



# United Nations Conference On International Organization, 1945 (CHARTER)

# MUNUC 34



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## CHAIR LETTER

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Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 1945 United Nations Conference on International Organization committee at MUNUC 34! My name is Ian Bamford, and I am your chair. I am a third year economics major from Connecticut, and I am especially interested in history and political science. MUNUC 34 marks my eighth MUN conference over six years. I have been consistently impressed by the high level of discourse that I have seen in my past conferences, especially last year when I was the chair of the Constitutional Convention at MUNUC 33. I am looking forward to seeing all of you come together to produce a lively debate on how a government should be structured.

During this committee, I want you to forget everything you know about the United Nations. After all, it would be a disappointment if we spent all weekend producing a facsimile of the UN's current governing document. I am looking forward to hearing original solutions from you that draw from the history of the time period that we are set in--the immediate aftermath of World War Two. All of the evidence that you could possibly desire is contained in this background guide as well as further supplemental documents that you may receive before or during committee, so research beyond what we give you is unnecessary. (Please feel free to review a history textbook if you would like to get more background information on World War 1, the League of Nations, or World War 2, but your research **MUST** stop in October 1944.)

Position papers will not be required, but I must warn you that if you do not read this background guide and other documents we give you **thoroughly**, you will be extremely lost in the committee room. This is **not** your typical General Assembly where delegates with only a cursory understanding of the issues can succeed. This is a highly complex committee based on actual world events which converge in ways that are both interesting and confusing. As a result, I recommend that you bring a notebook of relevant information into the committee room. Items to include in this notebook are your country's opinions on any of the topics listed in the Possible Solutions section, the ongoing historical crises and secret agenda items (to be distributed before conference starts), and anything from the history section that you think is interesting to bring up in speeches. As long as you read the

documents and take good notes, you will succeed at this conference and have fun. You will also have me or any of the Assistant Chairs to help on any of the historical points.

I have high hopes for this committee, and I am confident that you all will exceed these hopes. Best of luck in your preparations. Please let me know if you have any questions about the committee before the conference, and I am looking forward to meeting you!

Best,

Ian Bamford,

Chair of the 1945 United Nations Conference of International Organization,

MUNUC 34

[ianbamford@uchicago.edu](mailto:ianbamford@uchicago.edu)



## HISTORY OF THE COMMITTEE

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In early 1945, the end of the deadliest war in human history--World War Two (1939-1945)--was in sight. About 3% of the world's population, or more than sixty million people, died during the six years of fighting,<sup>1</sup> and while the United States mainland remained unscathed during the war, the destruction in Europe, Asia, and North Africa left millions to die of famine and set back economic development by at least a decade. The obvious conclusion that the Allied powers came to as the war was coming to an end was that such a tragedy should never happen again. Yet this was the exact sentiment of the Allies after the First World War (1914-1918), which was then dubbed "the war to end all wars." While the 1919 Treaty of Versailles attempted to create a mechanism to diffuse conflict, and the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawed aggressive warfare (wars waged not for self-defense), neither of these international treaties were able to stop the rise of Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Imperial Japan in the 1930s. We will explore the reasons for the failures of these international mechanisms in the section on history in this background guide. The task of this committee is to revisit the idea of mechanisms to prevent war and to see if we can structure an international organization that will be more successful than the League of Nations.

### ***Limitations to the committee:***

History is incredibly interesting and important to understand to be good global citizens, but one of the things you learn early on in any deep study is that humans are capable of committing unjustifiable atrocities against each other. In 1945, these atrocities included the Holocaust, colonialism, and racism (Jim Crow in the US). I believe that it is absolutely essential for you to learn about these events in detail because of their continuing influence on our modern society. However, I also recognize the limitations of a MUN conference. This is not the place to debate decolonization or racism. Why? Because it would put some delegates--the representatives from European countries and the United States--in the historically accurate position of defending atrocity. No one should be put in such a position. As a result, we will come to a compromise that I believe allows you to learn the

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<sup>1</sup> "Research Starters: Worldwide Deaths in World War II" (The National World War Two Museum, n.d.), <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/students-teachers/student-resources/research-starters/research-starters-worldwide-deaths-world-war>.

unfortunate history without having to reenact it--I will not censor this background guide, so the entire history relevant to the founding of the UN will be included, but discussion of the Holocaust, colonialism, racism, sexism, antisemitism, etc will not be allowed during committee debates. However, I am happy to answer any questions that you may have outside of committee about these topics, as I do think studying them in a respectful and conscientious manner is crucial.

## TOPIC A: BUILDING A HIGH-SPEED RAIL

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### Statement of the Problem

The problem facing delegates at this conference is simple: an international system that causes two brutal world wars over the course of three decades is fundamentally broken. This international system is best defined by the realist school of international relations which claims that states will act to secure greater power relative to other states. As a result, if a state believes it can increase its power over its neighbors through war, it will usually go to war. Under realist theory, such power imbalances are the primary cause of aggressive wars. Another cause of war includes disputes that cannot be resolved peacefully. An international system that will limit war must reduce these causes of war.

States will not engage in aggressive war to gain power if they believe that they will not gain power through engaging in war. While tautological, this statement defines the problem that delegates face: how can you prevent states from gaining power from waging war? An apparent answer is that if a state launches an aggressive war, every other country in the world would form an alliance to fight against that state. While the aggressor may think it can beat its neighbor, fighting against a global alliance is a different story. The other main cause of warfare is the inability to achieve peaceful conflict resolution. As a result, a main function of a new international system will involve a global forum to discuss such problems and, potentially, to impose a settlement upon the conflicting nations.

Both of these solutions involve a major problem: they require states to give up some of their sovereignty, the ability to make decisions for themselves. Countries--especially the largest--must commit troops and money to enforce the decisions of the UN. It is understandable that these countries would be unwilling to make such commitments without deferring to the wishes of their political leaders at the time of deployment. Likewise, states that submit to an international conflict resolution mechanism must be willing to accept decisions that they do not like. While delegates do want to establish institutions to reduce wars, they also need to preserve their states' sovereignty. Balancing these interests will be at the heart of the discussion in the committee.

There is also the matter of the post-war world order and power politics. In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles established the League of Nations as an afterthought. In 1945, the United Nations was formed before the war was even over. US Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman made sure that everyone understood that the establishment of the UN was no afterthought so that they would take the effort seriously as a way to secure peace in future decades.<sup>2</sup> The delegates knew that the United Nations was supposed to shape the decades after the war, much as the Treaty of Versailles defined the conflicts emerging from the interwar period (1919-1939). As a result, countries wanted to secure the system most advantageous to themselves. Take the Soviet Union as an example. There was already a sense that the Soviet Union and the United States were going to come to conflict, although they were still allies on relatively friendly terms. The Soviet Union, therefore, needed to come out of the conference in a position where it could have significant influence on the UN, even though American allies dominated the current representation at the conference. While the UN was supposed to relieve the presence of power politics, none of the delegates were naive enough to believe that power politics would not be at the heart of the decisions that the UN would make.

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations* (USA: Westview Press, 2003).



## Structure of the Committee

This committee will follow much of the same structure as a normal General Assembly at MUNUC, but there will be some notable exceptions to the GA structure to add some flavor to the committee and reflect some of the debates that historically occurred at the conference outside of structuring the UN.

### ***Voting***

First, not all countries will be represented equally throughout the committee. To start, four delegates (Argentina, Belarus, Poland, and Ukraine) do not have any voting rights. While they can speak during caucuses (both mods and unmods), they cannot cast any votes. Every other country starts off with one vote. At the end of Friday's first session, we will vote on resolutions to bring these countries into the UN. The committee can also vote on any other changes to voting procedures here that will take effect for the rest of the conference. For instance, delegates can vote to award some countries extra votes. Delegates can also vote to bring in countries whose members are not currently present in the committee as voting members. The vote of these countries will be awarded to their closest ally at the discretion of the chair. For instance, delegates could admit Puerto Rico as a voting member of the conference. Since Puerto Rico is a US possession, the US delegate would be awarded an additional vote for the remainder of the committee. This voting process is crucially important because, after it, some delegates may continue to have no votes in the committee, while others may have multiple votes themselves or as proxies from recently-admitted client states. This will reshape the voting landscape of the committee going into passing the actual charter at the end of Saturday.

Voting in all instances will be taken by majority vote, but there will be special voting rules for the final ratification of the Charter resolution. These special voting rules specify that the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union (the Big Three)--as well as a majority of the smaller states--*must* vote for the charter for it to be deemed a success. If one of the Big Three does not vote for the Charter that passes, then the Charter will still go into effect but will largely be deemed an ineffective failure, mostly because the UN was supposed to settle future disputes between the Soviets and the Americans. If delegates are committed to establishing an organization to preserve the peace, then all members of the Big Three need to sign. If not, then the UN may transform into an

alliance *against* the Big Three country that did not sign. To summarize, all of the Big Three countries want to build an organization that is fair to all of them. Otherwise, the UN might be turned into a source for further conflict.

### ***Secret Agendas***

Delegates will have secret agendas in the committee. These are points that your country's leadership wants you to pursue at the conference. These secret agendas reflect the historical reality that delegates legitimately did not know what to expect from other countries on some key matters, so they could not plan ahead. While delegates should adhere to these secret agendas, they often conflict with the agendas of other countries. As a result, delegates should expect to compromise. Furthermore, delegates should refrain from mentioning their "secret agendas," and instead refer to them as the wishes of their country's leadership. For instance, a delegate should not say "my secret agenda requires me to ask for...." Instead, the delegate should say, "President Truman told me that \_\_\_ provision is necessary to include in the charter." Note that some items in the secret agenda should be kept secret unless absolutely necessary.

### ***Optional Interim Reports***

Delegates will be assigned an Assistant Chair in the committee who will act as their country's leader. Delegates can and should issue short reports to their country leader (Assistant Chair) at times, and can even ask their leader for advice on how to resolve a situation that arises in the committee. Unlike a normal GA where delegates seek to impress their dais, in this committee, the relationship between delegates and the dais will be more akin to that between an ambassador and his/her head of state. To make sure that delegates have enough time to write interim reports, this committee will not have working papers.

### ***Treaties outside the UN Organization***

Lastly, countries can sign treaties with each other to secure parts of their secret agenda or to pledge to vote for a certain resolution or amendment in the committee. These treaties are binding, so if a delegate commits to vote a certain way or insert a certain clause into a resolution, they are

compelled to do so. It is important to recognize that this committee is taking place in the context of the last months of World War Two, and there are important political and military objectives that diplomats at the convention can achieve outside the sole mission of founding the UN. In fact, countries may be willing to make sacrifices in how they would like to structure the UN in order to achieve these outside objectives. All treaties in their final form (signed by all parties) must be submitted to the dais and ratified by the Chair before going into effect. Delegates can indicate details such as when the treaty is to go into effect (immediately, after the conference, after certain criteria are to go into effect, etc.) and if they would like to announce the ratification of the treaty to the public (meaning that the Chair will summarize the contents of the treaty and have it available at the dais for delegates to read during unmods, if they desire).

## History of the Problem

### ***Foundational History 1648-1914***

The modern European political system was founded at the end of the Thirty Years' War by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. This Westphalian system established the principle that nation-states have sole sovereignty of the internal matters governing their territory.<sup>3</sup> Under this principle of the co-equal sovereignty of states, one state should not invade another because they do not like a policy put in place exclusively affecting the territory in the other country. Instead, international disputes should only take place over disputes that result from the policy of one country affecting the other. Of course, power politics was another reason for war, as we will see in the coming pages.

This principle also marked the end of the long-held feudal system that governed Europe after the fall of the Western Roman Emperor circa 476 CE. Feudalism was essentially a hierarchical system of personal pledges of loyalty between a subject and a master. These pledges created chains tying everyday serfs to the most powerful men in Europe: the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope. A French serf, for instance, would pledge loyalty to their local lord who would be loyal to the regional great lord who would be loyal to the French king who would be crowned by the Pope. Of course, the actual system in effect was far more complicated with intermarriages, disputes over lineage, strange interpretations of legal doctrines or historical precedents, and political ambitions or personal greed that outstripped a person's current rank. These complications inevitably provided fodder for the conflicts that made Europe a war-torn paradise for greedy mercenary captains (some of whom would rise from lowly commoners to great lords, like the Sforza dukes of Milan or the Medici grand dukes of Tuscany). While it took decades for countries to transform themselves out of this feudal system--the Russians abolished serfdom as late as 1861--Westphalia marked the climax of this transitional period and the beginning of Europe's first modern "century" which lasted from Westphalia to the death of King Louis XIV of France, le Roi Soleil ("the Sun King"), in 1715. This century saw a consolidation of the principles of Westphalia in the creation of the modern European

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen McGlinchey, Rosie Waters, and Christian Scheinpflug, "The Westphalian System," in *Social Science LibreTexts*, 2021, [https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/International\\_Sociology/Book%3A\\_International\\_Relations\\_\(McGlinchey\)/01%3A\\_The\\_Making\\_of\\_the\\_Modern\\_World/1.02%3A\\_The\\_Westphalian\\_System](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/International_Sociology/Book%3A_International_Relations_(McGlinchey)/01%3A_The_Making_of_the_Modern_World/1.02%3A_The_Westphalian_System).

centralized nation-states, which, as we will discuss later, became the bedrocks of the power politics that led to the massive global conflicts of the 20th century.

The second modern European century lasted precisely a century, running from Louis XIV's death in 1715 to Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. This century saw the rise of the Enlightenment and the political principles that led to the revolutions in the United States (1775-1783) and France (1789-1799). It was the age of Diderot's encyclopedia, of Rousseau's landmark treatise the Social Contract, of Voltaire's entertaining novel Candide, of the expansion of overseas trade and imperialism, of the birth of capitalism and the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, and of the marked abuse of revolutionary zeal that led thousands to the guillotine in the Place de la Concorde in the heart of Paris. It was a time of both philosophical enlightenment and horrible atrocities that resulted in producing the principles of both our modern democracy and economy.

Most importantly, the 18th century showed that despite this principle of internal sovereignty established through Westphalia, power politics could still create massive conflicts that would kill millions, most impressively in the Seven Years' War (French and Indian War in the Americas)--which was truly the world's first global conflict--and the Napoleonic Wars. The first of these wars was over the colonial possessions of Britain, France, and Spain in the Americas, while the second was a war over whether Napoleon would be allowed to conquer the entirety of Europe.

Both were fundamentally "realist" wars in which one country saw the opportunity to increase its power over the others and seized this opportunity through warfare. While realism aptly describes international politics throughout history, the 18th century saw realist politics be extended to create wars on massive scales--the Westphalian centralization of the nation-state meant that wars would no longer be fought between bands of a few thousand mercenaries; they would now be fought by hundreds of thousands of citizen-soldiers. Westphalia in the 18th century meant that the destruction of warfare would increase, and advancements in military technology only made matters worse.

Since realism is such a fundamental part of the story of the United Nations and is the best framework to understand the history of modern international politics, we will take a break from history to turn to a discussion of realism. Realism is a school of thought in the study of international relations that claims that states act to maximize their own power relative to the power of other states. Absolute

gains in power--where economic and military advantages are gained by all--do not at all play into the realist story. A country like France would prefer to exist at the height of Napoleonic power in the 1800s rather than now when French power is dwarfed by the United States, China, and Russia. This statement is true even though the France of the 2020s, armed with nuclear weapons, could easily destroy the France of Napoleon if the two were to engage in an intertemporal war.

Liberalism, the school opposed to realists, would argue that states appreciate these absolute gains as well, as everyone would be better off if everyone were \$1000 richer, for instance. However, this analysis misses the fundamental insight of realism which is nicely summed up by the ancient Athenian general Thucydides: "the strong do what they can; the weak suffer what they must."<sup>4</sup> Since history has shown that when the strong do what they can, the situation can get pretty bad for the weaker countries, it is clearly better to be stronger rather than weaker than your enemies. Any gains shared by both countries are great for economic welfare, but they will not stop a stronger state from invading and massacring its weaker neighbor.

The goal of a state living in a realist paradigm is to be the strongest state in its international system: the hegemon. (Professor John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago, the leading living Realist scholar, argued that the "stopping power of water" prevents countries from invading across bodies of water on a large scale, so it is possible to be a regional hegemon, but not a world hegemon.<sup>5</sup>) If a state has the opportunity to be a hegemon, it will absolutely take that opportunity, through war if necessary. Britain saw the opportunity to be the hegemon in North America in the French and Indian War, and it won the war and seized Canada from the French. Similarly, France saw the opportunity to be the regional hegemon in the early 1800s, so Napoleon went on a murderous rampage through Europe from 1799 to 1815.

The third modern European century lasted from the end of Napoleon in 1815 to the beginning of the Great War in 1914. Most countries were at peace during this century because they saw different paths to greater relative power than war within Europe. These paths included industrialization--increasing wealth and productive capacity to purchase more weapons--and imperialism in Africa and

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<sup>4</sup> Thucydides, "Melian Dialogue," in *The History of the Peloponnesian War* (Athens, 4th century BCE).

<sup>5</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001).



Asia. Germany and Italy were unified in the middle of this century, fundamentally reshaping the power dynamics within Europe. Before their unification, the lands of Germany and Italy were ruled by tiny states, some of which were as small as a city. These small states never posed any serious threat to European stability. However, Germany was the industrial heartland of Europe, and its unification made it the most powerful country on the continent, exemplified by Germany's defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1).

The United Kingdom (previously, England) had long seen its role in Europe to act as a policeman to prevent any one country from gaining hegemony within Europe because only a European hegemon could overpower the British navy and attack the British mother country or British imperial possessions.<sup>6</sup> (England lost its ambitions to become a hegemon itself within Europe when it lost its continental possessions in France during the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453).) The UK's role in European politics, therefore, was to oppose any country that could become a hegemon. In prior centuries, this country was France, especially given the threat posed by Louis XIV and Napoleon.

Now that Germany was unified and economically powerful, the UK realized that it should ally itself with France and against Germany to prevent the latter from gaining hegemony in a future war. The UK's fears were especially heightened when Germany started to build a navy to rival the UK's Royal Navy. The UK thought that this shipbuilding program was an existential threat to its empire and its own survival, as the Germans could invade Britain if they gained sea supremacy. As a result, tensions in Europe heightened in the decades after 1871, and the states formed rigid alliance structures to defend themselves in the case of war, under the pretext that Germany could defeat any one country in a ground war but could not defeat every country combined. It is evident that these rigid alliances were formed because of the prospect that Germany could become a hegemon and would launch a war to establish its position as such. Unfortunately, these alliance structures kicked into action completely unnecessarily by turning a small regional conflict into the First World War.

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<sup>6</sup> Henry Kissinger, *World Order* (Penguin Books, 2014).

## ***World War One***

As early as 1506--long before the Westphalia system's creation-- the Captain-General of the Republic of Florence, Ercole Bentivoglio, told Niccolo Machiavelli "that future generations will never believe how bad it was [in the early 16th century], and they will never forgive us for losing so much so quickly."<sup>7</sup> The Renaissance was indeed a time of immense human suffering when the life expectancy in Florence halved to 18 as a result of plague and warfare. Little did Bentivoglio and Machiavelli know that the future was to be much, much worse. That is because the Westphalia system, as we have already seen, eliminated the few bonds of unity that existed through Europe such as the use of the Pope as an effective intermediary and the adherence to family alliances among monarchs. These bonds were replaced by a system of kill-or-be-killed. Only in rare times of equilibrium in the European power structure--when warfare to achieve gains in power was seen as too costly--was there peace on the continent. Of course, the creation and centralization of nation-states following Westphalia brought conflicts to larger scales, and new technologies made them deadlier. This process brings us into the last modern European century in which all of these factors come to a devastating climax.

In June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by Gavrillo Princip, a Yugoslav nationalist. Ferdinand was the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, the second largest state in Europe (excluding non-European colonies). Despite the name, Austria-Hungary included territories inhabited by many other ethnicities--most importantly, the Slavs (see map<sup>8</sup> at right, where Austria-Hungary is depicted in green). Princip and his group of terrorists, the Black Hand, believed that the Slavs of Austria-Hungary should be united with the Slavs of Serbia to form the state of Yugoslavia (which would actually come into existence in 1918). They committed this assassination in the name

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<sup>7</sup> Ada Palmer, "Machiavelli I – S.P.Q.F.," *ExUrbe* (blog), 2021, <https://www.exurbe.com/machiavelli-s-p-q-f/>.

<sup>8</sup> "Austria-Hungary," in *Wikipedia*, n.d., <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austria-Hungary>.

of their Slavic nationalism. As one would imagine, the Austro-Hungarian royal family did not take kindly to the archduke's death and invaded Serbia after issuing an ultimatum to the country.

Russia saw itself as a protector of the Slavs and, therefore, of Serbia, so Russia mobilized its army to defend Serbia. Germany declared war against Russia to support its ally, Austria-Hungary, and then the United Kingdom and France

joined the war to support their Russia. The war was now a conflict between the two predominant alliances in Europe: the Triple Entente of Russia, France, and the UK and Triple Alliance of Germany and Austria-Hungary (Italy remained neutral during the war and later joined the allies; see map at right for the two pre-alliances). As we can see, a minor bilateral conflict in the Balkans turned into a world war because of these rigid alliance structures based on the need to maintain the European balance of power.



Any discussion of the beginning of World War One ultimately raises the question of the war's inevitability. Of course, the assassination of the Archduke was a matter of free will, so this immediate cause of the war was most certainly not preordained. However, institutionally, Europe was clearly not capable of diffusing any sort of conflict that might bring in any member of the opposing major alliances. This was a formula for conflict escalation into a world war, exactly as we saw in 1914. Hoping that no conflict large or small would ever come up to bring the world to total war was not a good recipe for long-lasting peace.

Instead, a better solution would have been to establish different institutions to ensure that war was the worst-case scenario so that disputes could be settled peacefully without bloodshed. Therefore, the first fundamental pillar of a UN organization must be to ensure that nations have a forum to settle conflicts peacefully. A UN organization may also consider limiting the rigidity of alliance systems to prevent small-scale bilateral conflicts from erupting into major world wars.

Back to the discussion of World War One, this institutional failure led to one of the largest conflicts in human history with over 70 million soldiers mobilized and 21 million soldiers and civilians killed. By comparison, it took thirty years of fighting in the well-named Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) to kill 4-8 million people, and twelve years of fighting in the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1805) to kill 3.5-7 million people. In terms of deaths per year, World War One was deadlier by an order of magnitude (>10x). This is not surprising given that the stalemate of trench warfare in northeast France led to a strategy revolving around killing as many of the enemy's young men as possible instead of achieving strategic geographic objectives. Luckily for the generals (and unluckily for the soldiers), the new weaponry of the era such as artillery, poison gas, machine guns, planes, grenades, and tanks facilitated this strategy of mass killings. After four years of war, there was an overwhelming sense that Europe could not endure another conflict of such a scale. World War One was supposed to be the "War to End All Wars."

### ***The League of Nations***

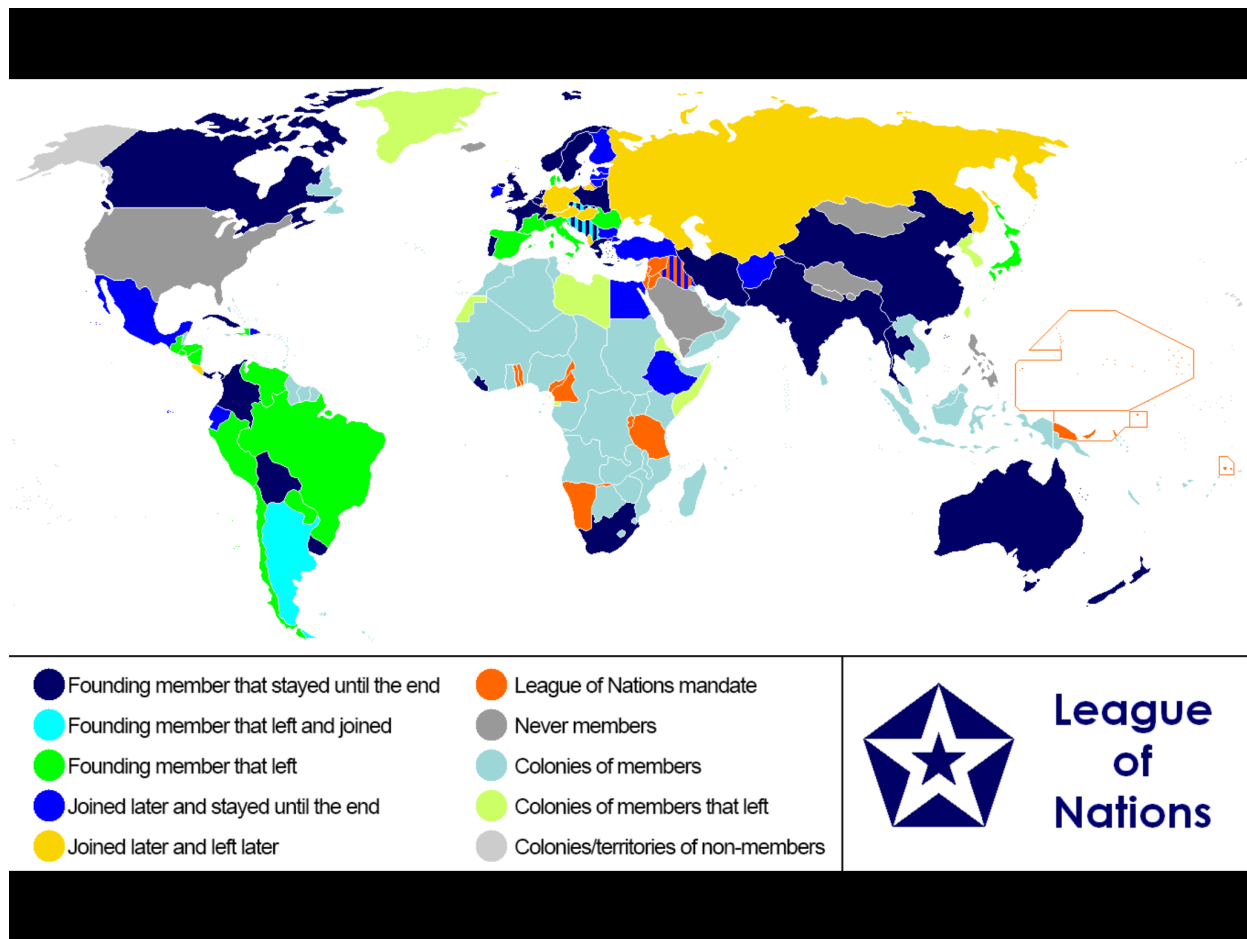
The war ended in November 1918, and the leaders of the victorious allies gathered in Paris to negotiate the terms of Germany's surrender. Of course, they were negotiating primarily among themselves--the Germans and other Central Powers had little role in the Conference. The product of this one-sided negotiation was the Treaty of Versailles, perhaps the most disastrous text in world history. The Treaty forced Germany to accept full blame for the war (which was of course absurdly ahistorical) and imposed crippling reparations to make Germany pay for the cost of the war. These reparations (which caused economic suffering in the 1920s and 1930s) and the humiliation of defeat set Germany on the course to bring Adolph Hitler into power, leading directly to an even bloodier war: World War Two. From Versailles, Germany also lost its overseas territories, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was broken up into smaller countries divided largely along ethnic lines, and much

of the Ottoman territory was given to France and the UK to administer as mandates. More importantly for our narrative, the Conference proposed the establishment of the League of Nations, a new international order meant to settle disputes and avoid conflicts.

The text of the Covenant of the League of Nations was approved in April 1919 and the organization came into effect upon the approval of the Treaty of Versailles a year later. Notably, however, the United States failed to join the treaty as a result of an increasing isolationist movement (this was a principle whereby the US should not intervene in foreign conflicts and should instead focus on domestic issues or perhaps just the Western Hemisphere under the Monroe Doctrine) and a failure of the Wilson administration to generate sufficient support for the agreement in Congress (a debilitating stroke marked the end of his campaign for the League). By the end of the First World War, the United States was the greatest military and economic power in the world, so its absence from the League would make it difficult for the League to enforce its decisions (see League membership in map<sup>9</sup> below).

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<sup>9</sup> "League of Nations" (Wikipedia, n.d.),  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_of\\_League\\_of\\_Nations\\_WW1.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_League_of_Nations_WW1.png).



The League of Nations had three organs: the Assembly, the Council, and the Permanent Secretariat. The former two could act only with unanimous approval on any issue in the jurisdiction of the League.<sup>10</sup> Members involved in a dispute that the League was intervening in were not required for unanimity. If Germany were attacking France, for instance, a League action on this invasion would not require the votes from either Germany or France, but would require the votes from every other member country. The reason behind unanimity is that it maintains each nation's sovereign ability to act as it chooses. The League would not compel any country to intervene in a dispute, but rather, it would coordinate member states if all choose to intervene. While preserving sovereignty, the unanimity rule severely restricted the League's ability to take action.

Every member nation was entitled to a vote in the Assembly which could rule on any issue in the League's jurisdiction, as well as admit new members, elect non-permanent members of the Council,

<sup>10</sup> "The League of Nations" (UN Geneva, n.d.), <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/history/league-of-nations>.



elect (with the Council) the judges of the Permanent Court, and control the budget.<sup>11</sup> The Assembly's counterpart was the Council which had a group of permanent members and a group of rotating non-permanent members elected by the Assembly. The numbers of seats and countries with permanent seats frequently changed. The initial permanent members were the UK, France, Italy, and Japan. Germany was added later in the 1920s, but then both Germany and Japan left the League in the 1930s. The Soviet Union then became a fourth permanent member later in the 1930s before being expelled from the League. The number of non-permanent seats was originally four but then eventually increased as high as eleven over the course of the interwar period.

The twenty years of the interwar period saw several great successes of the League, as well as several major failures. Charting these successes and failures is essential to understand what changes are necessary to avoid future wars in our establishment of the UN. In the following paragraphs, we will review the League's "technical activities" of international governance and then turn to its "political activities" involving international disputes.

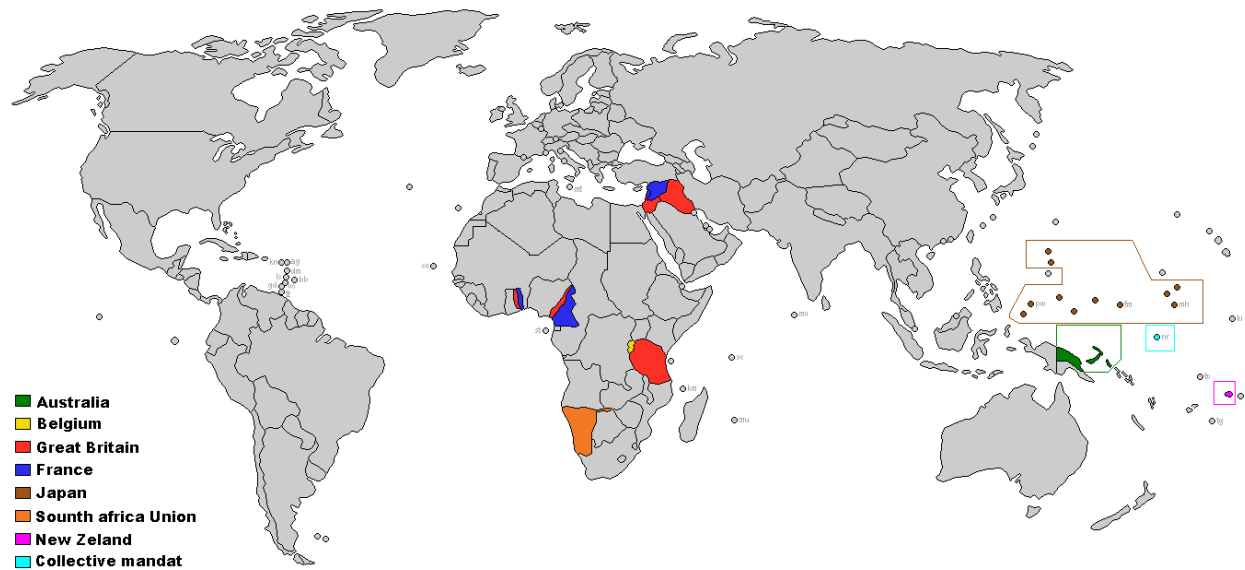
One of the most important technical functions of the League was establishing "mandates," which essentially meant that Ottoman and German overseas territories were to be distributed among the victors in the war to govern (see map<sup>12</sup>).<sup>13</sup> These mandates were still under some League control as the possessor states had to publish annual reports ensuring their compliance with League criteria that the mandate territories were being governed to the benefit of the inhabitants. In effect, however, the mandates meant the expansion of the colonial empires of the First World War victors, as League protections of the territories were nominal. The mandate system continued under a different name with the UN, but we will not cover this issue in our committee at MUNUC to prevent some delegates from having to defend colonialism.

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<sup>11</sup> "The League of Nations."

<sup>12</sup> "League of Nations Mandate," in *Wikipedia* (Wikipedia, n.d.), [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/League\\_of\\_Nations\\_mandate](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Nations_mandate).

<sup>13</sup> "The League of Nations."



The League also sought to protect the religious, social, and political freedoms of Eastern European minorities. This was an interesting violation of the Westphalian system of sovereignty because internal policies such as how a country should treat its own citizens were seen under Westphalia as no place for international mediation. This was notably in line with Wilson's point on the need for political self-determination--although some minorities were not given self-determination, they at least got a guarantee of protection. The formal enforcement mechanism was seldom used, and instead, the League attempted to resolve any issues informally and locally. The League also established a forum for states to discuss improving international transportation systems and promoted the development of international relationships in intellectual fields such as the arts and sciences.

The League was also concerned with matters of health. One important function was raising standards for child welfare and reducing human trafficking.<sup>14</sup> The League established a health office to disseminate information, coordinate national health departments, promote vaccinations, and control infectious diseases. This institution later became the World Health Organization. The last health-related mission of the League was to control the distribution of habit-forming drugs such as opium or cocaine.

<sup>14</sup> "The League of Nations."

The last technical function of the League was the repatriation of prisoners of war and refugees.<sup>15</sup> This mission was a years-long process involving millions of displaced people trying to get back to their home countries. The effort required significant international cooperation as well as the institution of legal mechanisms for many of these displaced people to travel without the correct papers. This led to legal protection of the rights of refugees from the Nansen passport, named after the head of this mission, Fridtjof Nansen.

While these technical functions of the League may seem relatively minor (and the League's successes were certainly on a small scale), there are many instances in which non-political international cooperation may be necessary or useful. These are all matters (with the exception of mandates) that you will want to bring up while drafting your own UN structure because economic necessity can oftentimes be a pretext for war (Acts, 27). Such technical aspects that you can include are public health, refugees, military disarmament, economic development, human rights, and narcotics. While the main function of the League and the UN was/is to prevent war, a subsidiary function should be to make the peace more prosperous.

Now, we will look at the major political disputes that the League tried to take on--successfully and unsuccessfully. The League bloodlessly settled minor border disputes between Finland and Sweden in 1920, Lithuania and Poland in 1922 and 1923, and Colombia and Peru in 1932. In the latter conflict, the League even dispatched some peacekeeping forces.<sup>16</sup> The League also successfully settled a major conflict between Greece and Bulgaria in 1925. In this conflict, a border issue was brought before the League, hearings were conducted, both countries agreed to a settlement, and the withdrawal of Greek troops was overseen by the British, French, and Italian militaries--a perfect execution of what the League was meant to accomplish.<sup>17</sup> Greece even compensated the Bulgarians for the incursion.<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately, there were also dramatic failures of the League of Nations. In 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria, a region of China. As an aggressive war, this invasion was a violation of the Kellogg-

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<sup>15</sup> "The League of Nations."

<sup>16</sup> Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations* (USA: Westview Press, 2003), 25.

<sup>17</sup> "The League of Nations."

<sup>18</sup> Schlesinger, 25.

Briand Pact of 1928 that mandated an end to such warfare. The invasion was also against the spirit of the League of Nations. The United States Secretary of State sent a telegram to the League of Nations stating that even the isolationist United States would support League action in this matter.<sup>19</sup> Before any substantive action could be taken, Japan had conquered much of Manchuria. The League passed a resolution with the support of the United States stating that the international community would not recognize a resolution to the conflict that violated the principles of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. This essentially meant that they wanted Japan to give its conquered territory back to China. All that had to be done was for the League to determine a course of action to force Japan to give up its new colony. After Japan successfully vetoed a resolution for the League's policing in the Council, the League and the United States simply condemned the invasion (causing Japan to withdraw from the League) and took no substantive action to end the occupation of Manchuria.<sup>20</sup> As a result, the Japanese conquered a large region of China in violation of international law and against the orders of the League with impunity.

The last major incident was the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. This episode essentially marked the end of any hope that the League could prevent any major wars in the future. The conflict began in December 1934 with a border conflict between Italian Somaliland and Ethiopia. The Italians under Mussolini prepared to invade Ethiopia, claiming that the border skirmish gave him an adequate *casus belli* (cause of war) under the principle of self-defense.<sup>21</sup> Ethiopia was a member of the League and brought the case to the League's Council, but Mussolini rejected all proposals. The League initially imposed economic sanctions including halting arms trading with Italy (but not oil), refusing to provide credit (loans) to the Italian government and companies, and ending all imports from Italy.<sup>22</sup> Since Italy was a major power, the League's attempt to impose sanctions failed at the behest of member nations who did not want to give up their trade with Italy or anger their neighbor. Trade continued despite the League's actions.

With both superior weapons and poison gas, Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in 1935 and completed the conquest in 1936. Not only did the League refuse to help Ethiopia regain its sovereignty, but most

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<sup>19</sup> *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: US Department of State, 1983).

<sup>20</sup> Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations* (USA: Westview Press, 2003), 25.

<sup>21</sup> "The League of Nations."

<sup>22</sup> Schlesinger, 25.

countries also recognized the conquest, a stark contrast to the unrecognized Japanese occupation of Manchuria. The League later dropped its objections to the invasion.<sup>23</sup> As a result of the League's failure to prevent the invasion, it was clear that any powerful European nation essentially had free reign to ignore and leave the League. While the League could still settle disputes between members looking for peace, it could not prevent aggressive warfare and even had a hard time punishing states for invasions.

In 1940 during World War Two, the Soviet Union was not a member of the alliance against Germany as Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of Russia, had not yet begun. With the chaos in the rest of the world, Josef Stalin took the opportunity to annex Finland, another League member. The League expelled the Soviets for violating the ban on aggression against another League member, though none of the allies could hope to do anything about it given the ongoing wars in the rest of the world. Unlike Mussolini who chose to leave the League, this act scarred Stalin and left him wanting some assurances of protections for the Soviet Union going into the San Francisco Conference.<sup>24</sup>

It is also worth mentioning that the League failed to enforce the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. After Hitler took power in 1933, he withdrew Germany from the League, stopped paying World War One reparations, and started rebuilding the German military beyond the size limitations specified at Versailles. Germany also reoccupied the Rhineland in a more blatant violation of the Treaty. As a vehicle for the enforcement of peace treaties, the League was, once again, a spectacular failure. If the League had taken action earlier (invaded Germany to enforce the treaty), in 1933 or 1934 or even 1935, then the German effort to rebuild its army would have failed. Instead, the League did nothing and established a policy of appeasing Hitler, even by awarding him with territories belonging to other countries, in the case of the German annexation of Austria, Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland, and later the entirety of Czechoslovakia. The League's members were facing economic turmoil at home from the Great Depression, as well as lingering war fatigue from the Great War that ended less than a generation earlier. There was simply no will to force Germany to comply with the Treaty. Instead,

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<sup>23</sup> Schlesinger, 26.

<sup>24</sup> Schlesinger, 27.

Germany was allowed to build the strongest army in the world over the course of the 1930s, an army powerful enough to conquer the continent in a matter of two years.

### ***World War Two and the Origins of the San Francisco Conference***

Japan continued its invasion of China, with a climax in 1937 when the Japanese military murdered hundreds of thousands of Chinese civilians in the Nanjing Massacre. On 1 September 1939, the war in Europe began with the German and, later, Soviet invasions of Poland. Against the forces of both Stalin and Hitler, the outdated and outgunned Polish army stood no chance and quickly surrendered. August 1939 was the last time the Polish people would have self-determination until the collapse of the Soviet Union five decades later. By 1941, the rest of Continental Europe fell except for a few neutral countries and a small strip of the European section of the Soviet Union that remained unconquered. In December 1941, Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor and began a months-long expansion of the Japanese Empire into Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific. Both the Japanese and the German invasions were aggressive, again in violation of the League and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. In the face of the Nazi and Japanese war machine, both of these international institutions were essentially useless. I will not go into more detail about the war, so we will skip ahead to laying the foundation for the San Francisco Conference.

The intellectual and organizational origins for the San Francisco conference began on February 12, 1942 (nine weeks after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor) when US Secretary of State Cordell Hull organized an Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy that included Leo Pasvolsky, the main author and intellectual behind the real UN Charter.<sup>25</sup> There was a long, ongoing debate between Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles and Pasvolsky over the degree of regionalism that should be included in the UN. Welles (supported by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill) held that regional bodies are better suited to solving local issues, while Pasvolsky worried that these regional bodies would detract from the central UN structure that should have the ability to project power. There was also the issue of power politics. A regional UN organization would mean that the US would only be in the regional body for the Americas, in line with the Monroe Doctrine. However, it would also mean that the Soviet Union would be in the European regional body but not the US. Considering that

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<sup>25</sup> Schlesinger, 37.



Europe was where the majority of the world's wealth and power was (as well as the location for the wars that the US kept getting dragged into), a situation with Soviet but not American representation in European decisions was unacceptable. By October 1942, President Roosevelt approved Welles's proposal to complete a full rough draft for a UN charter.<sup>26</sup>

Welles's proposal created an Executive Council that included the Big Four (US, UK, USSR, and China) as permanent members, as well as representatives from the seven global regions. The permanent members had a limited veto. Roosevelt rejected this proposal because he feared Stalin would reject a limited veto, and the regions were seemingly incohesive.<sup>27</sup> The president now turned to Pasvolsky to offer an alternative. Pasvolsky's draft reduced the power of the regional committees but kept the main organs that would become the body of the UN: the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Secretariat.<sup>28</sup>

Churchill and Roosevelt endorsed the creation of the UN in August 1943 as the UN draft charters were still being revised. Their agreement was simply over the principle of the use of an organization stronger than the League, but they did not delve into specifics. The duo brought in China's Chiang Kai-shek to agree to join a conference on the UN's organization. The major hurdle remained Stalin, whom Roosevelt and Churchill met in Tehran in November and December 1943. Roosevelt convinced Stalin to accept a body centered on the joint policing of the Big Four and reject a body with strong regional committees, as Churchill originally wanted. Meanwhile, the US Congress passed resolutions favoring a UN in the future, a major achievement for Roosevelt given that the typically isolationist Congress killed the participation of the US in the League, effectively neutering the organization. In February 1944, Roosevelt approved Pasvolsky's latest draft charter to serve as the US government's proposal. The draft included a Security Council with veto power for the Big Four to address security matters (peacekeeping operations and dispute resolutions), a forum for all nations called the General Assembly, a Secretariat to serve as the UN bureaucracy, and a World Court.<sup>29</sup> Pasvolsky convinced Roosevelt that the Security Council should include seven non-permanent members to prevent a

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<sup>26</sup> Schlesinger, 40.

<sup>27</sup> Schlesinger, 40.

<sup>28</sup> Schlesinger, 43.

<sup>29</sup> Schlesinger, 45.

dictatorship of the Big Four. He also added that the Security Council alone should have jurisdiction over security issues.<sup>30</sup>

Roosevelt scheduled a conference at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC in the summer of 1944 to bring the now-official US proposal to the other members of the Big Four (who themselves brought little to the conference). There, the Big Four agreed to a draft that they would bring to the San Francisco Conference the next year. **For the purposes of our committee, we will assume that this Dumbarton Oaks agreement is not binding.** Delegates can act in violation of the agreement.

Dumbarton Oaks ended in October 1944, and there remained half a year until the beginning of the San Francisco Conference. Only a few countries were privy to many of the events in this period, so the remaining history will be distributed to delegates as needed. **DO NOT RESEARCH THIS PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 1944 TO APRIL 1945.** We will tell you all the history that you need to know and have access to in follow-up documents.

Lastly, I leave you with a quote from then-Vice President Harry S Truman in Jefferson City, Missouri: "The policy we hope and believe will emerge from the SF Conference and others to follow will embody cooperation among nations to keep down aggressors... The only rational alternative to existing international anarchy lies in some reasonable form of international organization among so-called sovereign states. This is merely an extension of local and national practices to an international plane."<sup>31</sup> This is what is at stake in this conference: the only rational alternative to anarchy and bloody warfare.

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<sup>30</sup> Schlesinger, 47.

<sup>31</sup> Schlesinger, 7.

## Possible Solutions

Delegates should note that while it may seem natural to create a UN structured similarly to the one that many of you have experienced in Model UN, the dais expects this committee to create new power structures in the UN to secure better outcomes for their own countries.

### *Organs of the UN*

The UN can be divided into a number of organs--many of which your classmates will model at MUNUC. One such organ is the **General Assembly**, a forum for all countries to discuss problems and pass non-binding resolutions to solve them. Another organ is the **UN Security Council (UNSC)**, where countries can commit the troops and resources of member states to resolve conflicts. The UNSC does not need to have every country represented, though the major countries will definitely want a role on the council because their troops and money will constitute much of what the UN deploys in UNSC resolutions. Most of the great powers will want some form of **veto power** so that they do not have to send their troops to resolve a conflict if they do not want to. However, the status of this veto is negotiable. Does the veto mean that the country simply does not have to send its troops? Can a major power prevent discussion or investigation of a topic before the UNSC (**procedural matters**)? Can a major power block action taken by the UN members (**substantive matters**)? Meanwhile, smaller countries want the ability to have some representation on the UNSC to prevent a tyranny of the great powers.

The committee may also want to establish a **World Court** (International Court of Justice) to issue binding or non-binding resolutions to conflicts. However, delegates will need to consider the jurisdiction of the court, the selection of judges, and how decisions will be enforced. Delegates may also want to form other committees within the UN dedicated to issues such as human rights or economic prosperity. However, delegates should note that while the UN has evolved to take on these matters of promoting human flourishing as a core part of its mission, the 1945 formulation of the UN was primarily dedicated to the prevention of wars.

## ***Administration***

The administration of the UN is of vital importance. Who will run the organization? How will this **Secretary-General** be selected and what will his/her powers be? What qualifications will a Secretary-General need? How will this individual select support staff? Furthermore, there is the matter of where the UN will be located. The host country will have quite a bit of prestige, even at the cost of donating the land and constructing buildings for the organization. There is also the possibility of each UN organ being located in a different city. Lastly, the Charter should specify the responsibility of countries to send delegates to the committee. Such details include the qualifications of delegates, the size of the delegations, and any requirement to have delegates available in case of urgent matters.

## ***Technical Activities***

The UN should not just be an organization dedicated to preserving peace. It should also serve as a way to coordinate countries to enjoy a more prosperous peace. As a result, the UN should have bodies dedicated to preserving non-security-related concerns such as drug trafficking, global health, human trafficking, economic development, human rights, education, and refugees.

## ***Regionalism***

Delegates should consider whether smaller regional bodies be created to solve region-specific problems within the UN framework. If within the UN, the Charter should specify the exact boundaries of these regions and their powers. Delegates should also consider whether to permit alliances or international bodies outside the UN. Will the UN be the only international political institution? Countries that seek regional dominance or want to exclude faraway major powers from interference in local affairs will support regionalism, while countries that want a global footprint will seek a more limited form of regionalism. However, countries can permit regional bodies for certain areas and exclude them for others, or form an accommodating structure wherein the biggest countries can be represented on all of the regional councils, reflecting their global interests.

***Member States:***

Argentina, Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus are currently not voting members of the conference or the future UN. While these countries are in the committee room and can speak in both moderated and unmoderated caucuses, they cannot vote until they are admitted by the body. However, they do have key allies who can vote for their admission. You should also consider the mechanism for admitting or expelling future members.

## Bloc Positions

More details on country positions will be included in secret agendas distributed before the conference.

**The Big Four/Five** (UK, US, Soviet Union, and China--and maybe France): These countries are dedicated to establishing a UN that favors their national interests. They stand against the smaller countries in demanding a veto over substantive matters so they do not have to commit troops against their will. They understand that the UN cannot be successful unless they participate and enforce the resolutions of the body. As a result, they expect a higher level of respect and power within the organization to reflect their outsized role in its success. These countries oppose regionalism as they have global interests—the greater power regional bodies are granted, the less power the Big Four/Five countries have over these regions.

**Latin America** (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico): Latin America is a huge voting bloc that typically supports the United States against the Soviet Union. However, Latin Americans want the Big Four to have less power such as through a limited form of the veto. Latin American countries also want to get Argentina admitted to the conference and would like to establish a regional body.

**Small European countries** (Luxembourg, Netherlands, Greece, Belgium, Yugoslavia, and maybe France): These countries want the wars in Europe to come to an end, so they want to push the UN to have stronger institutional foundations. They want a firm and binding world court and a bullet-proof world alliance against aggressor states. These countries are more closely aligned to the UK and the US than the Soviets.

**The Eastern Bloc** (Byelorussian SSR (Belarus), Czechoslovakia, Ukraine SSR, Poland, and Soviet Union): These countries want to get Belarus, Ukraine, and the pro-Soviet Polish delegation admitted as full members, and support Soviet interests.

**The Middle East and Africa** (Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ethiopia, and Liberia): These countries represent smaller countries that want regional associations to defend



themselves collectively against the bigger powers. They also want to have stronger UN institutions to prevent future wars such as a binding world court and a bullet-proof world alliance against aggressor states. Lastly, these countries would like the larger countries to have less power in the UN such as a weaker veto.

**The Commonwealth** (New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and India): These countries generally support British interests, but they all strongly oppose greater powers for the Big Four/Five. Because the Commonwealth is a global collective of countries and British territories, they oppose regionalism since this would separate the Commonwealth countries from their closest allies--each other.

## Glossary

**Big Four:** China, Soviet Union, UK, and US.

**Big Three:** Soviet Union, UK, and US.

**Commonwealth:** A group of countries formerly or currently part of the British Empire. Considered in the UK's sphere of influence.

**Dumbarton Oaks Agreement:** A working draft developed primarily by the United States with input from allies that would serve as the basis for the UN Charter developed at the San Francisco Conference. For our purposes, we will not be using this agreement.

**General Assembly:** A body within the UN that includes all countries in the UN.

**League of Nations:** The precursor to the UN, the League was a failed attempt to establish an international organization to resolve the kinds of international conflicts that lead to warfare. The League was founded in the aftermath of World War One by an agreement in the Treaty of Versailles.

**Liberalism:** A school of thought within international relations that promotes the ability of international cooperation to avoid the warfare that emerges from power politics. Liberals essentially claim that there is a way out of the kind of politics described by realists. The UN and League of Nations are, therefore, liberal institutions. This kind of liberalism should not be confused with the ideas of the political left or the ideas from the philosophical school of liberalism. Bernie Sanders has realist leanings for foreign policy, is certainly a liberal in American politics, but is very philosophically illiberal. George W. Bush is an international relations liberal, is a conservative in American politics, and is much more philosophically liberal than Bernie Sanders. The main rival to international relations liberalism is realism.

**Permanent Member of the Security Council:** A powerful country that is always represented on the Security Council. It may be granted a veto.

**Procedural Matter:** A proposal that does not require the body to take an action. A procedural matter might include opening debate on an issue. It is the complement to a substantive matter and is left intentionally vague.

**Realism:** A school of thought in international relations that seeks to explain how states behave. Realists theorize that states act to increase their power because the power to defend themselves guarantees that state's survival. One mechanism of a realist state is the balance of power within a region to prevent a state or group of states from conquering the rest. Realism's main rival school is liberalism.

**Regionalism:** The delegation of international decision making on a regional instead of global scale.

**Secretariat:** The bureaucrats who run the UN. They are led by the Secretary-General.

**Security Council:** A body within the UN that can decide "security"-related questions, such as resolving disputes.

**Security Matter:** Any matter that involves or could directly lead to warfare, such as dispute resolution.

**Substantive Matter:** A proposal that requires the body to take an action. The complement of a procedural matter. This word is intentionally vague.

**Technical Activity:** Actions from an international organization that seek to remove the underlying cause of war and/or improve human welfare such as through economic development or the promotion of health or human rights.

**Veto:** A single country can cause a matter to be rejected.

**World Court:** A judicial body meant to settle disputes within the context of international law.

## Suggested Reading

*Act of Creation* by Stephen C Schlesinger

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