

International Model NATO - Washington, United States (2012)

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In February 2012, a delegation of five postgraduate students from POLSIS and the International Development Department took part in the annual Model NATO event in Washington D.C. Model NATO is a three-day event in which delegations play out the process of debate, negotiation and decision-making within the Atlantic Alliance.



Model NATO is organised by a consortium of American universities (Howard, Kent State and Converse College) and involves role playing of all twenty-eight NATO members plus selected partners including Russia, Ukraine and Georgia. The University of Birmingham was the only UK-based student delegation – POLSIS/IDD students represented the United States and as part of their visit spent a morning being briefed at the US State Department.

Report by Silvia Maglione (M.A. Political Science - Research Methods)

"I think it's very important that this generation get to know and understand NATO; and one very good way to do this is really through simulation, because it's learning by being and by doing." Professor M. Nwanze, Howard University

Indeed **POLSIS offered to us this tremendous opportunity to develop our knowledge on NATO and international security** by sponsoring our delegation for this crisis simulation exercise in Washington DC. Furthermore, the University of Birmingham was the only UK institution to send a delegation to this prestigious event.

Our delegation was headed by Prof. Mark Webber, whose profound knowledge on NATO immensely benefited our delegation, and also ensured the smooth running of the entire event. The extended role model took place between the 15th and 19th of February in the central Washington Plaza Hotel. The event was hosted by Howard and Kent State Universities. The event also included a variety of influential decision makers all of whom further enriched our experience.

As the delegation from the **University of Birmingham we had the pleasure to represent the United States'** view during the simulation which proved to be a very challenging and rewarding task. As every delegation visited the embassy of the country they represented, we had the distinct honour of visiting the US State of Department and spending our first morning having a confidential briefing by a significant number of top officials. This briefing was definitely a highlight of our remarkable visit to the USA.

Our delegation consisted of five members each representing the US on five different committees of NATO. The North Atlantic Council (NAC) was headed by myself whilst my colleagues put a great deal of effort into the Nuclear Planning Group, the Defence Planning, Political Affairs Committee and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.

Representing a super-power and NATO leading force such as the US was in many ways a deeply challenging and sometimes frustrating task. Nevertheless, as a cogent delegation, we managed to achieve consensus within the NAC for the final communiqué whilst representing the vast majority of US interests in the document. Passing the final document through consensus was the pinnacle of the simulation exercise, which was thoroughly achieved this year.

This would have never happened if it were not for the amazing opportunity offered to us by the University, and especially Professor Webber's dedicated and enthusiastic approach to the simulation as well as his efforts to prepare and coach us prior to this terrific event.

In fact, returning to the words of Prof. Nwanze at the closing ceremony, this year's simulation was by far the best he had ever seen. As we represented the most preponderant and influential country for the simulation we would like to attribute this success to the delegation's meticulous efforts of diplomacy and negotiation which we hope will have made the University of Birmingham proud.

The Birmingham delegation was prepared and led by the Head of the School of Government and Society, **[Professor Mark Webber \(/staff/profiles/government-society/webber-mark.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/government-society/webber-mark.aspx)**.

The event is very popular among students and Birmingham students were selected following an essay competition. In the academic year 2012/13, all taught postgraduate students in the School of Government and Society will be able to apply to participate in the event.

At the Model NATO 2013, the University of Birmingham will be representing Turkey and the trip to Washington D.C. will involve a briefing session at the Turkish embassy.

Further details of the Model NATO will become available in the autumn term. It is anticipated that the event itself will take place in early February 2013.

For more details about the recent Model NATO event, please contact **[Mark Webber \(/staff/profiles/government-society/webber-mark.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/government-society/webber-mark.aspx)** Email: **[m.a.webber.1@bham.ac.uk \(mailto:m.a.webber.1@bham.ac.uk\)](mailto:m.a.webber.1@bham.ac.uk)**.

