

Versailles 1919

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Background Guide

Disclaimers

RAMMUNC's executive board is aware that sensitive topics will and shall be discussed at RAMMUNC III's committees. Discussions about sensitive topics are encouraged. However, delegates are not allowed to directly attack others on personal qualities, such as race, gender, and sexual orientation. Otherwise, delegates are allowed to have discussions about whatever issues **related to the topics presented in the background guide** they see fit by discretion of the chair of the committee.

Concerning this committee, the denial of or any discussions about the Armenian or Assyrian genocides is strictly forbidden. Although we recognize the importance of such discussions, these topics are not directly related to the main goals of this committee, and risk driving the committee off-course. Passing remarks are allowed, but in-depth discussion should not occur so that time can be spent instead tackling the issues presented in this background guide.

Concerning the usage of AI, delegates are allowed to use artificial intelligence in the preparation for the conference, but all work must represent their own thoughts. Technology, including artificial intelligence, is strictly forbidden at RAMMUNC during committee time, and usage of unauthorized devices during committee time will result in disqualification from awards consideration, and possible removal from the conference. Delegates should direct further questions about this policy to commonwealthiro@gmail.com.

Unique Systems

All RAMMUNC III General Assemblies utilize unique systems. Versailles 1919 features a crisis backroom that periodically provides updates informing delegates of outside events. The Paris Peace Conference occurred during volatile times when main negotiating points and national positions shifted as the world around them changed. This committee reflects that reality.

Delegates cannot write private directives or pass public directives; the only documents the committee can pass are the three peace treaties. However, the crisis system operates bidirectionally: not only do world events affect the committee, but the committee affects world events. Since this is an international conference with high press coverage, what delegates say during committee time is known not only to the committee but to the entire world, influencing external developments. For instance, if the delegate from the Ottoman Empire vocally supports ceding Constantinople to Greece (an obviously unpopular position domestically), this may prompt challenges to the delegate's hold over their own government in subsequent crisis updates.

In other words, you are being watched. Think carefully about what you say, since a simple whisper in committee could spark a revolt across your nation if not formulated correctly.

Introduction

The **First World War** (1914-1918) was a devastating conflict unlike any before it. Yet its aftermath was nearly as chaotic. Three empires (**Germany**, **Austria-Hungary**, and the **Ottoman**

Empire) lay in ruins, with opportunistic powers circling like vultures to claim their remnants. In this simulation of the **Paris Peace Conference**, delegates will represent various nations and face the monumental task of drafting **three distinct peace treaties**, each addressing one of the defeated empires.

This committee will move at a faster pace than a typical General Assembly.

Topic One: Carrying the Iron Cross (Germany)

The undisputed heavyweight of the Central Powers, the **German Empire**'s defeat at the hand of the Entente remains one of history's most defining moments. Yet this victory came at an enormous cost: northern France and Belgium lie scarred with barbed wire and trenches, and an entire generation of European youth is either buried beneath them or haunted by the horrors they witnessed.

But while the war is over, the struggle is not. At the negotiating table, **France** and **Britain** demand total reparations from Germany, while a chorus of global powers, from the **Japanese** to the **Australians**, compete for slices of Germany's vast colonial empire. Furthermore, the **Poles** push for their independent state to expand into German territories, provoking opposition from the **Russians**, who still lay claim to the eastern half of Poland.

Despite its defeat, Germany is not entirely powerless. The nation sits at a critical geopolitical crossroads. With **communist uprisings** stirring within and revolution brewing beyond its borders, Germany may be the last dam holding back a red tide from Russia from overtaking Western Europe. Delegates must tread carefully; punish Germany too harshly, and it may collapse into chaos, much to the delight of the **All-Russian Congress**. Punish it too lightly, and domestic backlash may erupt against what appears to be leniency towards an "evil empire".

Regarding the German peace treaty, delegates must confront three key questions. How responsible was Germany for the war, and how should that shape reparations? Who should inherit Germany's colonial holdings? And should an independent Polish state be internationally recognized and/or expanded?

Guiding Questions

1. **To what extent should Germany be held responsible for the First World War?** Should Germany bear sole responsibility, shared responsibility with other Central Powers, or should blame be distributed among all belligerents?
2. **What reparations, if any, should Germany pay for its involvement in the conflict?** Given Germany's economic instability and rising communist movement, should reparations prioritize punitive measures or focus on European stability and reconstruction?
3. **Should a Polish state be internationally recognized, and what should its borders be?** Should Poland obtain territories from the former German regions of Prussia, Poznań, and Silesia, and how should competing claims of self-determination be balanced?

4. **How should Germany's overseas colonies be redistributed?** Should Germany's Pacific, African, and Asian colonies be transferred to the Entente powers as mandates, granted independence, or administered through another international framework?

Topic Two: The Fallen Eagle (Austria-Hungary)

Austria-Hungary is the melting pot of Europe, a pot on the verge of explosion. In the aftermath of the First World War, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy stands on unstable ground, with a host of smaller nations within its borders demanding independence and control.

To the south lies the newly-formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (**Yugoslavia**), the nation that lit the spark of the war. Claiming to represent all southern Slavs, it seeks to annex territories such as Istria and Dalmatia, which **Italy** also covets. Meanwhile, **Hungary** has declared independence as the Hungarian People's Republic, attempting to preserve the nation's territorial integrity even as the **Czechoslovaks** push from the north for their own self-determination.

On the fringes of the Balkans, **Bulgaria** waits anxiously, hoping its smaller size spares it from the ambitions of larger powers. **Greece**, however, has no such reservations and hungrily eyes the Bulgarian Aegean coast.

Some states see this moment as a chance to ensure Austria-Hungary can never rise again. But key questions remain. How many new states should emerge from the empire's ashes? Should every ethnic group be granted a nation, risking further instability in an already volatile region, or should some be denied in favor of a more manageable balance of power? And what if these independence movements, once recognized, **inspire rebellions** in the empire of the victors themselves?

With Austria-Hungary, delegates must grapple with one overarching question: which nations should have their independence recognized? And once recognized, how should they govern themselves (as monarchies, republics, or something else? Should they remain under the "protection" of larger nations as protectorates, or should they become international mandates? How should these nations be formed, by referendums, or by a simple stroke of the pen by the victors?

Guiding Questions

1. **Which nations, if any, should be granted independence from Austria-Hungary?** Should ethnic groups such as the Czechs, Slovaks, South Slavs, and others receive sovereign statehood, remain under a reformed Habsburg monarchy, or be incorporated into neighboring states?
2. **How can the victorious powers support independence movements without destabilizing their own empires?** What strategies can be employed to promote self-determination in Austria-Hungary while preventing similar movements from threatening British, French, or other colonial holdings?

3. **How should newly independent states be governed and supervised?** Should these nations be organized as monarchies, republics, or other forms of government, and should they operate under League of Nations mandates, Entente supervision, or full self-governance?

Topic Three: The Deserts, The Mountains Speak (Ottoman Empire)

The “sick man of Europe” is breathing his last breath. The **Ottoman Empire**, once a vast domain stretching from Constantinople to the deserts of Hejaz, is now unraveling, leaving behind a power vacuum not seen since its rise centuries ago.

This collapse has brought particular instability to two regions: Arabia and southeastern Anatolia. In Arabia, the **Kingdom of Hejaz** seeks to solidify its independence and form a pan-Arabic state, an effort not only opposed by the Ottomans but also by the **British** and **French**, who aim to replace Ottoman rule with their own imperial influence. Other global powers see this as an opportunity to expand their own reach, or at the very least curb the Anglo-French dominance in the region.

Meanwhile, southeastern Anatolia has become a battleground for four ethnic groups: **Kurds, Assyrians/Chaldeans, Armenians, and Arabs**, all laying claims to the same mountainous territory. Following the genocides of the Armenians and Assyrians/Chaldeans, these lands have been depopulated and repopulated by Kurdish and Arab communities. The result is a complex and volatile web of overlapping claims. As the British, French, and the remnants of the Ottoman state eye the region for influence, other nations may also seek a stake in its future.

The region’s vast, largely untapped natural resources only add fuel to the fire. Rich **oil** deposits lie across the Middle East, and until recently, they have gone largely unexploited. The strategic value of the region, sitting between Europe and Asia, is equally undeniable; the nation that controls the Arabian peninsula could **sever** Europe’s access to Asia in a single blow.

For the Ottoman Empire, delegates face one central question: who should control the Middle East? Should authority be handed to the imperial powers, or should local people determine their own futures? And if so, whose claims should be honored, and whose ignored? In either case, how much control should local peoples have over their natural resources, if any at all?

Guiding Questions

1. **Whose interests should take priority in reshaping the Middle East?** Should the territorial division reflect the strategic and economic interests of the imperial powers, or should local peoples be granted the right to self-determination?
2. **What form of governance should be established in former Ottoman territories?** Should independent states be recognized in the Middle East, or should a mandate system be implemented with Allied supervision?
3. **How should control over natural resources be allocated in the post-Ottoman Middle East?** Should local peoples retain sovereignty over their resources, or should imperial powers maintain control through mandates or other arrangements?

Dossier

Disclaimers

This committee is set in January 1919, in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. While some of the nations listed below may have not formally attended the actual Paris Peace Conference, assume that in this simulation, they have been invited and are fully participants. This will not affect your preparation; your task remains to represent your nation's interests as effectively and strategically as possible.

Nations

Central Powers

German Empire

The German Empire, the stalwart of the Central Powers, now lies defeated and exhausted. With communist uprisings gaining momentum at home, Germany must prioritize maintaining internal unity and stability above all else, even if that means agreeing to humiliating terms. Yet, any further public embarrassment risks fueling those same revolutionary fires the terms were meant to extinguish.

Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

Austria-Hungary is now a shell of its former self, struggling to maintain control over the lands it once ruled. As the empire teeters on the brink of collapse, its leaders hope to preserve some measure of influence in Central Europe, whether by sustaining a union with Hungary, or by turning the emerging independent states into mandates under its sway.

Sublime Ottoman State

The Sublime Ottoman State has lost all sublimity and the illusion of power it once held. At the peace conference, its primary goal is to preserve what remains of its territorial integrity. While Arabia may already be slipping away, the Ottomans are determined to not lose southeastern Anatolia as well. And if Arabia is to be placed under a mandate, who better to lead it than the Turks, the region's former rulers?

Tsardom of Bulgaria

The Tsardom of Bulgaria fought fiercely in both the Balkan Wars and the First World War in pursuit of its long-held vision of a Greater Bulgaria. The Bulgarian lion now cowers in the corner of Europe, hoping that others remain ignorant of its Aegean coastline, precariously perched between the Greeks and Turks. If it loses this strip of land within Eastern Thrace, Bulgaria risks losing its only direct access to the Mediterranean, leaving its seaborne trade and security at the mercy of whoever controls the Bosphorus.

Entente

United States of America

One of the few nations to emerge from the war relatively unscathed, the United States now stands as a rising global power. This newfound position grants its significant influence, which it hopes to use to advance the Fourteen Points and establish the League of Nations. While the U.S. may speak the language of self-determination, it has no qualms about supporting the creation of international mandates if doing so ensure its visions become reality. The world has seen what happens when European ideals are allowed to run amok; the dawn of the American age begins now.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland

The battered lion of Albion sits across the Channel, too tired to roar and announce its victory to the world. As it lies, it knows that such a disaster must never be repeated again. The German High Seas Fleet must be disbanded. The German colonies must become British possessions. Arabia, too, must come under British protection. As the American eagle begins to soar, the crown of Britannia begins to slip. Parliament knows that the United Kingdom must move aggressively to re-secure its place at the top of the global food chain, or the sun will set on the British Empire.

French Republic

Northeast France has been a battlefield for 4 years; an entire generation of Frenchmen know nothing other than bloodshed and destruction. It is only fair, states Georges Clemenceau, that Germany pays in kind. Germany must never be allowed to rise again, no matter the cost. To the east, France's position in the Middle East must be secured, lest it lose its hard-won gains across the Mediterranean.

Kingdom of Italy

Istria, Trentino, Dalmatia, Tyrol, and Trieste are rightful Italian territories, stolen by the Austro-Hungarians and now contested by the Hungarians and southern Slavs. Italy has given too much at the Isonzo for these claims to go unrecognized. It is additionally unfair that the Middle East has become a playground for the British and French; Italy deserves a slice of the pie. In fact, it doesn't deserve it, it needs it; the nationalist movement is growing in Italy, and if its claims go unrecognized, all might come crashing down.

Commonwealth of Australia

The beaches of Gallipoli are stained with the blood of fallen Australians. At the very least, this sacrifice should earn Australia the right to raise its flag over the former German territories in the Pacific. While generally aligned with the United Kingdom, Australia knows that its master's attention remains fixated on Europe and the Middle East. Thus it falls upon Australia to expand its influence in the Pacific before rival powers seize the opportunity and confine the Commonwealth to the land down under, forever.

Empire of Japan

The Empire of Japan sits precariously at the edge of Asia, watching closely for chances to pounce on the former German holdings in the Pacific and China. These territories would allow the rising Sun to shine across Asia, putting the Chrysanthemum throne at the peak of the east. But Japan seeks more than territory, it is determined to shed the image of a lesser partner in European affairs. In Japan's view, it is equal to, if not greater than, the European powers, and it now faces a pivotal choice: prove its greatness diplomatically, or force the world to recognize the power of Nihon. Perhaps portraying itself as a defender of the non-European world and the rights of the people within it could do the trick.

Other European States

All-Russian Congress of Soviets (Bolsheviks)

A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of communism. The Bolsheviks may have exited the war early, but their interests in Europe remain strong as ever. As the revolution rages on, it is clear that if it remains confined to the peripheries of Europe, the flicker of freedom will be snuffed out by the reactionaries around it. Communism must spread, no matter the cost; the Tsar overtaken today, the German emperor tomorrow!

Russian Provisional Council (White Movement)

A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of communism. Haunting the halls of homes across Russia, it is the job of the White Movement to eradicate this pestilence before it turns the world upon its head. The spread of communism must be stopped, regardless of the cost; the White Movement is already battling one communist enemy, facing another would only deepen their struggle.

Hungarian People's Republic

Hungary, the junior partner in the union, prays that the world focuses on the general issue of Austria-Hungary. Just like the nation it split from, Hungary is a diverse state, with Czechoslovaks and southern Slavs eyeing the lands that the Magyars have governed for centuries. Hungary cannot afford to follow its predecessor; Budapest must reign from Istria to Carpathia.

Second Polish Republic

Poland has been denied independence by the Russians, Germans, and Austro-Hungarians multiple times. It is time for Poland to return the favor. Poland must remain independent, and must grow to include all historic territories, including those within Germany. The Bolsheviks, ever so eager to march on Warsaw and reclaim the former Russian territories, must be kept at bay as well. Only then can the future of the Polish state be secured.

Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Yugoslavia) stands as the true representative of the southern Slavs. It is imperative that rightfully Slavic territories, such as Istria and Dalmatia, be united under its banner. Equally as important is ensuring that Austria-Hungary, or any of its successor states, never obtains the ability to threaten the nation's security again.

Czechoslovakia

It has been centuries since the Czechs and Slovaks have been ruled by a state run by their own people. It is only right that they are given independence, even if that means taking land from Hungary's northern flank. Equally as vital is establishing safeguards to prevent Austria and Hungary from reuniting again in the future, lest history repeat itself once more.

Kingdom of Greece

As Greater Bulgaria dies, Greater Greece flourishes. The gates to Eastern Thrace are open; it is only right for the Hellenes to return to the lands controlled by their forebears for centuries. From Eastern Thrace comes a direct road to Constantinople; if Greece plays its cards right, the controversy in Russia could allow the Kingdom to obtain the crown of Rome once more beneath the noses of the unworthy Ottomans.

Kingdom of Belgium

Belgium is ruined. Reparations are needed to rebuild the Belgian state; it matters not who it comes from, since as long as the money comes in, the battleground of Europe will finally be able to rebuild. In Africa, Belgian Congo appears to be ready to profit from the German collapse; the German African colonies are undefended, and as other world powers have their attention drawn elsewhere, perhaps Belgium could snatch these lands from under the noses of all Europe.

Non-European States

Kingdom of Hejaz

The British and French lied. Hundreds of thousands of Arabs died throughout this war, dreaming of a great "watan" where the Arabs can live as one people. Yet now vultures circle overhead, ready to pick apart the newly-freed people into mandates ruled by different oppressors. Hejaz is the only Arabic state strong enough to stand up to this; under the banner of the Hashemites, Arabia will be reunited from Yemen to southeastern Anatolia once more!

Society for the Elevation of Kurdistan

The Kurdish people have inhabited the mountains of Anatolia for centuries, yet they remain without a state to call their own. It is unfair that the nations of southern and central Europe are granted independence, while the peoples of the Middle East are excluded and expected to remain under the rule of new European overseers. Southeastern Anatolia must be liberated from both

Turkish and European control and given to the Kurdish people, who deserve to at last govern themselves in their homeland.

Assyro-Chaldean Delegation

The Assyrians and Chaldeans have endured repeated genocides of the past decades, leaving them a marginalized and diminished people within their own ancestral homeland. Southeastern Anatolia must be transformed into a sanctuary for the surviving Assyrian population, as well as for other persecuted Christian communities in the middle east, such as the Armenians. Above all, the Nineveh Plains, including the historic city of Mosul, must be returned to the Assyrians from the British to safeguard the people's future and restore their rightful place in the region's history.

Republic of Armenia

The Armenian Genocide decimated a centuries-old presence of Armenian culture across the Middle East and Anatolia. In the wake of this catastrophe, the Republic of Armenia must now fight not only for its survival, but for the survival of its people. Besigned on all sides by Bolsheviks, Kurds, Turks, and Arabs, it is becoming exceedingly clear that Armenia cannot withstand this on its own. Perhaps a fellow Christian nation would be willing to place the nascent state under its protection, ensuring its security for posterity?

Pan-African Congress

African peoples and their diasporas have been denied the right to self-governance worldwide, a right that they may now have the opportunity to reclaim. With support from the League of Nations, the Pan-African Congress seeks to establish self-governing mandates from the former German colonies in Africa, paving the way for true freedom for the first time in decades. This war must not become an excuse to simply replace one set of oppressors with another.

Republic of China

China has endured a century of humiliation, an era that must finally come to an end. Germany once controlled several colonies on the Shandong peninsula, a strategic region within striking distance of Beijing. These lands are rightfully Chinese and must be restored to it, or else China risks opening itself up to another century of exploitation.

Korean Provisional Government

Japan often speaks of equality between Asians and Europeans, yet its actions in Korea tell a different story, one where Asians are not even treated equally among themselves. For nine long years, Korea has suffered under Japanese rule. If independence is to be granted to other peoples on the basis of ethnicity, then the Korean people deserve no less. The status of the oppressor, victor or not, should not determine the rights of the oppressed.