



Imperial Russian Council
St. Petersburg, July 1914
Supplemental Guide

Hello,

My name is Taylor Strickling and I will be your chair for the 1914 Russian Council at BosMUN 2003. I am a graduating senior and am one of the few, the proud, the political science majors at MIT. I am also the president of the MIT Model UN Society. I am excited about this conference and cannot wait to meet all of you so that we may best serve Mother Russia in these difficult circumstances. I hope that you have all read through the primary background guide at this point. The document you are reading now is a supplement for the Russian Council only.

I know that the background guide has only been posted for a very short time and that many of you have not had as much time to prepare for committee as you may have preferred. I also know that the crisis cabinet committee format can be intimidating even for Model UN veterans. So, I felt it would be prudent to write this supplement to make sure every one has a relatively solid grounding. Of course, this supplement is hardly comprehensive; more research and reading will only improve the quality of your BosMUN experience.

How Committee will be Run

Types of Debate

Moderated

This is my preferred mode of debate. After points and motions have been made, I will ask that those wanting to speak indicate so by raising their placards. I will select someone to speak and they will make their statement. There is no official time limit on speeches. If we all abide by the principle of restricting our comments to one or two points at a time, this will not be a problem. We will be able to move debate along quickly and efficiently this way. Our committee is tiny, so no one will be unable to express his or her views. Still, if there is a problem, I will not hesitate to introduce speaking times.

Unmoderated

Unmoderated debate is a simple break. You may do whatever you like; confer with your fellow delegates, talk to the staff, write up documents, bargain, negotiate, etc. These will have a preset time limit after which we will return to moderated debate.

Poll

Sometimes, in the interest of getting everyone's opinions out on the floor, we may poll the committee. This entails going around the room and allowing everyone a preset amount of time to express their views on a particular topic.

Formal

Formal debate the modus operandi of normal Model UN committees. I prefer to avoid it. Formal debate involves the use of a speaker's list and speaking limits followed by questions and/or comments (depending on the particulars of the format). We should resort to this only if moderated caucus is failing miserably.

Points and Motions

Before a speaker is recognized, I will ask for points or motions:

Rise to a point of information if you have a question for the chair (i.e. questions about the rules, the schedule, substance, etc.).

Rise to a point of personal privilege if something is interfering with your ability to participate, e.g. you cannot hear the current speaker.

Rise to a point of order if there is a problem with the execution of the rules.

Additionally, you may motion to change the format of debate (the options are listed above), or to suspend the rules in special circumstances. These motions will be entertained at my discretion and I will (usually) follow the will of the majority opinion of the given motion.

What does the council do?

As I have mentioned before, this council does not produce resolutions or bills like a real UN organ or a legislature. Instead, we will produce directives, communiqués, and press releases.

Directives, communiqués, and press releases

Directives are executive orders. They include the order to move into pre-mobilization status (recall of reserves, alert status on borders, etc.), the order for a mobilization, a declaration of war, and a ratification of a diplomatic agreement. Communiqués are formal messages the council may send to other governments. Press releases may be thought of as communiqués to the entire world. The text of a press release will be made available to anyone and everyone. Directives, communiqués, and press releases require the signature of the Czar. I will apply my signature to any document I feel has the consensus of the council behind it.

Communications

In addition to former communiqués, council members may send to individual messages to others. Simply prepare a message, and the crisis staff will see that your message makes it to the right place. You may communicate with other delegates in the other two

committees, or with historical personalities represented by the crisis staff. If you wish to have a face-to-face meeting with anyone, then that can also be arranged.

A note about subversion

Formally, directives, communiqués, and press releases need to be approved by me. However, as the babbling fool that I am, many things may go unnoticed. You may attempt to give orders, directives, or release information without my consent. It will then be up to the crisis staff to decide what happens. Just remember, my Imperial police are very good, and Siberia is very cold.

Russia in 1914

Domestic Situation

This committee will be very different from normal Model UN committees. We represent the executive branch of a vast empire. Ultimate power and authority are vested in the absolute monarch, Czar Nicholas II (me). Each one of you is role-playing an historical character. In reality, there should be some hierarchy in your relationships. For example, the Army Chief of Staff would report to the Minister of War, and the Minister of War would in turn report to the Prime Minister. However, for the purpose of this simulation, I am throwing these distinctions out the window. Everyone is equal before the Czar. In this time of crisis, you are all advisors to the crown.

All delegates represent historical figures from Russian in 1914. I expect that you will be somewhat familiar with your alter ego. I recommend that you begin with the biographies that may be found at http://www.firstworldwar.com/bio/ww_russia.htm. Do your best to figure out how your character views the world. You ought not to deviate from the values of your character, but you should by all means improve upon your character's actions if possible.

I have neither the will nor the time to provide a full-scale history of Russia and Russian government during this period. Although it would certainly be useful for you to I will provide a bare bones section on items that may be directly relevant to committee.

Historically, Russia is the poorest of the great powers. In fact, serfdom was not abolished until the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1914, the bulk of the population is still an agrarian peasantry. Russia is in the process of a rapid modernization and industrialization process, but still lags behind the rest of Europe. In particular, Russia is in the middle of a massive railway construction project. This process of modernization has both benefits and downsides. First, due to Russia's superior manpower and natural resources, her place as the preeminent power in Europe will be secure when industrial capacity reaches the same level as the rest of Europe. Some say that when the railroads are completed at the end of the decade, Russia will be secure from any other single power.

The downside of this modernization process is evident in the resulting social and political changes. Revolutionary ideologies, particularly Marxism, have taken a foothold and pose a threat to the old Czarist order. 1905 saw a failed revolution that was only barely subdued. As a concession to opponents of the absolutist Czar, the Duma was formed. The Duma acts as a legislature, although real power is still held by the Czar. Although it has been nine years since the bloody events of 1905, revolutionary power has been growing and still poses a grave threat to the government. As we wade through the current crisis, it will be important to keep this unstable political background in mind.

Strategic Objectives and Ambitions

Although Russia has many interests, I want to make sure the entire committee is on the same page regarding fundamental Russian strategic objectives and concerns.

The Straits

Russia requires a warm water port that can function year-round. Currently, the Black Sea provides such a port. Unfortunately, the entrance to the sea is controlled by the Ottoman Empire at the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. Rather than be at the mercy of the Turks, it would behoove Russia to take control of the straits for herself.

Balkans

Russia has strong ethnic and cultural tie to the Slavic peoples of the Balkans. Most important, Serbia has grown into something of a Russian protégé nation. Influence in the Balkans furthers Russian influence over the straits. Still, the connection to the Serbs is more emotional than rational. Maintaining influence with and protection for the Slavs is historically a matter of pride for Russia.

Asia

The Russian Empire is expansive and covers much of the Asian continent. Russian control extends into the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Far East. To better protect these holdings, Russia is looking to maintain and expand her sphere of influence in the surrounding areas: Persia, Afghanistan, Sinkiang, Mongolia, and Manchuria.

Buffer Zone in Eastern Europe

Napoleon demonstrated how a western army can wreak havoc upon our country. Although Russia prevailed in the end, too much blood, treasure, and property was lost in that campaign. If there is more distance between the Russian heartland and western aggressors, then Russia will be safer and able to meet an aggressive enemy before he reaches St. Petersburg and Moscow. To that end, Austrian-controlled Galicia (northeast of the Carpathian mountains) and German-controlled East Prussia would better serve Russian interests if they were occupied by Russia.

Intelligence and Current State of Foreign Relations with the Great Powers

France

France is Russia's closest ally. It is generally understood that Germany can defeat other any individual nation. However, the Franco-Russian alliance poses a serious threat to Germany by means of a very difficult potential two-front war. The fates of France and Russia are therefore inextricably bound together. We dare not deny support to France without very good reason; Russia depends on France for security.

Austria-Hungary

Austria-Hungary is enemy number one. Austria has embarrassed Russia multiple times during recent years in the Balkans. In particular, they continue to try and dominate and harass the Slavic peoples in the region. The Austro-Hungarian Empire is a multi-national, multi-ethnic conglomerate that may have a looser grasp on domestic power than even the Ottomans or the Czar. However, their very strong alliance with Germany has emboldened them to act more aggressively in the international arena. They are close to overstepping their bounds with Russia.

Germany

Although not the most antagonistic toward Russia, Germany poses the greatest threat by virtue of its superior military machine. When Germany was under the leadership of Bismarck, relations were good. However, since the end of Bismarck's chancellorship, the Kaiser has grown more and more bellicose and belligerent. Most of his antics have been directed against France and Britain. However, he still clearly has designs on portions of the Russian empire, particularly the Warsaw area. Additionally, Russia's modernization program has made German policy makers very concerned. They fully understand that Germany stands to lose its position of continental power by the end of the decade if Russia continues to develop at current rates. This has led to a time window dynamic in German thought. Some German voices have called for war now while they still hold the upper hand. Russia is usually able to deal peacefully and reasonably with Germany, but the relationship is presently marred by strong tension and mistrust.

Great Britain

Relations with Great Britain are historically cold and hostile. The British have a far flung empire in Asia and have had designs on Russian interests throughout the continent. Russia and Britain have clashed over control of Persia, Afghanistan, and East Asia. Britain gave strong moral and material support to the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. Additionally, there is still a lingering resentment over British operations against Russia in the Crimean War from the mid-1800s. Nevertheless, with the rise of German power, Anglo-Russian relations have been warming up in recent years. The need for balance against German expansionism, combined with a French desire to unite her allies, has led some feelings of wary friendship.

Japan

Japan inflicted an embarrassing defeat on the Russian military 9 years ago in the Russo-Japanese War. Relations have not improved in particular. Most observers agree that had the war continued, Russia would have won the day eventually; superior Russian resources had already turned the tide when the peace treaty was signed. Still, the peace between Russian and Japan is fragile and both sides are wary of one another.

Italy

Italy presents an interesting diplomatic opportunity for Russia. Italy has close ties with Germany and a history of hostility with France. However, Italy shares an animosity with the Austrians that burns nearly as strongly as Russia's. They have territorial ambitions in Austrian-controlled Tyrol and Dalmatia. They also share another mutual enemy on the Ottoman Empire. If the enemy of your enemy is your friend, then Russia has a friendly future with Italy.

Current State of Military Preparedness

The Russian military is ready for action if called upon by the Czar. Options are limited. In brief, military planners have two standing mobilization plans designed for two different contingencies. One plan involves mobilization against the combined arms of an Austro-German alliance, while the second plan involves operations against Austria-Hungary only.

More information will be available during the conference, but in short, the First and Second Armies have been designated for operations against German East Prussia while the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Eighth Armies would move against the Austrians in Galicia. The armies will take approximately three weeks to begin offensive operations and may take as much as six months to reach full strength after the first mobilization order is given. Mobilization orders are not to be considered lightly. Although they may be cancelled, they cannot be re-ordered or switched without month-long delays.

Final Words

The simulation begins on July 23, 1914. One hour of committee time is the equivalent of one day in simulation time. It has been nearly a full month since the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Ferdinand. Instead of slowly receding from the news, the assassination story has been growing in intensity. Serb nationalists have been implicated in the assassination plot. There are even allegations that the Serbian government was involved. Some form of Austro-Hungarian reaction against Serbia is expected and may be imminent. We must be prepared to deal with the new crisis in the Balkans in a way that brings honor and glory to Russia. I look forward to serving with you.

Sincerely,

Taylor W. Strickling
Czar Nicholas II