



NATO Model Event Read-ahead Package

Introduction

This Read-ahead document has been produced to supply the necessary background information required to enable participants to prepare themselves and thereby get the most out of the NATO Model Event.

Aim

After reading and digesting this read ahead, participants should have a better understanding of:

- What they can expect to gain from the experience
- What is expected from them
- How to prepare for the event
- How they should conduct themselves during the event

Background

The NATO Model Simulation is designed to provide participants with exposure to decision-making within NATO. Each participant will play the part of a National Permanent Representative (Ambassador) known as Perm Reps (abbreviation for “Permanent Representatives”), representing his/her Nation in the North Atlantic Council or NAC. The Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC), which advises the NAC on military policy and strategy, will be played by an ACT staff member to provide advice or guidance as it is called for. The NAC is the highest level of decision making in NATO. It is chaired by the Secretary General and is the arena in which ultimately all NATO actions and activities have to be agreed by a process of consensus. This process requires the consent of all 29 Allies to approve a motion. Even a solitary dissenter is enough to prevent NATO acting and hence, the importance of individual interventions by National Perm Reps to promote debate and craft proposals acceptable to all Allies cannot be overstated.

Specific guidance

To address the 4 specific aims detailed above:



- What can YOU expect to gain from the experience?

That of course largely depends on you! The more you research your role and country background, and the more you actively role-play your nation during the event, the greater your understanding of the complexities and intricacies of high level, multi-national decision making.

- What is expected from you?

The success of the event hinges on you playing an active part in the proceedings. This in turn requires considered and well-phrased statements aimed to further the debate whilst also maintaining your national position. You should be aware of your nations military and foreign policies, albeit in general terms. Are you an interventionist? Are you likely to support military action? If yes can you contribute to it? Do you have specific military capability to contribute?

- So, how can you prepare for the event?

First start watching the news and reading a selection of Newspapers – try to get both sides of a story as most papers tend towards one bias or another. Although you will not be given advance notice of the specific crisis that you will debate, if you get prepared on current hot topics, such as piracy, cyber-issues, Middle East, North and Western Africa, you will not be “strategically surprised” – just to use a much inflated expression. Research your country through the internet. Find out about the economic situation, current political leanings and aspirations. Research your national reasons for joining NATO and who within the community tends to be in line with your national position. You are not expected to be a mini Ambassador, but you should build an awareness of what actions your country has supported or contributed to in recent years either as part of NATO or other independent or coalition military activity. A place to start would be to find out the position your country took regarding Gulf-1 1990/91, Gulf-2 2003, Kosovo, Afghanistan – to present. The more research you do, the easier you will find it to confidently present and debate your national case in the NAC. Given the diversity of cultures and National interests within the NATO community, discussions are inevitably influenced by the underlying political guidance issued to Perm Reps by national Capitals. Such guidance might be a standing “line to take” or specific to a particular issue. Ultimately, the Perm Rep is answerable to his own National government for any statement he makes. Throw away lines or casual flippant comments are therefore not the order of the day. However, the simulation requires certain actions at specific times so throughout the event, be prepared for a “telegram” from your Capital giving specific lines for you to follow. Not everyone will receive such guidance but if you do, remember that it is not a suggestion, it is your government telling you what to do or say. So only ignore it if you are fed up with living in Brussels and don’t need a pension!!

- Finally, how should you conduct yourself during the event?

With courtesy, dignity, intelligence - and low cunning. Ambassadors: are the primary actors in the discussion. They convene to the council the views of their national governments and try through means of eloquence and tactics to put forward the interests of their own country. Everything they say will be couched in “diplomatic terms” so as to avoid unnecessary offence or even the opportunity for offence to be taken. Ambassadors should address their colleagues as “honourable



ambassador”, and the SecGen as “mister/madam Secretary General”; formal language is also encouraged. This is not to be understood as an instance of empty formalism, but as a tool to enhance a fruitful debate and always keep respectful of others, even if the discussion becomes heated (and it will!). Ambassadors may ask the SecGen or the CMC directly for clarification on any matter regarding the issue under discussion: from procedures to military advices and explanations. In order for the ambassadors to request the floor, they shall raise their placard and keep it raised until they receive permission to speak from the SecGen. Ambassadors shall not under any circumstance interrupt other ambassador’s speech, or take the floor without the SecGen’s invitation. Although there is no time limit for the ambassadors’ interventions, we strongly encourage keeping the speeches within a 2-minutes range, as to allow everyone to participate in the discussion. Rational, unemotional considered debate will prove more effective than an emotional outburst and direct criticism or ridicule of another Perm Rep’s comments should at all times be avoided. As a final thought, due to the consensus process, it is unusual that a proposal will immediately satisfy all 28 Allies. Compromise and “constructive ambiguity” in the wording of statements is therefore the key to achieving an agreement in all 28 capitals.

Roles descriptions

- SecGen: leads the discussion and open the floor for the ambassadors to express their views. He/She is assisted by the Chair of the Military Committee (CMC). The SecGen may refer to the CMC anytime he feels the help of a military knowledgeable officer may be helpful to the ambassadors and the discussion. The CMC will also help the SecGen to create and keep track of a speech-list. SecGen needs to remind that the speech-list is intended solely as an instrument that can be useful in giving all the ambassadors the chance to intervene: it is not a binding list, as other factors need to be considered when deciding who’s turn to speak is (how many interventions a single ambassador has made; balance between “big” and “small” states; balance between possible different factions; etc.). The SecGen is also responsible for calling for consensus and votes when a decision has to be made. It is within the power of the SecGen to call for a suspension of the meeting and foster the discussion incentivizing informal discussion during breaks (this is particularly welcome when the discussion is stuck in impasse).
- Ambassadors: are the primary actors in the discussion. They convene to the council the views of their national governments and try through means of eloquence and tactics to put forward the interests of their own country. Ambassadors may ask the SecGen or the CMC directly for clarification on any matter regarding the issue under discussion: from procedures to military advices and explanations. Ambassadors are requested to express their idea following National traits to reach a consensus.
- Media (*if so playing*): is expected to report to an imaginary wider public the development of crises and issues taking place during the simulation. Ambassadors are of course part of this wider audience, but they are not necessarily your primary interlocutors. As in real world, media hold a great power because they truly are the eyes through which we see events happening. This power can be used (and is in fact used) to put forward the medium’s own agenda and to press decision-makers towards a specific outcome. Different media have different backgrounds, different interpretation of reality and (why not?) different goals: although difficult you should maintain a coherent stance throughout the simulation, while strictly



avoiding relating problems to a single individual/ambassador. Press need to be aware that competition between different news-agencies is fierce, as so it should be in the simulation too. Press, in deciding which issues to cover and how to do that will have to take into consideration other agencies' work too: you want to avoid having all press presenting the "same" news report, as your perspective will get lost in a white noise. Press normally works in a separate room, but may at times be allowed inside the room where the NAC meets.

Deliverables:

- Editorials: a news piece that gives an opinion on a topical issue. These pieces should provide opinion based on the information available at the time of printing - not just a narrative of events.
- Interviews: Media will be encouraged to engage with Ambassadors and the Sec Gen for on- and off-the-record statements. These interviews should exploit differing views within NATO, highlight the success or otherwise of any actions taken and establish an accountability vis a vis Ambassadors their decisions or lack of them.

Editorials and Interviews can be either:

- Written submissions: each piece is not to exceed 1000 characters (with spaces).
- Video news clips: should not exceed 2 minutes.

Media/Ambassadors interaction

At the end of each session, the Media will be allowed into the NAC room. The Editorials prepared during the session will then be presented. During the subsequent break Ambassadors will be encouraged to interact with the Media to address concerns, further their own and/or the collective (NAC) position and respond to questions that may arise. The Media will conduct interviews in the first 15 minutes of each coffee break (questions need therefore to be prepared in advance), and edit in the remaining 15 minutes of each break. Interviews will be presented to the Council as soon as the break is over, just before the NAC restart its debate. Timing is essential: should the Media fail to meet these deadlines in preparing their products, they will lose the chance to present them before the next break

In conclusion

Remember the 6 Ps - Prior Planning and Preparation Prevents Poor Performance! Research your national profile, be prepared to speak up to espouse and defend your position but also and perhaps most importantly, enjoy yourself.

Good luck!

