



University of
Pittsburgh

Asian Studies Center

University Center for International Studies

*NOTE: Since there is no real delegating body within Asia that functions in the same way as the United Nations or European Union, we have selected the recently formed 15-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) to serve as the body to debate, respond to, and resolve issues that are pertinent to Asia and the surrounding region.

**In addition, as this is a crisis simulation designed to encourage high school students to think critically and debate substantively about Asian-centered geopolitics, the Yeonpyeong Island bombardment is being presented as having occurred a week prior to the RCEP delegation meeting, whereas the actual event happened on November 23, 2010.

Asia Challenge Crisis Simulation

The first annual Asia Challenge Crisis Simulation* for high school students will take place on Thursday, March 18, 2021 virtually via Microsoft Teams. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), comprised of Australia, Brunei, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Vietnam, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea (South Korea), and Thailand will meet to address immediate and long-term crises affecting the partnership. There will be two sessions for the day.

In the morning session, the debates will center around the immediate crisis of North Korea's recent bombardment of South Korean forces on Yeonpyeong Island in the Yellow Sea** and the longer-term threat of North Korean nuclear aggression. This past week, in an escalation of tensions, the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea (DPRK) fired approximately 170 artillery shells and rockets at Republic of South Korean (ROK) forces stationed on Yeonpyeong Island off the Korean peninsula. While North Korea claimed that they were responding to South Korean shells being fired into North Korean territorial waters, this area of the Yellow Sea—the Northern Limit Line— is disputed by the two powers, and North Korea has been internationally condemned for its actions. Former US ambassador to the UN, Bill Richardson, has been involved in the negotiations to ease tensions in [what is being described as one of the region's most serious crises since the 1953 Korean War armistice](#).

The crisis at hand is deepened by North Korea's successful testing of its first inter-continental ballistic missile, the Hwasong-14 ICBM, in July of 2017. This missile is capable of reaching within striking distance of all RCEP member states and is central to North Korea's efforts to achieve full nuclear weapon capabilities. Thus, we are committed to working with member states to ensure a coordinated response to this aggression— including

consideration of retaliatory strikes— that utilizes all available RCEP resources to protect lives and national interests.

The member-states will strategize ways in which they can mitigate this threat to maintain peace in the region while also ensuring their countries' individual security and prosperity. *An additional crisis will be introduced at some point in the morning session related to the Korean Peninsula crisis that will require an immediate response by the RCEP delegation.*

In the afternoon session, debate will center around unstated issues that have arisen out of RCEP's (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) inception, which was joined on November 15, 2020 by today's 15 member-states and is arguably the largest free trade agreement in history. "RCEP will connect about 30% of the world's people and output and could add \$209 billion annually to world incomes, and \$500 billion to world trade by 2030. However, while RCEP will incentivize supply chains across the region, critics argue that it has been too accommodating and unwilling to confront political sensitivities in the region. [Its intellectual property rules add little to what many members have in place, and the agreement says nothing at all about labor, the environment, or state-owned enterprises.](#)"

The afternoon debate, therefore, will address these challenges within RCEP, and attempt to tackle the next steps for inter-regional consensus and collaboration around these issues. *An additional crisis will also be introduced at some point in the afternoon session that will require an immediate response by the RCEP delegation.*

Participating schools, upon assignment of countries, will be invited to write position papers on any of the five topics:

1. Korean Peninsula Crisis: the disputed maritime border between North and South Korea in the Yellow Sea
2. North Korean Crisis: Nuclear De-Escalation
3. RCEP and Labor Issues
4. RCEP and Environmental Issues
5. RCEP and State-Owned Enterprises Issues

Position papers will be due by Wednesday, March 1.

ASIA CHALLENGE SIMULATION SCHEDULE, Thursday, March 18, 2021

The schedule for the day will be as follows:

8:00 am- 8:30 am—Log in to assigned simulation room in Microsoft Teams; verify technology is working

8:30 am-8:50 am—Virtual welcome by the Asian Studies Center and instructions for the day

8:50 am-11:30 am-MORNING SESSION

8:50 am-9:00 am—Setting the agenda-determine the order of discussion for the topic

9:00 am-9:30 am—Introductory statements by member states—deliver a two-minute introductory position on the first agenda item (Korean Peninsula Crisis)

9:30 am-11:30 am—Debate the crisis and work toward a resolution

11:30 am-12:05 pm—Break

12:15-3:00 pm-AFTERNOON SESSION

12:05-12:15 pm-Setting the agenda-determine the order of discussion for the topic

12:15 pm-12:45 pm—Introductory statements by member states—deliver a two-minute introductory position on the second agenda item (RCEP labor, environment, state-owned enterprise issues)

12:45 pm-2:45 pm—Debate the second agenda item and work toward a resolution

2:45 pm-2:50 pm—Complete an anonymous self-evaluation to assess the skills gained by preparing for and participating in 2021 Asia Challenge

2:50 pm-3:00 pm—Awards announced for best delegations and position papers in each room