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Introductions from your Star Chamber Dais

Welcome, delegates!

I am Justin Murdock, your chair for the Star Chamber (2022) at StuyMUNC 2021. I am a senior at Stuyvesant, and I've been around with Model UN ever since the beginning of my freshman year. I loved all the captivating debates and action-packed committees I've been a part of, along with all the great friends I made at numerous conferences along my Model UN journey. I have a vast passion for Model UN, currently serving as StuyMUNC's Under Secretary-General of Administration for two years. Beyond Model UN, I serve as the President of my school's law club, am a Big Sib and Homeroom Leader at Stuy, write for my school's SING! competition as a scriptwriter, and play lacrosse for my school's team.

This will be my last StuyMUNC committee, and likely last Model UN committee ever, so I hope this will be both a bittersweet and nostalgic end to my MUN journey, not just for me, but all of you. MUN has been the spark throughout my high school experience and ultimately a variety of topics I am enamored by, particularly international history and psychology. I sincerely hope that this hypothetical committee, around potentially real events around history's corner, will ignite those creative, intellectual, and social engines in you all.

Finally, if you have any inquiries or clarifications, please feel free to reach out to the dais via our emails below. Will the Union Jack survive, or will it die? Let us decide!

Sincerely,
Justin Murdock ('22)
jmurdock20@stuy.edu

Salutations delegates!

My name is Madhavi Tiruchelvam, and I am delighted to be your director for this committee. I'm a current sophomore at Stuyvesant, and I've been a part of Model UN for the past two years. Although I started out my MUN career during virtual learning, I've been privileged enough to attend several conferences, and my love of the club has only grown now that we're back in person. In addition to Model UN, I'm assistant costume director in my school's SING musical theater production. In my spare time, I like to wander Prospect Park, bake brownies, and watch horror movies.

The Star Chamber committee will be run following standard crisis procedure, and I encourage you to take advantage of the broadness of the topic when running crisis arcs. There are so many complex aspects to this conflict, from the cultural and historical divides between the nations involved to the economic and political separations between them. This committee truly encapsulates everything I love about Model UN, giving you the opportunity to learn about history, politics, and what makes up a nation, as well as allowing for creative expression in your solutions and approaches to the issues.

This committee is one of the first in-person MUN experiences we've been able to have all year, and I'm so excited to meet you all! That being said, I understand that you may have some questions so feel free to email me if you have any concerns about parliamentary procedure or just the committee in general. I know it's been a while, and I cannot wait to see you all at StuyMUNC 2022!

Best of Luck,
Madhavi Tiruchelvam
mtiruchelvam40@stuy.edu

Hello Delegates!

My name is Luca Adeishvili, and I will be your crisis director for this committee! I'm honored to serve you all as your crisis director and I can't wait to see you all at StuyMUNC as you all try to solve the issues revolving around the breaking up of the UK. I'm a junior currently and have been part of Stuyvesant's Model UN since the beginning of my freshman year. Since then, I have attended many conferences, passing notes and making speeches while solving issues such as those pertaining to the use of chemical weapons, or the crisis in Yemen. With that, I wish you all a good time trying to solve the issues presented in this committee.

This committee will be tackling a very complicated political issue, so with that in mind, my advice would be to do thorough research on the causes of this issue, its historical impact, and the current situation at hand. Another important aspect you all will need to be well-informed on are the current actors in this situation, such as the major political figures in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and England. Knowledge of their motives and political positions will help you all perform well in this committee. Make sure the positions you take in committee match the actual positions of the person you represent in the real world and also make sure to choose to work with the right people in committee to further your person's own goals. Besides that, be sure to read up on the background guide and come into the committee with a clear and confident mindset. With that, I would like to say that I can't wait to see you all at StuyMUNC 2022 and I hope that you all will come out of the committee knowing that you did well! See y'all at StuyMUNC!

Sincerely,

Luca Adeishvili

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Committee Information

Hello and welcome, distinguished representatives to this emergency session of the renewed Star Chamber! Long gone are the days of Henry VII's ancient star Chamber in the Palace of Westminster—now, delegates across the British Isles have agreed upon meeting in this Court once more in these tumultuous times. This Chamber has now been tasked to deal with the issues of secession in the United Kingdom among its leaders, whether it be through peace or through war. This committee will be taking place in late 2022—much of your knowledge should be based on actual recent events, but in the spirit of Model UN creativity we will leave the fate of the Union Jack up to you delegates.

Though this committee session is quite unexpected, we will follow **standard parliamentary procedure** like all Model UN committees, including both moderated and unmoderated caucuses, and monitored debate. The dais will be impartial and will not serve as actual figures in history.

Given that this is a **Crisis committee**, we will be using various protocols exclusively for this type. Any sort of committee action will be determined by **directives** submitted by delegates, which are written documents

to be voted on (requiring a **simple majority** to pass). Delegates can also give the back room **crisis notes**, which are unilateral actions dependent on the delegate's given capabilities. Other types of notes such as **communiques**, letters to individuals outside the committee, and **press releases**, official statements directed for public release, are greatly encouraged. Such actions can entirely alter the flow of committee, as well as constant **crisis updates**, which can entirely alter the flow of committee and the delegates themselves. Your individual portfolios are attached at the end of the document for your reference to see your stance, position, and abilities.

Although StuyMUNC **will not require** position papers, we strongly recommend the submission of one to the dais' emails for feedback by **Sunday, May 1st**. Any relevant questions should also be addressed via email.

Feel free to let your creative engines spark to make this a memorable, and even more unexpected committee. The fate of the people, the country, and the world, ultimately lies on your shoulders. Union Jack or bust, your choices are a must!

Committee Background

The Kingdom of Great Britain was formed on May 1, 1707 with the ratification of the 1706 Treaty of Union by the Kingdoms of England (including Wales) and Scotland. The United Kingdom would later be formed with the Acts of Union of 1800, which united Great Britain with the Kingdom of Ireland, a client state of Britain's that had operated under limited political autonomy, on January 1, 1801, after the act had taken effect.

Early Relations with Ireland

The nation maintained a state of relative stability with its kingdoms up until the 1870s. With the growth of the Home Rule movement came more advocacy from Irish politicians, especially nationalists in the Irish Parliamentary Party, for Ireland's right to self-government from Britain. Ireland would be granted self-governance under the Government of Ireland Act of 1914 on September 18, 1914, however the act's implementation would be postponed with the outbreak of World War I.

On April 24, 1916, Irish republicans would launch an uprising in Ireland with the aim of establishing an independent Irish republic in what would be named the Easter Rising. The uprising was quickly suppressed by British troops six days later, and a total

of 3,430 men and 79 women would be arrested for alleged involvement in the uprising. The British government would receive widespread criticism from Irish politicians and the public alike for its mishandling of the court-martialing and execution of many of those supposedly involved. Many of the trials were done without proper legal counsel for the defendants and much of the executions were done on flimsy evidence, with many of those executed not being leaders in the uprising, despite British claims that they would only execute those dubbed to be "ringleaders" in the uprising.

Further actions taken by the British after the Easter Rising, including the imprisonment of thousands of nationalist activists and the imposition of martial law in Ireland led to further unrest amongst the Irish public. The controversial nature of Britain's response to the uprising inadvertently helped dramatically increase support for the far more radically separatist Sinn Fein party. Sinn Fein would win 70% of Irish seats in the UK Parliament in the 1918 general election and would subsequently declare independence from Britain on January 21, 1919.

The war would officially end on December 6, 1921 with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty which gave Ireland

the status of a self-governing dominion. Ireland had been partitioned into Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland earlier in the year with the enactment of the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, and with the signing of the treaty, Britain gave Northern Ireland the option to leave the now self-governing Irish Free State. The Irish Free State would officially be established on December 6, 1922, with Northern Ireland, mostly comprised of pro-Britain loyalists, deciding to stay in the UK with a semi-self governing status in the nation.

The Thatcher Era & The Troubles

Margaret Thatcher became Britain's first female prime minister on May 4, 1979, after a long tenure in the British Parliament and as the leader of the Conservative Party starting in 1975. Her premiership marked a political shift away from the heavy regulatory and welfare state policies that dominated British politics to a further emphasis on deregulation, privatization and neoliberalism. Her policies would also be marked by a promotion of British nationalism, as shown by her vocal support of Ronald Reagan's "rollback" policies across the globe and her fervent opposition to British membership in the European Communities, the predecessor to the EU.

Her premiership would take place in the backdrop of the Troubles, a decades-long conflict between Irish

republicans/nationalists and pro-Britain loyalists in Northern Ireland over its political status. Notably, Thatcher would avoid an assassination attempt after the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) bombed the Grand Brighton Hotel on October 12, 1984. Her premiership was especially marred by the hunger strikes of republican prisoners in 1980 and 1981 due to the suspension of their political status, and the death of Bobby Sands, one of the strikers, due to the government's inaction.

The Troubles eventually came to an end with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, which established that if Northern Ireland wished to reunify with Ireland, the governments of Britain and Ireland would be obligated to let them do so at any time. Violence continues to persist, however the agreement stopped most major engagements in the conflict.

Thatcher's premiership would come to an end 8 years prior to the agreement on November 28, 1990 with Thatcher resigning after a successful challenge to her leadership by her colleagues, spurred on by growing discontent with Thatcher's support of poll taxes, her opposition to the UK's involvement in the European Communities and her mishandling of the economy. The ideology of Thatcherism which defined her premiership would persist past her tenure, with future Conservative and non-Conservative governments also

utilizing the principles of the ideology to a great extent.

The PM-ship of Blair and Brown

Tony Blair and Gordon Brown's times as prime minister would be marked by a political shift in the politics of the Labor Party with the beginning of the "New Labor" brand in the party. Both administrations would abandon the more left-wing politics Labor had been known for in favor of adopting many tenets of Thatcherite ideology such as deregulation and weakening trade unions. This ideological realignment was done in an attempt to put it back in the mainstream of British politics after having not been in power for almost 20 years.

Blair's government was involved in negotiating the Good Friday Agreement which effectively ended the Troubles and also held referendums which resulted in the Scottish and Welsh electorates voting in favor of devolved administration, a form of administration which granted greater levels of self-government to the respective parliaments of Scotland and Wales. Euroscepticism, the ideological opposition to the UK's membership in the EU, greatly increased with Blair's emphasis on multiculturalism in Britain and his large acceptance of immigrants from new EU member states.

Brown's government would be marked by the 2008 global financial crisis and a large increase in the UK's national debt in an attempt to handle the financial crisis. Labor would lose 91 seats in the 2010 general election due to the financial crisis causing their popularity to drastically decline. This combined with the Conservatives forming a coalition with the Liberal Democrats would result in Brown losing the 2010 general election to David Cameron. 4 years after his loss, Scotland held an independence referendum on September 18, 2014, with 55.3% of voters voting against independence and with Brown playing a large role in maintaining the union while the referendum took place.

Brexit

Though eurosceptic views weren't out of the mainstream in British politics, the issue of EU membership wasn't a priority for many UK voters for much of the beginning of the 21st century. The issue would increasingly gain prominence as the issue of immigration, especially from EU member states, became an increasingly important issue amongst voters. This was especially indicated with the electoral successes of UKIP, a party with a hardline

anti-immigration platform that blamed EU membership for increased immigration, in the 2004, 2009, and 2014 European elections.

Prime Minister David Cameron would initially reject calls for a referendum in 2012, however would eventually succumb to pressure to do so due to the risk UKIP posed to the Conservative party's electoral performance. On June 23, 2016, the referendum would be held with voters voting in favor of leaving the EU by a close margin. Cameron would resign on July 13 and be replaced by Theresa May. Ireland would be a major issue in negotiations, as Northern Ireland and Ireland would no longer have an open border between each other after the UK left the EU. The "Irish backstop," a part of the initial Brexit withdrawal agreement, sought to re-establish an open border between Northern Ireland and Ireland after Brexit, however this would cause issues with many eurosceptic conservative MPs in Parliament.

The withdrawal agreement would end up being rejected three times by Parliament and the UK would have to request an extension to their withdrawal date twice in attempts to renegotiate the agreement. Theresa May would resign on July 24, 2019 after the refusal of the agreement and Boris Johnson would succeed her as prime minister, subsequently calling for a snap election

after also being unable to get the agreement approved. The Conservatives would end up winning a large majority in Parliament that allowed them to ratify the now revised withdrawal agreement, setting the date for withdrawal to be on January 31, 2020.

The UK's withdrawal and subsequent implementation of the withdrawal agreement meant that Ireland and Northern Ireland would maintain an open border while the UK entered a transition period in terms of trade, travel, and freedom of movement for all of 2020. The subsequent transition period would end on December 30 with the signing of a permanent trade agreement between the UK and the EU.

Modern Implications

Various British Isles excluding England have signaled great distaste in recent British affairs. Notably, 62% of Scots voted to remain in the latest Brexit referendum, signaling an ignorance of the Scottish voice. Westminster even went as far as to pass a series of laws that threaten to undermine Scottish legislative power, with the United Kingdom Internal Market Act via the Sewel convention, which allowed passing of laws without devolved legislatures (notably Scotland).

Though a border already existed between the Republic of Ireland and

Northern Ireland, it is seemingly cemented with the divisions in trade, given to the government by a complex legal arrangement known as the Northern Ireland Protocol. It has become a critical juncture given the hard border that has been estimated to cost 850 pounds a year in cost. Fears over trading protocol in the Irish sea have also arisen.

Brexit largely seems to have failed in regions other than England and is seemingly unpopular. What is to be done? In this hypothetical committee, we begin with such:

- Nicola Sturgeon, Elizabeth Saville Roberts, and Deirdre Hargey collectively signed the St. Patrick's Agreement of 2022, which entails: (1) the formation of a weak confederation called the United Confederation of British Isles of Scotland, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Wales (UCB), (2) the implementation of filibustering in Westminster, and (3) a halting of trade between Irish and English

territories (now sourcing fuel resources from Russia). This has been argued to be a blatant violation of sovereignty, which delegates must explore according to Westminster and Union law and traditions.

- The Scottish National Liberation Army and Irish Republican Army have been called upon once more by various political parties and fervent nationalists, similar to the Troubles. Sources of such arms are unknown so far.
- With militarization and plighting, Irish and Scottish lands have become infertile due to rapid agricultural usage, leading to concerns of shortages, especially during COVID times.

Delegates must consider these new hypothetical updates going forward in this committee.

Committee Positions

Within this committee, there are representatives from across British politics, with members of multiple different parties and legislative houses. There are two general blocs, pro-independence and unionist, but within these blocs, there are a multitude of different parties with differing views for what those terms mean. Thus, being in the same bloc as another representative doesn't necessarily correspond to shared beliefs or values.

Unionist

The Unionist bloc supports keeping the British Union together in

some shape or form. They include members of the **Conservative** party in Parliament, members of the **Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)** in Northern Ireland, as well as members of the **Labour** party in Parliament.

Pro-Independence

This bloc contains politicians advocating for separation from the Union for their respective nations. The bloc includes members of the **Scottish National Party (SNP)**, Scottish Labour, the **Plaid Cymru** in Wales, and **Sinn Féin** in Ireland

UNIONISTS

Prime Minister Boris Johnson

Boris Johnson is the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and the Leader of the Conservative Party in Parliament. He has also served as mayor of London and secretary of state for foreign affairs under former PM Theresa May. He was the leading spokesman for the Leave campaign during the Brexit referendum, persistently advocating for strategies that centered on maintaining British autonomy rather than close economic connections with the EU.

Dominic Raab MP

Dominic Raab is the Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor, and was also formerly foreign secretary. He is a stalwart member of the Conservative party, and was a major proponent of the Leave campaign.

Priti Patel MP

Currently serving as Home Secretary of the UK, Priti Patel is a major member of the Conservative party

within Parliament. In the past, she has held the titles of Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury as well as Secretary of State for International Development. She was staunchly in favor of leaving the EU during the 2016 referendum, and has come under fire many times for her right-wing attitudes towards immigration and other issues.

Sir Keir Starmer MP

Keir Starmer is the Leader of the Labour Party in Parliament and thus Leader of the Opposition under the Conservative-headed government. He has stated that he does not believe in Irish reunification and if a border poll was to be taken, he was firmly on the side of the unionists, although he added he believed it was a decision for the Irish peoples to make.

Thangam Debonnaire MP

Thangam Debonnaire is the Shadow Leader of the House of Commons in British Parliament. She has been an MP since 2015, and is a member of the Labour Party.

Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP

Sir Donaldson is the current leader of the Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland. He is a Member of Parliament, representing the DUP as their leader in the House of Commons since 2019. Recently, he has come under some fire following his decision for DUP

representatives to quit their positions in retaliation for the **Northern Ireland Protocol**. He is firm in his belief that the protocol will tear apart Northern Ireland's position in the Union and thus the Union as a whole.

Paul Givan

Paul Givan was elected First Minister of Northern Ireland in June 2021, and is a staunch unionist. He resigned quite recently, in February 2022, in accordance with the Democratic Unionist Party's (DUP) protest to the post-Brexit trade policy known as the **North-Ireland protocol**. The protocol was intended to maintain an open border between the Republic of Ireland, which is part of the EU, and Northern Ireland, which no longer qualified for the same trading privileges as it is currently in a non-EU nation. To avoid trade checkpoints on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the UK and the EU negotiated that the checkpoints would be on the border of Northern Ireland and Great Britain. However, unionists argued that this pushed Northern Ireland apart from the rest of the union.

Mark Drakeford

Mark Drakeford is the First Minister of Wales and has been the Head of the Welsh Labour Party since 2018.

Anas Sarwar

Anas Sarwar is the Leader of the Scottish Labour Party, as well as a Member of the Scottish Parliament. He is firmly against Scottish independence, calling it a ‘disaster’, and that the SNP should never have held such a ‘reckless’ referendum.

Rishi Sunak MP

Rishi Sunak is the British Chancellor of Exchequer and the MP for Richmond (Yorks) in Parliament. He is a staunch supporter of the Conservative Party and former Prime Minister Theresa May, having voted three times in favor of May’s Brexit withdrawal agreement. He greatly supported Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s campaign, becoming Jonson’s Chief Secretary of the Treasury in the beginning of his administration. Since becoming Chancellor, he has been the lodestar of the government’s economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PRO-INDEPENDENCE

Nicola Sturgeon

Nicola Sturgeon is the first minister of Scotland and leader of the Scottish National Party. She began her career as a member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) in 1999, and worked her way up the party ranks to become deputy leader in 2004. She fought for Scottish independence during the 2014

referendum and although citizens voted to stay, her effective campaigning led to her being voted first minister of Scotland as well as leader of the SNP. She was a strong opponent of leaving the EU during the Brexit negotiations, and has pushed to hold another independence referendum in 2023.

Ian Blackford MP

Ian Blackford is the Westminster Parliamentary Leader of the Scottish National Party. The Westminster Leader leads the party within the British Parliament, although they aren’t necessarily the leader of the party as a whole. The SNP is one of the main pro-independence forces within Scotland, and holding a referendum was one of their main talking points during the 2019 election season.

Keith Brown MSP

Keith Brown has been a Member of Scottish Parliament since 2007, and has been Cabinet Secretary for Justice within the Scottish Government Cabinet. He is the deputy leader of the Scottish National party. As Cabinet Secretary, he is responsible for maintaining domestic safety by overseeing police issues as well as issues to do with the penal system and criminal justice.

Kirsten Oswald MP

Kirsten Oswald is the deputy Westminster leader of the Scottish National Party. She has been a Member of Parliament since 2019. She is also Chairwoman and Business Convener of the SNP.

Adam Price

Adam Price has served as the leader of the **Plaid Cymru**, a Welsh nationalist party since 2018. In addition, he has been a member of the **Senedd**, which is the devolved Welsh parliament, since 2016. He agreed to a joint campaign with the SNP to remain in the European Union, and has stated that Welsh independence is one of his major leadership priorities. While campaigning for the 2021 Senedd elections, he stated that if the Plaid Cymru were to win a majority of the seats, they would hold a referendum for Welsh independence.

Elizabeth Saville Roberts MP

As a member of Parliament since 2015, Elizabeth Saville Roberts has fiercely campaigned for more representation of Welsh and Irish identities in government. She is the Leader of the Plaid Cymru in the House of Commons, demonstrating her commitment to Welsh independence from England. Some of her notable achievements include campaigning for

Irish and Welsh language freedoms by speaking both languages within Parliamentary addresses.

Michelle O'Neill MLA

Michelle O'Neill is the former Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland and the Vice President of the Sinn Féin party. She has been a Member of the Legislative Assembly in Northern Ireland since 2007. She led Sinn Féin's election campaigns in 2017 and 2019, and has been a fierce supporter of Irish reunification. She argued that after Brexit, a referendum for independence was urgently needed. After DUP leader Paul Givan resigned, O'Neill automatically lost her position as Deputy First Minister.

Deirdre Hargey

Deirdre Hargey is the Minister of Communities within the Northern Irish executive, and a stalwart member of the Sinn Féin Irish nationalist party.

Conor Murphy

Conor Murphy is a member of the Legislative Assembly for Northern Ireland. He is a member of the Sinn Féin party and previously served as a Member of Parliament.

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