

Duma



Model United Nations at Illinois XXII

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Letter from the Director

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to MUNI! My name is Justin Tomczyk and I am your director for this committee. In this body, you will be simulating the Duma of the provisional government in the year 1917 - right after the revolution and exactly a century ago. Delegates will be simulating the legislative body representing the single largest country on earth - covering almost a dozen time zones and representing numerous nationalities and faiths. As a student of Political Science and Russian, Eastern European and Eurasian studies, I've designed this body to represent the many intersecting points of Russian identity and the social climate of the empire. This committee will be combining aspects of a crisis committee and a general assembly and will force delegates to leverage unilateral abilities and actions with political power and influence. While this format may be somewhat confusing at the start, myself and my staff will do everything we can to clarify any questions regarding procedure and rules. We hope that you enjoy this conference - please direct any concerns and comments to myself.

Best,

Justin Tomczyk
Director, 1917 Duma

Letter from the Chair

Hello everyone!

My name is Amal Mir and I'll be serving as your chair for the Russian Duma Committee. I am currently a sophomore double majoring in Economics and Political Science. I have been involved in Model UN for around 6 years now, and served as the Director of the U.S. Senate for MUNI last year. I look forward to meeting you all in person! If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at amir4@illinois.edu. I hope that everyone is as excited about this conference as I am, and wish you to know that what you are doing is extremely important in helping to make our world a more united and cohesive place.

Thanks!

Amal Mir
Head Chair, 1917 Duma

Committee Information

State of the Empire

Officially, the Russian Empire is now known as the Russian Republic. The February Revolution of 1917 ended the Romanov dynasty and led to the establishment of a provisional government. Russia has made peace with the Central Powers as the Great War enters its final hours. Parts of what was once the western half of the Russian Empire (Land along the Baltic Sea and regions historically known as Poland and Lithuania) remain under German occupation. Central Asia (historically known as “Turkestan”) is now skirting the boundary between a collection of Russian-protectorates and fully independent states - the empire’s loose grasp on the Central Asian steppe has led to the development of a parallel society that is growing more and more susceptible to foreign influence. The Caucasus are governed by an iron fist. After centuries of conflict, it seems that the region’s blood feuds and grudges may be quelled with the establishment of a trans-Caucasus governance. In the East, Russia’s territorial integrity is challenged by an increasingly ambitious China and Japan. A porous border along the north of China and parts of the Korean Peninsula have placed intense pressure on Vladivostok and Siberian authorities to pursue regional governance to counter foreign pressure. Throughout the empire, pockets of resistance have become breeding grounds for numerous political ideologies - Communists, Anarchists, Monarchists and Independence activists have all grown stronger in their isolated holdouts due to the waning influence of the central government.

The Duma and You:

In this time of crisis, the Duma is one of the few functioning organs of the Russian government. As representatives of the Russian people during this trying time, it is up to you - the delegates - to keep the fabric of Russian civil society intact. Because the Russian executive is in such a shaky state due to the collapse of the Tsar and the judiciary is all but paralyzed, the Duma will be assuming most of the responsibilities of the Russian state. That being said, there are certain boundaries in the actions available to the Duma.

The Duma contains two members of noteworthy rank: Alexander Guchov (President of the Duma) and Ivan Goremykin (Prime Minister of Russia). It’s best to consider the role of these positions in the Duma to be the analogous to the Speaker of the House in the American house of representatives.

The Prime Minister reports to the cabinet of ministers and the president of the Russian state. In this sense, he is a powerful individual with close connections to the higher ups of the Russian

government. There are, however, many caveats that come with this title. The Prime Minister cannot introduce directives to the Duma. They may sign as a signatory and speak in favor of a specific policy, but they may not sign as a sponsor nor motion to introduce the legislature. The Prime Minister is also attached to the status of the ruling coalition – if the government is targeted by a vote of no confidence, he loses his title and is considered a normal voting member of the Duma. There are certain advantages that the Prime Minister holds – their unilateral capabilities are greatly enhanced by the resources provided to them through their government post and the Prime Minister is often in close contact with the high ranking members of Russia's military and government.

The President of the Duma is similar to the Prime Minister in that they may not sponsor nor introduce legislature. However, while the Prime Minister's focus is the Russian government as a whole, the President of the Duma is focused exclusively on the inner workings of the body. The President of the Duma is responsible for keeping the ethics and practices of the Duma members in line and is responsible for committee oversight. The President of the Duma is able to launch investigations related to corruption and graft. Like the Prime Minister, the President of the Duma is tethered to a ruling coalition and may be ousted through a vote of no-confidence.

As legislators your personal powers are somewhat limited. Your primary goal is the creation of laws. "Laws" in this case refers to both civil law (i.e. voting requirements, what rights citizens have, the legal status of minority groups and nationalities within Russia) and laws regarding policy and the Russian state (the creation and approval of treaties, declarations of war, and other agreements). In this case, laws and legal matters will be resolved through the usage of resolutions. When directive is passed it is expected that the state will then enact whatever is included in the directive. Directives are passed with a simple majority vote of Duma members currently present. **Due to Russia's weariness towards war and conflict, directives related to declarations of war and the usage of military require a 2/3rds majority.** A directive may be overturned after its passage with a 3/4ths voting majority - however, overturning a directive will not undo consequences of the state's actions. Directives that are declarations of war are considered null and void at the end of the conflict. Directives related to treaties and trade agreements require the recipient country to ratify before going into effect. A member of the Duma may motion for a vote of no confidence at any time. If over half of the Duma votes approves of the motion, the committee will move into a vote of no confidence. It takes a 3/4ths majority to formally dissolve the ruling coalition. The positions of Prime Minister and President of the Duma are then decided by popular vote within the chamber.

Because you are not cabinet level ministers you cannot issue personal commands to components of the government (such as mobilization orders or financial decisions). You do, however, likely have connections in local government, industry, and various parts of civil society that would you may bend to your will. These connections will be either dispersed via envelope at the start of the committee or at the delegate's request to the crisis director. You are strongly encouraged to research the ethnic identity, religious affiliation, geographic location and political ties your character holds to better understand your connections.

On Russia and the Russians:

Russia ("Россия") is the largest country on earth and home to the Russian people. The country straddles the Eurasian steppe with its western border in Eastern Europe and its easternmost point just miles from Alaska. Russia is home to numerous nationalities and cultures - the most numerous of these people being ethnic Russians. Ethnic Russians represent roughly 75 to 80 percent of Russia's population and are mostly centered in Russia's western half. Ethnic Russians speak Russian and utilize the cyrillic alphabet in their text. Russians are primarily Eastern Orthodox with a significant Jewish minority. While considered a part of greater-Europe, the question of European identity and association has resonated through the foundations of Russian society. Political and religious differences between Russia and mainland Europe (along with extensive Russian interaction with the East) have lead many Russian policymakers and leaders to consider themselves a separate identity.

One of the major groupings of nationalities in Russia are non-Russian Slavs. These are the Ukrainians, Poles and Belarusians located along Russia's western half. While these people share many similarities with Russians due to a shared slavic language and geographic proximity, there are many diverging cultural points that have lead to inter-ethnic tension. The Poles are predominantly Catholic and utilize the Latin alphabet. Poles in Russia represent a third of the Polish nation - the other two thirds being occupied by Germany and Austro-Hungary. While Poles have begrudgingly accepted Russian control, their attachment to the historic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Polish golden era have lead to a series of revolts, rebellions and insurrections over several years. The territory that was historically Poland has become the battleground of the Great War's Eastern Front. Ukrainians and Belarusians represent another large portion of the non-Russian Slavs in the Russian Empire. While Poles have retained their national identity and largely preserved their national consciousness, the largest divide within the Ukrainian and Belarussian communities are over whether or not they are separate from Russians in their identity. Usage of a (modified) cyrillic script and the predominance of Orthodox christianity have lead many in Russian society to argue Ukrainian and Belarussian national

expression are components of Russian identity. However, the presence of a large Catholic community in western Ukraine and a vocal Polish minority in parts of Belarus have complicated this process.

The Balts represent a unique group of peoples located in Russia's north. The Balts occupy areas known as Lithuania, Latvia/Livonia, Estonia and Finland. Balts are primarily Protestant (the exception being heavily-Catholic Lithuania). While in close proximity to Russia, Baltic peoples are largely unrelated to Russians in terms of culture and language. Lithuanian and Latvian represent the oldest living branch of the Indo-European linguistic family tree and predate the Slavic family. Estonian and Finnish are Finno-Ugric languages that are closely related to Hungarian, but are otherwise completely linguistically isolated. There is a significant German-speaking population along the Baltic Sea due to the Teuton-lead Baltic Crusades and the historic presence of Prussia.

The Caucasus represent one of the most troublesome areas of Russia. Located at the crux of Turkey and Iran, the Caucasus represent the intersection between Eastern Europe and the Middle East. After a history of raids and skirmishes in Russia's southern half, the Russian Empire sought the complete domination of the various tribes and khanates that ruled the region. The patchwork of nationalities and cultures in the region have complicated Russian efforts to govern the region. Among the many Caucasian groups are the Chechens - a group known for their ferocious fighting abilities and rugged lifestyle. While the Chechens represent a historic opponent of Russian interests in the region, they also are an important power-broker in dealing with other Caucasus peoples. The Chechens have been used as a vassal by Russian authorities in countering insurrection attempts and as a first line of defense against creeping Turkish and Iranian influence. The Armenians are one of the oldest cultures in the Caucasus and represent the first Christian kingdom in the world. They consider the Russians to be the historic protectors of Orthodox Christians and are reluctant to stray from Russia's side. Whispers of the cleansing of Armenians in Turkey have crept up the Caucasus and throughout the empire. The Georgians are a particularly troublesome group in regards to Russian rule in the Caucasus. Like the Armenians, the Georgians are Orthodox Christians. However, historic conflict against Russia and between Georgian subgroups - particularly Ossetians and Abkhaz - have left a distrust with Russia and an affinity for European influence. The Azeris are a particularly unique group of Caucasus peoples. Azeris occupy a region historically known as Azerbaijan - an area that transcends the Russian-Iranian border. Azeri is a Turkic language with a high level of mutual intelligibility with Turkish. Despite their Turkic lineage, Azeris are Shia Muslims with a large Zoroastrian minority. Close cultural ties to Turkey have created a divide within Azeri society, particularly in relation to Russian military occupation and rule in the Caucasus. Azerbaijan's Shia faith has put them at

odds with Sunni groups throughout the Caucasus and have complicated Russian efforts to placate the Region.

Russia's Asian half represents the most expansive part of the empire. Among the many denizens of this territory are the descendants of Siberian settlers and Russian colonists. These communities form a network of outpost-cities that are largely self reliant and govern themselves autonomously from the rest of the empire. Over time, a political movement calling for Siberian independence has grown from the tundra and is seeking any weakness in the empire to exert itself. Siberia is also home to numerous indigenous groups with a long, complicated history with Russia. While Russian colonialism did lead to direct conflict with these groups, the vast geography of Siberia and steppe have kept tensions between the crown and these peoples at a minimum. However, with the removal of the Romanov family and establishment of the provisional government, many Siberian peoples are grasping at any chance for liberation and self-determination. To the south, in the area known as "Turkestan", the peoples of Central Asia push the boundaries for self determination in the provisional government. Turkic-speaking and Sunni Muslim, Central Asia represents the most culturally distant area of the Russian Empire. Central Asia is composed of Uzbeks, Turkmen, Tajiks, Kazakhs. All of these groups speak a language within the Turkic family (the exception being Tajik, a language similar to Farsi/Persian) and trace their lineage to the Golden Horde. Within Central Asia is the Khanate of Khiva, a semi-independent protectorate composed of primarily of Uzbeks. The Emirate of Bukhara is another semi autonomous area of Central Asia, composed mostly of ethnic Persians.

Members of the 1917 Russian Duma:

Ivan Goremykin

Leading Duma member and Prime Minister of Russia, Goremykin represents one of the many old-guards of the Russian state. A sympathizer towards the Tsar and upper echelons of the military, Goremykin is one of the most staunchly conservative members of the Duma. As Prime Minister and one of the most important individuals within the Russian political system Goremykin is committed to the consolidation of power and is heavily resistant to change.

Alexander Guchkov

President of the Duma and leading member of the Octoberists, Guchkov is one of the driving forces behind the Russian opposition and the new Russian left. Guchkov watches the Duma like a hawk and has a keen aversion towards any semblance of corruption and nepotism. That being said - his firebrand revolutionary personality and confrontational nature have put him at odds with the Russian state and the ideological right.

Alexander Kerensky

Arguably one of the Duma's most principled members, Kerensky represents the moderate liberals within the Russian Duma. As a well-educated attorney from the upper crust of Russian society Kerensky has found himself at odds with both the far left and establishment right. However, his insight into reform and modernization have lead many to support him during this turbulent transition.

Roman Malinovsky

One of the leading members of the Bolsheviks and Russian left. Malinovsky is a somewhat reclusive figure in Russian politics. With little political background and few connections to the Tsar, Malinovsky rose to the rank of Duma member by mobilizing trade unions and workers behind him during the October Revolution.

Pavel Milukov

A member of the progressive movement, Milukov has worked extensively with Kerensky to prioritize governance reform and anti-corruption efforts within the provisional government. Unlike Kerensky, Milukov has held better traction with the more radical elements of the political left.

Vasily Shulgin

A cornerstone of the Russian conservatives, Shulgin aims to unite all the competing factions of the political right under one united cause. Vasily has extended cooperation efforts to everyone from the military hardliners to the Orthodox ultra-nationalists and imperialists.

Alexei Khvostov

One of the most controversial members of the Duma. A proud, staunch conservative, Khvostov has openly criticised almost every initiative and plan to reform the government. Khvostov has come under fire for his historic support of serfdom and the ruling class in addition to a series of anti-semitic publications. While controversial in the Duma, Khvostov holds a large amount of clout with the Orthodox church and the remaining vestiges of the Russian ruling class.

Vladimir Purishkevich

Purishkevich is one of the most influential members of the Duma in terms of influence and authority. A noted radical and ultra-conservative, Purishkevich is suspected of collaborating with the Black Hundreds and other militant groups. Purishkevich has openly rejected calls for reform.

Victoria Sobolev

A member of the left and progressives within the Duma. Sobolev is ethnically Russian and is a native of Kharkov, Ukraine. Her interest in politics began during a city-wide strike in response to a shortage of food and supplies during the Great War.

Paulina Franzkewicz

A native of Russian-occupied Poland and a devoted Catholic, Paulina represents one of the highest ranking Polish nationals within the Russian state. She is supportive of a strong central government and is hesitant towards the independence and surrender of imperial holdings.

Anano Tsurtssumia

A Georgian national and noteworthy author, Anano has spent years advocating and fighting for Georgian independence. She is a supporter of the socialists and progressives in the Duma due to their stance on decolonization and statehood for imperial vassals.

Katerina Mourmul

Native of western Ukraine, representative Mourmul has played a key role in fostering support for the reform effort along the fringes of the Russian state. While Katerina is a noteworthy Socialist, her allegiance towards the cause of the Ukrainian national struggle has led to serious divisions with other members of the left.

Vladimir Potiyevsky

Veteran of the Russo-Japanese War and high ranking member of the navy, Potiyevsky is one of the many members of the Duma opposed to all types of reform. In his mind, the only way to cure the ailing Russian state is through more repression and centralized power.

Timur Sareshfili

Orthodox Georgian Duma member. Favors keeping the Russian state completely intact due to increasing stability near the Caucasus after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, but strongly opposes Russian colonialism and Russification of national minorities.

Nursultan Namigaev

A native of Azerbaijan and noteworthy local administrator, Nursultan is one of the rising figures of Caucus politics. As a devout Shia muslim, Namigaev has proposed not only the accelerated emancipation of Azerbaijan from the Russian state but has also pushed for closer Azeri ties to neighboring Turkey. Namigaev is considered a moderate in Russian politics and his priorities lay mostly with statehood and independence.

Tadas Stanaites

A veteran of the Great War and native of Lithuania, Stanaites represents one of the many activists fighting for Baltic independence. Stanaites was drawn to politics after witnessing a repressive crackdown on demonstrators in Vinius by the Russian government during the reconquest of the city.

Alexander Odinoky

From the heartland of Russia, Odinoky represents the many Russian communities living along the western edge of the Ural mountains. Alexander is drawn to Bolshevism in the hope that revolution would revitalize the Russian economy and bring industry back to backwater regions.

Mahmir Kino

An Azeri-Bolshevik, Kino hopes that a future under Socialism and a united left would allow the caucuses to move past their knot of blood-feuds and ethnic wars and usher in a new era of peace and prosperity.

Rufat Abbasov

Like Mahmir, Rufat is a strong proponent of Bolshevism from Azerbaijan. Having renounced his faith and distanced himself from his family and connections in Baku, Abbasov struggles to connect with the average Azeri.

Kristina Varonko

A native of Minsk, Varonko has lead rallies and demonstrations targeted at workers groups and farming collectives in rural Belarus. While her activism has mobilized workers collectives throughout Belarus, she's drawn attention from the military and local administration due to her inflammatory rhetoric.

Alek Bukoviki

Alek Bukoviki is an open supporter of the Tsar and the imperial government. His open advocacy of martial law and military rule has chafed some members of the Russian right. While his rhetoric has pushed some away, his connections in Russian-occupied Poland have given him a large amount of influence over Russian territorial holdings.

Marina Filipovic

A Serbian living in Russia, Filipovic was a strong proponent of Russian support for the Serbian people living under Austro-Hungarian rule. However, given the disastrous outcome of Russian involvement in the Great War, Filipovic become somewhat of a polarizing figure. She is generally aligned with moderate policies.

Kristina Savic

Another Serbian living in Russia. Unlike Filipovic, Savic places party allegiance over her national ties to Serbia. Savic is a vocal Bolshevik as she considers a proper revolution to be the only counter to western expansion into the Balkans.

Vladimir Kovesnikov

A conservative and nationalist, Kovesnikov is considered one of the leader candidates for Prime Minister. His appeals to stability and gradual reform have made him an attractive choice to undecided and moderate voters.

Wladyslaw Shur

Distant from other members of the Russian right, Wladyslaw is a major proponent of decentralized and limited governance. Appalled by the right's embrace of military rule and the left's calls for popular revolution, Shur has found himself at home with minority voices and independence activists.

Vlad "Volodya" Chornogorye

A factory manager and native of Omsk, Vlad is another leading figure of the Bolshevik movement. His charisma and popular appeal make him a strong contender for future prime ministership.

Dragan Osmanovic

A second generation Serb living in Saint Petersburg, Osmanovic is a large proponent of Orthodox solidarity and aid. Osmanovic has prioritized Russia's relationship with Serbian, Georgian and Armenian communities in the state and abroad. Osmanovic leans right.

Piotr Savelevich

A former professor turned activist, Savelevich represents a large section of the Russian middle class. While a socialist and open to all types of reform Savelevich still considers immediate stability to be a priority of the Russian state.

Natasha Chala

Chala is a native of Kiev and former journalist. Her connections to the investigative press have helped uncover large amounts of corruption within the Tsarist regime. While she left her press position behind in favor of her position in the Duma, her connections in journalism continue to feed her information from investigative reports.

Oleg Sesperov

A supporter of the military and current provisional government. Sesperov is one of the leading conservative voices in the Duma.

Vasyl Zadaniya

Vasyl is a veteran of the Great War. After being maimed in the opening weeks of the conflict Vasyl became a leading anti-war campaigner. Zadaniya is member of the Duma's conservative bloc.

Igor Smirkov

Leader of the Donbas miners' union. Smirkov has a vast network of connections and political ties in Eastern Ukraine. While Smikov is a liberal socialist, his workers union is more loyal to him than any particular movement or party.

Sergey Kadyrov

Kadyrov is one of the leaders of the Don Cossacks. With his autonomous lifestyle and history, Kadyrov presents a counterweight to the military leadership usually favored by conservatives. Kadyrov is an advocate for keeping the empire intact.

Rufid Bagirhov

A proud Azeri and devote muslim, Bagirhov has long served as a voice for understanding between Azeris living in Persia and Azeris living in Russia. While his connections and constituents in Baku overwhelmingly approve of his leadership, Rufid has drawn the attention of Russian authorities for his overwhelming closeness to Persia.

Jurate Grybauskaite

A Lithuanian patriot, Grybauskaite has worked endlessly for rapprochement between Russia and Lithuania through reform and improvements in governance. Grybauskaite is a progressive and approves of the decolonisation of the Baltic states.

Jaan Vokk

Governor of an oblast within Estonia, Vokk is a Russian loyalist and held close ties with the Tsar. While ethnically Estonian, Jaan considers the continuation of the Russian empire to be his number one concern. Jaan has been accepted into the Duma's conservative bloc.

Yersultan Kuderyaev

Kuderyaev is a socialist and community organizer from Almaty, Kazakhstan. Attaching himself to the progressives and reformers, Kuderyaev has fought diligently for reform in the Russian state and the decentralization of power away from Saint Petersburg.

Darkan Savirmov

Darkan is another Duma representative from Kazakhstan, hailing from Aktobe. Darkan is a progressive like Yersultan, but favors a strong centralized government over squabbling local administrations.

Ali Takimov

The daughter of a Chechen warlord, Takimov is one of the few voices representing Chechnya and the northern Caucasus in the Duma. Her ties to her family and clan have raised suspicions regarding her true allegiance, however she has found company in the Duma's socialist bloc.

Volmek Tsernov

A grizzled Uzbek governor, Tsernov has no patience for Kazakhs. Tsernov has advocated for the independence and autonomy of the Uzbek people, but has reluctantly fallen in line with conservatives and loyalists within the Duma.

Arabella Tsakishvili

A well-educated Georgian socialist, Arabella has advocated for the establishment of a trans-Caucasus authority to govern the troubled region over local administrations. Arabella has risen rapidly through the ranks of the socialist bloc and is one of many competing candidates for Prime Minister.

Hans Jollander

Hans is one of the many Volga-Germans living in Russia. He is a voice for Baltic Germans and Volga Germans - a community under increasing political pressure and social angst since the end of the Great War.

Dragan Trivanovic

A Serbian in exile. Dragan was expelled from Austrian-occupied Serbia for conspiring to kill the Archduke. He now resides in Russia and is a part of the Duma's conservative/nationalist bloc.

Oleg Sliskom

One of the few Russians to visit the United States of America. Oleg is a proud supporter of the provisional government and conservative bloc and hopes that the provisional government can keep as much of the empire intact as possible.

Roma Franzkiewicz

Roma is another representative of the Polish community in Russia. She is a conservative and supports the imperial rule as a counterweight to possible German aggression.

Olya Tsornoveka

Olya is not committed to a particular ideology or political party. However, she is a vocal advocate for the rights of native Siberian and Caucasus groups within the Russian state. She has pushed for the localization of governance and the right of communities to utilize their native language in local matters.

Tsorno Goberyanek

Tsorno hails from Siberia. Ethnically Tuvan, Tsorno has spoke openly of the merits of pan-Turkism and solidarity between Siberian native groups.

Voldemar Tsumavich

Voldemar is an ethnic Russian from Siberia. In light of the deportations of Poles and Baltic peoples to the Siberian wilderness. Voldemar has advocated for Siberian independence lest these peoples are not returned to their home. He has spoke favorably of the progressive platform within the Duma.

Timura Normashevili

A proud socialist and local organizer, Timura has lead numerous strikes and rallies against the rling class of Imperial-occupied Georgia. Timura is a loud Socialist who is not afraid of conflict or commotion on the Duma floor.

Lyudmilla Sobaka

Lyudmilla is a conservative from Russia's far east. Her concerns over Japanese and Chinese expansion efforts have lead her to support the current military control over Russian governance and the strong, unified government within Saint Petersburg.

Svetlana Sadovskaya

Svetlana is a member of what is known as the green/peasants party. While much of the Duma debates foreign policy and domestic reform, Svetlana is an advocate for the serfs and peasants that are often ignored by the ruling class. While apolitical, Svetlana approves of local governance as a means to compensate for the failure of the state.

Alexandra Sobor

A Pole, Alexandra is one of the leading voices calling for Polish independence. She has been lauded by the Russian military for her disruptive ideology but quietly supported by other independence activists and minority advocacy groups.

Andrey Jodorovsky

Andrey is Bohemian by lineage. However, he has shaped his membership in the Duma to represent all diasporas within the Russian state. He was a staunch advocate for Russian intervention in defense of Serbia before the Great War.

Zygmunt Sienkiewicz

Zygmunt is a conservative Pole with a grudge against the Russian state. While not entirely supportive of full independence, Zygmunt wants Russian power to be as minimal as possible.

Natalia Suprova

A distant relative of the Romanov family. Natalia is one of the Duma's hardliners in support of Russian autocracy and dominance. She has little patience for the political left and is vying for Duma presidency.

Ippolit Matveevich

A member of Russia's Jewish community. Ippolit is a member of the Duma's progressive bloc and is a vocal proponent of reform.

Yuliya Solovey

Yuliya is part of the Duma's conservative bloc. She is an ethnic Russian from Ukraine. She is a proponent of Russian dominion over the fringe territories and supports the Russification of ethnic minorities.

Solomia Timoshenko

A conservative Ukrainian, Solomia is a proud nationalist with somewhat radical ties to Ukrainian patriotic groups. She supports the limiting of reforms in hopes that it will lead to more local governance and autonomy.

Dhakar Soromayev

A progressive Kazakh. Dhakar supports the idea of assimilation of minorities in the Russian state into Russia-proper through socialism and economic unification

Islam Sadirov

Like many Uzbeks, Sadirov has a deep distrust of the Russian government. Sadirov believes that the only way to ensure a future peace in central asia is through local governance and autonomy.

Timura Khinkhali

A progressive and member of the Duma's political left. Timura believes that all minority groups in the caucuses should have their independence decided through political referendum.

Ruslan Zvonar

The son of Latvian deportees, Ruslan is one of many Russians residing in Siberia. He is apolitical with a strong affinity for Siberian independence movements.

Neringa Grybauskaite

Nerigna is one of the most vocal activists towards the cause of baltic independence. She is aligned with the progressive bloc and is a vocal opponent towards Russian military engagements.

Toomis Vanger

Like Vokk, Toomis is an Estonian national with a strong allegiance towards the Russian government. Toomis is a former member of the military and strongly despises the Baltic-German community.

Romano Ciuciasca

A resident of Moldova and ethnically Romania. Romano is member of the progressive bloc and has spoken openly of the benefits of socialism.

Muhammad Asalamov

Muhammad is one of many Azeris represented in the Duma. In this turbulent political time, Asalamv believes that inter-fath dialogue and understanding is the key to long term prosperity. Muhammad generally votes with the conservatives and considers the military to be a stabilizing force in the Caucasus.

Topic A: Transition in the Empire

The Tsar is dead. With the Romanov line completely removed from power, Russia remains under the control of the provisional government. This provides a key moment of hope for many reformers within the Russian Empire. While the goal of the provisional government is the successful transition of power through peaceful election, there are few guidelines for how to achieve this or what sort of process this transition would take. While it's almost complete consensus that whichever successive form of government take shape must be determined through a democratic vote, the debate for the system of governance this state would utilize is completely unanswered. It's up to the delegates to not only ensure a fair political transition, but to also lay the groundwork for the future of the Russian state

Currently the Russian Empire is lagging far behind its peers in terms of economic and civic development. Serfdom is still considered a valid institution. Illiteracy and innumeracy plague the non-urban Russian public. Russian infrastructure is woefully undeveloped, with more kilometers of rail in Germany than the entirety of the Russian empire. Much of the Empire's richer western half is either occupied by the German military or drained from supporting the war effort. Manufacturing and automated processes are almost non-existent and the Russian military is largely unable to mobilize itself on short notice. Russian society has been deeply bruised by the Great War - humiliating defeats and large-scale defections have eroded much of the social morale. The Russian intelligentsia are considered architects for the disaster of the Great War and many Russians feel disillusioned with their reasons for joining the conflict altogether. On top of all these social and economic faults, quality of life in Russia has taken a nosedive. The Great War has led to shortages and famine in an already poor Russia. Academics and the well-educated have begun a slow exodus from the country in hopes of finding a better life elsewhere. Russia's military is divided by petty squabbles between officers and their superiors while the military's integrity slowly unravels. Russia is on the fast track to full socioeconomic collapse.

Among the chaos, several competing political ideologies have arisen. One of the most vocal factions in transition-Russia are the communists. Taking after the works of Marx, the Russian communists are led by Vladimir Lenin - a charismatic leader and revolutionary bent on upending the Russian political system as a whole. "Communists" in this case refers to a wide umbrella containing Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, hard-left Socialists and Marxists. While these groups are full of individuals that lay on their own sliding scale of political ideology, communist Duma members fall on the left. Communists share the concept of property without ownership and a society without class and wealth inequality. While the end goal of communism is the dissolution of the state and the absolute lack of private property, Communists have short-term

goals that are much more grounded in reality. Communists use worker-organized “Soviets” run out of factories and community centers to provide social services that the state is unable to conduct. Communists also seek the removal of the remaining components of the Tsar's regime and are opposed to involvement in any conflict. While not necessarily in direct opposition to nationalism, communists in Russia often find themselves at odds with nationalists due to the latter's emphasis on the interests of their own select few within society.

Traditionalists - and conservatives - represent the right leaning elements of the Russian Duma. These individuals are often in direct opposition to communists and democrats and are often divided over the topic of national interest groups. Conservatives will push to keep as much of the previous regime intact. This means retaining as much of the Tsar's political system as possible and limiting reform efforts. While conservatives are generally in favor of limited government engagement in business and social life, conservatives in Russia have a particular view of the role of a leader in society and the role of the state in the national consciousness. Conservatives in Russia are proponents of a strong, authoritarian leader. The only form of legitimacy that is respected in Russia is not legal right or moral justification but rather pure strength and willingness to act. When looking at the spread of the conservative party, we can see a wide variety of figures and ideologies represented. The most common type of conservative is the military-aligned Russian traditionalist. These figures are close to the military and are likely to have previous connections to the Tsar and Russian ruling class. They are proponents of the partial military governance imposed by the provisional government and are likely to hold sway over the military's inner circle. There are also Orthodox patriots who consider Russia to be the successor to Byzantium and the Roman Empire. These individuals argue that Russia's Orthodox heritage is a guarantor of dominion over Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Caucasus and eventually the world. These people are not open to change and are stubborn in changing their opinions and viewpoints. Scattered among the conservatives and the patriots are a collection of conservative minority national activists. There are two common profiles for these individuals. The first are national minorities that held close ties to the Tsar and empire. These individuals are likely to side with the conservative elements of the Duma in an effort to conserve whatever remaining influence they hold over their territory. They are also likely to be connected to ruling families and clans throughout the Russian empire. The second archetype for conservative national minorities are those who consider a limited executive to be an instrument of greater local sovereignty. These individuals are likely to support protectorate status and defense from the Russian military, but will most likely demand as much sovereignty as possible in matters like religious governance and language usage.

Another core group of the Russian Duma are moderates and progressives. These people are open to change but are not nearly as partisan or fervorous as the far left and far right of the Duma. They instead have to leverage their personal interests (due to cultural ties to the minority groups, religious affiliation and ties forged in the Duma) with the good of the Russian Empire.

Finally, there are the radicals. These people represent the absolute fringe of Russian politics and are relatively isolated in the Duma. This includes anarchists, radical conservatives, hidden monarchists and covert islamists. These representatives regularly draw criticism from other Duma members and are accused of ulterior motives. While few in number and politically isolated, these individuals represent a vocal minority that can be used to advocate for non-moderate policies.

This topic area is based on the transition process within the empire. Should delegates choose this topic area they will be tasked with ensuring a smooth transition from Tsarist Russia to whatever sort of system of governance voters decide. Delegates must also answer questions regarding economic modernization and reform efforts within Russia in addition to larger questions of identity and purpose.

Topic B: The Russian Role in the World

The Great War is in its final chapters and a level of devastation never before seen in the history of man has been unleashed unto the world. Europe has been ravaged by war and as an entire generation of young people experience the horrors of total war and mechanized death. The era of empires and dynasties seems to be winding down as the Ottoman empire slowly dissolves - leaving a vacuum of power in the Middle East and the Balkans. The threat of war is creeping closer and closer in Asia due to an ever-ambitious Japan. The concept of truly independent statehood in parts of Africa and South America seems like a possibility as colonial-fatigue sets in on the empire of Western Europe. Between all of these theatres and fronts lays Russia - large, unwieldy and dangerously unsure of its place in the world.

Along the West, imperial holdings have grown restless and tired of Saint Petersburg's dominance. Nationalists are gaining momentum in the historic territories of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania. While peace with the Central Powers has relieved Russia of some pressures in this region, a budding nationalist revolution is becoming a greater possibility. The possibility of the Ukrainians, Balts and Poles taking advantage of the empire's current weakness is not entirely out of the question and poses a serious threat to Russia's dominance. However, inappropriate usage of aggression and repression will likely push these groups even more towards independence rather than cooperation with the Russians.

Russia's southern neighborhood is not looking entirely secure either. A dissolving Ottoman Empire has left a noticeable vacuum in the region and may provoke some sort of Persian expansion response. Franco-English interests in energy and political control over the middle east may slowly creep to the caucuses. Similar to the western half of the empire, Russia's weakened state has lead many revolutionaries and community figures in Caucus communities to speak openly of revolt and independence. To further complicate matters, the discovery of a large oil reserve under Azerbaijan has lead to a sharp spike in international interest in the territory's energy - particularly from neighboring Iran and the United Kingdom. The Sunni-Shia divide has grown more intense as tensions between Shia Azeris and Sunni Chechens and Tatar peoples flare up due to the increasing lack of control over the region.

Central Asia presents a different challenge for Russia altogether. With an increasingly divergent social and cultural climate compared to the rest of Russia, the possibilities of an independent Central Asia are growing more likely with every passing month. Interest from Iran and China have provided a viable alternative to Russia's economic support and current experiments with limited sovereignty have set much of Turkestan on a divergent course with Russian society.

As of now, the Russian Empire is surrounded by countries that can be considered geopolitical opponents. While many of the concerns with this security arrangement are based on inter-state conflict, the nature of Russia's multicultural and ethnic landscape extends these threats into domestic politics. In Topic Area B, delegates will have to place domestic concerns aside for the time being to decide what sort of post-war world Russia would like to take part in and what this world will look like. This includes deciding whether or not Russia will participate in alliances, defend non-Russian ethnicities abroad (such as the Serbs), shed outer territories to avoid war and redefine its relationship with Europe and the western world. It will also provide Russia an opportunity to craft its policies towards China, Japan, Iran and colonial territories held by western powers.

Delegates are expected to utilize all the tools provided to them within the boundaries of modern diplomacy. Sanctions, political condemnations, alliances, defensive pacts, covert operations and military incursions are all viable policies that may be pursued to enact Russia's foreign policy objectives. While delegates are encouraged to keep their foreign policy proposals within the realm of realism and historical accuracy towards Russia's mindset, the director would smile favorably on creative and unique ideas to reshape Russian foreign policy. That being said - it's key that delegates take into account domestic elements and the social fatigue in Russian society following participation in the Great War.

Topic C: Breaking Ground

Because the Great War has shaken up the geopolitical reality of Europe and the world, there is a general sense of anxiety and uneasiness around the globe. While the closing hours of the conflict seem to show a Franco-Anglo-American paradigm, these powers are unable to attend to the concerns of all the troubled areas of the world due to their own reconstruction efforts and national-trauma from the Great War.

This topic is the most abstract and will require the most research and policy development from the delegates. If Topic Area C is chosen, delegates will set aside Russian reconstruction efforts and delay efforts to reshape the Russian Empire's foreign policy. Topic Area C would reorient the Russian state more towards alternative forms of foreign policy and aid work in a direct effort to reshape the world order. This includes Russian colonial expansion into the Middle East and Northern Africa, Russian aid efforts in the Balkans and former Ottoman Empire, the establishment of Russian political interests in the Americas and the usage of Russia's intelligence assets built through the secret police and operatives abroad to interfere with the politics of other countries. Effectively - Topic Area C abandons efforts to reconstruct and improve Russia in hopes of destabilizing and reshaping the world. Again, this is the most abstract topic area and is not recommended at the start of committee.