

BALMUN Conference

After the delayed arrival in Hamburg, due to thunderstorms in the surrounding area, we caught our train at around 8.30PM and headed to Rostock observing some of the landscape on the way from Hamburg to Rostock (in the dark). All said and done, all 3 pupils, Christof Mehlstäubler, Max Bailey, Jonas Schippel as well as Mr. Jurzcak were all settled in at their hosting families etc by 11.30PM.

We missed the "opening" gathering at which the already arrived delegations began dancing and singing together, basically to get to know one another; this was joined by a Red Bull Mini cooper, providing energy drinks to keep everybody lively.

The formal side of the conference began on the Friday with the President of the General Assembly, Marian Wilhun, banging the gavel to open the 4th annual



General Assembly in session

BALMUN conference. The broad topic was "designing future development goals" (the UN had developed goals until 2015, but has not yet developed a new set for after 2015), which was then subdivided into the disarmament

committee, political committee, human rights committee and the environmental committee. Before moving into the actual committees to debate, we heard several guest speakers, including the headmaster of the 'Innerstädisches Gymnasium Rostock' (ISG) the hosting school, the German UN Youth Delegates and the USA diplomat for Politics and Economy stationed in Germany, Karel Bel. After listening to some interesting and insightful views on the topic from a professional level, we were then able to ask her questions relating to the agenda for the conference.

That took until mid-day, at which one of the committees, the Special Conference led by Christof Mehlstäubler and his co-chair left to eat lunch followed by a trip to a local wind turbine production facility, Nordex. We were guided around the main site

of production learning numbers and facts about the wind turbines being produced. This, although quite interesting, was a tedious task for Christof as he had to translate all the technical terms the tour guide was saying in German, into English so that the delegates of his committee could understand what was being said! The delegates discovered first hand about the difficulties of producing such turbines, and also the recent fall of demand- banks are not as keen to hand out loans for said objects as they find them too financially risky. Hence we learned, the company Nordex, which is the 8th largest producer in the world, is only producing 5 turbines a day; in times of high demand they are capable of producing up to 32. Such information was crucial when thinking of the situation at hand, especially in respect to the topic, which was: "Evaluating offshore-technology and creating a concept for renewable energy in the Baltic region."



American Diplomat, Karen Bel giving her speech

Meanwhile, the other committees remained in the general assembly to hear views of the other delegations in the form of opening speeches. The Disarmament Committee, in which Jonas Schippel represented Saudi Arabia were debating the question of "Finding sustainable solutions for the disposal of worn out or disused weapon systems and small arms," and "Finding economical future solutions for ordnance companies by respecting the progressive disarmament." Being the delegation of Saudi Arabia, Jonas obviously had a lot to say on the topic, as they aren't as keen on disarmament especially with the developing situation currently occupying that part of the world. As expected the other big nations such as the United States also put up heavy resistance, especially in the final General Assembly, when all committees came together and all 150 delegates debated.

Meanwhile, the Environmental Committee discussed the question of "Finding regulations against an economic "weapon of the 21st century" - the trade with rare earth elements," as well as "the installation of incentives for the (re) cultivation of unemployed fields in order to provide nutrition for areas with starvation". However, it became abundantly obvious that the key points had not been addressed, as some delegations, for example France attempted to pass an amendment to submit a clause asking the "WTO to impose sanctions on any country attempting to drive up trade prices of rare earth metals." Saudi Arabia was quick to counter this, upon which it came to the question posed by Egypt whether or not "Capitalism was really the best system." Stumped by the nature of the question, Saudi Arabia fiercely responded saying it should rethink its structure before addressing a system in use in 70% of the countries represented.



Some of delegates from the conference

The Political Committee faced the question of "Ensuring programs to provide adequate workplaces and a flexible job market for an aging population with different needs and abilities," as well as "Preventing bribery and corruption in political processes by implementing international guidelines." After being given a broad

definition by the chairs, the delegation of Saudi Arabia, represented by Max Bailey was quick to get involved within the debate and play a major role in the main theme of the debate; targeting "the managers or the workers when attempting to root out corruption." Germany was quite keen on it being the managers and was a hardliner when debating the topic, however in the General Assembly Germany was disassembled by other delegations when faced with all sorts of questions at which point most clauses were stricken from the resolution, thus providing little insight into what the political committee had done.

Last of the main committees was the Human Rights committee which faced the questions of "Finding ways to guarantee equal payment and equal treatment of all people independent of gender, disabilities and origin," and "Creating a global partnership for educational programs in Africa to insure sustainable development programs." Naturally, Saudi Arabia was opposed to some points brought up by the committee, being a strict Muslim country. That being said, it did not seek to support its views, rather it wished statements to be phrased as vague as possible so that it would not seem too imposing, as well as to counter possible side effects and ideas drawn on by radical groups. That way, Saudi Arabia did not work counter-progressively to the debate, they helped make it accessible for all.

Other than the 4 main committees and the Special Conference there was the Security Council, composed of the 5 most power industrial nations and several



Jonas Schippel and Christof Mehlstäubler, delegate of Saudi Arabia and President of the Special Conference

invited countries specific to the topic. The topic was "Installing safety measures for the internet in order to prevent future crimes and terrorist attacks," in lieu of "Providing political stability in times of crises with regard to Pakistan." The problem faced by this committee is that they didn't have the delegation of Pakistan present and that they focused on the

second topic. This led to some very restrictive and personal opinion along with exaggerated restrictions. The United States was only being a limited ally, however in light of the recent Bin Laden operation and the conflict that ensued, they were quiet during the course of the debate.

On the Sunday, after all debating in committees had formally ceased; the General Assembly came together to debate a resolution, which was composed of 3 main clauses submitted by each committee. After 'fruitful' and intense debating; and after the president of the Special Conference was asked to debate along with the other delegates of Saudi Arabia, the resolution passed, even if it wasn't to everybody's liking. The resolution on the other hand did provide a good basis to work upon, and with more time and more debating would have most likely been a viable solution for all nations involved.