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Pardee Michael Corgan Fund Essay

Working as a Diplomat Assistant at the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations for my internship was a long-held ambition. Given my upbringing in Pakistan and my enduring interest in global politics, I have long been committed to safeguarding the human rights of Pakistanis and Kashmiris. I worked under the supervision of Saima Saleem, who is the second secretary and Pakistan's first visually impaired UN diplomat and civil servant. Working under her supervision, I was inspired to advocate for Kashmiris living under the Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir. As a part of my role, I attended many high-level ECOSOC, UN General Assembly, and UN Security Council meetings on the recent war between Pakistan and India in May. I amplified Kashmir's stance for self-determination and Pakistan's continuous peace and de-escalation efforts in the region.

Simultaneously, it was an honor to represent the viewpoint of Pakistani civilians and the consequences of terminating the Indus Water Treaty on the livelihoods and farmlands. I voiced Pakistan's stance on continuing the Indus Water Treaty as a symbol of peace and mutual interest between India and Pakistan, while also discussing the importance of preserving nature, geopolitical stability, and the possible impact on climate change.

Throughout this internship, I was given the flexibility to switch between diplomats and learn about Pakistan's stance in the Middle East, where I attended high-level meetings on the question of Palestine and vocalized Pakistan's stance against the Israeli occupation and genocide in Gaza. It was a pleasure to attend the conference on Palestine, organized by Saudi Arabia and France, in July.

Some days, my supervisor required me to attend meetings and events organized by other UN Permanent Missions. I observed several meetings on the status of women and children as part of the UNDP series, Canada's efforts to support the disabled communities, and the question of Syria's future. My role in these meetings entailed taking detailed notes to present to my supervisor, to then respond through a diplomatic lens. Most days, I was tasked to develop well-researched responses for the Third and Sixth Committees concerning the Indus Water Treaty, Kashmiri human rights, geopolitical security, and counterterrorism. In total, I contributed to over 15 publications on the Pakistan Mission's website. Throughout this process, I conducted legal and policy research on state sovereignty and its relevance to international law, and national security threats to support Pakistan's stance in the Middle East and South Asia.

This experience was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, as it allowed me to build a network in the realm of diplomacy and international politics while gaining first-hand insight into how diplomacy works. It helped me further solidify my career choice. I realized that in the future I would not want to represent a country, not even my own, because diplomacy tends to limit the ability to advocate for minorities or address internal issues, focusing instead on highlighting only positive aspects. I envision myself creating a tangible impact through international human rights law, rather than dialogues. Even though I might not represent a country in the future, this internship really helped provide a clearer perspective on what I wish to pursue in the future while building social capital. I am very grateful to the Pardee School and the Michael Corgan Fund committee for funding this experience.







