

PAPER, PROPAGANDA AND PUNDITRY: A SALUTATION ON BEHALF OF THE PRESS

NATHAN PINKOSKI, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Greetings, Delegate! With this newspaper now in your hands, you can, at last, boast of a tangible accomplishment to your decision to join the grandeur of the High School Model United Nations, or carry on the previously experienced joy of HSMUN 2008 into the lofty heavens of HSMUN 2009.

There to greet you as you journey into this Paradise is not a dearly beloved Beatrice, but rather the cherubims and seraphims of the HSMUN Press Corps, trumpeting the news proudly via this and other, similar documents.

In these pages, you will discover a collection of articles compiled by our writing staff for the purpose of informing you on a few crucial global events and scenes where crises could very emerge, fearful and terrible. Consider these articles as a good place to begin your research. Need further tips on researching? See our article in this edition.



An excited committee of 2008, whose members are no doubt anxious to return to this scene for HSMUN 2009

We angels of the Fourth Estate will be glad to guide you and inform you during the course of your conference., as will our High School Journalists. New this year will be a competitive element for these--our best and most involved high school writer who succeeds in accomplishing what a genuine international journalist must accomplish will be honoured publically.

As you go about on your diplomatic endeavours, nurturing ideas and writing resolutions,

the Press Corps will be there to immortalize your doings.

You will discover that it is not a sin to covet honour, but that recognition in the Papers and the struggle for that recognition has led to tremendous things: on the one hand, a people dreaming of "A more perfect Union" based on Justice and Freedom-- but on the other, a bloodied mob holding the head of their King before the terrible three-coloured Idol...

THE RISE OF THE ASIAN TIGERS: EAST ASIAN ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

SAM JEFFERY

Before the rise of the Asian Tigers, the economic and political power of the international community lay unquestioningly with the West. America and Europe controlled the markets of the world with an iron fist, and seemed to be little threatened by the developing Third World countries on the other side of the globe. All that changed in the 1960s, when the economies of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan exploded onto the global market, determined to win over a good portion of it.

For the next few decades until 1995, East Asia (including China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand) would see the highest GDP growth rates. It was considered an economic miracle, a phenomenon looked upon first with curiosity, then with interest, and finally with trepidation by the Western powers. Rapid industrialization was followed by a dramatic increase in exports targeted at the rich capitalist powers. Strong authoritative governments followed economic plans

exactly. The abundance of skilled workers and the inexpensive goods they created ensured the Tigers' quick rise to economic power.

The success of the Asian Tigers relied upon, and still relies upon, this export-driven economy, which comes at the expense of self-sufficiency. The economies of the East Asian nations rely almost entirely upon the consumer-driven cultures of America and Europe. The implications of this continuing in the current world climate are potentially devastating. The United States, as during the Great Depression, is beginning to drive up tariffs and taxes on imported goods, attempting to allow their local companies to compete with the low-cost goods exported en masse from Asia. East Asia itself is breeding a class of business moguls, millionaires who wish to live as extravagant and excessive a life as their Western business rivals. These new consumers are great in number thanks to the large populations of the Tigers, and

thus their demand for goods is significant. Consumerism is on the rise at last.

The citizens of Asia have been producers long enough –now they wish to be consumers, too. Can an economy that thrives on the basis of export and export alone survive if and when it must rely on itself and the nations that surround it? Can such economic prosperity continue when its *raison d'être* is gone? Or can the consumers within balance the odds? In these coming days of recession and hiked tariffs, only time will tell.



OBAMA PRESIDENT: WHAT IT WILL MEAN IN THE WORLD

NATASHA TAMES

At the time of this printing, President Barack Obama, having hardly a fortnight in office, has not undertaken markedly different steps from Bush's foreign policy. However there is a large potential that the Obama administration may mark the dawning of a new era of cooperation with the rest of the world.

The United Nations Association of the US has claimed that "virtually every major for-



US President Barack Obama

ign-policy issue facing the United States must be dealt with under the umbrella of the UN."

Whether such a statement is true or not, the past eight years have shown a reduction in harmonious UN-US relations. The Bush administration alienated not only the countries it chose to invade during its Global War on Terror, but many of its own allies as well.

There is much hope that with the inauguration of Barack Obama, such

matters will change. In the last few months, Mr. Obama has made a number of interesting choices for various political positions within the United States that may be seen as indicative of hope for a renewal of US-UN relations and a greater degree of American involvement and leadership in the UN. He has notably nominated Senator Hillary Rodham-Clinton as Secretary of State, as well as Dr. Susan Rice, a recognised diplomat who specialises in the alleviation of poverty and disease in addition to the issue of climate change, as the American Ambassador to the UN.

See page 3

OBAMA IN THE OVAL

Continued from page 2

These nominations are extremely significant in that they may reveal certain intentions of the Obama administration.

Hillary Rodham-Clinton has widely been acknowledged as an avid supporter of multilateral diplomacy as well as of the UN. Mrs. Rodham-Clinton is also a staunch advocate for women's rights; her nomination to the position of Secretary of State clearly shows the Obama administration's intent to support multilateralism. In addition, she has also made evident her view that the US should provide more leadership so that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) may be achieved.

Obama's nomination of Senator Clinton for Secretary of State clearly illustrates a new administration more fully devoted to helping fulfill the MDGs, and thus it seems clear that the Obama administration will take a more active role in multilateral diplomacy than its predecessor, the Bush administration.

Another notable nomination has been that of Dr. Susan Rice to the position of US Ambassador to the UN. Again, it is clear that such a nomination shows a commitment to America's role in helping to achieve the MDGs. In addition, the nomination of Dr. Rice, who is an experienced diplomat, illuminates the desire of the soon-to-be Obama administration to renew its relationship with the UN.

Clearly Mr. Obama intends for his government to be more cooperative, optimistic, and aligned with the beliefs of the UN as a whole. In a sentence, the largest effect the Obama presidency will have upon the world will be a new age of American leadership in multilateral diplomacy via increased leadership in the UN.

RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT:

WHAT IT MEANS AND WHAT IT WANTS TO DO

NATASHA TAMES

The Responsibility to Protect (commonly abbreviated as R2P) is a recent phenomenon in the field of international relations. It owes its existence to the trend in conflict that has been prevalent since the end of the Second World War: the number of interstate conflicts has dramatically reduced, whereas the number of intrastate or civil conflicts has increased. Perhaps the most dire consequence of this trend is the fact that the majority of casualties in such wars are in fact innocent civilians. The International Community has often claimed, in response to multiple atrocities due to civil wars in countries such as Sierra Leone, Kosovo, and Rwanda, that such atrocities would "never again" occur. However there was a serious lack of action on the behalf of the international community to ensure genocide and other atrocities would not continue. Members of the international community, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan in particular, questioned whether intervention was necessary to prevent such crimes.

In 2001, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) was formed to investigate whether intervention was necessary; the ICISS ultimately came up with the concept of R2P. R2P essentially argues that the onus for the responsibility of citizens is upon a nation. If a nation is unable or unwilling to protect its own citizens, R2P advocates that it is the international community that must then be responsible for the protection of its citizens. In short, R2P means that sovereignty is responsi-

bility: a state is a sovereign state if and only if it has the capacity to protect its citizens. When it is unwilling or incapable, it loses its privilege of sovereignty and the international community must intervene.

This is clearly the most contentious issue of R2P: the fact that it could potentially undermine what the UN itself protects within its Charter, the sanctity of borders. The presence of intrastate conflict means that if R2P must be invoked, other states will be obliged to intervene in the internal politics of another state. The existence of R2P may in fact mark the advent of a new era of sovereignty and state rights: if R2P is to be utilized in a serious, responsible manner, it is then inevitable that sovereign rights of certain states will be infringed.

Another issue is how states are selected to be intervened within on the basis of R2P. Traditionally, since the formation of the UN in 1945, the Security Council has generally been responsible for dealing with issues of war. However in our post modern world, it is clear that a restructuring of the Security Council is needed. Can a council made up of rival states that possess veto powers agree to intervene within states that are suffering humanitarian crises? Or will R2P always be thwarted by differing interests, such as we have seen in the case of Darfur?

R2P is clearly a contentious issue. However, as an international norm, it may have the potential to ultimately turn the international community's common sentiment of "never again" into a reality.

THE SILENT PROTECTORS: EUROPEAN PEACEKEEPERS IN AFRICA

SAM JEFFERY

If asked what the European Union is doing in Africa, most in Africa and Europe alike will say the same: “meddling”. It is time that a different answer was called out: “what no one else will”.

For years, virtually every peacekeeping mission to Africa that contains European Union peacekeepers as part of the force has been greeted begrudgingly, if not with outright hostility. History tells Africa that the EU is interested only in the capital gain Africa has to offer, and not its people. Such a reception hardly comes as a surprise in light of the past. And yet I believe it is time to call for a new view of the peacekeepers who lay their lives down for the betterment of those African nations in such dire straits, receiving nary a word of praise in return.

What happened in Chad this past summer is a prime example of this old view coming into direct conflict with the good the EU forces are trying now to do.

Chad is an African country that borders Sudan, unstable enough in

its own right due to decades of civil war and an unhealthy government. More recently it has been made a zone of deadly conflict due to the huge numbers of refugees from Darfur fleeing to its relative safety. The European Union sent in a mission of 3700 peacekeepers to protect the refugees and aid workers from the escalating conflict spilling into Chad from Sudan. The mission was the largest of its kind ever attempted by the EU, and as such was subject to months of delays and supply issues that led critics to cry out over the EU’s “hesitance”. Despite the pledge of neutrality from the forces involved, suspicions of imperialism were immediately raised over the large percentage of French troops contained in the force.

Chad was a former French colony, that much is true. But the percentage of French troops in any EU peacekeeping mission is, like the British percentage, much higher than most other European nations due to both higher defence budgets and debts owed to their former colonies.

Still, charges remain that the EU peacekeeping force is in place for political and economic purposes, to make the EU look good in the international eye, and perhaps even to provide monetary gain. If that were true, the assumption would have to follow that the Darfur refugees were safe, and in no need of the peacekeeper’s protection. However, prior to the deployment of EU peacekeepers to Chad, the refugees were considered to be in the most dangerous position of people on both sides of the border. The refugees had fled from the genocide in Darfur, and yet were faced with civil wars within Chad. Stranded, the refugees set up ten camps on the border –and were beset by bandits as well as the rebel groups on both sides of the border.

When European peacekeepers attempted to airlift refugee children out of that hellhole and into safer refugee camps in Europe they were not only reprimanded and prevented from doing so –they were accused of kidnapping and arrested. Perhaps what those men did was not strictly politically or even legally correct. But then again, perhaps some of those children now lie in the ground in Chad rather than in a bed in Europe. Sometimes what is right must go beyond policy.

The European peacekeepers of Africa deserve nothing less than unconditional gratitude from both those whose lives they save and the governments of the countries they aid. They are the uncomplaining soldiers who rescue the helpless despite accusations that their intentions are purely selfish. They are the silent protectors of Africa, who do work no one else can or will.



GAZA: THE WHIPS AND SCORNS OF TIME

SAM BROOKS

When I look at the international headlines lately, one thing that jumps out is the commentary on the conflict in the Gaza strip. One should probably note that to many, headlines about that situation rarely jump out anymore because the war in the region has been going on for so long. In fact, one thing that has become clear to me through some research is that there is a significant grey area in pinpointing when this conflict actually started.

I began to research the topic trying to get a basic understanding of the causes for this war, and frankly I just can't get a grip on it. The basic idea is that the Gaza strip is a territory claimed by both Israelis and Palestinians but there is an aggressive stalemate in placing sole ownership on it.

If we step back a few years and take a look at what all has happened there, it seems to be a classic case of history repeating itself. There have been numerous diplomatic "solutions" to the problem and temporary ceasefires but unfortunately the conflict always finds a way to poke its nasty little head out of the hole it's been buried in. Perhaps we need a deeper hole.

So, why is nothing working? For starters, the Palestinians are governed by terrorists. Back in 2006, it was looking very promising that a permanent solution would finally be found. While the Israelis and Palestinians would likely remain bitter rivals, they both recognized that there were serious humanitarian reasons to put an end to the conflict because way too many innocent people had died. Israel was going to hand over the Gaza strip.

Then, Palestine held an election and in came Hamas. One should prob-

ably note that Hamas was elected democratically but the rest of the world views them as terrorists. As a result, most of the major players at the world's table don't recognize Hamas as the legitimate government in the region.

Israel did withdraw as promised; however it was a only very short time before rockets from the strip were fired back at Israel. I would wager that had Hamas not been in control of the region there would be a far greater chance that the war could have ended there.

Moving forward from that point we once again have witnessed the cycle of so-called "truces" only to be followed shortly by new attacks. When I look at the most recent news from the region, while it is devastating to hear about the new conflict in Gaza, it's nothing we haven't heard before.

The question is, what can be done about it? There are several temporary measures in place to help keep the lives of people living with this disaster afloat, such as a mutual respect for UN aid workers in the region, but the armed conflict is bound to continue.

The major problem with trying to resolve the conflict with conventional non-violent means is that Hamas does not respect international agreements. They have their own agenda and until their objective is met they will do whatever it takes. Unfortunately, diplomacy is probably off the table. Historically there have been several wars ended by such means, but these wars have always been between two nations or



groups of nations. They know that because they are all involved in international relations as a whole that if they don't respect the agreements made there will be unpleasant consequences.

Hamas, on the other hand, has no such "good" relations with other world organizations, so they lack the incentive to respect agreements made. Clearly the tactics in use currently are ineffective and a whole new rulebook is needed when dealing with a force such as Hamas.

The other problem is that even in the hypothetical situation that Hamas was given everything that they want, there is no guarantee that they would stop. Their track record is far from perfect and despite the thousands of innocent casualties, some men just like to watch the world burn.

I don't claim to have some magical step-by-step solution to the problem but I can speculate that it will probably involve the removal of Hamas by force. Until then we can only watch from a distance, support those who are trying to help, and believe that one day the region will finally achieve the peace it deserves.

GEOPOLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF THE CREDIT CRUNCH

SAMUEL SHAPIRO

Over the past couple of months, we have all been watching, in disbelief, the staggering number of red “down” arrows that have taken over our television screens. Rather, it is more the mouths of the adults that have been dropping in direct proportion to the recent trend in the stock markets. The younger population, on the other hand, is seemingly enjoying the current economic recession, seeing lower fuel prices and cheaper goods which often highlight their significantly less complicated and more fun-filled lives (HSMUN being a crucial aspect of this so-called fun).

The world has entered a state of economic downturn. The economy being a complex and chaotic system, it is often difficult to pinpoint exactly who and what was and still is responsible for yet another recession, and for which reasons. While some critics suggest that this is only part of an up-and-down cycle of the capitalistic society in which we live, others suggest that the interactions between economic and political superpowers are to blame for this global instability that has led to the current economic crisis and credit crunch.

The main players of the latter proposition are the two current economic superpowers of the world: America and China. For the past many years, America and China have been involved in a symbiotic relationship. When this relationship started around two decades ago,

there was stability and balance: the American superpower helped fuel the Chinese economy, which is now one of the most prosperous in the world. The reason for this prosperity, however, is that in recent years, China has soured the symbiotic aspect of its interaction with the US by saving up enormous portions of its gross national income. If one looks at the above-mentioned relationship as a see-saw, one can see that the large savings on the side of the Chinese has an opposite effect on the US, that is, drastically increased rates of overspending.

And so it comes as no surprise to many economists that America has fallen into huge debt. Not only that, but the depressingly calamitous administration of the then-president of the USA, none other than George W. Bush himself, has done little to make the situation any better. Currently at a debt of over eight trillion dollars, only recently did the US

federal government realize that it was time to inject trillions of dollars more back into the market and banking system, much of this coming directly from tax-payers’ own money.

Many have predicted that the era of America as a world superpower is soon to come to an end, and that China may yet rise to become the next superpower. However, Niall Ferguson, a well-respected historical, political and financial analyst, has predicted that even with all its losses, the US is probably the best-equipped country in the world to deal with this crisis due to its formerly powerful status, and that European countries are actually more likely to suffer more. Also, China is likely to continue its economic relationship with the US and input money to relieve the economic recession, since it has more to lose than to gain by pulling the plug on the US.



CALAMITY IN THE CONGO

SAMUEL SHAPIRO

The situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (referred to henceforth as the DRC) is a grim one. Rebels and neighbouring countries alike are involved in bouts of violence that have plagued the country for over a decade. Ceasefires are consistently ignored, and all attempts at peace are in vain, for the violent clashes between rebels and armies continue to



escalate with no apparent end in sight. And throughout all this, millions of innocent lives are affected.

The DRC has been at war since 1997. Some wars are due to civil conflicts, while others involve neighbouring countries like Uganda and Rwanda. The current crisis involves three main sides: the Tutsi rebels, led by General Laurent Nkunda; the Hutu fighters originating from Rwanda; and the Congolese national forces. In this case, the truth of the story is unfortunately quite twisted. Nkunda claims that he is protecting the Congolese Tutsi minority from the Hutu fighters, while simultaneously threatening to topple the Congolese government due to their non-compliance and ineffectiveness. The Congolese government accuses Rwanda of backing Nkunda's army of rebels, and confronts all those rioting parties opposing the government. Rwanda, of course, denies any such accusations, saying instead that they are unsatisfied with the way the Congo-

lese government has been treating the Hutus; yet they have invaded the DRC twice in the recent past.

And then there is all the mineral wealth of the DRC, including diamonds and gold, that drives all three parties at once. Corruption reigns, with officers and politicians alike slowly taking over these mines by force, and profiting greatly as a result.

But as complex and confusing as the story may be, one truth remains quite clear: the people of the DRC are suffering greatly. Since the most recent clashes in September 2008, over a million Congolese citizens have been displaced from their homes, and continue to move around constantly in order to escape all the violence and destruction that always seems to be catching up to them. A humanitarian crisis – the greatest in the world at present – is plaguing the people, with food and water shortages, limited shelter, a dearth of medical treatment, and abuse from the rebelling forces.

The existing UN peacekeeping force of 17,000, although currently the largest UN peacekeeping mission in the world, is able to offer neither sufficient aid nor protection, for the violence is such that any attempts at help result in riots and rebel attacks against the UN forces. Back in November 2008, the UN Security Council voted unanimously to send an additional 3000 troops to help

the existing forces. Nkunda's forces are estimated at 7–8000, only 5000 of which are situated in the currently most heated area of the DRC, the Nord-Kivu region in the eastern half of the country. Yet the UN is still unable to accomplish much, watching helplessly as Nkunda's army tunnels its way towards Goma, the capital city of the DRC, leaving a path of destruction in its wake.

The government is also not doing anything to help. The current President of the DRC, Joseph Kabila, refuses to negotiate with Nkunda, and at the same time is not doing enough to keep the Hutus out of his country. The result is clashes between all three parties, an obvious recipe for disaster. Calls for ceasefires go unheard because no compromises ever satisfy all sides.

So the war continues, and one cannot help but ask the question: Is the UN doing enough to help, or has the crisis in Congo become a hopeless situation?

THE PLIGHT OF PAKISTAN

SARAH FLOWERS

The current political state in Pakistan is one of turmoil. As one of the world's most volatile nations, Pakistan has faced a number of crises in its sixty years of independence. The bulk of the conflict within the country is religion-based, as Pakistan was created as a dominantly Muslim state, and disputes between the primary religion and other secular natures of the region created tensions that have resulted in hostility between peoples of different religions.

Pakistan has also had a politically unstable history. Controlled by a string of military leaders and overrun with [political] coups, the nation's record has definitely been tarnished. Military leader Pervez Musharaff – who became yet another 'military man' running the country when, in 1999, he seized power in a bloodless coup – brought about little change during his time as President. In 2001, after the attack by Al Qaeda on the United States, President Musharaff claims he felt pressured to join sides with the Americans in fighting the Taliban, Pakistan's allies in Afghanistan. 2007 also brought about a series of changes to Musharaff's government. Faced with dilemmas that would ultimately cost him his political career, the president declared a state of emergency on November 3, 2007 and effectively imposed martial law. However, following the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in December, Musharaff's government lost the highly emotional political election that occurred in February 2008. The election saw the creation of a political alliance between Bhutto's widower, Ali Asif Zardari, and Mawaz Sharif – one

of the nation's most popular politicians – as well as a victory for the Pakistani People's Party (PPP).

Friction has also been created on an international level. Ongoing tensions between Pakistan and rival nations, such as Israel and India, have brought the country on to the world stage. A bitter conflict with India – the Indo-Pakistani war in 1971 – led to the secession of eastern territory that was then molded to become Bangladesh. In more recent years, the two nations have been embroiled in a power struggle over the region of Kashmir. The reason for three wars since 1947, Kashmir is "small, but nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas its strategic importance and beauty make it a prized possession" (CNN International). This issue has even seen Pakistan become a nuclear state, a development that occurred in response to India's testing nuclear weapons in the mid-1990s. In January 2003, the nations verbally attacked one another on the subject of nuclear weaponry. While "India's defense minister says that India could eas-



ily absorb a nuclear hit...Pakistan would 'cease to exist.' Pakistan's information minister retorts that India would learn a 'historic and unforgettable lesson' in such scenario" (CNN International).

The dawn of the new millennium saw the rivals attempt to make peace, or at least declare a cease-fire. This promise came into effect in late 2003, with both India and Pakistan agreeing to a cease-fire along the borders of Kashmir, beginning on November 26 of that year.

STRIFE IN SUDAN

SARAH FLOWERS

Since gaining independence in 1956, the nation of Sudan has been fraught with war. In more recent times, international attention has been focused on the region of Darfur, where mass murders have been carried out. In 2004, military forces known as janjaweed – aided by government troops – began to carry out widespread killings. It is thought that over two hundred thousand civilians have been killed, and almost two and a half million people have fled the region in the face of the

atrocities.

Current leader Omar Hassan al-Bashir first came to power in 1989 after he staged a military coup to overthrow the democratic government in charge at the time. During al-Bashir's dictatorial reign, the country has re-entered a period of unrest – after ending a two-decades-long civil war – which cumulated with the mass killings that began in 2003. However, the president's term may be coming to an end soon, as an arrest warrant has been issued

See page 9

THE CRY OF DARFUR

Continued from page 8

for al-Bashir, who is to be tried in the International Criminal Court for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

In September 2004, Colin Powell, the American Secretary of State, condemned the activities within the Sudan, labeling the killings as “genocide”. President George Bush began an active campaign within the United Nations urging the organization to replace the ineffective African Union forces with peacekeepers from the UN. However, Sudan resisted the troops, causing the American leader to implement unilateral economic sanctions against the nation of Sudan both for disallowing the deployment and for providing national support of the janjaweed militia.

Unfortunately, the condemnation of events by the United Nations has done little to stop the massacres. In August 2007, Arab tribes located within the Darfur region and accused of committing mass killings turned their vast amounts of firepower onto one another. The Terjem and Mahari tribes are thought by the United Nations to have raped and pillaged (as part of the janjaweed). The two squared off in South Darfur, raiding one another’s villages and scattering Arab tribesmen into the displacement camps that house some of their previous victims. In Darfur, many of the clashes were thought to be conflicts between Arabs and non-Arab citizens. However, these new Arab

against Arab battles appears to be a sign of the evolution of the Sudanese crisis. No longer just a rebellion, the war in Sudan has become a killing free-for-all with numerous armed groups, a rise in crime rates, and chronic attacks on aid workers in the region.

In November 2008, President al-Bashmir caught the international community by surprise when he ordered a ceasefire to occur in Sudan, particularly in the Darfur region. The Sudanese leader announced that the government would begin disarming militias. However, many skeptics claim that al-Bashir is promoting peace in order to avoid his international trial.

Currently, the situation in Sudan is still bleak. While the United Nations continues to pump aid into the region, outbreaks of violence are common. In April 2008, Rodolphe Adada, the African Union-United Nations Joint Special Representative for Darfur, informed the Security Council that “unfortunately, it is commonly understood today in Darfur that peace is not at all attractive. Neither economically, nor politically...” The world is continuing to provide aid in hopes that a peace settlement will soon be reached in Sudan.



A GUIDE TO RESEARCH

NATHAN PINKOSKI

Your research, Delegate, will occupy your time in these weeks before the conference. Adopt these simple tips in order to be well-prepared:

1) Search out Political Magazines. This does not mean TIME; this Press Corps laments the sensationalism that passes for journalism therein. Go to your public library and browse genuine journalism, such as The Economist, for information relevant to your country’s position and international events. Don’t know where South Ossetia is? Don’t know what the Sunni Awakening is? Go look.

2) Find your country’s official website. Nearly all nations have a website that lists broadly their country’s international outlook. Prepared by diplomats, this is an excellent place to start searching.

3) Daunted by the information online? Go check the HSMUN Blogs, where some links to important stories are. Check them, and follow the links at those pages.

4) Look at the UN Website, www.un.org. This excellent website not only has news releases on international crises, it also contains summations of issues facing the General Assembly as well as an online compendium of every Resolution the GA and Security Council have ever passed in their history. These all provide excellent frameworks for you to work with while you write your own resolutions.

If you have any questions, post on the blogs!

TANGO OF TENSION: VENEZUELA AND COLUMBIA

ERIN REDDEKOPP

Tensions mounted in November, 2007 between Columbia's Álvaro Uribe and Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, bringing the two South American Countries to the brink of war. Nine months of name calling and threats of invasion passed and on July 11, 2008 both leaders agreed that reconciliation was in their best interest.

Meeting in Punto Fijo, a Venezuelan town, the leaders focused on leaving behind the tumultuous relations, both recognizing that trade between the two countries would increase their national and regional stability. Venezuela is Colombia's second most important trading partner after the United States and Colombia exported more than \$5 billion of goods to Venezuela in 2007.

At home Mr. Chavez faces turbulence over rising inflation and a decrease in oil imports. He is desperate to burnish his tarnished image and inspire loyalty amongst his citizens. To do this he must work to remove the stigma of a corrupt dictator and create stability within and around his borders. Peace with Columbia stabilizes regional economics and may even endear him to approximately 2 million Colombian voters living in Venezuela who have expressed discontent with his belligerence towards the Colombian president.

For Mr. Uribe, the meeting symbolized an end to his isolation in the region, which had existed since his much-criticized raid into Ecuador to kill a top FARC leader. As one of the region's few staunchly pro-American nations, Columbia often finds itself on the wrong side of Latin American leftist movements that sweep through the other states.

The nations have remained on good terms for the past six months, helping to squash doubts that reconciliation between the leaders was possible. A world wide economic crisis has helped to strengthen the countries dependency on each other; however, one still wonders if the relationship is strong enough to sustain two power hungry leaders.

THEY WERE BROKEN MEN ON AN AFRICAN PIER, NOW THEY'RE SOMALIA'S PRIVATEERS : WHY WE NEED TO ESTABLISH LAW AND ORDER IN SOMALIA

ERIN REDDEKOPP

In 2008 and early 2009, the lawless African Horn has been the setting of a real life storybook, where the pirates of Puntland, a band of economically savvy fisherman, strike fear into the hearts of the crews of passing oil tankers. These ruthless buccaneers seize their treasure, keep their hostages alive and well-fed, and return everything and everyone in one piece, once the ransom has been paid.

The reign of these scallywags may soon come to an end. While individually, the navies of India, China, Canada, Malaysia, the United States and France do little to strike fear into the hearts of the pirates, collectively they may achieve their aim; the eradication of Somali pirates.

It is easy to embrace piracy as an entertaining story amongst the drone of bombings and economic turbulence. They fire few guns and shed no blood, but we must condemn them. Not because middle class morality demands us to do so, but because no matter the apparent economic advantages piracy brings to Somalia, it also causes immense human and economic damage.

REMINDER!

POSITION PAPERS ARE DUE ON FEBRUARY 13TH.

LATE ENTRIES WILL FORFEIT CHANCE FOR POSITION PAPER AWARDS.

The pirates are beginning to seize enough oil to tip the balance in a small local war. No country is safe. American, Korean, and Russian vessels have all been seized and the last thing the world needs right now is disruption of one of its busiest shipping lanes and a spike in insurance premiums.

Even if leading world navies can bring about the downfall of the pirates, the collapse of Somalia to an extent where these pirates could emerge is frightening. The vast ungoverned space in the African Horn threatens to transmit shockwaves through a seam of fragile and strife-torn African states from Sudan to the Congo.

Restoring peace in Somalia will take more than restoring safe passage through the horn. Stability must be established from inside Somalia itself. The pirates must be deprived of a sanctuary, and the jihad-tinted anarchy can not be allowed to spill over Somalia's borders, a task that seems as fantastical as a quest for the Black Pearl.

Conference Schedule

Delegates will be expected to wear formal attire at all times during the conference, including at the opening ceremonies and the banquet.

Thursday 19 February, 2009

6:00-6:30pm Registration ETLC Atrium
6:40-8:00pm Opening Ceremonies
Secretary-General's Address
Mock Debate ETLC 1-001
8:00-9:00pm Committee Sessions NREF

Friday 20 February, 2009

9:00am-12:00pm Committee Sessions NREF
12:00-1:00pm Lunch (not provided)
1:00-4:00pm Committee Sessions NREF
6:00pm Banquet at The Fantasyland Hotel

Saturday, 21 February, 2009

9:30am-12:00pm Committee Sessions
12:00-1:00pm Lunch (provided) NREF Atrium
1:00-2:00pm Plenary ETLC 1-001
2:00-3:00pm Closing Ceremonies ETLC 1-001



*O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention,
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act
And monarchs to behold the swelling
scene!*

NREF, Headquarters of HSMUN 2009

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FEBRUARY!

