



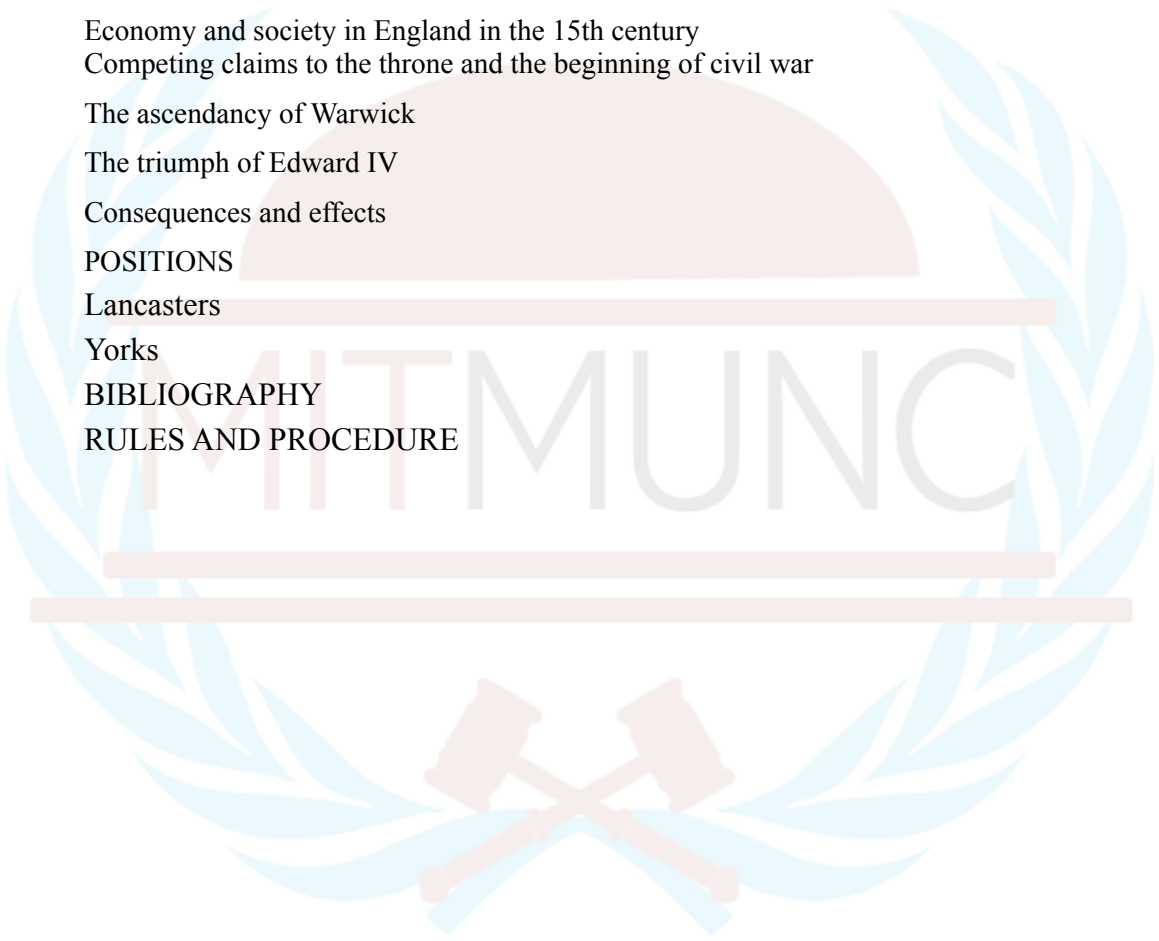
Crisis Committee

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Welcome Letter

Dear Delegates,

Your Dais members are incredibly excited to welcome you to the fifteenth Massachusetts Institute of Technology Model United Nations Conference, which marks our return to in person conferences, and especially excited to see all of you in Crisis. Crisis is an incredibly dynamic and exciting flavor of Model UN and we hope you get to explore the nigh on endless possibilities it presents.

To introduce ourselves, we are undergraduates studying at MIT. Xinyan is a sophomore in biological engineering, concentrating in synthetic biology and minoring in Chinese. Stuti is a senior double majoring in computer science and biological engineering, minoring in economics and chemistry.

The topic we have chosen for you this year is the War of the Roses, a bloody war for succession of the English Crown fought during the mid to late fifteenth century between two prominent sub-branches of the royal family – the Lancasters and the Yorks. The House of Lancaster was represented by a red rose, and the House of York by a white rose, hence the name. This period of history has been reimagined and represented countless times in popular culture, perhaps most notably in *Game of Thrones*, and we are eager to see what you will make of this convoluted and treacherous time.

While we await your position papers, we hope you thoroughly enjoy the preparation to win your own wars. We look forward to this year's debate and what each one of us will gain from it! You should submit your position papers five days prior to the beginning of the conference to the chairs at the following email: crisis-mitmunc-2023@mit.edu.

Sincerely,
Crisis Chairs
Xinyan Pan
Stuti Khandwala



Topic: War of Roses

BACKGROUND

A crisis committee is a decision making body that has more power than a traditional committee. It is known to produce action, as we work through a critical point in the history then shape alternate realities of what the future would look like. In this year's committee, you will be in the period between 1455 and 1485, in the Wars of the Roses, a series of dynastic civil wars whose violence and civil strife preceded the strong government of the Tudors. Here's a summary of how the actual war proceeded, which gives you an insight into the characters themselves, and will lead you to question about what could have been done better from the point of view of your character. Would you have wanted a different end? Was the end the optimal solution for all parties? There are many other points you must ponder about.

Economy and society in England in the 15th century

The difficulties that arose in the agriculture-based economy following the black death were a major problem for many landowners until the 1470s, when severe climatic changes occurred. Rents fell, slavery was weakened, villages were abandoned, and land lacked limestone that made it possible to farm even on steep slopes. Subsistence agriculture emerged, as most markets and markets disappeared. Economic problems led to reductions in many regions' tax liabilities. However, when the labor shortage caused by the plague was added to the weakening of slavery, the villagers took advantage of this situation and took action to meet their labor needs. Unfree peasants were paid cash for their labor, and these people were later directly integrated into the money economy. Labor shortages encouraged a shift towards rural agriculture, which required far fewer workers. The landowners fenced their land to raise sheep, which resulted in a decline in rural populations in areas such as Lincolnshire. The situation was so dire that the transformation of arable lands into pastures for grazing animals was bitterly criticized in Parliament in 1489. The spread of pasture increased wool production and then fabric exports. The British progressed in sheep breeding, especially with high quality wool, and many of them sought wide and qualified production like the fabric- production centers in Flanders. The wool trade continued to grow throughout the 13th century and brought prosperity to many towns, especially Shrewsbury. However, as the tax on wool exports was increased from the 14th century, wool began to be exported as fabric. This offered a kind of tax benefit for the development of the British fabric industry: The industry progressed as wool was not exported but processed inside. The most important center of the mentioned industry was East Anglia. The Great Yarmouth area alone accounted for three-quarters of the country's woolen fabric exports, and according to official records, 12,000 woolen fabrics were produced here in 1400-1401. Economic developments made the dimensions of social differentiation even more evident. Exports of wool and cloth also helped Britain maintain its trade balance, which was highly significant in covering both administrative costs and war expenses. A similar situation happened in Scotland. The large ports that made it possible to access continental Europe were striking. As of 1500, Edinburgh meets 60% of Scotland's exports. Edinburgh was also a center with important economic and political dynamics.

Edinburgh's importance was consolidated with the replacement of Berwick, who was increasingly under British control.

Competing claims to the throne and the beginning of civil war

Both houses claimed the throne through descent from the sons of Edward III. Since the Lancastrians had occupied the throne from 1399, the Yorkists might never have pressed a claim but for the near anarchy prevailing in the mid-15th century. After the death of Henry V in 1422 the country was subject to the long and factious minority of Henry VI (August 1422–November 1437), during which the English kingdom was managed by the king's council, a predominantly aristocratic body. That arrangement, which probably did not accord with Henry V's last wishes, was not maintained without difficulty. Like Richard II before him, Henry VI had powerful relatives eager to grasp after power and to place themselves at the head of factions in the state. The council soon became their battleground.

Great magnates with private armies dominated the countryside. Lawlessness was rife and taxation burdensome. Henry later proved to be feckless and simpleminded, subject to spells of madness, and dominated by his ambitious queen, Margaret of Anjou, whose party had allowed the English position in France to deteriorate.

Between 1450 and 1460 Richard, 3rd duke of York, had become the head of a great baronial league, of which the foremost members were his kinsmen, the Nevilles, the Mowbrays, and the Bourchiers. Among his principal lieutenants was his nephew Richard Neville, the earl of Warwick, a powerful man in his own right, who had hundreds of adherents among the gentry scattered over 20 counties. In 1453, when Henry lapsed into insanity, a powerful baronial clique, backed by Warwick, installed York as protector of the realm. When Henry recovered in 1455, he reestablished the authority of Margaret's party, forcing York to take up arms for self-protection. The first battle of the wars, at St. Albans (May 22, 1455), resulted in a Yorkist victory and four years of uneasy truce.

The ascendancy of Warwick

The next round of the wars arose out of disputes within the Yorkist ranks. Warwick, the statesman of the group, was the true architect of the Yorkist triumph. Until 1464 he was the real ruler of the kingdom. He ruthlessly put down the survivors of the Lancastrians who, under the influence of Margaret and with French help, kept the war going in the north and in Wales. The wholesale executions that followed the battle of Hexham (May 1464) practically destroyed what was left of the Lancastrian party, and the work seemed complete when, a year later, Henry VI was captured and put in the Tower of London.

Warwick made an equally vigorous effort to put the government of the realm in better shape, to restore public order, to improve the administration of justice, and, by confiscations and economies, to make the crown solvent. At the same time, both Warwick and his master were caught in the diplomatic schemes of the astute Louis XI, who had succeeded Charles VII as the king of France in 1461. He was still preoccupied with the power of Burgundy, and the English were to be the pawns in the game he intended to play for the humbling of Charles the Bold.

Yet Edward IV was not prepared to submit indefinitely to Warwick's tutelage, efficient and satisfactory though it proved to be. It was not that he deliberately tried to oust Warwick; rather he found the earl's

power irksome. Edward's hasty and secret marriage to Elizabeth Woodville in 1464 was the first overt sign of his impatience. The Woodvilles, a family with strong Lancastrian connections, never achieved real political influence, but they climbed into positions of trust near the king, thus estranging Warwick still further.

The open breach between the king and the earl came in 1467. Edward dismissed Warwick's brother, George Neville, the chancellor; repudiated a treaty with Louis XI that the earl had just negotiated; and concluded an alliance with Burgundy against which Warwick had always protested. Warwick then began to organize opposition to the king. He was behind the armed protest of the gentry and commons of Yorkshire that was called the rising of Robin of Redesdale (April 1469). A few weeks later, having raised a force at Calais and married his daughter Isabel without permission to Edward's rebellious brother, George Plantagenet, duke of Clarence, Warwick landed in Kent. The royal army was defeated in July at Edgecote (near Banbury), and the king himself became the earl's prisoner, while the queen's father and brother, together with a number of their friends, were executed at his command.

By March 1470, however, Edward had regained his control, forcing Warwick and Clarence to flee to France, where they allied themselves with Louis XI and (probably at Louis's instigation) came to terms with their former enemy Margaret. Returning to England (September 1470), they deposed Edward and restored the crown to Henry VI, and for six months Warwick ruled as Henry's lieutenant. Edward fled to the Netherlands with his followers.

The triumph of Edward IV

Warwick's power was insecure, however, for the Lancastrians found it difficult to trust one who had so lately been their scourge, while many of the earl's Yorkist followers found the change more than they could bear. There was thus little real opposition to Edward, who, having secured Burgundian aid, returned from Flushing to land at Ravenspur (March 1471) in a manner reminiscent of Henry IV. His forces met those of Warwick on April 14 in the Battle of Barnet, in which Edward outmaneuvered Warwick, regained the loyalty of the duke of Clarence, and decisively defeated Warwick, who was slain in the battle. On the same day, Margaret and her son, who had hitherto refused to return from France, landed at Weymouth. Hearing the news of Barnet, she marched west, trying to reach the safety of Wales, but Edward won the race to the Severn. In the Battle of Tewkesbury (May 4) Margaret was captured, her forces destroyed, and her son killed. Shortly afterward Henry VI was murdered in the Tower of London; Margaret remained in custody until being ransomed by Louis XI in 1475. Edward's throne was secure for the rest of his life (he died in 1483).

In 1483 Edward's brother Richard III, overriding the claims of his nephew, the young Edward V, alienated many Yorkists, who then turned to the last hope of the Lancastrians, Henry Tudor (later Henry VII). With the help of the French and of Yorkist defectors, Henry defeated and killed Richard at Bosworth Field on August 22, 1485, bringing the wars to a close. By his marriage to Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth of York in 1486, Henry united the Yorkist and Lancastrian claims. Henry defeated a Yorkist rising supporting the pretender Lambert Simnel on June 16, 1487, a date which some historians prefer over the traditional 1485 for the termination of the wars.

Consequences and effects

Besides the obvious consequences of Lancastrian and Yorkist kings swapping thrones several times and the establishment of the House of Tudor at the end of it all, the wars killed half the lords of the 60 noble families of England, established a much more violent political environment, and saw first a boost to the power of the nobility and then a swing back in the favor of the Crown. Finally, the wars have inspired historians and writers forever after, whether it be Tudor propagandists, William Shakespeare, or the creators of such television shows as Game of Thrones.

POSITIONS

Notes on characters: While we do not require your character to follow the same path as they did historically, we will be looking for delegates to stay in character and serve the interests of that character.

1. LANCASTERS

Henry VI

A generally weak king, uninterested in military matters and showing signs of mental illness. His general incompetence revived the York claim to the throne, and due to physical and mental frailty he was quite unpopular. He suffered a mental breakdown that led to a protectorate being formed, and Richard of York was named Lord of Protector, however he later recovered and resumed the struggle to maintain and regain the throne.

Margaret of Anjou (Henry's wife)

Henry VI's wife who more or less ruled in his stead. She became heavily involved in politics when she became concerned that Richard of York, the Lord Protector while Henry was incapable of ruling, was going to depose her husband. She was generally unpopular among the people, but a strong ruler. By her account, she recruited various outlaws to her cause by having them recognize her son Prince Edward as the rightful heir.

Prince Edward of Westminster (Henry's son)

The only son of Henry VI and Margaret, eager to reclaim the throne while he and his mother held a court in exile in France. There were widespread rumors that he was the product of an affair his mother had with one of her supporters, but no evidence, and Henry VI recognized him as his son.

Elizabeth Woodville

First marriage was to a minor supporter of the House of Lancaster with whom she had two sons, after his death she married Edward IV, making her Queen for a time. This marriage created a schism between her and Richard Neville, however, eventually resulting in Richard defecting to the Lancasters and the execution of Elizabeth's father. After Edward IV's death, Elizabeth ended up being instrumental in the ascension of Henry VII, who married her daughter, and remained politically influential even after her son was deposed.

Henry Tudor (Henry VII)

Son of one of Henry VI's half-brothers and Margaret of Beaufort, a Lancaster, first king of the House of Tudor whose ascension (in our timeline) ended the War of the Roses, and the last King of England to win his throne on the battlefield.

Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick (starts a York defects to Lancaster side)

Also known as Warwick the Kingmaker, the wealthiest and most influential lord of the time in England with connections stretching outside the country. He was instrumental in deposing two separate kings, leading to the epithet Warwick the Kingmaker. He was popular throughout all classes of society and skilled at using this popularity for political gain.

Thomas Neville, Viscount Fauconberg

Also known as the Bastard of Fauconberg, a sailor with success in clearing out pirates in his early years before he became a Yorkist commander. Later on he joined his cousin Warwick the Kingmaker in defecting to the Lancaster side

John Neville, 1st Marquess of Montagu

Warwick the Kingmaker's younger brother, while his brother was in exile the then-king Edward IV lowered his rank and John Neville, taking this as an insult, defected to the Lancaster side.

Henry Beaufort, 3rd Duke of Somerset

Margaret of Anjou's principal commander, a competent military leader of the Lancasters. Regarded as the hope of the Lancaster party, he made peace with the Yorks for some time while Edward IV was king and was pardoned, but later rejoined Margaret in her struggle to reclaim the throne for the Lancasters.

Edmund Beaufort, 4th Duke of Somerset

Younger brother of Henry Beaufort, and a military commander for the Lancasters. Lived in exile in France for some time while the Yorks held the throne.

John Talbot, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury

Lancaster supporter, served as Lord High Treasurer by Queen Margaret's appointment, although he was not very competent at the position.

Edmund Tudor, 1st Earl of Richmond

Half-brother to Henry VI and father of Henry VII, prior to the War of the Roses was allies with Richard of York. Served as advisor to Henry VI while he was king.

Lady Margaret Beaufort

Edmund Tudor's wife, actively maneuvered to secure the crown for her son Henry VII. She was very influential politically, especially for a woman at the time, and a vital contributor to the Tudor cause. She also started the era of extensive patronage by the Tudors.

John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford

One of the principal Lancastrian commanders and instrumental supporter of King Henry VII and the Tudor dynasty.

John Butler, 6th Earl of Ormond

Polyglot and ambassador serving the Lancasters, later attainted by Edward IV after he was defeated in battle and sent as an ambassador throughout Europe.

2. YORKS

Richard, Duke of York

The Yorkist claimant to the throne who initially led the charge against the Lancastrian King Henry VI. He was an ambitious and determined individual who was willing to risk everything to secure the throne for himself and his descendants.

Edward IV

The son of Richard, Duke of York, and the eventual Yorkist king. He was a charismatic and capable leader who was able to rally support for the Yorkist cause and emerge victorious in the War of the Roses.

George, Duke of Clarence

The brother of Edward IV and a key supporter of the Yorkist cause. He was ambitious and scheming, and was accused of treason by his own brother. He was ultimately executed in 1478.

Richard III

The brother of Edward IV and a key Yorkist ally. He was a controversial figure who is often remembered for his alleged role in the deaths of his nephews, the young Princes in the Tower. He was killed in battle in 1485.

Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick (Starts in House of York)

Also known as "Warwick the Kingmaker," he was a powerful nobleman who initially supported the Yorkist cause but later in the war switched to the Lancastrian side. He was a skilled political operator who played a key role in the conflict, but was ultimately killed in battle in 1471.

John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln

The son of Elizabeth of York and the Duke of Suffolk, and an important Yorkist supporter. He was ambitious and had a strong claim to the throne through his mother, but was killed in battle in 1487.

Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland

A powerful nobleman who initially supported the Lancastrian cause but later switched to the Yorkist side. He was a capable military commander who played a key role in several Yorkist victories.

Thomas Stanley, 1st Earl of Derby

A powerful nobleman who initially supported the Lancastrian cause but quickly switched to the Yorkist side when his power was threatened. He was a shrewd and opportunistic figure who was able to maintain a position of influence throughout the conflict.

John Howard, Duke of Norfolk:

A key Yorkist supporter who was made Duke of Norfolk by Edward IV. He was a skilled military commander who played a key role in several Yorkist victories.

William Hastings, 1st Baron Hastings

A close friend and confidant of Edward IV, he was made Lord Chamberlain by the Yorkist king. He was a loyal and trusted adviser to the king, and was executed by Richard III in 1483.

Edward, Earl of March

The son of Richard, Duke of York, and the eventual Yorkist King Edward IV. He was a competent and capable leader who was able to rally support for the Yorkist cause and emerge victorious in the War of the Roses.

Richard Neville, 5th Earl of Salisbury

Father of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, He was an English nobleman and magnate based in northern England who became a key supporter of the House of York during the early years of the Wars of the Roses. He was present at the First Battle of St. Albans in 1455, where the Duke of York's forces were victorious, and he also fought at the Battle of Wakefield in 1460, where he was captured and executed.

Edmund, Earl of Rutland

The youngest son of Richard, Duke of York, and a key supporter of the Yorkist cause. He was known for his intelligence and military skills, and he played a key role in several key battles during the Wars of the Roses, but was killed in the Battle of Wakefield.

George Plantagenet, Duke of Bedford

The youngest son of Richard, Duke of York, and a key supporter of the Yorkist cause during the War of the Roses. He was a brave and loyal supporter of the Yorkist cause, and fought alongside his brothers in several key battles. Despite his youth, George was highly regarded for his courage and dedication to the Yorkist cause, and was remembered as a hero by his family and supporters.

Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick

The son of George, Duke of Clarence, and a key supporter of the Yorkist cause during the War of the Roses. He was a distant cousin of the Yorkist kings Edward IV and Richard III, and had a strong claim to the throne through his mother, who was a daughter of Richard, Duke of York

John, Earl of Worcester

A key Yorkist supporter as well as a skilled diplomat and military commander who served the Yorkist kings Edward IV and Richard III with distinction. He was known for his bravery and loyalty to the Yorkist cause who served as a military commander and diplomat during the War of the Roses. He was killed in battle in 1471.

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RULES AND PROCEDURES

In some ways, the rule of procedure in crisis committees is greatly simplified compared to a more traditional setup. Debate will proceed in a perpetual moderated caucus with one minute speaking time, and delegates can motion for unmoderated caucus with the approval of the dais.

The main element of procedure that sets crisis committees apart is the directive. In crisis committees each delegate will have a certain amount of power to take direct action, such as directing troops or collecting intelligence. Depending upon existing preparatory action, the dais will roll dice to determine the outcome. For example, a directive to steal resources from another delegate or bloc will be more likely to succeed if it is preceded by a successful reconnaissance or propaganda mission. However, perhaps your reconnaissance mission fails and the other bloc is alerted that you tried to gather intelligence on them. It should be noted that delegates will not be permitted to take military action early on in debate – what directives are allowed to pass will be up to the discretion of the dais.

There are two modifiers that must be attached to every directive – each can be public or private, overt or covert. A public directive must be voted on by the entire bloc before it can pass, a private directive does not need to be voted on, however the action taken must be under the jurisdiction of the delegates who are signatories – private directives can only make use of the resources available to the signatories and not any bloc-wide shared resources. It is worth stating here that every delegate whose resources are involved in a directive must be a signatory – for instance if you are using another delegate's specialized spy team, they must be a signatory on that directive. Covert directives will not be read aloud by the dais, instead signatories will receive private notes regarding the success of the directive and whatever consequences result from a success or failure. Overt directives will be read aloud to the entire bloc when they are submitted, although no voting is necessary, and the results will also be made public.

Finally, delegates are requested to keep their directives within reason. Model UN is at its heart a roleplaying experience, and delegates should stay within the limits of their roles. An English nobleman shouldn't be creating a team of scientists to investigate nuclear weapons, for instance.