

# Lessons in diplomacy

## Youths at model U.N. debate make-believe crises

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A German airliner en route from New York to Tel Aviv explodes over Queens, N.Y. In this simulation of a looming international crisis, a terrorist group claims responsibility for the bombing. What are student diplomats to do? Propose a worldwide plan for upgrading airport safety to the Central Texas Model United Nations, that's what.

Debating a response to the make-believe emergency, the students are learning to negotiate, debate and, above all, think globally.

"It's not fair to make everyone in the world be in fear when they get on an airliner," said Elizabeth Tulis, an LBJ High School senior, arguing for a proposal to install baggage X-ray machines in international airports.

Meeting on the University of Texas campus this week, more than 250 Austin-area students are tackling issues taken from the agenda of the real United Nations. Leadership spots are filled by university students like Barry Kamar, a UT sophomore serving as president of the Security Council, but delegates are high school students, and about 35 pages have come from Austin's Pearce, O. Henry and Bailey middle schools.

The point is to gain experience in thinking through complex problems and working together for solutions, said Jason Schwartz, a UT student serving as this year's secretary general.

Back in the Security Council meeting, the counter that the alternative is more terrorism, until Kamar gently suggests that those who dislike parts of the plan should propose amendments.

The students have another day to hammer out a consensus, as the conference continues today.

**Illustration:** David Kennedy

COLOR PHOTO

Bowie High student Andrea Augustin, representing Honduras during the Central Texas Model United Nations on Friday, raises her country's card to vote on a procedural matter. She and more than 250 other students debated issues from the agenda of the real United Nations.

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