



HISTALYA

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PEACE OF WESTPHALIA

AGENDA ITEM:
OPEN AGENDA

STUDY GUIDE

UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL

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Letter From the Secretary-General

It is with great pleasure that I extend a warm welcome to all participants of HistalyaMun'24, which will be held in Antalya from August 15th to 18th.

As we gather for this Model United Nations conference, we anticipate engaging debates, enlightening discussions, and invaluable networking opportunities. Our committees, covering a diverse range of topics about historical events, promise to challenge and inspire delegates, fostering both critical thinking and diplomatic skills.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the organizing team and our gracious hosts in Antalya for their dedication and hard work in bringing HistalyaMun'24 to fruition.

I am eager to meet each and every one of you in Antalya as we come together for this enriching experience.

Sincerely,

**Metehan Yıldırım
Secretary-General
HistalyaMun'24**

Letter From the Under Secretary-Generals

The most esteemed Delegates,

First of all, I would like to welcome all of you to the Peace of Westphalia of HistalyaMun'24. I am more than honored to be serving you as the Under-Secretary-General of this committee alongside my precious Under-Secretary General Emir Topcu. As the academic team of Peace of Westphalia our primary goals for this conference are to make sure that the committee works smoothly and, more importantly, to

encourage you all to speak out more, express your opinions, and feel at ease in this committee.

I believe that this committee in particular is very crucial to comprehend the depth of the democracy structure which is in use today's world. On the other hand, it's religious aspects are one of the biggest foundations for the elimination of religious wars and conflicts. Even though the Peace of Westphalia is ending point for both "80 Years War" and "30 Years War", this guide mainly focuses on 30 Years of which consequences are greater and more crucial. I hope that the research process would be as fun as I had while researching this topic.

This committee will entertain some historic figures and as the Academic team, We all encourage you to get in the role and re-live the treaty and war phases. So feel free to role play the characters you got for the allocation.

My biggest thanks go to my Under Secretary-General Emir. This won't be possible without his support and help. Next up I would like to thank the Executive team for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this prestigious conference and making it possible to make this amazing committee.

There is no doubt in my mind that this committee will flow smoothly, and to help along with your research processes and help you understand the topic, Emir and I have prepared a study guide for this particular agenda. This guide aimed to be both helpful and instructive.

I will be more than glad to help you if you have any inquiries about the agenda, the committee procedure, or anything related to the conference. Please do not hesitate to contact me. I am looking forward to seeing you at the conference!

Kindest Regards,
Timur Saim Temur
Under-Secretary-General of Peace of Westphalia
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Our most esteemed Delegates,

To begin my words, I would like to present to you all a warm welcome to the Peace of Westphalia committee of HISTALYAMUN'24.

It is my utmost delight to serve you as your Under-Secretary-General in this committee. My partner Timur and I worked hard to provide you with this extensive study guide, and will be on duty to answer your questions, whenever need be.

Our first and most important duty as your committee academy will be to ensure the quality of the debate. We do not have a single doubt that you, our delegates, will be smooth,

efficient and prolific in your workflow. If there emerges any issues regarding the flow of the debate, we will be there for help.

My first and biggest thanks go to my beloved Under-Secretary-General, Timur Saim Temur. From day one, he has always been by my side, and I do not know how I will pay my debt to him. Thank you, brother.

My second wave of gratitude is reserved for the Executive Team of HISTALYAMUN'24. It is an immense honor to be a part of this prestigious conference, and it is obviously thanks to the Executive Team for they have seen me worthy of this position.

Both Timur and I will be more than happy to resolve any confusion regarding the agenda, this guide, or the committee in general. You may contact us at any time in this regard. I am ecstatic to work with you all.

Kindest Regards,

Emir Topcu

Under-Secretary-General of Peace of Westphalia

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Procedure of the Treaty Cabinet

The procedural working of the Peace of Westphalia Cabinet during the conference will be as follows:

1. The committee may begin discussion if at least a quarter of representatives are present in the current session.
2. All governing processes within the committee shall be in the direction of the Committee Board, consisting of 2 chair board members and a rapporteur keeping a record of all discussions that take place in the committee.
3. Representatives will be subject to a roll call that will be taken at the start of every session, in which they can state that they're either present or present and voting. If a representative were absent during the roll call, they can inform the Committee Board of their state of presence via a message paper.
4. Commencement Declarations, acting as the opening speeches for the committee, shall be taken at the beginning of the first session. The speeches may not exceed 1 minute.
5. Directorial Speeches will be entertained after the Commencement Declarations and at the beginning of every subsequent session. They can also be entertained if the Committee Board deems it necessary. The speakers will be first selected by the Committee Board from the delegates who wish to deliver a Directorial Speech and entertain the speakers according to their order of recognition. The speeches shall not exceed 90 seconds, and all yielding procedures are in order.
6. Delegates may raise motions subsequently to the opening of the floor, deemed by the Committee Board. Three types of motions shall be used: Moderated Caucus, Semi-Moderated Caucus, and Unmoderated Caucus;
 - a. At the beginning of every session, at least one moderated caucus must be entertained and concluded before proceeding with the entertainment of other types of motions. Said moderated caucuses must be between 5-20 minutes in duration and no individual speaker shall exceed 90 seconds of speaking time. Extensions and terminations are in order.
 - b. Semi-moderated caucuses, serving as the main way of discussion between delegates throughout the committee, have no predetermined total time, and thus must be terminated if the given topic reaches the end of its discussion quota.
 - c. Unmoderated caucuses may also be entertained if the need arises for the delegates to communicate in a more free manner. Unmoderated caucuses cannot exceed 20 minutes.
7. The committee will move forward with the updates given by the Committee Board dependent on the collective actions taken by the delegates. The delegates are obligated to resolve any conflicts regarding territorial possession and/or political disdain via leveled debate.
8. All final decisions taken, including the finalized map of Europe, must be presented to the Committee Board for the conclusion of the committee. The Cabinet will otherwise be deemed failed.

9. All members of the committee, including the Committee Board, must strictly comply with the Rules of Procedure provided by the Secretariat of the conference.

What is the Peace of Westphalia?

An important turning point in European history was reached in 1648 with the signing of the **Peace of Westphalia**, which ended the **Thirty Years' War** which devastated most of the continent. This set of accords established the current state structure and the tenets of international relations that are still relevant today, which also ended one of the bloodiest campaigns in European history.



Originally a theological conflict inside the **Holy Roman Empire**, the Thirty Years' War had spread to encompass many of Europe's major nations, including Austria, France, Sweden, Spain, and others. This war, which started in 1618, was characterized by extensive destruction, especially in the German states where the people suffered greatly from financial ruin and other losses. The continent was in dire need of an end to the suffering by the time the warring

groups convened in the Westphalian cities of **Münster and Osnabrück** to seek peace.

The Peace of Westphalia was not a single treaty, but rather a series of agreements reached after extensive and intricate talks. The most important treaties were the Treaty of Münster, which resolved the dispute between Spain and the Dutch Republic, and the Treaty of Osnabrück, which addressed the Holy Roman Empire's internal conflicts. These accords were the result of years of diplomatic labor, reflecting the diverse and sometimes conflicting interests of the various parties involved. The negotiations were among the first to incorporate many sovereign nations on an equal footing, establishing a precedent for future international diplomacy.

The Westphalia Treaty established numerous essential concepts that would determine the future of European politics. Most significantly, the accords established the notion of state sovereignty, which recognizes each state's right to administer its area without external interference. This principle of non-intervention has become a pillar of the modern

international system, in which nation-states are regarded as the principal actors in global affairs.

In addition to political autonomy, the Peace of Westphalia upheld the concept of religious tolerance throughout the Holy Roman Empire. Building on the earlier Augsburg Peace of 1555, the treaties permitted monarchs to choose the official religion of their lands, whether Catholic, Lutheran, or Calvinist, easing the religious tensions that had caused most of the battle. While this did not abolish religious conflict, it did represent a substantial step toward more peaceful coexistence among diverse religious communities in Europe.



Territorially, the Peace of Westphalia caused considerable changes throughout Europe. France gained significant territory in Alsace, bolstering its dominance on the continent, while Sweden won land in northern Germany. The Dutch Republic's independence was formally recognized, effectively ending the Eighty Years' War with Spain. These territorial changes undermined the Holy Roman Empire's strength, allowing its constituent nations to exercise greater autonomy and contributing to its slow decline in European politics.

Despite its achievements, the Peace of Westphalia did not solve Europe's issues. Religious and territorial conflicts persisted, and the balance of power remained a delicate and contentious concept. Nonetheless, the Treaties of 1648 were a crucial step toward a more structured and peaceful international order, laying the groundwork for the rise of the nation-state as the fundamental unit of political organization.

Deep dive into “Thirty Years War”

The Thirty Years' War, which raged across Europe between 1618 and 1648, was one of the continent's most complex and catastrophic battles. The war began with strong theological conflicts inside the Holy Roman Empire and swiftly escalated into a continental

conflict involving numerous major nations. This extended struggle had far-reaching ramifications, changing Europe's political, social, and religious environment.

The Thirty Years' War originated as a consequence of the Protestant Reformation, which had shattered Europe's religious unity. The Peace of Augsburg, signed in 1555, momentarily alleviated tensions by allowing Holy Roman Empire monarchs to choose between Catholicism and Lutheranism as the official religion of their respective realms.



However, this agreement failed to account for the rise of Calvinism, resulting in escalating dissatisfaction. When Ferdinand II, a devoted Catholic, rose to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire in 1619, his efforts to reestablish Catholicism throughout his domains were met with furious opposition from Protestant nobility and leaders. This resistance reached a climax with the Defenestration of Prague in 1618, when Protestant nobility in Bohemia hurled two Catholic officials out a castle window, sparking the Bohemian Revolt. This act of disobedience signaled the start of what would become a massive and catastrophic conflict.

The battle is often separated into four distinct phases: **Bohemian, Danish, Swedish, and French.** The Bohemian Phase was marked by a conflict between the Catholic Habsburgs and the Protestant Bohemian nobles. Despite initial Protestant triumphs, the Catholic armies won a decisive victory at the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, reestablishing Catholic dominance in Bohemia. During the Danish Phase, King Christian IV of Denmark intervened to support the Protestant cause but was defeated by Catholic forces commanded by General Albrecht von Wallenstein. The Treaty of Lübeck, signed in 1629, caused Denmark to withdraw from the conflict, leaving Catholic forces in control of northern Germany.

During the Swedish Phase, the war gained worldwide traction with the arrival of King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, a devout Protestant and skilled military leader. Gustavus Adolphus' involvement, aided by French finances, changed the balance of power, resulting in key Protestant wins at engagements such as Breitenfeld and Lützen, though his death in 1632 reduced Swedish dominance. The final and most devastating phase, the French Phase, saw Catholic France declare war on the Habsburgs, not for religious reasons, but to limit Habsburg power and prevent Europe's unification under a single dominant dynasty. This phase expanded the war's scope throughout Europe, resulting in immense devastation and a stalemate that tired all parties involved.



The Thirty Years' War finally ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, a series of treaties that redefined the political and religious order of Europe. The war's consequences were immense: the Holy Roman Empire, already a patchwork of semi-independent states, emerged further fragmented and weakened, paving the way for the rise of independent nation-states.

The Peace of Westphalia also enshrined the principle of religious tolerance by allowing rulers to choose the official religion of their territories, including the recognition of Calvinism alongside Catholicism and Lutheranism. However, the war had exacted a heavy toll: it is estimated that the population of the Holy Roman Empire declined by as much as 20%, with entire regions devastated by famine, disease, and the destruction of war.

In terms of power dynamics, the war saw Spain's demise as a dominant European force and the rise of France as the continent's leading state. The struggle also demonstrated the growing importance of national interests above religious allegiance, indicating a transition toward the current system of nation-states. Despite its devastation, the Thirty Years' War laid the groundwork for the formation of a more structured and stable international order, with the ideas established at Westphalia still influencing diplomacy and power dynamics in Europe and beyond. The Thirty Years' War left a legacy of dramatic alteration, with the connected fates of religion, politics, and conflict reshaping the path of European history.

Major Phases of the War

The Bohemian Phase (1618–1625): The war began in Bohemia, a region within the Holy Roman Empire, where Protestant nobles rejected Ferdinand II's attempts to enforce Catholicism and deposed him as their king, electing Frederick V of the Palatinate, a Protestant, in his place. The conflict quickly escalated, with Ferdinand seeking to reclaim Bohemia with the support of Catholic allies like Spain and the Catholic League. The Catholic forces decisively defeated the Bohemian Protestants at the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, leading to the reassertion of Catholic control over Bohemia and the harsh repression of Protestantism in the region.

The Danish Phase (1625–1629): The Danish King Christian IV, a Lutheran, entered the war to support the Protestant cause in northern Germany and to protect his own interests in the region. However, the Catholic forces, now bolstered by the leadership of General Albrecht von Wallenstein, proved too strong. Wallenstein's army, well-funded and disciplined, achieved several victories, including the capture of significant Protestant territories. The Treaty of Lübeck in 1629 forced Denmark to withdraw from the war, allowing Ferdinand II to issue the Edict of Restitution, which sought to restore all ecclesiastical lands taken by Protestants since 1552 to the Catholic Church. This edict further inflamed tensions, particularly among Protestant princes.

The Swedish Phase (1630–1635): The war took on a new dimension with the intervention of Sweden, led by King Gustavus Adolphus, a skilled military leader and devout Lutheran. Backed by France, which sought to counter Habsburg power despite being a Catholic state, Gustavus Adolphus revitalized the Protestant cause. His victories at the Battle of Breitenfeld and the Battle of Lützen marked significant turning points in the war. However, Gustavus Adolphus was killed at Lützen, and although the Swedes continued to fight, their momentum waned after his death.

The French Phase (1635–1648): In the final phase of the war, Catholic France, under the leadership of Cardinal Richelieu, openly entered the conflict against the Habsburgs. France's primary goal was to prevent the unification of Europe under a single dominant power, particularly the Habsburgs, who controlled both the Holy Roman Empire and Spain. The conflict spread across much of Europe, with battles taking place in Germany, France, the Low Countries, and Italy. This phase of the war was marked by brutal warfare, widespread destruction, and increasing war fatigue among the belligerents. The lack of a decisive victory by any side eventually led to the push for peace negotiations.

Deep dive into “Major Phases of the War”

The Bohemian Phase (1618-1625)

The Bohemian Phase of the Thirty Years' War, which lasted from 1618 to 1625, signaled the start of a long and destructive battle that would encompass most of Europe. This phase, which was based on the Holy Roman Empire's complicated religious and political issues, was especially important in laying the groundwork for the larger struggle that would follow. The Kingdom of Bohemia, located in what is now the Czech Republic, had a primarily Protestant populace, with many of its nobles practicing Lutheranism, Calvinism, or the Hussite tradition, a forerunner of Protestantism. However, when Ferdinand II, a fervent Catholic and staunch supporter of the Counter-Reformation, was appointed King of Bohemia in 1617, he strove to restore Catholic authority in the province, causing widespread dissatisfaction among the Protestant elite.

On May 23, 1618, the dramatic Defenestration of Prague set off the Bohemian Phase. In a brave act of defiance, Protestant lords, enraged by Ferdinand II's attempts to limit their religious freedoms, tossed two of the king's Catholic officials, Jaroslav Borzita of Martinice and William Slavata, as well as their secretary, out a window of Prague Castle. Miraculously, the officials escaped the fall, but it marked the beginning of an open uprising against Habsburg control. This act of defiance swiftly turned into a full-fledged revolt, with the Protestant nobility forming a temporary government and mobilizing their soldiers. They attempted to remove Ferdinand II and replace him with a Protestant monarch, eventually offering the crown to Frederick V, Elector Palatine, a renowned Protestant prince and leader of the Protestant Union. Frederick, excited by the prospect of expanding his dominance and reinforced by Protestant support, accepted the crown and became King of Bohemia in November 1619.

The Bohemian rebels and Frederick V made a bold maneuver that directly challenged Ferdinand II's authority and swiftly drew in external powers, transforming a local battle into a larger European war. Ferdinand II, desperate to retake his throne and suppress the insurrection, received support from the Catholic League, an alliance of Catholic kingdoms inside the Holy Roman Empire, as well as from Spain. Meanwhile, the Protestant Union rallied behind Frederick V and the Bohemian cause, laying the groundwork for a decisive confrontation.

The dispute concluded in the Battle of White Mountain on November 8, 1620, near Prague. The fight was a decisive and terrible defeat for the Bohemian Protestant forces, who were heavily outnumbered and outmaneuvered by the Catholic League's army, led by the Count of Tilly and backed up by Spanish and Bavarian troops. Frederick V's armies, led by Christian of Anhalt, were quickly overpowered, resulting in a devastating loss. This defeat ultimately concluded the Bohemian Revolt and represented a watershed moment in the Thirty Years' War. Frederick V escaped into exile, earning the disparaging epithet "The Winter King" for his brief rule, which lasted just one winter.



The consequences of the Bohemian defeat were harsh and far-reaching. Ferdinand II, having regained control of Bohemia, retaliated harshly against the Protestant nobility who had supported the uprising. Their holdings were stolen and given to Catholic loyalists, profoundly changing the region's social and economic structure. Ferdinand also initiated a re-Catholicization effort, banishing Protestant clergy and establishing Catholicism as the predominant religion, which had a significant impact on Bohemia's religious and cultural landscape.

The Bohemian Phase not only put down the uprising within the Holy Roman Empire, but it also laid the groundwork for the Thirty Years' War to continue. The conflict that began in Bohemia quickly expanded beyond its borders, attracting other European countries and escalating into a continental struggle for political and religious control. The sectarian split between Catholic and Protestant kingdoms, which had been severely highlighted during the Bohemian Phase, fueled the larger struggle, resulting in decades of devastation throughout Europe. The defeat of the Bohemian Protestants at the Battle of White Mountain was a critical moment, bringing an end to Bohemian independence and resulting in a new era of Habsburg dominance in Central Europe, as well as laying the groundwork for the long and bloody Thirty Years' War.

The Danish Phase (1625–1629):

The Danish Phase of the Thirty Years' War, which lasted from 1625 to 1629, was the second main era of the battle after the Bohemian Phase. This period was marked by the intervention of King Christian IV of Denmark, a Lutheran monarch who attempted to defend Protestant interests in the Holy Roman Empire while limiting the growing authority of the Catholic Habsburgs. The Danish Phase is important for a shift in the war's dynamics, as it expanded the struggle beyond the German nations and entailed additional external powers, resulting in major political and military advances.

Denmark's King Christian IV was both a fervent Protestant and a powerful king with territorial ambitions in Northern Germany. He was concerned about the Catholic Habsburgs' growing authority, especially following their victory in the Bohemian Phase, which secured their control over Central Europe. Christian IV's action was partly driven by a desire to strengthen his position in the region and preserve Danish interests, particularly in the Baltic Sea and the duchies of Holstein and Schleswig, over which he wielded considerable power.

In 1625, Christian IV officially entered the conflict by raising an army and forming an alliance with numerous Protestant German rulers. He obtained financial help from England, the Dutch Republic, and France, all of which were frightened of Habsburg authority. His principal purpose was to challenge the Catholic League, led by Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, and turn the tide of Catholic wins. Christian IV's involvement into the struggle signaled a new phase in the war, bringing in additional external powers and broadening the scope of the conflict.



Initially, Christian IV's campaign showed promise. He managed to consolidate support among the Protestant states in Northern Germany and advanced his forces into Lower Saxony. However, the tide soon turned against him. The Catholic League, under the command of the seasoned general Johann Tserclaes, Count of Tilly, and the imperial forces led by the capable military commander Albrecht von Wallenstein, proved to be formidable opponents. Wallenstein, in particular, was a key figure during the Danish Phase. He was a brilliant strategist and raised a large, well-equipped mercenary army, funded through the plundering of occupied territories.

Christian IV's soldiers were decisively defeated at the Battle of Lutter in 1626 by Tilly's Catholic army, who destroyed the Danish-Protestant forces. This defeat was a significant setback for Christian IV and the start of a string of military disasters for the Danish king. The defeat at Lutter damaged the Protestant cause, allowing Catholic forces to reclaim the initiative.

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The Treaty of Lübeck, signed in 1629, effectively terminated the Danish Phase. The peace required Christian IV to forsake his support for the Protestant cause within the Holy Roman Empire and withdraw from the conflict entirely. In exchange, Charles was allowed to keep control of Denmark and his duchies, while his influence in German politics was substantially reduced. The Treaty of Lübeck was a significant triumph for both Catholic soldiers and Emperor Ferdinand II, who had successfully neutralized one of his main opponents.

The aftermath of the Danish Phase had a profound impact on the larger Thirty Years' War. The loss of Christian IV and Denmark's withdrawal from the battle enabled the Catholic League and the Habsburgs to cement their authority in Central and Northern Europe. Wallenstein's domination and ability to transfer imperial power into formerly secure Protestant districts demonstrated the growing strength of Catholic forces. However, the war was far from ending, and the vacuum left by Denmark's retreat drew the attention of other Protestant powers, particularly Sweden, which would join in the battle during the war's later stages.

The Swedish Phase (1630–1635):

The Swedish Phase of the Thirty Years' War, which ran from 1630 to 1635, was a watershed moment in the struggle, shifting the balance of power in Europe. This period is notable for the involvement of King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, whose military prowess and leadership revived the Protestant cause and challenged the Catholic Habsburgs' authority. The Swedish Phase not only broadened the scope of the war but also laid the groundwork for major political and military shifts that would determine the trajectory of European history.

By 1630, the Protestant cause in the Holy Roman Empire was in terrible straits. The Protestant troops had been defeated in earlier parts of the conflict, particularly the Bohemian and Danish campaigns, and the Catholic League, led by Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, had acquired a strong grip on Central Europe. Ferdinand's Edict of Restitution, issued in 1629, increased tensions by ordering the restitution of church territories that had been secularized since the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, endangering Protestant interests throughout the empire.

In this grim circumstance, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, sometimes known as the "Lion of the North," emerged as a significant character. Gustavus Adolphus, a devout Lutheran and excellent military strategist chose to join in the conflict for religious and political reasons. He aimed to defend Protestantism, limit the Habsburgs' expanding dominance, and protect Swedish interests in the Baltic region. Gustavus Adolphus landed on Germany's northern coast in June 1630 with a well-trained and disciplined army, kicking off the Swedish Phase.



Gustavus Adolphus' military campaign was characterized by a string of remarkable successes that soon shifted the tide of the war in favor of the Protestant armies. His army, noted for its inventive tactics, mobility, and excellent use of artillery, defeated the Catholic soldiers in several critical battles. Gustavus Adolphus' most significant victory was the Battle of Breitenfeld in September 1631, when he decisively defeated the Catholic League's army, led by Johann Tserclaes, Count of Tilly. This victory marked a watershed moment in the conflict, shattering the idea of Catholic invincibility and reviving Protestant morale.

Following Breitenfeld, Gustavus Adolphus continued his drive into the heart of the Holy Roman Empire, seizing key cities and gaining Protestant allies. His success compelled Emperor Ferdinand II to recall Albrecht von Wallenstein, a strong general who had been fired in 1630 for alleged excess and political ambitions. Wallenstein's return provided a new dimension to the struggle, as he attempted to halt Gustavus Adolphus' gains and reestablish Habsburg authority.

The Swedish Phase culminated in the Battle of Lützen on November 16, 1632. This conflict, fought in the darkness and cold of a German winter, was one of the bloodiest and most important battles of the Thirty Years' War. Gustavus Adolphus personally led his soldiers, and while the Swedes won the fight, it cost them dearly. Gustavus Adolphus was killed during the conflict, dealing a severe blow to the Protestant cause and Sweden. His death created a power vacuum and a time of uncertainty, as his successor, Queen Christina of Sweden, was still a child and Protestant forces battled to retain momentum.

Despite the loss of their charismatic leader, the Swedish army continued to battle under the direction of generals Johan Banér and Lennart Torstensson. However, without Gustavus Adolphus' leadership, the Protestant armies encountered increasing difficulties. Wallenstein, having restored his influence, began a counteroffensive, seeking to reclaim regions lost to the Swedes. The conflict became more complex and divided, with shifting alliances and increasing war fatigue among the participants.

The Swedish Phase concluded in 1635 with the signing of the Peace of Prague, a pact between the Holy Roman Emperor and the majority of the empire's Protestant nations. The pact intended to settle the Holy Roman Empire's internal turmoil by making concessions to Protestant states and consolidating the emperor's power. However, Sweden and France, which had entered the war as Sweden's ally in 1635, refused to accept the treaty's stipulations, resulting in the continuance of the fight, known as the Franco-Swedish Phase.

The Swedish Phase of the Thirty Years' War was a critical period that significantly altered the course of the conflict. Gustavus Adolphus's intervention not only revitalized the Protestant cause but also demonstrated the effectiveness of modern military tactics, which would influence European warfare for years to come. His victories challenged the dominance

of the Catholic Habsburgs and set the stage for a more prolonged and complex phase of the war, involving more external powers and reshaping the political landscape of Europe. While the death of Gustavus Adolphus was a severe setback for the Protestant cause, the impact of his military achievements and the legacy of his leadership endured, influenced the outcome of the war and the future of the European state system.

The French Phase (1635–1648):

The French Phase of the Thirty Years' War, which ran from 1635 to 1648, was the conflict's final and most widespread stage. This phase saw a substantial transformation like the war, from a purely religious battle within the Holy Roman Empire to a broader European conflict motivated by political and territorial goals. France, led by Cardinal Richelieu, entered the war directly against the Habsburgs despite being a Catholic nation, demonstrating the intricate and shifting relationships that characterized this period.

By 1635, the Thirty Years' War had already ravaged most of Central Europe, and prior periods of the war, such as the Bohemian, Danish, and Swedish phases, had seen Protestant and Catholic forces fight frequently, with neither side winning a conclusive triumph. The Peace of Prague of 1635 temporarily calmed the situation within the Holy Roman Empire by making concessions to Protestant kingdoms, but it did not end the underlying war between the Habsburgs and their foes.



France, under by Louis XIII and his prime minister Cardinal Richelieu, had indirectly participated in the conflict by offering financial and military support to Protestant troops, particularly Sweden during the Swedish Phase. Richelieu, an astute and strategic thinker, viewed the Habsburgs as a major threat to French interests. The Habsburgs ruled both the Spanish and Austrian branches of their family, encircling France on two sides and trying to dominate Europe.

Richelieu's decision to intervene personally in the conflict in 1635 signaled the start of the French Phase. France launched war on Spain, then the Holy Roman Empire, transforming the fight into a battle for European supremacy. Although France was a Catholic country, Richelieu valued the balance of power in Europe over religious solidarity, hoping to weaken the Habsburgs and maintain France's influence on the continent.

The French Phase of the war was defined by a series of complex and usually violent battles fought across multiple fronts. The conflict spread throughout Europe, affecting not just the Holy Roman Empire and Spain, but also the Netherlands, Sweden, and other European countries. Despite early setbacks such as internal revolts and financial difficulties, France was able to maintain its position and even gain an advantage in several critical conflicts.

One of the most famous conflicts of this period was the Battle of Rocroi in 1643, when the French army, led by the young Duke of Enghien, later known as the Great Condé, triumphed against the Spanish forces. This conflict is often regarded as signaling the loss of Spanish military might and the advent of France as Europe's main military force. Rocroi was more than just a tactical success; it represented a shift in the balance of power and highlighted the efficacy of French military reforms established under Richelieu and later by Cardinal Mazarin, who succeeded Richelieu after he died in 1642.

As the conflict progressed, it became evident that neither side could achieve a complete triumph, resulting in immense weariness and damage throughout Europe. The French Phase of the conflict was distinguished by a considerable increase in the use of mercenaries, who were frequently violent in their actions, causing widespread suffering among civilians. The conflict also witnessed the employment of scorched earth tactics and extended sieges, which added to the devastation.

By the mid-1640s, both parties were ready to put an end to the conflict, which had destroyed much of Europe and claimed an immense number of lives. The discussions that eventually led to the Peace of Westphalia began in 1644 and were long and complicated, reflecting the diverse interests involved. The Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648, marked the end of the Thirty Years' War and established a new political system in Europe. The pact recognized the sovereignty of the numerous states that comprised the Holy Roman Empire,

essentially ending the emperor's authority to enforce his will on German princes. It also offered France considerable geographical gains, ushering in the country's ascension to the top of Europe's power rankings.

The French Phase of the Thirty Years' War was thus a watershed moment in European history, reshaping its political environment. France's intervention was critical in averting Habsburg supremacy and establishing state sovereignty principles that would serve as the foundation for the European state system for generations. The Peace of Westphalia, which ended the war, signaled the end of large-scale religious battles in Europe and the start of a new age of power-balanced political and diplomatic ties. The influence of the French Phase, and indeed the entire Thirty Years' War, may still be felt in today's international system, where the values of sovereignty and non-interference in state internal affairs remain basic.

Important Conflicts

Battle of White Mountain (1620)

The Battle of White Mountain was one of the earliest and most decisive battles of the Thirty Years' War. Fought on November 8, 1620, near Prague, this battle marked the end of the Bohemian Phase of the war. The Catholic forces, led by the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II and the Catholic League under Count of Tilly, decisively defeated the Protestant Bohemian forces. The defeat crushed the Bohemian Revolt, led to the reassertion of Habsburg control over Bohemia, and initiated a wave of re-Catholicization in the region.

Battle of Breitenfeld (1631)

The Battle of Breitenfeld fought on September 17, 1631, was a major turning point in the war and the first significant victory for the Protestant forces during the Swedish Phase. Led by King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, the Protestant army defeated the Catholic League's forces under Count Tilly. This victory revitalized the Protestant cause, demonstrated the effectiveness of Gustavus Adolphus's military innovations, and marked the beginning of Swedish dominance in the war.

Battle of Lützen (1632)

The Battle of Lützen, fought on November 16, 1632, was another critical engagement during the Swedish Phase. Although the Protestant forces under Gustavus Adolphus won the battle against the Imperial army led by Albrecht von Wallenstein, the Swedish king was killed in the fighting. His death was a severe blow to the Protestant cause, as Gustavus Adolphus had been a charismatic and capable leader. Despite this, the battle solidified the Swedish presence in the conflict and maintained the momentum of the Protestant forces.

Battle of Nördlingen (1634)

The Battle of Nördlingen fought on September 6, 1634, was a significant defeat for the Protestant forces. The combined Imperial and Spanish forces, led by Ferdinand of Hungary and Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand of Austria, decisively defeated the Swedish-Protestant army. This battle marked the end of Swedish ascendancy in the war and led to the withdrawal of several Protestant states from the conflict, culminating in the Peace of Prague in 1635. However, the defeat also prompted France to enter the war directly, leading to the French Phase of the conflict.

Battle of Rocroi (1643)

The Battle of Rocroi, fought on May 19, 1643, during the French Phase of the war, was one of the most famous and significant battles in European history. The French army, led by the young Duke of Enghien (later known as the Great Condé), achieved a decisive victory over the Spanish forces. This battle is often seen as marking the decline of Spanish military power and the rise of France as a dominant European power. Rocroi was a symbolic victory for the French and demonstrated the effectiveness of their military reforms.

Siege of Magdeburg (1631)

The Siege of Magdeburg, which culminated in the sacking of the city on May 20, 1631, was one of the most brutal and devastating events of the Thirty Years' War. Imperial forces, led by General Tilly, captured and plundered the Protestant city of Magdeburg, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians. The massacre at Magdeburg shocked Europe and intensified the resolve of the Protestant forces, particularly in Northern Germany.

Battle of Wittstock (1636)

The Battle of Wittstock fought on October 4, 1636, was a significant victory for the Swedish forces during the later stages of the war. Despite being outnumbered, the Swedish army, under the command of Johan Banér, defeated the combined forces of the Holy Roman Empire and Saxony. The battle demonstrated the resilience of the Swedish army and maintained Sweden's influence in the conflict, even after the death of Gustavus Adolphus.

Battle of Jankau (1645)

The Battle of Jankau fought on March 6, 1645, was one of the last major battles of the Thirty Years' War. The Swedish forces, led by Lennart Torstenson, achieved a decisive victory over the Imperial army. This battle further weakened the Habsburgs and paved the way for the eventual negotiations that would lead to the Peace of Westphalia.

Importance of the Agreement

The Treaty of Westphalia also caused considerable territorial changes throughout Europe. France emerged as a significant winner, gaining lands in Alsace and cementing its position as a powerful European force. Sweden, another significant victor, purchased property in northern Germany, strengthening its position in the region. The Dutch Republic's independence from Spain was formally recognized, effectively ending the Eighty Years' War and establishing the Netherlands as a major participant in European trade and politics. These territorial modifications undermined the Holy Roman Empire, which had played a key role in the Thirty Years' War. The empire's authority was further reduced by the acceptance of its constituent nations' sovereignty, resulting in a more fragmented and decentralized political structure throughout Central Europe.



The loss of the Holy Roman Empire's dominance signaled a watershed moment in European history. The empire, long a strong entity, was substantially weakened, and its position in European affairs had shrunk. This fall prepared the way for the development of other powers, particularly France and Sweden, and contributed to the empire's gradual disintegration over the decades that followed. The Treaty of Westphalia effectively ended the Holy Roman Empire's supremacy and signaled the start of a new period in European politics, marked by the rise of sovereign nation-states.

The aftermath of the Treaty of Westphalia had far-reaching implications, shaping the course of European history and international relations. One of the most notable effects was the development of the modern state system, which is distinguished by the coexistence of sovereign states within the framework of international law. The concepts of state sovereignty and non-interference in other states' internal affairs paved the way for the advancement of

diplomacy and international relations. The Westphalian system also emphasized legal equality among states, regardless of size or power, which became a cornerstone of the international order.

The Treaty of Westphalia recognized religious diversity, which had far-reaching social and cultural implications. While the treaty did not end religious conflict, it did mark a shift toward more tolerance and acceptance of religious variety. The pact also helped to bring an end to the religious wars that had plagued Europe for almost a century, turning the focus of warfare away from religious disagreements and toward state and power issues. This transition was critical in the evolution of modern European society, as religion became increasingly private and independent from state activities.

Involved Parties and Key Figures

Catholics

Catholic side, the war was driven by the Habsburgs' desire to consolidate their power and restore Catholic dominance in regions where Protestantism had taken hold. The Catholic coalition included the Holy Roman Empire, the Catholic League, and other Catholic powers, all of whom sought to suppress Protestantism and expand their influence in Europe.

The Holy Roman Empire

The Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II was the leading figure of the Catholic cause. A devout Catholic, Ferdinand was determined to reassert imperial authority and enforce the Catholic faith throughout his territories. His policies, including the Edict of Restitution in 1629, which aimed to restore Catholic lands seized by Protestants, were a major factor in prolonging the conflict. Ferdinand's efforts were supported by the Catholic League, an alliance of Catholic states within the Empire, led by Maximilian I of Bavaria and the formidable military leader, Count Johann Tserclaes of Tilly.

The Catholic League

The Catholic League was formed in 1609 as a counter to the Protestant Union, with the explicit goal of defending Catholic interests within the Holy Roman Empire. Under the leadership of Maximilian I and military commanders like Tilly, the League played a crucial role in several key battles, including the early victories at the Battle of White Mountain in 1620 and the defeat of Danish forces at the Battle of Lutter in 1626. The League's actions were instrumental in maintaining Catholic dominance in the early years of the war.

Spain

Spain, ruled by the Habsburgs, was deeply involved in the conflict, both in support of the Austrian branch of the Habsburg dynasty and in its own struggles against Protestant forces in the Netherlands and France. Spain's military resources were significant, and Spanish troops fought in various theatres of the war. However, Spain's involvement strained its finances and military, leading to notable defeats, such as the Battle of Rocroi in 1643, which marked the beginning of the decline of Spanish power in Europe.

The Papacy

The Catholic Church, under the leadership of the Papacy, was a staunch supporter of the Habsburgs and the Catholic League. The Pope provided spiritual and financial support to the Catholic forces, viewing the conflict as a vital struggle to preserve the Catholic faith in Europe. The Papacy's backing was crucial in sustaining the Catholic effort throughout the war, although the war's devastating impact on Europe eventually led to a broader recognition of the need for peace.

Protestants

The Protestant side of the Thirty Years' War was made up of a wide range of governments and forces united chiefly by their hostility to the Catholic Habsburgs and a determination to protect and advance Protestantism inside the Holy Roman Empire. The Protestant coalition was motivated by both religious and political reasons, as numerous leaders wanted to protect their independence from imperial domination and extend or defend their domains.

The Holy Roman Empire's Protestant States

The conflict within the Holy Roman Empire began with the Bohemian Revolt in 1618, sparked by the Defenestration of Prague, where Protestant nobles rejected the Catholic King Ferdinand II's authority. The Protestant Union, a coalition of Protestant states within the Empire, was formed to resist the Catholic League and defend the religious and political freedoms of its members. The Bohemian Revolt was initially led by Frederick V, Elector Palatine, who accepted the crown of Bohemia, challenging Ferdinand II. However, after their defeat at the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, the Bohemian cause was crushed, and Frederick V was forced into exile.

Denmark-Norway

Denmark, under King Christian IV, entered the war during the Danish Phase (1625-1629) to support Protestant interests and protect its territorial ambitions in Northern Germany. Although Christian IV was a Lutheran monarch, his involvement was also driven by a desire

to expand Danish influence. However, after suffering a significant defeat at the Battle of Lutter in 1626, Denmark was forced to withdraw from the war, and the Treaty of Lübeck in 1629 marked the end of Danish involvement.

Sweden

Sweden's entry into the war marked a major turning point for the Protestant cause. King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, often hailed as one of the greatest military leaders of his time, intervened in 1630 during the Swedish Phase. Gustavus Adolphus aimed to protect Protestantism and to curb Habsburg power in the Baltic region. His victories, particularly at the Battle of Breitenfeld in 1631, revitalized the Protestant forces. Even after his death at the Battle of Lützen in 1632, Sweden continued to play a crucial role in the conflict, maintaining its military presence and influence in the Holy Roman Empire.

France's Support

Although France was a Catholic nation, it supported the Protestant cause for strategic reasons. Cardinal Richelieu, France's chief minister, provided financial and military aid to Sweden and other Protestant states to weaken the Habsburgs. France's direct involvement in the war, beginning in 1635, further shifted the conflict from a religious war to a struggle for European dominance, with Protestant forces benefiting from French resources and military support.

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