

THAIMUN IX
THE UN
PRESS CORPS



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Overview of the Committee

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

By definition, a Press Corps is a group of journalists and media team tasked to cover a particular location or notable figure. The most well known example of a press corps is the White House press corps, tasked to report on the going-ons in the White House, the president's actions and news briefings. However, within MUN, the Press Corps often takes the form of a general media committee tasked with taking pictures and writing about the conference overall, by a group of general reporters and photographers. For THAIMUN IX, we are combining the best of both worlds to create a hybrid committee that allows participants to act as delegates representing individual stances (news outlets) while interacting with the conference in its entirety.

Outside of simulation, the Press Corps is most comparable to the UNCA - the United Nations Correspondents Association. Which is an extension of the UN founded in 1948 that comprises over 200 correspondents from dozens of countries, representing publications, news agencies, and broadcasters from all regions of the world. The UNCA represents the United Nations on issues related to coverage of the news and access to news sources. Additionally, the organisation sponsors press briefings and annual galas recognizing outstanding journalism and work on humanitarian issues by prominent individuals. Overall, the end goal of the UNCA is to keep the art of journalism alive and information accessible.

THE PURPOSE & FUNCTION OF THE PRESS CORPS

In its simplest form, the role of the Press Corps is to ensure transparency across the conference and bridge the gap between information and people. Functionally, delegates are expected to act as agents of global news organisations and represent their views and values. Throughout the conference, they must cover developments within committees under the given general theme. In pursuit of comprehensive coverage, they may flit through different committee rooms, organise and attend press conferences, interview delegates, and write articles to be published on a selected social media platform throughout the conference.

Once an article is published, it will have bearing on the entirety of the conference - for example, a quote in an article by the delegate of China on Human Rights can be used both in UNHRC and any other committees. Thus, it is vital for us to deliver a hundred percent accuracy (or not, if you want to create some friction!).

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

There are 3 primary constituents of the Press Corps:

1. Editor-in-Chief(s): Role served by the chairs of the committee. Vet and publish articles, advise correspondents and moderate the committee.
2. The Outside: Comprising the entirety of the THAIMUN conference that is affected by the proceedings in the press corps as well as the abstract “outside world” served by the backroom (chairs) that decides the outcome of articles and how they are received.
3. Journalists / Correspondents: Delegates tasked with covering the conference, writing articles, interviewing and developing issues.

The Press Corps at THAIMUN IX will comprise the following news outlet:

Organisation	Description
Al Jazeera (Qatar)	Al Jazeera is an independent news organisation funded in part by the Qatari government. Launched in 1996, it was the first news channel in the Arab world dedicated to comprehensive news and live

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	<p>debate, with the focus on people at its epicentre. However, it has been widely criticised in the Arab world, particularly by Arab world leaders for its handling and normalising of taboo topics.</p> <p>As of 2017, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan have kicked Al Jazeera bureaus out of their countries, going as far as banning hotels from offering the channel. Additionally, the diplomatic war between Qatar and a group of Arab states, has one key demand at its forefront - shutting down Al Jazeera.</p>
<p>Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)</p>	<p>Established in 1993, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) is Australia's national broadcaster. It is principally funded by the Australian Government and is administered by a government-appointed board.</p> <p>As a publicly-funded broadcaster, the ABC is expected not to take editorial stances on political issues, and is required under its charter enshrined in legislation to present a range of views with impartiality. However, not unlike other news outlets, over time, the ABC have frequently been criticised for bias, particularly leaning to a left-wing political bias.</p>
<p>BBC (UK)</p>	<p>The BBC is a public service broadcaster established by Royal Charter. It is primarily funded by the licence fee paid by UK households to access their services. The span of BBC extends the global sphere, a fact only supported by its broadcasts in 42+ languages.</p> <p>However, BBC has been widely criticised for its biased reporting - particularly their anti-Indian sentiments when reporting on South Asian politics, fake news and deliberate misinterpretation, and anti-American bias among other biases.</p>
<p>CNN (USA)</p>	<p>Founded in 1980, the Cable News Network (CNN) is a multinational news-based pay television channel based in the United States. As of 2018, CNN reached over 90.1 million US households - which was 97.7% of households with cable.</p> <p>The network is known for its dramatic live coverage of breaking news, some of which has drawn criticism</p>

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	<p>as overly sensationalistic and biased. This has been particularly the case in their depiction of the 2020 US Presidential Elections, with a blatant bias towards centrist candidates.</p>
Door darshan (India)	<p>Doordarshan is an Indian public service broadcaster founded by the Government of India in 1959, and owned by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Doordarshan operates 21 television channels, including an international channel known as DD India.</p> <p>Doordarshan has been widely criticised after the fact for acting as a tool for the Indian government to disseminate government propaganda. For example, during Operation Blue Star in 1984 (an operation aiming to rid a prominent political leader), only government sources were used to report the story. Doordarshan was thus complicit in the production of a video claiming acts of violence which, when investigated by independent journalists, were found false.</p>
DW (Germany)	<p>DW is a German public state-owned international broadcaster funded by the German federal tax budget. The service is available in 30 languages and has been broadcasting since 1953.</p> <p>Among criticisms, DW has often butt heads with the Venezuelan government and Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - both occasions that had resulted in censorship of DW's coverage in the respective countries.</p>
Fox News (USA)	<p>Launched in 1996, FNC was created to appeal to a conservative American audience. As of September 2018, approximately 87,118,000 U.S. households (90.8% of television subscribers) received Fox News.</p> <p>Among other notable opinions, Fox News has widely been criticised for <i>“practising biased reporting in favour of the Republican Party, its politicians, and conservative causes, while portraying the Democratic Party in a negative light.”</i></p>
Islamic News Agency (Iran)	<p>The Islamic Republic News Agency or IRNA, is the official news agency of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is government-funded and controlled under the</p>

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	<p>Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Today, IRNA has 90 offices in Iran and around the world.</p> <p>IRNA has often been scrutinised for spreading misinformation about various different events, including Covid-19, Israel, and the attempted assassination of Iraqi PM Mustafa al-Kadhimi. The organisation's accuracy has been additionally questioned.</p>
<p>Jerusalem Post (Israel)</p>	<p>The Jerusalem Post is a Jerusalem-based newspaper started by Gershon Agron in 1932 during the British Mandate of Palestine as The Palestine Post. The paper, which was once considered left-wing, shifted to the right in the late 1980s.</p> <p>With an editorial line critical of political corruption, support for the separation of religion and state in Israel, and opposition to unilateral concessions to the Palestinians, the publication claims to be in the Israeli centre. It is also an outspoken supporter of the State of Israel investing more in World Jewry and educational programs for the Jewish diaspora.</p>
<p>South China Morning Post (China)</p>	<p>Founded in 1903 and currently owned by the Alibaba Group, the South China Morning Post is a leading news media company that has reported on China and Asia for more than a century with global impact.</p> <p>For its steady presence globally, it has often been criticised for promoting China's power abroad as well as being lenient on propaganda owing to Jack Ma's ownership of it.</p>
<p>New York Times (USA)</p>	<p>Founded in 1851, The New York Times is an American daily newspaper with a worldwide readership. In its accolades, the NY Times brandishes 132 pulitzers - the most of any newspaper.</p> <p>While the NY Times cannot be pinned to be biased on the political spectrum, it has been criticised to be aligned towards the interests of corporations that provide the majority of their advertising revenue.</p> <p><i>"They determine, they select, they shape, they control, they restrict — in order to serve the interests of dominant, elite groups in the society."</i></p>

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<p>NHK World (Japan)</p>	<p>NHK World-Japan is the international extension of the state-controlled public broadcaster NHK, with its services aimed overseas.</p> <p>While NHK World has not been the subject of much criticism, NHK, its Japanese counterpart has often been the subject of social controversies.</p>
<p>Rappler (Nobel Peace Prize, Philippines)</p>	<p>Rappler is a website-based news organisation in the Philippines. It is most notably known for its coverage and stance against the Duterte-led government and its war on drugs after Rappler noticed a network of paid followers and dummy accounts on Facebook spreading fake news related to Duterte.</p>
<p>Reuters</p>	<p>Reuters is a global news organisation headquartered in London, United Kingdom. Independence has been at the forefront of Reuters' priorities. However, during World Wars, the British government put pressure on it to serve national interests. Reuters resisted the pressure by reorganising as a private firm in 1941.</p>
<p>Novaya Gazeta (Nobel Peace Prize, Russia)</p>	<p>Novaya Gazeta is a Russian sociopolitical publication notable for its critical and investigative coverage of Russian political and social issues. In their pursuit, several journalists have turned up murdered, in connection with their investigations. Thus, in 2021, the newspaper has notably been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for safeguarding freedom of speech despite adversities.</p>
<p>The Guardian (UK)</p>	<p>Founded in 1821, The Guardian is a British daily newspaper attributed to a socially liberal political stance. Despite being criticised for biases and anti-semitism, the Guardian is regarded as one of the most trust-worthy news sources by households.</p> <p>The Guardian has a reputation as "an organ of the middle class". It has outgrown its status as local newspapers and now has a complex structure with international presence</p>
<p>Xinhua News Agency (China)</p>	<p>Xinhua News Agency, or New China News Agency, is the official state press agency of the People's Republic of China. It is the largest and most influential media organisation in China, as well as the largest news agency in the world, based on the number of correspondents it has worldwide. Xinhua</p>

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	<p>is a major channel for the distribution of information related to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chinese central government.</p> <p>However, the organisation has often been criticised for political bias, censorship and disinformation.</p>
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TERMINOLOGY

- **Press Conference / Briefing:** An interview given to journalists by a notable figure in order to make announcements or answer questions. In the Press Corps, at the EIC's discretion, press conferences may be held on a topical issue where correspondents may ask questions to a political figure to gain material for their articles.
- **Interviews:** Often one-on-one talking sessions with other delegates in different committees in order to establish information for articles.
- **Press Release:** A press release is an official statement delivered to members of the news media for the purpose of providing information, creating an official statement, or making an announcement directed for public release. They are from a primary source, meaning they are original informants for information. In order to make a press release, news outlets must approach or be approached by delegates in other committees and receive information first-hand.
- **Opinion Pieces:** Article that reflects the opinion of the writer, in this case, the news outlet. May aim to reflect, praise or criticise the actions in the conference.
- **News Articles:** Normal articles aiming to report on news.

SEQUENCE OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THAIMUN IX

1. Opening Statements – Each delegation must present a 60-90 second speech giving a general insight into their assigned news outlet's stance on the topic (transparency and corruption) as well as focus on the sub-issues your news outlet deals with that falls under the general topic and the issues being discussed at THAIMUN IX. For example, if you're the Chinese News Outlet Morning Post you could choose to build your stance on transparency with what you hope to uncover in the NPCC when they discuss the rights of Uyghurs in Xinjiang.
2. Unmoderated Caucus – You are expected to use this time to research, visit committee rooms and interview delegates to form your article. Each outlet is expected to send in an article every 30-60 minutes (upto editor's discretion based on depth)
3. Press Conferences – Delegates can organise press conferences by conferring with editors. Press conferences will last around 30 minutes where figures will give statements and answer questions from correspondents. This information and direct quotes can be used in the articles.
4. Submitting Articles – Articles can be published through the editors, who after vetting them will create posts on instagram with the article posted verbatim. Note that aside from written articles, participants can also submit other forms of media.
5. The THAIMUN IX Conference Video – On day 2 of the conference, participants are expected to band together to make a video to highlight the conference.

Structuring Writing

When writing, whether it be OP-ED pieces or news articles make sure to focus on these key things:

1. **Purpose:** Since you are the bridge between information, the way you want to portray your writing can significantly sway public opinion. Make sure to write with an end-goal in mind - are you trying to sway opinions towards a certain side of the political spectrum? Is your goal 100% journalistic integrity? Before you even start writing, make sure to tune in with one sentence that describes exactly what your purpose is, and centre your work around it.
2. **Points:** Trust in the intelligence of your readers enough to know that they can sniff out faulty logic. Make sure you have a point - better if you have several to back things up. Build your argument around your strongest point. If you have conducted interviews, make sure to use direct quotes.
3. **Audience:** Read the room so to speak. Make sure the tone you are using resonates with your audience. If your news outlet caters towards liberals, make sure your writing resonates that.
4. **Visual Aids:** Your editors will attach visual elements with your writing when publishing them, but you will be doing yourself a favour if you send them pictures and videos that go with your writing. Afterall, know one knows your writing better than you.
5. **Language:** You don't need to use the fanciest words to write, but you need to make sure you are using the right language that resonates with people and upholds what you want to say. Aim for punchy, short text when you want to grab attention. Use detail and imagery when depicting sad scenes. Play with words, grab attention.

Topic: The Question of Transparency and Corruption in Foreign Press Discussion

INTRODUCTION

Transparency is an issue within all national governments with international significance. Many believe that the people deserve to know their political leaders' activities and financial loggings, while others believe that "ignorance is bliss". This leads to multiple debates on whether or not governments should be open to the public of their activities with the nation's funds and services. When individual actors, namely corrupt officers, politicians, or dictators marginalise transparency for their personal gain, their countries face financial crisis, incapable administration, and ineffective judicial systems. A lack of communication with the populace results in greater corruption at the expense of individual liberties. The press and others are therefore responsible for supervising governmental activity in cases of corrupt activity, and deterring such by this type of citizen-oversight.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY OF THE TOPIC

Dangers of lack of Transparency

The lack of transparency leads to greater abuse of power as it cuts down the responsibility within governing bodies. In the long run, this can result in both financial and infrastructural issues that prevent the societal development of a nation.

Mexico and Administrative Transparency

Being opaque in judicial and administrative processes also leads to the dispute between the people and the government. In Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto was elected to be "the President who was going to transform Mexican society" in 2012. He yet failed to meet the people's ideal objectives, and avoided accountability by covering up numerous scandals in regards to accepting bribes, and such discreditable behavior. For instance, In one case, over 43 college students went missing with the government arguing they were burned by a group of gangsters. Though Satellite images from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights refute them, the public is oblivious to acknowledge the government

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actions and the press is impotent to report them. This makes Mexico become vulnerable to greater scandals to a further extent, and no person will be there to speak on it, therefore making it even more difficult to attain transparency within the Mexican government.

Greece and Financial Transparency

Financial transparency is essential to nations like Greece that heavily rely on international aid. Because their financial situation is so unsteady, it is considered a major threat to countries utilising Euro currency. Nevertheless, when Greece was given 350 billion USD by the EU, widespread corruption prevented the money from being used to their advantage. Instead, the Greek Parliament passed laws that legitimised the illegal spending of state funds on private matters. Corruption within the Greek government is self-perpetuating. It is a never ending cycle as the system condones corruption, requiring more aid from time to time. Being opaque only hindered the country from achieving transparency, and publicising every funding and expenses officials are held accountable for their costs and, if any personal spending is involved, prosecution of violators will be relatively trouble-free.

Why transparency?

Being obligated to share information with the public regarding the government's management of taxpayer dollars and expenses of the political representatives largely contributes to holding the government accountable to people of the nation. It gets the public engaged, therefore enhancing the effectiveness of the governing system and promoting quality decision making. In effect, a system which regulates itself and is free from corruption is created. The barrier to implementing such vision is the political figures in maintaining their power and securing their long-term health. Each and every nation has national sovereignty, which is why the UN is unable to force them to strengthen their transparency. This is why the ideal resolution seeks to resolve this issue requires an incentive for them to do as suggested. A resolution must indicate the approach to prevention of corruption that has been done by the transparent nations and effectively address the issue, so that it is universally ratified. In order to achieve the absolute system, it is important to make use of the external organisations. Empowering the people and the press can create a long lasting check on government transparency, as they work to communicate with the public as well.

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KEY TERMS:

- **Government Transparency** - A transparent government is one where details of administration are accessible by the public, including financial information, election information, and judicial processes
- **Corruption** - A fraud by high authorities that frequently involve financial bribery
- **Bribery** - In the context of political corruption, bribery involves giving or receiving an unearned payment to a government official to influence their use of official powers.
- **Free press** - The right for news organisations to publish books, pamphlets, newspapers, or periodicals without restraint or censorship subject only to the existing laws against libel, sedition, and indecency
- **Media Transparency** - The transparent exchange of information subsidies based on the ideas of newsworthiness
- **National Sovereignty** - The ability of a government to control all matters of state. This means a country can do what it wants within itself and cannot be forced to do anything.

TRANSPARENCY & CORRUPTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THAIMUN IX:

The aim of the Press Corps at THAIMUN IX is to act as a central organ of the conference that bridges committees together. Our job is to make information accessible and proceedings transparent to ensure accountability and that there is no disconnect between delegates' stances.

Before THAIMUN IX, each Press Corp Delegate is expected to already have thought of the topics they wish to cover throughout the conference. They can do this by glancing over the different topics that are being discussed in each committee and linking them to 1. The News Organisation's ethos and 2. The topic of Transparency and Corruption.

For example, if you are the Delegate representing the South China Morning Post you are likely to take an avid interest in the NPCC (National People's Congress Standing Committee, China) discussing foreign IPO of national companies. Not only because changes in the Chinese economy and government directly affects the outlet but also because on numerous

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occasions the organisation has published work that cracked down on the importance of transparency when dealing with legislation affecting economies and market rules.

The key takeaway is that you not only have to write about transparency but you must contextualise it to the conference. We highly suggest you come up with leads ahead of time and explore two or more throughout the conference.

DISCUSSION OF THE TOPIC:

The media is where people are informed about events around them that may affect them. It is the source of information for the public, and it is where they receive the updated information they should be aware of. However, information is often twisted or changed, which can be extremely misleading for the public. Because information is so easy to access, it also doesn't take long for them to spread, and even alter as it's difficult to weed out what is actually true. The lack of transparency in the media can also be perceived as a form of corruption. The concept of Media Bribery emerged in response to claims of bias within the media. In the modern world, people, in many cases, tend to be sceptical towards news and information released on the internet. Genuine news media publications are faced with a public that no longer knows what and how to trust. Therefore, there is a need for change in transparency in news publications so that the public trust of news is built. This can be done through the acquisition of where and how certain news are crafted. Reporters and journalists being transparent about their source of information can show respect, prioritisation and consideration towards the audience while taking responsibility for the news they are publishing in the media. Once and for all, they must make a greater effort to specify and cite whatever the original source material may be, to offer ways for the audience to participate in the news-gathering process, and to be responsive to requests for correction. This way, they are able to establish credibility and transparency. By being more transparent and honest with the public, by being willing to redact and fix mistakes and by showing how stories are created, the credibility of news and the faith of the public will only continue to rise.

BLOC POSITIONS:

BBC

Internationally, the BBC is the ruler of the airwaves and owns the best reputation for the highest journalistic standards. BBC operates as transparently as possible and takes its duties seriously by being consistent with biases and involving real experts on call, along with real foreign correspondents on the ground. It's funded by the licence fee paid by UK households. Their performances are monitored and reported in the Annual Report and Accounts, therefore being directly accountable to licence and fee payers, maintaining their independence. They take their responsibility to operate transparently and conduct audience research with the use of their network of Audience Councils to update themselves on the views of licence fee payers across the UK. They publish the findings of each and every editorial appeal decision, outcomes of value for money, service licence reviews, and minutes of their monthly Trust meetings. For instance, their position was once on Brexit and Donald Trump, but unlike CNN, they chose to remain honest and credible by not manipulating or disgracing themselves before the votes.

The New York Times

The New York Times is an American daily newspaper based in New York City with a worldwide readership. After 162 years, it still remains as America's flagship news source, the first place people world over look for news of the United States. They have also developed a national or even worldwide reputation for thoroughness. Though some criticise the NYT for editorial biases, the New York Times highly researches and verifies sources, and writes primary news articles. The majority of papers from across the nation just republish articles written by other sources such as AP, Reuters, NYT, with little to no original content. The Associated Press is a cooperative that uses its own reporters as well as news accounts from media outlets throughout the world.) The New York Times has won more Pulitzer Prizes by far than any other paper. It is therefore considered the primary newspaper of record.

TOPICS PRESS MUST COVER:

- **The role of transparency in Journalism:** The importance of openness and accountability of the media in ensuring that the information being relayed to the public is unbiased, accurate and does not aim to sway public opinion. To what extent is it necessary to disclose the inner workings of news outlets (medium of income, sponsors, etc.,) as a precursor for information mediation? How do we hold ourselves accountable and prevent corruption?
- **The role of transparency in Government:** Why transparency is necessary in government and to what extent governments must disclose information to the public. How journalism can bridge the gap between government and transparency. How information on politics and government can be made more accessible to the public.
- **Transparency and Corruption in the Context of UN Issues:** How issues like the Uyghur Genocide, passing of gender equality acts in education, and other UN issues require transparency to prevent corruption. What role can media and journalism play in that endeavour?
- **Transparency and Corruption in the Context of THAIMUN IX:** Whether committees and delegates within the conference adhere to the limits set for anti-corruption and to uphold transparency. Whether there is a disconnect in the way that delegates interact between committees and how to hold them accountable.

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