

HASALMUN'25



# SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE

## STUDY GUIDE

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*"Youth will shape the world"*

***“The Charter of the United Nations which you have just signed is a solid structure upon which we can build a better world. History will honor you for it.”***  
***President Harry S. Truman***

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## I. Letter from the Secretary General

Dear Delegates of the San Francisco Conference,

It is my utmost pleasure and honour to welcome each and every one of you to the 12th annual session of HASALMUN and specifically to the San Francisco Conference. I am proud to say, on behalf of our whole academic and organisation team, that every detail of this conference was devised with careful dedication and sincere enthusiasm so as to provide all of you with pleasant and unforgettable memories.

MUN is not just about building connections, the value of it goes much deeper; MUN is about bonding over world issues. It is about realising how all human beings are bound by different problems and understanding that the world is waiting for courageous, intellectual, kind-hearted leaders and individuals to heal the broken hearts, and rebuild the shadowed dreams.

HASALMUN has, since its day of foundation, been a stage where everyone is provided with the opportunity to express, debate, and negotiate. Every delegate is received with the greatest amount of excitement, happiness and pride; because, as young individuals ourselves, we know the importance of being recognized as worthy individuals. I assure you that HASALMUN'25 will be a place for growth, in every possible context.

This year, the San Francisco Conference will be working for world peace and multilateralism. Our irreplaceable Under-Secretary General **Mr. Burhan Mert Bellici** has prepared this amazing study guide with invaluable efforts in order to ensure that all delegates receive every piece of information they need from this document alone. I thank him for being the greatest in his job and his marvelous commitments to the conference. Moreover, I also want to thank our academic trainee **Mr. Deniz Mucur** for his contributions to the study guide, committee, and conference.

Last, but definitely not the least, I want to thank you delegates for making this conference truly meaningful. Without your words and actions, HASALMUN would not be what it is today. Thank you to all the youthful minds for adding value into this conference and the world we live in. Youth will shape the world!

Best wishes & Yours sincerely,

**Öykü Tekman**

Secretary-General of HASALMUN'25

## II. Letter from the Under-Secretary General

Most Esteemed Participants,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to the San Francisco Conference committee of the twelfth annual edition of HASALMUN. I, as Burhan Mert Bellici studying at Hüseyin Avni Sözen Anatolian High School, am thrilled to serve as the under-secretary general for this committee.

The San Francisco Conference shaped the course of modern history and provided all of the world an unified diplomatic system. It was a treaty shaped by many brilliant statesmen and diplomats whom you will represent throughout this conference and it gave hope to the people that the world could be a better place. This study guide written by me and my brilliant academic assistant Deniz Mucur may be a bit unorthodox or puzzling for some, however I can guarantee that it encompasses all that you need to know for this committee about the San Francisco Conference . It is also highly suggested to read the Sections XII, XIII, IX and X. And records of the San Francisco Conference as well as the United Nations charter will be provided within the further readings section and reading them is almost imperative for this committee .

Dear delegates, I hope to meet you all and have a great committee as we decide and shape the future of the world. Additionally, I would like to thank my great academic assistant Deniz Mucur. He is like a son to me and I hope he succeeds further in life. Lastly, I wish you all good luck on your journey!

Also if you have any questions regarding the study guide you can always contact me,

Sincere gratitudes,

Burhan Mert Bellici

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**Important Notice about the Position Paper:** The position paper, as mentioned in your allocation mail, has a deadline of the 16th of June. We expect the position paper to contain the general stance of your nation on the controversial issues discussed during the conference, which is explained in Section X.



### III. Introduction

The United Nations Conference on International Organization, informally known as “the San Francisco Conference,” opened on April 25, 1945, and concluded with the signing of the United Nations Charter on June 26. Fifty nations participated at the invitation of the four sponsoring governments: the United States, the United Kingdom, the USSR, and China. The conference had the intention of building a world order which can withstand the test of time and prevent the destruction ensued by both of the world wars.

In this regard delegates of fifty nations have spent days debating upon various topics which are further explained in the following sections of this study guide. Some other aims of the conference was to ensure development and humanitarian aid in developing nations as well as helping nations recover from the devastating economic toll of the Second World War.

In addition this committee was also the beginning of a new diplomatic system and a different system for international relations. As explained throughout this study guide the details of several different diplomatic systems, their necessities and the reasons for their failure should be noted as this committee is not just centered around writing the charter it is also about designing a new diplomatic system to stand the test of time and further humanity.

### IV. Glossary

*Accord*: An accord is a formal agreement done between actors or nations in international law.

*Consensus*: Consensus refers to general agreement among a group of people or a whole. Consensus in an agreement states that the agreement was favored by all actors related.

*Status quo*: Status quo is a Latin phrase with the general meaning of existing state of affairs, in a connection with social and political issues.

*Clause*: In law a clause means a particular part of a written within a legal document with the aim of clarifying the specific rights, obligations, or conditions that related parties must obey

*Summit*: A summit is a formal meeting done between leaders of two or more countries to discuss about prearranged agendas.

*Preamble:* A preamble is an introductory statement at the beginning of a legal document that refines the document's purpose and core concepts.

*Isolationism:* Isolationism is a foreign policy orientation in which a state deliberately limits its involvement in international political, economic, or military affairs.

*Intervention:* Intervention refers to the involvement of a state or international actor in the internal or external affairs of another sovereign state, typically to influence outcomes related to conflict, governance, or humanitarian conditions.

## **V. Historical Background**

### **A. Colonization**

For most of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the world was dominated by empires. European nations, including Britain, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Belgium, projected their power primarily into Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific. The empires asserted their claims over huge territories, frequently drawing borders without concern for the cultures, communities, or histories of the inhabitants. Colonized peoples were not granted self-government, and their wealth was sucked out to enrich far-off capitals.

Whereas colonialism had been legitimized on the grounds of "civilizing missions" or economic progress, in practice it unleashed extensive exploitation, inequality, and oppression. The local systems of governance were destroyed, and indigenous ways of living were interrupted. Resistance was suppressed through military power, censorship, and supremacy in most locations.

When the San Francisco Conference took place in 1945, most of the world was still under colonial rule. Yet a profound change was underway. The catastrophic expense of World War II, combined with rising anti-colonial pressures, exposed the moral dilemmas of imperial control. Colonial subjects had fought and died in the war alongside nationals of the Allied powers, but came back to still foreign-ruled homes.

To all but a handful of the delegations present at the conference, particularly the Asian, African, and Latin American delegations, the establishment of the United Nations held out not only the hope of peace, but of justice. The stress on equal rights and

self-determination embodied in the Charter was an explicit repudiation of colonial rule. Although complete decolonization would have to wait for decades, its seeds were sown in San Francisco. The fact that every nation was afforded the right to speak and be heard in the international system was a milestone in world history.

## **B. World War I**

The First World War (1914–1918) was the most catastrophic and revolutionary conflict of the modern era. What had started as a European conflict among great powers had evolved into a global war at the cost of more than 16 million lives. The war demonstrated the profound deficiencies of the international order: militarism, rigid alliances, imperialist rivalry, and diplomacy had all combined to produce a disaster on a previously unimaginable scale.

By the close of the conflict, four great empires; the German, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian had disintegrated into new states and border disputes. In the midst of the uprising, people started to call for a more equitable and peaceful international order. The notion that peace could no longer be controlled by a few empires signaled the start of a new period in diplomacy.

### **1. Wilson Principles**

On January 8, 1918, Wilson addressed the U.S. Congress and outlined the Fourteen Points, a list of principles designed to guide peace negotiations and establish a more just and stable world order. These principles included calls for open diplomacy, disarmament, fair economic relations, and the creation of an international body to preserve peace.

Wilson called for open diplomacy and honesty in international relations, a renunciation of the secret treaties that had drawn nations into conflict in the past. He called for freedom of the seas, impartial trade among nations, and disarmament to avoid future militarism. Most of all he enunciated the principle that nations under imperial rule had a right to determine their own political future. At the core of his plan was the demand for a global organization that would ensure peace and settle disagreements through talk instead of through arms. Though the resulting League of Nations eventually collapsed, Wilson's principles lived on. His principles opened the way for colonized nations everywhere in the world and provided the intellectual

foundation for the United Nations, established almost thirty years afterward at the San Francisco Conference.

## **2. Versailles Treaty**

The Versailles Treaty, which was signed on June 28, 1919, officially concluded the First World War and enforced a set of harsh political, territorial, and economic conditions on Germany. The treaty was principally negotiated by the victorious nations France, Britain, and the United States, and it had unmerciful claims, especially by France and Britain, which experienced colossal losses in the war. Germany was forced to take the blame for the war in the "war guilt" clause (Article 231) and to pay enormous reparations, give control of vital territory, and severely restrict the size and extent of its armed forces.

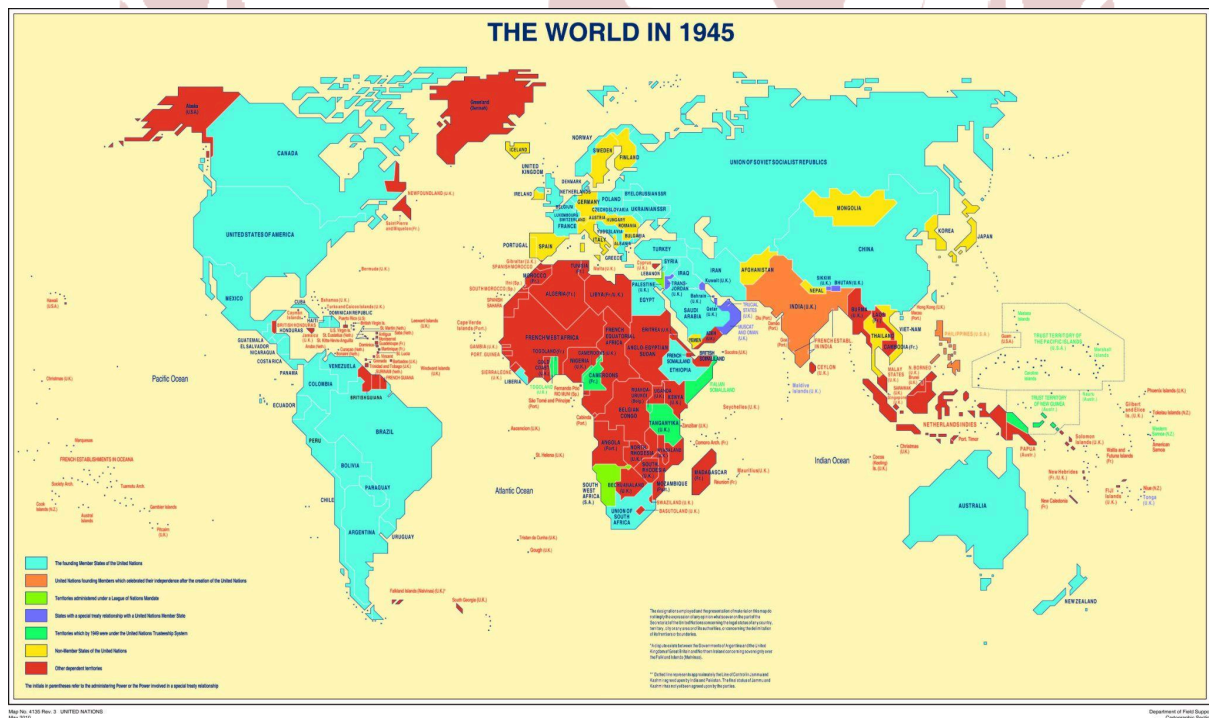
While the treaty included some features of Wilson's principles, most notably the establishment of the League of Nations, it did not live up to its more general aspirations for a just and durable peace. The treaty's punishment terms generated a great backlash in German territory and provided an environment for political extremism and economic instability. Furthermore, many of Wilson's suggestions, particularly those relating to decolonization, were not applied properly. Whereas most European nations became independent, colonies in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa were merely transferred from one imperial power to another under the system of mandates, strengthening rather than weakening colonial rule.

The Treaty of Versailles is viewed by most historians as a flawed peace, a peace that terminated a war but was unable to bring stability. Its legacy was an unstable global system that was barely capable of keeping the rising crises of the war years in the future. The treaty's failures did nothing but highlight the need for a more democratic and just system of world governance, a challenge that would not be taken up for decades in the San Francisco Conference of the United Nations.

## C. World War II

World War II (1939–1945) was an international war that involved more than 30 countries and became the deadliest war in human history. The war started as Nazi Germany invaded Poland with the demand of the Sudetenland. The war lasted for years and caused a lot of destruction in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific. Tens of millions of soldiers and civilians were killed. Total fatalities ranged from 70 to 85 million. The victims of the Holocaust, the atomic bombings, and most civilian massacres are part of this figure.

This catastrophic war exposed the complete failure of the League of Nations, which had been formed after World War I to prevent future wars. The League lacked the power, military strength, and membership of great powers like the United States. It did not act forcefully against aggression in the 1930s, such as Japan's invasion of Manchuria, Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, and Germany's remilitarization and occupation of the Rhineland. Such failures encouraged totalitarian regimes and demonstrated that international peace could not be maintained through weak diplomacy and unenforced rules. Mainly, World War II demonstrated the negative consequences of unrestrained aggression and how the League of Nations was unable to fulfill its role of protecting everyone in unison.





## VI. Diplomatic Systems

### A. Westphalian System

The Westphalian System is regarded by many historians as the beginning of modern international relations. The Westphalian System is a product of the Peace of Westphalia signed in 1648 which ended the Thirty Years War. The war, which has killed approximately 8 million people, was a result of an internal dynastic conflict, yet it has expanded into almost all of Europe and lasted for three decades. The main driving factor between the rapid expansion of this conflict was the constant interventions from different powerful kingdoms of Europe which continuously stirred the balance of the continent. This was due to the fact that before the Westphalian System, sovereignty and borders of nations were not accepted by other nations. Border towns or counties constantly changed hands over neighbouring nations due military conflicts or dynastic successions.

Before the Westphalian System there were nations which were well established militarily, economically or bureaucratically however they were not recognized as equals by other equally powerful states which was a great obstruction in the forming of complex diplomatic relationships between nations. Another root of this problem comes from the fact that states as we understand it today are severely different from those of the Pre -Westphalian Period. The existence of a state was dependent on the head of state (Duke, King, Emperor etc.) the decisions and the actions were all done on the order of said head of state. This seriously complicated international relations as well as most of heads of state are distantly



related they also have claims on same or similar land which provided grounds for a constant struggle and war between nations even if said struggles were bad for both of the parties the order of the head of state was definitive and the benefits of the state were of little importance compared to the benefits of the ruler.

However, European nations, upon seeing the results of constant struggle for thirty years, have decided to solve the problems mentioned above which has obstructed the diplomatic process which could have either shortened the conflict or prevented itself entirely. With this aim, the peace treaty signed underlined the importance of state sovereignty over its territory regardless of the head of state. The Westphalian System could be marked as the beginning of modern international relations and simply summarized as a system that relied on a system of independent states refraining from interference in each other's domestic affairs and checking each other's ambitions through a general equilibrium of power.

### **B. Concert of Europe**

The Concert of Europe was a broad understanding among the major European powers in the 19th century to preserve the balance of power, uphold existing political borders, and respect each other's areas of influence. Which began, according to historians in 1815 with the Vienna Congress, began weakening with the Crimean War and ended with the beginning of the First World War in 1914. This system, though being regarded as the successor to the Westphalian System, marks a great shift from it as the equilibrium of power was broken by France under the leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte and their conquests which subsequently resulted in the eruption of the Napoleonic Wars. Great powers in Europe aimed for a system that would prevent one nation from getting extremely powerful under the right circumstances. In this regard the diplomats envisioned a relatively more interventionist system compared to the Westphalian System where delegates from the Great Powers of Europe : Great Britain, France, Austria, Prussia and Russia would meet regularly to discuss solutions to conflicts.

The congress system however, was short lived as it only regularly continued till 1820 however there were still conferences or congresses organized which were in similar fashion to the envisioned diplomatic system. The general idea of the statesmen who shaped this system was if all the great powers can agree or could sit together through the duration of a conference that gives the world a better chance of preventing wars. Furthermore even if war was unavoidable, the nature of the concert itself prevented wars which often saw great powers divided among themselves by 2-3 or 1-4 made sure that the side which was outnumbered eventually backed down. The system was successful in preventing major conflicts between great powers in Europe and allowing for peaceful solutions and discussions to problems.

However, the system gradually weakened with the rise of blocs among the great powers, as the system depended on the decisions of the nations for that specific problem. First, the rise of the Holy Alliance and then the rise of the Entente and the Triple Alliance made the congresses unable to perform as the solutions were not from multilateral discussions, it was simply two competing blocs which tried to outmaneuver each other. This in turn affected the non-great power nations of Europe as the congresses became more of a competition they have also moved away from the idea that the Concert of Europe was a binding concept. This, combined with the fact that two rival blocs forming severely damaged the combined enforcement power held by the great powers, the alienation of small nations and constant competition, resulted in the diplomatic system losing its effectiveness. Hence a congress to defuse the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand could not be effectively gathered and began the First World War.

### **C. League of Nations**

The League of Nations was established in 1920 following the devastation of the First World War, as part of the Treaty of Versailles, to maintain international peace and prevent future conflicts through collective security, disarmament, and diplomatic negotiation. The League was intended to be a diplomatic forum where member states could settle disputes without going to war. It was conceived by Allied powers, most notably with the help of US President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. The main difference between the Concert of Europe and the League of nations was the goal of replacing power politics with a rules-based, cooperative international framework.

The League was organized as follows: a Permanent Secretariat, which handled administrative duties; a Council, which comprised both permanent and non-permanent members and was tasked with crisis resolution; and a General Assembly, in which all member states had a voice. The League also set up a number of commissions and agencies to deal with matters like health, labor rights, and mandates over former colonies. However, the principle of unanimity in decision-making and the lack of the League's most powerful intended member—the United States—whose Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles—fundamentally limited the League's operational capacity. Furthermore, it was often helpless against aggression because it lacked an independent military force and was



dependent on the willingness of its member states to impose sanctions or launch military interventions.



The League's credibility began to deteriorate during the 1930s, as it failed to respond effectively to several crises. Additionally, the rise of authoritarian regimes and the rise of reactionary forces obstructed multilateral cooperation. Smaller and weaker states, for whom the League was supposed to be a guarantee of security, increasingly found themselves isolated as great powers pursued strategic interests

outside the League's framework. The system ultimately collapsed under the weight of its own weaknesses, and with the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. The Covenant of the League which is the founding document for the League of Nations could be found in the Section XI and it is highly advised to be read.

## **VII. Related Conferences Before the San Francisco Conference**

### **A. Atlantic Charter**

The Atlantic Charter was a significant policy declaration made on August 14, 1941, during World War II, jointly crafted by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was an outcome of a clandestine meeting between 9 and 12 August on board naval vessels anchored in Placentia Bay, off Newfoundland's coast. Even though the United States was officially neutral at this time, Roosevelt and Churchill attempted to present a joint vision for the post-war world. The Atlantic Charter was not a treaty in the strict sense; instead, it was a declaration of shared principles, marking the first significant step toward the creation of a new world order. It also conveyed the message to other nations that the United States, while not yet a participant in the conflict, was advancing towards identification with the Allied effort.

The Charter set out eight fundamental principles to direct international relations following the fall of Nazi Germany and the Axis powers. The United States and the United Kingdom initially asserted that they had no interest in expanding their territories. Second, they concurred that boundary adjustments among territories are to be effected in line with the free choice of the people involved. Third, they reiterated the right of all peoples to determine their own government and reinstate sovereign rights that had been taken by force. Fourth, they undertook to re-establish self-government to individuals who had been deprived of it by force. Fifth, the Charter called for equal access to commerce and natural resources for all states, thereby encouraging the economic welfare of both the victors and the defeated. Sixth, the two leaders emphasized the requirement for higher standards for labor, economic progress, and social security through international economic collaboration. Seventh, the Charter looked forward to a postwar world without fear and want. Ultimately, it fostered the ideal of open sea access and demanded the disarmament of war states after the war, in an effort to avert future war.

Although it was not a legally binding document, the Charter had tremendous moral force and was adopted very rapidly by a number of Allied countries. Official approval by all of the major Allied powers, the Soviet Union, Free France, China, and governments-in-exile, was accorded to the declaration on 24 September 1941. This sponsorship laid the groundwork for the Declaration by the United Nations, which was signed on 1 January 1942 by 26 states. This statement obligated the signatory powers to adhere to the principles of the Atlantic Charter and to join together in an effort to counter Axis aggression. Significantly, this was the first application of the term "United Nations" to describe the Allied powers, a title put forward by Roosevelt himself.

Responses to the Charter were diverse worldwide. While it was being hailed in the United States and the United Kingdom as a clear reaffirmation of liberal ideals, it also raised controversy. In the British Empire, some officials complained that the provisions of the Charter for self-determination would undermine colonial rule. Churchill would famously stress that the Charter did not apply to British colonies, a position which was being criticized both within and without the nation. Nationalist leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru in British India and other colonies viewed the ideals of the Charter as being in conflict with imperial interests. The disparity between the Charter's promise of

self-government and the realities of colonialism created a source of tension within the Allied coalition.

## **B. Bretton Woods Conference**

The Bretton Woods Conference, also known as the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, was held from July 1 to July 22, 1944, in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. The high-profile conference included 730 delegates from 44 World War II Allied nations. The conference aimed at creating a new international economic order for stabilizing the economy, preventing financial crises like the Great Depression, and promoting postwar reconstruction. The Bretton Woods agreements established the economic base of the international order, to be completed by the political and security system at the San Francisco Conference.

Delegates at the Bretton Woods conference established two significant branches: the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the first World Bank Group agency. IMF lends monetary stability, maintains fixed exchange rates, and gives short-term loans to countries that have problems with payments. IBRD gives long-term loans for post-war reconstruction, especially for war-ravaged Europe. They promote international economic cooperation, stability, trade, and economic development.

Bretton Woods agreements stirred controversy about economic sovereignty, trade imbalances, and the centralization of power in creditor nations, mainly in the U.S., that would eventually lead to conflict in international finance governance. The underdeveloped world, which was not represented at the conference, criticized the system as biased in favor of industry. The conference did, however, provide a model for multilateral collaboration during wartime in both Europe and the Pacific. The Bretton Woods Conference was needed to create the economic framework to supplement the political and security framework of the United Nations, founded at the San Francisco Conference.

San Francisco focused on world peace and diplomacy, while Bretton Woods labored to create a financial order for political stability and to prevent economic crises that gave rise to fascism and war. Both conferences were essential to the post-war global order: Bretton Woods established economic institutions and San Francisco built political institutions.

Bretton Woods inaugurated the post-war world order by institutionalizing economic cooperation via the IMF and World Bank, laying the foundation for international monetary policy to come. The significance of this matter at the San Francisco Conference demonstrates the collective Allied stance toward peace, security, and economic interdependence as a fundamental foundation for the objectives and structure of the United Nations.

### **C. Dumbarton Oaks Conference**

The Dumbarton Oaks Conference, also called the Washington Conversations on International Peace and Security Organization, was held from August 21 to October 7, 1944, in Washington, D.C. Representatives of four principal Allied powers—America, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and China—met at the conference to prepare an initial draft of a new international organization to replace the League of Nations and maintain world peace and security following World War II.

The conference was divided into two stages due to political tensions: first, trilateral meetings were held by the U.S., U.K., and Soviet Union (21 August–28 September), and then by the U.S., U.K., and China (29 September–7 October). These meetings produced the first complete institutional design for what would be the United Nations.

The draft document outlined the creation of six major organs: a General Assembly, a Security Council, an International Court of Justice, a Secretariat, an Economic and Social Council, and a Trusteeship Council. Of these, the most controversial element was the Security Council. Five permanent members—the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, China, and later France—were to have each one vote with veto power over major decisions. This aspect was designed to secure the involvement of the great powers but also raised concerns about restrictions on international democratic representation.

The draft, although it stressed the importance of collective security, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and respect for sovereign equality, made no reference to human rights or the right of self-determination. These omissions were criticized by small states and colonial powers. In the interim between the drafting and the San Francisco Conference, these lacunae were protested by various Allied governments and non-governmental groups, and amendments introducing more progressive and inclusive formulations were made.

Although some of the political and legal questions were left open, the Dumbarton Oaks Conference laid a fundamental basis for the United Nations' creation. The draft proposals produced at this conference shaped both the San Francisco Conference's agenda and structure in 1945, where the international community gathered to finalize the UN Charter.

#### **D. Yalta Conference**

The Yalta Conference took place in a Russian resort town in the Crimea from February 4–11, 1945, during World War Two. At Yalta, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin made important decisions regarding the future progress of the war and the postwar world. Among the important decisions mentioned were the agreement on the creation of an international organization to keep and guide the world through crises in peace. The Dumbarton Oaks plan stated the SC would be responsible for helping to prevent future wars. The actual method of voting in the SC was left open for future discussion.

The plan also stated that Member States were to place armed forces at the disposal of the SC. This would help prevent war or suppress acts of aggression between States. States generally agreed that the absence of such force had been a fatal weakness in the older League of Nations which had led to its ultimate demise. The Dumbarton Oaks proposals were fully discussed throughout the Allied countries in the Yalta Conference. The SC voting procedure was further addressed by Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin at the Yalta Conference. On 11 February 1945, the Yalta Conference announced that the SC question had been resolved. The Yalta Conference also called for a Conference of the UN to be held in San Francisco on 25 April 1945. The purpose of this conference was "to prepare the charter of such an organization, along the lines proposed in the formal conversations of Dumbarton Oaks."

### **VIII. Convening of the San Francisco Conference**

The San Francisco Conference, also known as the United Nations Conference on International Organization, convened on 25 April 1945 in San Francisco, California. It was attended by representatives of 50 countries, all of which had been at war with the Axis powers and signed the 1942 Declaration by the United Nations. It was the four main Allied powers —the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and the United Kingdom— that invited these countries to form a new world charter. This charter would create an international organization committed to peace and security.



The idea for the conference was conceived from earlier meetings during the war, specifically the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1944, when they sketched out a preliminary design for the United Nations, and the decisions taken at the Yalta Conference further strengthened the need for a comprehensive international conference to finalize these arrangements as explained in section VII. San Francisco was chosen as the venue due to its symbolic position on the Pacific Coast and its accessibility to member states from the East and West.

The conference was held in the War Memorial Opera House. Committee meetings and formal sessions were held in other buildings close by. There were more than 850 official delegates, supported by over 2,500 staff, advisers, and observers. It was one of the largest assemblages of diplomats in history. While each nation was given an equal vote, the great powers wielded considerable influence in determining the final results. The conference ran for two months and ended on June 26, 1945, with the signing of the United Nations Charter. This was of great importance, as the war in Europe had just ended, and the devastation of World War II highlighted the need for a better international organization than the failed League of Nations.

## **IX. Main Commissions of the San Francisco Conference**

### **A. General Provisions**

The General Provisions committee of the San Francisco Conference was centered around drafting the preamble of the United Nations and determining the principles and purposes of the organization. Alongside that, the General Provisions committee also discussed the criteria for membership, amendment processes, and the process of electing a secretariat. During the conference within this committee, the main points which were discussed was the nature of the United Nations. Some developing nations expressed their concerns about an interventionist UN and how this could be a tool to enforce the mandate of stronger or more influential nations. In contrast some stronger nations underlined the failure of the League of Nations because it could not intervene and called for a more interventionist United Nations.

### **B. General Assembly**

The General Assembly committee was centered around the structure and procedures of the envisioned organization; it oversaw membership and voting processes, budgetary

control and election of members to other bodies. During the conference there were some concerns that the General Assembly, which was determined as the central operating organ of the planned organization, would be overshadowed by the power of the Security Council. In addition there were discussions on the representation of nations while most of the nations were in favour of the one-country-one-vote system, Soviet Union and the United States as well as the United Kingdom though not as passionately as the Soviet Union wished for weighted voting where the votes of nations would be determined from their contribution to the organization based on several criteria. However, small and medium sized states were in the majority at the conference and the opposition was strong against the proposal so a one-country-one-vote system passed.

Another important topic of the General Assembly was the establishment of several socio-economic committees which were aimed to align and further with the goals set in the UN charter. Additionally, the funding of the United Nations over different models were also discussed. Finally the topic of decolonization and for the monitoring of decolonization the Trusteeship Council was formed from the discussions borne in the General Assembly.

### **C. Security Council**

The Security Council committee throughout the conference was the biggest source of controversy, as it determined some of the most sensitive topics such as the decision of the permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council. As well as the veto powers given to a select group of states many representatives of several delegations have raised their concerns about this model for the Security Council; however, the states who will later be the permanent members of the Security Council: France, China, United States of America, United Kingdom and the Soviet Union have managed to convince and influence the delegations. Another important discussion held throughout this committee is the bindingness of the decisions as well as the enforcement powers the United Nations would have. The discussion about forming an army for the United Nations was also a prominent topic of debate held in the Security Council committee of the San Francisco Conference.

### **D. Judicial Organization**

The Judicial Organization committee drafted worked on the structure of the International Court of Justice. As well as the procedures for legal cases between states and the jurisdiction of the court. However, many states were wary of submitting disputes to

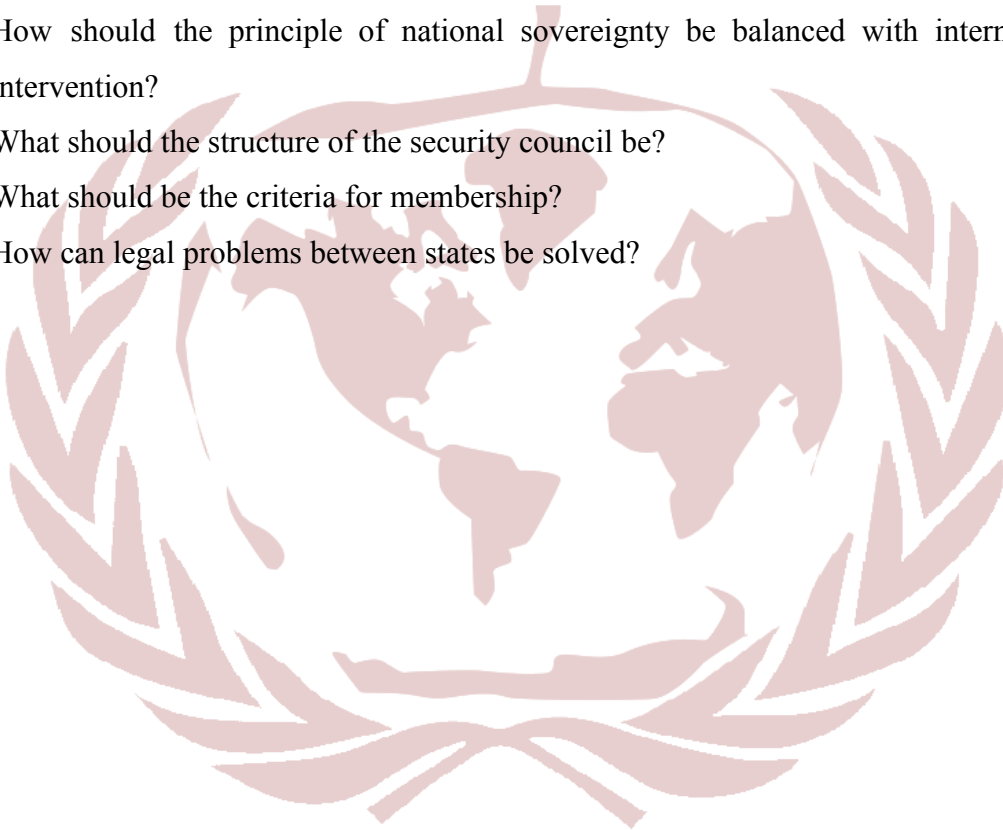
binding international legal rulings, fearing loss of sovereignty. The potential power of the ICJ deeply scared some nations so there were serious oppositions about the binding powers of the ICJ. In addition the selection process of judges which initially lacked geographical representation was among the concerns of non-European nations. Because of these concerns some nations wished ICJ to be an advisory organ of the United Nations. However others have argued that without binding judgements, the United Nations would become much weaker as this limits the organization's capabilities of intervention.





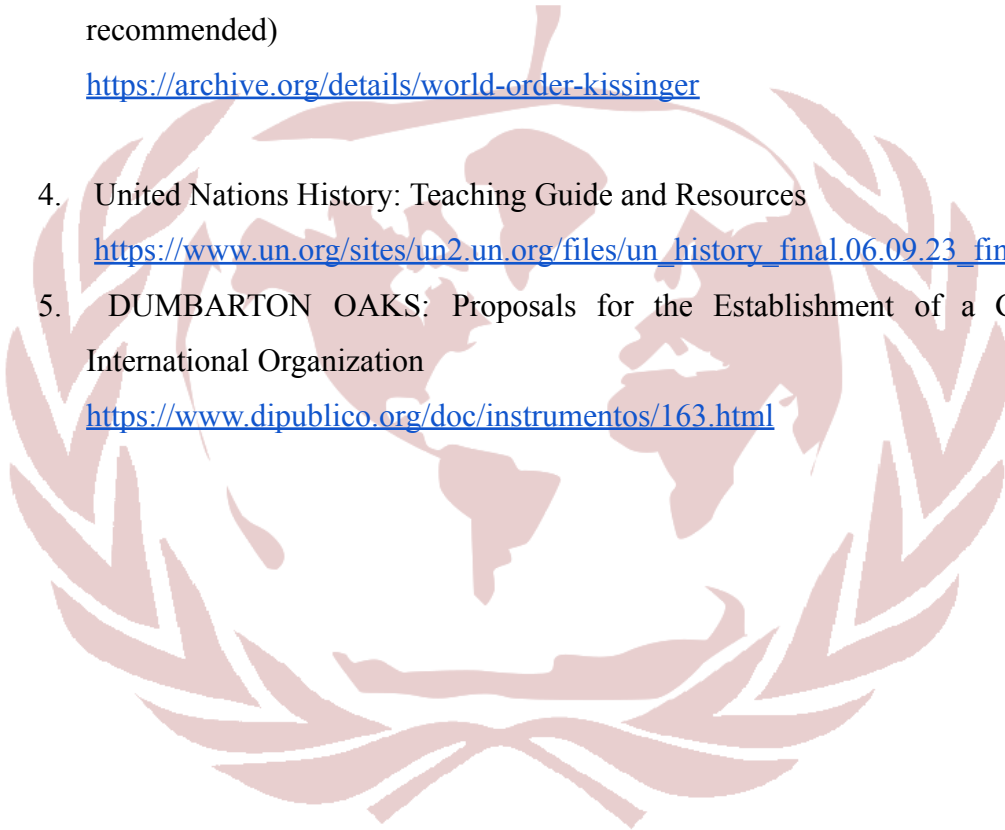
## **X. Questions to be addressed**

- How will UN resolutions be enforced?
- Should the UN have its own military or rely on member states?
- What should the process be for future changes to the UN Charter?
- What role should the UN play in global economic recovery
- Should the UN support independence movements in colonies?
- How should colonial territories be represented or protected?
- What should be the main goals of the UN
- How should the principle of national sovereignty be balanced with international intervention?
- What should the structure of the security council be?
- What should be the criteria for membership?
- How can legal problems between states be solved?



## **XI. Further Reading**

1. Covenant of the League of Nations  
<https://archive.org/details/covenantofleague07leag/page/4/mode/2up>
2. United Nations Charter  
<https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>
3. World Order by Henry Kissinger (reading the first 100 pages is highly recommended)  
<https://archive.org/details/world-order-kissinger>
4. United Nations History: Teaching Guide and Resources  
[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un\\_history\\_final.06.09.23\\_final.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_history_final.06.09.23_final.pdf)
5. DUMBARTON OAKS: Proposals for the Establishment of a General International Organization  
<https://www.dipublico.org/doc/instrumentos/163.html>



## **XII. References**

- ‘Concert of Europe (The)’ (Encyclopédie d’histoire numérique de l’Europe) <https://ehne.fr/en/encyclopedia/themes/international-relations/organizing-international-system/concert-europe> accessed 13 June 2025
- ‘Dumbarton Oaks Conference’ (Encyclopædia Britannica) <https://www.britannica.com/event/Dumbarton-Oaks-Conference> accessed 13 June 2025
- ‘History of the United Nation (United Nations)’ <https://www.un.org/node/44721> accessed 13 June 2025
- Kissinger H, World Order (Penguin Books 2015)
- ‘The Covenant of the League of Nations: League of Nations Union’ (Internet Archive, 1 January 1970) <https://archive.org/details/covenantofleague07leag/page/4/mode/2up> accessed 13 June 2025
- ‘The League of Nations’ (The United Nations Office at Geneva) <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/league-of-nations/overview> accessed 13 June 2025
- Wells, Anne Sharp (2014) Historical Dictionary of World War II: The War against Germany and Italy. Rowman & Littlefield