The International Relations Simulation

Simulations are conducted in four major phases:

- Getting Ready (approximately one week for development of teams and role-profiles)
- The simulation (approximately two weeks of intensive diplomacy)
- The conference (one day to conclude the simulation)
- De-briefing (two weeks to produce a written summary report)

A. Getting Ready

Before the simulation proper begins, the lecturers for the classes involved determine a broad scenario for the simulation. Based on this scenario, they develop a list of the likely major players and these become the simulation roles. The overall number of roles depends primarily on the number of students involved.

After the roles have been determined, the students form teams of two or three, and teams are allocated roles; that is:

1. They are given the task of playing out the role of a prominent political, religious or social leader in the Middle East, Europe, Canada or the United States, such as King Hussein of Jordan, Yasser Arafat, Jean Chretien or George W. Bush.
2. There will be teams that will form the media: Web, Paper, Radio or TV media.
3. The simulation will require 2-3 controllers that will oversee the action of countries and the communication in the simulation.

Once teams are formed, the first task for each team is to develop a role profile: a description of the political agenda, character traits, background, interests, long- and short-term political objectives, and potential allies and opponents of the character they are playing. This is a very important task, and requires the students to engage in a considerable amount of research. Students show considerable initiative in tackling this task. For example, contact the embassy of your role character. For many, this may be your first attempt at "real" research.

Role profiles are then made available to all the participating students on the website.

Role Profiles are due:_________________________________________

B. The Simulation

The member countries will be introduced to the Simulation Scenario. At this point country leaders will be asked to negotiate, respond and act depending on the information presented in the scenario.

The aim of each group is to advance their character's interests as far as they can, keeping within the parameters of reality, and the role profile.
As in real life, various communication modes are available. Players can communicate with: other individual players to simulate private discussions and diplomatic communiques; with small groups of other players for regional conferences and meetings, with all other players to simulate press releases.

The Media:

As well as political roles, the simulations also contain media roles, such as the BBC World Service, CNN, or the New York Times (there is usually one media role for each participating university). As in real life, the media is responsible for keeping all the players up to date with the latest developments, through the simulation pages on the Web. Media players can indulge in investigative journalism, interview other players, and sometimes even receive "leaks" from the simulation controllers.

The Controllers:

All communication is monitored by game controllers, in order to prevent excesses, resolve disputes and assess the performances. If players wish to undertake violent actions against other players, they must first submit their plans to the scrutiny of all of the controllers. The controllers determine the plausibility of the action and either allow or disallow it. If the controllers cannot agree on the "legality" of an action, it is referred to the lecturer.

Computer Messages:

Students are free to say whatever they like in their messages, but there are certain ground rules which all teams must observe. For example, players cannot kill each other, and major actions/initiatives need prior approval from the controllers. Actions without such approval can be disallowed, and the team’s grade will suffer accordingly.

Students will be evaluated on their participation on the website Message Board. Each student is required to write at least 4 messages on the Message Board which will be monitored by the controllers and the lecturer.

C. The Conference

The Conference will determine the actions of the various countries involved. Please see the Conference Handout.

The Conference will take place on: ________________________________

D. The Position Paper

Please see the Position Paper Document for details.

Position Paper is Due: _____________________________________________