



Model United Nations of the Far West

Guide to World Press

Contents

Coverage of the United Nations	2
Coverage of the Model United Nations	2
Ground Rules	3
The World Press Organization	3
Operation of the World Press	3
Journalism Principles	3
Preparation	4
Reporting-Source Collection	5

Almost every nation of the world publishes at least weekly, if not daily, one newspaper. Together, hundreds of newspapers along with news magazines make up the modern world press. Many are independently owned, some are closely censored by government and others are government operated. Freedom of the press is not a world wide phenomenon.

Editors, journalist, pressman, and delivery personnel make up the bulk of this industry's labor force. Their product is information. They report on the activities of governments, businesses, and organizations of every color, but mostly, they report about people. Individuals who are heroes and villains, creators and destroyers, young and old. The press tells their stories, it reports on who did what, what they did, why they did it, where it was done and how. The primary function of newspapers is to communicate to the human race what its members do, feel, and think. The press becomes a mirror of the society, a reflection of who we are and what we do.

The principle player in this ebb and flow of information is the journalist. They go about each day in an often routine way collecting bits and pieces of a story, conducting interviews, taking notes at press conferences, and often stepping back through time at the library as they assemble each article, fact by fact. One article might take a few hours to research and write while others take weeks or months to complete. Long term assignments are generally investigative reporting and take a special type of journalist to patiently dig out the facts. The modern journalist is as much an interpreter of the news as a reporter of the news. Its not enough to report the news today, newspapers need to explain and analyze what's happening and even speculate why its happening. Journalism, therefore, demands of its practitioners the widest range of intelligence, knowledge, and experience, as well as natural and trained powers of observation and reasoning.

Coverage of the United Nations

The United Nations is not a difficult assignment most of the year. Most of the larger national delegations have agreeable press officers willing to provide information and answer questions - if the questions are not too sensitive. During the fall of each year, when the General Assembly session commences, a press correspondent's assignment becomes demanding as multiple meetings, many of which can become excitable, take place at the same time. While one can not be in more than one place at a time, there are other ways to get information about meetings.

Coverage of the Model United Nations

The Model UN mirrors the United Nations in a number of ways. There is often a lack of consensus in committee meetings, the official line may not always be the same when heard in the hallways or across the table from a delegate. The back room politics of the United Nations is reflected at the Model UN with the hallway conversations and late night caucusing sessions. It is the adept observer who can discern these diplomatic subtleties and begin to better understand the game of politics and diplomacy, and from there to write about it. Being a correspondent at the Model UN is not a difficult assignment, but like the UN in the fall, it is fast paced and at times very intense. Like the conference itself, the correspondent's time framed is compressed and correspondents will face deadlines for articles.

Ground Rules

While it is the intent of MUNFW to observe the freedom of the press, in cooperation with each Secretariat, the MUNFW reserves the right to not publish any article submitted by a correspondent that is deemed inappropriate, libelous, or which appears to be plagiarized in any manner. Correspondents will be issued credentials, Press IDs, which will admit them into any committee room for the purpose of observation of the proceedings. However, correspondents are strictly prohibited from speaking in any committee to individual delegates or to the committee itself. If a correspondent wishes to speak to a delegate, they may do so only during a suspension of the meeting.

The World Press Organization

The World Press consists of correspondents from national news services assigned to cover the UN. World Press delegates write and submit articles to the daily news publication, a newspaper published once or twice daily. This newspaper disseminates news and opinion, serving as a link between committees and delegates, facilitating the overall integration and cohesiveness of conference proceedings both in and out of committee. The World Press' production staff is headed by the Editor-in-Chief, who with the assistance of editors, production assistants, and reporters, strive to provide adequate coverage of conference events.

Operation of the World Press

The World Press generally has a morning and/or an evening edition. News reports, news and policy analysis, conference related features, editorials, and resolution summaries normally make up each edition. Press delegates are issued credentials allowing admission to any committee room for the purpose of observing the proceedings, and are expected to write at least one article per day. At the conference, press delegates are often assigned to report on specific subjects -committees, agenda items, or other events. These assignments are normally made at morning or evening press meetings. After the morning briefings, delegates begin to pursue their stories. Delegates will write two kinds of articles: news reports and news analyses. News reports contain facts, information and summaries from the journalist's country's point of view and admitted bias; however, the reader must be able to easily distinguish between fact and fiction. A news analysis must draw on knowledge, historic and current perspectives, and remain informative while expressing the viewpoint of the journalist's country. News analyses must be labeled as such. This is an international news service, not a gossip column. There are limited opportunities to extend beyond the basic news story and to cover general aspects of conference, but news and analysis are the primary components of the World Press. Articles are expected to be written in a form appropriate to the content. News articles should be straightforward, concise and informative. And all news articles should use common language—not the flowery and unspecific type common in committee speeches and resolutions—and give enough background so that any reader may easily extract information from them. The length of articles will vary according to their subject, the Editor-in-Chief shall determine the appropriate length.

Journalism Principles

The intention of the World Press is to produce a credible and accurate news summary, with the ideals of a free press and the basic ethics of journalism always in mind. To this end, journalists must remain close to their sources. The most effective tool in any kind of journalism is the direct source: the delegate's words as opposed to the rumor, just as the President's words before the spokesperson. First hand research and observation, and the assimilation of multiple first hand sources make

articles—single-source second-hand information does not. In addition, journalists must also know their material. If a session of the Security Council is the subject of coverage, the journalist must be aware and abreast of the ground rules, topics at hand, general politics at work, and, more specifically, the position of the country from whose perspective the article is being written. The following rules attempt to establish a professional relationship between the press, the delegates, and the Secretariat. The Editor-in-Chief reserves the right not to publish articles submitted by a correspondent that are deemed inappropriate, of poor quality or libelous in any way.

1. The correspondent shall cover that which is assigned or approved by the Editor in Chief, to the best of their ability in order that Press coverage is thorough and accurate.
2. It is the correspondent's responsibility to make deadlines set up by the Editor-in-Chief, unless they have approval from the Editor in Chief for alternate deadlines.
3. Correspondents shall not in any way disturb, interrupt, or, especially, become a party in, the debate or caucusing of any committee. Interviews are appropriate only when agreed to by the delegate and when committee is suspended.
4. Correspondents shall not, in any manner, express their views or comment on any conference proceedings when on duty for the World Press. Views and comments shall be expressed only through appropriate articles. More information on the boundaries of conflict of interest will be discussed by each year's Editor in Chief.
5. Notes, drafts and copies of correspondent's articles shall not be divulged or given to anyone other than the World Press staff. No delegate or member of the Secretariat may influence coverage in any manner other than through the course of an interview or personally written statement to the press. If anyone feels it necessary to influence or approve your work, they should bring the matter to the Editor-in-Chief only.
6. When asking questions of delegates or the Secretariat, the correspondent MUST identify themselves as such, and for which national news service they are reporting, and ask through what means, if any, the source consents to be identified. That which is overheard or part of a speech can be used without consent, however information obtained by the correspondent's intervention, no matter how small, must be consented to.

Preparation

It is not necessary for World Press correspondents to have prior journalism experience to participate in the World Press; however, prior journalism or objective writing experience is helpful. Specific training as to the content and form of articles will be the responsibility of the delegate. A delegate preparing for a Main Committee would research his or her country's international and domestic situation, the background and the nation's policy on the particular agenda items, and the committee rules and procedures; the World Press delegate must prepare in the same way (see the other sections of the Delegate Handbook for more information). In order for a reporter to correctly reflect their nation's point of view (or bias), they must understand both the internal and external conditions and policies of their country. Moreover, although you will not actually participate in committees, you will be covering their proceedings; thus, the more internal politics, tactics, insight into topics and knowledge about the countries represented in the committees you know, the more insightful your reporting and the easier it will be to expose the depth needed in an effective news piece. Having a working knowledge of the rules, common rules tactics used in committee, and the issues being discussed will serve this purpose. In other words, read the Annotated Agenda and do additional research on the agenda topics that are important to the country you're representing and on which you as a journalist would want to report. Also know how MUN committees work both in theory and

practice. An effective method of preparation is to research the news service for which you will be reporting, to obtain background information about how, where, why, by whom and for whom they are published. Delegates should also study general techniques involved in reporting and composing for newspaper articles and practice reporting, interviewing, and writing articles about their school's MUN meetings.

Reporting-Source Collection

Observation is one of the central tenants of reporting. When covering the MUNFW, it is important to astutely observe the committee, delegation, etc., that is the subject of your article.

Take notes on what you're observing, especially direct quotes from the proceedings, noteworthy events or speeches, etc.

Collect copies of any relevant documents such as agendas, resolutions, projects, etc., in order to collect and report the products and work on what you are covering.

You do not need to record all that takes place but you will need to have reference materials about the subject of your article in order for it to be correct and complete.

Gathering information must go beyond mere passive observation. Sources other than yourself must be used in order to complete any news story or features piece.

The interview: Conduct interviews at the convenience of the interviewee, never during committee proceedings except while caucusing if the source consents. Identify yourself as a reporter as well as what paper and country you represent, and the purpose of the interview (i.e, beat coverage, analysis, or a feature). When you record specific quotes, always transcribe them immediately—ask the source to repeat themselves or explain themselves further if necessary. You must ask the source if they may be quoted by name, country or anonymously—you must quote the source in the manner in which they have consented to. Do not espouse your views in any way during an interview, you are an unbiased reporter during interviews regardless of your papers bias or whom you are speaking with. Interviews should be used to gather information and commentary that you could not get from mere observation. Interviews should be used to supplement the information provided in your article, express perspectives of proceedings and gain insight into background politics. At least two sources necessary for any article, and the more the better, but sources cannot completely take the place of observation.

When you, as a reporter or as a delegate gain inside information such as rumor or information given in confidence outside of an interview, it is not usable in an article. However, you may ask such a source questions about such rumors, etc., but all reporting of such information must be gained during an interview for the record or while you are acting as a credentialed (that means wearing it) delegate of the press.

Any questions as to admissible information should be directed to the Editor in Chief. Each different article format has its own set of necessary ingredients. When your coverage assignments are made you will know whether you will be writing a news or features article. At conference, news may entail beat news or simulation emergency news coverage or news analysis. Feature writing will cover regular features as well as secretariat and delegation coverage.

Beat coverage consists of attending committee, questioning delegates — chairs if appropriate — examining resolutions, amendments and present this information as a coherent whole. The purpose of a beat article is to inform the reader as to what happened in a committee, what the main issues of discussion and who the main players are. From your article, the reader should gain a general overview, with delegate commentary, as to what happened in that committee and who was involved. Bias is appropriate only to the extent that it is in line with your country's newspaper practice, but should not bar easy extraction of fact from your article, nor should it exclude unfavorable happenings (in the eyes of your country). Your primary concern is to report the news so that others have a true picture of what went on.

Delegation coverage generally means observing a delegation in appropriate settings, gather interviews and information from the delegates in and out of said delegation. Articles should put the delegations purposes and behaviors into perspective relative to current events, conference happenings and the history the delegation itself. The purpose of delegation coverage is to look at issues or events from the perspective of a country specifically and the representative delegation as a whole to present the aims, points of view and accomplishments of a delegation as they and others see them (but never as the reporter sees them).

Features provide coverage of lively, perhaps nonpolitical, aspects of the conference such as secretariat information, committee profiles, social events and the like, This form may be creative but still demands sources and verified information, the bulk of features stories will not be gossip or farce articles, they serve to add creativity and human interest to the paper, not to make it a tabloid. Features writers need be versed in their country's viewpoint, the workings of the MUNFW in general, and current international events. Other information will be gathered as necessary at conference and features articles will take many forms, Appropriate forms will be discussed as articles are assigned at conference.

News Analysis means educated and qualified opinion and commentary on issues, committee proceedings and the conference as a whole. These are not editorials but analysis based on observation, fact, information and documents. Your perspective may be that of your country to a greater extent here than with news articles but it must be supported by fact and other delegate reaction or trends. Sources are still required. The purpose of news analysis is to provide informed opinion and analysis of conference events so that such may be put in the broader perspective of a region or the international community as a whole the reasons for and affects of events. Such will add insight to events and give a voice to the different opinions of those participating in the simulation.

In summary, these are the various ways and purposes of reporting what you need to collect and why. In general, keep in mind that you are not the news, you are a reporter with a dual purpose; to report the news for your country's audience and to allow all countries of the MUNFW to gather information about the proceedings of the conference regardless of their national perspective.

Story Construction

Once you have finished your observation and gathered all necessary information and consulted two or more sources, you are ready to construct your article. The most important thing to remember is that others must be able to easily follow and understand what you have to say, in other words, can someone who, for example, did not attend the Security Council that day, read your article and henceforth have a good idea of what happened and who was there.

Articles should not be overly long, they should present their information in a straightforward and concise fashion. Committee rhetoric is inappropriate, except in some news analysis. Only important and relevant details should be included. For example, you don't need to say that role was called and quorum established this had to happen for the committee to convene in the first place. But if a discussion that lasted an hour and entailed tricky rule citing ensued when the chair attempted to establish quorum, and the Secretary General had to resolve the dispute, that would be newsworthy.

Organize information-Decide what will or will not be included. Group related facts with corresponding quotes and other information. Decide how you will order your article as appropriate to its form and content (as a general rule chronological order for news articles). Make a brief outline to ensure all necessary areas will be covered and all necessary information has been obtained. Obviously, some delegates will need or want to organize more than others; it is up to you but keep in mind that you are writing in short time and space terms and the organization and readability of your article go hand in hand. Also, the better you write the first draft, the less time will be spent proofing and time will be of the essence.

Write the story: All articles will consist of three parts, the lead, the body and the wrap-up, in that order. The lead is the opening paragraph of the story. It is one or two sentences, news leads identify the who what where and when of a story, This sentence or two should let the reader know what is being covered and the general focus of the article to come read a typical front page story of a major daily newspaper, the first paragraph will follow such a format and this is what yours must also do. Feature, analysis and other leads also identify what the article is about but also serve as a teaser or proposition, if you will. Thus, the lead identifies the subject of the analysis to come, sets the articles tone and peaks the readers interest with its commentary.

The body will be the bulk of your article. For news stories it will present the events, facts and comments of the subject and move from point to point logically with facts, information and comments meshing to form a complete picture. As mentioned before, news articles usually facilitate a chronological form. Quotes and supporting background or documented information should not be grouped separately but be grouped point by point. If the period of coverage combines multiple stages of debate of agenda topic, chronology may be set aside so that each topic may be dealt with separately to facilitate overall logic of organization. For other types of articles, the body may take whatever form or order the author deems appropriate generally the most important information comes first with importance descending as the article continues. Overall, logical and readable organization is what is important. And, most importantly, do not get bogged down in unnecessary information or description, not everything need be included, just what is important. As a reporter it is your duty to determine what is important, this determination should, for the most part, be an unbiased decision.

Wrap-up serves the purpose of letting the reader know the article is closing. News wrap-ups should be one paragraph restating the lead in light of the information presented in the article. Features should be a one paragraph combination of summary and final comment. News analysis should be a one or two paragraph final overall conclusion tied in with the lead. In general, paragraphs should be short and sentences concise. This is not an essay (unless its a news analysis then it can be less rigid). It helps to study daily national newspapers to see this and compare your writing with such.

Once you story is complete, you need to edit it. Would someone outside the issue understand? Is information readily extractable and logically organized? Is the piece accurate i.e. are quotes and sources properly cited, etc? Is it appropriately balanced and biased? Is the language intelligent yet straightforward and unobtrusive? Would someone who never went near what you are covering get an

accurate picture of the proceedings and the issues? Always spell check.

You don't need to be a staff writer for the Washington Post to write for the World Press. You are expected to write a story or more a day, be responsible for the information in your articles and make your deadline. Beyond this it's up to you but remember that your name is on the article and the paper as a whole and being on the World Press is a unique opportunity to not only participate at conference but be recognized by the whole conference for such participation. And it is also a learning experience.

Always keep in mind that you are writing for someone else's information, and that if they can gain information and understanding of that which happens outside their committee rooms and connects the conference as a whole, the purpose of the World Press is served and your job as a reporter has been accomplished.