thirty Eight

http://fivethirtyeight.com/

CONTACT US

We would appreciate hearing your feedback about out conference. Please direct all inquiries and comments to our Secretary-General.
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You can also contact us at the mailing address below:
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Non-Affiliation Statement

Although this organization has members who are University of Virginia students and may have University employees associated or engaged in its activities and affairs, the organization is not a part of or an agency of the University. It is a separate and independent organization which is responsible for and manages its own activities and affairs. The University does not direct, supervise or control the organization and is not responsible for the organizations contracts, acts, or omissions.