

**Kent Denver School and St. Mary’s Academy**

**Model United Nations Conference**

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**Intermediate Background Guide**

**Historical European Council: December, 1805**

**Topic 1: Threat to European Trade and Security**

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**History**

 In the years leading up to the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte from 1789 to 1799, France experienced a decade of revolution, marked by blood and violence. With a starving lower class and a monarchy neglecting the people’s demands, discontent rose throughout France. As Maximilien Robespierre and the Jacobin Club, a revolutionary party, gained power, they overthrew the monarchy of Louis XVI in 1789. Years of ruling by guillotine followed, establishing the Reign of Terror.

In July of 1793, Robespierre became the face of the Committee of Public Safety, an organization responsible for convicting those in opposition of the revolution. Under his rule a new calendar was established, religion was abolished, worshipers were persecuted, and executions of those found not in alliance with the French Revolution were rampant. Within a year, 17,000 French citizens had died by formal executions for accusations of disloyalty to the revolutionary cause. By June of 1794, Robespierre was elected president of the National Convention, the government that replaced the French monarchy in 1789. Executions ordered by Robespierre continued until the Thermidorian Reaction brought an abrupt halt to his power on July 27, 1794. On July 26 of that year, Robespierre gave a speech rich with threats and promising further executions. In response, the National Assembly, also known as the National Convention, arrested Robespierre and his followers. On July 28th, the National Assembly executed Robespierre and 21 others without a trial. In the days following, 82 other members of the Jacobin Club were executed. The subsequent days were known as the White Terror, as members of the Jacobin Club were wanted for execution, and this brought the Reign of Terror to an end.

The turmoil France faced in the wake of the Reign of Terror allowed for the rise of a new leader, Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon was born in 1769 in Corsica, a French island off the coast of Italy. After attending the Brienne Military School at a young age and later the Royal Military School in Paris, he proved himself to be a gifted military leader. Napoleon quickly worked his way up through the ranks and, despite a lack of a noble title, became the commander of the French army in Italy in 1796. Here in the northern territories of Italy, he fought and won many battles against Austrian forces, pushing Austria and its allies to make peace with France.

In 1798, Napoleon began his campaign in Egypt against the Ottoman forces, who governed the land at that time. His motivation for doing so was the British trade routes to India that he had hopes of controlling. However, when confronted with defeat, Napoleon returned home without a great military victory.

With a tumultuous political climate following the Reign of Terror, Napoleon easily gained power and in 1799 became first consul of France. At this time, Napoleon replaced the previous government system of France with one led by three consuls. As Napoleon was the first consul, the other two consuls filled advisory positions to Napoleon. By 1802, Napoleon was named consul for life, and by 1804 he had declared himself emperor of France.

Throughout Napoleon’s rise to power, France engaged in numerous wars with surrounding European nations. The first major stance against France was taken in Haiti, as slaves revolted against France in 1791. By 1804, Haiti had gained independence from France under the condition that Haiti buy its freedom from France. In 1792, France declared war with Austria. At this time, Austria declared that an absolute monarchy be reinstated in France. Austria’s demands stemmed from a fear that their own citizens would see revolution such as that in France, and pursue a revolution in Austria. In response to Austria’s demands, French forces attempted to gain control of Austrian territories in the Netherlands. France was unsuccessful as Prussia forces defended Austria and the conflict was resolved.

In 1796, Napoleon, as commander of the French Army, began contimplating a naval attack of Britain. However, after realizing that France’s navy was not capable of overpowering the British Royal Navy, he consentrated on attacking Britain through their trade routes in Egypt instead. He aspired to destroy British trade with India; however, after the French army suffered great diseases, his efforts proved unsuccessful.

In 1801, Britain and France declared peace through the Treaty of Amiens. However, eighteen months later when Britain failed to withdraw troops from Egypt or Malta as promised to France in the treaty, France redeclared war.

The Third Coalition was formed in 1805 between England, Russia, and Austria in opposition to Napoleonic France. With England separated by sea, the majority of the battles fell to both Russia and Austria. Because of this, many believe that if Prussia were to join these forces, the course of war would be severly altered.

**Military Timeline**

* April 20, 1792: French Assembly declares war on Austria in Italy, launching a series of battles throughout northern Italy.
* November 6, 1792: The Battle of Jemappes was fought against Austrian forces. France gains the Austrian controlled territories of the Netherlands
* March 18, 1793: Battle of Neerwinden was fought against Austrian forces, allowing Austria to regain Netherland territories.
* October 17, 1797: War with Austria in Italy is brought to a close as both parties sign the Treaty of Compo Formio.
* December 25, 1797: Napoleon Bonaparte is elected to the Institut de France.
* May 19, 1798: Napoleon launches military campaign in Egypt.
* Jun 19, 1798: Napoleon’s forces capture Malta.
* July 2, 1798: Napoleon’s forces capture Alexandria.
* July 21, 1798: Napoleonic victory at the Battle of the Pyramids
* August 1, 1798: Ottomans destroy the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile, severely weaken Napoleon’s hopes in Egypt. Napoleon later left Egypt to return home to France on August 23, 1799.
* August 22, 1798: The Institut d’Egypte is founded by the Institut de France, with the purpose of conducting research on physical, historical, and industrial aspects of Egypt.
* May 20, 1800: Napoleon leads troops into Italy.
* August 12, 1800: Napoleon’s Civil Code is drafted. These codes later became law in France and abolished the process of granting privileges based on birth, created a freedom of region for French citizens, and stated that government promotions would be based on merit. Inspiration for these laws was taken from previous Roman laws and shifted France away from the feudal laws of monarchy. These codes are the main piece of evidence that support the claims that Napoleon was an “enlightened” leader.
* October 2, 1800: Napoleon signed the Treaty of Mortefontaine with the United States, ending the Quasi War and bringing peace after the XYZ Affair.
* December 24, 1800: Failed assassination attempt on Napoleon in Paris.
* July 15, 1801: Concordat signed between France and Papacy, reestablishing the Roman Catholic Church in France and reversing the religious discrimination that occurred under the Reign of Terror.
* March 25, 1802: Treaty of Amiens with England.
* May 3 1803: Louisiana Purchase. Napoleon sold the territory of Louisiana to the United States, as an attempt to limit oversea territories in response to the Haitian revolts lead Toussaint L’Ouverture. In addition, France needed more money as Napoleon began his military campaigns.
* May 16 1803: Peace broken with England.
* May 18 1804: Napoleon declares himself Emperor.
* December 2, 1804: Napoleon’s coronation in which he crowns himself as emperor, famously depicted in a painting by Jacques-Louis David.
* December 2, 1805: Victory at Austerlitz. At this time Napoleon is still at war with Britain, Russia, and Austria; however, peace with Austria is speculated.

**Current Situation**

The Battle of Austerlitz

The French army launched an attack against Austrian and Russian forces, defeating them on December 2, 1805. The battle is known as the battle of the three emperors as Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte of France faced Tsar Alexander I of Russia and Emperor Francis I of Austria. The two armies met in Moravia, present day Czech Republic. Alexander I had hopes of taking an offensive position, meeting Napoleon’s forces head on, while Francis I wished to take a defensive stance against Napoleon. They decided to attack Napoleonic forces on the southern flank, having known it was the weakest branch of Napoleon’s forces, but not having known Napoleon had strategically designed it to be so.

As Austria and Russia attacked Napoleon’s southern flank, weakening their own center, Napoleon launch a counter attack on a flank now void of many troops. With only 68,000 troops, Napoleon’s forces were able to defeat an opposing army of 90,000. Of these two armies, there were approximately 9,000 French casualties, while the joint allied forces of Austria and Russia suffered 15,000 casualties and 12,000 troops taken as prisoners.

As Napoleon’s greatest battle to date, the Battle of Austerlitz sheds new light on the seriousness of Napoleonic threats to European nations, particularly trade and security. Napoleon’s very first military campaign was designed to endanger the trade routes of Britain, as he swept through Egypt. Since then he has shown no reservations when pursuing military acquisitions, endangering France’s surrounding sovereign states. Both of these facts serve as evidence to the severity of threats against trade and security of European nations.

An Austrian Surrender?

Directly following the battle of Austerlitz, Francis I of Austria arranged for a meeting with Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. Francis and Napoleon met at 2pm on December 4th. While the content of this two-hour meeting is still ambiguous, many speculate Austria has now negotiated peace with France and left the War of the Third Coalition, leaving Russia to face Napoleon alone.

French Forces

To date Napoleon Bonaparte boasts the strongest, most skilled army in all of Europe. Napoleon first began building the French military directly after The Peace of Amiens with Britain. At this time he put roughly 100,000 troops through intensive training that lasted eighteen months. At the same time, an additional 300,000 French troops were spread along borders. Napoleon’s elite army, known as the Grand Army, has received three years of training, and is known to be his most skilled force.

France has adopted a policy of conscription since 1973, at which time the French army was limited to 300,000 troops. Since this time, Napoleon has further employed conscription, now obtaining the largest army in Europe. Napoleon has further revolutionized the French military forces by adopting a complete division of forces into an army corps system. Through Napoleon’s leadership, the French military is now regarded as the master of war on land. With war at sea historical dominated by Britain, a new Napoleonic fleet threatens Britain’s naval strength.

Disruption of Trade Routes

As 1805 Europe is dominated by policies of mercantilism, trade and exportation are vital to a nations' economic security. Currently, Napoleon’s occupation of new lands has disrupted many traditional European trade routes. With a historically bad relationship with France, Britain in particular is endangered by these trade threats, specifically pertaining to Mediterranean ports. Napoleon’s first campaign specifically targeted Britain’s trade routes, and since 1800, British traffic in Mediterranean ports has decreased. All European nations now face questions about the access to Mediterranean ports as Napoleon gains more power and more land. These areas are key trade routes for European contact with many Asian nations, particularly India.

**Key Questions to Consider**

* How should the European nations make a joint reaction to Napoleon’s rise in power?
* Should Napoleon be met with a diplomatic or more aggressive reaction?
* What immediate threats to trade and security arise from Napoleon’s new power?
* What would it mean for remaining opposition forces to Napoleon if Austria has withdrawn from the war? What would be the effect of Prussia joining the Third Coalition?
* Do signs show Napoleon as a lasting threat or will France’s power be short lived? (Look to historical context that has occurred before this date and not after)
* Should the European nations recognize Napoleon as “Emperor” of France?

**Key Positions**

**Austria:** Austria has engaged in years of battle with France, more recently proving disappointing to Austrian forces. After war and peace with Austria in territories of Italy, France has once again engaged in war with Austria. However, in light of the Battle of Austerlitz, Austria's continued involvement in the war appears doubtful. As Russia and Austria together suffered 27,000 casualties in the Battle of Austerlitz, many now believe that Austria may have made peace with Napoleon and left the Third Coalition, abandoning its allies.

**Russia:** Having recently suffered great loses at the Battle of Austerlitz, Russia has become vulnerable to further Napoleonic attacks. While Russia shows no signs of peace with Napoleon at this point, the existence of the Third Coalition is now endangered by the threat that Austria may have withdrawn from war. Russia is now faced with a debate over how to approach France and whether a militaristic opposition would be possible without the help of Austria, if such suspected peace proves to be true.

**Prussia:** Historically known for its dominating military in war on land under Frederick the Great, Prussia now faces a new vulnerability. With incredibly close proximity to France, Prussia’s key concern is national security. Prussia has yet to join the Third Coalition with Russia and Austria, but many speculate that if done, the three forces would be able to successfully oppose Napoleon.

**Britain:** As a nation with historically bad dealings with France, Britain in particular is threatened by Napoleon's increase in power. With trade routes targeted by France in Egypt, and domination of the seas endangered, the Kingdom of Britain has reason to be nervous. Fearing a French attack in 1803 and 1804, Britain fortified its coast and became heavily dependent on its royal navy. Prime Minister William Pitt concentrated defense around Dover, Chatham, the River Medway, Romney Marsh, and Rye, all places that Napoleon was most likely to attack. The Western Heights of Dover became of prominent importance to Britain as it was primarily concerned with strengthening this region from its originally vulnerable state. In October of 1805, Britain gained a very important victory over France at Trafalgar. With this victory, many began to believe a French invasion of Britain was almost impossible; however, the Battle of Austerlitz brings doubt to this theory.

**Our Council**

Each delegation should be aware of any treaties signed between Napoleon and the delegation’s country before December of 1805, but should not limit themselves to the actual events of history. The fact that countries pursued submissive diplomatic ties to Napoleon in the actual course of events does not necessarily mean that delegates should in this committee. During this committee, European powers will be expected to come up with a joint response to Napoleon’s power. New information presented in council could stray from the actual course of events and delegates are expected to be comfortable doing the same. This council requires a strong knowledge of historical context that will allow delegates to accurately alter their country’s position quickly and without hesitation in order to insure peace and security in Europe.

Throughout council, delegates will be permitted to send personal communiqués to Napoleon himself, and will receive responses. While this is not a council that exists within the United Nations, we will still follow the same parliamentary procedure. Delegates will be permitted to write individual national treaties, as well as joint resolutions, following the same format of regular councils.

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