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GEC Model United Nations

The Hellenic Assembly

The Trojan War



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Letters from the Chairs

Greetings delegates!

My name is Jay Mo, a junior currently attending Saint Paul Preparatory Seoul. It is a great honor for me to be meeting you all as the chair of this committee, and I am thrilled to see you this coming March. This is my second year participating in GECMUN. Last year, I was here as a delegate of a crisis committee, and I remember myself being astonished by how open the committee was to creative and even ridiculous resolutions to various issues. I fell in love with how we were urged to abandon our conventional ways of thinking as well as the warm atmosphere that the chairs generated by connecting with each and every one of the delegates. It is my great desire to provide you with the same experience. Please, do not hesitate to make yourself heard and always be mindful that this is indeed a “crisis” committee where we must all open our ears to what others have to say. As for delegates that are new to MUN or crisis committees, just know that the chairs are here for you and have your back. By working together, I believe we will be more than capable of having an exciting and productive session, plus a good amount of fun!

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γειασας(hello),delegates!

I'm Karoline Herman and I am pleased to introduce myself as this committee's co-chair. This is my second year participating as a chair in GECMUN. Something about the atmosphere of last year's conference kept pulling me back and GECMUN IV has remained a wonderful memory in my mind. This year's committee will probably be nothing like you've been in before and we hope to meet and extend past all of your expectations. Research well, get into your roles, and most importantly, have fun! I wish you good luck and I hope that we can all defeat the Trojans before it's too late!

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Introduction

Helen, daughter of Zeus, was the most beautiful woman who had a full line of suitors seeking her hand in marriage. As Menelaus was selected as the lucky man, everyone thought that the dispute over her was over- until Paris took her away to Troy. The call to war by Menelaus and Agamemnon meant many different things to the mighty kings and warriors of the Greek nations. For very few, it meant an opportunity for honor and glory. For many others, however, the war signaled the start of a long struggle that would prevent people from returning home for many years, even decades. If there is a common objective that unites these people, it would be toppling Troy to win Helen back. Once Helen comes back, everything would surely go back to the way it was before, would it not?

Delegates will be playing the roles of Greek heroes who have prominent roles in the Trojan War as commanders, warriors, healers, and soothsayers. Each delegate must work in their field but also cooperate with others to attain the ultimate goal of winning the war by deciding on battle strategies, appeasing upset gods, and predicting the next moves of the Trojan forces. There will be various obstacles that will make obtaining this goal an arduous journey. Commanders will have conflicting opinions which might prevent the committee from proceeding in one direction. And never forget that the Gods are watching from above! Not all of them are particularly fond of the Greeks.

Be mindful of how many lives are at stake, the resources that you have, and how the prolonging of the war will affect you. Also keep in mind that every victory and success comes with a price. It is your responsibility, delegates, to minimize those costs.

The committee will be set after all the Greek forces have arrived on the shores of Troy but before any action that would initiate the actual war. Consequently, delegates should expect to jump straight into strategic thinking as soon as the committee commences.

Also please be reminded that there is absolutely no need for the committee to flow according to the original myth. The chairs highly encourage delegates to think outside of the box and come up with unique solutions to various situations and crisis updates. For that reason, the construction of the Trojan Horse will not be allowed as a possible solution. This is your chance to rewrite the whole story!

καλή τύχη (good luck), delegates. May Tyche be with you!

Information

Topic Background

Every epic battle has an epic beginning. This story begins on Helen was the most beautiful woman in the world. When it came time for her to marry, a long line of suitors from all over the world brought gifts to appease to her stepfather, Tyndareus, and win her hand. Helen eventually decided on Menelaus. Tyndareus was wary because he didn't want to anger any of the suitors by sending them away or by taking any of their gifts for he didn't want to give them a reason to fight with him. Odysseus, one of the suitors, offered a way out of this situation if Tyndareus would assist him in getting Penelope, Tyndareus' niece, to marry him. The solution was to, before announcing the decision, get all of the suitors to take part in a pact to defend the chosen husband if the time came. Tyndareus agreed and Menelaus and Helen were married.

Later on, Zeus held a ceremony in Olympus but didn't invite one of the goddesses due to her irksome nature. The goddess, infuriated, threw a golden apple into the ceremony with the writing "To the most beautiful" inscribed upon it. Three goddesses, Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite claimed the apple, hence claiming that they were the most beautiful. Since they couldn't all be the most beautiful, they asked Zeus to decide who the true owner of the apple was. Zeus, not wanting to start a fight or just being too bothered to do so, let the decision fall on Paris of Troy. The three goddesses went to Paris and let him decide. They also each gave him their own incentive to choose them. Hera offered him the position of King of Europe and Asia Minor, Athena offered him the gift of strategy in war, and Aphrodite gave him the love of beautiful Helen, wife of Menelaus. Paris chooses Aphrodite and decides to claim his "prize," Helen of Troy. Thanks to Aphrodite's assistance, Paris succeeds in abducting Helen, thus leading to the commencement of the Trojan War.

Geography

The Greek forces come from nations and cities dotted all over the Greek peninsula. To ensure that they would arrive in Troy all together, they rendezvoused at Aulis, a port located approximately 300 km away from Troy. Getting to Troy required the Greeks to sail across the Aegean Sea, a voyage made even longer by the many islands that prevented the ships from journeying in a clean, straight path directly to Troy.

Since ancient ships sailed at an average speed of around 6 knots, it would take around 2~3 days for a ship to arrive in Troy from Aulis under the condition that the ship travels on a straight route. If other nasty variables-such as foul winds, storms, and having to detour around islands- are taken into consideration, it would certainly take ships even longer, even up to a full week or more, to complete the journey.



This distance is one of the factors that delegates should always keep in mind because it will most likely be a major element that will prolong the war. Reinforcements, if needed, will have to be called ahead of time to make sure that they arrive at the perfect time. When discussing battle plans, commanders should be mindful of the fact that their men would be tired after the long trip and would be needing time to recover their strength.

All in all, the distance from Greece to Troy will make it increasingly difficult for the war to be put to an early end.

Troy's Strength

It was said by Homer in the Iliad that the city of Troy was extremely well-protected with strong walls and a good foundation. Rather than Troy falling because of a weak defense or a flimsy wall, it was felled because of the Trojan Horse. In fact, the walls were so strong that they were said to have been built by Poseidon and Apollo themselves. However, the wall does have a weakness. As previously mentioned, the wall was stated to have been built by Apollo and Poseidon. This was as a punishment by Zeus and for a reward by the then-king of Troy, Laomedon. When Laomedon refused to reward Apollo and Poseidon, Poseidon sent a sea serpent to besiege the city. Laomedon was told by an oracle that the only way to save the city was to sacrifice his daughter so he sent his daughter out to get chained to a rock and await her death. Herakles(Hercules), who happened to be in Troy however, came to the rescue and offered to slay the serpent and save Laomedon's daughter in exchange for Laomedon's divine horses. After the deed was done however, Laomedon refused to give up the horses. Herakles, enraged, left the city and returned with a gang of warriors. He captured the city and killed Laomedon. Laomedon was buried near the Scaean Gate and as long as his resting place remains untouched, his city's wall will remain unassailable.

Major Greek Nations

There are five major regions that will be looked at during this committee's discussion: Sparta, Athens, Ithaca, Mycenae, and Crete. Starting with a big one, Sparta was a major city-state in Ancient Greece. It was known for being very militarily advanced and being brutal in combat. The adjective "spartan" actually means "showing indifference to comfort." Sparta was located primarily in modern Laconia(region of Greece) and was placed strategically to be able to control trade ports. Another very important, and well-known, city-state is Athens. Athens was known for both their military and their smarts. Athens is named after the pagan goddess of wisdom "Athena," hence their smarts. Their military, especially their army, were known for their "hoplites." Hoplites is just a word for a soldier that is armed with mostly just a shield and a spear. These hoplites would be accompanied by a slave or a poor citizen who would carry around their weapons before combat and would protect the camp during combat.

Next, Ithaca is most known for being the home of Odysseus. It is not sure completely where this place was, most scholars think it is just the modern island of Ithaca and that will be where it is in our discussion. Ithaca is most discussed in Homer's Odyssey where Odysseus embarks on a decade long journey to get back home and take his place on the throne. Mycenae was a major city-state in Ancient Greece as well. It was located primarily in modern Argolis, Greece. Mycenae is known to be more intellectually advanced than militarily advanced. They were the first-speakers of the Greek language. That being said, it doesn't mean that they weren't militarily advanced in their own respects, it just means that it wasn't their strongsuit. A spear was their weapon of choice during combat. Lastly, Crete is the biggest island in Greece. It is famous for its eclectic geography. It is also famous for being the birthplace of Zeus. Crete was more of a supporter during battles. They provided troops and were most famous for their archers. Not only that though, they also provided slingers, javelin throwers, and stone throwers.

Agenda

The primary objective that should be accomplished is reclaiming Helen. Though achieving this goal will naturally lead to clashes with the Trojans, there is no need for the delegates to feel pressured to take down Troy and reduce it to ashes. Troy can be left completely unscathed if all works out well through peaceful means (though this is hardly likely!). The fate of Troy will be left purely at the hands of the delegates as they will be the ones commanding the Greek forces.

Another issue that delegates will be required to address is the means through which this conflict with the Trojans can be solved. One method that the Greeks can use is to proceed to use physical means and immediately start a battle. Considering that the Greeks already have their troops brought to Troy, it can be said that they are fully ready to launch attacks anytime. To do this, the perfect timing and excuse to initiate the war must be discussed. These are steps that will be taken only after the delegates understand the possible costs of their decisions.

Delegates can also take a different approach and resort to peaceful ways of negotiation. If delegates resolve to negotiate with the enemy, then they should decide what kind of rhetoric and tone they will employ. One choice is to appear aggressive. For example, they can accuse Paris of causing for all this chaos and hold Troy responsible for providing protection to such a troublemaker. The other choice is to show a more passive attitude. Perhaps the Greeks can suggest a trade or a compromise for the safe return of Helen. However, one factor that delegates must be aware of is the fact that the Trojans would already be sensing the presence of the Greek troops on their doorstep as a threat. Rather than talking, they could be preparing an army of their own.

Delegate Positions

ACHILLES

Achilles is considered to be one of the greatest heroes that ever existed in the history of Greece. His mother was the goddess Thetis, who dipped him in the River Styx by holding his foot when he was a baby, making him immortal except for his vulnerable heel. He is a valuable asset on the battlefield which is why the Greek leaders tried so hard to recruit him. Achilles is extremely confident of himself and often comes across as arrogant.

PATROCLUS

Patroclus is a dear friend to Achilles. Apart from the fact that he is also a formidable warrior, he is the only true friend of Achilles that accompanied him to the Trojan War. Throughout the war, Patroclus provides good emotional support to Achilles and helps his friend from letting his temper get the best of him.

AGAMEMNON

The king of Mycenae and elder brother of Menelaus. He is described to be a charismatic commander who called on the kings of different Greek nations and assembled forces to lay siege on Troy when his brother's wife, Helen, was taken by Paris. Agamemnon finds himself burdened by a lot of responsibility and stress as he has to mediate debates between different kings while trying to shorten the war to prevent more lives from dying in the battlefield.

MENELAUS

The king of Sparta and the lucky man who won Helen's hand in marriage. Little did he know that his happy family would break apart after he hospitably greeted Paris into his realm. Enraged by Paris's betrayal, Menelaus, with the aid of his brother Agamemnon, summons Helen's past suitors by calling upon the oath they all sworn, that if Helen were ever to fall in danger, they would all readily fight to protect her. Menelaus farms special hatred for Paris.

ODYSSEUS

Odysseus is the king of Ithaca who was, in the past, a passionate suitor that sought Helen's hand in marriage. He was the very person who proposed the idea of swearing an oath which later required many suitors, including himself, to come to the defense of Menelaus. But when the time came that he was called by Agamemnon and Menelaus to participate in the Trojan War, Odysseus tried to pretend he had gone mad so that he could stay with his beloved wife Penelope and his son Telemachus. This plan ultimately failed and he had no choice but to go on the expedition. It is his personal objective to finish this war as soon as possible and return to his family. He is known to be extremely intelligent and a brilliant strategist.

DIOMEDES

Despite being one of the youngest heroes recruited to fight in the Trojan War, Diomedes displays exceptional skills in the battlefield. He is even willing to fight the Gods if he is pushed to do so. While he tries to prove himself as an honorable warrior, he hardly displays thirst for power. He counsels Agamemnon on battle strategies and earns the respect of his comrades for his wisdom and maturity.

TELAMONIAN AJAX

Ajax, the prince of Salamis and Periboea, is described to be a "giant." He is very tall, strong, and practically fearless which allows him to thrive in the battlefield as he intimidates his enemies with his physical appearance. As a young man, he trained with Achilles under the same master, Chiron, and therefore shares some friendship with both Achilles and Patroclus.

NESTOR

Nestor is a senior warrior who has had his fair share of adventures and expeditions. In the past, he was an Argonaut who accompanied Jason on his quest for the Golden Fleece. He does not participate too often in the battle itself, but often serves as Agamemnon's wise counsel. Nestor is also an eloquent speaker and helps to reconcile people after conflicts.

MENESTHEUS

Menestheus is the king of Athens who was called upon to fight in the Trojan War due to proposing to Helen in the past. He is a valuable war resource capable of organizing troops and cavalry forces better than anyone. Menestheus is not considered to be brave like the other commanders and is at times scorned by his fellow commanders.

IDOMENEUS

The king of Crete who is a good friend to Telamonian Ajax and one of Agamemnon's good advisors along with Nestor and Diomedes. Idomeneus was one of the Greek heroes who is always ready to tend to wounded comrades in the battlefield and come to their defense at times of peril.

CALCHAS

A seer and a priest of Apollo skilled at foretelling the future and reading signs. It was Calchas that foretold the happening of the Trojan War and the siege of Troy. Though he does not participate directly

in the battle, his words have great influence over the decisions of the Greek commanders who are sensitive to divine intervention. His interpretations are what can influence the flow of the battle.

MACHAON

A physician from Thessaly who, with his brother Podalirius, participated in the Trojan War. Both Machaon and his brother are legendary healers who are able of tending to serious injuries. Part of his medical prowess is thanks to the herbs he obtained from the centaur Chiron.

SINON

A soldier who is skilled at acting and is therefore capable of acting as a spy for the Greeks. This makes Sinon a precious resource, especially in stalemate situations or when the Greeks are desperate for a glimpse into the plans of Trojans.

AGAPENOR

Agapenor is the king of the Arcadia who was the commander of sixty ships. He was also one of the suitors of Helen in the past which bound him to the oath of having to fight on Menelaus's side.

Questions to Consider

- What is the best way to resolve the conflict regarding Helen? Are there any peaceful measures that the Greek forces could take?
- What are some specific battle strategies that could give Greece the upper hand in the war?
- What is the best way to minimize casualties whilst also maximizing the possibility of winning the war?
- How should the Greek forces react to divine intervention?
- To what extent should prophecies and interpretations of signs be taken into consideration?
- What immediate impact will the presence of the Greek army have on any negotiations?
- What would the Greeks gain from participating in this war besides honor and glory?
- What should be done if the war lasts too long? Will the Greeks have to give up and turn back?
- Is this war even winnable in the first place?

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