

JCC: IMJIN WAR

(JOSEON DYNASTY)

Background Guide

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Throughout this committee, delegates will be engaging in complex debates and discussions covering a wide array of topics. As SSICsim seeks to provide an enriching educational experience that facilitates understanding of the implications of real-world issues, the content of our committees may involve sensitive or controversial subject matter for the purposes of academia and accuracy. We ask that delegates be respectful, professional, tactful, diplomatic, and open to new perspectives when engaging with all committee content, representing their assigned country's or character's position in an appropriately nuanced and equitable manner, communicating kindly and compassionately with staff and other delegates, and responding to opposing viewpoints constructively.

This Background Guide presents topics that may be distressing to some Delegates, including but not limited to: violence and warfare. Great care will be taken by staff in handling any/all of these topics should they arise. Additionally, the staff for JCC: Imjin War - Joseon Dynasty request that all participants exercise discretion when engaging with committee content, and ensure that interactions are intended to drive the overall conversation and personal/committee goals, rather than 'score points' or generate interpersonal conflict/discomfort.

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SSICsim expects that all discussions amongst delegates will remain productive and respectful of one another. If you have any equity concerns or need assistance in setting boundaries or navigating sensitive subject matter, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, our Deputy Secretary-General, Aidan Thompson, at dsg@ssicsim.ca, or our Equity Proxy, Di Vink, at equity@ssicsim.ca. We want you to feel safe, comfortable, and welcomed at SSICsim!

If you wish to switch committees after having read the content warnings for this committee, please:

- Use the following form to request a committee switch:
<https://forms.gle/fKUYrcSTxwPRQ2CD9>
- Contact your Faculty Advisor/Head Delegate to inform them of your request if you are a part of a delegation



AIDAN THOMPSON (HE/HIM)
DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear delegates,

It is an honour and a privilege to welcome you all to SSICsim 2023 this year. This committee has been an idea brewing in my head for quite some time and I am super excited to be able to present it and run this committee with the very talented team that I have been working with.

Allow me to introduce myself: My name is Chris (or Martin, depending on who you may ask) Madiba, I was at Concordia for economics for the past couple of years and this fall I'll be starting over with Criminal Justice at Humber. For a very long time, I have had a very prominent interest in world history. Thus, when picking what kind of committee to run for this year's edition of SSICsim, naturally my brain went in that direction. As a history nerd, I have always paid close attention in my school history classes, however I first heard of this war from some Youtube videos I watched some years back. With that, when I was given the opportunity to once again be a committee director I chose this war, both for the history nerd in me and the delegates who are also huge history nerds.

This war is a particularly important moment in both Japanese and Korean history; In Japan it laid the groundwork for the ascension of the Tokugawa shogunate about a decade after its end, which in turn laid the groundwork for modern Japan as we know it today. In Korea, the war and its aftermath gave rise to national heroes such as Yi Sun-shin, but the massive civilian toll started the centuries of animosity between Japan and Korea, which would only be accentuated when the Japanese empire would invade again, successfully this time, a few centuries later. It also helped to further highlight the geopolitical power balance that existed in eastern Asia at the time, placing China at its centre, with Korea as its tributary and Japan

attempting to break away and disrupt said system. While the war itself did not do much to change the status quo of the time, its ripple effect still affects us today.

My main objective as a director is to ensure that all of the delegates have the most enjoyable time participating in this conference and this committee. I hope to give you all an unforgettable experience which will help you fall in love with Model UN in the same way I did as a novice delegate.

Good luck, and be sure to have fun!

CHRIS (MARTIN) MADIBA (ANY PRONOUNS)
DIRECTOR, JCC: IMJIN WAR

DEFINITIONS

Daimyo

Great lord in feudal Japan, vassal of the Shogun.

Shogun

Military ruler who is nominally a vassal to the Emperor.

Samurai

Member of the Japanese military caste.

Tsushima

Island in the Tsushima strait, midway point between Japan and Korea.

Arquebus

Early portable gun.

Joseon

Korean dynasty that was in power from 1392 to 1910.

Ming Dynasty

Chinese dynasty that was in power from 1369 to 1644.

Wokou Pirates

Japanese pirates who frequently raided the Korean coastline.

CONTEXT

In the wake of the Onin war, any semblance of Unity in Japan had faded and the empire was controlled by regional daimyo rather than central authority. Over 100 years later, however, Japan is once again united under the rule of shogun Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who intends on building an Asian empire centered on Japan.

After the state of Goryeo was overthrown by the Joseon Dynasty in 1392, Korea went through a period of development, peace, and reform. Having become a tributary of the Chinese Ming dynasty and experiencing relative peace over the century, a full-scale war is not what the King is concerned about.

Initial Japanese Overtures

In 1587, Japan under Toyotomi Hideyoshi had tried to re-establish severed diplomatic ties with Korea. In that same year, he asked the So clan from Tsushima to send an ultimatum to Korea to side with the Japanese in a war against the Ming dynasty. Because, however, the So clan had a vested interest in trading with Korea, they did not want to jeopardize this and thus delayed the talks for two years. When Hideyoshi renewed this order, So Yoshitoshi, leader of the So clan, made an effort to improve relations between Korea and Japan. In this visit, he presented an arquebus to the Korean court. A high-ranking Korean official named Ryu Song Ryeong suggested that the weapon be put into production, which the Korean court ignored.

Korean Response

In April 1590, Korean ambassadors Hwang Yun-Gil and Kim Saung-Il among others went to Japan on a diplomatic mission as Hideyoshi was finishing up a campaign. Upon his return, Hideyoshi incorrectly assumed that they were in Japan for a tribute mission. Upon their departure, the Korean ambassadors were taxed to deliver a letter from Hideyoshi inviting

Korea to join Japan against the Ming.

Upon their return, discussions surrounding the situation were complex. While Hwang yun-Gil could not give a solid estimate of Japan's military capacity, he nonetheless maintained that a war was coming, whereas Kim Saung-Il thought Hideyoshi was bluffing. As the Korean court failed to reach a decision and did not take the threat of invasion seriously, likening it to Wokou pirate raids of the past, Japan invaded in 1592.

Armed Forces: Korea

Korea's military was in a dissipated state before the start of the war. While commanders were exclusively of noble birth, it was frowned upon for noblemen to join the army as such commanders had very varying capabilities in the military. By far, the Joseon dynasty's most powerful asset was its navy, which consisted of Panokseon and Kobukson, the latter of which were commissioned by admiral Yi Sun-Shin.

ISSUES FOR DEBATE

Topic 1: Contrasting Military Structures

Korea's military was not in the best state before the beginning of the war. Historically, it had been primarily used to fight the Jurchen on Korea's northern border, and closer to the start of the war it had been significantly weakened due to the influence of Confucianism. At that point, the army relied on the conscription of citizens to bolster its ranks.

Guiding Questions for Delegates:

1. How will Korea manage to mount an effective defense in so little time?
2. How can Korea strengthen the northern border from incoming attacks?
3. What assets currently held by the Joseon dynasty can be used to fend off Japanese attempts at invasion? What assets can be obtained?
4. What information does the Korean military have about their attackers that could aid the war effort?

Topic 2: Bureaucracy and Governance

The Joseon dynasty was in theory ruled by a king and by an enlightened Confucian nobility. However, reality was much different, with much of the Korean nobility being plagued by corruption and cross-fighting. At times, this would hinder the ability to get important administrative tasks done such as properly raising troops and appointing competent administrators.

Guiding Questions for Delegates:

1. How will the Korean administration overcome organizational challenges in order to stop the Japanese onslaught?
2. How can issues of corruption and cross-fighting be resolved in order to strengthen the governance of the nobility over Korea?

CONCLUSION

As war seems imminent and the fate of the balance of power in East Asia hangs in the balance, each player has their part to play. Korean commanders are concerned with defending the country while the bureaucracy fails at its job, the Ming are concerned with maintaining its influence in Korea and Japan is looking first and foremost to change that fact. In the end, it is up to you all to dictate where these efforts will end up and how everything will play out. Best of luck, delegates...

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