

UCIMUN *2025*



Faith and Empire *Background Guide*

By: Nick Young



Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to the 33rd Annual High School Conference at UCIMUN! My name is Nick Young, and I will be your Director for this year's Historical Crisis Committee. I joined Model UN in my first year of high school and this will be my 6th year debating under this format. Model UN has taught me a new way to view the world around me and has challenged me to make a bigger impact as more global issues continue to arise. I have competed in 15 conferences throughout high school and helped my school run 3 of their conferences. It has made me very comfortable speaking in front of others and delving into political discussions. Here at UCI, I am a 2nd year student, majoring in Environmental Engineering, with the hopes of later double majoring in Political Science. I want to use these degrees to advance to graduate school and get my master's and Ph.D. in Climate Science and Policy. This would allow me to work for our government, influencing our climate policy and improving the global climate. Outside of MUN, I am involved around campus, whether through STEM clubs or leadership-building programs. I enjoy playing sports, watching movies, listening to music, and going on late-night adventures throughout Irvine.

To preface our committee, I will outline our two topics and then discuss various issues you will be expected to tackle throughout the two days of debate. We will be going in chronological order where Topic A will come first and then Topic B will proceed on the second day. In Topic A, we will be navigating the 14th century and its religious climate as massive changes occur throughout this period including the expansion of Islam throughout Asia and the Second Great Schism of the Catholic Church. We will be looking into the intricacies of these two religions and how they were able to set a foundation for themselves and their respective empires during this period. There will be alterations to historical events calling on each of you to prepare a position for your character that is flexible and able to respond to any political or religious issues or situations that may arise. In Topic B, we will see the Fall of Constantinople and the end of the Byzantine Empire. We will be navigating the post-conflict atmosphere where the societal and socioeconomic implications will be of the utmost importance. The political stability of Europe and Asia will be thrown for a loop and delegates will be expected to best adapt to these changes in whatever way suits their character.

As you participate in your research for your position papers, you will realize that some information you are looking for may be hard to come by. Some of the topics that this committee covers are indeed a bit niche, and you might have to do some digging around to find the relevant facts. If you are having a lot of trouble, I hope this topic synopsis can be a resource that you can fall back on, since it contains most of the information you will need for the committee. Go in depth and look at what your character's background is and find ways to leverage their own beliefs or connections to make history go the way you'd like! Enjoy researching, making historical shockwaves, and making history better or in any way you deem fit!

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Topic A: Religious Turmoil Within the Middle Ages

Introduction

In 1378, the Second Great Schism of the Catholic Church began. This was the primary event that allowed for the Protestant Reformation in 1517 and widespread criticism of the Catholic Church throughout Europe. This was inevitable after the first Great Schism in the late 11th century when the Eastern Orthodox Church was founded and the grasp the Catholic Church had on Europe was officially challenged. This had been in the works since around 300 AD when the pope's rule was continuously being challenged by different rights or orders of the Catholic church. Ecumenical councils, or the councils of the leaders of the church including, bishops, cardinals, and the pope, had become increasingly more divided leading to the official split of the Catholic church.

The Second Great Schism began after the election of two popes, creating two papacies, and widespread division throughout the Catholic Church in Europe. With the church being the political cornerstone of Rome and the majority of the continent dependent on its direction, having two different clashing opinions in power led to a loss in legitimacy. This led to various councils and meetings of the nobles, priests, bishops, archbishops, and Cardinals in Rome to work out the differences in opinion and once again solidify the church's power. With no solution found quickly, leaders of the church started to reach out to monarchs around Europe to gain leverage for their stance and arguments. This led to the kings of France and Spain getting involved in the election and legitimizing of the Church.

After over 30 years of quarreling and electing different members of the clergy to the position of Pope, in 1417, Pope Martin V was elected ending the Schism of the Catholic church



and simultaneously restoring order to the Catholic church and the large majority of the political atmosphere in Europe. This was not long-lived as countless issues preceded the election of Pope Martin V. The Church had survived a second schism but it wasn't as serious as the first. With history holding an entire split of the Catholic Church, which had solidified power after almost a century in Europe, was once again being shaken and tested. The upcoming description in this synopsis will dive deeper into the conferences and actual councils of clergy and nobles that led to the diffusion of the Schism, and what issues stayed after the dust had settled.

Simultaneously, the Mongols had torn through Central Asia and officially ended the Abbasid Caliphate in 1258 AD. The once powerful Islamic state was destroyed and slowly divided itself into many different empires emerging throughout the territories of modern-day Iraq and Syria. In the early 1300s, there was one that began to stand out as the driving force in the Islamic world which came to be known as the Ottoman Empire, founded by Osman I and the Ottoman Dynasty who would come to control the Western portion of Asia Minor. They began to





dominate the region with their nomadic tendencies after being driven out of the heart of Asia Minor by the Mongols in the previous century.

They soon would lay claim to land belonging to the Byzantine Empire and other strong established city-states throughout Asia Minor and portions of Europe proving their abilities to gain influence and land swiftly. Their military tactics were impeccable and united in faith, they were successful in educating their people and bringing about fantastic scholars of the Middle Ages. This empire became an anomaly because of how fast they were able to recover from the Mongols ravaging all they had previously built. The empire would survive for a total of 600 years before disbanding showing the true power of their religion, political strategies, and military strength proving them to be a historical force to be reckoned with.

Description

Avignon or Rome?

In March of 1378, Pope Gregory XI died leading to a successor for the papacy to be elected as soon as possible. The church needed a leader and the nobles of Rome were wasting no time as they frantically searched for someone to take the position. This election was more important than previous elections for the papacy because it would be the election that would determine the permanent residency of the pope. The pontiff would reside in either Avignon or Rome, leading to the political shift in power for whichever nation laid claim to the position. In recent history during the 14th century, the popes were flocking from France and the Romans were hungry for an Italian pontiff to once again lay claim to power in the Catholic Church. This



led to the official term “schism” being used to classify this point in time as the Church was split over where the papacy would land and who would become the next Pope.

As the struggles continued in France and Italy, the French church leaders elected Archbishop Bari to be the next Pope of the Catholic Church. They did this in a swift attempt to please the Roman people who were yearning for the papacy to return to Rome after almost a century of the pontiff residing in the mountains of France. He took the name of Pope Urban VI and assumed his role back in the city of Rome. It seemed as though all was well in the Catholic Church with the papacy being reestablished and retiring back to Rome seemingly solidifying the residency of the Pope in Italy, until Pope Urban VI started to make drastic changes the clergy did not foresee. Pope Urban quickly realized rumblings and threats were coming from the French cardinals who so heavily desired to have a French pontiff who also lived in France. The cardinals who elected him were crumbling under the pressure coming from the people and began to make plans to legitimize his rule. He quickly made alterations to how they could be treated by nobles and lay people within Europe leading to disgruntled feelings from his council. The cardinals who were used to being treated as royalty by the nobles of society were now being blocked from any sort of special treatment due to Pope Urban’s decree.

This began the constant battle for control between the Pope and the cardinals who had found him to be the answer to all their problems. The cardinals only let a few months pass before secretly meeting and conspiring to take Pope Urban out of the position as Pope and elect someone else who would be able to restore their power. The cardinals soon made an official statement regarding the rule of Pope Urban VI and stated he could not claim the papacy as the cardinals were rushed and heavily influenced by the angry Roman supporters swaying their



judgment to that of the crowd rather than their own beliefs. Even with the backing of prominent religious figures such as Saint Catherine of Siena, Pope Urban was excommunicated and officially lost his title as the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church.

This led to a militant who had previously been in charge of the papal guard to be elected as Pope who took the name of Pope Clement VII. He began to abuse the power of the papacy and was fully supported by the King of France and various other Dukes throughout the French countryside. The main goal became dethroning the Italian pontiff who still had widespread support throughout Italy and Rome to solidify the home of the Pope as the French city of Avignon, thereby beginning the 40 Western Schism of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Scramble for the Papacy

The continent of Europe was now divided based on who the true and rightful Pope of the Roman Catholic Church was. The English, Italians, Germans, and the people of Flanders were all in favor of Pope Urban VI who they felt had been wrongfully removed from his position. They were also adamant about the fact his excommunication was invalid due to it being done by those who had justly elected him into the position and he had done no action worthy of such a punishment. On the other hand, the people of France, Spain, Scotland, and the other areas around France were in favor of this new Pope and political figure, Clement VII. This reality created the idea of dual popes, who would coexist and rule their respective portions of the continent and who were in support of their respective beliefs and ideals.

The European religious climate became the battle between the two popes and one of them would be able to garner more support than the other therefore fully legitimizing their claim to the



papacy over the others. They launched full-scale political campaigns and rallied for the leaders of the empires and nations that backed them to support them fully in their endeavors to bring the church back to their respective states.

Not long after the beginning of the Schism, both Pope Urban VI and Pope Clement VII passed away leading to their successors taking their place on the campaign trail to bring the papacy back to one solidified church. Pope Boniface IX became the pope to replace Urban VI and Pope Benedict XIII succeeded Pope Clement VII. This quickly became a cycle as the Popes continued to pass away just to be replaced by the next person in line who would be able to continue the efforts to bring the rule to France or Italy. This continued until the reign of Pope Innocent VII took power for the Roman side. Pope Benedict sent an army to Rome and excommunicated Pope Innocent to end the stalemate between the two clashing papacies. Pope Innocent soon died, was replaced by Pope Gregory XII and the idea of three popes was then introduced.

Councils Convene

After the death of Pope Innocent VII and the beginning of the reign of Pope Gregory, the two sides and their support systems in Avignon and Rome decided it was time to take to council and discuss the best course of action for the future of the church and the office of the pope. When the idea of both Pope Gregory and Pope Benedict resigning was declined, in 1409, the parties met in Pisa for what became known as the Council of Pisa which was the primary attempt to dissolve this 30-year conflict of 2 different Popes in the same continent under the same church.



The Council of Pisa began with the conclave of cardinals discussing the course of action and meeting nothing but deadlock for 15 sessions of their convening. They were in a dead stalemate until 24 cardinals out of the almost 500 clergy members who had met decided they were going to go against the idea of the two current Popes and elect a separate Pope to unite the entire church while completely forgoing the two opposing councils. Even though no Pope had died, they saw fit to find someone else to take the seat as the official Pope of the Catholic Church. They decided that Pope Alexander V would become the next Pope of the Catholic Church who would then oversee the continuation of the Council of Pisa until its natural end.

By the end of the council, all of the popes had been legitimized and there was no clear leader in the end. Pope Gregory, Pope Alexander, and Pope Benedict were all seen as legitimate representatives of the office of the Pope under canon law. The Council of Pisa had proven to be almost useless in solving the problem and rather added more issues for the cardinals to solve. Not long after his election, Pope Alexander V would pass on leaving Pope John XXIII to take his place as the new shining member of the papal trio. Pope Gregory was quickly losing support heading into the beginning of the second and final council of the Second Great Schism.



Something New for Islam

It all began in the Anatolian Peninsula where the Ottomans began their rise.



This was an area where modern-day Turkey is located and provided a connection between the continents Europe and Asia. In 1280 AD, these lands were controlled by the nearby Byzantine Empire, but they were far from the permanent rulers of these territories. The Byzantine Empire was showing noticeable cracks within its ranks and in the end, the empire was knocking at the door. Osman I the first ruler of the Ottoman Empire, was able to take control of the neighboring territories through his keen political agenda and military tactics involving the addition of mercenaries from throughout the region who ensured victory for the Ottomans. With the promise of gold and other prizes, mercenaries were constantly flocking to the call of the Ottomans, as Osman quickly gathered an impressive win rate in any battle or skirmish he fought.

With thousands of soldiers and hundreds of mercenaries at Osman's disposal, the Ottoman Empire was able to grow at a rate the Byzantines couldn't keep up with. After being



cemented in their Islamic faith by their predecessors of the Abbasid Caliphate, the nomadic Muslims were making big changes to the global political climate. The mass conversion taking place in modern-day Turkey enabled most of the territories the Ottomans were taking control of to submit to the rule of Osman, as they agreed with the primary beliefs and values of their rulers. The Ottoman Empire would soon solidify itself as a sultanate that was ruled by a religious king who was also the primary warrior leading the armies to gain territory.

The New Threat

As the Ottomans continued to attack and occupy lands in the region of Anatolia, they were viewed as a formidable opponent for the weakening Byzantine Empire who had seemed to have an iron grip on these lands for centuries. The Byzantine Empire was being turned into fragments politically and a decentralization of power. Ottomans also united under their religion making their conquests into these Christian lands seen as holy wars. They were laying claim to land that wasn't ruled or occupied by Muslims leading to them being eligible for war. This was what distinguished them from the Byzantine Empire which was having the exact opposite issue at this point.

With holy war being the motto of this emerging military powerhouse, all of the mercenaries from the region were attracted to this philosophy and allowed manpower to skyrocket for all the battles they were participating in. The constant requirement alongside the addition of the Royal Janissaries, the standing army the Ottoman Empire was raising and training enabled warfare to constantly be waged in areas where the Byzantines were weak and couldn't protect themselves. Janissaries were mostly the Christian youth, through the Devshirme system, as the Ottomans would forcibly put them into the army to not only solidify the new religion in



the lives of the young people but to turn their new subjects to use allowing for a constant positive feedback loop.

Expansion into Byzantium

After the passing of Osman I, the Ottoman Empire was headed by Orhan I, the son of Osman, inheriting the rule of the rapidly expanding Muslim empire. Under his rule, they were able to make their first steps into Europe and gained control of Gallipoli, which was a stronghold imperative to the needs of the Balkan kingdoms. Under his reign, they also began to reach out to the weakened leadership of the Byzantine Empire. At the time, Queen Theodora and her father Emperor John VI, began political relations with the young leader of the Ottoman Empire. They came to an agreement which led to Theodora marrying Orhan I. Now that Orhan was married to the princess of the Byzantine Empire, the Ottomans were free to intervene in any of the Byzantine relations. With this new power structure, the Ottomans not only had influence politically but had more reason to bring their growing armies into Europe and control the lands occupied by the Byzantine Empire which had seemingly run out of options. Orhan's marriage undermined all centralized power of the Byzantine Empire and this was a complete disaster for what was previously the strongest power in the world. The Byzantines were losing their political influence to the Ottomans who had just banded together not even 100 years ago and were now steamrolling anything in sight.

This new development enabled the Ottomans to move onto the Balkan regions which they had previously weakened through their capture of Gallipoli. Under the command of Murad I, the new leader of the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman armies were easily able to defeat the Balkan troops and gain cities such as Adrianople which would soon behold as the new capital of



the powerhouse that was the Ottoman Empire. From here, the Ottomans would go on to defeat the Bulgarian kingdoms, and soon after the Serbians. They were seemingly unstoppable as they continued their conquest throughout the Balkans and towards the lands of Kosovo. Once they reached Kosovo, they took the biggest hit the empire had ever seen, with the death of their leader Murad I in battle. This was still not enough to defeat the Janissaries as they went on to win the Battle of Kosovo in 1389.

The First Challenges to Expansion

After the death of Murad I and the Battle of Kosovo, Bayezid I became the new emperor of the Ottomans and faced their first challenges in their expansive endeavors. He was looking to centralize power in both the Balkans and back in Anatolia. This proved to be the first difficulty with how spread out the balance of power was but he was still able to coordinate conquests farther into the Balkans. Under his command, the army of Janissaries conquered the lands of Hungary. He also conducted the first sieges of Constantinople in the years 1394-1402. This constant siege didn't prove to be successful with the constant aid from around Europe coming to help the Byzantine capital stand tall. Despite the constant onslaught of the Ottomans, they were able to defend the capital despite losses at Necropolis essentially guaranteeing Ottoman dominance over the entire Balkan region.

Committee Begins

We shall begin the committee in 1417. The second council of the Second Great Schism of the Catholic Church will be concluding. All 3 of the popes have either resigned or been excommunicated from the church leaving them in a stable position for now. Pope Martin V has



just been unanimously and peacefully elected into the office of the Pope and shall assume power over the Catholic Church. All seems to be at peace on the continent of Europe, but there are rumblings still throughout the countryside about a possible reformation and various other dangers to the church and its power. We will now shift our gaze onto the continent of Asia and see how far Islam has been able to come while Christianity struggles and its hopes to stay dominant dwindle.

As for the Ottomans, Mehmed I had just unified the Ottomans as their religious influence expanded out over the Balkan regions. Even with their 7 years of turmoil to begin the 15th century, they are looking as strong as ever. Mehmed seems as ambitious as any ruler and is ready to attack at a moment's notice. His sights seem to once again be set on the capital of the Byzantine Empire to wipe out their opponents for good. Islam, the driving force of this empire, is unifying them all under their strong leader who is ready to continue his conquest.

Bloc Positions

European Kingdoms and Empires: As the Catholic Church continues to struggle, European Kingdoms must find a common ground and solidify themselves before it is too late. They must focus on their inner turmoil and not let it boil out onto the world stage allowing for an opportunity to look west for the growing opposition to the south of them in Asia. They must strengthen their political and military ties as the empires fall apart under the religion they were once all united under. They must find a solution to these religious and political issues to have any hope for the future of their territories.



Asian Kingdoms and Empires: As the Ottoman Empire begins to expand its influence other Asian kingdoms and states must explore their political future with a giant growing among them. They must weigh in on the long term implications of having a neighboring empire growing on the foundation of Islam's teachings. Will they join them? Help them? Revolt against them? Some have had no choice as the Ottomans have already claimed their land and others have joined the cause under the teachings of Islam. It is up to the rest to decide as the politics are further being driven by religion and the giant in the region for centuries is beginning to crack for the 2nd time.

Neutral Parties: As the Catholic Church continues with its issues and the Islamic World is growing in influence, it is time for those without a strong connection to religion weigh in on their own politics and beliefs. Aiding the Catholic empires and kingdoms could lead to an amazing future as they have been the strongest in the most recent world history, or they could gamble on the Islamic World with its rapid growth to help begin something new. They have the opportunity to make the biggest changes and shake up world history. They must choose wisely as their own politics and motives will be on the line. Some will play it safe, others will risk it, and only history can decide which is the right choice.

Committee Goals

- ❖ Explore the social and political conditions of the expansion era, and the policy debates surrounding centralizations of government and battles for religious control.



- ❖ Analyze the reasoning for expansion and religious influence and observe how your characters can manipulate these two key factors to determine the future of the Ottoman and Byzantine empires.
- ❖ Understand the importance of religion in this period and what it means for the rest of history.
- ❖ Explore the challenges of expansion and how to create a government that functions under core ideals while still battling for power.

Research Questions

- ❖ Who were the Ottomans and what political, religious, and societal beliefs did they hold? How were they so successful at integrating Islam into their lifestyle and into the lives of those they were ruling?
- ❖ How does the Catholic church normally function in terms of its leadership and decision-making? Why were the actions of the Second Great Schism so unprecedented and how did they differ from the previous centuries of the Church?
- ❖ Why was the Byzantine Empire failing? Who were its allies and what other nations/empires/city-states were reliant on its success?
- ❖ What were the international relations between European and Asian empires in the 14th and 15th centuries? Who was trading with each other? Who was inventing new technologies that benefitted either continent?
- ❖ Was there disease or any other outside threat to the expansion and success of the empires of this time?



- ❖ Is there any major event that will soon come in history that will change everything? Is there one moment where the world pauses and the next thing you know everything is different?



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Topic B: The Fall of Constantinople

Introduction

At the beginning of the Late Middle Ages, in May of 1453, the walls of Constantinople fell. What had previously been impossible, Mehmed II, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire had achieved. The Byzantine Empire was breathing its last breath, as the Ottomans began to siege the capital city in late March. After nearly 60 days at the gates of the city, the walls began to fall. Using the new advanced technology, known as the cannon, Mehmed, was able to breach the thick stone walls of the city he had been able to surround.

Even with the valiant efforts of the Byzantine Emperor, Constantine XI with his 7,000 men, foreign mercenaries, and other commanders from allies throughout Europe, they were outnumbered 10 to 1. The Ottomans had been raising an army for over 100 years, with the constant influx of fighters from all the lands they had passed through while they conquered the Balkans and Anatolia. Constantine died in Constantinople during the siege as he refused to flee the capital of his empire. Quickly after the walls fell, Mehmed the Conqueror called for a ceasefire, as the Byzantines had been easily beaten.

Once victory was ensured, Mehmed boasted his victory as the capital of the Ottoman Empire was relocated to the city of Constantinople. During this transformation, he began to lay claim to the line of the previous Roman emperors. He renamed the city of Constantinople as Istanbul and it would soon grow into a cultural center for the coming generations of Ottomans. The change that proved to be the greatest was the transformation of the most iconic piece of architecture in Constantinople, the Hagia Sophia. What was previously the crown jewel of the city, the massive church that could be seen from hundreds of miles away was turned into a



mosque. This message showed that Islam had come to power and their holy war against the non-Christian lands had been a success.

Without a true Roman heir, there were new kids in town and they were the Ottomans. Generations of Roman rule were over and the era of the Ottomans was just beginning. They would be around for another five centuries in the same place showing how powerful and successful an empire centered around Islam could be.

Description

What's Next for the Ottomans?

With the Ottomans now gaining control of an abundance of land, previously occupied by the Byzantine rulers, they had to figure out the specifics of ruling over their territories. With the quick consolidation of power in Istanbul, they would need to further explore the nuances of ruling a large empire. Officials began to realize how diverse their populace had become. With now controlling lands in Anatolia, the Balkans, and the former lands of Byzantium, they would have to accommodate those who practiced other religions and cultures. Although they had waged a holy war, attempting to convert the hundreds of thousands of new subjects to Islam wasn't a feasible strategy. If they attempted to do so, they would have a rebellion on their hands only causing a handful of problems for the newly established territories further into Europe. In terms of law for the empire, they resorted to half Sharia law and half customary law which incorporates their previous laws under their religion of Islam, with the laws that the lands were previously governed on. This left familiarity with the people of the Balkans and Constantinople allowing for a smoother transition of power to the Ottomans.



Once the expansion had slowed down, the Ottomans delved further into the cultural aspects of their empire. They began to make technological advancements in architecture and culture proving to have sophistication in the arts. Scholars and philosophers emerged from the empire as they began to settle down and invest in the lands they had just acquired. This also led to a period of economic growth with the cities they had conquered being transformed into trade outposts and opportunities for the empire to connect to different areas of the world they previously didn't have access to. With the lands of the modern-day Middle East and Turkey being rich in precious metals and spices, they were able to establish themselves as a trading hub within a mere few years. These developments developed into worthwhile choices for the empire as a new influx of money allowed for more military campaigns and changes in government. More oil was just being added to the tank as the Ottomans continued to fuel the engine of their empire.

How is Europe Reacting?

The immediate response from the rest of the European states involved severe panic and alarm about their statehood and religion. Witnessing the Byzantine Empire fall was far from good for the rest of Europe as they began to feel vulnerable to the encroaching Ottomans. An immediate response came from Pope Nicholas V, as he and the other church leaders saw the continuing expansion as a possible end to Christendom. They called upon the leaders of Europe to unite together under the Catholic faith to reclaim the territory that had been taken from them to restore Christianity to those lands. The call went out across Europe with the primary generators of military power being the Kingdom of Poland and Hungary. With these troops



coming together it seemed as though there was a glimmer of hope for a military threat to the growing Ottoman Empire. As the months went on, organizations from these kingdoms dwindled leading to the call for military efforts to fail without any true action taken. Without any clear political power in Europe to unite around, the rest of Europe would continue to prepare to fend off any oncoming onslaught from the Ottomans.

With a military campaign falling through, the Eastern Orthodox Church saw this as an opportunity to once again unite with the Catholic West. The Eastern Church saw the weakness of Constantinople and wanted to work with the Church they had just separated from. This caused even more problems for the rest of Europe as they began to have religious turmoil within the different branches of Christianity. In a moment where they needed to once again unite, they became more divided than ever leading to issues for those who were under Ottoman rule. As the Ottomans began to oppress the Eastern Orthodox under their rule, the church leadership was desperate to end the struggle. This led to even more dialogue between the two churches with little to no clear answers resulting and anger ensuing.

Even with these religious issues, Italian city-states, housing the Pope and many of Catholicism's most powerful leaders, didn't hesitate to fortify their cities. They urged the rest of the predominately Catholic regions of Europe to do the same. Hungary wasted no time in doing the same as they anticipated the Ottomans to continue to display their power and continue their conquest further into Europe. With the absence of a predominant power in Europe, smaller states were able to quickly emerge and distinguish themselves which also provided hope to stop the advancing and rapidly expanding Ottomans. Polish and Lithuanian states began to grow in



political and economic power proving a bright future ahead for Europe despite the actions of the neighboring Ottomans.

Possibly the largest threat to Europe was the fact that trade had been compromised by Ottoman expansion into Constantinople. The rest of Europe no longer had access to trade routes they had been able to benefit from for centuries. Without the normal influx of resources and money flowing into the states, they were faced with various difficulties and disadvantages if the Ottomans were to pose any further threats. This prompted European technology to be enhanced as the European powers began to send out explorers on ships that were being developed. An age of Exploration had been born as a result of these changes leading to even more monetary benefits heading toward Europe.

European Hope Isn't Lost

On the horizon, is the world's most prosperous period. The Renaissance! The Renaissance taking place between the 14th and 17th centuries was just beginning to ramp up showing new art, technology, and a surge of Classical values hitting the world. There was a revival for the beauty of human beings and life proving to be very powerful for Italy and France. The outpouring of knowledge and culture into European powers proved to be rejuvenating and leveraged them ahead of their shortcomings in trying to defend themselves against their aggressive and powerful neighbors. This period allowed them to acquire wealth in different ways and continue to display their wealth, power, culture, and religion despite the looming threat from nearby. The public was heavily skewed against the Ottomans across Europe using all the aforementioned fruits of the Renaissance. With public opinion on their side, money, and



increasing approval, the Ottomans were going to have far from an easy time if they wanted to continue to expand into Europe.

Committee Begins

We shall begin in 1455, 2 years after the fall of Constantinople, providing enough time for the Ottomans to gain control of the city and establish it as their new capital, Istanbul. Any of the directives you have passed on the previous day will most definitely still apply. You have the freedom to do as you please with these events, within the realm of possibility of course. The Ottomans are looking strong, Europe is looking weak, but not all hope is lost for them. You can pick a side, stay neutral, or play both! It is up to you to change the course of history. There are rumblings of another big issue for the Catholic church, expansion into different areas of the globe as European powers struggle to fight with the Ottomans, and the possibility of colonies popping up all over the world.

It is up to you to decide what happens and how the world will deal with it! Be prepared for anything to be thrown at you and your peers. History is crazy, yet predictable. Can't wait to see you all in Istanbul determining the future!

Bloc Positions

European Kingdoms: As the Ottomans continue to move into the Byzantine Empire and conquer the strongest cities in recent history, European kingdoms have only one option and that is to defend themselves. It is up to the kingdoms of Poland, France, Britain, and others in Europe to either band together to fight back against the strong Ottoman powers, join them, or decide to



remain neutral and not engage in any warfare. There might not be much of a choice as the Ottomans have a desire for expansion and the basis of their expansion is mostly religion. With the majority of European kingdoms and empires in this time period being very centered in their faith, this would be another motive to defend their territory and land especially as the Ottomans move forward on the basis of Islam.

Asian Kingdoms & Empires: The Ottomans are proving to be quite successful in their push forward into European territories and lands. Any support other Asian kingdoms and empires can provide have proven to be beneficial to the overall cause. They have some cause for concern about their own lands, trade interests, and cultural practices but overall support and peace with the Ottomans has been in their best interest. A continuing partnership in terms of supplies and information for the growing Ottoman army has also proven to make good allies for many Asian territories.

Neutral Parties: Historical figures with no direct allegiance or motive have freedom to flow between the different sides of this conflict and forward their own personal interests as they wish. Whichever side of the conflict they feel would be better they are free to join making them not necessarily neutral but not bound to one side. These parties include those who are geographically distant from the invasion of Constantinople or may not possess military power or resources that would prove directly beneficial to either side.



Committee Goals

- ❖ Understand the developments and intricacies of cultural expansion and religious changes during the period and how they have influenced the political structure of different empires/states.
- ❖ Notice the future implications of actions and choices made by military and political leaders, leading to constant turmoil.
- ❖ Explore how history can be predictable by interacting with the different updates and alterations that are decided on by crisis staff to make this experience as immersive and fun as possible.

Research Questions

- ❖ What is going to be happening in the coming 50 years? What about the next century? Knowing what has already happened, how can you prepare for it with your character's own experiences during the time period?
- ❖ Look back! What happened before the Second Great Schism, Islamic Expansion, and the Fall of Constantinople? What wasn't mentioned in the background guide that shook up Europe and Asia? **Very important!!!!**
- ❖ What diplomatic strategies were used during the period? What strategies are being used now? How are countries banding together to fight someone they see as threatening?
- ❖ What drives expansion? Why does an empire want to gather more land and what allows them to be so successful for extended periods?



- ❖ How can your character shake up history? What in their skill set can be a defining advantage to the Ottomans, Europeans, or another global power to shift the course of history?



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