

UTMUN

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# Conference of Dresden 1812

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**DIRECTOR**  
Tessa di Vizio

**VICE-DIRECTOR**  
Christy-Anna Chung

**MODERATOR**  
Jacky Luo

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## Content Disclaimer

At its core, Model United Nations (MUN) is a simulatory exercise of diplomatically embodying, presenting, hearing, dissecting, and negotiating various perspectives in debate. Such an exercise offers opportunities for delegates to meaningfully explore possibilities for conflict resolution on various issues and their complex, even controversial dimensions – which, we recognize, may be emotionally and intellectually challenging to engage with.

As UTMUN seeks to provide an enriching educational experience that facilitates understanding of the real-world implications of issues, our committees' contents may necessarily involve sensitive or controversial subject matter strictly for academic purposes. We ask for delegates to be respectful, professional, tactful, and diplomatic when engaging with all committee content, representing their assigned country's or character's position, communicating with staff and other delegates, and responding to opposing viewpoints.

The below content warning is meant to warn you of potentially sensitive or triggering topics that are present in the formal content of this background guide, as well as content that may appear in other aspects of committee (e.g., debate, crisis updates, directives), so that you can either prepare yourself before reading this background guide or opt-out of reading it entirely:

**This committee will discuss topics of violence and war as they pertain to the Napoleonic Era through military campaigns, invasions, wars, and European expansion. Delegates are expected to embody their respective character's positions, not their mannerisms, and to be diplomatic when engaging with committee content. If any concerns related to these topics arise, or you feel uncomfortable at any point, do not hesitate to reach out to any member of the dais or Secretariat.**

If, because of this committee's content warning, you wish to request switching committees and you registered with UTMUN as:

- a) part of a group delegation, please contact your faculty advisor and/or head delegate with your concerns and request.
- b) an individual delegate, please email our Equity Officer at [equity@utmun.org](mailto:equity@utmun.org) with a brief explanation of your concerns based on this committee's content warning and your request to switch. You will be contacted shortly regarding your request

## UTMUN Policies

We ask for your cooperation in maintaining order, both inside and outside of committee session, so that we may provide a professional, safe, inclusive, and educational conference.

Throughout the conference, please note that delegates shall only:

1. Wear Western Business Attire (i.e., no costumes, no casual wear)
2. Embody their assigned country's/character's position, not their mannerisms (e.g., no accents, no props)
3. Use laptops or electronic devices during unmoderated caucuses to draft paperless resolutions/directives (subject to their committee director's permission)
4. Opt for diplomatic, respectful, and tactful speech and phrasing of ideas, including notes (e.g., no foul language, suggestive remarks, or obscene body language)
5. Make decisions that contribute to a professional, safe, inclusive, and educational space for debate

The rest of our conference policies can be found on our website at <https://www.utmun.org/conference-policies>. By attending all or part of a UTMUN conference, attendees agree to abide by all of our conference policies.

Furthermore, delegates' efforts to contribute to a culture of collaboration, inclusivity, and equity at our conference, both inside and outside of committee session, will be considered by the dais and Secretariat when determining conference scholarships and committee awards.

In cases of failing to adhere to any of UTMUN's policies, the Secretariat reserves the right to take any action it deems necessary, including rendering delegates ineligible for awards, taking disciplinary action, and prohibiting delegates from participating further in the conference.

## Equity Concerns and Accessibility Needs

UTMUN 2020's Secretariat and Staff are committed to ensuring every attendee has an enjoyable, comfortable, and safe experience and is able to participate fully and positively at our conference.

If you have any equity concerns (e.g., concerns about barriers to participation) or accessibility needs now or during the conference, please do not hesitate to contact your committees' dais and/or our Equity Officer at [equity@utmun.org](mailto:equity@utmun.org).

## A Letter from Your Director

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Conference of Dresden, 1812! In this committee, you will have the opportunity to navigate the intricacies of international relations in Europe, untangle the complex web of shifting alliances, and negotiate a host of interrelated issues to arrive at a meaningful resolution to deal with an important turning point in history that shaped future events.

My name is Tessa Di Vizio, and I will be your Director for this committee. I am a second-year student pursuing a double major in International Relations and Political Science. Joining me on the dias are Christy-Anna Chung (Vice Director) and Jacky Luo (Moderator). We are all looking forward to meeting you and hearing you debate at the conference in February.

Since this is a historical committee set in 1812, you will need to have a firm grasp on the historical context of the time. You will need to consider the climate of the time as well as your character's alliances, enemies, domestic situation, and history to inform your debate. Above all, you will need to embody your character's interests and passionately advocate for them on their behalf.

This background guide is meant to serve as a starting point for your research. It should provide the general context of the time and relevant background information. We strongly encourage you to go beyond the sources we've provided and go in-depth on the topics. Although this background guide is subdivided into distinct topics, you will notice, from reading the topics and in your own research, that these issues are interrelated and there is a lot of overlap. In saying this, allow your ideas about the different topics inform each other in your position paper and debate. To explain, your stance on the effectiveness of the Continental System and its impact on your country's trade and domestic economic issues will influence your stance on foreign relations and also impact your view on the viability of Napoleon's plan to invade Russia. We want you to follow your character's interests and be realistic, but feel free to work within those parameters and be creative in your ideas.

Throughout the conference, we expect/are looking to see evidence of strong research, engaged debate, and respect for your fellow delegates. We want you to not only be well-prepped for the conference so you can embody your character's ideologies and advocate their interests during debate but also diplomatic in your interactions; we value active and attentive listening so you can debate the topics in a nuanced way and also compromise so you can work together and pass resolutions.

We look forward to reading your position papers and meeting you in February for the conference. Happy researching, and don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions!

Tessa Di Vizio  
Director, Conference of Dresden 1812  
tessa.divizio@mail.utoronto.ca

## Topic A: The Continental System and Economic Relations

Britain and France have had a tense relationship throughout history, engaging in many battles and wars both on the European continent and the seas, as well as overseas in their colonies. Not only did this ebb and flow of tensions affect international relations, but these conflicts had significant domestic impacts on the countries as they were costly in terms of human lives and monetarily. Most notably, the Seven Years War (1756-1763), which saw battles erupt all over the world, was incredibly expensive and drained a lot of these states' resources. While British trade was expansive, involving a variety of trading networks that spanned the globe, it was insufficient to replenish the treasury. This led Britain to heavily tax its colonies, leading its Thirteen Colonies to revolt and declare independence as the United States of America. However, trading relations were still maintained and restored British coffers, though not as mercantilist in nature as before. Similarly, France felt the effects of these wars and tried to increase taxes to raise revenues, but this failed on a domestic level. On the one hand, it allowed the French to rebuild its naval fleet, though it still could not compete with the British who reigned supreme on the seas. On the other hand, this instability and general dissatisfaction with the monarchy and its handling of these economic issues led to the French Revolution, which eventually gave rise to Napoleon.<sup>1</sup>

### The Continental System

The Continental System mainly refers to Napoleon's overall political and economic goals for the different European states in the system. In addition, its main purpose is to protect and extend Napoleon's vision of France. By contrast, the Continental Blockade is the specific measures, such as sanctions, that Napoleon implemented to restrict British trading relations with continental Europe and undercut its progress.<sup>2</sup> Napoleon's overarching goal was to create a "Grand Empire" across Europe for France, and he employed the Continental System as a means to achieve this.<sup>3</sup> If states did not agree with Napoleon's policies, they risked losing territory and being isolated from the increasingly integrated network Napoleon was creating. He would need the support and control of territory "from Bayonne to St. Petersburg; from the harbour of Cette to the mouth of the Cataro" to accomplish his task and fully shut England out.<sup>4</sup> His minister of Foreign Affairs, Talleyrand, emphasized Napoleon's focus on expansion and domination. Even the Pope was not immune from Napoleon's wrath; he once ordered the Pope to leave Rome because "some English ships had landed in Civitavecchia."<sup>5</sup>

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1 Ute Planert, "Napoleon and Beyond: Reshaping Power in Europe and the World," In *Napoleon's Empire: European Politics in Global Perspective*, ed. by Ute Planert, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 9-12.

2 Silvia Marzagalli, "The Continental System: A View from the Sea," In *Revisiting Napoleon's continental system: Local, Regional and European Experiences*, ed, Katherine B. Aaslestad and Johan Joor, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 84.

3 Geoffrey Ellis, "The Continental System Revisited," In *Revisiting Napoleon's continental system: Local, Regional and European Experiences*, ed, Katherine B. Aaslestad and Johan Joor, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 28-29.

4 Annie Jourdan, "French Representations of the Continental Blockade: Three Kinds of Narratives for and against," In *Revisiting Napoleon's continental system: Local, Regional and European Experiences*, ed, Katherine B. Aaslestad and Johan Joor, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 41.

5 Ibid, 44.



## Goals of the Continental System

Through the implementation of the continental system, Napoleon's goals were twofold, but both hinged on the expansion of France and the downfall of Britain's power. First, Napoleon was trying to gain an advantage over Britain, his greatest rival. Since he was unable to best Britain in naval battles, he wanted to employ economic strangulation. To explain, Britain was not self-sufficient, relying heavily on imports of raw materials from abroad as well as markets to sell their manufactured goods. By cutting off access to continental resources and markets, this could eventually result in bankruptcy, mass unemployment, and popular revolt against their government. Through this blockade, Napoleon intended to severely impact the British economy, which would prompt it to surrender to his demands.<sup>6</sup>

Napoleon's second goal was to achieve economic dominance over the European continent. To achieve this, Napoleon wanted to force the continental states to depend on France for industrial products. Napoleon's military campaigns reinforced this message by enlarging his territorial rule across the continent. He was trying to pit the interests of the British against those of the continent to galvanize support. His plan relied on France's capabilities in tandem with the support of his allies across the continent. Overall, the Continental System was an extension of Napoleon's military strength in Europe. Based on whether France was victorious and gaining territory or being repelled and defeated, the blockade was relatedly adjusted.<sup>7</sup>

## The Continental Blockade and the Berlin Decree (1806)

To make his vision of the Continental System a reality, Napoleon issued a series of decrees aimed at cutting off Britain's access to trade with Europe. Though he knew that this plan would harm France, its effect on Britain would be much worse, incentivizing Napoleon to continue. Before these formal measures were taken, however, he had already begun to limit Britain's access to various ports. While the initial blockade was formed by the British, cutting off the continent's Atlantic coast, the French retaliated by closing off the German coast to Britain.<sup>8</sup> After defeating Prussia in 1806, Napoleon closed British access to Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubeck, which were crucial cities for British exports into Europe. Moreover, British goods were also seized, benefitting French coffers. He then amped up his anti-British economic measuring, issuing the Berlin Decree (1806), which was a multipart attack aimed at Britain. The decree stated that Britain was in a state of blockade, banning trading relations with it, allowing for the seizure of British goods, the arrest of British subjects and refusal to British ships' entry to ports. Since he wanted to deprive Britain and depreciate its currency, he mainly targeted British exports but permitted imports to continue, since it would strengthen

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<sup>6</sup> George Nafziger, *Napoleon's Invasion of Russia* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1988) 1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

<sup>8</sup> David A. Bell, *Napoleon: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 80.

France.<sup>9</sup> Most importantly, the contents of the decree applied not only to France but to its allies across Europe. Though it lacked the naval power to enforce its will, the success of the French army's campaigns and its territorial aggrandizement compelled other states to follow the decree.<sup>10</sup>

### The British Response and Shifting Alliances

In response to the blockade, the British retaliated, trying to pierce holes in the French plan. The British government passed an Order in Council the following year to ban trade between neutral actors and the French and its allies. As the British had the naval power to enforce their claims (unlike the French), this order primarily affected neutral countries, such as the US and Denmark. However, it did not greatly impact France, where little damage was inflicted. Moreover, the British were affected by the Treaty of Tilsit, which concluded the War of the Fourth Coalition (1805-1807), as it included terms that adversely affected British trade with the continent. Specifically, it revoked Britain's access to Prussian and Russian powers, leaving only Austria, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, and parts of Italy as possible trading partners. However, Britain's trading relations with these countries dwindled over time.<sup>11</sup>

Over time, as Britain's naval power grew, more countries began to ally with France as a counterweight and to secure support in case of an attack. As Denmark was strategically important because of its location on the Baltic, the British proposed a secret defense alliance in exchange for Danish ships to be temporarily given to the British fleet. However, Denmark sharply rejected this offer, prompting the British to invade and take the ships in September 1807. After this point, their trading relationship ended, and Denmark joined the Continental System. Furthermore, while Russia declared war on Britain, it chose to not fight Britain directly but rather with Britain's trading partners, invading Sweden and taking control of Finland. This move reduced Britain's continental trading partners. Moreover, Napoleon invaded Portugal in 1808, inciting the Peninsular War, Austria joined the Continental System soon after, and almost the entirety of Italy supported Napoleon's plans.<sup>12</sup>

Britain responded to these developments by passing another Order in Council, retaliating against the French by imposing the same sanctions on it. This move further harmed the neutral actors as they were more vulnerable to attack and seizure. On the flip side, Britain permitted trade via neutral ships to any port that was not French as long as the ships paid the requisite import duties, which was advantageous to the types of products Britain was exporting, such as sugar, coffee, and cotton, from its colonies.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Georges Lefebvre, *Napoleon* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 328.

<sup>10</sup> Nafziger, *Napoleon's Invasion of Russia*, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Jourdan, "French Representations of the Continental Blockade," 43.



### The Milan Decree (1807)

Napoleon retaliated against this move, by passing the Milan Decree, to strengthen the earlier Berlin Decree. It reaffirmed that French ships and privateers could seize goods shipped to Britain, its colonies, or other links to Britain. Essentially, Napoleon's goal was to prohibit trading between Britain and other European countries. Unless merchants could prove the origin of their goods, they would be assumed English, and thus seized, at the ports. As well, neutral ships taken by the British could be lawfully re-captured by the French. Moreover, this meant that no state could remain neutral and must pick a side, strengthening the systems of alliance at the time. Both decrees were adopted within the Continental System and by Russia, Prussia, and Austria, which were allied with France at the time.<sup>14</sup>

### The American Reaction

As a previously neutral country, the American government passed a series of acts in response to these newly amped up harsh sanctions, notably the Embargo Act (1807) and Non-Intercourse Act (1809). The latter act only restricted trade between American ships and the British and French empires. However, these acts greatly harmed the US and were both repealed less than a couple of years later. Specifically, in 1810, it passed new legislation to incentivize either Britain or France to drop their sanctions against the US by promising to re-enact the prohibitions on the other party who did not act. This move worked as France dropped its sanctions on the US and resumed trade.<sup>15</sup>

### The Treaty of Vienna and Russian Withdrawal from the Continental System

Central to the peace were healthy Franco-Russian relations, which were relatively stable until the end of the decade. In service of his own interests, Tsar Alexander wanted to pursue an alliance with Austria as a means of balancing France's increasing hegemonic influence over the European continent. He recognized that if France were to control Austria and expand its reach, this could be detrimental to Russia's own goals. However, he and Napoleon reaffirmed the contents of the Treaty of Tilsit and promised support against a possible altercation with Austria. This came to fruition in Napoleon's campaign in 1809 but the help was mostly symbolic and did not substantially contribute to Napoleon's victory against the Austrians. The Treaty of Vienna (1809), which concluded this conflict, punished Austria by annexing some of its territory to France and Bavaria. This readjustment of borders was important to the Continental System because it cuts British trade off along southern Europe.<sup>16</sup>

This breakdown continued and, over time, Napoleon grew to anger the Russians even

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<sup>14</sup> Marzagalli, "The Continental System," 86.

<sup>15</sup> Nafziger, *Napoleon's Invasion of Russia*, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 7-9.

more in relations to their fight with the Turks. Instead of supporting Russian expansion, Napoleon increased pressure on Russia to more strictly abide by his decrees supporting the Continental System against Britain. This adversely affected Russia because Britain was their most important market for some raw materials and resources, such as timber and wheat, which were abundant across the territory. Instead of submitting to Napoleon's demands, which would harm the Russian economy, which depended on this trade, the Tsar continued trading with Britain, allowing neutral ships into Russian ports, while banning imports of certain French market goods.<sup>17</sup>

### Economic Crisis of 1811

Since the start of the Continental System, there had been waves of progress and times of recessions and economic turmoil. Prices of goods had steadily and artificially become more inflated within the continent and from overseas colonies. In 1811, Europe did not return to the gold standard, leading to further depreciation. Trade with Prussia exacerbated the issue since they only accepted their own currency, which was depreciating, for goods, it was harmful in regards to the import duties Napoleon imposed but also resulted in an economic shock. In France, however, this crisis was not as disastrous. In fact, prices for goods were lower, markets were more sustainable and there were less overall bankruptcies.<sup>18</sup>



<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>18</sup> Lefebvre, *Napoleon*, 354.

### Questions to Consider

1. How can you reconcile (if you think it is possible) Napoleon's desire for territorial aggrandizement with stability in Europe? How can the eroding balance of power be maintained or strengthened?
2. Which country or groups of countries can challenge Napoleon's growing hegemony over Europe? Is this even possible?
3. In light of the 1811 economic crisis, what do you think can be done to mitigate against the adverse effects of the Continental System? Do you have any plans to reform it? Is reform necessary, in your opinion?
4. How have Britain and France's economic blockades affected your country? What is your connection to these parties: formal allies, enemies, neutral, or currently fighting? How has this relationship impacted your view of the Continental System?
5. What have been the effects of the Continental System on your country's domestic economy? What about on your trading relations? Foreign relations? Access to raw materials? Manufactured goods?

## Topic B: Foreign Relations

### Napoleon's Plan for Europe

Napoleon wished to create a unified Europe under the control of France. He declared "I wished to found a European system, a European Code of Laws, a European judiciary: there would be but one people in Europe."<sup>19</sup>

After conquering a nation, he appointed his family members and marshals as rulers. His brother Joseph Bonaparte first became King of Naples, and later king of Spain. His sister Caroline Bonaparte and marshal Joachim Murat ruled over Naples. His brothers Louis and Jerome Bonaparte became kings of Holland and Westphalia respectively. Napoleon himself married Marie Louise, the Austrian princess.<sup>20</sup>

### Peninsular War

By 1808, France had already succeeded in gaining control over a large majority of Europe. Napoleon had eliminated, as military opponents, Austria and Prussia, through victories in Ulm, Austerlitz, Jena-Auerstedt, and Friedland,<sup>21</sup> and Russia through their peace treaty at Tilsit. It was this treaty that enabled Napoleon to focus on Britain, as well as Sweden and Portugal.<sup>22</sup> He called on Portugal to close their ports to and declare war on Britain.<sup>23</sup> In doing this, he hoped to complete the Continental System, a plan to destroy Britain's economy by cutting off its trade.<sup>24</sup> However, Portugal was slow to act, and in response, Napoleon sent troops headed by General Andoche Junot to invade and conquer the country through Spain.<sup>25</sup> Then he closed Portugal's ports to British ships.<sup>26</sup> This aggression caused Spain to question their alliance with Napoleon. Unfortunately, this suspicion came too late. Napoleon had already sent troops into Spain under the guise that they were to serve as reinforcements for the invasion of Portugal.<sup>27</sup> However, these troops were used to invade Spain and the Peninsular War began.

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19 Matthew Zarzeczny, "Napoleon and the Unification of Europe," Research Subjects: Government & Politics: The Napoleon Series, The Napoleon Series, accessed October 29, 2019, [https://www.napoleon-series.org/research/napoleon/c\\_unification.html](https://www.napoleon-series.org/research/napoleon/c_unification.html)

20 Zarzeczny, "Napoleon and the Unification of Europe."

21 Andrew Jackson, "The Peninsular War," The Peninsular War 1808-1814, Andrew C Jackson, Accessed October 27, 2019, [http://www.peninsularwar.org/penwar\\_e.htm](http://www.peninsularwar.org/penwar_e.htm)

22 "Peninsular War," Encyclopaedia Britannica, July 20, 1998, [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/chicago\\_manual\\_17th\\_edition/cmos\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/web\\_sources.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/web_sources.html)

23 "Peninsular War."

24 Marjorie Bloy, "The Continental System," A Web of English History, Last modified January 12, 2016, <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/c-eight/france/consys.htm>

25 "Peninsular War."

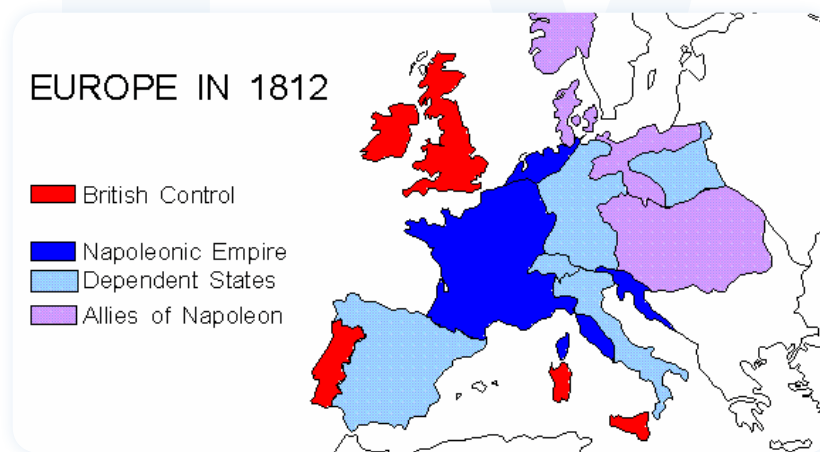
26 "Campaigns and Battles," Public Broadcasting Service, Accessed November 1, 2019, [https://www.pbs.org/empires/napoleon/n\\_war/campaign/page\\_9.html](https://www.pbs.org/empires/napoleon/n_war/campaign/page_9.html)

27 "French defeated in Spain," History, A&E Television Networks, Last modified: July 27, 2019, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/french-defeated-in-spain>

After the invasion, Napoleon sent General Joachim Murat to occupy Madrid and bring Charles IV and Ferdinand VII to Bayonne using a mixture of both threats and promises. During this conference, on May 5, 1808, Napoleon forced Charles IV and Ferdinand VII to turn over the Spanish throne to him. He was able to do this by promising that Spain would remain Roman Catholic and independent under a ruler that he would name. He placed his brother Joseph Bonaparte on the throne and sent soldiers to insure his rule. Yet, three days prior to this, the people of Spain had already risen against the invader in the Battle of Madrid.<sup>28</sup> Spaniards killed 150 soldiers, and the French retaliated by killing thousands of Spaniards.<sup>29</sup> This signified the beginning of the war for Spanish Independence.

These uprisings encouraged Britain to send an expeditionary force to the Iberian Peninsula which was led by Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley.<sup>30</sup> Their aim was to expel the French from the area.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the British forces, there was a strong presence of guerrilla warfare.<sup>32</sup>

The next four years were characterized by countless victories and losses for both sides, the French and the English, in Spain and Portugal. While many of the battles and campaigns ended indecisively, the fighting was successfully diminishing France's resources.<sup>33</sup> Napoleon was losing men, materials, money and time.<sup>34</sup>



*The above map shows a breakdown of Europe in 1812 by rule.<sup>35</sup>*

<sup>28</sup> "Peninsular War."

<sup>29</sup> "Campaigns and Battles."

<sup>30</sup> Jackson, "The Peninsular War."

<sup>31</sup> "French defeated in Spain."

<sup>32</sup> "Peninsular War."

<sup>33</sup> "Peninsular War."

<sup>34</sup> Tristan Dugdale-Pointon, "Peninsular War (1807-14)," History of War, March 3, 2002, [http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/wars\\_peninsular.html](http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/wars_peninsular.html)

<sup>35</sup> "Napoleonic Wars: Europe in 1812," History of War, Accessed November 1, 2019, [http://www.historyofwar.org/Maps/maps\\_napoleonic.html](http://www.historyofwar.org/Maps/maps_napoleonic.html)

## Ideological Spread

At the same time, the ideas of the Enlightenment were spreading throughout Europe. The Enlightenment was an intellectual movement which stemmed from the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>36</sup> Exploration, individualism and scientific endeavours, as well as developments in industry and politics, replaced centuries of traditions.<sup>37</sup> Philosophy became a free force that was capable of challenging the conventions.<sup>38</sup> The Enlightenment is often referred to as the Age of Reason because logic, the power by which humans understand the universe and improve their own conditions, was a principle idea of the time.<sup>39</sup> Immanuel Kant, an German philosopher important to the Enlightenment,<sup>40</sup> defines enlightenment as the process of thinking for oneself and relying on one's own intellectual capacities in determining what to believe and how to act.<sup>41</sup>

Consequently, the power of established authorities came into question as they challenged an individual's own reason.<sup>42</sup> In particular, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a French writer and political theorist at the time,<sup>43</sup> disputed the Medieval idea of the Divine Right of Kings in his book entitled *The Social Contract*.<sup>44</sup> The Divine Right of Kings states that monarchs were chosen to rule by God and, as such, any person or group who challenged the authority of the monarch was challenging God.<sup>45</sup> However, Rousseau argued that it was not God who bestowed power on to the king. Instead, he stated that a king received authority from the will of the people, and that meant that the people had the capacity to take away this authority.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, Napoleon created the French Civil Code, also known as the Napoleonic Code, which included many ideas from the Enlightenment. The code abolished all feudal customs and obligations, and ensured the equality of all citizens before the law.<sup>47</sup> As Napoleon's power spread throughout Europe, as a result of his conquests, these ideas also

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36 William Bristow, "Enlightenment," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, The Metaphysics Research Lab, Last modified August 29, 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/enlightenment/>

37 Matthew White, "The Enlightenment," The British Library, British Library, June 21, 2018, <https://www.bl.uk/restoration-18th-century-literature/articles/the-enlightenment>

38 Bristow, "Enlightenment."

39 Brian Duignan, "Enlightenment," Encyclopaedia Britannica, Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., Last modified September 13, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Enlightenment-European-history>

40 Brian Duignan and Otto Allen Bird, "Immanuel Kant," Encyclopaedia Britannica, Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., Last modified October 31, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Immanuel-Kant>

41 Bristow, "Enlightenment."

42 Bristow, "Enlightenment."

43 "Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)," British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC, Accessed November 1, 2019, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/rousseau\\_jean\\_jacques.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/rousseau_jean_jacques.shtml)

44 Beth Harris and Steven Zucker, "A beginner's guide to the Age of Enlightenment," Khan Academy, Khan Academy, Accessed October 29, 2019, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/monarchy-enlightenment/rococo/a/a-beginners-guide-to-the-age-of-enlightenment>

45 <https://www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/earlymodernpolitictheory.htm>

46 Harris and Zucker, "A beginner's guide to the Age of Enlightenment."

47 "The Napoleonic Code," Guided History, Accessed November 1, 2019, <http://blogs.bu.edu/guidedhistory/moderneurope/the-napoleonic-code/>



spread. This paradigm shift threatened the existing monarchies – monarchies which were Napoleon's allies.

### Timeline of Events

**1792:** The Napoleonic Wars begin.

**1804:** Napoleon crowns himself emperor of France

**1807:** Napoleon calls on Portugal to join the Continental System and declare war on Britain

**1808:** Napoleon conquers Portugal and parts of Spain. The Peninsular War begins.

**1808:** The Spaniards revolt against France and the Spanish War for Independence begins.

**1808:** Napoleon appoints his brother, Joseph Bonaparte, as ruler of Spain.

**1810:** Napoleon marries Marie Louise, the Austrian princess.

**1812:** The Conference of Dresden

### Questions to Consider

1. Who are you allied with? Can your alliances change depending on how the series of events unfold?
2. How do the spreading ideas of the Enlightenment effect what is currently happening? How do they affect your role?
3. How will France's lack of resources play a role in the events to come?

## Topic C: Napoleon's Invasion of Russia

### Military Strategy

Napoleon was installed as first consul of France; a France which was riddled with unrest, disorder, and chaos following the great political upheaval of the French revolution and its subsequent governments. He also faced hostility from many of the other major European powers at the time, most of whom were still monarchies and hostile to the republic<sup>48</sup>. Despite these numerous obstacles, Napoleon waged very successful campaigns of war across and Europe even before he was able to institute various reforms and restructure the French the army<sup>49</sup>. Up until the Conference of Dresden of May 1812, Napoleon has suffered few major military losses; his eye for strategy on the battlefield and quick thinking played a major role in his victories.

### War of Movement

Napoleon notably emphasized movement as a key part of his strategies for war; instead of sieges, he preferred to settle conflicts quickly in brutal and decisive battles that would force his opponents into signing treaties<sup>50</sup>. To this end, he reformed the army and trained them to be more mobile and independent. First, soldiers were taught how to sustain themselves off land; this would reduce their reliance supply lines and also lessen the load troops had to carry<sup>51</sup>. Napoleon specialized in artillery during his own military training, and he brought innovations to make weapons lighter and more mobile<sup>52</sup>. Lastly, Napoleon's army was organized into troops with leaders that could fight and move independently far quicker than an entire army could<sup>53</sup>. These tactics together made the French forces more mobile, allowing for more complex and demanding strategies in battle.

### Divide & Conquer

In many of his battles, Napoleon faced multiple opposing armies from the various European powers forming coalitions. Understanding that allowing enemy forces to unite would make overcoming them far more difficult, Napoleon thus moved his armies extremely quickly and preemptively entered strategic engagements with enemy forces while they were still divided and manageable<sup>54</sup>. In cases where he had to fight on multiple armies, Napoleon

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48 Philip G. Dwyer, "Self-Interest Versus the Common Cause: Austria, Prussia, and Russia Against Napoleon," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 31, no. 4 (2008): 605.

49 Ibid, 611.

50 Charles J. Esdaile, "De-Constructing the French Wars: Napoleon as Anti-Strategist," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 31, no. 4 (2008): 515.

51 Ibid, 523-529.

52 Ibid, 542.

53 Ibid.

54 Dwyer, "Self-Interest Versus the Common Cause," 614.

made use of a “central position”, inserting his army between the opposing ones to intercept them and fight them separately on multiple fronts<sup>55</sup>. Smaller sections of his forces could hold off opposing armies while the main force overtook one of them before rejoining the rest of the French troops. This tactic is but one specific method of how Napoleon would break enemy forces into smaller groups that were easier to defeat.

### Surprise and the “Manoeuvre De Derrière”

At least in the earlier years of the war, Napoleon was often outnumbered in terms of troops, and his armies were poorly equipped compared to those of the other European powers<sup>56</sup>. While dividing the enemy forces and engaging with them in smaller groups proved effective; this tactic was made possible only through the use of surprise attacks and deception to actually separate enemy forces. Napoleon often surveyed the terrain, looking for advantageous locations where such traps could be sprung to make the best use of his limited forces<sup>57</sup>. One infamous tactic was splitting his army into two groups, one would engage with the enemy first and hold their attention while the second secretly snuck around and surrounded the army from behind<sup>58</sup>. This strategy cut off the opposing force’s supply lines and support, but it was made possible only through the mobility of Napoleon’s forces.

## Historical Examples

### Siege of Toulon, 1793

One of Napoleon’s first military victories before he became first consul of France. An allied fleet of the British entered and seized the harbours of Toulon, driving out the French forces northward<sup>59</sup>. Instead of engaging with their forces head-on by land on the north side, Napoleon proposed circling around to the southern harbours to install and attack the fleet with French artillery<sup>60</sup>. The tactic proved very successful and the allied fleet was quickly defeated.

### Italian Campaign, 1796

The French defeated the kingdom of Sardinia that was allied with Austrian forces. Napoleon quickly moved his army to engage with the Piedmontese army (Royal Sardinian army) head-on while part of his forces circled around to both trap the Piedmontese from behind and to fight the Austrians separately, preventing them from uniting with the Sardinian forces.<sup>61</sup>

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55 “Battle of Austerlitz Re-Enacted,” BBC News, accessed December 4, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38199738>.

56 Jeremy Black, “British Strategy and the Struggle with France 1793-1815,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 31, no. 4 (2008): 561.

57 Dwyer, “Self-Interest Versus the Common Cause,” 627.

58 Esdaile, “De-Constructing the French Wars,” 542.

59 Black, “British Strategy and the Struggle with France,” 562.

60 Michael V. Leggiere, “From Berlin to Leipzig: Napoleon’s Gamble in North Germany, 1813,” *The Journal of Military History* 67, no. 1 (2003): 39.

61 Ibid, 54-58.

### Austrian campaign, 1796-1797

Napoleon's army fought eastward into Austria, eventually threatening the capital of Vienna and forcing an armistice. At the Po river, French forces split to surround and isolate Austrian army. By encircling the enemy, they threatened to cut Austrian communication and supply lines, forcing them to retreat<sup>62</sup>. The army was split apart into smaller groups as they fled, making for easy successive victories.

### Planned British Invasion of 1805

Although the operation was not carried out, Napoleon initially planned an invasion of the United Kingdom in 1805. A key part of this plan was to send the French fleet to the Caribbean to lure away the powerful Royal Navy; the French would then quickly turn back and lose them heading back to Europe to assist with landing the Napoleon's army in the United Kingdom. However, on their returning voyage, the French naval fleet was attacked off the Spanish coast and forced to retreat to Cadiz, leading to the Battle of Trafalgar later in 1805. Britain meanwhile, under the threat of invasion, entered a coalition with Russia and Austria, forcing Napoleon to turn his military efforts eastward and give up his plans for the United Kingdom.

### Battle of Ulm, 1805

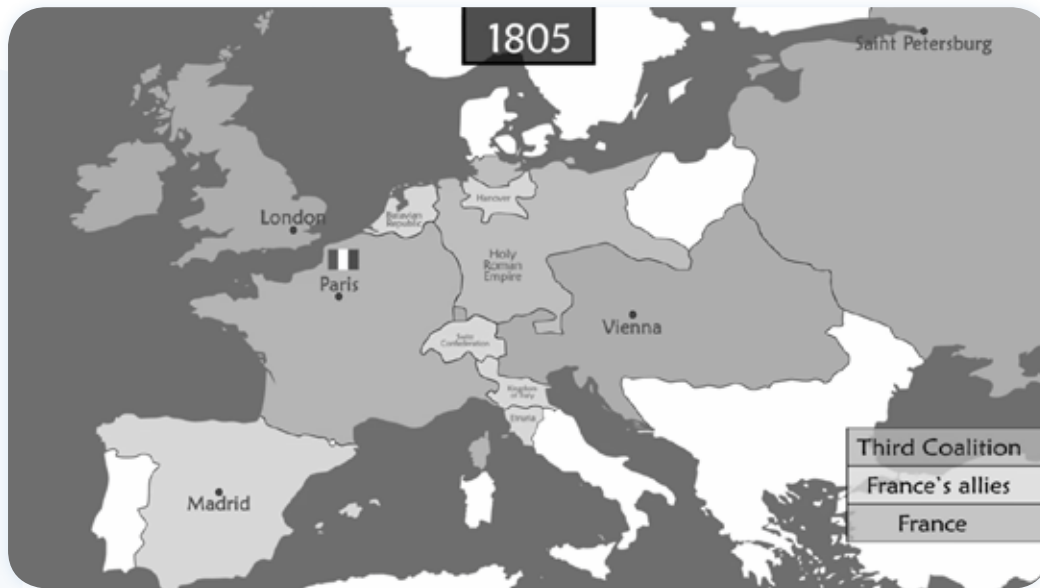
After hearing of the approaching Austrian and Russian armies, Napoleon speeds to Bavaria to intercept them. At the black forest, he sends a small group in to fool the Austrian army into waiting for them on the other side; meanwhile, the rest of Napoleon's forces circle around from the north to corner the army from behind and partition the Russian reinforcements. The Austrian army surrendered quickly after being surrounded.

### Battle of Austerlitz, 1805

Along with the Battle of Ulm, the Battle of Austerlitz is often considered one of Napoleon's greatest military victories throughout the Napoleonic Wars. The French began this battle occupying a strategic plateau against an approaching allied Austrian-Russian force. Napoleon ordered a false retreat from the plateau, which enemy forces immediately seized. The Austrian-Russian force then overextended, splitting into two groups to both chase the fleeing French and to hold the high ground. However, a hidden bulk of Napoleon's forces then emerged from the hills and retook the plateau, partitioning the pursuing Austrian-Russian force from the rest of their army. The now cornered group quickly surrendered or were shot at with French artillery as they attempted to escape over the frozen rivers.

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<sup>62</sup>"Battle of Austerlitz Re-Enacted," BBC News, accessed December 4, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38199738>.



*A Map of Europe in early 1805 during the War of the Third Coalition.  
The stage is set for the major French military victories at Ulm and Austerlitz*

## Military Standing of Major European Powers in 1812

### France

At this time, Napoleon is currently at the height of his power during the Napoleonic Wars. He has dominated most of the European continent, forced the cooperation of other European powers through fear, and created various puppet states with his brothers as kings.

In the past decade, Napoleon has made major reforms to France in the areas of administration, education, legislation, and the military.<sup>63</sup> These actions have gained him the general support of the people by ushering in peace after years of political instability; his popularity is evident through massive support for his policies in citizen votes and referendums. Napoleon has also gained the support of the clergy, a major institution in France, through agreements such as the Concordat of 1801 that officially recognized Catholicism as the religion of France.<sup>64</sup> This popular support from the people is essential considering the need for mass conscription of men between ages 20 to 24 to bolster Napoleon's army for his constant war campaigns and the maintenance of Spain.<sup>65</sup> However, people are also joining the army in the states he conquers; for instance, the Polish openly viewed the French as heroes when they invaded traditional Polish land that had been shared by Russia, Austria, and Prussia for the last decade. More than just conscripting men, Napoleon manages to gain

<sup>63</sup> Ernest N. Votaw. "Review of The Concordat of 1801," Bulletin of Friends' Historical Association 24, no. 1 (1935): 50-52.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>65</sup> "Napoleon at War: The Russian Campaign, 1812," Public Broadcasting Service, accessed November 4, 2019, [https://www.pbs.org/empires/napoleon/n\\_war/campaign/page\\_12.html](https://www.pbs.org/empires/napoleon/n_war/campaign/page_12.html).

their respect and favour by fighting alongside them in many battles throughout his wars.<sup>66</sup>

In preparation for France's invasion of Russia, Napoleon has rallied the support of most of the eastern European continent from Naples to the kingdom of Westphalia. Notably, he has allied himself with Prussia and Austria, and he even married Marie Louise, the Austrian emperor's daughter.<sup>67</sup> Through the previous Treaty of Tilsit with Russia in 1807, Napoleon gained control of the Duchy of Warsaw to act a buffer between Europe and Russia in the case of an invasion.<sup>68</sup> The security of this eastern European region is essential for Napoleon's plans, as key communication and supply lines will run from here through Russia during the invasion. Ensuring these lines are not compromised requires security and great levels of organization.

## Spain

While Spain is in decline as a major European power during 1812, the nation serves a stage of conflict that greatly affects the dynamics of Europe at the time. Events of the previous decade have left Spain in a very precarious state of French control in 1812. Spain initially allied with France earlier in the war, and cooperated with French forces for the invasion with Portugal when it failed to stop trading with its longtime partner Britain as part of the Continental Blockade.<sup>69</sup> However, when Spain soon after faced political instability from conflict within the royal family, Napoleon took advantage of the situation to take control of Spain and place his brother Joseph Bonaparte on the throne. The people, deeply unsatisfied with French occupation, formed militias and guerilla groups to attack and torture French forces in Spain. In response, French soldiers began harshly cracking down on resistance efforts, executing rebels, and burning villages suspected of harbouring resistance members. Controlling Spain and suppressing the conflict has proved extremely costly for France in terms of both troops and resources; they station thousands soldiers throughout the region.<sup>70</sup>

Britain has complicated matters by landing an army in Portugal under the leadership of the Duke of Wellington. Through a few major battles at Lisbon and with the support of local Portugese people unhappy with French occupation, the British army managed to drive Napoleon's forces out of Portugal. With Portugal now secure and allied against Napoleon, Spain is under threat of invasion and being taken from France. Britain has already supported resistance efforts in France and almost managed to topple French rule in Spain once though it ended in failure.<sup>71</sup> French forces in Spain have requested reinforcements and support from Napoleon, but he has turned his efforts towards Warsaw and Russia. Spain is currently in a very precarious position, trapped between two powers with an unstable rule.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Samuel R. Williamson, "Napoleon and Russia," *The Sewanee Review* 119, no. 4 (2011): 667.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 668.

<sup>69</sup> Black, "British Strategy and the Struggle with France," 569.

<sup>70</sup> Esdaile, "De-Constructing the French Wars," 551.

<sup>71</sup> Black, "British Strategy and the Struggle with France," 527.



## Russia

Although Russia is still officially allied with France, their relations are extremely shaky and both are at the verge of war with one another by 1812.<sup>72</sup> Despite their agreements, Russia has not supported France in any of its military campaigns thus far and denied requests to invade other states. Russia has also refused to abide by the continental blockade against Britain, because it believes that doing so is harming its economy.<sup>73</sup> In preparation for war against Napoleon, which seemed fairly inevitable at this time, Russia has signed a peace treaty with the Ottoman empire to avoid conflict.<sup>74</sup> Doing so has also allowed Russia to fully arm its border without tensions from the Ottoman empire. However, by virtue of its geography alone, Russia still proves difficult to invade due to its barren and undeveloped lands.<sup>75</sup>

## United Kingdom

Throughout the Napoleonic wars, the United Kingdom has generally engaged minimally with in direct conflicts and battles on land. Instead, they have mostly fought through diplomatic ties, forming coalitions and agreeing to war efforts from other states such as Austria. However, they maintain an extremely powerful Royal Navy that makes invasion of the British Isles very impractical. Their fleet has engaged in a few maritime conflicts, such as the battle of Trafalgar in 1805, where they defeated an allied French fleet to once again prove their dominance at sea.<sup>76</sup> During 1812, the British have also landed a small army in Portugal to support resistance efforts against the French as part of the Peninsula War.

## Austria

Austria has been a major player throughout the course of the Napoleonic Wars, forming coalitions against the French at times and allying with them at others. In 1812, Austria is currently allied with France and the emperor was in attendance for the Conference of Dresden; the marriage of his daughter Marie Louise with Napoleon has left the two countries in temporary peace, whereas they had been warring with each other for the better part of the past decade.<sup>77</sup> However, this alliance was also one out of necessity and not without grudges. Previous defeats at the hands of the French have left Austria greatly weakened, it has lost its access to the Mediterranean Sea and had to cede many of its western provinces for the creation of Napoleon's puppet states.<sup>78</sup> Austria's army is notable, but not as great or as efficient as the larger European powers.

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72 John McLean, "Invasion of Russia," *History of Western Civilization II*, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/invasion-of-russia/>.

73 Ibid.

74 Mary Crooks, "Jun 24, 1812 CE: Napoleon Invades Russia," *National Geographic Society*, October 25, 2013, <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/thisday/jun24/napoleon-invades-russia/>.

75 Saul David, "Napoleon's Failure: For the Want of a Winter Horseshoe," *BBC News*, February 9, 2012, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16929522>.

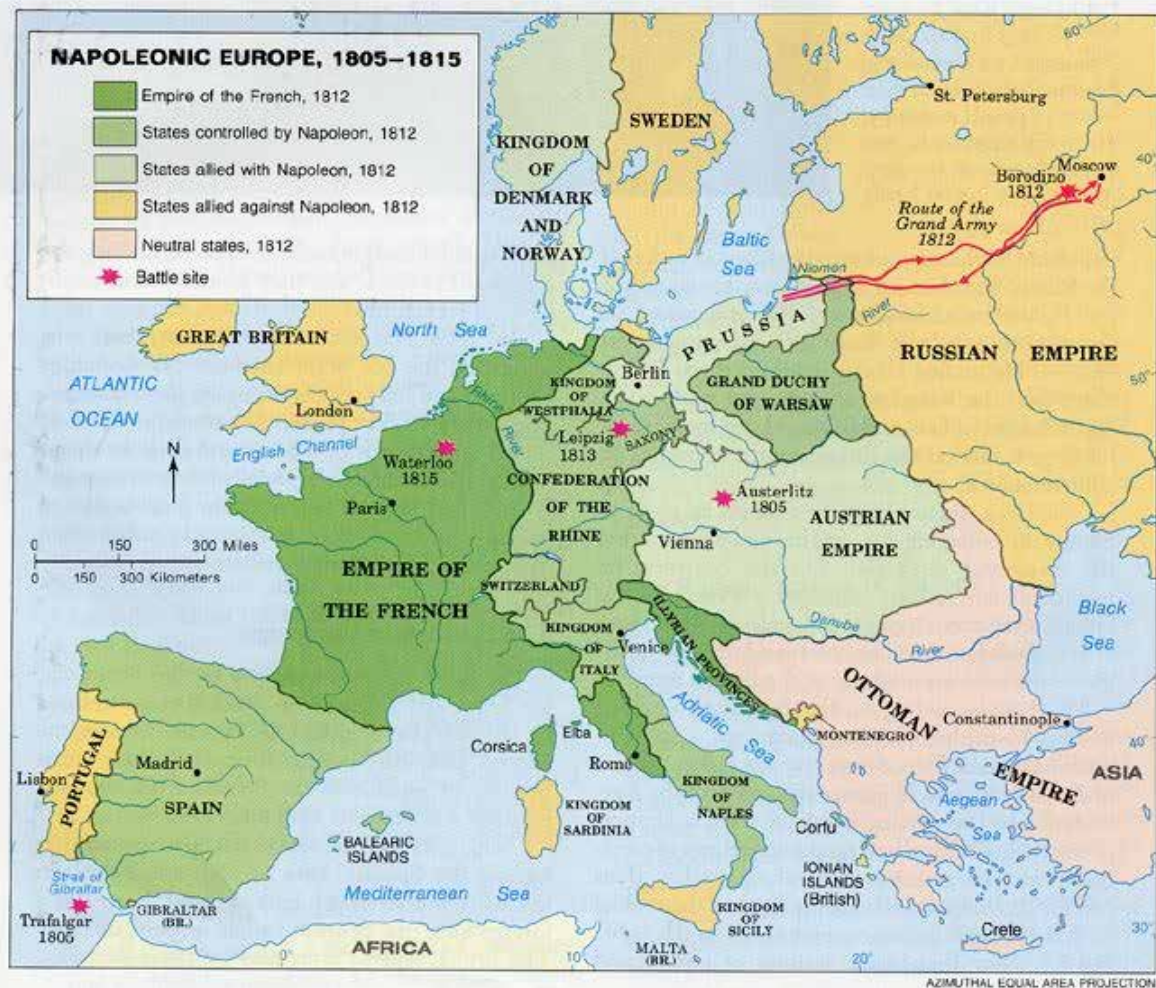
76 Black, "British Strategy and the Struggle with France," 569.

77 Dwyer, "Self-Interest Versus the Common Cause," 630.

78 Ibid, 632.

## Prussia








Similar to Austria, Prussia is currently allied with Napoleon in 1812 after being in conflict with the French for the better part of the last decade. As conditions of its defeat and under the Treaty of Tilsit between French and Russia earlier in the war, Prussia has lost almost half of its territory.<sup>79</sup> In the west, its land was used for the creation of the puppet state the Kingdom of Westphalia and parts of the Confederation of the Rhine. In the east, the Duchy of Warsaw was created from Prussian land to act as a buffer from Russia. Prussia occupies a very strategic location crucial for the invasion of Russia; it provides a very direct route to Moscow and into the heartland of Russia.<sup>80</sup> Prussia also maintains a strong army, but it is again not comparable to that of the French.



Map of Europe in 1812 depicting the French Empire and its allies.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Karen Serres, "Ary Scheffer's 'The Retreat of Napoleon's Army from Russia in 1812,'" *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/23344763>.

French Revolutionary Wars	1792 - 1802	
First Coalition	1792 - 1799	
Second Coalition	1799 - 1802	
Napoleonic Wars	1803 - 1815	
Third Coalition	1803 - 1805	
Fourth Coalition	1806 - 1807	
Fiveth Coalition	1809	
Sixth Coalition	1812 - 1814	
Severnth Coalition	1815	

*Overview of the various coalitions formed against France throughout and before the Napoleonic Wars leading into 1812*

### Questions to Consider

1. How did Napoleon led his armies to victory in previous battles despite facing unfavorable odds and coalitions among other great European powers? Consider factors such as geography, battle strategy, army morale, etc.
2. How did alliances and coalitions affect declarations of war and hostility? Conversely, how did victories and threats of conquest force nations into alliances? How decisive were these coalitions or agreements in ultimately determining the outcomes of war?
3. Napoleon managed to create a number of puppet states and install his brothers as kings there, but who else besides napoleon Bonaparte himself influenced his militaristic decisions? For those with power, were there any accompanying ambitions or interests along with this power?
4. Aside from arms, troops, and sheer military might, what other political, economic, and social factors produce conditions conducive to successful military campaigns? Consider among other European powers France's transformation under Napoleon's reign.

## Advice for Research and Preparation

This background guide is meant to serve as a starting point for your research. It should provide the general context of the time and relevant background information. We strongly encourage you to go beyond the sources we've provided and go in-depth on the topics.

You are expected to be an expert on your role so that you can successfully defend your character's interests and advocate on their behalf in your position paper, during debate, and in your resolutions. Remember, you are acting as a delegate on behalf of your respective character; leave your own personal opinions on the topics of the discussion. You must act within the constraints of your position (i.e., the character's ideologies, national interests, and policies), but feel free to get creative in your approach.

Though separate in the guide, the three topics are all interrelated and impact each other. We recommend using the three different topics to inform your approach in each situation. Don't hesitate to bring in your stance on foreign relations in the economic topic; it can be an important factor in how you view the Continental System, for example.

You should treat your position paper as you would an academic paper. This means that you should include full, proper citations and a bibliography to reflect your research. While resources like Wikipedia are helpful for establishing a basic general understanding of an issue, you must move beyond it to additional resources and more academic-type sources for your position paper. The resources listed in the bibliography are great places to start your research if you're unsure of how to begin. Start with a general understanding of the time period and the Napoleonic Wars, then move on to more focused research specific to your character.

As this is a historical committee based on the actual Conference of Dresden set in 1812, consider the time period, when looking at your sources and in your arguments. Don't consider anything on or after the Conference in your research as you'll be shaping the course of history in the committee room through your debate and resolutions. Once again, feel free to be creative in your proposals but remember to be realistic. For example, you cannot pledge 100,000 troops if your country only has 25,000. Be sure to consider your character's allies and enemies as well as their national interests. It will help you craft a more focused position paper and provide you with your main goals that you want to resolve during the debate. The "Questions to Consider" sections are a great place to start to help you narrow down the topic and make it relevant to your character.



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