

Dear Participants,

This letter and the subsequent study guide are to direct the focus of your research to themes that are most pertinent to the debate we will be having over the course of two days at The Summit on War & Politics.. We hope you are able to make the most of them.

In the European Great Powers simulation, you will don the roles of the most powerful rulers of early modern Europe. You will have nearly complete control over your nation as you handle its domestic and foreign policy. Apart from managing your economy, and conducting diplomacy with other monarchs, you will also have control over your military. You will be able to enact policies in fields including but not restricted to royal marriages, espionage missions, warfare, laws, taxation, trade & production, technology, religion and colonization. While you may make full use of your powers as the Emperor, the Pope or even the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire you must stay within the confines of reality and historical accuracy.

It is important that you extensively study the period we will cover – 1477 to 1648. Both these years are vital to the shaping of early Modern Europe but as students of history (as as a participating in this simulation), you must not only be well researched about these two years but also of the prevailing themes and events between them.

On 5 January 1477, the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold died without a male heir. His only issue, Mary would inherit the rich provinces of the Low Countries. Heirs all across Europe desired her hand in marriage to acquire her great inheritance. While France wanted to marry into their traditional vassals, the House of Burgundy, Mary chose the Archduke of Austria as her partner. The Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick III married his son Maximilian I to the heiress to the Duchy of Burgundy in August 1477. This event would result in one of the longest

and most fierce rivalries of early modern Europe – between France and the Habsburg Dynasty. It would also elevate the House of Habsburg to the status of a great power and define European Great Power politics for centuries to come. Most alliances, rivalries, conflicts and wars would become branches of the larger Habsburg-French rivalry.

While the French and the Austrians were rivals for most of early modern Europe, it is important that you know that they were also allies for a good part of the Middle Ages. They also united a few times (under the guidance of the Pope) for short period to ensure their strategic interests. While it is important to keep in mind historical event and realities, we will not be expecting you to replicate them. You are required to think on your feet, and of history, as a process rather than a sequence of events. Above all else, you have the power of hindsight – you can decipher the correct from the incorrect as it turned out to be, back in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries. It is possible that French-Habsburg relations might not deteriorate much, it is possible that the threat of the Turks be counter, it is also possible that the Reformation not take place. All the important game-changing events in Europe (and the rest of the world) will be determined by the actions you take as individuals and as a whole.

Some of the important themes you must read up about include but are not restricted to the Holy Roman Empire and its dynamics, the Papacy and the Catholic Faith, the Reformation, the Eastern/Danubian Monarchies (Austria-Hungary, Poland, Bohemia and Croatia.), the Ottoman Turks and Islam, control of trade, colonization, early modern warfare, naval capacities, geographic/climatic conditions, terrain, marriage diplomacy and hereditarily claims, prevailing laws and customs, personal unions and vassalage, state administration and management of estates, and advent of new technology.

The simulation will be structured in a format more complex than your usual “specialized MUN committees”. We will have the simulation divided into formal and informal discussions (and thus the requirement for two of you). Unlike any other conference, these discussions will be held mostly, at the same time. To explain it in a simpler manner, with an example, while one of you may be sitting at the “High-Table” with other monarchs discussing the fate of the rapidly expanding Venetian Republic, the other could be present in the “back-room” securing an alliance with the French and the Papacy to launch the attack.

We will also have constant intervals where we may move forward in time to let you know of the consequences of your actions. Some of these maybe be (after the start in 1477), 1492 (colonization begins) or 1494 (the Italian Wars commence), up until 1648, which marks the end of the Thirty Years War and the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia. Of course, we may neither end up the way Europe ended up, nor end up that far. It is possible that our simulation of the European Great Powers takes us in a different direction, and/or makes us stop much earlier or later than 1648. While you understand these phenomena, you must also understand that your roles as kings/queens may change as soon you or another monarch acts in that direction. Please be prepared that your characters may die, (or better still be killed) or your entire country be wiped off the face of the planet. This may be because you could not produce enough soldiers or perhaps, in some cases you could not produce any heirs. Best of luck with both!

For an understanding of how the formal and informal debates will move, I must recommend to you a YouTube video and a video game. To get a rough understanding of how the formal debate, will be I would recommend that you watch the following clip from a series of BBC sketches, *The Nearly Complete and Utter History of Everything*: <http://bit.ly/1BQv2Pf> To understand the sort of nation-building and back-room *realpolitik* that will go on in the informal

debate I recommend Paradox Interactive's Eruopa Universalis IV. We strongly advise that you use original copies of the game, which we are more than willing to provide through Steam accounts. Europa Universalis does a near flawless job at representing most historical dynamics and events of the early modern period in Europe.

You may, as king/queen of your realm, feel free to communicate any person you think worthy of your words. You may contact anyone from your royal astrologers to conquistadors in the New World. You may also receive updates from your country that you may be required to act upon. The Executive Board will be at your service to help you execute your ideas; no matter how radical they are, as long as they seem feasible. You are a monarch of Europe after all; your wish will be our command. However, be warned that any failure to apply reason (as it was back in the early modern period, not your post-modernist 'liberal' reasoning) to your actions and thoughts could have drastic consequences. Use your powers with caution, and take moderated steps to ensure your survival. Remember, it is always better to stay shut and let them guess than to remove all doubt!

While you may not want to appear a fool, we recommend that you not come with the goal of appearing too intelligent either. As counter-intuitive as this may sound, do not aim for that best delegate trophy (not matter how beautiful it is) but aim for broader goals within the simulation – if you are Spain aim to conquer all of the New World, if you are France try to become the Holy Roman Emperor, If you are Russia, aim to eliminate the Ottomans, if you are the Pope try to establish God's Kingdom on Earth or if you are Venice try not selling everyone out. (hehe) All in all, aim for something bigger and better than merely some silverware; aim for the sky, or the moon or the stars (or perhaps for an empire over which the sun never sets).

Let me leave you with a secret. This conference, The Summit on War & Politics was an excuse to be able to simulate the simulation of which you will be a part. Don't tell this to other guys, but it is the truth. Neither is this statement meant to be disrespectful to the other councils nor is it supposed to make you feel more important, it is only to make you understand the responsibility on your shoulders while you are a part of it. We hope you learn and enjoy to the highest possible extents in the coming days. We have worked for this simulation for months and hope that the effort that has gone behind this simulation is reflected in some way in this simulation by the evening of the 6th of November.

I know that, by then many of you would have turned Protestant, (and that we will already have a heathen among us – the Ottomans) but I still believe that the following words spoken by Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont in 1095, will be apt to make an end to this letter and to summarize the purpose of this council (and the conference):

“Most beloved brethren, today is manifest in you what the Lord says in the Gospel, ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.’ Unless the Lord God had been present in your spirits, all of you would not have uttered the same cry. For, although the cry issued from numerous mouths, yet the origin of the cry was one. Therefore I say to you that God, who implanted this in your breasts, has drawn it forth from you. Let this then be your war-cry in combats, because this word is given to you by God. When an armed attack is made upon the enemy, let this one cry be raised by all the soldiers of God – Deus Vult, Deus Vult. [God wills it]”

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