



# Supreme War Council: Rewind

New English School's Model United Nations 2026

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# **What is the War Council in Model United Nations?**

A War Council in Model United Nations is a specialised crisis-style committee where delegates represent historic individuals rather than modern states. Instead of debating general resolutions, delegates simulate real-time decision-making during a period of conflict through **directives**, responding to unfolding events, intelligence updates, and crises issued by the chair.

In a War Council, power is often unequal, some figures hold more military, political, or economic authority than others, reflecting historical realities. Delegates must use strategy, negotiation, alliances, directives, as well as their LPs (Leader Points) to influence the course of events.

## **Committee Overview: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire:**

This War Council examines the decline and eventual collapse of the Ottoman Empire through four key interconnected developments that weakened Ottoman authority and accelerated fragmentation.

### **1. The Young Turk Revolution (1908)**

Delegates will address the internal political crisis sparked by the Young Turk movement, which sought constitutional reform, centralisation, and modernisation of the Empire. While initially restoring the constitution and limiting the Sultan's power, the revolution deepened political divisions, empowered the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), and contributed to authoritarian governance and internal instability.

### **2. The First Balkan War (1912–1913)**

The First Balkan War marked a major territorial and psychological blow to the Ottoman Empire. Delegates must navigate military defeats against the Balkan League, loss of nearly all Ottoman European territories, refugee crises, and the weakening of Ottoman prestige. Decisions made here affect alliances, military reform, and the Empire's ability to respond to future threats.

### **3. The Second Balkan War (1913)**

Although brief, the Second Balkan War reshaped regional power dynamics and temporarily allowed the Ottomans to regain limited territory. However, it reinforced the Empire's dependence on military elites and heightened nationalism, further militarising Ottoman politics and narrowing diplomatic options on the eve of World War I.

### **4. The Arab Revolt (1916–1918)**

During World War I, Arab nationalist movements which were encouraged by British promises of independence rose against Ottoman rule. Delegates will confront the consequences of over-centralisation, ethnic and regional discontent, and foreign manipulation. The revolt undermined Ottoman control in the Arab provinces and exposed the Empire's inability to maintain loyalty during total war.

## **Role of World War I:**

While not a standalone subtopic, World War I forms the critical backdrop of the War Council. The Ottoman decision to enter the war, combined with earlier political and military weaknesses, transformed decline into collapse. Delegates must balance survival, reform, repression, and diplomacy as the Empire faces existential threat.

## **Purpose of War Council:**

This War Council challenges delegates to explore whether the fall of the Ottoman Empire was inevitable or preventable. Through the actions of historical individuals, delegates may attempt to reform the state, suppress revolts, negotiate with foreign powers, or manage decline, while understanding the complex interplay between internal reform, nationalism, war, and imperialism.

## 1. The Young Turk Revolution (1908):

Thus, the **1908 Turk Revolution** shifted the history in the Ottoman Empire meaningfully from a single ruler to a government with a constitution. A group called the **Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)** orchestrated the change against **Sultan Abdul Hamid II** in opposition.

The Ottoman Empire declined in relative terms by the early twentieth century and lost territories throughout the **Balkans and North Africa**. Due to economic problems and discontent in the army, the Young Turks called for the **restoration of the 1876 Constitution**, abrogated by the **Sultan in 1878**. In July 1908, army officers in Macedonia revolted and took arms, issuing a declaration calling for reform. **The Sultan agreed to restore** the constitution on 23 July.

Parliament was reopened, representation from most ethnic minorities such as **Turks and Arabs** and freedom of speech and the press was promised and the **CUP introduced modern methods of education and army organization**. But conditions continued to worsen. The 1909 counter-revolt by **religious figures and soldiers** attempted to return the country to the customary order. The CUP dispatched military forces and deposed sultan Abdul Hamid, replacing him with his younger brother. **Turkish leaders were in charge**, which angered Arabs, Armenians, and others.

The CUP promoted **Turkish nationalism**, made Turkish the primary language of instruction in schools and of government, and these factors troubled the **multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire**, and were viewed as consequences of the **outbreak of World War I** and of its disintegration. The revolution shows how new conflict can change countries that have many different groups.

## 2. The First Balkan War (1912–1913):

The First Balkan War occurred from **1912 until 1913**. It was a major European war in which the Balkan League (**Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro**) fought the Ottoman Empire. They sought to take over Ottoman lands in Europe.

The **Ottoman Empire was weakened** by the start of the 20th century after it had already lost its power to the Young Turk Revolution. The Balkan countries could gain more land and become independent because of old territorial disputes with the **Muslims**. Serbia wanted more territory after its wars with Turkey, while Bulgaria had a large army from recent wars. **Greece and Montenegro were allied**. They signed a **secret treaty of mutual attack** in 1912 for their own reasons. **Montenegro invaded on 8 October**. The war began.

The Balkan armies moved swiftly onward Bulgaria attacked and captured **Kirk Kilisse** in Thrace whilst **Serbia** registered a series of victories and advanced into **Kosovo and Macedonia**. Greece took **Thessaloniki** before Bulgaria did, while Montenegro took over territory toward the north-west. The Ottomans lost most of their holdings in Europe within months, and the war left many dead, wounded, and displaced among others in total; **800,000 Balkan troops were clashing with 300,000 Ottoman soldiers**. Bulgaria approached Constantinople, then halted.

The Ottomans surrendered most of their remaining Balkan possessions in the **London peace talks (1913)**, but the League was quickly battling over the spoils of the **Second Balkan War**. The First Balkan War further weakened the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan Wars in general were a cause of World War I, and weak empires lost territory to strong alliances.

### **3. The Second Balkan War (1913):**

The Second Balkan War was a significant conflict that occurred in **1913 immediately following the events of the First Balkan War**. In fact, the Second Balkan War was a direct result of the First Balkan War, as it saw the former allies of the First Balkan War turn on each other along with other new combatants. More specifically, the Second Balkan War saw Bulgaria face off against: **Greece, Montenegro, Ottoman Empire, Romania and Serbia**. Due to the timeframe in which it occurred, the Second Balkan War (along with the earlier First Balkan War) are considered to be important to World War I. In fact, historians consider the events of both **Balkans Wars to be important causes of World War I**, which began in 1914 following the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

As stated above, the First Balkan War and the tensions present in the Balkans led to the events of the Second Balkan War. First, the Balkans (along with the rest of Europe) experienced a **growth of nationalism** in the 19th century and early 20th century. This growth in nationalism caused nations within the **Balkans to seek to expand their territory** and influence in the region. Ultimately, the growth of nationalism led to the outbreak of the First Balkan War, which was the most direct cause of the Second Balkan War.

At the time of the First Balkan War, the **Ottoman Empire was in a state of decline** and struggled to fight back. As a result, the First Balkan War finally ended on May 30th of 1913 with the signing of the **Treaty of London**. With this treaty, the Ottoman Empire gave up large sections of territory in the Balkans, which was taken over by the member nations of the **Balkan League**. However, soon after the end of the First Balkan War, Bulgaria expressed frustration with the lands that they received. This is what ultimately led to the start of the Second Balkan War.

## **4. The Arab Revolt (1916-1918):**

The **Arab Revolt** was a major uprising against Ottoman rule that erupted during **World War I**, significantly accelerating the collapse of Ottoman authority in the Arab provinces. Led by **Sharif Hussein bin Ali**, the Sharif of Mecca, the revolt was rooted in a combination of **long-standing regional grievances, growing Arab nationalist sentiment, and wartime pressures** placed upon the Ottoman state.

Although the Ottoman Empire had ruled much of the Arab world for centuries, its authority weakened in the early twentieth century due to **increased centralisation under the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)**, conscription, taxation, and the erosion of local autonomy. These policies, combined with the influence of Arab intellectual movements and dissatisfaction among Arab elites within the Ottoman administration, created fertile ground for rebellion.

The revolt formally began in **June 1916**, when Sharif Hussein declared independence from Ottoman rule following a series of correspondences with British officials, who promised support for Arab independence in exchange for rebellion against the

Ottomans. Under the military leadership of **Faisal bin Hussein**, Arab forces conducted guerrilla warfare, targeting Ottoman supply lines, railways, most notably the **Hejaz Railway**, gradually undermining Ottoman control of the region.

However, the Arab Revolt was not a unified mass uprising. Its success relied heavily on **British financial, military, and logistical support**, and many Arab regions remained divided in their loyalties. Meanwhile, Ottoman authorities, particularly under **Djemal Pasha**, attempted to suppress dissent through military force, executions, and tighter control of Arab provinces, measures that often deepened resentment rather than restoring stability.

The Arab Revolt had profound consequences. Militarily, it weakened Ottoman positions in the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant. Politically, it shattered the image of imperial unity and exposed the limits of Ottoman legitimacy. In the aftermath of the war, however, Arab expectations of independence were undermined by **secret agreements such as the Sykes–Picot Agreement**, which divided Ottoman Arab territories between European powers.

Ultimately, the Arab Revolt stands as a pivotal moment in the fall of the Ottoman Empire, illustrating how **nationalism, imperial overreach, and foreign intervention** combined to dismantle centuries of Ottoman rule and reshape the modern Middle East.

## **Committee Procedure:**

This War Council will operate under a crisis-style format, prioritising rapid decision-making, strategy, and historical realism over traditional resolution-based debate. The committee will function through Ad Hoc debate, directives, and a Leader Points system.

## **Ad Hoc Debate:**

The committee will primarily operate through Ad Hoc debate, a flexible and continuous form of discussion without a formal speakers' list.

## How Ad Hoc Debate Works:

- Delegates may speak **when recognised by the chair**, either by raising their placard or through directed questions.
- There are **no preset speaking times**; the chair may limit or extend speeches depending on urgency.
- Delegates are encouraged to **interrupt constructively** through points, negotiations, or brief interjections when allowed.
- The chair may shift rapidly between delegates to simulate the urgency of wartime decision-making.

## Purpose of Ad Hoc Debate:

- React immediately to **crisis updates and intelligence briefings**
- Negotiate **alliances, military coordination, or political compromises**
- Justify or challenge proposed strategies before directives are written
- Simulate internal power struggles within the Ottoman leadership and foreign influence

## Directives:

Instead of resolutions, delegates will submit **directives**, which represent **concrete actions** taken by their historical figure.

## What a Directive is:

- Short, precise, and action-oriented
- Focused on **implementation**, not ideals
- Written individually or jointly (when the chairing panel allows)

Directives must clearly outline:

1. **Objective:** What the action aims to achieve
2. **Method:** How it will be carried out
3. **Resources Used:** Including Leader Points spent
4. **Timeframe & Scope:** When and where it applies

The chairing panel will evaluate directives based on:

- Historical plausibility
- Strategic coherence
- Alignment with the delegate's authority
- Resources committed

## **Sample Directive:**

**Directive Title:** Suppression of Nationalist Unrest in Macedonia

**Author:** Enver Pasha

**Objective:**

To restore Ottoman control in Macedonia and prevent further Balkan nationalist mobilisation.

**Method:**

Deploy two infantry divisions supported by gendarmerie units to conduct coordinated patrols, enforce curfews, and dismantle nationalist cells. Local leaders suspected of collaboration will be detained, while loyal officials will be empowered to administer emergency governance.

**Resources (Leader Points):**

- 8 Leader Points – Infantry deployment
- 3 Leader Points – Internal security and intelligence

Total: 11 Leader Points

## **Expected Outcome:**

Short-term restoration of order and deterrence of further uprisings, at the cost of increased resentment among local populations.

*\*\*This is a sample NOT to be used during debate, as directives must be longer and more detailed*

## **Leader Points:**

**Leader Points** function as a strategic **currency** representing the real power available to each delegate.

## **What Leader Points Represent:**

- Military manpower and equipment
- Political authority and elite backing
- Economic resources and logistics
- Foreign support or diplomatic leverage

Each delegate begins with a set allocation (given by the chairing panel) reflecting their **historical position**. Senior military or political leaders will generally have more points than peripheral figures.

## **Using Leader Points:**

- Execute directives
- Expand the scale or intensity of an action
- Increase the likelihood of success

Examples of expenditures may include:

- Infantry units or naval assets
- Propaganda campaigns

- Diplomatic missions or secret negotiations
- Emergency reforms or repression measures

Spending **more Leader Points** does not guarantee success, but it:

- Improves effectiveness
- Allows broader scope
- Enables riskier or more ambitious strategies

## **Gaining & Losing Leader Points:**

Leader Points may be:

- Gained through successful directives, popular support, military victories, or foreign backing
- Lost through failed operations, unrest, military defeats, or loss of legitimacy

The chair will adjust Leader Points dynamically to reflect:

- Shifts in power during the Young Turk period
- Consequences of the Balkan Wars
- Strain caused by World War I
- The impact of the Arab Revolt

## **Strategic Importance:**

- Prioritise actions carefully
- Balance ambition against realism
- Compete and cooperate over limited resources

Delegates who waste Leader Points on poorly planned directives risk losing influence, while those who use them strategically may alter the historical trajectory of the Ottoman Empire.

