



British House of Commons (1810)

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LETTER FROM THE CRISIS DIRECTOR

Welcome, Colleagues!

Welcome to the heady days of the British House of Commons!

My name is Thadeus Obora, and I will be serving as your Crisis Director. I am a fourth-year student and a History/Political Science double major in the college, with a great love for all things Industrial Revolution and historical. I hail from Naperville, in the suburbs of Chicago (Neuqua Valley HS) and love the opportunity I have now to finally live in Chicago. As somebody who almost went to MUNUC when I was in high school, I relish the opportunity to participate in the behind-the-scenes antics that make this conference run well - so much so that after being an Assistant Chair on the Cuba 1960 committee my first year, Chair on the German Unification committee by second year, and the Japan 1960 committee last year, I have returned as an executive! When not frantically working on the background guide for this committee, I can be found exploring the city for new restaurants and foodie-locals, browsing eBay, or repairing vintage fountain pens and typewriters - an archaic hobby that I use to finance all of the binge-eating. Outside of MUNUC, I participate in EUChicago, a research-cohort based group that studies the European Union and its broader policy, ChoMUN, our college Model UN conference, where I serve as an executive, and the UChicago Model UN team, wherein I am occasionally sent across the country to participate in crisis committees - or at least, I was, until the current pandemic.

While no doubt it will be expressed to you in session, I want to reiterate how excited I am to be chairing this hybrid committee! I hope to see lively debate of the sort expected from such an august body, full of the jabs and commentary that make the real House of Commons such a joy to watch.

I look forward to meeting you all in the committee and going through the process of statecraft together! If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to me at thadeusjobora@uchicago.edu, and I will gladly be of assistance.

Regards,

Thadeus J. Obora

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the British House of Commons!

My name is Callaway Rogers and I'll be your Chair for this committee. I'm a fourth year in the college, and after many trials and tribulations I've finally committed to majoring in Political Science. I grew up in Memphis, Tennessee, and while I was lectured ad nauseam about how cold Chicago is (not that bad, actually), I do wish someone had warned me about how lacking the variety of fried food would be. I'm writing my thesis on the strange and unusual thing that is American nationalism, so the topics this committee will be covering are near and dear to my heart. I'm quite looking forward to hearing what y'all have to say during this conference.

I also wanted to take just a brief moment and cover what exactly we will be focusing on during this committee. As is covered in depth later on in this background guide, Europe in 1810 was not a particularly stable place. Napoleon was on a rampage, the rise of nationalism was upending the political order of the Western world, and Britain was struggling to defend her place and expand her influence. This committee will discuss military matters, but it will not get bogged down in the particulars. The committee represents the British House of Commons, not a military body, so it will not concern itself with tactical minutiae such as troop deployments and battle plans. Rather, it should focus on whether or not a war should be fought at all and how domestic society should be changed to best support the fighting of such a war. Napoleon's France, for example, harnessed the power of nationalism to raise a massive army that he used to conquer much of mainland Europe. Some of the key questions I hope the committee will focus on include whether Britain should embrace nationalism and whether Britain's security and national interests require that she fight against France at all.

I'm sure many other questions will be addressed during committee as well, which I am looking forward to with great curiosity. If you have any questions at all, whether they be about procedural matters on the committee and our expectations for it or substantive questions about the content of this background guide and committee, please email me at jcrogers@uchicago.edu or Thadeus at thadeusjobora@uchicago.edu. Once again, I can't wait to meet you all and simulate the British House of Commons.

Callaway Rogers

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

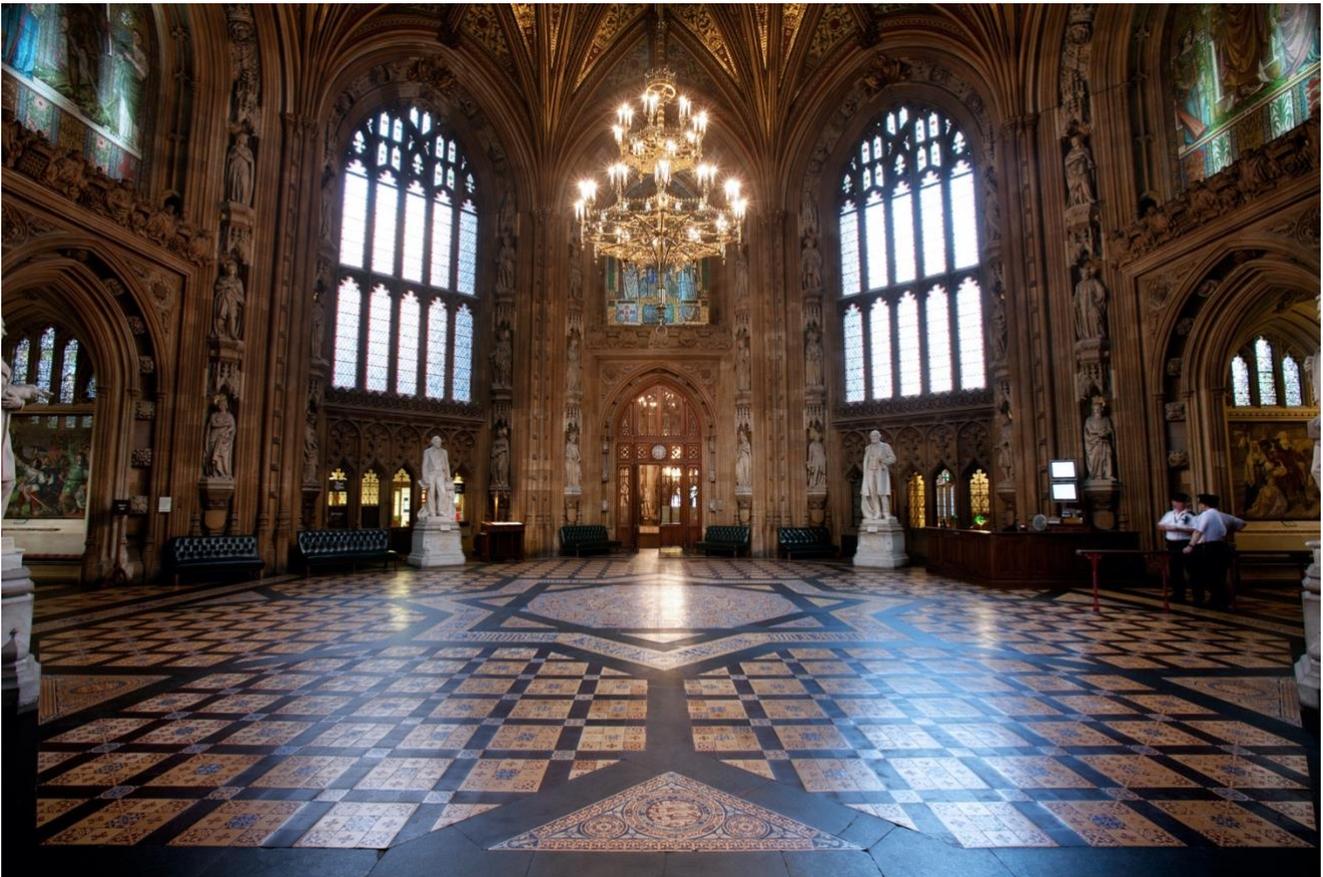
Britain, 1810: the last great hope of the old-world order. Across the Channel, The War of the Fifth Coalition has ended in yet another French victory, giving them dominance over continental Europe. On the other side of the Atlantic, tensions between Britain and the United States rise daily due to the impressment of neutral American sailors and interruption of American trade with France. Throughout Europe, nationalism and revolutionary reforms are being implemented by both Napoleon and his copycats, each searching for an advantage. As stewards of the last great independent country in Europe, Parliament and the House of Commons of Great Britain must decide what reforms to make and what they must preserve if they are to survive the coming conflicts. As things stand, the only things between Britain and the armies of France is the narrow English Channel and the stalwart Royal Navy...

This is where it all begins. Delegates will take the reins of the British Empire through the House of Commons at the beginning of the 19th century. They will have to chart a course through turmoil, navigating between friends and enemies, while dealing with crises as they arise. This is a unique committee, with a unique format, one that will truly show the range of options that can happen. Delegates should come in with a plan to steer the British Empire (or themselves) towards greatness and an open mind to surmount obstacles as they appear.

Hybrid Mechanics

While some of you have likely participated in Model UN committees before, this committee will be a little special. We are a hybrid, and as such will have elements from both GA and Crisis committees. In general, the committee will act as a crisis committee without backroom powers. This means that the committee will write and pass directives. Directives are short, roughly only one to three pages long, and they have direct power over the world of the committee. Those of you familiar with GA's will notice this is different from the resolutions that those committees pass, which have no direct power. These directives will have an impact on the world that the Assistant Chairs and the Crisis Directors will communicate to the committee in crisis breaks that will happen periodically throughout the

course of the committee. Depending on how the conference progresses the committee might also write and pass a resolution, but that process and what exactly a resolution is will be communicated to the body should it become necessary. As mentioned above, delegates will not have backroom powers. All interaction with the world of the committee will occur through directives that the entire body passes.



HISTORY OF BRITAIN

Origins of Parliament and the Rights of Englishmen

According to the most learned Englishman, the custom of holding a “Parliament” is said to be a long standing tradition of the Anglo-Saxon’s dating back to the *Witan* and the *Moot* of the 8th through 11th Centuries AD.¹ The first clear evidence, however, of the assertion of the rights of lords and churchmen over the King comes with the signing of the *Magna Carta* (“Great Charter”) by King John in June, AD 1215 at Runnymede.² Amongst these rights were the right to a trial by jury of one’s peers (a recent and popular English innovation), the idea that the King must also follow the laws, new taxes required general consent of the people, the sanctity of town charters, the right to a speedy trial, *habeas corpus* (the right to know what one is accused of).³ The importance of the *Magna Carta* in the development of Parliament specifically and concepts of free and limited government more generally cannot be overstated. Most notable for the development of Parliament was a clause in the *Magna Carta* that allowed for a council of 25 nobles to supervise King John and ensure that he was in compliance with the charter.⁴

Within twenty years, Parliament was expanded to include two representatives from each shire (local English administrative units) and two from each town; additionally, this Parliament (known as the Parliament of Simon de Montfort) also included lesser lords and wealthy merchants (burgesses), and the topics it addressed ranged beyond approval of new taxes.⁵ A few decades later under Edward I, this pattern became known as the “Model Parliament,” and Parliament was summoned regularly (46 times over a reign of 35 years).⁶ The earliest Parliaments were called largely out of a need for money

¹ “Birth of the English Parliament: Anglo-Saxon Origins,” *UK Parliament*, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/originsofparliament/birthofparliament/overview/origins/>.

² “Birth of the English Parliament: Magna Carta,” *UK Parliament*, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/originsofparliament/birthofparliament/overview/magnacarta/>.

³ “Key Clauses of Magna Carta,” *Salisbury Cathedral*, <https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/magna-carta-what-magna-carta/key-clauses-magna-carta>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ “Birth of the English Parliament: Simon de Montfort,” *UK Parliament*, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/originsofparliament/birthofparliament/overview/simondemontfort/>.

⁶ “Birth of the English Parliament: Changes under Edward I,” *UK Parliament*, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/originsofparliament/birthofparliament/overview/edward/>.

to wage wars, though, by the end of the 13th Century, Parliament had removed Edward II and asserted its authority as an equal part of government.⁷

The reign of Edward III (r. AD 1327-1377)⁸ - his ascension having been endorsed by Parliament - saw the crystallization of many of the structures and powers of Parliament.⁹ Under his reign, elected representatives of towns and counties became permanent members of Parliament and sat in one chamber called the House of Commons; nine years later, the nobility and king were split off from the House of Commons to create their own deliberative house of Parliament.¹⁰ Further, Edward III issued a resolution calling for Parliament to convene annually. Over time, the Lords and Commons began to take a more active role in government, moving beyond their role as council to the king. In AD 1376, Parliament chose Sir Peter de la Mare to serve as the first Speaker of Parliament to the King, voicing the combined complaints of the Lords and Commons with the elderly king's rule.¹¹ This Parliament of 1376 became known as the Good Parliament as it was also the first Parliament to prosecute corrupt royal ministers through a process known as impeachment.¹²

Just twelve years later, the Merciless Parliament met and deposed King Richard II through a trial process, leaving Henry IV as King.¹³ After this trial, Parliament had deposed two Kings in less than a hundred years and picked the successors to the former kings. From this point on, the importance of Parliament in determining the survival of a monarch as well as the line of succession was indisputable.

With the overthrow of Richard II, Parliament was granted numerous concessions in return for supporting the ascension of Henry Bolingbroke.¹⁴ The King affirmed that the Commons must

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Thomas Frederick Tout & J.R.L Highfield, "Edward III: King of England," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edward-III-king-of-England>.

⁹ "Birth of the English Parliament: Rise of the Commons," *UK Parliament*, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/originsofparliament/birthofparliament/overview/riseofcommons/>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "Birth of the English Parliament: The Commons as law makers," *UK Parliament*, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/originsofparliament/birthofparliament/overview/lawmakers/>.

approve all taxes.¹⁵ Additionally, the Commons were recognized as an equal part of the lawmaking process, and no bill could become law without the ascent of the Commons.¹⁶

Until 1536, the 37 counties, each represented by two knights of the shire, were exclusively located within England.¹⁷ That year saw the admission of the twelve Counties of Wales to the House of Commons and the right to elect one knight each.¹⁸ Around the same time, the franchise (requirements to vote for public office) were restricted to create a more aristocratic electorate; predictably, the Commons grew to become a more aristocratic body representing wealthier commoners.¹⁹ A law passed at the time required the representatives of towns to live in their district, yet nearly one quarter lived outside of their burrows at the time.²⁰

In AD 1529 Parliament met to debate a matter of great historical importance: the divorce of Henry VII from Catherine and Aragorn.²¹ The Pope had blocked the annulment of the marriage for years and Henry VIII had made up his mind. Within a few years, Parliament had passed numerous laws transferring religious authority from the Catholic Church in Rome to the Crown and Parliament of England.²² Henry VIII and his successors, throughout their reigns, acknowledged that the Crown *in* Parliament (that is, the King working with Parliament), was the greatest expression of the will and sovereignty of the English people.²³

The reign of Elizabeth I saw renewed tensions between members of Parliament and the crown. One Peter Wentworth was arrested on three occasions for arguing that members of Parliament should be afforded protection for freedom of speech during Parliamentary debates.²⁴ Many historians see this

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "Birth of the English Parliament: Knights of the Shire," *UK Parliament*, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/originsofparliament/birthofparliament/overview/knights/>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "Birth of the English Parliament," *UK Parliament*, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/originsofparliament/birthofparliament/overview/burgesses/>.

²¹ "Birth of the English Parliament: Reformation Parliament," *UK Parliament*, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/originsofparliament/birthofparliament/overview/reformation/>.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "Birth of the English Parliament: Elizabethan Parliaments," *UK Parliament*, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/originsofparliament/birthofparliament/overview/elizabethan/>.

period as a time of the House of Commons realizing its potential as a force of *opposition* to the position of the Crown, not just the reigning monarch.²⁵ Though at this time, Parliament was still summoned by the monarch, saw itself as a servant of the will of the monarch, and was limited in the scope of its debate, rarely touching on issues of national or international importance.²⁶

English Civil War and the Restoration

With the extinction of the House of Tudor following the death of Elizabeth I, the House of Stuart ascended to the throne of England under James I. James was followed by his son, Charles I as king in turn. Charles I had kept England out of the Thirty Years War which was ravaging Germany at the time, however, he was incredibly unpopular at home. The first eleven years of Charles I's reign were known as the "Eleven Year Tyranny" as he dissolved Parliament and ruled through royal decree alone.²⁷ This included raising numerous taxes without Parliament's approval for the reform of the Royal Navy and ecclesiastical reforms foreboding the return of England to the Catholic Church.²⁸

Ironically, the English Civil War was only possible due to uprisings in Ireland and Scotland (other realms under Charles I's rule). In AD 1633, Thomas Wentworth was made lord deputy of Ireland and attempted to make Ireland self-sufficient, conform religiously with the Church of England, to extend British plantations at the expense of Irish landholders, and to 'civilize' the Irish; both the Protestant and Catholic landed elite of Ireland quickly grew to hate the new lord deputy. Similar land policies in Scotland, as well as an attempt to introduce the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* into Catholic Scotland provoked riots.²⁹

In Scotland, the enraged people quickly drew up a "National Covenant" calling for the withdrawal of the *Common Book of Prayers* and justifying revolt against the rule by decree of Charles I. Charles I

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Jane H. Ohlmeyer, "English Civil Wars," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/event/English-Civil-Wars>.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "British Civil Wars." National Army Museum. Accessed December 15, 2020. <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/british-civil-wars>.

quickly dispatched an English army to Scotland to put down the revolt, though this army was soundly defeated, and the king signed a treaty at Berwick in 1639, ending the First Bishops' War.³⁰

Charles, however, was not ready to admit defeat, and he summoned Parliament in 1640; this Parliament became known as the "Short Parliament," as it only sat for three weeks.³¹ The House of Commons was willing to grant Charles the vast sums he desired to put down the revolt, but only if he, in turn, addressed the grievances of the Commons against him that had accumulated over the past decade. In his rage, Charles dissolved Parliament and dispatched an under-paid, poorly trained, and poorly equipped army to Scotland for the Second Bishops' War.³²

The Covenanters (as the Scottish rebels had quickly been named), invaded northern England and took the important northern town of Newcastle. Again, Charles was forced to negotiate with the Scots and, at their insistence, recall Parliament. This next Parliament became rather ironically known as the "Long Parliament," as it assembled at Westminster for the next twenty years.³³ This Parliament immediately impeached Wentworth, who was now an earl, and executed him after a lengthy trial instigated by Protestant and Catholic Irishmen, Scottish Covenanters, and English opponents of Charles I.³⁴

Within a few months, the Ulster uprising broke out in Ireland. The revolt quickly took on religious undertones, pitting Roman Catholics against Protestant Anglicans, as it engulfed the island.³⁵ Protestants and Catholics destroyed each other's property and initiated massacres; the extent of the death is not clear, though the fact that the English government of Ireland's claim of 154,000 dead Protestants is a vast over exaggeration is undeniable.³⁶ A political crisis in England quickly broke out as Parliament and Charles I fought over *who* should lead the army to punish the Irish insurrectionaries. Instead of compromising, Charles mobilized his own forces and rallied at

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ "The Civil War." UK Parliament. Accessed December 15, 2020. <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/parliamentaryauthority/civilwar/>.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Como, David R. *Radical Parliamentarians and the English Civil War*. First edition. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Nottingham; at the same time, Parliament raised its own forces, under its own command: the English Civil War had begun in earnest.³⁷

Neither side enjoyed an initial advantage. Both the Royalists and Parliamentarians faced massive problems in equipping and supplying their armies, though by the start of 1643, their armies both numbered roughly 60-70,000 in number.³⁸ The First English Civil War was almost entirely a war of sieges and skirmishes as both sides scrambled for territory to increase their own resource base and diminish that of their opponents. Charles, while controlling much more territory, failed to capture the wealthy towns of the Southeast, especially London. Despite this strategic failure, Charles maintained his army through 1643 until he was defeated by the Parliamentarians at the Battle of Marston Moor in July 1644.³⁹ The battle caused Charles to lose two field armies while giving the Parliamentarians the chance to reform theirs into a centralized standing army called the "New Model Army."⁴⁰

Ultimate English victory over Charles I came through an alliance with the Scottish. After putting down the Ulster uprising, Charles I was able to pull resources from Ireland to support his campaigns in England and Scotland. Fearing a turn in the war, the Covenanters of Scotland signed a political, military, and religious alliance with the Parliamentarians known as the "Solemn League and Covenant."⁴¹ This treaty required England to establish Presbyterianism as its official state religion in return for Scotland dispatching 21,000 men to aid them.⁴² While aid from Ireland did not arrive in time or numbers to prevent Charles' surrender to the Scots in 1646, the fact that he had sought aid from the Catholic Irish forever ruined his reputation in Protestant England.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ "Who Were the Covenanters?" Scottish Covenanter Memorials Association. Accessed December 15, 2020. <http://www.covenanter.org.uk/whowere/html>.

⁴² Ibid.



In 1647, Charles I signed an agreement with the Scottish Covenanters known as the “Engagement” wherein he agreed to establish Presbyterianism in England within three years in return for Scottish support in restoring him to the throne of England.⁴³ A Scottish invasion failed in 1648, and in 1649, Parliament ordered the execution of Charles I; Scottish and Irish support immediately arose for Charles I’s son Charles II.⁴⁴ In 1650, Oliver Cromwell, the leader of the Parliamentary forces, invaded Scotland and defeated the Scots in the field multiple times. By 1651, Charles II had lost England and fled to France.⁴⁵

Since this civil war, the people of the British Isles have had a deep distrust of standing armies. Additionally, religious tensions and debates were greatly heightened and the relationship between Parliament and the King thrown into chaos.⁴⁶

British East India Company

From its chartering in 1600 as the English response to expanding Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and other European expansion into Asia, the British East India Company would go from merely a trade

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

organization to an intense monolith of political and economic power and control. The founding of the British East India Company represented a shift in British policy towards the outside world and was a conscious decision to join a new world order of Imperial states. Britain at its founding was relatively poor, overwhelmingly agrarian, and had just emerged out of decades of internal conflict and war over religion - conflict which had almost cut the island off from the rest of the continent, and certainly left them behind in a continental race for expansion. Following the Defeat of the Spanish Armada and a string of successful voyages of exploration by men like Sir Frances Drake, Britain found itself finally stable enough to begin looking outward again - and by the late sixteenth century, outward meant imperial expansion. Imperial expansion, of course, meant India - a massive subcontinent filled with incredible spices and ready trade partners.

Britain was not content merely to compete with other Europeans, nor was it content to be merely a trading *partner* with India - and in 1757 it would become much more. June of that year saw a conflict along the banks of the Hooghly River which would forever change British power in India, and indeed the world. Beginning in 1755, the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj ud-Daulah, adopted a violently pro-French posture, and began raiding British trading posts across occupied Bengal. The East India Company, of course, could not allow this to continue, and so advanced on the Bengali capital of Murshidabad in 1757 (the delay caused by a need to muster enough soldiers). Though outnumbered almost twenty to one by a blended French and Bengali army, the British force under Robert Clive (the famous Clive of India) would take the upper hand in the battle due to a startling miscalculation - and a bit of luck. Though both sides had ample artillery reserves, only the British had brought tarpaulins to cover their artillery pieces from the rain - something the French gunners had neglected to bring. The Nawab, assuming that the British artillery had been disabled by the torrential rain, ordered a mass cavalry charge which was immediately cut down in droves by the still-operational British cannon, resulting in the loss of the Nawab's trusted General Mir Madan Khan. This, combined with the treachery of one of the Nawab's trusted advisors, Mir Jafar, saw the Nawab's forces break and run from their entrenched positions where they were easily overrun by Clive's men. This last act sealed the fate of India and granted to the Empire an enormous swath of land, men, and material which would alter the course of imperial - and world - history.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Bunting, Tony. "Battle of Plassey." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., June 16, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Plassey>.

The company would exist separate from the Crown, a sort of unregulated corporate entity under the protection - but not control - of the Crown. The East India Company and its incredible inroads into the Indian subcontinent would play a pivotal role in shaping not merely the borders of the British Empire, but also the British economy. By devastating the Bengali calico textile industry (by undercutting the prices of Bengali cloth with machine made cloth), Britain created a ready market for the textiles pouring out of Lancashire mills - progress enabled not merely by the Industrial Revolution, but also a massive new market of ready buyers. This meant an incredible amount of money flowing into the British economy, enabling it to only continue to expand its reaches further into Asia - and creating a very wealthy metropole, to boot.⁴⁸

War of Austrian Succession

A bloody conflict which spanned from 1740-1748, the War of Austrian Succession is, in the words of M.S. Anderson "not an easy subject for the historian," for it lacks "unity of theme," and "does not centre around any one clearly defined and predominant issue".⁴⁹ The War of Austrian Succession thus has no easy cause - no clear cut reason for the suffering of all those hundreds of thousands who participated in it, and perhaps no definite and surefire reason for all those millions of pounds of expense spent in its pursuit.

Much of the fighting done in the conflict was not even new to the areas in which it occurred - in West Germany, the Netherlands, Italy - the war is seen as merely a continuation of centuries or at the very least decades of on-and-off warfare between secondary states and their sometimes-petty rulers. Even the conflict's title - the *War of the Austrian Succession* - makes one assume it relates to some dynastic consideration among the vestiges of the Holy Roman Empire. Yet, this would only partially be true, and the war is less of a forward thinking conflict than it is a backward looking conflict, the last gasp of grand "Anglo-French struggle," the last conflict in which European interests would

⁴⁸ Robins, Nick. "The Hidden Wound." In *The Corporation That Changed the World: How the East India Company Shaped the Modern Multinational*, 1-18. London: Pluto Press, 2012. 7-21.

⁴⁹ Anderson, M. S. (Matthew Smith). *The War of the Austrian Succession, 1740-1748*. London ; New York: Longman, 1995. 1.

dominate colonial rivalries.⁵⁰ Indeed, in many ways, the conflict would be the last of its kind - neither a wholly spectacular conflict, nor a wholly irrelevant one - one of the last of the petty squabbles of European gentry before such tidal waves as nationalism and industrialization would pit ever larger nation states against one another.⁵¹

The conflict itself, then, was whether or not Maria Theresa would be able to ascend to the throne of the Habsburg throne in Austria, or if France, Prussia, Bavaria, and a number of other states would be able to place their own choices upon the throne. Thus, although it was a war technically about monarchical succession, this was only a pretext used by regional power players to attempt to destabilize the ever-powerful Habsburgs. Its specifics are unimportant for this committee, but its lasting impacts had a great impact on the future. Notably, unresolved disputes over colonial territory (especially in India) between Britain and France would push the two towards continued war, Prussia would emerge with its Silesian territories intact, and the Austrian inheritance would remain with Maria Theresa, though Austria would emerge a far weakened adversary compared to its once lofty position.

Seven Years' War

Hailed by such esteemed historians as Winston Churchill himself as the "first World War," the Seven Years War would prove to indeed be the first global war, beginning in 1756 and ending in 1763. Seen by many as an extension of the War of the Austrian Succession, the Seven Years War would see the great powers of Europe pitted against one another - France, Austria, Saxony, Sweden, and Russia on one side, and Prussia, Hanover, and Great Britain on the other.⁵² This conflict arose through English encroachment upon French territory in North America - this conflict came to be known as the French and Indian War, and exploded into an international conflict when Britain began seizing French merchant ships in the Atlantic.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 3.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Seven Years' War." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., January 6, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Seven-Years-War>.

The ultimate result of the Seven Years' War was the final domination of the British over the French in colonial scale, with the British winning almost exclusive access to India and the Americas, including almost the entirety of New France. But this came at an incredible cost in a very literal sense. Though France emerged far the weaker, Britain came out of the war far from unscathed, with its national debt having almost doubled through the course of the conflict. Mainland Europe, meanwhile, maintained the status quo, with Austria failing to deliver a striking blow to its longtime enemy Prussia, and Prussia emerging with its borders untouched, and in fact, came out of the flames of war firmly established as a major European power.

American Revolution

Though a victory for the British in the Americas, the Seven Years' War left the empire heavily in debt, as sending soldiers across the world to fight this truly global conflict was not an inexpensive prospect. As the colonists in America benefited immensely from the British victory in the Americas, gaining vast new stretches of territory, a series of taxes were levied upon the American colonists. Embittered by what they saw as unfair taxation and a lack of representation in parliament (a privilege provided to none of the other British colonies, either), the British colonies of North America roiled with dissent. Colonial protesters enacted widespread boycotts against British consumer goods in response to these "Intolerable Acts" and against the idea of taxation without representation itself.

These acts cascaded in a manner familiar to every American elementary school student - colonists, incensed by what they interpreted as taxation without representation, engaged in a long and bloody war with their colonial rulers over the right to self-government. Eventually, the blood cost of keeping the thirteen American colonies became too great for the British government to justify continued rule, and so the colonies were abandoned, and the modern-day United States of America was formed.

French Revolution

Long a stalwart defender of the continental status quo and riven with disparity between its ruling two estates and the subservient (and most populated) third estate, France was a prime candidate for an uprising of the people.

The Eighteenth century had been a time of incredible change and intellectualism in continental Europe, and these changes had produced a class of educated and wealthy commoners – the beginnings of the middle class – who chafed under the restrictions that their common birth placed upon them. Peasants had been freed from serfdom in some parts of Europe, and even in France, some peasants owned the land upon which they toiled. Standards of living and education were on the rise among even the French peasants, and with this came a yearning to be free – to break away the chains of serfdom that had bound generations of peasants to the land. Between 1715 and 1800, the population of the continent would *double* as mortality rates dropped and more and more children lived to adulthood. By 1789, France would become the most populated country in Europe at 26 million – such a large increase placed an enormous burden on the food and consumer goods supply of the country, and, when combined with economic downturn in the 1770s, the cities and verdant fields of France were rife with fury and revolutionary rumblings.⁵³

Historians will debate the base causes *ad nauseum*, but they were, fundamentally, a combination of the up-and-coming bourgeoisie being excluded from power, the unwillingness of the peasant class to continue engaging with the anachronistic feudal system, widespread engagement with enlightenment philosophy provoking a desire to leave the toxic system of the three estates, French involvement with the American war for independence driving the government nearly to bankruptcy, crop failures in 1788 led to disastrous grain shortages and starvation, and finally, a broad perception that the monarchical system was both ineffective and incapable of adapting to a changing society.⁵⁴

These causes established, the famous events of 1789 would flow like a torrential river, sweeping the whole of the country into turmoil and crazed revolutionary fervor. From the beginning of this

⁵³ [1] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "French Revolution," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., September 10, 2020), <https://www.britannica.com/event/French-Revolution>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

revolution in 1789 until 1792, France was rocked by competing claims to power and even insurrection until finally formally dissolving the monarchy and declaring the first French Republic.⁵⁵

Though deeper explication is unnecessary for the scope of this project, the French Revolution terrified the old monarchies of Europe, who saw the undeniable power of the people now demonstrated for a second time – with the seditious ideas of the American Revolution now bleeding on Continental soil. Members of the ousted nobility flooded into Russia, Prussia, and the United Kingdom (among other locales), each repeating similar stories of violence and destruction of property, of peasants parading through the ancestral mansions of those who saw themselves as their masters. This instilled a tremendous anxiety among the British upper classes - fearful of their own tenuous class system being overturned by the combined action of the people.

The Rise of Napoleon

Born on the island of Corsica in 1769, Napoleon Bonaparte was the second son of minor Corsican nobles - though he had title, he was born without significant wealth. Educated in mainland France, Napoleon was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Royal Artillery in 1785 but left the service for a brief period to return to his native Corsica, where nationalist currents were gaining traction. After being rebuffed by his would-be mentor and gaining a taste for the Republican spirit, Napoleon returned to the mainland and his commission, eventually being promoted to the rank of captain. By age 24 he was promoted to Brigadier General, and by 1795 had gained a reputation as a crack officer, helping to put down the 13 *Vendemiaire* royalist revolt. In 1796, he was sent to lead an army in the Italian campaigns, scoring victory after victory not only on the battlefield, but at home as well. The young general started two newspapers - one for circulation in France, and one for circulation among his troops, and through these increased his political influence ever more. The riches plundered in the Italian campaign would allow Napoleon to finance and orchestrate a coup in France - the coup of 18 Fructidor. It was this coup which allowed Napoleon Bonaparte, the boy who had once been mocked for his accent, his stature, his birthplace, and any number of other things, to succeed to the throne of one of Europe's most powerful states.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

This is where delegates will start the committee. Uncertainty is brewing across the English Channel in Europe. The rise of Napoleon is something that threatens to upend the balance of the entire established world order. The British House of Commons will have to guide the Empire past obstacles both foreign and domestic, in order to come out on top. The rich history of Britain is something that must be taken into account moving forward, so that past successes can be copied, and past failures can be avoided.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The sections that follow will outline the state of political thought in the early 1800s. Delegates are expected to use the information below, in conjunction with their party positions, to formulate responses to the crises that arise during the course of debate in committee. The terms and ideas inform the dais', and thus the policies of other countries, responses towards the United Kingdom. Working both with their own parties and across the aisle, delegates must grapple with different paths of political thought while checking the rising power of Napoleon, civil stability at home, and colonial events in the New World and beyond.

What is War?

The modern definition of war comes from Carl von Clausewitz, a Prussian military officer who fought in the Napoleonic wars. Clausewitz argued, in his seminal work *On War*, that war is nothing more than politics by other means. He believed that the political nature of the end goal of war, typically concerning the ownership of territory, affected every component of war. As simple as this seems today, this was a revolutionary concept at the time that would not have even been true fifty years before its writing. The other major idea of *On War* was his "fascinating trinity" of war.⁵⁶ He argued that the defining characteristics of war are its primordial violence, the vital role of chance, and its subordination to politics and policy. In *On War*, he wrote that "in the whole range of human activities, war most closely resembles a game of cards" (Clausewitz 86). A game of poker requires good luck, to get the cards one needs. A certain amount of callousness, to be able to coldly take from one's opponent. And the skill to ensure one succeeds, no matter the cards one receives.

Before the advent of nationalism, the vast majority of wars were personal affairs fought between rulers, often having little impact on the average individual. Feudalism was based on the exchange of land for military service, and this contract was a personal one between vassal and liege. Due to technological limits, there was little a government could do to affect the everyday life of its citizens.

⁵⁶ Clausewitz, von Carl. *On War*. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, 1976.

Those same technological limits meant that there was little of value for a government to extract from its people, even if it were able to. Industrialization and the rise of nation-states changed that by making the success of the government the concern of every one of its citizens, and the success of the people the concern of the government. The increasing technologization of weapons and warfighting meant that waging successful campaigns required the total mobilization of a nation's population and economic base. Thus, civilization was introduced to the continent-spanning total wars that would dominate history until the development of the nuclear bomb.

This has a profound potential impact on committee. The nature of war is changing as the House of Commons meets. This should be taken into account in order to face down potential threats to the Empire.

Nation-States

While there is some debate over whether the United States or France was the first nation-state, it is clear that France was the first nation-state in Europe. The French Revolution in 1789 provided the basis for French nationalism, and Napoleon was able to use this nationalism to weld together the French people, or nation, and his government, or state. This fusion allowed him to create the *levée en masse*, or the first system of national conscription. With this conscripted army, and the large taxes the people were willing to bear for the good of their nation, Napoleon was able to conquer much of continental Europe. Nationalism improved the quality of the troops Napoleon was able to field and drastically increased the number of them that he was able to draw upon to fuel the meat-grinder of total war.

This fusion of the nation to the state required the state to give to the nation as well. State-sponsored public education became necessary, both to instill nationalism within the people and to provide training for contributing to the economic and military might of the state. Industrialization, and the ever-increasing mechanization of warfare, meant that warfighting continued to require more and more education. In addition, the total wars of the twentieth century, World War 1 and World War 2, would give rise to massive state-run welfare systems that provided healthcare, housing, and secondary education to their people. Most important, however, is the fact that highly educated and

nationalist populations would naturally want to be involved in the governing of their state. The Prussian aristocracy, for example, knowingly decided not to spread nationalism throughout their state because it would require them to give some of their political power to their people. Only after they were humiliated by France in the War of the Fourth Coalition did they concede to reality and spread nationalism among their people. Despite their major losses in the War of the Fourth Coalition, and the massive territorial concessions they were forced to make as a result, the spread of nationalism will allow Prussia to raise a significantly larger army when they rise up against Napoleon again.⁵⁷

This committee will see delegates engage with the existence of some of the world's first nation states, and the incredible power that they are able to wield - both politically and militarily. This new meaning of what a country is must be considered by the House of Commons, as there are many potential implications across the British Empire.

Nationalism

Nationalism, put simply, is the loyalty that a person holds for their nation. A nation is a collection of people tied together by the things that they share. While different for every nation, some typical shared factors are language, religion, and history. Nationalism is often used interchangeably with patriotism, and the two terms are very similar. Patriotism refers more to loyalty towards one's government, or the state. Nationalism is loyalty towards one's nation. Even in the age of nation-states these are two distinct entities. A state will often try to bind itself as closely to its people as it can, and this can include attempts to define a nation as all of the people that the state has power over. States are not always successful in this endeavor, however, and so some states find themselves governing multiple nations.

Civic vs. Ethnic Nationalism

There are two distinct types of nationalism: civic and ethnic. The effects are the same: loyalty towards one's nation. Their difference is in how they define that nation. Civic nationalism, prominent most in the United States, defines a nation by adherence to ideals. For the United States this is the

⁵⁷ Mearsheimer, John. "War and the Nation State." PLSC 27600, University of Chicago. Lecture.

"American Creed," which in most definitions focuses on ideals such as independence, support for democracy, and a belief in the value of personal freedoms. Anyone who adheres to those ideals, according to civic nationalism, is a part of the nation.

Ethnic nationalism defines the nation by its ethnic factors. These are typically things like a shared language, religion, and culinary tradition. The statement "as American as apple pie" is an example of an acknowledgement of one of these factors. In real-world discussions of ethnic nationalism race plays a role as well, but we will not be discussing race in any context in this committee. Such discussions are outside the bounds of a Model UN conference and will not be tolerated. To reiterate, defining a nation by its race or through racial tropes will not be tolerated.

Nationalism vs. Hyper-nationalism

Nationalism, and especially ethnic nationalism, has been responsible for many racially motivated atrocities. This committee will not tolerate racism of any form, especially during its discussion of nationalism. Because of this, we will be differentiating between nationalism and hyper-nationalism. Nationalism, as stated earlier, is a sense of loyalty towards one's nation. We will be defining hyper-nationalism as the belief that other nations are worse than one's own. It is possible to be loyal to one's nation without looking down on other nations, and this is expected of any nation the committee interacts with.

Foundations of Nationalism

Creating a nation-state requires a state to tie itself to a nation, which is only really possible when there is a common consensus on what the nation actually is. The state, with its vast resources, plays a key role in creating this consensus. A national myth is one of the most important parts of a national identity, and the best tool for its creation is a public education system. Such a system need not simply be a propaganda machine, and the state has strong incentives to ensure that it is not. As technology advances it both warfighting and economic production require higher and higher levels of education. A public education system focused solely on indoctrinating the public into the state's preferred blend of nationalism would struggle to provide the kind of independent thinkers required for a competent and innovative labor force.

There are a number of other ways to instill a firm national identity in a population as well. National holidays, perhaps completed by nationalistic parades, are another example of a way that a state could instill nationalism within its people. These holidays could celebrate the past achievements of a nation, such as a massive military victory or the winning of independence. State welfare programs, such as pensions for military veterans and centralized healthcare, might also help tie a nation closer to a state.

Effect on the Fighting of Wars

The introduction of nationalism to the world stage revolutionized the fighting of wars. Prior to the rise of nation states war was focused primarily on territory. Wars were populated mostly by relatively bloodless sieges, as no army could sustain significant losses. Pitched battles were incredibly risky, and thus rare. Napoleon changed that. He fought to destroy the enemy army, with territorial conquest a distant afterthought. This “decisive battle” strategy was made possible by nationalism.

The *levée en masse* was the most important of the factors that allowed Napoleon to wage his total wars and fight his decisive battles. This was France’s system of conscription, the first of its kind and scale. Before nationalism, conscription on this scale was not possible, as the people had no vested interest in the wellbeing of the state. Nationalism gave them that interest, and thus the motivation for military service.

The loyalty to the state created by nationalism had more uses than just allowing the creation of the draft. Technological advancements that increased the killing power of weapons fundamentally changed military tactics. These changes required a new sort of soldier, one who could be trusted to fight relatively unsupervised. Before the invention of the firearm, the vast majority of infantry engagements occurred between two shield walls. The spear has been the dominant weapon for most of human history simply because it allows one to attack from farther away. The spear even remained in widespread use after the invention, and adoption, of the musket in what is commonly referred to as the “pike and shot” era of warfare. Such formations were tight, compact, and the soldiers in them lived and died by their cohesiveness. If a soldier broke and ran it was not just them

who would be killed but their friends as well. These small formations also allowed officers to closely supervise their soldiers and keep them actively engaged.

Advancements in technology, such as the widespread adoption of rifles and field artillery, meant that the use of close formations was suicide. Soldiers had to be dispersed across the battlefield to be able to withstand any amount of fighting, so warfare became more of an individual affair. Without direct supervision from officers, and their comrades, soldiers needed something to convince them to give their lives for their cause. Nationalism provided this loyalty.

This newfound independence of common soldiers gave other benefits as well. It allowed victorious armies to pursue defeated foes, a necessity in warfare centered around the destruction of the enemy's ability to defend themselves instead of the conquest of territory. It also allowed armies to move much farther than ever before, as soldiers could be trusted to come back after being tasked with foraging supplies from the countryside. This made armies much more self-sufficient, and thus allowed them to range incredible distances away from their supply bases.

Nationalism came with more than just benefits for the state. The people, with their newfound interest in their nation-state, exacted a price from the government. Welfare programs, democracy, and public education all spread throughout the world as a result of nationalism. Democracy was the most important of these, as it distributed political power far more widely than it had ever been before. This distribution of political power was necessary to tie the people to the state, as it committed them to the actions of the state. Public education was a blessing for both the state and the people. Educated people live happier and more successful lives with a higher standard of living, and they are also better able to contribute to the state's economy and serve in the state's military. Welfare programs were also a requirement to reward the people for their sacrifices. The first welfare programs to emerge were primarily pensions for military service. The state had to provide for their soldiers who had lost their ability to support themselves as a result of their military service. In short, nationalism was a massive force multiplier that dramatically increased the military power of a state,

but oftentimes forced a state to give up a large amount of its political power and to assume a greater role in caring for its people.⁵⁸

The rise of ideologies such as nationalism will have a profound effect on the political climate of the 19th century. Delegates should be prepared to account for this in all aspects of committee and use it for their own advantage. While this all gives delegates a wide latitude to chart a path forward for the British Empire as they see fit, they should be prepared to deal with internal and external forces that are being influenced by ideologies outlined above.



⁵⁸ Mearsheimer ; Porter, Bruce D. *War and the Rise of the State*. Free Press, 2002.

BLOC POSITIONS

Tory

The Tories are a British political party and one of the two major parties at this time. They are majority Anglican, but there is a fair amount of support for Roman Catholicism and Catholic Emancipation. Tories are generally of lesser gentry yet are more stereotypically monarchist than any other faction. Their foreign policies can be described as hawkish, with strong pro-imperialist and interventionist tendencies throughout its members. Among ordinary folk, their support base tends to be landowners and farmers, with further support coming from beneficiaries of military spending and other royalists. While having a smaller base to draw from, it tends to be rather influential in a country recently wracked by a civil war.⁵⁹

Whig

The Whigs are the other major political party at this period in time. They heavily favor constitutional monarchy over absolute monarchy, believing heavily in the power of the parliamentary system. In contrast with the Tories, they are against the influence of the Catholic Church, for limiting Crown patronage, and tend to be composed of more aristocratic families of the upper gentry. Whigs also derive support from the mercantile class and industrial reformists rather than entrenched landowners. Generally considered to be the current dominant political force, they are nevertheless composed of many competing internal factions that must be navigated to create party unity as a whole.⁶⁰

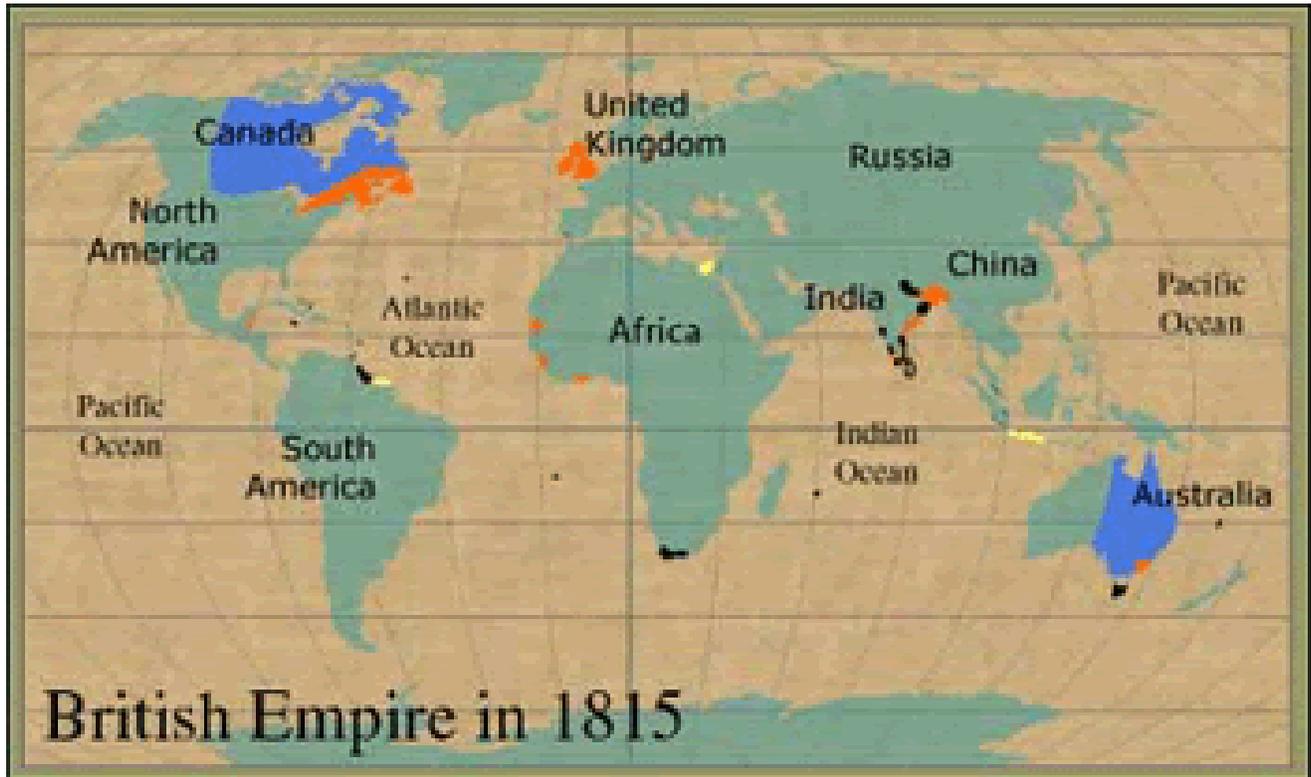
These bloc positions should be a starting point for delegates, but they are not beholden to them. In the end, delegates must chart their own paths, together with others or on their own, in order to achieve their goals. Good luck and may the sun never set on the British Empire.

⁵⁹ Christie, Ian R. Wars and Revolutions: Britain 1760-1815. The New History of England. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982.

⁶⁰ Lowe, Norman. Mastering Modern British History. 4th ed. Palgrave Master Series. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

APPENDIX

Map A: The British Empire at the End of the Napoleonic Wars⁶¹



 Territory claimed by Britain but not settled

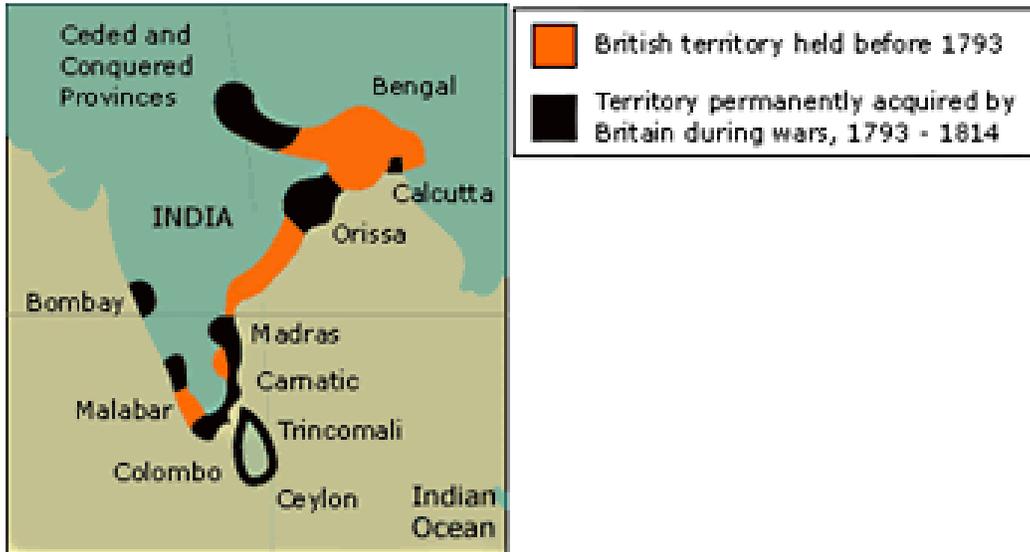
 British territory held before 1793

 Territory permanently acquired by Britain during wars, 1793 - 1814

 Territory temporarily occupied by Britain during wars, 1793 - 1814

⁶¹ Andrew Porter, "Britain's Empire in 1815: A fragile peace," *BBC*, last updated February 17, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/britain_empire_01.shtml.

Map B: British Territory in India in 1815⁶²



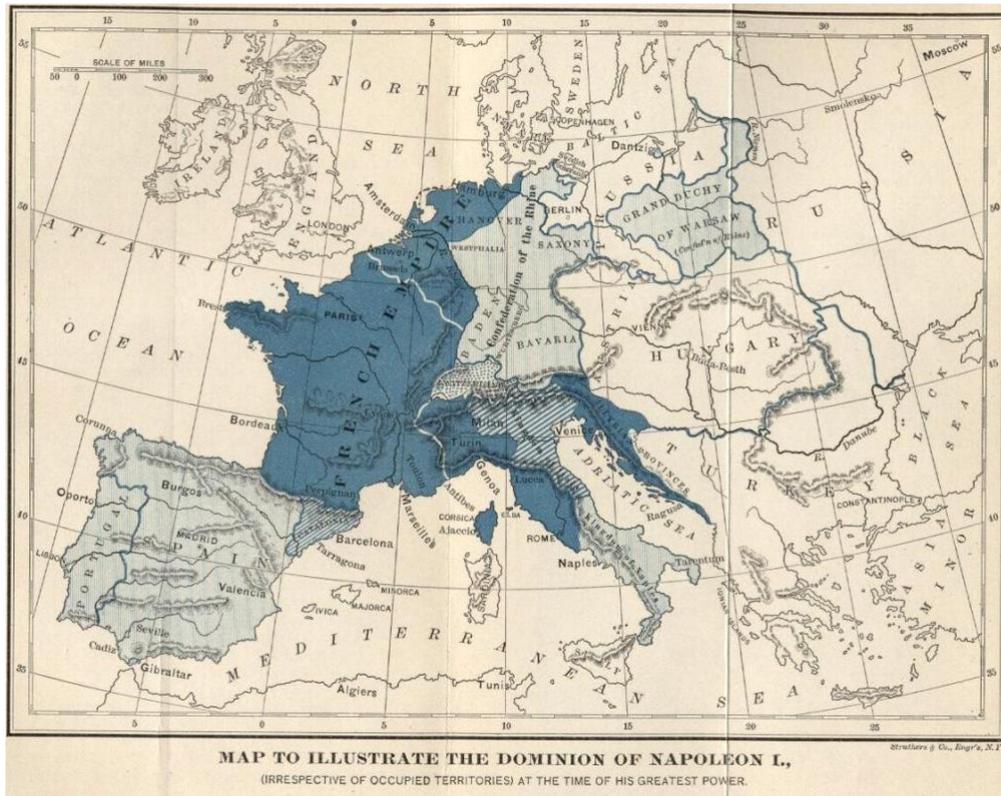
Map C: Europe in 1810⁶³



⁶² Andrew Porter, "Britain's Empire in 1815: Eastern empire," *BBC*, last updated February 17, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/britain_empire_01.shtml.

⁶³ *The Public Schools Historical Atlas*, edited by C. Colbek, University of Texas at Austin, 1905.

Map D: France and Her Dependencies in 1810⁶⁴



⁶⁴ Louis, Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, *Memoirs of Napoleon*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891).

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