



Agenda - Structuring the United Nations Security Council

UNSC



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LETTER FROM THE BUREAU

Dear Delegates,

Namaste, we, the Bureau of the United Nations Security Council, are delighted to welcome you all to the eleventh iteration of the Shishukunj Model United Nations. The Agenda for this year's UNSC is "Structuring the United Nations Security Council," with the freeze date of August 22, 1944.

The committee is set at a time when the trajectory of the Second World War is changing rapidly, Allied forces are advancing from the Normandy beaches, Soviet troops are pushing westward through Europe, and the Pacific campaign against Japan is intensifying, and the delegates are presented with a challenge of ensuring another one never begins. The outcome of the war appears to be certain, yet the shape of the peace that follows is anything but. The League of Nations collapsed under the weight of its own structural flaws, leaving the world without an effective mechanism to prevent another war.

The committee convenes at a point in time when nothing has been decided. The United Nations does not exist yet. The structure of the Security Council remains uncertain. Even concepts that seem obvious today, such as permanent membership and veto powers, are still matters of intense debate. Through this agenda, delegates will be tasked with discussing some of the most fundamental questions surrounding the proposed Security Council. Issues such as voting procedures, military enforcement actions, and the distribution of powers among states remain unresolved. The committee will also examine the extent to which great powers should influence international decision-making and whether collective security can be achieved without compromising state sovereignty. The decisions taken within this committee may therefore alter the course of the post-war international order entirely.

As a crisis committee, the situation outside your committee room will change rapidly. Political realities may change, alliances may shift, and assumptions that appear certain at the start of debate may not remain so by its conclusion, and you must expect the unexpected. To prepare effectively, we strongly encourage you to look far beyond the pages of this study guide, which is just a foundation for your research. Use this document as your conceptual baseline, but dive deeply into the primary source materials of 1944 and explore the political, military, and diplomatic realities of the period in greater depth. A thorough understanding of your portfolio's interests and historical position will be essential throughout the committee. Delegates are expected to think critically and creatively about the long-term implications of their decisions and recognise that even minor procedural questions may carry significant political consequences.

We expect all delegates to be well-versed with the agenda and to conduct themselves with professionalism and integrity throughout the conference. Plagiarism, misrepresentation of another individual's work, or any other form of academic dishonesty is strongly discouraged and may invite action from the bureau if deemed necessary. We look forward to seeing the discussions, negotiations, and solutions that emerge from this committee. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to any of us.

Regards,

Vishesh Dagra
Chairperson

Mishca Mahajan
Vice Chairperson

KEYWORDS

1. **Aggressor State:** A nation that initiates an illegal use of armed force against the sovereignty or territorial integrity of another state
2. **Armistice:** An armistice is an agreement between opposing sides in a war to stop fighting temporarily or permanently. It is basically a ceasefire, but it does not always officially end the war.
3. **Capitulation:** The formal agreement of surrender of military forces or a state to an opposing power, or the act of giving up under agreed-upon conditions.
4. **Charter:** A charter is a formal document granting rights, establishing the purpose of an organisation, or outlining fundamental principles
5. **Collective Security:** An international relations arrangement where states agree that an attack on any member is considered an attack on all
6. **Communism:** A political and economic ideology that advocates for a classless society with the communal ownership of all property and the abolition of private ownership. It seeks to eliminate social inequalities by placing the control of resources and production into the hands of the public.
7. **Demilitarisation:** The process of reducing, dismantling, or entirely removing military forces, armaments, and fortifications from a specific area or state. It typically occurs following a peace treaty, the end of a conflict, or as a strategic measure to de-escalate political tensions.
8. **Expansionism:** A political or ideological doctrine advocating for the expansion of a country's territory, power, or economic influence.
9. **Fascism:** A far-right, authoritarian, and ultranationalist political ideology. It prioritizes the perceived interest and glory of the nation or race over individual rights, actively suppressing opposition and enforcing centralized control over society and the economy.
10. **Gestapo:** The official secret police force of Nazi Germany. Established by Hermann Göring and later commanded by Heinrich Himmler, it became the primary instrument used to suppress all political opposition, persecute Jewish people, and eliminate threats to the Nazi regime.
11. **International Order:** A system that emerges out of the interactions, such as trade and exchange, among different political units over time.
12. **Lytton Commission:** A group sent by the League of Nations in 1931 to investigate Japan's takeover of Manchuria. The commission found that Japan was wrong and had unfairly attacked Manchuria. It also said that the new country Japan created there, called Manchukuo, was controlled by Japan.
13. **Panzer Group Eberbach:** a temporary, ad-hoc armoured formation of the German Wehrmacht during World War II. Led by General Heinrich Eberbach, it was created in August 1944 in France during the chaotic retreat following the Allied breakout from Normandy (Operation Cobra)
14. **Patton's Third Army:** George S. Patton's Third Army was a famous American army in World War II known for its fast advance across France and Germany after D-Day. It played a major role in defeating German forces, especially during the Battle of the Bulge.
15. **Sphere of Influence:** A spatial or conceptual area where an external entity, such as a country, organization, or individual, holds power, authority, or significant sway without having formal, direct rule. In the context of WWII, the territories, political alignments, and economic systems were dominated by the Axis and Allied powers. These boundaries were first established through secret treaties and military conquests.
16. **The Locarno Treaties:** Agreements signed in 1925 between countries like Germany, France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Italy. The treaties were made to improve relations in Europe after World War I. Germany agreed to respect its borders with France and Belgium and promised not to attack them.
17. **The Wehrmacht:** The armed forces of Nazi Germany from 1935 to 1945. It had three main parts: The army (Heer), the navy (Kriegsmarine), and the air force (Luftwaffe). The Wehrmacht fought for Adolf Hitler during World War II and was involved in many invasions across Europe.
18. **Treaty:** A treaty is a formal, legally binding written agreement established between sovereign states or international organisations.
19. **Trusteeship:** The administration of a territory by another state or international body until it is considered capable of self-government.
20. **Veto:** A veto is a legal power to unilaterally stop an official action. The word "veto" literally means "I forbid" in Latin.

INTRODUCTION TO AGENDA

On August 21, 1944, representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union sat down at the Dumbarton Oaks estate in Washington, D.C. to negotiate the institutional architecture of a proposed post-war international security organization. This committee convenes on the second day of those negotiations. The war is not over. The institution being discussed does not yet exist. The decisions being made in that room are among the most consequential of the twentieth century, and they are being made under conditions of genuine uncertainty about how the war ends and what the world looks like afterward.

The necessity of a new international institution is not contested among the Allied powers. What is contested, sharply and in some cases irreconcilably, is what that institution should look like, who should hold authority within it, and under what conditions it should be permitted to act. Those disagreements form the substance of this committee's agenda. The starting point for understanding those disagreements is the League of Nations, which, having started to replace war with collective diplomacy, ended up lacking any enforcement mechanisms, in turn, losing its credibility, rendering the institution irrelevant before the Second World War even started. This committee aims to correct these failures.



The current Security Council concentrates authority in a small group of major powers with special voting rights that are binding but rarely exercised. The four agenda items before this committee correspond to the four most significant unresolved questions at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference as of August 22, 1944. The first concerns the architecture of permanent membership: which states hold permanent seats, on what principled basis, and what obligations accompany the privileges of that status. The second concerns the veto mechanism: specifically, whether permanent members may cast a veto in disputes to which they are themselves a party. The third concerns military enforcement: how the Council authorizes force, who commands the resulting operation, and how the institution addresses the structural reality that enforcement is most credible against states that cannot block it and least credible against those that can. The fourth concerns the legitimacy of Axis participation in the post-war order: which states are excluded, on what stated grounds, for what duration, and how the committee addresses the specific case of Italy's co-belligerent government, which has been fighting alongside the Allied powers since October 1943 and occupies an ambiguous position in the proposed framework, or the cases of Germany and Japan.



This committee operates under a strict freeze date of August 22, 1944. No delegate may draw on knowledge of events, developments, or outcomes that had not yet occurred on that date. The world of this committee is a world still at war, still uncertain of its outcome, and still in the early stages of designing the institutions that will govern whatever comes after. Delegates are expected to engage the agenda from within that historical reality, representing their assigned delegation's interests, constraints, and beliefs as they existed on that specific morning. The background guide that follows provides the historical foundation necessary for informed participation. Delegates are expected to research beyond it.

HISTORICAL SCENARIO

Timeline of World War II

Creation of the League of Nations - January 1920

Our committee came into existence for many reasons, but the formation of the League of Nations in January 1920 was the first solid step towards it. The League of Nations formally came into existence under the terms of the Versailles framework. The Institution was designed to prevent another war. But right there in the very formation of the institution, there lay a massive flaw. The United States was supposed to be the fifth member of the Council, but Thomas Wilson, the 28th President, with his Senate, refused to ratify this covenant. So, there it was, the world's great attempt to maintain world peace without the world's greatest economy, i.e., the USA.



Japan's Invasion of Manchuria - September, 1931

The Peace that the League aspired to bring only lasted a decade. It was disrupted when Japan invaded Manchuria, and the Lytton Commission correctly identified Japan as the aggressor. Then tensions in the league gained momentum, Japan vetoed its own condemnation, and then withdrew from the League of Nations.

Italy's Invasion of Ethiopia - October 1935

The league's reaction to Japan's Invasion of Manchuria signalled to aggressors worldwide that the League was powerless. Italy invaded Ethiopia. This time, the League did vote to impose sanctions but deliberately excluded oil, the only commodity that could perhaps stop Benito Mussolini.



Germany's Remilitarisation of the Rhineland - March 1936

On the fine day of March 7, German forces marched into the Rhineland in clear and open violation of the harsh Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Treaties and as expected, the League of Nations did nothing.

Germany Invaded Poland - September 1, 1939

Hitler led Germany to invade Poland under Hitler's motive to get "Lebensraum" or living space for Germans. The League of Nations, which was created to prevent precisely this, ceased to exist as a security institution. Britain and France declared war on Germany. The lull which followed the defeat of Poland ended on April 9, 1940, when German forces invaded Norway and Denmark. Denmark surrendered, and Norway held out until early June before German forces could occupy the entire country.

France is Forced Into Surrender - June 1940

Germany's Wehrmacht infiltrated France through the allegedly impassable Ardennes forest. On June 22, 1940, France signed an armistice with Germany. Now, the world was divided because France had surrendered, and Britain was now entirely alone in Western Europe. The armistice provided for the German occupation of the northern half of France and permitted the establishment of a collaborationist regime in the south, with its seat in Vichy.

Italy Enters the War - 10 June 1940

Italy entered the war on June 10, 1940, and invaded southern France on June 21. Dissatisfied with Italy's share in the spoils at the armistice negotiations, Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini attacked Greece in October 1940 from Albania (which the Italians had seized in April 1939). The Italians also attacked British forces in Egypt from Italian-controlled Libya in late October 1940. Both adventures resulted in military disasters that required German intervention. From July 10 to October 31, 1940, the Germans waged, and ultimately lost, an air war over England, known as the Battle of Britain.



Germany's Attack on the Soviet Union - 22 June, 1941

On 22 June 1941, Germany invaded Russia, with just 3 million German troops on 2900 km sq. of land. This operation was called Operation Barbarossa, which failed miserably. This marked Russia's entry into the war.

The Atlantic Charter - 14 August, 1941

At Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, two of the world's most influential leaders met. Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill had made it to Placentia Bay by secretly travelling through warships. After a lot of discussion and thought, these two heads of state issued a joint declaration, which essentially committed their nations to building a more compatible post-war system in comparison to the League of Nations. This was the first such agreement that would support our committee to come into existence. On January 1, 1942, 26 nations fighting against the Axis powers gathered in Washington, DC to sign and support the joint declaration by the USA and Britain.

United States Enters World War II - December 7, 1941

One day, Japan, still engaged in warfare on the Chinese mainland, launched a surprise air attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The United States immediately declared war on Japan. Great Britain followed suit. On December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

The War in North Africa - November, 1942

In late 1942 and early 1943, Anglo-American forces achieved a series of significant military triumphs in North Africa. The failure of the Vichy French armed forces to resist enabled the Allies to quickly occupy French North Africa to the Tunisian border within days of landings on the beaches of Morocco and Algeria on November 8, 1942. It also triggered the German occupation of Vichy France on November 11, 1942.

The German Surrender at Stalingrad - 31 January, 1943

German Field Marshall Friedrich Paulus surrendered the remnants of the Sixth German Army. This came to the Allies as a surprise. In defiance of his own führer Freidrich Paulus had still surrendered at Stalingrad. This conflict had led Germany to lose 330,000 trained men, who could never really be compensated for. This little spark of insurgency had infuriated Hitler, and he made the post of field marshal in Germany extinct.



The Invasion of Sicily by the Allied Forces - July-August 1943

160,000 Allied troops had landed in Sicily. Only 3 weeks after the landing in Sicily, the Fascist Grand Council, which was built and founded by Benito Mussolini, voted to remove Mussolini as the Prime Minister. The Monarch of Italy, King Victor Emanuell III, had regained his constitutional command of the nation's armed forces and had Benito Mussolini arrested.

The Third Moscow Conference - October 18 to November 11, 1943

At the third Moscow conference, Anthony Eden, Vyacheslav Molotov, and Corden Hull, the foreign ministers of Britain, Russia, and the USA, respectively, had pledged to form an international organisation for the maintenance of world peace and security. Mr Hull recognised this as the end of 'the sphere of influence' and the beginning of the balance of power.

Mussolini is rescued by Germany - September 12, 1943

Italy signed the armistice of Cassibile on the third of September. Under this armistice, Italy had agreed to stop fighting against the Allies and surrender. When this was publicly announced on August 8, Germany rescued the former Prime Minister and installed him as a puppet leader for a part of his own country. Benito Mussolini was now the head of the Italian Social Republic (German-occupied northern Italy). While Northern Italy was a Nazi puppet, Southern Italy was held by the Allies, and in the middle of all of this, Italians found themselves fighting a civil war (partisans vs fascists).

Moscow and Tehran Conferences - November-December, 1943

The big three met for the first time. Franklin Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, and Winston Churchill. They agreed upon one thing: the USA, Britain, and the Soviet Union would be permanent guarantors of post-war security.

Rome falls - 4 June, 1944

Allied forces barged into Rome. The Prime Minister was replaced. Ivanoe Bonomi held office. Southern Italy's co-belligerent status was further consolidated. The Axis powers lost Rome.

Operation Overlord (D-Day) - 6 June, 1944

Over 150,000 Allied soldiers landed at Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword beaches along the Normandy coast of France under machine-gun fire, artillery bombardment, and the concrete defences of Hitler's Atlantic Wall. The decisive western front that Joseph Stalin had demanded since 1942 was finally opened, and Germany was facing the nightmare it had feared from the start: a two-front war against enemies with greater manpower, fuel, and industrial production. Allied troops spent weeks fighting through the bocage. The strategic town of Saint-Lô was reduced to rubble by bombardment.



Operation Bagration - 23 June, 1944

It was launched on June 23, 1944, exactly three years after Hitler began Operation Barbarossa. The Soviet Union was dismantling the army that had marched into its territory in 1941, believing the war would end within months. More than 1.2 million Soviet troops, supported by over 5,000 tanks, 30,000 artillery guns, and nearly 6,000 aircraft, crashed into the German Army Group Centre across Belarus with overwhelming force and coordination. The entire German defensive sector collapsed under the pressure. Soviet deception operations had convinced the Germans that the main attack would fall farther south, leaving Army Group Centre dangerously exposed when the offensive began. In barely six weeks, twenty-eight German divisions were destroyed, hundreds of thousands of German soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured, and Soviet forces advanced more than four hundred kilometres westward through Belarus toward Poland.

Saipan Falls - 9 July, 1944

Fought between June and July 1944 in the Mariana Islands, the battle ended with the destruction of nearly the entire Japanese garrison of approximately 30,000 troops, while American forces suffered roughly 3,400 fatalities. American forces took over Saipan. Control of the Mariana Islands gave the United States secure bases for the deployment of long-range Boeing B-29 Superfortresses that could reach the Japanese home islands. The collapse of the Marianas exposed the failure of Japan's outer defensive perimeter and contributed to the resignation of Prime Minister Hideki Tojo shortly afterward. Emperor Hirohito appointed General Kuniaki Koiso as Prime Minister. The defence of the Japanese home islands raised an important question during an internal political crisis and war.

Wolf's Lair is Bombed - 20 July, 1944

The July 20 Plot, carried out at the Wolf's Lair headquarters in 1944, was the most serious assassination attempt against Adolf Hitler during the war. German military officers, led by Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, planted a briefcase bomb during a strategy meeting in an effort to overthrow the Nazi regime and negotiate peace with the Allies. The explosion, however, failed to kill Hitler because the heavy oak conference table absorbed much of the blast, while the briefcase itself had been moved farther away from him moments before detonation. Hitler escaped with burns, damaged eardrums, and a renewed sense of paranoia, and the consequences for Germany were immediate. Hitler used the failed assassination attempt to tighten his personal grip on the military. The German resistance, already fragmented and weakened, was effectively destroyed, and the failed plot became a brutal reminder of how completely fear and terror now dominated Nazi Germany in the final phase of the war.

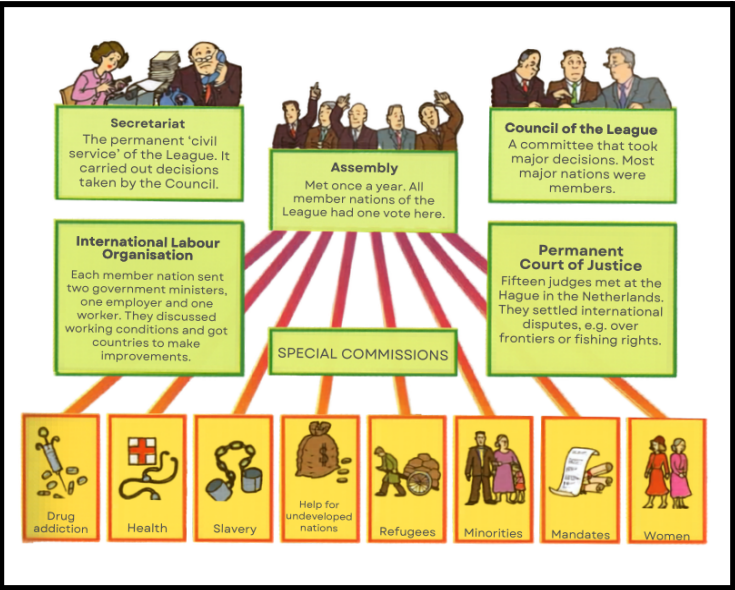


Dumbarton Oaks - 21 August, 1944

Phase I of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference began. Representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union began formal negotiations on the institutional architecture of the proposed United Nations Security Council.¹

¹ <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/world-war-ii-in-depth>

Structure of the League of Nations



The main organs of the League of Nations were the Assembly, the Council, and the Secretariat.

The Assembly, which met once a year, consisted of representatives of all member states and decided on the organisation's policy. Each state was allowed up to three representatives and one vote. It had three powers: electoral, constituent, and deliberative.

The Council included four permanent members (Britain, France, Italy, and Japan) and four (later nine) others elected by the Assembly every three years. The Council's main function was to settle international disputes. The number of permanent and non-permanent members varied.

The Secretariat carried out the day-to-day work of the League under the direction of the Secretary-General, who wrote annual reports on the work of the League.² The two essential wings of the League were the Permanent Court of International Justice and the International Labour Organisation. It required unanimous

agreement, meaning that nearly every major member possessed the ability to block collective action. Unanimity was required for the decisions of both the Assembly and the Council. However, in the event of a dispute, the consent of the parties to the dispute was not required for unanimity.

Failure of the League of Nations

The League of Nations' failure unfolded gradually through years of hesitation, negligence, compromise, and political surrender. On paper, the League sounded revolutionary; in practice, the major powers treated collective security as inconvenient to use when the crisis actually arrived. The League became trapped in endless debates, resolutions, and commissions while aggressive states learned that discussion rarely translated into meaningful action. Its most fundamental weakness was the required unanimous agreement. The result was an organisation where political interests constantly overpowered enforcement.



During the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, Japan remained a member of the League while investigations into its own aggression were being conducted. The League condemned the invasion through the Lytton Commission, but after months of delay and diplomatic caution, Japan simply withdrew from the organisation and continued its expansion unchecked. More than forty delegates could gather in Geneva to discuss international peace, yet the institution itself lacked the power, unity, and political will to stop the aggressor sitting inside the chamber. The League eventually imposed sanctions on Benito Mussolini's Italy, but the sanctions excluded crucial resources such as oil because Britain and France feared provoking a larger European conflict or driving Italy closer to Nazi Germany. As a result, the sanctions damaged the League's credibility more than they damaged Italy's war effort.

The organisation appeared willing to punish aggression symbolically while avoiding any measure that might actually stop it. Finally, the League suffered from the absence and withdrawal of major powers. The United States, despite being central to the League's original conception under President Woodrow Wilson, never joined because the U.S. Senate refused ratification. Meanwhile, Germany, Japan, and Italy either withdrew or openly defied the organisation during the 1930s. By the end of the decade, the message the League had unintentionally taught aggressive states was dangerously simple:

² <https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ln/Instruc>

international condemnation could be survived, collective action could be delayed, and determined powers would rarely be stopped by words alone.³

Atlantic Charter

On August 9–10, 1941, Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt met aboard the U.S.S. Augusta in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, to discuss Allied war aims and the framework for a postwar international order. The resulting Atlantic Charter outlined eight common principles, including opposition to territorial expansion, support for free trade and freedom of the seas, and the promotion of international economic and welfare cooperation. The charter proved to be one of the first steps towards the formation of the United Nations. The meeting had been called in response to the geopolitical situation in Europe by mid-1941.⁴



Even though the Atlantic Charter of August 1941 was not a binding treaty, it was important in reaffirming Anglo-American unity against Axis aggression. Laying out President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s vision for the postwar world, it focused on free trade, self-determination, disarmament, and collective security.

The eighth paragraph of the charter reads,

*“Eighth, they believe that all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea, or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, **pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security**, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.”⁵*

The principles of the Charter were formally adopted on January 1, 1942, in the Declaration by the United Nations. Signed by 26 nations, it bound them to the Atlantic Charter's core tenets and committed them to defeating the Axis powers.

United Nations Declaration



On 1 January 1942, during the Arcadia Conference in Washington, D.C., the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and China signed a document which later came to be known as the United Nations Declaration. The parties pledged to uphold the Atlantic Charter, to employ all their resources in the war against the Axis powers, and not to seek to negotiate a separate peace with any of them.

The next day, the representatives of 22 other nations added their signatures, namely, the four dominions of the British Commonwealth (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa); eight European governments-in-exile (Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Yugoslavia); nine countries in the Americas (Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama); and one non-independent government, the British-appointed Government of India. It allowed for Soviet suggestions but denied to France, which was under German occupation at the time. Roosevelt coined the term "United Nations" to describe the Allied countries and suggested it as an alternative to the name "Associated Powers."

³ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/League-of-Nations>
⁴ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/atlantic-conf>
⁵ nato.int/en/about-us/official-texts-and-resources/official-texts/1941/08/14/the-atlantic-charter

The signatories promised to pursue the creation of a future international peacekeeping organisation dedicated to ensuring “life, liberty, independence, and religious freedom, and to preserve the rights of man and justice.”

Moscow and Tehran Conferences

During the Moscow Conference of the Foreign Ministers in October and November of 1943, the United States, Britain, China, and the Soviet Union signed a four-power declaration. In the Declaration, the Governments of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States called, among other things, for the establishment at the earliest practicable date of a general international organization (the United Nations). Specifically, points 4 and 5 of the Declaration read:

“4. That they [the Governments] recognize the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organization, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving states, and open to membership by all such states, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security.

5. That for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security pending the re-establishment of law and order and the inauguration of a system of general security they will consult with one another and as occasion requires with other members of the United Nations, with a view to joint action on behalf of the community of nations.”⁶



The Tehran Conference was the first wartime summit among U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin in Tehran, Iran, between November 28 and December 1, 1943. During the Conference, the three leaders coordinated their military strategy against Germany and Japan and made several important decisions concerning the post-World War II era. The conference resulted in Allied commitment towards Operation Overlord, an invasion of northern France, to be executed by May of 1944, while the Soviet Union agreed to launch another major offensive on the Eastern Front that would divert German troops away from the Allied campaign in northern France and later join the war against Japan. The three Allied leaders also discussed important issues concerning the fate of Eastern Europe and Germany in the postwar period. Broader international cooperation became a central theme of the negotiations at Tehran. Roosevelt and Stalin privately discussed the composition of the United Nations. Roosevelt outlined for Stalin his vision of the proposed organization in which the future United Nations would be dominated by “four policemen” (the United States, Britain, China, and the Soviet Union) who “would have the power to deal immediately with any threat to the peace and any sudden emergency which requires action.”⁷

Historical Relevance

These historical developments are not merely a matter of chronology. Each major event on the path to August 1944 has led to the concerns that are at the heart of current debates about the future of the Security Council. The failure of the League of Nations to act decisively against aggression raised questions of enforcement and authority. The wartime cooperation between the Allied powers demonstrated both the need for and the difficulty of finding agreement among the major powers. At the same time, ongoing military operations proved that any future international organisation must have not only diplomatic legitimacy but also the practical ability to keep the peace. Consequently, debates on permanent membership, veto powers, voting structures, and military enforcement are essentially rooted in the successes and failures of the current international system. It is therefore important to understand this historical context in order to understand why these issues are still at the centre of the committee’s agenda.

⁶ <https://unterm.un.org/unterm2/en/view/UNHQ/CD2D07F41339CC0.E852569FA0000330D>

⁷ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/tehran-conference>

The Military Situation

The Western Front

The Western Front has been blown open by the Allies. Operation Cobra shattered the German line near Saint-Lô, the key transport hub barely ten miles from the Normandy beaches, after more than 2,500 Allied bombers attacked the twenty-kilometre corridor. Germany lost Saint-Lô, and with it lost the ability to stabilise the front. German divisions, exhausted by weeks of attrition and constant Allied air attacks, can no longer form organised defensive lines. Fuel shortages cripple movement, Allied aircraft destroy convoys before they reach the battlefield, and commanders increasingly issue orders to units that barely exist outside paper reports. The American, British, Canadian, and Polish forces closing in from every side formed a crescent, 'Falaise pocket', around the retreating German Seventh Army and Panzer Group Eberbach, trapping them. Nearly 100,000 German soldiers are caught inside the pocket; around 50,000 are captured, thousands are killed, and the survivors flee eastward through a corridor shrinking by the hour beneath artillery fire and Allied aircraft.⁸ Paris stands only days from liberation. Allied strength in France has risen to roughly 2.2 million troops, while Germany's Army Group B has fallen below 400,000 exhausted men with collapsing morale, almost no air cover, and little belief that the war in the West can still be won.



Eastern Front



On July 17, around 57,000 exhausted German prisoners were marched through the streets of Moscow beneath Soviet banners while street-cleaning trucks followed behind them, washing the roads after the prisoners had crossed in what became known as the "Parade of the Vanquished." Yet while Soviet armies advanced westward with unstoppable momentum, another tragedy unfolded in Warsaw. The Warsaw Uprising began on the first of August when approximately 40,000 fighters from the Polish Home Army rose against the German occupation, hoping the advancing Red Army would support them and help liberate the city. Soviet forces stood barely sixty kilometres away across the Vistula River, yet assistance never truly came.

The Home Army answered to the Polish government-in-exile in London rather than Moscow, and a liberated Warsaw loyal to Western-backed Polish leadership threatened Stalin's plans for a Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe after the war. Soviet strength now stands near 6.5 million soldiers under arms, while German forces across every front continue to shrink under impossible losses. In the East, Soviet armour now outnumbers German tanks so heavily that the Wehrmacht is no longer fighting for victory, but for survival itself.

The Pacific Front

The Pacific War by 1944 moved only toward the Japanese mainland. American strategy in the Pacific relied on "island-hopping," a campaign designed to capture strategically important islands while bypassing heavily defended positions that could be isolated and cut off from supplies. Each advance allowed the United States to move its naval bases, airfields, and bombers progressively closer to Japan. Although Japanese forces continued to resist fiercely, the Japanese strategy focused less on achieving victory and more on slowing the American advance by inflicting casualties severe enough to discourage a future invasion of the home islands. This deterioration from the Battle of Saipan became even more visible during the Battle of the Philippine Sea in June 1944, one of the



⁸ <https://d-dayinfo.org/en/operation-overlord/falaise-pocket/>

largest carrier battles in naval history. During the engagement, Japanese naval aviation suffered catastrophic losses, including approximately 600 aircraft and three fleet carriers, compared to roughly 123 American aircraft losses. Japan entered the war with some of the world's most experienced naval aviators, many of whom had participated in earlier campaigns across China and the Pacific. By 1944, years of attritional warfare had depleted this veteran core, and Japan's training system could no longer produce qualified replacements at the same pace. New pilots often entered combat with only limited flight experience, placing them at a severe disadvantage against increasingly experienced American air crews supported by superior logistics and industrial production. As a result, the Combined Fleet, once regarded as one of the most formidable naval forces in the world, entered a period of irreversible decline.⁹

The Italian Front



Nearly 600,000 Allied troops from across the world forced their way north toward the Gothic Line, Germany's last great defensive barrier, which stretched across the Apennine Mountains. Italy did not surrender ground dramatically. Albert Kesselring knew the campaign no longer offered Germany a path to victory. Every week the Allies remain trapped in Italy is another week Germany can survive elsewhere. Delay itself became a weapon. German defensive lines were layered across mountains and narrow passes so that every Allied advance crashed into mines, artillery, and machine-gun fire before beginning again somewhere farther north.¹⁰ Germany still holds nearly 400,000 troops in Italy under Army Group C, while Allied casualties have climbed to roughly 300,000.

The Political Situation

America

The United States entered the post-war negotiations determined to avoid repeating the political failure that followed the First World War. A second international body rejected by Congress would have destroyed American credibility before the system even began functioning. By 1944, American security was no longer believed to depend on distance from Europe and Asia alone. Continued participation in global affairs was now viewed as essential. Beneath the diplomatic language of "collective security" and "international cooperation," one reality remains clear: the post-war international system is intended to reflect the economic, industrial, and military dominance achieved by the United States during the war itself.



Russia



Nearly twenty-seven million Soviet citizens had been killed during the war. Entire cities such as Stalingrad, Kyiv, and Sevastopol had been shattered into rubble, while thousands of villages had disappeared beneath German occupation, starvation, and mass executions. Stalin, therefore, approached every negotiation with one conviction already settled in his mind: the Soviet Union would never again leave its survival dependent on foreign promises or Western goodwill. Soviet distrust did not emerge from paranoia alone. After the Russian Civil War, Western powers had intervened militarily against the Bolsheviks, and the Soviet leadership never forgot it. Poland,

Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria were viewed in Moscow less as independent nations than as the corridor through which invasions repeatedly entered Russia. The French invasion of Russia had crossed those plains. Operation Barbarossa had done the same with even greater destruction. Stalin intends to ensure that no hostile power can use that route again.

⁹ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-the-Philippine-Sea>

¹⁰ <https://48thhighlanders.ca/actions/gothic-line/>

Britain

By 1944, the United Kingdom still sat among the great powers, but six years of fighting had drained British industry, buried the country in debt, and stretched its military across Europe, North Africa, the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and Asia all at once. Britain survived increasingly through American loans, supplies, and industrial support. Winston Churchill knew the empire no longer possessed the strength it had carried in 1914. Churchill publicly defended the language of liberty and self-determination in the Atlantic Charter, but London applied those principles very carefully. Freedom was encouraged in Nazi-occupied Europe, not in colonies such as India, Egypt, or Palestine. Britain depended on those territories for military bases, raw materials, trade routes, and global influence. The contradiction inside British policy became impossible to ignore: Britain fought a war against dictatorship abroad while resisting independence movements across its own empire. Churchill also pushed strongly for the rapid rebuilding of France after Germany's defeat. Britain no longer possessed the economic or military strength to contain Soviet influence in Europe alone, and a stable France could help restore the balance of power on the continent. At the same time, Britain remained determined to protect the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, and the Persian Gulf because they formed the strategic arteries connecting the empire to Asia and Middle Eastern oil supplies. Churchill's private discussions with Joseph Stalin over spheres of influence in Eastern Europe revealed the reality beneath Allied rhetoric.

China



China had suffered enormously during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Major cities had fallen, millions of civilians had died, and large sections of the country remained divided between Japanese occupation zones, Nationalist control, and Communist influence. One of Chiang's most serious conflicts involved Joseph Stilwell, the American commander responsible for coordinating Allied operations in China and Burma. Stilwell openly criticised the Nationalist government, accusing it of corruption, poor military organisation, and reluctance to fully engage Japanese forces. He also pushed for greater direct authority over Chinese troops. Chiang rejected those demands firmly because allowing an American general to command Chinese armies would have damaged the legitimacy of the Nationalist government itself. China was already divided

between the Nationalists and the Chinese Communists under Mao Zedong, and any appearance that Chiang answered directly to Washington risked weakening his authority further inside China. Many American observers increasingly believed Communist forces fought more effectively against Japan than Nationalist armies did. Chiang understood that military weakness threatened his long-term position against Mao. International prestige, therefore, became strategically essential. At the same time, Chiang wanted Soviet influence kept away from China after the war, particularly in regions vulnerable to Communist expansion. He was therefore attempting to preserve Chinese sovereignty, maintain foreign support, and contain internal rivals simultaneously during one of the most unstable periods in modern Chinese history.

Germany

Officially, Nazi Germany continued speaking about total victory in 1944, but inside the German military and political leadership, confidence had begun collapsing under the weight of military reality. Many German officers increasingly believed the war could no longer be won and instead hoped for a separate peace with Britain and the United States that would allow Germany to concentrate entirely against the Soviet Union. The idea rested on the belief that Western leaders feared Soviet expansion enough to eventually treat Germany as a barrier against communism rather than as the principal aggressor of the war. Yet that possibility remained extremely unlikely. Franklin D. Roosevelt remained committed to unconditional surrender, while Joseph Stalin would have viewed any separate peace as a direct betrayal of the Allied alliance. Had Adolf Hitler been killed during the July 20 plot, sections of the German military hoped a new government might seek peace. Instead, Hitler survived. German hopes increasingly shifted toward the so-called Wunderwaffe, or "wonder weapons." V-1 flying bomb attacks against London, the development of the V-2 rocket, early jet aircraft, and advanced submarine technology were all presented by Nazi propaganda as weapons capable of reversing the war.

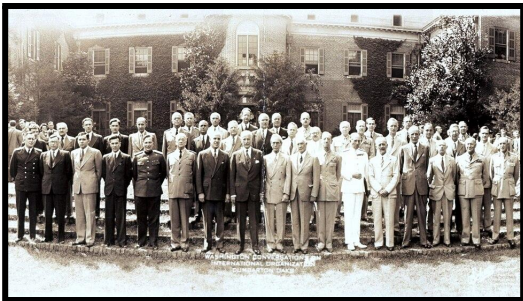


Japan

At the same time, Japan also recognised that its strategic position was deteriorating rapidly. American advances across the Pacific, the destruction of Japanese naval aviation, and increasing bombing of Japanese territory had made outright victory increasingly unrealistic. Yet Japan continued searching for a path out of the war that preserved the imperial system. The government of Kuniaki Koiso understood that Japan's military position was collapsing, but many Japanese leaders believed unconditional surrender would destroy the political and cultural foundations of the state itself. Japanese diplomats attempted to use the Soviet Union as a possible mediator with the Western Allies, hoping Moscow might help negotiate terms less severe than unconditional surrender. The strategy appeared logical because the Soviet Union and Japan remained formally neutral under the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact. However, Stalin had little reason to support Japanese interests. Soviet leaders already planned to enter the Pacific War after Germany's defeat and expected territorial and strategic gains from Japan's collapse. This created a deadlock that prolonged the war further. The Allies continued demanding unconditional surrender, while Japanese leaders continued insisting on preserving the imperial institution. Between those two positions, the conflict continued even as both sides increasingly understood how the war was likely to end. During this period, preparations for organised Kamikaze attacks also began expanding. Young Japanese pilots were trained for deliberate suicide missions against Allied naval forces as military leaders attempted to slow the American advance through increasingly desperate methods.



Dumbarton Oaks Conference



On August 21, 1944, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union opened negotiations at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference inside a Georgian Revival estate in Washington, D.C. The war that had shattered the old international order was still raging across Europe and the Pacific while diplomats attempted to design the institution meant to prevent another catastrophe of the same scale. China was excluded from the opening phase because Moscow still maintained a neutrality pact with Japan and did not want visible coordination with Beijing while Soviet-Japanese relations technically remained intact. From the beginning, the conference carried a contradiction at its core: the Allied powers were attempting to build a system for future peace while simultaneously fighting

the largest war in human history. The delegations agreed upon a six-organ structure that would later form the foundation of the United Nations: a Security Council would hold primary authority over international peace and security; a General Assembly would provide each member state with one equal democratic vote regardless of military or economic strength; an International Court of Justice (ICJ) would settle legal disputes between states that accepted its jurisdiction and have recognised the ICJ as an international court; an Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) would coordinate humanitarian and developmental work, whilst a Trusteeship Council would supervise colonial and non-self-governing territories moving toward self-administration; a Secretariat led by a Secretary-General would manage the institution itself. The structure reflected a direct attempt to correct the weaknesses of the League of Nations, whose recommendations often carried moral weight but little practical enforcement power. By August 22, major disputes are unresolved: the veto structure, and the balance between state sovereignty and international oversight.¹¹

Legitimacy of Axis Participation

The United Nations was an active wartime coalition during World War II. To even be considered for attendance at the foundational UN conferences, nations were required to officially declare war on the Axis powers and endorse the Atlantic Charter. Allied powers consider Axis powers to be aggressor states because they initiated the global conflict through a series of invasions and military expansions aimed at conquering new territories and building vast colonial empires. The question that arises is whether aggressor states should have any role in shaping the post-war system? Should Germany or Japan have a voice in creating the United



¹¹ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Dumbarton-Oaks-Conference>

Nations Security Council that is being built for the peace of the world? Inclusion may result in the loss of credibility and moral foundation, but exclusion could cause long-term stability issues, especially if Axis nations question the legitimacy of the organization. But it is not simply whether excluded states will destabilise the order from outside, but whether included states with revisionist agendas will prove more damaging from inside. Another approach might involve a graduated or conditional participation: a period of probation or supervised re-entry, during which states formerly identified as aggressors may demonstrate compliance with the organisation's principles before acquiring full membership and the associated rights. If the organisation is to exclude aggressor states, it requires a principled basis for identifying them. Reliance on military victory alone (treating the defeated powers as aggressors by definition) ties legal status to political outcome rather than to conduct. Any future organisation built on this foundation would need to determine which state is the aggressor before the conflict has been resolved, precisely the determination the League found itself unable to make with authority.

Japan

Japan withdrew in defiance after the League condemned the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and demanded they withdraw its troops (March 1933). But the Soviet Union and Japan are not currently at war. The Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact of April 1941 remains in force. Japan's own strategy in August 1944, following the fall of Saipan and the replacement of Prime Minister Tojo, has involved preliminary and indirect diplomatic soundings aimed at discovering whether any negotiated settlement is available.



Italy



Italy left in December 1937 in protest after the League imposed economic sanctions against Italy in response to its brutal invasion and colonization of Ethiopia (Abyssinia) in 1935. Following the overthrow of Mussolini in July 1943, the armistice of September 1943, and the declaration of war against Germany on October 13, 1943, the Kingdom of Italy under Marshal Pietro Badoglio and subsequently under Prime Minister Ivanoe Bonomi has been recognised by the Allied powers as a co-belligerent. Italian forces (the Co-Belligerent Army), operating out of southern Italy, have been fighting alongside Allied forces in the Italian campaign. Rome fell to Allied forces on June 4, 1944, further consolidating the authority of the Bonomi government in liberated territory. The Allied powers granted Italy co-belligerent status, not the status of an Allied nation. Italy has not been invited to the Dumbarton Oaks negotiations. It has not signed the Declaration by the United

Nations. Its political rehabilitation remains conditional and provisional. At the same time, the Italian Social Republic, Mussolini's German-backed government in German-occupied northern Italy, continues to operate and claims to represent Italian sovereignty. The Italian case raises a question that the guide's existing treatment of Axis participation does not address directly: whether participation in the post-war order should be determined by the conduct of a state's government at the time the war began, or by the conduct of the government that exists when the organisation is constituted.

Germany

Under Adolf Hitler, Germany quit after the League refused to grant Germany military equality with other European powers and criticized its rearmament (October 1933). But a memo arrives from Adolf Hitler, the Chancellor of Germany, which reads:

“The German Reich, along with the Italian Social Republic and the Empire of Japan, expresses its willingness to enter negotiations concerning the future political and security framework of Europe and the wider international system. Germany remains prepared to discuss terms relating to security arrangements, military limitations, political representation, and long-term continental stability.”
- Adolf Hitler
Chancellor of Germany

The Moscow Declaration of October 1943 specifies that the proposed organisation should be open to membership by all “peace-loving states”, large and small. The phrase “peace-loving” implies that states that have demonstrated aggressive conduct may eventually qualify, provided they demonstrate a change in character. Whether that standard can ever be met by a state whose current government remains in power, and what institutional mechanism would certify such a change, are questions that must be discussed.



MAJOR POWERS

In August 1944, the major powers were divided into two primary military coalitions: the Allied Powers, led by the "Big Four": the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and China, and the Axis Powers, consisting primarily of Nazi Germany, the Empire of Japan, and the Italian Social Republic.

Allied Powers

It was the coalition of countries that opposed the Axis powers (led by Germany, Italy, and Japan) during World War II. The principal members of the Allies were **the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, the United States, and China** (the "Big Four"), as well as **France** while it was unoccupied. The Allies also included every other signatory to the Declaration by the United Nations (January 1, 1942): **Australia, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Poland, South Africa, and Yugoslavia**. Later wartime signers were **Mexico, the Philippines, Ethiopia, Iraq, Brazil, Bolivia, Iran, Colombia, Liberia, and France**.



The Allies began as an agreement between Poland, the United Kingdom, and France that the latter two would come to Poland's aid if it were invaded by Germany. When Germany did attack on September 1, 1939, the United Kingdom and France fulfilled their promise, declaring war against Germany on September 3. The independent British dominions of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa followed the United Kingdom's lead, declaring war either that same day or a few days later. Denmark and Norway joined the Allies the next year when Germany invaded both countries on April 9, 1940.

Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg joined the Allies in May 1940 after Germany repeated its World War I strategy of moving its forces through those countries to invade France. However, all these new partnerships were short-lived as Germany soon conquered each country. Similarly, Greece and Yugoslavia joined the Allies in 1940 and 1941, respectively, but were eventually occupied. Following France's surrender on June 22, 1940, the United Kingdom and its

former colonies were effectively the only Allies in action for over a year, from mid-1940 to mid-1941. The German invasion of the Soviet Union significantly changed the course of events in 1941, resulting in an Anglo-Soviet treaty on July 12, 1941. Unlike the smaller nations that were easily annexed by Germany, the Soviet Union was able not only to survive its initial ambush but also to help the Allied cause beyond its own borders (e.g., invading Iran to ensure that its oil could not be used to fuel Axis vehicles). With support from the American Lend-Lease program, it became a major force against Germany, eventually driving German troops back toward Berlin. The Allied coalition expanded after Japan attacked American, British, and Dutch military bases in the Pacific, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. Germany declared war on the United States as well, on December 11. Where once the United States had participated in the war only as a source of arms and other supplies for the Allies, serving as what President Franklin D. Roosevelt memorably called "an arsenal of democracy," these aggressions brought it fully into the Allied fold.



Countries that immediately declared war on members of the Axis powers in the wake of Japan's attack included Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, and Panama. Brazil joined on August 22, 1942, and Mexico on May 22, 1942. Bolivia became an official member as well on April 7, 1943, but its government was overthrown in a coup shortly thereafter.¹²

¹² <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Allied-powers-World-War-II>

Important Leaders

1. Franklin Roosevelt

Franklin D. Roosevelt approached wartime diplomacy with a clear understanding that winning the war alone would not guarantee lasting stability. The failure of the League of Nations shaped nearly all of Roosevelt's thinking. This logic shaped Roosevelt's "Four Policemen" concept, in which the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and China would act as the principal powers responsible for maintaining post-war stability. Roosevelt believed cooperation between the major powers offered the only realistic foundation for international order. He also believed the Soviet Union could be managed through inclusion rather than isolation and hoped China would emerge as a stable democratic power in Asia after Japan's defeat. In 1944, both assumptions still appeared possible despite growing tensions beneath the Allied alliance and China's internal instability. At the same time, Roosevelt's health had deteriorated severely. Weight loss, exhaustion, and visible physical decline had become increasingly apparent to those around him, even while the American public remained largely unaware of the seriousness of his condition.¹³



2. Winston Churchill



Few Allied leaders understood the mechanics of European power politics as thoroughly as Churchill. He understood that Britain was emerging from the war financially weakened, militarily overstretched, and increasingly dependent upon American economic and industrial support. He placed greater trust in military strength, strategic alliances, and negotiated spheres of influence than in idealistic assumptions about permanent international harmony. In his view, European stability had historically depended upon preventing any single power from dominating the continent, and he believed that principle remained valid even during the construction of a new international order. This perspective shaped his attitude toward the Soviet Union during the final phase of the war. Winston Churchill respected Soviet military strength and recognised the ginormous sacrifices made by the Soviet Union against Germany, but he also feared that unsupervised Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe would destabilise the continent after the war. Churchill's private discussions with Joseph Stalin regarding influence in countries such as Greece, Romania, and Bulgaria reflected this strategic realism clearly. Beneath the public language of Allied unity and collective security, Churchill believed that clear understandings between the major powers remained essential for preventing future conflict once Germany had been defeated.¹⁴

3. Chiang Kai-shek

China remained devastated by the Second Sino-Japanese War. At the same time, Communist forces under Mao Zedong continued expanding their influence through guerrilla warfare and rural mobilisation. In several areas, Communist resistance against Japan was increasingly viewed by foreign observers as more organised and effective than Nationalist operations. His strategy relied upon gaining formal international recognition first and then using continued American political, economic, and military support to strengthen the Nationalist state after Japan's defeat. Chiang recognised that the post-war struggle against the Chinese Communists would depend not only upon military force, but also upon international recognition and external support. However, the long-term stability of this strategy remained deeply



¹³ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Franklin-D-Roosevelt>

¹⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Winston-Churchill>

uncertain because Communist influence inside China was already expanding rapidly beneath the surface of wartime unity.¹⁵

4. Joseph Stalin



Stalin's central objective was to convert Soviet wartime victories into permanent strategic security for the Soviet Union. He viewed alliances pragmatically and distrusted the long-term intentions of both Britain and the United States. Soviet leaders believed Western governments would eventually attempt to limit Soviet influence in Eastern Europe once Germany had been defeated. Whether those fears were entirely justified mattered less than the fact that Soviet policy was built around them with absolute seriousness. Stalin, therefore, demanded buffer states across Eastern Europe, extensive reparations from Germany, and unconditional veto authority within the future Security Council. These demands were not treated in Moscow as bargaining tools, but as strategic protections shaped directly by Soviet wartime experience. The Soviet Union had lost approximately twenty-seven million people during the war, and that destruction shaped every Soviet calculation regarding the post-war order.¹⁶

Axis

Powers



It was the coalition headed by Germany, Italy, and Japan that opposed the Allied powers in World War II. The alliance originated in a series of agreements between Germany and Italy, followed by the proclamation of an "axis" binding Rome and Berlin, with the two powers claiming that the world would henceforth rotate on the Rome-Berlin axis. This was followed by the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact against the Soviet Union.

The primary motive of the Axis Powers (Germany, Japan, and Italy) in World War II was aggressive territorial expansion and the subjugation of neighboring regions to solve severe domestic resource shortages with the intention of establishing, by military conquest, a permanent dominance over Europe and Asia. This was driven by a shared dissatisfaction with the post-World War I international order as well as anti-Communism.

Under the leadership of dictator Adolf Hitler, Nazi Germany aimed at the acquisition of a vast, new empire of "living space" (Lebensraum) in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The Nazi

leadership calculated that the realization of German hegemony in Europe would require war, and began planning a European war from the day the Nazis came to power in late January 1933. Imperial Japan followed a policy of military conquest with the support of its Emperor, military establishment, and many in the educated elite who sought Japanese rule and influence throughout East Asia and the Pacific Ocean. Germany and Japan formed an anti-Communist front aimed at the Soviet Union in 1936. That same year, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany formed the Axis alliance, shortly after Italy completed its brutal and successful conquest of Ethiopia. Japan had initiated its policy of military conquest by invading Chinese Manchuria in September 1931. Six years later, in July 1937, Japan invaded China proper to unleash World War II in Asia. On November 25, 1936, Germany's foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, and Japan's ambassador in Berlin, Count Mushakoji, signed an agreement, the Anti-Comintern Pact. According to them, since the Comintern, or Third International, based in Moscow, existed in order "to disintegrate and subdue existing states," they pledged "to consult with one another on the necessary preventive measures and to carry these through in close collaboration." An official communique published in Berlin and in Vienna on July 11 stated that the German Reich



¹⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Chiang-Kai-shek>

¹⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Joseph-Stalin>

recognized Austria's full sovereignty and that Austria undertook, "both in general and toward the German Reich," to pursue the policy of "a German state." A visit by Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law and minister of foreign affairs, to Hitler at Berchtesgaden on October 24 was followed by Germany's becoming the first power to recognize Italy's annexation of Ethiopia. On November 1, in Milan, Mussolini completed the bargain by proclaiming the Rome-Berlin Axis and by violently attacking communism. In the last week of September 1937, Mussolini received a spectacular welcome when he paid a state visit to Germany. Convinced that in a forthcoming war the Nazi Reich would be victorious, he formally subscribed to the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact on November 6 of that year, and on December 11, he withdrew Italy from the League of Nations. The connections among the Axis powers were strengthened by a full military and political alliance between Germany and Italy (the Pact of Steel, May 22, 1939) and by the Tripartite Pact, signed by all three powers on September 27, 1940, one year after Germany's invasion of Poland and the beginning of World War II.

A number of other countries, including Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia (after Czechoslovakia had been divided in 1939), in November 1940, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia in March 1941, and, after the wartime breakup of Yugoslavia, Croatia (June 1941), joined the Axis powers induced by promises of territory or protection, or by coercion. Finland, although it did not formally join the Tripartite Pact, cooperated with the Axis because of its opposition to the Soviet Union (to which Finland had been forced to cede territory in 1940) and entered the war in 1941.¹⁷

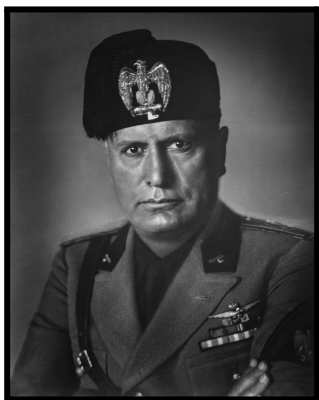
Important Leaders

1. Adolf Hitler

For years, Hitler had been rewarded politically and militarily for taking extreme risks that many professional soldiers and diplomats considered reckless. Repeated successes strengthened Hitler's conviction that his personal instincts mattered more than conventional military caution or professional advice. By 1944, he increasingly treated his own judgment as superior to that of many senior generals, even as Germany's strategic position deteriorated across every front. Hitler also believed that the Allied coalition would eventually fracture under ideological pressure. He viewed the alliance between the capitalist Western powers and the communist Soviet Union as fundamentally unstable and expected political conflict between them to emerge before Germany was completely defeated. In the long term, this assumption was not entirely incorrect. Serious tensions between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies were already beginning to appear beneath the surface of wartime cooperation. However, Hitler miscalculated the timing. The Allied powers remained committed to Germany's unconditional surrender before addressing their own post-war rivalries.¹⁸



2. Benito Mussolini



Benito Mussolini remained in power during 1944, but his authority had become heavily dependent on Germany. After being removed from office in 1943 and rescued by German forces, Mussolini was placed at the head of the Italian Social Republic in northern Italy. Mussolini continued delivering speeches, publishing articles, and maintaining the formal structure of Fascist rule, but support for the regime had weakened sharply after years of military defeats, economic hardship, and foreign occupation. Resistance movements against both German forces and Fascist authorities expanded across Italy throughout 1944. German officials still treated him as a leader, but real authority actually rested with Berlin rather than Rome. By 1944, the rule was operating more as a puppet state under Germany in an effort to keep control of northern Italy during the last stages of the war than as an autonomous state.¹⁹

¹⁷ https://www.britannica.com/topic/Axis-PowerSecurity_Councils

¹⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Adolf-Hitler>

¹⁹ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Benito-Mussolini>

3. Emperor Hirohito

Emperor Hirohito remained the symbolic centre of the Japanese state, but decision-making during the war was heavily shaped by military leaders, ministers, and imperial institutions operating around him. The Japanese government remained unwilling to accept unconditional surrender if it threatened the imperial institution itself. Preserving the position of the Emperor became central to internal discussions regarding any possible peace settlement. This created a major deadlock between Japan and the Allies because Allied policy continued demanding unconditional surrender while Japanese leaders insisted upon maintaining the imperial system. Simultaneously, Japanese diplomats explored the possibility of Soviet mediation despite the Soviet Union preparing privately to enter the war against Japan after Germany's defeat. Publicly, Japan continued presenting an image of resistance and determination, while internally many officials were already searching for a way to end the war under conditions that would preserve the imperial state.²⁰



Minor Allied and Axis Powers

Many minor Allied states were in favour of the creation of a stronger international organisation especially after seeing the failure of the League of Nations to prevent aggression in the 1930s. However, they also remained cautious of a system where a small group of powerful countries exercised disproportionate influence over international decision-making. States such as Canada, Australia, Brazil and Ethiopia generally favoured collective security but also sought assurances that smaller nations would retain a meaningful voice within the organisation.

To governments-in-exile and occupied Allied countries the issue appeared different. Countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia had direct experience of the consequences of great-power diplomacy and were thus concerned with questions of sovereignty, representation and political independence. Many feared that decisions affecting smaller states could once more be made without their participation.

Among the minor Axis and Axis-aligned states, concerns largely centred around their place in the emerging post-war order. Countries such as Hungary, Romania, Finland, and Croatia faced the possibility that the new international system would be designed entirely by the victorious powers. As a result, many questioned whether such a system could truly claim to represent the international community as a whole. While their interests and circumstances differed considerably, they generally opposed arrangements that concentrated excessive authority in the hands of a few states.

Despite being on opposite sides of the war, many smaller powers shared a common concern: that the future organisation should not become an instrument through which the strongest nations simply formalised their dominance under the language of collective security.

²⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hirohito>

STRUCTURE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Permanent Membership

Permanent membership in the proposed Security Council posits that a small, elite group of nations must hold permanent seats on the future Security Council to ensure that those who possess the physical capacity to enforce peace are the ones directed to manage it. The blueprint for this design stems largely from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's concept of the Four Policemen, which envisions the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the Republic of China acting as the armed guardians of the post-war world. Under this framework, these four states would have an exclusive mandate to maintain order, occupy defeated Axis territories, and suppress any security threats unilaterally. The core argument in favor of permanent membership is strictly functional: for collective security to succeed where the League of Nations failed, there must be an absolute alignment between diplomatic authority and military capability. Conversely, the concentration of permanent authority within a self-selected directory of superpowers generates severe concerns regarding legitimacy, representation, and sovereign equality. The accountability of such an executive body, where the most powerful actors are immune to rotation or removal, is questioned because it violates the spirit of the Atlantic Charter. Furthermore, allocating permanent seats raises a fundamental systemic dilemma regarding the criteria for qualification.

Veto Mechanism and Voting Structure

A veto system is a mechanism through which specific states are given a legal power to unilaterally block a resolution from passing, regardless of majority support. In a traditional majoritarian system, whoever gets the most votes wins. In a veto system, votes are qualitative; a single negative vote from a privileged country renders the affirmative votes of all other nations legally void.

If the council votes to take military action against a global power, the result is not the peaceful enforcement of law, but the outbreak of total war. A veto system acts as a safeguard, ensuring the institution only authorizes enforcement actions that the world's primary military powers are collectively willing to back.

There are several distinct pathways to structure the Council's veto power:

Veto Mechanism	Mechanism	Benefit	Flaw
Absolute Veto	Any permanent member can block any substantive or procedural resolution at will.	Guarantees major power participation; maximum great-power protection	Self-exoneration may occur
Limited/ Partial/ Categorical Veto	Applies only to specific categories of decisions; barred from peaceful settlement discussions.	Allows institutional deliberation and fact-finding even when enforcement is blocked	Risk of major powers withdrawing if actions threaten their strategic interests.
Unanimity-Minus-One	Total unanimity among Council members, but excludes votes from parties to the dispute.	No state should be a judge in its own cause;	A major power facing collective measures may dismantle the organization entirely.

Veto Mechanism	Mechanism	Benefit	Flaw
No Self Veto	Veto on all substantive decisions except in disputes to which they are directly a party.	Prevents self-exculpation	Requires compulsory abstention

There are a number of voting structures, such as:

- **Simple Majority:** Every country has one vote, and the majority decision passes. It is used for **procedural votes**, i.e., minor administrative things.
- **Two-Thirds Majority:** It requires more than a two-thirds majority, which prevents a majority that is narrow from pressuring a decision.
- **Greater Power Unanimity:** It requires unanimity among the permanent members of the Council. If even one major power denies, the resolution fails. It is used for **substantive votes**, i.e., serious matters.
- **Unanimity-Minus-One:** If a major power is directly involved in a dispute, it can't vote for that specific resolution. The rest of the Council can vote to investigate or punish the conflict without that country stopping the vote.
- **Weighted Voting Systems:** Each country's vote is weighted according to measurable metrics.
- **Consensus-Based Structures:** Resolutions are negotiated until no country objects, but this can result in delays.



Military Enforcement Powers

Military enforcement powers can determine the existence of any threat to the peace or act of aggression and authorise provisional measures, economic sanctions, or direct military action (such as blockades, no-fly zones, or troop deployments) to restore international security. Common types of military actions are blockades and no-fly zones, humanitarian interventions, armed deployment, counter-insurgency (COIN), and peacekeeping support.²¹ The League's Covenant included provisions for sanctions and, theoretically, collective military action under Article 16. In practice, those provisions never produced a sustained military response to aggression. The reasons were institutional. Member states retained full discretion over whether to contribute to enforcement action. No standing forces existed. The Secretariat possessed no independent military capacity. Each crisis required the assembly of a new political consensus and new material commitments from scratch, under conditions of maximum political pressure. By the time any consensus was assembled, the military situation had usually already shifted in the aggressor's favour. The League's enforcement failures were not solely failures of capacity. They were also failures of perceived impartiality. When Britain and France imposed incomplete sanctions on Italy while maintaining broader cooperative relations with Mussolini's government for reasons of European balance-of-power calculation, the message received by smaller states was that enforcement was conditional on the political convenience of the major powers. Military operations require unified command authority. Unified command requires a commander. A committee composed of representatives, each responsible to their own government and representing powers with potentially divergent strategic interests, is not an operational command structure. Coalition forces can only achieve strategic objectives when their national interests are aligned. If the Committee operates by consensus, a single permanent member can effectively veto an operational decision even after the political decision to authorise force has been taken. If it operates by majority, the institutional logic contradicts the principle of great-power unanimity that governs the Council's political decisions.

²¹ <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-7>

CONCLUSIONS

The delegates gathered at Dumbarton Oaks are attempting something that history rarely allows: designing a new international order before the old conflict has even ended. As of 22 August 1944, the outcome of the war appears increasingly favourable to the Allied powers, but victory remains an expectation, not a fact. German forces continue fighting across Europe. Japanese armies still occupy vast territories in Asia. Millions remain under occupation. The war is not a memory. It is the present. Yet even before the fighting has ceased, governments are already confronting an uncomfortable question: if the League of Nations could not prevent this catastrophe, what confidence should anyone place in simply rebuilding it under a different name? The League's failures are no longer matters of academic debate. Delegates have watched them unfold in real time. It investigated aggression that it could not stop. It passed resolutions that aggressor states learned to ignore. It demanded collective action from governments that often found collective action inconvenient. By the end of the 1930s, the League was trapped in the worst position any institution can occupy: it retained responsibility without retaining authority.

The organisation being discussed at Dumbarton Oaks is therefore built on a very different assumption. Peace, its architects argue, cannot survive on goodwill alone. It requires power. More specifically, it requires the cooperation of those states capable of projecting power on a global scale. That belief explains permanent membership. It explains the debate surrounding veto powers. It explains why military enforcement sits at the centre of these negotiations rather than at their margins. Of course, the moment one accepts this logic, a second question emerges. If peace depends on the great powers, who ensures that the great powers themselves remain accountable? That question sits quietly beneath almost every issue before this committee. Should a permanent member be allowed to veto action against itself? Should military strength be the primary qualification for permanent authority? Can an institution genuinely claim to represent international security if some states possess privileges that others can never obtain? And if today's aggressors are permanently excluded from tomorrow's order, does that create lasting stability or simply postpone future resentment? None of these questions is comfortable. If they were, they would already have been answered.

Delegates should remember that they are not debating an ideal world. They are debating a world shaped by Stalingrad, Normandy, Warsaw, Saipan, and countless other battlefields. Every proposal discussed in this committee is, in one way or another, an attempt to solve problems written in blood and measured in millions of lives. The institution being designed here will not be perfect. No serious delegate should expect it to be. The real challenge is deciding which imperfections are acceptable and which are dangerous. An organisation with too little authority risks becoming another League of Nations. An organisation with too much concentrated authority risks becoming something else entirely. That is the dilemma of Dumbarton Oaks. The delegates in this room are not deciding how to create a perfect peace. They are deciding what kind of imperfect peace the world will inherit when the guns finally fall silent.

QUESTIONS A DIRECTIVE MUST ANSWER

1. What should be the overall structure and composition of the Security Council?
2. Which states shall be represented within the Security Council?
3. How many Permanent and Non-Permanent members shall the Security Council contain?
4. Which states will be granted the status of Permanent Membership, and on what basis should such status be granted?
5. What form of voting structure should be adopted?
6. Should permanent members possess veto powers? If so, what limitations, if any, should exist on its usage?
7. Which form of veto mechanism should be adopted?
8. Should the Security Council possess Military Enforcement Powers? If yes, under what circumstances must it be exercised?
9. What limitations should exist on the Military Authority and Enforcement Powers of the Security Council?

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