

GEC Model United Nations

League of Nations
Disarmament Conference
1933 - 1934



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Letters from the Chairs

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the League of Nations of GECMUN V! My name is Seunghoon Lee, a junior from North London Collegiate School Jeju. I will be serving as your chair for the conference. In the League of Nations, we will go back to the 1930s, a time period when a huge threat was impending and a short-lived international peace started to collapse.

GECMUN is very special to me not only because I started my MUN experience in GECMUN II, but also because it made me get into the world of Model United Nations. If not for GECMUN, I would never have been able to push myself to the position of the chair, win those big awards, and become a leader of the school's MUN club.

You may be frightened because this is your first MUN conference, or overconfident because this is your tenth time serving as a delegate. However, no matter how experienced you are or how good you are, the important part is that you challenge yourself. If you do a thorough preparation prior to the conference, speak up in every session, and fully engage yourself in the debate, you will be the most successful among all delegates. The chairs are ready to help you at any times. If you have any concern, difficulty, or problem regarding the conference, please feel free to contact my charing partners or myself (shoonlee20@pupils.nlcsjeju.kr).

I look forward to meeting all of you!

Regards,
Seunghoon Lee

Greetings honourable delegates,

I am Hannah Seo from North London Collegiate School Jeju who will be serving as co-chairs as the League of nations at GECMUN V. This GECMUN V is very meaningful to me as it is my second chairing but last chairing at GECMUN. GECMUN was my first MUN as a delegate two years ago, first MUN at UNSC as a chair a year ago and GECMUN V is my finale of my high school MUN.

Throughout the conference, we will guide the discussion about the Disarmament Conference 1933-34. You will mainly be discussing the position of Germany with respect to their disarmament as a consequence of the treaty of Versailles. We hope to encourage active debate regarding this historically important issue between delegates and are confident that an effective resolution will be determined.

Since the League of Nations is a starting point of the most powerful committee in the world, the United Nations, this committee is surely a significant committee to deal and judge historical issues. I expect you to come with 'creative' ideas from 'productive' research for this two days of conference.

If you have any questions about our committee or issues, feel free to contact either my chairing partners or myself (hwseo19@pupils@nlcsjeju.kr). I am looking forward to meeting you and having a meaningful conference.

Kind regards,
Hannah Seo

Dear delegates,

As a student in NLCS Jeju who has been involved in different committees of GECMUN for the previous 3 years, I know how intimidating Model UN can be. Many of you will be new to MUN, and many of you may find yourself wondering who you are, where you are, and what you're doing in the midst of a heated debate. While I will be trying my best to help you all in this conference, I must also stress that it will be you that will make the choice whether to speak, and you who'll ultimately determine your nation's stance.

In this conference for disarmament, you may want to consider the factors we have given you in the 'questions to consider' section along with your nation's stance to make a choice on what you're going to do, and who you may want to meet. Your nation may have the same aims as every other nation, but may take a different approach to get there.

If there's one thing I have learnt over my many conferences, it's that it never hurts to try and take a risk in MUN. You never know when you might come up with something brilliant that will boost your position, and even if you don't, it will still be much better than wasting a day by sitting on a desk doing nothing.

Always remember that there will be a 100% chance of losing your self determination if you do not speak up.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at jhwankim20@pupils.nlcsjeju.kr or one of us chairs.

Jihwan Kim

Introduction

The League of Nations was established in 1919, following the fourteen points raised by Woodrow Wilson in the 1919 Versailles Settlement. By tackling different social and humanitarian issues, and settling down various territorial disputes, the League had promoted various approaches and attempts to maintain collective security until the outbreak of the Second World War.

The absence of the major powers, however, limited the activities of the league to a great extent. Without the United States and Soviet Union, the league was powerless in forcing strong military sanctions. Because strong military actions were crucial to halt the aggressors, the League of Nations was powerless in dealing with strong aggressors that arose in the 1930s. The outbreak of the Second World War revealed the failure of the league.

Although unsuccessful, the LON is meaningful to World History because it was the very first form of an intergovernmental organization. It acted as a guidance for the United Nations to abide by, and provided hope to the international society that collective security can be reached if nations cooperate.

Definition of Key Terms

TREATY OF VERSAILLES

A peace treaty signed between the Triple Entente (Great Britain, France, USA) in 1919 Paris Conference following the First World War (1914-18). Germany was forced to pay severe reparations.

MAIN

An acronym used to refer to the causes of the first world war, which included Militarism - the idea that a stronger military was good, Alliances - the idea that nations would help each other if one was invaded, Imperialism - the idea that colonies were a symbol of strength, and Nationalism - simply the idea of people having a strong identity about their origin country.

SELF DETERMINATION

The idea that the people of each nation have the choice to determine their own destiny.

LEBENSRAUM

The German term for 'living space'-- a Nazi foreign policy to acquire living space for the German people. This term was used to the Nazi regime's aim to gain land in the east.

APPEASEMENT

The act of making political or material concessions or sacrifices towards an aggressive power to avoid conflict.

CONTAINMENT

The action of keeping a hostile nation or an ideal (usually a social system in this context) from spreading by placing a limit in its boundaries.

Historical Background

The Conference

The League of Nations was an international, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, created after the First World War to provide a forum for resolving international disputes. It was the first international organization which was the first international organization whose principal mission was to maintain world peace. It was founded on 10th January 1920 as the result of the Peace Conference. Though it is first proposed by President Woodrow Wilson as part of his Fourteen points for an equitable peace in Europe, the United States never became a member. Its primary goals as stated in its Covenant, included preventing war through collective security and disarmament and settling international disputes through negotiation and arbitration.

The Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments of 1932-34 was a failed effort by member states of the League of Nations, together with the United States to actualize the ideology of disarmament which took place in Geneva in 1934. In this conference, Germany immediately demanded to be allowed 'military equality' for it would leave. The French were equally insistent that German military inferiority was their only insurance from future conflict as serious as they had endured in the First World War. Britain and the U.S. were unprepared to offer the additional security commitments that France requested in exchange for limitation of French armament. After 10 months of negotiations, France, Britain and Italy announced, Germany and other states disarmed by the Treaty of Versailles should be insured equality in a system which gives security to all nations.

The World

The years 1933-4 marked a significant shift in world affairs. The Wall Street Crash of 1929 followed by the Great Depression in America was now influencing the entire world. The European economy, largely dependent on American loans, collapsed together with that of America. A serious level of economic depression made the member nations of the League to only focus on their own domestic affairs-- this resulted in the weakness of the League. States could never achieve collective security in this occasion; therefore, the League was becoming powerless.

In Germany, Adolf Hitler rose to power in January 1933, ending more than thirteen years of political turmoil in the weak Weimar Republic. Hitler started to run an authoritarian and totalitarian state-- The Third Reich or Nazi Germany-- under his aim to revoke the Treaty of Versailles, acquire living space for Germans, and unite all German people into a single Reich. By using the Reichstag fire as an excuse of blaming the communists, Hitler passed the Enabling Act in March 1933, Hitler was able to position himself above the law and the Reichstag so that he could gain more authority.

While he consolidated his power domestically, Hitler was slowly increasing his influence in the international society. Hitler openly criticized the Treaty of Versailles and, at the same time, drove for expansion as he adopted the policy of lebensraum: acquiring living space for Germans. To the allied powers and member states of the LON, Germany acting against the TOV was a challenge to the authority of the League and a conspicuous threat to themselves. Germany was secretly conducting rearmament and planning the annexation of the Eastern frontier-- this was an international threat and a priority for the League to solve.

Another threat to the league was Japan. At the start of the 1930s, Japan experienced a serious economic downturn due to the impact of the Great Depression and its economic policy. To save itself from such a serious economic depression, Japan needed a new proportion of land and that was China. In September 1931, Japanese soldiers claimed that the Manchurian railroad Japan controlled was sabotaged by Chinese soldiers. Japan used this excuse to attack and invade Manchuria in February 1932. As Japan invaded Shanghai in 1932, China appealed to the LON. The league decided that Japan should leave, but it failed to stop Japan because Japan left the league.

Soviet Union was steadily growing its influence during the period. It maintained a complicated relationship with Britain and France: Although Hitler was a threat, the allied powers ended up being lenient upon Hitler to act as a barrier against communism. There was no visible conflict or clash between the Soviets and the allied powers, but underlying tensions were present. Stalin encouraged the communist parties all around the world to oppose and eliminate other left wing groups, including political parties and labor unions. By initiating the Popular Front Program in 1934, Stalin strictly opposed the fascist regimes.

In the 1930s, it became conspicuous that the league was not able to effectively deal with aggressors; it was failing. As dominant powers of the league, Britain and France were having a series of domestic issues so that they were barely able to consider collective security and the works of the league. With the absence of the two strong powers, United States and Soviet Union, the league was powerless.

Stances of Major Parties Involved

We recommend that you check the geographical location of your nation for 1933.



CHILE

Chile was hit severely by the Great Depression between the years 1930 and 1932. Chile's saltpetre and copper exports collapsed, and was forced to reduce its imports. Although Chile was a member nation of the league and attended the conference, disarmament was barely an issue for them to heavily consider.

CHINA

Hugely threatened and slowly dominated by Japan, the dominant power in the far East and its close neighbor, China was supportive not only in the disarmament of Germany but also the weakening of Japan. China also called for the support of collective security so that the international society could protect China from threats.

FRANCE

France was severely hit by Germany in the Great War. Hence, it feared the military of Germany more than any other nations; Clemenceau, for example, tried to impose a strong sanction against Germany in the 1919 Versailles settlement. Keeping in line, France insisted that Germany should remain weak and 'security must precede disarmament.' France called the establishment of an international police force before disarming each nation.

ITALY

In July 1933, Mussolini called for the creation of the Four Power Pact among Britain, France, Italy, and Germany to ensure peace and security among Europe. Mussolini's goal was to form a league consisting of a few major powers. In the pact, he also respected the right for Germany in terms of rearmament; he was on a stance more of rearming Germany to an international standard.

JAPAN

Although Japan left the league during the conference, the chairs decided to put Japan on the list for a fruitful debate. The delegate may choose its stance, but considering the scale of military Japan had at that time, it would be hard for Japan to disarm itself.

GERMANY

Adolf Hitler has just been assigned as the chancellor of Germany in 1933, and has been actively working on strengthening his power by the Reichstag Fire, the Enabling Act, the banning of political parties and trade unions which could introduce other political ideals. He seems very keen on rearmament as he claims that he is unable to protect his nation when the surrounding nations are also armed, and claims the Treaty of Versailles to be unfair. As much as Germany has been a strong nation which was previously in the center of conflict, it will be an important aspect to determine how it will maintain a peaceful relation with everyone in the long term.

PORTUGAL

Portugal is relatively far away from the central and western European nations, and has just undergone a coup by the fascists which replaced the original democratic republic. It may be slightly concerned about the political instability in Spain.

SPAIN

The new elected government in 1931 composed mainly of republicans and communists in Spain. They have been experiencing continuous threats from the other parties including fascists internally, partially due to the nation's poverty. The government may be worried after witnessing the coup in Portugal, and may want to have a stronger military force for internal stability, while they may be more indifferent to foreign relations.

AUSTRIA

Austria is a nation directly touching Germany on its north, and may be concerned that Germany may attack or attempt an anschluss in the near future if armed. They may have to choose whether they will vote to disarm everyone, or keep everyone armed. Internally, they have also experienced some turmoil through the Austrian civil war in 1933-1934.

HUNGARY

Hungary was a new state created from the end of World War 1 based on the idea of self determination, but continued to go through one government after another with a communist government, an anti-communist government, and monarchy until it settled with a right wing government. They have been one of the closest Axis powers up to this point.

ABYSSINIA (ETHIOPIAN EMPIRE)

Abyssinia has been one of the last nations in Africa that have not been colonised yet by a European nation, and has undergone war with Italy in 1895 which they successfully defended their nation. Its independence has continuously been threatened over time by many European nations.

ARGENTINA

By the beginning of World War II, Argentina had a significant population of ethnic Germans. One area where they were particularly prominent was Misiones Province, Argentina's Northeastern panhandle bordering on Paraguay and Brazil. It is estimated that by the early 1940s, there were around 10,000 ethnic Germans in Misiones, out of the province's total population of 190,000. With the rise of Nazism in Germany, Nazi agents started active propaganda work among the ethnic Germans living in Argentina, with Nazi-organized meetings reportedly held as early as 1933.

UNITED KINGDOM

At the World Disarmament Conference in Geneva, the British - sensitive to their new vulnerabilities - tried unsuccessfully to prohibit strategic aerial bombardment, distinguishing "tactical" from "strategic" emerged as a contentious issue.

AUSTRALIA

In 1929, the Great Depression crushed a country already on its back. By 1932, more than 30 percent of German workers in Australia were unemployed. Speck ran a small electrical-contracting company. It went bankrupt, taking the boss and his 21 workers into the streets. For Speck it was the last straw. He was fed up with the limitations of his life and his country. The same frustration drove many Germans to the guttural siren song of Adolf Hitler. It drove Speck over the horizon. In the strange bubble world he would live in for the next seven and a half years he would brush up against Germany's new keepers briefly, fly a swastika, and at least once seek out the Nazis' financial help. As with so many Germans of his era, the full story of his political leanings will probably never be known. But in 1932, Oskar Speck seemed without any politics at all. "All I wanted was to get out of Germany," he said later.

BELGIUM

Upon the official Belgian withdrawal from the Western Alliance, the Belgians refused to engage in any official staff meetings with the French or British military staff for fear of compromising its neutrality. The Belgians did not regard a German invasion as inevitable and were determined that if an invasion did take place it would be effectively resisted by new fortifications. The Belgians had taken measures to reconstruct their defences along the border with the German state upon Adolf Hitler's rise to power in January 1933. The Belgian government had watched with increasing alarm the German withdrawal from the League of Nations, its repudiation of the Treaty of Versailles and its violation of the Locarno

Treaties. The government increased expenditure on modernising the fortifications at Namur and Liège. New lines of defence were established along the Maastricht–Bois-le-Duc canal, joining the Meuse, Scheldt and the Albert Canal. The protection of the eastern frontier, based mainly on the destruction of a number of roads, was entrusted to new formations (frontier cyclist units and the newly formed Chasseurs Ardennais).

SOVIET UNION

After Adolf Hitler came to power on January 30, 1933, Joseph Stalin and Vyacheslav began the suppression of the Communist Party of Germany. The Nazis took police measures against Soviet trade missions, companies, press representatives, and individual citizens in Germany. They also launched an anti-Soviet propaganda campaign coupled with a lack of good will in diplomatic relations, although the German Foreign Ministry under Konstantin von Neurath (foreign minister from 1932–1938) was vigorously opposed to the impending breakup. The second volume of Hitler's programmatic *Mein Kampf* (which first appeared in 1926) called for *Lebensraum* (living space for the German nation) in the east (mentioning Russia specifically), and, in keeping with his worldview, portrayed the Communists as Jews (see also Jewish Bolshevism) who were destroying a great nation. This ambition, if implemented, would be a clear danger to the security of the Soviet Union.

NEW ZEALAND

People fleeing Nazism in the 1930s were subject to New Zealand's Immigration Restriction Act 1931, under which officials could decide who was suitable to enter. The act excluded aliens unless they had guaranteed employment, substantial capital, or particular knowledge or skills. The guidelines meant that most who applied were declined entry, usually on the grounds that they would not be readily absorbed into the population. Nevertheless, about 1,100 mainly Jewish refugees fleeing persecution in Nazi Europe were accepted for settlement in the years between the rise of Hitler and the start of the Second World War.

PERSIA

The shelling of Iran's parliament by the Russians, and the signing of the 1919 Treaty, firmly planted the roots of suspicion against Britain and Russia. This was while many people were aware of Wilhelm II's speech in Damascus in 1898 calling on all Muslims to rely on him as a true friend. By the early 1930s, Reza Pahlavi's economic ties with Nazi Germany began worrying the Allied states. Germany's modern state and economy highly impressed the Shah, and there were hundreds of Germans involved in every aspect of the state, from setting up factories to building roads, railroads and bridges.

Cases to Consider

Successful Disarmament Cases and cases of protecting Self Determination

Although you will not be able to reference the following cases, you can use them to predict the actions of other nations and come up with new tactics based on these examples.

Satellite states of the Soviet Union and its disarmament (1992-1991)

The process of establishing the 'buffer zone' of the Soviet Union is in many ways similar to Nazi-Germany's expansion to the East except that in the former, the western nations were actually able to protect some nations such as Greece from falling against the aggressor nation. Although there are several geographical differences, it may be a good idea to see how this was done and see if it could be applied to guarantee the security of weak nations surrounded by aggressor nation. To do this, you may want to see how the western powers used 'Containment' towards the Soviet Union in locations such as Korea, Germany, and Greece to see whether aggressor nations such as Germany could also be contained if they choose to attack.

You will also want to see how the Soviet Union was able to end the cold war in 1991 peacefully by proclaiming the independence of its satellite states under its own will, and consider what non-war factors may have resulted in this.

2018 North Korea - United States Summit (2018)

The North Korea-United States Summit is an ongoing example in which a leader in a dictatorship country is undergoing disarmament by negotiations. You will also be able to analyse Kim Jong Un before coming to the negotiation table can also be analysed to try and understand what the leaders of aggressor nations may be thinking, and what makes them pursue aggressive foreign policies.

Past Cases of the Outbreak of Warfare.

World War 1 (1914 - 1918)

One of the major long term causes for the outbreak of World War 1 can be seen in the idea of Militarism, where nations built large armies for both defence and for aggression to fulfill their national interests. Many nations extended their military by methods such as universal conscription as a part of an arms race, or in order to strengthen their defences against the other nations. The idea of a cycle where other nations strengthen their military as a reaction to the expansion of the military in another nation has led to the first world war to expand greatly in scale, and may have to be resolved in order to prevent another buildup to a war.

Alliances have been seen as another major cause that has spread a small conflict between 2 nations into a large scale war. The First world war had initially started from a small conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary due to the assassination of the Austrian emperor Franz-Ferdinand, but expanded as Germany and Italy in the triple alliance and Great Britain, France and Russia in the triple entente joined the war due to alliances with Serbia and Austria-Hungary.

It is therefore going to be important for nations to try and figure out how other nations consider alliances after the war, and see if an alliance is going to encourage them to stop a war or start a war. can not be seen as equivalent to Nazi-Germany, nations may be able to investigate on why the war did not grow into a full scale conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States.

The Korean War (1950)

The Korean war can be looked at as a case where the United Nations was involved in supporting the self determination of a relatively weaker nation against a determined aggressor. While North Korea can not be seen as equivalent to Nazi-Germany, nations may be able to investigate on why the war did not grow into a full scale conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Although you will not be able to reference the following cases, you can use them to predict the actions of other nations and come up with new tactics based on these examples.

Solutions

Possible Solutions

Two major contradicting opinions in the conference were whether to disarm all nations to the standard of Germany or rearm Germany back to the standard of its neighboring powers. Under these two different approaches, we have listed detailed solutions for each occasions.

1. Disarm all nations

One possible solution is that all nations disarm to the standard of Germany so that it is fair for Germany and all weapon and military threats come to an end. However, because there are huge obstacles to just suddenly disarm all nations, it is important that the international society comes up with a third-party military force that exists to ensure collective security.

2. Creation of an international Police Force

France, in particular, insisted for the creation of an international police force which can both ensure security among all nations and check potential aggressors and threats to maintaining collective security. The presence of an international force will possibly result in nations to agree upon disarming themselves.

3. A short-term mandatory military conscription

This plan was proposed and largely supported by the British during the conference, named The MacDonald Plan for Reduction of Armaments. It is divided into two different parts: the first being effectiveness-- the armed forces-- and the second being materiel, equivalent to physical equipment. For the former part, MacDonald proposes the adoption of a short-term militia system in continental Europe and to initiate compulsory military conscription for men aged 18 and above.

4. Rearm Germany to international standard

It is also possible that the league decides to rearm the formerly disarmed Germany to the level of international standard so that it is properly recognized as a legitimate nation and a state with the right to protect itself. However, there will be concerns regarding whether Hitler is trustworthy and whether this will achieve the aims of collective security of the league. Therefore, several measures regarding

Questions to Consider

- What would be more significant between support from the public or support from other nations to make your nation's opinions influential?
- How can alliances be used to contain war rather than expand them as it did in world war 1?
- How has World War 1 impacted your nation's international policies?
- If you have domestic conflicts, how may that affect your position towards disarmament? Could you use the disarmament conference to limit the power of your opponents?
- What is your nation's geographical location in the map? How may that affect your nation's stance on disarmament? On the same note, how may it affect the imposing of sanctions?
- How can a nation solve the dilemma between domestic security and international disarmament?
- How will nations stop determined aggressors?

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