

Simulation

On Thursday, April 7, you will represent your state/party in a simulation of negotiations to resolve the crisis in Syria. You will be negotiating with a group of students representing the other major players in the Syria conflict (see below for a list of negotiation groups). You must meet during your regular class period, but you need not meet in the regular classroom. Arrange in advance with your group where you will meet to conduct the negotiation.

The United States representative will act as the chairperson for the negotiations, calling the meeting to order and setting the agenda for talks.

The Russian representative will act as the rapporteur (note-taker) for the talks. The Russian representative is responsible for sending an email to Professor Kaplow after the talks conclude with the details of any agreements reached.

How the Talks Work

The US representative will call the negotiation session to order promptly at the beginning of class time on April 7. The representatives will make proposals and seek to negotiate a resolution of the crisis. The talks will conclude promptly at the end of the class session. Do not go over that time—some members of your group may have to get to their next class or to other commitments.

By midnight on April 7, the Russian representative will email Professor Kaplow with a description of the agreement reached by the group, or to report that no agreement was reached. Please copy the other members of the group on that email.

Objective

Your objective in the negotiation is to secure an agreement that advances the goals or interests of your state/party in Syria. That is, you want two things:

1. To reach an agreement.
2. To support your goals and interests in Syria.

These objectives are sometimes in tension. You want a deal, but don't sign on to an agreement that runs counter to the interests of your state or party.

Preparation

There is no assigned reading for the simulation, but you should prepare. Familiarize yourself with the goals of the other parties in your negotiation (take advantage of the list of sources from the policy memo handout, repeated below). Come up with a proposal for a peace agreement in Syria that you think can win the support of the other parties, and that also supports your interests. You should also try to anticipate proposals that are likely to be made by other representatives and think about how you will respond.

Survey

Each participant will fill out an online survey after the simulation has concluded. The survey will ask you several questions about the performance of the other members of your negotiation group:

- Did they show up on time?
- Did they come prepared to negotiate?
- Did they take the simulation seriously and engage in the assigned task?
- Did they stay engaged in the negotiation until talks concluded?
- How would you grade the performance of the other members of the group?

The responses of your fellow group members will be taken into account when calculating your grade for the simulation/response paper.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Simulation

Do I have to do this?

Yes.

Why are we doing this?

To illustrate some of the complexities of international negotiations. To give you a chance to apply your knowledge of the Syria crisis. To provide an example of crisis bargaining, which is an important part of international politics.

What are the rules?

Prepare. Show up on time. Take it seriously. Stay until the end. Do your best both to reach an agreement and to support the interests of the state/party you represent.

This isn't going well. No one will agree to anything. What do we do?

Welcome to international diplomacy. Ask questions of your fellow representatives and try to understand what they are looking to accomplish in Syria. See if you can find areas where you agree. Try to break the problem into manageable pieces. You can do it!

What if we can't reach an agreement?

It happens. Do your best to reach an agreement, but don't sign on to an agreement that runs counter to your goals/interests in Syria.

Can we make agreements that don't include all the parties?

Yes.

Can we make multiple agreements that cover different aspects of the crisis, or that include different parties?

Yes.

Can we make secret agreements?

No. Secret agreements aren't worth much in international relations.

We can't reach an agreement! Can I leave early?

No. Stick it out and try to make a deal.

We reached an agreement! Can I leave early?

Congratulations! The negotiation probably will take the whole class period, though, so see if you can find ways to improve on the agreement in the time remaining. If you reach an agreement early, and you're sure you can't improve upon it, then you can take some well-deserved time off.

I'm the Russian representative. What do I put in the email to Professor Kaplow?

Describe the agreement(s) reached by your group. Be clear about each party's commitments. If you didn't reach an agreement, say that. Try to get all group members on board with how to describe the agreement before you send the email. Be sure to copy the other representatives on the email so they can correct you if there's a mistake.

I disagree with how the Russian representative described the agreement in the email sent to Professor Kaplow. What do I do?

Reply to all and set the record straight. That's why you were copied on the email.

I'm uncomfortable with the unstructured nature of this assignment.

I feel your pain. Do your best to reach an agreement that supports your goals/interests in Syria. You can do it!

Reaction Paper

For your reaction paper, due April 14, you will reflect on the outcome of the simulation, analyzing your success in realizing the goals of your state/party and examining the barriers to a resolution of the crisis.

In no more than two double-spaced pages (using a standard 12-point font and 1-inch margins), answer these two (multi-part) questions:

1. Were you successfully in supporting the goals of your state/party? Why or why not? What could you have done differently that would have given you a better outcome?
2. What was the main barrier to an agreement in your negotiation group? How did you overcome it (if you did) or how could you have overcome it (if you didn't)?

This paper requires no outside research. Just reflect on what happened during the negotiation. Submit the reaction paper via Blackboard (as a PDF file, if possible) before class on April 14.

Resources

Here is the list of resources from the policy memo handout. You may find these useful as you prepare for the simulation.

General background

<http://syriadeeply.org/>

<http://www.cfr.org/syria/hbo-do-syria/p37408>

[http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Syria 90 Day Forecast 24 FEB 2016%281%29.pdf](http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Syria%2090%20Day%20Forecast%2024%20FEB%202016%281%29.pdf)

<http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2016/02/25/federal-syria-its-time-to-recognize-reality/>

<http://www.iiss.org/en/regions/syria/despite-good-intentions-prospects-for-syria-ceasefire-are-gloomy-4d6e>

US

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2016/02/22-confederal-model-syria-ohanlon>

<http://us-russiafuture.org/publications/working-group-papers/the-u-s-and-russian-interventions-in-syria/>

<http://duckofminerva.com/2016/02/the-triple-imperative-a-new-plan-b-for-syria.html>

https://twq.elliott.gwu.edu/sites/twq.elliott.gwu.edu/files/downloads/TWQ_Winter2016_Byman.pdf

<http://warontherocks.com/2016/02/high-time-for-intervention-the-united-states-must-invest-in-its-partners-to-turn-syria-around/>

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2016-02-16/fight-or-flight>

Russia

<http://us-russiafuture.org/publications/working-group-papers/the-u-s-and-russian-interventions-in-syria/>

<http://warontherocks.com/2016/02/the-russian-quagmire-in-syria-and-other-washington-fairy-tales/>

<http://csis.org/publication/best-enemies-russia-turkey-confrontation-beyond-syria>

<http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=62207>

Turkey

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2016/02/19-turkey-syria-challenges-kirisci>

<http://warontherocks.com/2016/02/prospects-for-a-turkish-incursion-into-syria/>

<http://www.nationalinterest.org/feature/solution-syria-the-kurds-turkey-the-us-can-agree-14226>

Syria

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2016-01-19/assad-has-it-his-way>

<http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/2015/06/02/iran-s-stakes-in-syria-s-economy/i9ce>

<http://www.tcf.org/blog/detail/inside-bashar-al-assads-syria>

Opposition

<http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=62263>

<http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=62239>

http://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Syrian%20Opposition%20Guide_0.pdf

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/19/opinion/one-mans-syrian-resistance.html>