



## **The European International Model United Nations 2016**

### **Dual Cabinet Crisis**



Image Source: PA

*The First World War*

## **Welcome Letter**

Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of The European International Model United Nations (TEIMUN), we would like to welcome you to the Historical Crisis Council. Participating as a delegate at the oldest collegiate MUN in Europe, will be a challenging yet extremely rewarding experience for you. During sessions, you will be pushed to analyze the catastrophes of our past, in hopes of gaining a better understanding of the potential challenges of tomorrow. Outside of the committee room, you will have the opportunity to take part in cultural excursions, break a move on the dance floor, play football on the beach, all while making friends from around the world.

As a committee, our main goal during this simulation will be to create an unpredictable and exciting crisis environment whilst ensuring your enjoyment along the way. This committee will lead to an exhilarating review of the First World War. We, therefore, expect plenty of political schemes and wargames. As you are preparing for the conference, please don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

We look forward meeting you in The Hague.

Your chairs,

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## **Introduction**

The First World War, waged from 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918, is one of the largest conflicts the world has ever seen. Over 70 million troops were mobilised and 17 million lives were lost. New methods of warfare were developed or perfected – chemical weapons, tanks and airplanes, trench warfare. Part of the 'Great' War's enduring tragedy is that it was largely pointless, springing to life because nations were more prepared to fight than to discuss. And its legacy was equally marred by the Treaty of Versailles, widely seen as flawed, and the League of Nations, an organisation set up with noble ideals perhaps but ultimately doomed to weakness and irrelevance. Two decades after the conclusion of 'the war to end all wars', Europe and the world were once again torn apart by their unresolved demons.

Despite its notoriety, the First World War's scope makes it an ambitious and exciting choice of topic for TEIMUN's first ever Dual Cabinet Crisis. Over the course of the conference, Delegates will have the chance to take over control of the Allied or Central Powers, reshape history and fight for victory. Perhaps they will win a true and lasting peace – perhaps they will burn their enemies to the ground.

Below is a summary of the First World War's origins and key features. Delegates should read over it carefully, supplementing it with their own research. It is also vitally important that Delegates read the Rules of Procedure carefully, so as to fully understand how the Dual Cabinet Crisis is going to work.

## **Historical Background**

Germany unified in 1871 as an imperial federation of states, led by the King of Prussia (Kaiser Wilhelm 1) in the wake of the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian war. An era of booming population growth and rapid industrialization followed. The new German nation managed to forcefully annex the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine from France further fueling the tensions in Europe. Subsequently, the great powers formed separate alliances. Germany, Austria-Hungary (Habsburg Empire) and Italy formed one side and The Russian Empire and France the other one.

Germany in particular started building up its military might in particular its navy to challenge the British supremacy. Fearing the loss of control of the high seas, the Brits signed a strategic military pact with France and Japan to (re)establish their dominance. Nonetheless, the different alliances had far reaching internal dilemmas and issues. Czar Nicholas II ordered his troops to fire demonstrators in

St. Petersburg while simultaneously having to deal with crushing defeats at the hands of the Japanese.

The arms race between the British and Germans led to the creation of the H.M.S. Dreadnaught, a new type of battleship that was rapidly copied by the German forces, the by now leading European economic powerhouse. The British government signed another strategic agreement, this time with already heavily internally pressured Russian government. The latter also started feeling external pressure when the Austrian-Hungarian Empire annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina, a feat the Czar heavily condemned due to the Serbian minority that he declared as his protectorate.

The Balkan War erupts in southern Europe as Serbia leads an attack by members of the Balkan League (Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece) against the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire to drive the Turks out of Europe. After a year of heavy fighting in southern Europe, the Turks are driven out of the Balkans. A peace settlement is then drawn up by the major European powers that divides up the former Turkish areas in southern Europe among the Balkan League nations. However, the peace is short-lived as Bulgaria, desiring a bigger share, attacks neighboring Greece and Serbia. Romania then attacks Bulgaria along with the Turks. This Second Balkan War results in Bulgaria losing territory and the Serbians becoming emboldened, leaving the Balkan region of southern Europe politically unstable.

Keeping this in mind the primordial event did not come as a surprise. Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, is shot dead in Sarajevo, capital of the Austrian province Bosnia. Franz Ferdinand's killer, Gavrilo Princip, is backed by Serbian terrorist group 'the Black Hand'. Austria-Hungary issues Serbia with an ultimatum, calling for Serbia to allow Austria-Hungary to be represented in proceedings against the guilty. Serbia agrees to most of the demands, but not this one.

As Europe stands on the brink of war, British proposals for a meeting of the great powers are ignored. Backed up by Germany, Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia on 28 July. Russia quickly steps in to protect the small nation and mobilises its army. Germany responds by declaring war on Russia. France is Russia's ally and begins mobilising its forces. As the armies mobilise, war becomes almost inevitable. Many believe the war will be a short manageable conflict, but the crisis unfolds so quickly that no statesman is able to regain control of it.

## **Combat During WWI**

The men and women who served their countries during World War One endured some of the most brutal types of warfare the world has ever seen. The new technologies that the arms race had sparked to life combined with the huge number of soldiers mobilised made for horrific, deadly and gruesome battlefields.

The first types of artillery and machine guns were deployed in the late 19th century, these extraordinarily effective defensive weapons, create a deadly zone of fire in front of the defenders position. Forcing a defensive approach towards warfare. It therefore came as no surprise that the combatants started digging trenches to protect themselves and allow them to fire back without exposing themselves to danger.

Trench warfare did however not occur until the end of 1914, the first weeks of the war were typified by continuous struggled by the opposing factions to outflank each other. Operationally it was not an intentional race to reach the French or Belgian coast before the other. However, the fight to capture the unoccupied ground on each other's northern flank, the German attempt to capture more French ground and reach Paris, against the French determination to hold up their enemy's advance resulted in the movement of the armies in a north-westerly direction towards the coast. Battles took place as the armies sidestepped one another towards the French-Belgian coast and the Channel ports of Calais, Dunkirk, Ostend and Zeebrugge. This period of fighting has become known as "The Race to the Sea".

The fierce defense of strategic landmarks by the Allied forces resulted in a situation which became one of deadlock. Carefully selecting the most favourable high ground the Imperial German Army began the construction of a strong defensive line from early in 1915. The Front Lines were consolidated through trenches, wire defenses, mines and deep bunkers, reinforced emplacements etc. The building and digging was gradually carried on both sides of the wire along creating a more or less continuous line of trenches along the Western Front.

The next three years attempts were made to break the deadlock through major battle offensives, however due to the characteristics of these battles the armies couldn't achieve any long term objectives. Before an offensive the enemy lines were bombarded, any success was counted in gains of distance more so than strategic objectives.



**Figure #1:** The major fronts of World War 1 in the Western Theatre. TheGreatWar.co.uk.

While World War I on the Western Front developed into trench warfare, the battle lines on the Eastern Front were much more fluid and trenches never truly developed. The great length of the line and lower density of the soldiers made it easier to break. Rapid counteroffensives to seal breakthroughs were made difficult by the sparse communication networks.

The same could be said for the Asian and Pacific theatre where the Allied forces attempted to take over the colonial possession of Germany, mostly through naval battles. A battle in this front is the Siege of Tsingtao, In the autumn of 1914 British and Japanese forces attack the port of Tsingtao (Qingdao) – a German colony - in China. Although the Germans put up a firm resistance a force of 23,000 Japanese soldiers seized control.

### Chemical Weapons

Prior to World War One poisonous gas was considered uncivilised. The development of it was sped up due to the necessity to overcome the stalemates. Contrary to popular belief the French were the first to use tear-gas grenades in the very first month of the war. Other types of gasses were sneeze inducing types and the infamous chlorine gas that was introduced during the start of the second battle for Ypres. Within seconds of inhaling the French troops' respiratory organs were destroyed bringing on choking attacks. Although widely condemned it was this moment during the war that got the cat out of the bag and escalated

the use of poison gas for the remainder of the war. New types of gasses were invented and deployed to force soldiers out of their trenches. Mustard gas, causing internal and external blisters, as well as Phosgene gas became a common sight. By 1918 the use of poison gases had become so widespread, particularly on the Western Front, that if the war had continued in 1919 both sides would have inserted poison gases into 30% to 50% of their shells.

### Airplanes

Airplanes and aircraft technology evolved along all frontiers - graduating from canvas and wooden construction to the eventual incorporation of metal. The early forms were mostly unarmed and used in reconnaissance missions until weapons were added to the airplanes. When an eventual deadlock was reached on the ground, the battle above would still be raging. Men in the skies fought for air superiority in an attempt to breakthrough. These fights and the type of warfare on the ground led to a multitude of different aircrafts emerging: fighters, scouts, night bombers, night fighters, fighters capable of ground attacks. They laid the foundation for our modern aircraft.

### Tanks

The standard means of warfare at the time had led to a stalemate of sorts between the entrenched sides and as a means of progressing from this position the British and French forces implemented tanks in modern warfare for the first time with varied success at first. They proved rather unreliable although as the war developed they played a larger role. In response the Germans developed their own tanks, however their production numbers were much lower than the combined allied effort and as a result the Germans corrected this deficiency by deploying captured allied tanks alongside their own.


## **Allied Powers**

### *France*

After the German invasion of the neutral territories of Belgium and Luxembourg, the German forces turned their attention to France thus bringing the French into the war. This action directed towards the French came as a result of France refusing to take a position in relation to the war that had begun between Germany and Russia. Germany demanded that France remain neutral while the French bilateral agreement with the Russian's required they intervene. A failure to respond, other than to withdraw troops from the borders and call up its reserve forces, led to the German decision to declare war on France. The French Empire meant that French involvement was global.

 *British Empire*

The British Empire, as a result of its bilateral agreement with France, entered the war as a result of the German escalation and troop movement towards the French territory as well as a refusal by Germany to maintain the neutrality of Belgium in the conflict. Included in the British Empire at the beginning at the war were its dominions: Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The British Empire conducted war mainly within Europe but through its dominions fought throughout the globe.

 *Russia (1914–17)*

Through its alliance with the Kingdom of Serbia, Russia entered the war in response to the Austro-Hungarian invasion of its ally Serbia. The nation quickly marshaled its forces in defence of its ally. Having declared war on Austria-Hungary, Russia subsequently mobilized against Germany as a result of its dual alliance with the Austro-Hungarian's. After refusing to de-escalate its mobilization in response to calls from both German and Austro-Hungarian governments, Germany officially entered into a state of war with Russia.

 *Serbia*

Serbia, as a result of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was invaded by Austro-Hungarian forces after failing to comply completely with the presented ultimatum. The Serbian goal in the war was to defend itself and remain independent from Austria-Hungary.

 *Montenegro*

Montenegro joined in the defence of Serbia from Austria-Hungary and later Bulgaria. It's participation was limited to the action as it was unsuccessful and Montenegro was conquered by Austro-Hungarian forces.

 *Belgium*

Invaded by Germany in 1914, after refusing a German request to allow troop movement through its territory, having been up till that point a neutral party in the conflict till that point. Belgian influence in the war was limited to its resistance to German forces and it was occupied for the majority of the conflict.

 *Japan*

As part of the allied forces, Japan seized the German Micronesia colonies and the coaling port of Qingdao on the Chinese Shadong Province and thus declared war on Germany as well as Austria-Hungary due to the latter's refusal to withdraw a ship from a German port. Japan thus participated in the removal of German territories in the Pacific.





### *Italy (1915–18)*

Having at first been part of the triple alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany, Italy, Having designs on territory in Austria and receiving offers from the Allies, officially joined the Allies through the signing of the Treaty of London. They subsequently declared war on Austria-Hungary and later Germany. Italian action in the war was primarily in forward assaults on the Austro-Hungarian provinces to its north although in its colonies it also fought conflicts.



### *Portugal (1916–18)*

Germany's declaration of war on Portugal meant the end of Portugal's neutral position in the war and their official entrance. Conflicts between Portugal and Germany had already occurred although these had centered on their respective African colonies. Furthermore the German U Boat blockade in the Atlantic had damaged Portuguese interests. Portugal's primary goal during the war was to maintain its colonial empire.



### *Romania (1916–18)*

Having initially been aligned with the Central Power, Romania declared itself neutral in response to the Austro-Hungarian invasion of Serbia stating that since Austria-Hungary was the aggressor it was under no responsibility to join the aggression. A subsequent Allied offer of Hungarian territory swayed Romania away from its neutral position into an alliance with the Allies. Their intervention in the war proved a temporary uplift for the Allied eastern front however the subsequent November revolution in Russia in 1917 and their withdrawal from the war greatly restricted Romanian ability to be effective.



### *United States (1917–18)*

Initially the United States had a policy of non-intervention and tried to find ways to negotiate an end to the conflict. This continued despite German use of submarine warfare in the Atlantic which included American casualties, famously the sinking of the RMS Lusitania. After repeated warnings from the United States, Germany seized its use of submarine warfare temporarily but its later resumption would be a catalyst for United States entry into the war. An attempt by Germany to persuade Mexico to join the Central Powers and attempt to retake Texas from the United States which was intercepted by British Intelligence and released by President Wilson to the public provided the justification the United States required publicly to enter the war.



### *Greece (1917–18)*

Initially King Constantine I of Greece and its new provisional government of Venizelos clashed over the loyalties of the country. While the King sided with the

Central Powers, the provisional government sided with the allies. Subsequent internal strife and conflict led to the resignation of King Constantine I in favor of his son and Greece entered the war aligned with the allies. Greek involvement in the war was largely limited to fighting around its borders, especially in Macedonia.

## Central Powers



### *Germany*

Germany's dual alliance with Austria-Hungary placed it in a state of war with Russia as their forces mobilized against them in response to the Austro-Hungarian invasion of Serbia. A refusal to calls by Germany to Russia to de-escalate its mobilizations led to Germany's declaration of war. In the West, an appeal to France to stay neutral, despite its bilateral agreement with Russia, was met with silence and mobilization of reserve forces. Germany subsequently invaded Luxembourg and declared war upon France while a refusal by neutral Belgium to allow German forces passage through the country led to a further war and invasion by Germany.



### *Austria-Hungary*

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary by Yugoslav nationalist Gavrilo Princip in late June of 1914 led to the delivery of an ultimatum to the Kingdom of Serbia and its subsequent invasion by Austro-Hungarian forces. Austria-Hungary was motivated by the eradication of Serbia and to end its interference in Bosnia. Furthermore it was correctly believed that Serbian officials were involved with the assassination plot.



### *Ottoman Empire*

The Ottomans entered the war through a secret agreement made with the German's in August of 1914. Its hope in doing so was to reclaim territories lost to Russia as well as in other regions and once again establish the Ottoman Empire as a growing world power. The Ottoman Empire also used the distraction of the war and thus the Western powers as opportunity for mass ethnic cleansing.



### *Bulgaria (1915-18)*

German and Austro-Hungarian officials managed to convince Bulgaria to join the central powers and declare war upon Serbia. Bulgaria soon joined Austria-Hungary in its attacks on Serbia, sharing in its territory after its conquer.

## **Conclusion**

This Background Paper has given you a brief overview of how things stand before the start of World War I, but during TEIMUN 2016 it will be up to you to shape the direction the conflict takes. Only one thing is certain – the history you create will be very different from history as we know it today. The aim of this Historical Crisis is simple – win. How you do that will depend on your creativity. Will you take out your enemies with sheer military force? Cut deals and make alliances that will protect you? Undermine your enemies with subterfuge? Anything and everything goes. Good luck!