



Minnesota International Center
A World Affairs Council

**MEDIA ADVISORY FROM THE MINNESOTA INTERNATIONAL CENTER
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Saint Paul Academy Students to Go to Washington for National Competition

For the second time, the Minnesota International Center is sending a team from St. Paul Academy and Summit School to represent the state at the National *Academic WorldQuest* Competition, sponsored by the World Affairs Councils of America (WACA), in Washington, D.C. on April 20 and 21, 2012.

The team members, Jeremy Tong (11th grade), Ibad Jafri (11th grade), Thomas Toghramadjian (9th grade) and team captain Hagop Toghramadjian (11th grade), have been studying intensively and the topics are not for the faint of heart U.S. Education: Competing Globally; U.S. Energy Policy; U.S. Economic Competitiveness; Middle East; Afghanistan/Pakistan; China; NATO; UN Millennium Goals: Child Health; Azerbaijan and Current Events. plus they will be competing against 43 other teams from 26 states.

Hagop explained, "We divided up the sections, and once each one was covered then we rotate so that each section gets examined by two separate sets of eyes. In another regard, however, we've been studying our entire lives. As a four year old, my favorite toy was my talking globe--I'd sit with it for hours. I actually had all the capitals in the world memorized by the time I was 7 or so. The rest of the team has a similar interest in global issues and geography. Jeremy likes watching the economy, Ibad is an expert on the Middle East, and Thomas specializes in 20th century history. I think part of the reason for our fascination with the rest of the world is that all of us are first generation Americans; Jeremy's parents come from Hong Kong, Ibad's from Pakistan, and Thomas's and my father is an Armenian from Lebanon. We've all been back to our respective ancestral lands multiple times, and lived right in the middle of complex cultures, societies and political systems there. What's more, so many of the "global issues" we study aren't vague hobbies for us; they directly impact our families abroad. For example, when conflict ignites in the Middle East, my cousins' village gets bombed. When China's economy booms, Jeremy's family fundamentally changes its lifestyle. The list could continue, but you start to get an idea of why *Academic Worldquest* is so interesting for our four team members."

The SPA team won the state competition sponsored by the Minnesota International Center on December 1, 2011, beating out 14 other high school teams (and coming in 2nd in the community competition which was held alongside with another 32 teams of adults!)

During their time in Washington for the competition, they will attend receptions at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China and the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Their two days there won't all be work and no play – there'll be time for sightseeing too.

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