

2008 INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

THE CASE OF PALMYRA

On March 26, 2008 students in the program in International Economics and Cultural Affairs participated in their annual International Workshop. Using an educational simulation from the United States Institute for Peace, The Case of Palmyra, students tested their negotiating skills by trying to neutralize escalating tensions in the fictitious region of Palmyra to solve the international conflict between two fictitious countries ravaged by years of fighting between different ethnic groups, border disputes and a growing desire for political autonomy on the part of one territory in the region. Students played the role of United Nations Mediators, Human Rights NGO representatives, displaced citizens living in refugee camps, members of the governments of the affected countries, and lobbyists for the Palmyra Liberation Movement.

Students grappled with such contemporary issues as human rights violations, the effects of war on the region's agriculture and economy, conditions that lead to a perceived need for independence, ethnic animosities and the lives of those displaced by war. Guiding students through the negotiation process was Dr. George Lopez of the University of Notre Dame. Dr. Lopez is a founding faculty of the Krok Institute for International Peace Studies, where he currently holds the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C. Chair in Peace Studies. Students ultimately voted not to grant autonomy to Palmyra but did make provision for war crime trials, peacekeeping forces at the border, compensation to refugees and international assistance in stabilizing the region.



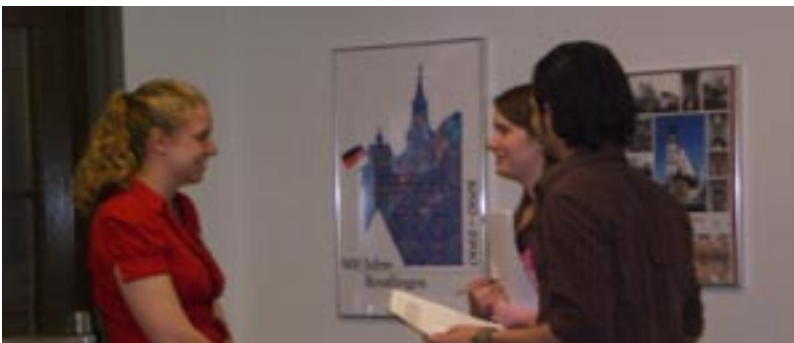
United Nations moderators (center) lead general negotiations. Right to autonomy, future economic development, and immediate safety for the region are all heated topics.



Free Palmyra from the oppressive government of Siwa! Save our farms from environmental destruction! Representatives of the Palmyra Liberation Movement (left), the North East States Organization (center) and the Nizwan Farmers' Cooperative Affected by War (right) engage in general negotiations.



The Nizwa government must stop the rebels within their borders! The Government of Siwa (left) meets with United Nations mediators (right) before general negotiations to discuss what each party hopes to achieve and how they can work together.



Let me keep my home! Representatives of Internally Displaced in Siwa (left) and the North East States Organization (right) meet during early caucusing to discuss land-ownership feuds between former and current residents of Palmyra.