

An SMUN 2016 Publication

# TORCH

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Issue No. 2

## PRESS ARTICLES

Get the latest reports hot off the press from **Asahi Shimbun**, **FOX News**, **Russia Today**, **The Onion** and **The Times**!

## THE LATEST

This issue, read all about the world-changing developments in Kosovo and find out what happened in SMUN's first galaxy-crossing Star Wars Dispute Resolution simulation!

## MEET THE TEAM

USGs Shasha and Divya, along with DISEC Head Chair Alastair share their thoughts on the committee debates. Also, we dig up a lil' dirt on budding romances right here in SMUN'16.





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# *Thoughts on Kosovo and Separatism*

BY DANA CHANG | DIRECTOR (MARKETING & MEDIA MANAGEMENT)



For the past two days of Singapore Model United Nations (SMUN) 2016, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has debated how to best handle the situation in Kosovo. For the uninitiated, Kosovo is the disputed borderland between Serbia and Albania. It unilaterally declared independence from Serbia in 2008 – a move which Serbia has strenuously rejected, and continues to reject.

The UNSC's morning session at SMUN 2016 revolved around a working paper submitted by the delegate from Egypt. There were many proposed solutions therein, which several delegates applauded for succinctly canvassing

all relevant issues concerning Kosovo's self-determination. This article will focus primarily on the issue of international recognition.

Within the UNSC (the actual UNSC, not the SMUN UNSC – as this author is unsure what the latter's positions are specifically ☺), the five members with veto power have divided stances on this issue. USA, UK and France have recognized the declaration of independence, while the People's Republic of China has expressed concern, urging the continuation of the previous negotiation framework. Russia has outright rejected the declaration and considers it illegal.



Today Kosovo is recognized by 108 out of 193 UN member states; without question an important achievement, but still short of the requisite two-thirds majority to become a UN member state. The Egypt delegate's working paper centered around having more states and, importantly, the UNSC support Kosovo's statehood. This would entail granting Kosovo a stake in the UN General Assembly as a non-member – without voting rights.

This suggested course of action strikes a reasonable balance between the needs of Kosovo and the concerns of those who oppose it. It allows Kosovo to have some form of international recognition which could boost their trade and international relations – but at the same time, it does not go so far as to obtusely insist that all nations must recognize Kosovo's sovereignty. After all, there are indeed valid concerns regarding this matter, particularly, concerns about separatism.

In 2010, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion stating that Kosovo's declaration "did not violate any applicable rule of international law". This ruling was fairly equivocal insofar as it did not say that the new state of Kosovo was actually legal, but many observers criticize this ruling because it gives separatism a green light. Naturally, Serbia also rejected the Court's ruling (though ironically, it was Serbia who successfully lobbied the UN General Assembly to call for an ICJ advisory opinion in the first place).

Separatism is a valid and deep-seated fear for numerous countries, especially since ethnic conflict is not unique to Kosovo and Serbia.

Many nations fear that the Kosovo example would encourage separatist groups worldwide to press for sovereignty. Russia has been battling separatists in its Chechnya region for years. Ethnic repression in Tibet has led to resentment and nationalist rumblings against Mainland China. The vicious separatist struggles which occurred between Sri Lanka and India is a case study every Singaporean student has encountered in his/her days studying Social Studies in secondary school – and again, this was due to ethnic conflict. The greater implications from recognizing Kosovo's self-proclaimed independence must be considered at the big picture. What message would be sent out to the world regarding separatism if the UN were to grant international recognition to Kosovo? Would it essentially legitimize separatism?

There are many ways of looking at this problem. Separatist movements generate a lot of political, social and economic turmoil (as the situation in Kosovo demonstrates), and nations condemn it for that reason. Alternatively, if ethnic differences generate antipathies so deep that they cannot be realistically resolved, separation becomes the obvious and, perhaps, the only feasible antidote. Some therefore feel that, pragmatically speaking; separatism has utility and should not be viewed as one-dimensionally 'bad'. (Understandably, this is not a popular opinion.)

It is difficult to say what the outcome will be if Kosovo is declared a sovereign state. Perhaps it will cause a 'domino effect', spurring others to leap on the separatism bandwagon. Perhaps not. This author can only wait and see.



# *APEC: Consolidation of the Trans-Pacific Partnership*

BY TANAY PALEKAR | PRESS DELEGATE, ASAHI SHIMBUN

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference took place on the 13th of June, Monday. The debate brought up the pros, cons, and other concerns of various nations regarding the TPP. Key figures attending the meeting include Japan, Hong Kong, Mexico, and South Korea.

The driven and enthusiastic delegate of South Korea dominated the conference. He made several valid points which provided a strong base to his argument, and the overall debate.

Hong Kong was more hesitant in its approach towards the TPP. The delegate stated that Hong Kong was reluctant to join the agreement. Since China was excluded from the agreement, the Hong Kong delegate made strong statements, revealing that a refusal to include Hong Kong would lead him to convince his allies to press for a countermeasure agreement against the TPP. The delegate of Hong Kong stated that although Hong Kong is not involved in the discussion, they have been indirectly affected by it in the past.

China proved a prominent and helpful ally, while other nations, like Indonesia preferred to be quietly supportive.

Japan viewed the TPP as the rebalance for new standards in the global economy, which will be mutually beneficial to practically every country involved in the agreement in the long term.

Finally, Mexico indicated general support of the TPP since it has brought about great benefits to the Mexican economy. The national gross domestic product has increased greatly while income inequality has decreased. Hence, the Mexican delegate strongly encouraged APEC member states to support the TPP, and TPP members to ratify it as it is likely to bring about great benefits for all.



# *Call for Better Enforcement in UNCSW: Delegates Discuss Women Migrant Labour Rights*

BY HOH KAH YEE | PRESS DELEGATE, ASAHI SHIMBUN

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) convened for their first committee session today. 35 delegates from various countries spoke on the topic of women migrant labour rights. Discussion over the course of the hour-long first committee session centred around the necessity for guidelines on protecting the rights of female migrant workers. While nations like Russia and China called for additional frameworks to support the development of a systematic approach to protect women migrant labour rights, dissent arose from countries like Colombia and Egypt, which argued that such frameworks already exist. In addition, they pointed out that the introduction of additional frameworks may unnecessarily complicate legal discussion, delaying access to protection for an often silenced minority group. These delegates postulate that the devil is in the enforcement of existing frameworks.

Migrant labour is often a troublesome concern for nations. Not only do these migrants often speak a different language from their hosts, they also subscribe to different value systems which may put them at odds with the locals. Countries with significant migrant populations have also faced many limitations in providing a strong and comprehensive support system for migrant labour.

Japan is no stranger to the dilemmas brought

about by migrant labour. According to the Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan (SMJ), 2.12 million female foreign workers continue to face discrimination at the workplace due to their gender and their race. While Japan has adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) mooted at the UN General Assembly in 1979, stereotypes of the ideal woman – also known as *Yamato Nadeshiko* – continue to be deeply rooted in the Japanese consciousness. Foreign women bear the brunt of society's judgement, enduring widespread stigmatisation and discrimination at work and in the domestic sphere.

Discussions over the next few committee sessions are expected to shine light on a common understanding for the roles that the United Nations and the respective governments will play in alleviating the plight of women migrant workers.

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# *JCC IJA: Defense May Not be Japan's Forte, But Singapore's Fort Will Soon be Ours*

BY CHRISTINE LOH | PRESS DELEGATE, ASAHI SHIMBUN



*The Generals split upon knowing that there were a time limit, timekeeping might not be their strong suit!*

## *Japanese generals hard at work for a greater Japan!*

Greeted warmly by General Takuro Matsui, I scurried in to await the strategising of taking Malaya, with Singapore as the ultimate goal. An impregnable fortress, Singapore might meet its match as the hardworking Japanese generals decide to use whatever unspeakable tactics necessary to take control of it. One such tactic includes “brainwashing the locals” to the point that they “form cults” – the exact words of General Renya Mutaguchi. What exactly are the locals brainwashed with? Japanese culture.

To get to Singapore, our patriotic generals will first have to take Malaya, before proceeding to their goal. One would doubt if they could even discipline their children with the playful attitude I witnessed during the committee session. General Tomoyuki Yamashita even joked about the list used for reinforcements, calling it the “shopping list”. If only mothers had heard the entire session, no mother would send their children to serve the Empire.

General Yamashita had also brought up the prospect of putting a “suicide mission squad” in Kuantan, which many might regard as an extremely reckless tactic, and to parents’ heartbreak and tears. Is this really what the



Japanese want? The barbaric brainwashing with our rich culture, tainted by participants' unwillingness to learn its greatness.

An exclusive interview with General Renya revealed their hypocrisy and how their acts are of utmost irony.

AS: Do you think that you should be jeopardising world peace?

GR: All for the Emperor of Japan. We are the Imperial Army, we must get rid of white superiority! Asia for Asians, you know. We are going to rid the world of superiority and we will emerge victorious, dominating and ensuring the welfare of Asia. We are the ones making world peace, not the whites.

AS: You state that you want to get rid of white superiority but you are the ones supporting Nazi Germany, who are ruled by white supremacists.

GR: They are an exception, they are wonderful. We respect the Nazis and Germany has won Japan's respect for its wonderful concentration camps and we believe that they are great. However, the British on the other hand... they are the superiority we want to get rid of.

AS: Do you really think that it is necessary, and if it is actually worthy of having world peace sacrificed?

GR: It is ultimately worth it. We are not jeopardising world peace, we are ensuring world peace. It is

always worth it when you fight for a cause, which is that all Asians have a voice.

The Imperial Army seems to be under the influence of irrationality as they put a price on our greatly treasured, but diminishing peace, as Japan declares war on Britain.



# *Standardisation of Troops' Training and NATO's Role in Afghanistan*

BY TER YI TING | PRESS DELEGATE, FOX NEWS

Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) met up yesterday to discuss the ever-growing threat of terrorism in the Middle East, particularly the situation in Afghanistan. Members have questioned the standard of training received by troops stationed in Afghanistan, critiquing their lack of standardization in Resolute Support Mission (RSM) training. In the discussion, plans to re-evaluate the private military companies sent to train these Afghan troops were also discussed, as well as an increased focus on raising Afghans' literacy rates. Such discussion comes about in light of US's plans to pull forces out of Afghanistan when the resurgence of Taliban, local terrorist group, remains uninhibited.

The consensus by NATO members, with its 18 delegates (Lithuania, Italy, USA, France, Norway, etc.) was that standardizing the RSM training of the Afghan troops would remain important – both for defense against terrorism and Afghanistan's eventual independence. The question of who gets to decide such “standards” however remains unclear as discussions continue.

A notable suggestion was made by Denmark, as it brought up the merits of further investing in

Afghanistan's military support agencies. In turn, this would provide more assistance in training the Afghan troops. Canada agreed, and added that such training needs to be “streamlined so as to make it more efficient and effective”.

However, there were disagreements on what a trained Afghan troops should prioritise in their defense. Delegates from France and Canada reaffirmed their stance on defense against the Taliban, thus arguing that more time and effort is needed to improve troops' weapons training and tactical skills. Other countries like the Netherlands stated that “we're not here to baby the nation”, and that troops should focus on protecting the key infrastructure of Afghanistan so as to ensure their independence.

Some countries like the United Kingdom (UK) and Bulgaria disagreed on the importance of standardizing RSM training. UK stated that the most important issue is the rebuilding of war-torn Afghanistan, which the Netherlands agreed with, as resources could then be used more efficiently and channeled into increasing NATO's domestic support and trust. Bulgaria was more concerned about the fairness of the electoral systems so as to make sure that Afghanistan was democratic and free from corruption. However,



corruption. However, Poland was more focused on the military reality in Afghanistan, that it was not due to lack of training that continued Taliban's reign, it was likely due to demoralization and fear of Taliban by the Afghan troops. This is further worsened by the "lack of trust and cultural sensitivities for NATO commanders."

One thing that all delegates agreed upon was however the importance of promoting basic literacy among the citizens and troops. This is so that the troops can better understand and use the technology that NATO provides them. In addition, increased literacy would also improve the interconnectedness between NATO members, facilitating the dissemination of information to Afghan security forces.

After months of debate, the US is moving toward a decision to expand the military's authority to engage with terrorist forces such as the Taliban. When asked whether military presence should be increased in Afghanistan, a US delegate however still provided a firm dissent. "The US would currently not undertake such action", she states and adds that like President Obama promised, there would still be a limit of 10, 000 active US troops in Afghanistan despite the growing terrorism threats.



# *OIC Discusses Islamophobia, Avoids Real Concerns*

BY NIGEL WONG | PRESS DELEGATE, FOX NEWS

Islamophobia is a term often thrown around by Muslims and liberals alike<sup>1</sup>. But at the heart of it, what it really is and whether it is warranted or not may be a difficult question for most. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) delved into the intricacies of what an increasing number of Muslims are claiming to be a real issue in a discussion held this year.

In this discussion held on 13th June, delegates representing various countries discussed Islamophobia and the solutions to what they deem to be an issue. In these discussions, there was often an implication that any suspicions towards Muslims are unwarranted.

The result of such an implication is that only solutions to Islamophobia were discussed in the OIC, without investigation into the social phenomenon itself, or of whether it is indeed a socioeconomic injustice. As pointed out in the engaging exchanges, it is true that not all Muslims are terrorists. Yet, America must not forget that many serious terrorist attacks in the past few years have been committed by Muslims mostly, or individuals inspired by Islamic ideologies.

Furthermore, not only were many of the solutions suggested by OIC in violation of the American constitution, some of them could even lead to further radicalisation of Muslims



*Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Discussion*



in America. For example, Cameroon's delegate proposed that critics of Islam such as Donald J. Trump should be punished by the government. This was questioned by Yemen, who pointed out that this could be a violation of freedom of speech – a fundamental tenet to the American identity.

Other solutions such as sending Islamic religious leaders to schools in Western nations and the censorship of media promoting caution towards Muslims were proposed by the delegate of Guinea and the delegate of Egypt respectively. Both solutions, however, could be counterproductive and may cause more damage to Western society. At the end of the day, we have to ask ourselves if tampering with our American culture is what we really want.

The 'unwarranted' nature of Islamophobia is also most problematic, especially in light of recent Islamic-inspired attacks such as the Orlando nightclub shooting. Perhaps, some caution is not entirely undesirable if America wishes to prevent any more tragedies. As Todd Starnes summarised aptly, "We're not Islamophobic Mr Obama, we just don't want to get blown up".



# *DISEC: Middle East Nuclear Non-Proliferation Issue Started off in Divergence*

BY IP CHUN WING | PRESS DELEGATE, RUSSIA TODAY

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) of the Singapore Model United Nations 2016 began its first conference concerning the future of nuclear non-proliferation plan in the Middle East. Countries were split into two camps albeit only the United States, along with North Korea, appeared to place stronger preference on the matter of urban violence as a result of the tragic gunshots incident which happened within the country recently.

Divided opinions were seen throughout the session. The United States, as supported by her European counterparts persisted in their nonchalance towards the demands of the Middle East regarding nuclear energy, who insisted the American acquisitions of nuclear energy threatens the safety of the world. Russia, a provider and advocate of nuclear power, along with Serbia, however, recognised the importance of nuclear technology. The Russian delegate stood firm on the issue, indicating every nation is entitled to invest in all forms of technology and energy it desires.

A range of suggestions was also put forward. Israel praised Iran as a successful case on the non-proliferation nuclear strategy in the Middle East and urged for the formation of an International Energy Agency in tailoring a unique deal for each. A motion for having a moderated caucus

focusing on the suggestion of a nuclear free zone was raised but was shortly banned during the voting. Unanimously, countries remained firm to their stance with no agreed proposition.

The concerns on the possibility of nuclear terrorism was raised by numerous countries, however the United States and Russia remained silent on their views.

The committee will continue the discussion on the topic in the next session.



# *NATO: What Is Crisis Without ISIS?*

BY ANISH BHATTACHARYYA | PRESS DELEGATE, THE ONION



“Talk about the larger picture,” said Netherland’s delegate, the irony of which is striking due to his small frame. The delegates were throwing ideas across the floor as they discussed potential regulatory policies for Afghanistan’s rampant crime rates, which will no doubt be resolved by the end of the day. Mid-discussion, USA’s delegate proposed moderating RSM’s (Resolute Support Mission) training in Afghanistan, since moderation has always helped to resolve every national matter in the past. Romania then proposed the best solution: “directly transfer the funds to the Afghan government and not indirectly through the NATO” – as everyone knows, more experience of corruption is always handy to help us better prepare for it. On a serious note, what was most striking was Canada’s point about education, where Afghan youths can learn to avoid ideological brainwashing by self-proclaimed messiahs of peace. Being quintessentially polite, Canada also skimmed lightly over the messiahs’ farrago of distortions, misquotations and the misinterpretations of the Holy Koran.

A crucial point which almost all delegates touched upon was the need for primary education and how the lack of which can make Afghan youths more impressionable by advocates of terrorism. Slovenia for one argued that “education is a long term thing and not a short term thing”. Whether this is true or not however remains to be seen, for UK’s statistics show otherwise. Indeed, education is a rather short term thing, as a large proportion of English youths are high-school dropouts. This delegate’s motion was also supported as strongly as US for Muslims, as his time elapsed when he started to quote a movie. On the other hand, Bulgaria’s education level was also borne out when he consistently praised other delegates without raising any points of his own. As we predicted at the beginning, NATO indeed did a brilliant job providing feasible suggestions for Afghanistan. It turns out we just need to build schools, after all.



# *DISEC: ISIS, The Most Threatening Nuclear Force in the Middle East*

BY ABHISHEK DASH | PRESS DELEGATE, THE ONION

The debate at DISEC began on a completely predictable note, with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) committing itself to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament of not just the Middle East, but the entire world. DPRK's delegate also commented that they believed in all nations donating their nuclear weapons for "safe keeping". For the rest of the day, the committee even established an agreement that ISIS's obtaining of nuclear weapons outweighed potential national security threats or nuclear war, the latter of which was continually overlooked by all delegates.

France, still reeling from the recent spate of terrorist attacks, expressed disapproval toward terrorist organisations and found support in the USA and Netherlands as well. Netherlands, in particular, called for the "complete and total ban of nuclear resources in the Middle East", demonstrating the lovable demeanour of our very own Donald Trump. All delegates linked the risk of terrorism to nuclear proliferation, incorrectly insisting that ISIS will remain a major threat as long as it has nuclear weapons. However, with its resources and finances depleted, the chances of ISIS obtaining any nuclear weaponry is low.

The debate finally came into fruition when delegates began criticising Israel's nuclear presence as per usual. "We must remove Zionist nuclear threats," Syria insisted vehemently in yesterday's exchange. Israel, on the other hand, cited its justification of national security. This comes despite the fact that there is already a standing nuclear deal between Israel and Iran.

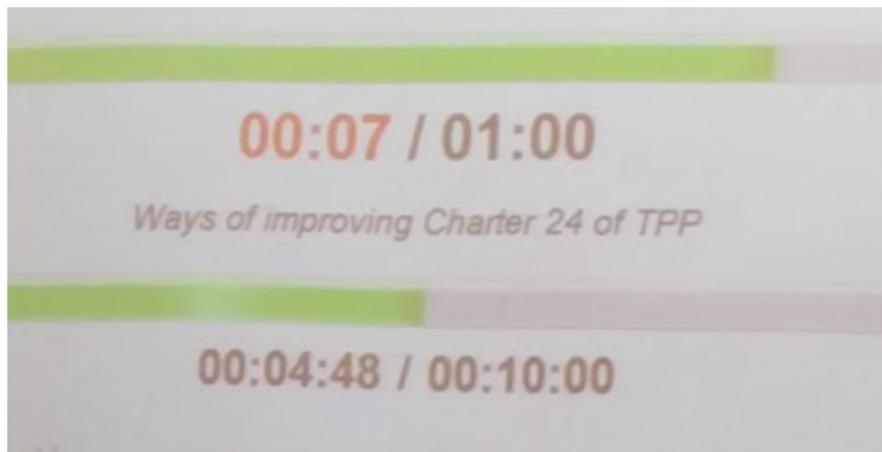
Being a wholly fair and reasonable state, India was finally willing to arrive at a consensus of nuclear non-proliferation, but strongly maintained that nuclear weaponry remains essential in order to regulate threats. By the end of the session, all delegates agreed to focus on the primary threats to the world: not an all out nuclear war, but ISIS. "Eliminating ISIS would be the ideal solution", a concerned member urged, "and even better if we nuked them!"

It remains to be seen if future sessions will be of the same engaging quality, or if a resolution will actually be reached.



# *APEC: Trans-Pacific Partnership Seen to be Ineffective in Helping SMEs, Communism to be Adopted Instead*

BY ANG DE REN | PRESS DELEGATE, THE ONION



*A moderated caucus was held on Chapter 24 of the TPP, which addresses SMEs.*

At the latest APEC meeting held in University Town, delegates discussed extensively about how the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) favoured large corporations over SMEs, putting the latter at a disadvantage. After some intense speeches and even more intense lobbying, the Chinese delegation successfully led the council to adopt Communism in place of the TPP, arguing that it achieved the same goals the TPP was pursuing.

The delegate who came up with the proposal, Dou Yi Yang, told The Onion, “The Americans were at the forefront of promoting the TPP, but some APEC members have shown time and again their concerns regarding the pact. As a country that always considers the interests of other countries along with her own, China simply had to come up with a new method

to rescue APEC members from the poorly formulated TPP.”

“The TPP has been very hostile to Russia but China’s proposal made me feel like I was a child again,” says Katyarina Paliyev, Russian delegate to APEC and outspoken critic of Gorbachev. “Establishing a new regional economic order, promoting mutually beneficial economic alliance, helping out small firms... These are some of the purported goals of the TPP that region-wide Communism can achieve, but without all the pro-US elements. As a bonus, it also seems to be the first time the interests of Russia and China can be in union with that of the rest of the world. Win-win!” she added, with two thumbs up.



# *SOCHUM: The Fight Against Mental Illnesses*

BY JIANG HAO | PRESS DELEGATE, THE TIMES

Whether rich or poor, every nation has encountered problems in addressing mental health issues. Delegates from the United Nations Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee (SOCHUM) tackled this problem head-on during the opening committee yesterday, painting it as a common enemy to all countries of the world. Over the course of the first session, delegates actively debated funding and other policy issues faced in tackling mental health conditions, and also discussed the various causes of mental illness, including local cultural, genetic and economic factors.

Economic factors, including the funding allocated to addressing mental health within each nation were the topics most discussed by the council. Delegates from less economically developed countries brought up the issue of having limited funds to provide better facilities and train more professionals to treat mental illnesses. These countries find themselves in a dilemma as social stresses – such as poverty and job loss – which may be a contributing factor in causing mental illnesses such as poverty and job loss, tend to be prevalent in their societies.

Nevertheless, it was agreed that even the funding for mental health in more economically developed countries remained far from enough. Although the United Kingdom has announced an extra £600 million for mental health and

£1.25 billion from 2015 to 2020 for children and young people's mental health services, this increased funding still does not meet the needs of all its citizens.

According to the delegate of the United Kingdom, "UK is very conscious about the issue of mental health, we have research institutions and experts to study mental illness. But we need more funding to tackle the problem by increasing the quantity and quality of trainers (who carry out the treatments for the mentally ill)."

Aside from funding, the council also contemplated cultural values as a significant cause of mental illness. In subsequent sessions, delegates decided to discuss whether it would be necessary to abandon cultural values that prove obtrusive to modern treatments of mental health conditions, or to respect and allow locals to retain these values and seek other solutions instead.

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# *UNSC: Divided Over Kosovo*

BY OOI ZI JING | PRESS DELEGATE, THE TIMES

The United Nations Security Council entered a deadlock in its first committee session. While the delegate of the United States supported a comprehensive and coherent solution for Kosovo to gain official independence from Serbia, urging council to give their utmost support to what he deemed a peaceful solution, China strongly disagreed. Citing several resolutions previously passed by the United Nations (which have ultimately failed to liberate Kosovo from its current state), the delegate of China asserted that the entire European Union, as well as the majority of developed countries remained worried about the situation. The proposed US solution was there not the best way forward. In a similar vein, the delegate of the Ukraine highlighted that Kosovo's problem is one-of-a-kind, thus deserving of fresh solutions, since previous solutions were outdated and unsuitable for Kosovo.

Ukraine recommended that the US, the biggest and strongest economy of the world, should act as the mediator between Kosovo and Serbia. Egypt counter-proposed an international solution that covers the independence, the status and the representation of Kosovo, without American intrusion. The representatives of Egypt were in favour of enforcing the International Court of Justice declaration that recognized as Kosovo an

independent state.

Overall, committee discussion was intense, with chairs having to repeatedly remind delegates to refrain from cross-talk. France was somewhat optimistic towards the end, hoping to have more than half of attendant member nations on board with the solution to aid Kosovo, in light of Russia's attempts to limit Kosovo's independence. This confidence of course came with the full support of the delegates of China and Venezuela. Hopefully, fruitful discussion will ensue in the subsequent committee sessions, though it is unlikely that council will come to an immediate consensus.



# *A Darth of Democracy?*

BY KOH HAN YI | DIRECTOR (PUBLICATIONS & DESIGN)

The Extraordinary Session of the Galactic Senate opened with the Chair of the session requesting the delegates<sup>1</sup> (who will be henceforth referred to as “senators”) to imagine dramatic music, only to be rewarded with various attempts of Star Wars fanfare. Each of the senators was confronted by an issue of astronomical proportions: in light of the assassination attempt of Supreme Chancellor Palpatine by the Jedi and the approaching end of the Clone Wars, should Palpatine be allowed to continue using emergency powers?<sup>2</sup>

The session was interrupted no less than six times with various updates from the frontlines, which ranged from Republican victories over the CIS<sup>3</sup> in various planet systems, to the revelation of a scandal where Chandrilan officials were planning an internal rebellion

1 Seven delegates (Alderaan, Chandrila, Corellia, Ithor, Kuat, Lord and Kanz Sector, and Naboo) represented systems from the Delegation of 2000, all of whom hoping that Palpatine would relinquish his emergency powers, while the remaining five (Carida, Fondor, Kamino, Lansono, Ryloth) from the Militarists faction favoured the notion of Palpatine being granted more extensive emergency powers.

2 For those whose knowledge of Star Wars only extends to “that dude in black” and “glowing light sticks”, a loose and extremely summarised analogy would be the issue of whether a government should transition to democracy or remain an autocracy.

3 The Confederacy of Independent Systems (CIS), also known as the Separatist Alliance, the Separatist State, or simply as the Separatists, the other belligerent of the Clone Wars.

against the Republic and the beloved Supreme Chancellor Palpatine (gasp). Nevertheless, the senators, each taking the expected stance of their home systems, debated with enough fervour to make one believe that the events of Stars Wars really happened, and were not just a Disney franchise with a fanbase probably larger than the population of Singapore.

Among one of the most ardent supporters for Palpatine’s continued supreme power was the senator from Kamino, who proposed with utmost passion that Palpatine, though indeed the most brilliant and glorious person he had ever met (this author felt like she was in the DPRK), ought to “relax a bit and go on a vacation” to avoid future assassination attempts. On the account of his “pretty face”, he touchingly volunteered to sacrifice himself to oversee the galaxy in Palpatine’s stead (and thereby put himself in the crosshairs of future assassins) till it was safe for Palpatine to return.

Said senator also suggested the construction of a Death Star<sup>4</sup> by the Galactic Republic against the CIS, launching a short debate on weapons of mass destruction – one that sounded suspiciously like a parallel of today’s committee debates in DISEC. The Kaminoan senator found a zealous supporter in the senator from

4 A weapon the size of a moon, capable of destroying an entire planet.



Fondor, who rousingly advocated not only the construction of a weapon more powerful than what the CIS had, but also the absolute protection of the security of the Republic and the elimination of any challengers to this.

The opposition held no shortage of ardent voices. The senator from Chandrila pointed out that vesting so much power in an individual would be antithetical to the meaning of a senate – a point echoed by the senator from Corellia, who took it upon himself to cast some light (and doubt) on Palpatine. In particular, the senator from Alderaan, beginning his speech with the pithy question “Is this how democracy dies?” (a reference to an original quote in the prequel trilogy), questioned why they should allow their moral empathy to descend to that of a droid’s, while highlighting that the very reason Palpatine was the target of an assassination was his status as the sole holder of power within the senate.

As the 2½ hours drew to an end, the vote on the retention of emergency powers of Palpatine was finally called, where only five votes were required for Palpatine to gain complete control over the Galactic Republic. The first round of voting, to this author’s surprise given the seemingly “swing” status of quite a few senators, yielded only four votes in support of the motion, which would probably have been passed had the senator from Kamino not left the venue in search of his misplaced cell phone.

Eventually, the senator from Ryloth showed his true colours as a Palpatine supporter in the second round, switching his vote from a nay to a yay. The Extraordinary Session of the Galactic Senate thus ended with the infamous Imperial March, together with the Chair’s ominous declaration of “Long live the Empire”. Perhaps one good thing that came out of this senate session was that no





# *Shall We Debate Over Dinner?*

BY MITCHELLE ANG | PRESS DIRECTOR

Not everything about SMUN this year is strictly academic; after all, we need a break from time to time. TORCH helps you scope out the various cuties spotted so far, with the help of various sharp-eyed participants! We will not name the eye candies, but feel free to put your detective skills to use. P.S. Both committee members and delegates alike were named; we will leave you to guess who they are!

A Secretariat Committee member with Harry Potter vibes:

“He is sassy, wears Harry Potter spectacles, and has the cutest, tiniest pair of eyes ever. He also has a slim frame and is the fairest in the land!”

A Committee member exuding elegance:

“She is really tall, with beautiful long dark hair. She just has an elegant vibe, you know?”  
(Committee member)

The male Angelina Jolie delegate:

“He has thick and full lips, and is tall and slim. He is also really caring and asked me constantly if I was alright, hehehe!”

The Press Team’s journalist delegate:

“She has a bubbly personality, and has the prettiest almond eyes. True to being a journalist, she is also well-spoken.”

The Chair, who is an elf-in-disguise:

“She has her hair up in the most adorable bun, and is super petite in size. She’s probably older than me but her elfin features are just so pretty!”

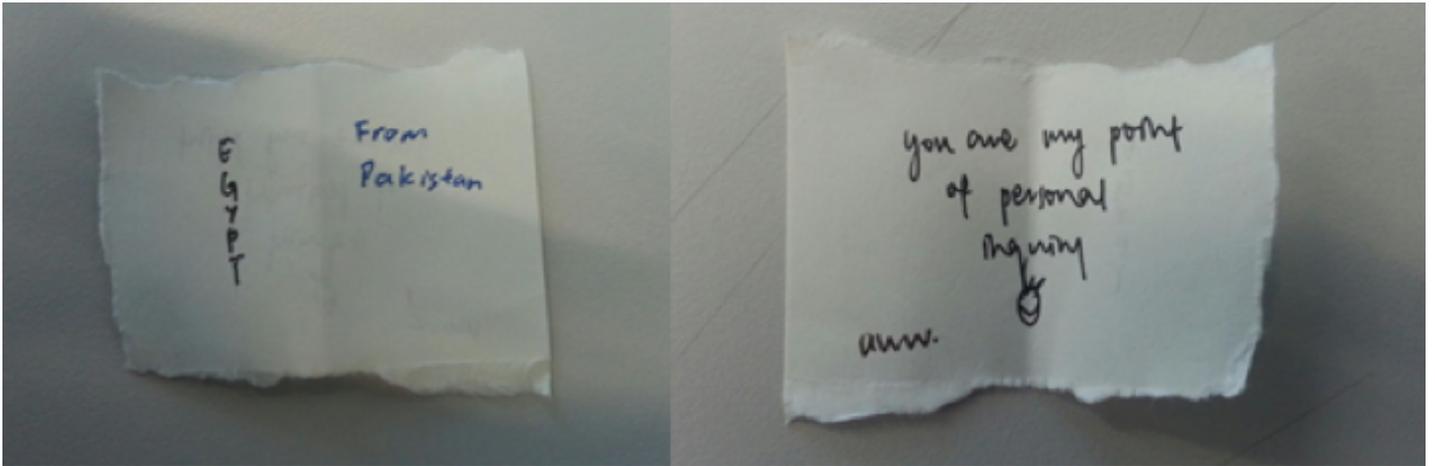
And finally, the best submission that warrants all names to be exposed – this world-changing confession for our Sec-Gen:

“His disarming smile that could end the nuclear proliferation problems in Iran and North Korea, his illuminating smile that sheds light on the situation in Kosovo and the irrationalities surrounding Islamophobia... and his distinguished MUN career. BANG MY GAVEL ANYDAY, INGMAR!”



# *OIC: A Romance Blossoms*

BY NIGEL WONG | PRESS DELEGATE



Even during moments of debate and conflict, love comes from unexpected sources. This reporter was informed by a reliable source that the delegates of Egypt and Pakistan of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation were sending “very interesting” notes to each other.

The two delegates, who debated furiously over religious topics for over 2 hours, were exposed when an anonymous source intercepted and sent one of their “interesting” letters to the Press Corps (thank you!). The note, which reads “You are my point of personal inquiry” appears to be

an undeniably unique pick up line thought of by Pakistan’s delegate. We can only say it is short and sweet, much like the Egyptian delegate.

The notes went under the radar for a period of time, masked by ferocious arguments and the smell of burning bridges. Well, this just goes to show that love can blossom even in the harshest of conditions.



# *Under Secretary-General (Acads): Shasha Dania*

BY OUTREACH DIRECTORS



*Shasha is one of the Under Secretary-General (Academics), and a Sociology major at the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. On top of that, her two minors in English Literature and Gender Studies have basically ensured she's not going to surface from the overwhelming torrent of readings anytime soon. SMUN 2016 will be her 15th conference, and first ever time as a Secretariat member. In what limited free time she has, she can be found on Netflix watching whatever tv shows have caught her eye this time, playing Civilization V for hours on end and indulging in her dreams of world conquest, and taking naps that totally do not last entire afternoons and are in fact extremely productive in nature and not a complete waste of time at all.*

## **D: What are you most excited about for SMUN 2016?**

**S:** I am most excited to interact with all of the delegates, and see how the topics chosen this year will play out. Lots of thought went into picking the topics, and I hope that the delegates will have a lot of fun debating and picking through them to leave no stone unturned.

## **D: What do you hope to achieve at SMUN this year?**

**S:** I want all of SMUN 2016's delegates to go away from the conference having enjoyed themselves. For me, to be able to help create a conference that's both fulfilling and enriching would be an amazing achievement in itself.

## **D: What's your favorite thing about SMUN?**

**S:** My favourite thing about SMUN is anything but the debate - it's the ties you make there that last beyond the conference. It's the friends you meet whom you still talk to for months afterwards, and the relationships you form that'll stick with you forever.

## **D: How did you first get involved in SMUN?**

**S:** My first SMUN was actually SMUN 2015, where I was Chairperson of the UN High



Commissioner of Refugees. The conference changed me so much as a person that I decided it was worth it to come back this year, and help make SMUN 2016 equally amazing.

**D: If you could go back in time, what year would you travel to?**

**S:** I'd travel back to 1919 - specifically, to watch how the political landscape in Europe would change after the Paris Peace Conference. The Conference is one of my favourite historical events, due to the sheer significance of it, and in a morbid way, I'd like to see the effects of it play out first-hand.

**D: If you could be any character from a Disney movie, who would it be and why?**

**S:** Since Disney owns Star Wars, I can technically say Princess Leia Organa, right?



# *Under Secretary-General (Acads): Divya Vijayaragavan*

BY OUTREACH DIRECTORS



*Ms Divya Vijayaragavan has just completed her second year reading Political Science and Economics at the National University of Singapore Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. She is serving as Under-Secretary-General (Academics) at SMUN 2016. She led the NUS team to the Harvard World Model United Nations 2016 conference in Rome, where the delegation won four awards. Divya won a Diplomacy Award in the Human Rights Council at World MUN 2016, and the Outstanding Group Delegation and Outstanding Delegation Awards at the Citi-Pan Asia MUN 2015 conference in Taipei.*

**D: What do you hope to achieve at SMUN this year?**

**DV:** I hope to ensure that we continue to establish SMUN as a premier conference in Singapore's MUN circuit, where delegates take back treasured memories of rewarding and stimulating experiences. I wish for this year's conference to continue to strive to uphold SMUN's reputation as an inclusive and welcoming platform to foster open and easy participation from delegates of all backgrounds.

**D: What's your favorite thing about SMUN?**

**DV:** My favourite thing about Singapore Model United Nations is how we manage to bring in such a huge pool of delegates with vastly different backgrounds and experiences on an inclusive and welcoming platform. What always astounds me is when I hear delegates recount how they came in apprehensive and unsure but manage to bloom into participative and engaged delegates at the end. Our delegates make unforgettable connections and experiences that build up and serve well.

**D: How did you first get involved in SMUN?**

**DV:** Oddly enough, I've never quite got an opportunity to be officially part of Singapore



Model United Nations before. I was offered to be Head Chairperson of UNICEF at SMUN'15 but I had to pass due to clashing commitments overseas. So I was incredibly honoured to be entrusted with this position this year!

**D: What's one thing you've always wanted to try but have been too scared/busy/hesitant to?**

**DV:** Skydiving! It's been an activity that's always captivated my fancies, but I've never quite mustered the guts to give it a go. I suppose it'll be quite a while yet until this dream of mine comes true!



## *Interview with Alastair Loh Chuan Yao, DISEC Head Chair*

BY LAM MEI SHUEN AND NATASHA LIM



**D: Could you summarise how the debates have progressed thus far?**

**A:** The debates began with the accessibility of nuclear weapons and the effects of nuclear proliferation on terrorism. As it progressed, the focus of the discussion shifted towards issues of nuclear non-proliferation, treaties and potentially setting up nuclear-free zones in the Middle East.

The debates have been fruitful so far, and there have been a lot of constructive ideas going around. All in all, it has been an intense day of debates and I hope that it will continue to be so for the next few days.

**D: Do you foresee any resolutions being passed soon?**

**A:** Definitely. I'm expecting about three or four draft resolutions to be sent to me tonight. In the end, I will only allow one resolution to be submitted per topic, and the delegates will either have to come to a consensus eventually as to which resolution they want passed, or fight it out between the different draft resolutions.

**D: Are there any major blocs which have been formed in the course of the debate?**

**A:** Yes there are. From my observations, there are 3 blocs being formed: firstly the Venezuelan-USA bloc, secondly DPRK's bloc (quite surprisingly) and finally a bloc consisting of Israel and a few other countries, since Israel is being alienated in this Council due to its refusal to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

There is also a smaller bloc being formed between Italy, Iran and a mix of other countries.

**D: Any memorable moments in the committee sessions so far?**

**A:** The event I remember the most is DPRK's first speech – the delegate walked to the front of the room with a picture of Kim Jong Un and told the other delegates to give a round of applause to Kim Jong Un. It was wildly inappropriate, but memorable nonetheless.



**D: Have there been any crises/sudden developments in DISEC so far?**

**A:** Till today, no.

**D: Do you have any concluding statements?**

**A:** Traditionally, DISEC is a very security-driven, intense and hostile committee to be in. This year, it is admirable that DISEC has so many delegates who are passionate about the issues of discussion. It's very encouraging to see that the next generation of MUN delegates have so much interest in global affairs, especially since it is something that is hard to understand. Although nuclear non-proliferation is a common term being thrown around frequently, there are nuanced underlying issues that are hard to understand. However, I am proud that the delegates this year have managed to flesh out the essence of these issues through the debates, which is admirable given their tender age. Kudos to them!



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