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THE COD WARS ICELAND

NYUMUNC XV

Joint Crisis Committee

Chair

Tammy Tam

Crisis Director

Maulik Bairathi

The Cod Wars: Iceland

Committee Background Guide



Joint Crisis Committee

New York Model United Nations Conference

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Welcome Letters

Meet Your Crisis Director

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of all the staff of NYUMUN, welcome to our 15th conference and Cod Wars: Iceland.

My name is Maulik Bairathi, and I am very excited to be one of the CDs for the Cod Wars JCC. I am a Junior studying Economics and Mathematics in the College of Arts and Sciences. I am originally from Massachusetts and in my free time I enjoy going to museums, playing squash, and watching documentaries.



I am presently serving as the Treasurer of NYU Model UN, and I was previously on the directorate of both NYU's conferences. I have been doing Model UN since Middle School and I have attended and staffed many conferences since then. I hope to see varied and novel plans to develop Iceland and navigate the conflicts facing the nation. I plan to let you all guide the committee to the fullest extent possible, and I wish for you all to embrace this control and make this a memorable committee and conference. I am looking forward to seeing all the creative and detailed plans you all will make in the backroom!

I hope you all enjoy this conference. We are sincerely looking forward to meeting you all and hopefully having an excellent weekend of crisis. Good luck with your preparations and research. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns about the committee.

Sincerely,

Maulik Bairathi, Crisis Director of Cod Wars: Iceland

Meet Your Chair

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of NYUMUN, welcome to NYUMUNC XV and Cods Wars: Iceland!

My name is Tammy Tam (yes this is my real and legal name), and I am very excited and honored to be your chair for this weekend. I am a sophomore at NYU double majoring in psychology and politics. Here are some interesting facts about me: I am from the state of Hawaii, I spend my free time going to art galleries and museums, and I am an avid fan of Miffy.

Before you begin reading our background guide, I would like to share a little bit more about my experience at MUN. I have been in MUN ever since my sophomore year in high school, and I am so glad that I am able to continue this passion in college. I initially chose to join MUN because of my interest in learning about social issues and international politics, but I stayed because of the many wonderful memories that I created during my time in MUN. Some of my closest friends I have today are people I have met through conferences, and I hope you are able to have this same experience. When preparing for this upcoming conference, it is important that you evaluate the series of disputes through different ranges of perspectives, from observing the different economical and geopolitical standpoints to considering the impacts this issue may bring on an international and even global level. This is an opportunity for you to use your critical thinking skills and creativity to come up with solutions and even potentially rewrite history.

I hope you enjoy this conference just as much as we did when we were preparing for it, and I cannot wait to meet all of you and hear all your brilliant ideas. Best of luck with your preparations and research! Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Tammy Tam, Chair of Cod Wars: Iceland

Email: tk7997@nyu.edu

Statement of Diversity and Inclusion

Whilst NYUMUNC is committed to maintaining as educational and historically accurate an experience as possible, we recognize that any debate around historical events will incorporate sensitive issues. Delegates are expected to discuss these issues maturely and appropriately.

NYUMUNC is committed to promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion in line with NYU's values; in the spirit of this commitment, NYUMUNC will not tolerate any bigoted symbols, statements, or attitudes. Remember that by attending our conference you agree to our Terms and Conditions of Conference Attendance, which we suggest you read over. It is posted on our website and is in your Delegation Guide.

Delegates will not engage in crimes against humanity, including but not limited to genocide, atomic bombings, war crimes, or other serious offenses. Xenophobic statements, actions, or attitudes will not be tolerated. Delegates who violate these guidelines will face repercussions. If you have specific questions that you are not sure about regarding appropriate topics, please don't hesitate to email or ask.

Introduction

Welcome to 1972 Iceland! Iceland is a beautiful nation in the Northeast Atlantic off the coast of Britain, Norway, and Greenland. But all is not well in Iceland, and the nation faces systemic economic instability, political tensions, and social crises. As the leaders of Iceland in the upper house of the Althing, you must work swiftly and efficiently to steward Iceland through present and future challenges to a more prosperous immediate and distant future.

Under the specter of the Cold War, you will have to balance your own interests with those of NATO and the US in particular. While your military may not be vast, your status as NATO members and the location of a US military base of paramount importance in the Cold War your influence and leverage over global powerhouses will be a great asset and it will be up to you to push these advantages to the fullest extent.

You will face new challenges associated with continuing industrialization. Seemingly fish harvests decline more every year with the recent crisis of herring harvests in decline just three years ago, and it is alarming to see the state of Cod harvests following a similar pattern. Unstable fish harvests do not bode well for the welfare of citizens and continued instability could result in long term consequences for the Icelandic financial system. Your government has concluded that your fisheries cannot support both your harvests and foreign nations, and have just expanded your economic exclusivity zone! How will the rest of the world respond and how will your fisheries fare?

While it may seem your neighbors are your only threats, be assured that they are not. The Icelandic public is dynamic and ever changing and it is important to be responsive and wise when dealing with public sentiments. Economic and social tumult are only moments away from

creating chaos for any nation, be careful to stay popular while stewarding your nation through these crises.

The land of Iceland, while beautiful for most of the time, is powerful and capricious. The myriad of seismic, volcanic, and glacial features are an ever present threat. The best laid plans can always be ruined by nature so be cognizant of the slip-strike faults, 35 recently active volcanoes, surge type glaciers, and many more features which are endemic to the great land of Iceland.

We hope you all are able to use the great qualities of this land to create a great future for the people of Iceland but be prepared to deal with the dynamism and change which is inevitable on this island.

Committee Mechanics

Committee will begin on September 1st 1972. The Icelandic government has just announced that they have extended their EEZ, or Economic Exclusion Zone, for commercial fishing to 50 miles, effectively crippling British fishing operations in the region.

In this committee, delegates will take the role of the Prime Minister Edward Heath's cabinet. Thus, committee directives will essentially take place of policy papers which will then be passed on to the House of Commons in the form of a bill. Those bills will be discussed by the House of Commons (the backroom), and enacted or failed depending on the results.

Due to numerous physical and technological limitations, communication between the two committees of the JCC will be limited. It will be up to the delegates from both sides of the

committee to establish standardized procedures for communication, but below are several suggestions for delegates to consider.

- **Selected Envoys:** One way to gain an understanding of how the other committee is approaching the crisis would be to send an envoy from one committee to the other. Committee front rooms have the option to pass directives which designate a selected committee member to be sent to the other room for a predetermined amount of time, building bilateral communication.
- **Cycles of Ambassadors:** Another way to establish shared communication between committees would be the regular organization of ambassador meetings. Each committee would select 1-2 designated ambassadors per session to interact with each other in unmoderated caucus format outside of the respective committee rooms. The meeting will not be recorded, and it is the responsibility of the ambassadors to convey the discussed content.
- **Joint Room Summits:** A final form of communication to consider is the establishing of joint summit meetings to discuss cross-committee initiatives and directives. A summit would allow every delegate to attend, although committees should consider what form of debate would be best used in these summits. Due to the real life difficulty in hosting summits, the frequency and length of these joint sessions would be subject to limited chair discretion.

Background

Environment

Iceland is both a geologically and anthropologically young island. Only formed 33 million years ago, and only settled by humans in roughly 900. Yet again, Iceland was formed

roughly 33 million years ago. It lies upon multiple geographical borders including the ocean border between the and the border between two tectonic plates. Specifically, Iceland lies on the border between the North American and Eurasian plates. The border between the North American and Eurasian plates in this area and for much of the Atlantic ocean is a divergent boundary. At a high level, this means the tectonic plates are slowly moving apart and creating new material on the ocean floor immediately north and south of Iceland as well as through it. This leads to massive amounts of seismic activity. For the sake of brevity, we will not overly focus on seismology. However, a couple main features of the seismology of Iceland are that it sits on two “deformation zones”, the Southern Iceland Seismic Zone and the Tjörnes fracture zone. Both zones are caused by stress from the plates brushing together and often building, creating fractures and stress on both plates. The stress manifests in both the creation of fissures where lava can erupt from as well as slip-strike type earthquakes where built up stress can release quickly creating potentially large earthquakes which spread fairly widely.

Iceland is also extremely volcanically active. There are roughly 200 volcanoes on and near Iceland, but only 35 volcanoes which have been active in the last 12000 years. Volcanoes and fracture zones in the country are globally significant, and very few areas are more volcanically active in recent history. Eruptions can be devastating and have destroyed entire towns and relocated thousands of people. Most recently in 1947 and 1970 the Volcano Hekla erupted, killing one person in the eruption.

Iceland also has many glaciers which cover roughly 11% of the landmass. There are very few large glaciers as 13 glaciers constitute 98% of the glacial area. Glaciers are large masses of slow moving ice, they can create massive amounts of erosion and can shape the landscape. Notably in Iceland’s case, All Icelandic glaciers are surge-type glaciers which are very rare

making up 1 in a 100 volcanoes globally. Surge type glaciers move cyclically, often moving very little and advancing and retreating with the seasons, and then rapidly advancing. Historically there are records of glaciers in recent history advancing as much as 5 miles in several days. Ice flows are powerful and fast moving and it cannot be understated how much glaciers shape the landscape of Iceland in both the long and short run.

The land of Iceland is largely a plateau at an average height of 1640 feet above sea level. Much of the landscape of Iceland is formed by volcanic activity and then glacial erosion. This creates the extensive network of fjords seen on the island, which are narrow ocean inlets into the land. Most of the inland of Iceland is elevated and uninhabitable. Essentially all human settlements are in the coastal region.

Iceland has the Atlantic Ocean to the south and Icelandic ocean to north. The gulf stream brings relatively warm water from the Atlantic, the west of the Icelandic ocean brings cold water, and the east of the Icelandic ocean brings water from the arctic. This leads to the deep water from the Atlantic containing marine snow and other nutrients to surface off the coast of Iceland. The massive amount of upwelling is thought to be one of the reasons Iceland is such a potent fishery.

The fertile waters lead to flourishing marine life. There are more than 270 species of fish in the area, the majority of which are born in the immediate vicinity of Iceland. However, many migrate from arctic or open waters to Icelandic waters. That being said, roughly 25 species of fish are commercially fished and the majority is cod, red fish/rock fish, and capelin which are a type of smelt. Of the invertebrates in the region Norway lobster, Northern shrimp, and Iceland scallop are the only ones relevant commercially. Common and Grey seals live and reproduce on the coast of Iceland, however, the walrus that were one native to the region have since gone

extinct. Iceland is also home to 12 species of whales, but primarily blue, fin, humpback, and sei whales are hunted and the hunting of the smaller and more common minke whale began in the early 20th century.

History

Iceland has no known prehistory and the first settlers were able to retell and eventually record their experiences in several books. The first permanent settlers of Iceland are alleged to have first permanently settled as early as the mid 870s, which the archaeological record supports. Permanent settlers came from the Nordic region and Norse controlled regions of Britain. That being said, it is suspected that the island was discovered multiple times prior to the Viking age, but either did not attempt to settle or left after a short time.

Settlers were motivated by available lands, apparent valuable resources, increasing difficulty of war and raiding, and increasing taxes under the Norwegian crown. Land was easily available during the first 60 years of settlement and was seemingly easy to purchase or claim, but by 930 the land was fully settled and difficulty increased. At the time colonization Iceland was 40% forested, but settlers rapidly deforested the island reaching its lowest point at present.

From the very beginning, the settlers were unaffiliated outside power. Most of the governing strategy stemmed from the religion of Norse people who believed in a governing class called the Godar, which was a group of 40 chieftains who met and ruled the land. They would create juries, laws, and would convene small groups of godi for local governance. The overall assembly happened once a year to amend and create laws, this was called the Althing. There was no central power which could command the country to go to power.

In 999, after several Norwegian Christian missionaries had come to the island in previous years, the Althing decided all Icelandic people should be Christian. In spite of the fact that the Godar system came from Norse religion, the structure remained after the conversion. Acceptance of Christian religion was common in the region, as the King of Norway made his nation Christian prior. The spread of Christianity in the region coincides with expansion of literacy.

Iceland was productive at this time, grazing of sheep and cattle was extremely successful leading to meat, dairy, and wool production. They also harvested Walrus tusks and hides. The practice of spear-drift whaling also began around this time, which is the practice of spearing a whale and then reclaiming the carcass after it has drifted to shore. The country engaged in trade and is widely believed to have imported timber and grain. This period was prosperous and considered a golden era for the Icelandic people. However, prosperity eventually came to an end as in the 1200s massive and bloody disagreements between members of the Godar created instability. This coincided with Norwegian initiatives to unify the Norse world.

In 1264, all members of the Godar submitted to the Norwegian Crown. They were affiliated with the Norwegian Crown, and paid tax. However, the distance between Iceland and its closest neighbors the Faroe Islands are 400 miles away. At the time, voyages of this length were too cumbersome for governance purposes but doable for commerce. Thus, Iceland needed its own structure to self-govern and maintain order on the island and the Althing continued as it had before.

In the beginning of the 14th century it became apparent that the fisheries around Iceland were unparalleled, and the serious trade of fish began, primarily of Cod. Much of the Cod was sold to the Church who used it during fasting. However, the deforestation and overgrazing of the lands of Iceland which induced erosion. Simultaneously, the region went through a little ice-age

with shorter growing seasons. Both led to less productivity for grazing, agriculture, and the abandonment of grain farming which had recently become possible. Serfdom also became popular. Both factors created a cod-dependent Iceland.

In 1380, Norway and Denmark merged into the Kalmar Union with other Nordic nations which created economic and political consequences, however, Denmark was by far the dominant power in the union and controlled most of it. Denmark had less demand for Icelandic goods and thus trade declined with the Norse mainland. However, trade continued with other nations, supporting the territory economically. Through the 15th century, trade with the British and German flourished. At the time, some British ships would fish the area, however Germans rented ships to local Icelandic people and then bought the fish. However trade flourished and Iceland was a major trading partner of both nations. During the 15th century, the Danish tried to stop trade with the British leading to repeated violent disputes. In the 16th century, the British became less interested in Iceland, somewhat informed by the conflict and discovery of other comparable fisheries. Agriculture also entered a golden age at the time.

In the 1530s the Lutheran Reformation occurred but was disliked and resisted by the people of Iceland leading to retaliation from their Lutheran rulers, As the Icelandic bishops were removed and replaced, and the monastery lands were taken from the Icelandic church which has considerable influence and holdings until this point. In 1602, trade was monopolized by the Danish, this was catastrophic for Iceland. In 1660, Denmark became an absolute monarchy however little changed as the Danish did not interfere with local governance further. Under the trade monopoly, the fish price was suppressed as was demand. However, illegal trade continued with the British, Germans, and Basque people. Whaling was expanded and became more

effective under the Basque whalers, however, Icelandic people lacked the capital to begin at the time.

Finally, the eruption of the volcano, Laki, in 1783 killed 80% of livestock and a fifth of the country. It is generally believed that over the following the 12th century to 1800 years, Iceland declined massively. It has been estimated that the economy declined in output by up to 40%. In 1800, the Althing was finally abolished and replaced with a more empowered Danish governor, who then created an appeals court and the city of Reykjavik.

In 1814 Norway gained independence from Denmark. In 1843, the Althing was reformed and in 1874, Denmark granted Iceland home rule. The economy began to recover from the disasters of the past. Iceland remained neutral during World War 1, however, as a trading partner of both Britain and Germany, the British made efforts to restrict the trade of Iceland which succeeded. Iceland declined in population as well as 15,000 people emigrated. The treasury of home-ruled Iceland became indebted. After the end of World War 1, in 1918, Iceland became fully sovereign but still in a union with Denmark.

The economy recovered under independence, and then swiftly declined with the great depression and closure of Spain, a major importer, due to civil war. During World War 2, Iceland was occupied by the British and later the Americans as well. The occupation was entirely peaceful, and largely treated the nations as guests rather than occupying forces. During the war, the economy of Iceland boomed as fish increased in value rapidly. Iceland became an extremely wealthy nation rather than the poor nation it had been for most of history.

In 1940-1943, Iceland ended the union with Denmark and became an independent republic. Both the UK and Britain, had lots of goodwill towards the nation following the

occupation. This led to Iceland receiving the most Marshall aid of any nation in Europe per capita by far and NATO membership in 1949.

Recent History & Current Issues

Overview

The main subjects of interest in recent history are the Proto Cod War from 1952 to 1956 and the First Cod War from 1958 to 1961.

The Proto Cod War began in May of 1952. Iceland extended fishery limits from 3 to 4 nautical miles offshore. The British did not comply with these new regulations which limited access to Iceland for British fishing vessels. The Icelandic Coast guard tried to stop British trawlers, which was met with significant albeit non-military retaliation. Britain sanctioned Iceland, banning the export of Icelandic fish to Britain. This was significant as the British were the chief consumers of the good. Iceland threatened that the conflict could make the NATO alliance and presence in Iceland less popular, and eventually threatened to leave NATO and expel US forces currently stationed in Iceland. The dispute was eventually resolved diplomatically with the British accepting the full demands of the Icelanders in the fall of 1956.

The First Cod War took place subsequent to another unilateral extension of fishing territory by the Icelanders from 4 to 12 nautical miles. Prior to the extension being issued, the countries met at the 1958 Law of the Sea conference, however, the British largely believed the policy was not unanimous or popular and did not come to an agreement at the conference and the British held to an unyielding policy on territorial waters. The extension was issued in September of 1958. Iceland made threats to NATO and the US military again, asserting that if the Royal Navy came within 12 nautical miles Iceland would leave NATO and expel forces. The British

assessment was accurate as 2 of the three parties in the coalition government were more moderate and wanted to come to a compromise. The Prime Minister of Britain sent the Royal Navy, which he believed would exaggerate divisions and put pressure on hardliners to give in. Under the pressure, the government collapsed and was reformed and compromise became extremely unfavorable with the citizenry of Iceland. The British began compromising, and eventually formal negotiations started late in 1960. The extended deployment of the navy was costly for the British driving the compromise. Finally, in 1961 an agreement was reached to accept the 12 mile expansion, the full amount demanded by the Icelanders, with the singular caveat that future disputes would be referred to the ICJ.

Iceland Economy/Trade

Trade restrictions of varying strictness were imposed by the Danish crown which was not fully released until 1855. Which stifled development and investment in the nation for hundreds of years leading to a poor Iceland until the 1880s when urbanization and development increased. This culminated in massive investment in capital for fishing, which required the opening of a state bank, Landsbanki, and finally fish becoming the largest export of Iceland at roughly the same time.

Beginning in 1905, the mechanization of boats compared to the sail smacks used prior further accelerated the growth of fishing as compared with agriculture which was somewhat successfully modernized. However, the fishing of Iceland is volatile. In 1967-68, the decline in herring stocks was so severe it decreased real export revenue by 20% and caused an inflationary event. Frequent collapses in both Cod and Herring fisheries are a threat to the economic stability of Iceland and have begun only recently with the introduction of trawling technology which may be overfishing the populations. This phenomenon is not restricted to Iceland, similar events are

occurring in Cod fisheries in the Northwestern Atlantic. Iceland is also limited in its ability to anticipate decline in fisheries before they are realized.

Whaling stopped in small areas for brief amounts of time until present. However, at present the Whaling industry is large. In 1946, the International Convention on Whaling was formed and Iceland was a member to the convention, eventually adhering to the ban on blue whales in 1960 but adhering to other regulations inconsistently. Recently, there have been calls in the UN to ban commercial whaling entirely for an extended period of time. That being said, nothing has been done at this time.

The many rivers of Iceland have made it a prime candidate for hydroelectric plants. Beginning in 1904, multiple hydroelectric plants were created. The majority of the highly productive and large ones are partially state owned by Landsvirkjun, the state power company. The productivity of the most recent hydroelectric plant opened in 1969 dwarfs past plants by a factor of 7 to 1. Further development would be both profitable and possible if Iceland can monetize the power generated.

Iceland is a uniquely excellent area for geothermal technologies and research as it sits atop significant hotspot activity. Geothermal is currently being used to heat residences, schools, and businesses after its initial usage in 1907. Geothermal power is currently being researched by the state authority, Orkustofnun, and the private sector as it is unknown where geothermal plants could be added or how geothermal can be harnessed for general energy production.

Despite the potential of hydroelectricity and geothermal, at this time Iceland still imports massive amounts of coal and oil for use in energy, heating, and transportation.

In the end of the 1960s, a Canadian company opened an aluminum smelter which smelted a refined form of Bauxite into aluminum. This is an extremely energy intensive process, and it is largely regarded as the first way to commercially monetize the bounty of electricity of Iceland.

The Icelandic continental shelf is widely suspected to have oil offshore. The geological patterns of the area are similar to those found in Greenland and Norway which contained significant amounts of oil. Iceland would be one of the most difficult areas to drill for oil because of the deep water and volatile weather conditions.

Trade has continually liberalized over the post-war period and Iceland has continued to participate in further trade with European neighbors. In 1970, Iceland joined the European Free Trade Association allowing for free trade within the members of association and for the association to negotiate with other nations on behalf of the association to create further free trade agreements.

The Icelandic Kronur, the currency of Iceland, was first introduced in 1918. In 1961, the Central Bank of Iceland was created which manages the currency of Iceland and conducts Monetary policy, prior to this currency was controlled by Landsbanki who did not conduct monetary policy. As a small nation, the currency of Iceland is unstable and vulnerable to inflation if mismanaged. Management can become difficult in Iceland because of external shocks in either imports or exports. At present exports make up 34.49% of the GDP.

Iceland Politics

In the 1970s, the Icelandic government operated within a parliamentary system with a constitutional monarchy. The Althing, Iceland's parliament, consisted of two chambers: the lower house (the "Folketing") and the upper house (the "Landsmót"). The head of state was the King of

Iceland, who was represented by a regent. However, Iceland had gained independence from Denmark in 1944, and the King's role was mostly symbolic.

The Prime Minister served as the head of government and was typically the leader of the majority party in the Folketing. The government was formed by the Prime Minister and the cabinet ministers, who were responsible for various government departments. The Althing held legislative power, passing laws and scrutinizing the government's actions.

Political parties played a significant role in Iceland's government, with elections determining the composition of the Althing. In 1970s, the dominant parties included the Independence Party and the Progressive Party, both of which often formed coalition governments.

In the 1970s, elections in Iceland were conducted through a proportional representation system, where political parties were allocated seats in the Althing based on the percentage of votes they received nationwide. Voters cast their ballots for party lists rather than individual candidates, and seats were distributed among parties according to their share of the popular vote. This system aimed to ensure a fair representation of diverse political viewpoints in parliament.

Following the elections, the party or coalition of parties that secured a majority of seats typically formed the government. The leader of the majority party, or the leader of the leading coalition, would become the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister then selected members from their own party or coalition to serve as cabinet ministers. These ministers were tasked with overseeing specific government departments or ministries, such as finance, education, or foreign affairs.

The cabinet, led by the Prime Minister, held executive authority and was responsible for implementing government policies, drafting legislation, and managing the day-to-day affairs of

the country. Cabinet meetings provided a forum for ministers to discuss and make decisions on key issues affecting Iceland, with the Prime Minister coordinating their efforts and representing the government's position to the public and the Althing.

The collapse of a coalition government could occur due to various reasons, including disagreements over policy issues, internal conflicts within coalition parties, or scandals that undermined public trust in the government. When these rifts became irreconcilable, coalition partners might withdraw their support, leading to the government's downfall.

Following a coalition collapse, the President of Iceland would usually consult with political party leaders to determine the next steps. If there was no clear path to forming a new coalition government, the President might dissolve the Althing and call for new elections to allow voters to elect a new parliament. Alternatively, parties might attempt to form a minority government or explore alternative coalition arrangements to maintain governance without the need for immediate elections.

Iceland Social Climate

The presence of the US military in Iceland is not popular in Iceland and the people of Iceland are often considered reluctant allies to the US despite receiving significant amounts of resources from the US. By extension, there were also protests against NATO membership which would entail further militarization of the country.

Gender equality was an evolving concern in Icelandic society during this period. While Iceland had made strides in women's rights, including granting women suffrage as early as 1915, gender disparities persisted in various spheres. Women faced barriers in accessing leadership positions in politics, business, and academia, reflecting broader global trends. Advocacy for

gender equality gained momentum in the 1970s, setting the stage for subsequent reforms and the emergence of Iceland as a global leader in gender parity.

Labor issues were also prominent in 1972, with debates surrounding workers' rights, wages, and working conditions. While Iceland had a strong tradition of labor unions advocating for workers' interests, tensions occasionally arose between labor and management. Strikes and labor disputes were not uncommon, as workers sought to improve their livelihoods and secure fair treatment in the workplace.

Social welfare and healthcare were areas of concern, with efforts underway to expand access to essential services and improve standards of living, particularly in rural areas. Iceland's welfare system aimed to provide support for vulnerable populations, but gaps in coverage and resource allocation persisted, requiring ongoing attention and reform.

Additionally, discussions around cultural identity and national heritage were central to Icelandic society in 1972. As a small, geographically isolated nation, Icelanders placed significant importance on preserving their language, traditions, and cultural heritage. Efforts to promote Icelandic language education and cultural initiatives underscored a commitment to safeguarding the country's unique identity amid globalization pressures.

Iceland Military

Iceland formed the Icelandic Coast Guard in 1918, which is the primary military force of the nation. In the beginning, the Coast Guard only had a single vessel. Since then, the fleet has expanded modestly. The Coast Guard is charged with protecting Iceland and Icelandic waters. At this time Iceland has 3 large patrol vessels, 2 smaller patrol vessels, and one Fokker F27. Further resources can be taken from the private sector under extenuating circumstances. A Sikorsky helicopter has been ordered, however, it has not arrived yet.

The Coast Guard is experienced with a variety of tasks including demining, surveillance, cutting trawler nets (a type of fishing where the net drags behind the boat), and search and rescue. However, the force does not have significant fighting experience and is not well equipped for significant military conflict and is better suited to stopping belligerent fishermen.

Iceland being a part of NATO allowed the nation to not build a significant military. NATO requested that the US military create a base on the island, called the Iceland Defense Force. It was stationed at the Naval Air Station in Keflavik. The force was made of all branches of the US military and was commanded by US Navy Rear Admiral. The force was significant and had far more aircraft and weaponry than the Icelandic Coast Guard by far. In total, the presence of the IDF generates at least 2% of the GDP of the nation. At present the ongoing cold war has intensified NATO presence in the region and made it an important outpost for NATO and the US.

Side of JCC Breakdown- United Kingdom

Initial Conflict

For centuries, seafood had always been a staple in diet for England as well as many other Northern Atlantic countries. During the end of the 14th century, England saw how the territorial waters around Iceland were especially resourceful for fishing due to its abundance of cod, and seized the economic opportunity to increase their access in the fishing grounds. As a political response, Denmark, who was ruling over Iceland at the time, restricted trade between Iceland and England. This sanction escalated to violence and eventually led to the Anglo-Hanseatic War (1469-1474), where England was fighting to pressure against the trade of the Hanseatic cities

located on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea. After five years of conflict, both diplomatic sides eventually came to a consensus and allowed some British ships to have partial fishing rights in Icelandic territory.

Post-World War II

In the aftermath of World War II, there was an increased demand for food sources. Although there had always been disputes over the fishing grounds between Iceland and the United Kingdom, the food shortage post world war quickly exacerbated this crisis. In the spring of 1958, a new Icelandic law was passed, which unilaterally extended its fishing limits 4 to 12 nautical miles across the coastline. This extension implementation directly impacted the British trawling industry, who relied heavily on these fishing grounds and had been traditionally fishing in these waters. The United Kingdom's fishing industry, particularly in regions such as Hull and Grimsby, relied heavily on access to the fishing grounds around Iceland. Twenty British trawlers, four warships, and a supply vessel, had been regularly operating 12 miles of the coast. Deploying ships off the restricted zones is incredibly expensive. The United Kingdom, led by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, viewed Iceland's actions as a direct threat to Britain and argued that the principle of freedom of the sea should allow open access to international waters.

However, despite the enforcement of the fishing limit extension, Iceland did not clearly state the repercussions if the British trawlers refuse to voluntarily leave the Icelandic coast. Furthermore, the United Kingdom did not view Iceland as a threat; Iceland did not have a navy and the Icelandic coast guard had only seven ships, each equipped with only one gun that were less than 100 tons. On the contrary, the United Kingdom had a major military advantage. The Royal Navy was known as one of the most renowned navies in the world. Additionally, the

United Kingdom had a huge geographical advantage. The Royal Navy could easily reach the Icelandic coast in less than two days.

First Cod War

The United Kingdom officially declared the First Cod War on September 1, 1958 as a response to Iceland's extension of fishing limits. Icelandic coast guardsmen threatened to arrest any British trawlers who trespassed within their new 12-mile limit. In response, the Royal Navy deployed warships and established zones to protect British trawlers and ensure they could safely continue fishing. The United Kingdom considered these regions of water as international waters. The deployment of navy vessels only led to escalated tensions between the two nations. On September 4, 1958, Icelandic offshore patrol vessel ICGV *Ægir* attempted to forcefully remove British trawlers off the Westfjords, but was stopped by *HMS Russell* intervention, leading to the collision of the two vessels. Following this incident, Iceland continued to violently threaten British trawlers to escape the sea. On October 6, 1958, V/s *María Júlía* fired three shots at the trawler *Kingston Emerald*. On November 12, 1958, V/s *Þór* fired shots at the trawler *Hackness* after claiming that the trawler illegally stowed its nets. *HMS Russell* was then deployed to defend *Hackness*, and *HMS Russell* ordered the Icelandic captain to leave the trawler alone, claiming that their nets were not within the 7.4 km limit recognized by the British government. The captain of V/s *Þór* refused to compromise and attempted to threaten the trawler with gun violence. The *Russell* threatened to sink the Icelandic boat if they fired their shots, and the Icelandic sailors had no choice but to retreat in temporary defeat.

A temporary truce was formed in November 1958, when both nations reached an agreement known as the "Agreement on Measures for the Regulation of Fishing around Iceland." Under this compromise, Iceland agreed to reduce its fishing limits from 12 to 6 nautical miles

seasonally and allowed British trawlers to continue their fishing operations and access some of the valuable fishing grounds around Iceland. The First Cod War officially came to an end in 1961. However, this was far from the end. Little did they know that the violence the United Kingdom had witnessed from the First Cod War was only the tip of the iceberg. The First Cod War would only set a precedent for the future conflicts over fishing rights in international waters.

Non-Cod Concerns

Ultimately, the United Kingdom faced other, more pressing issues in their political discourse. Economic competition from the European mainland caused the sharp decline of British manufacturing. Social unrest in Northern Ireland has exploded into The Troubles. The decolonization movement has led to the massive decline in British influence on world affairs. As the United Kingdom becomes a country in decline, its government is forced to play the difficult and dangerous game of determining what is too much, and what is too little.

Essential Topics to Understand

Party Positions

In the present political landscape of Iceland, several prominent parties represent distinct ideologies and policy agendas. The Independence Party, established in 1929, stands as a center-right conservative force, emphasizing national sovereignty and traditional values. With a focus on free-market economics, privatization, and limited government intervention, it maintains close ties with Western allies, particularly the United States, in foreign affairs.

On the other hand, the Progressive Party, founded in 1916, positions itself as a centrist agrarian party, advocating for the interests of farmers and rural communities. While conservative

culturally, it supports progressive measures in education and healthcare, along with social welfare programs and income redistribution to address rural poverty.

Contrary to the center-right leanings of the Independence and Progressive Parties, the left-wing socialist People's Alliance, established in 1956, champions workers' rights, social justice, and income equality. It calls for nationalization of industries, expanded social welfare programs, and a reduction of inequality through government intervention in the economy. Emphasizing neutrality in foreign affairs, it opposes Iceland's involvement in military alliances.

Meanwhile, the Social Democratic Party, also formed in 1916, occupies the center-left, rooted in the labor movement. It advocates for universal healthcare, education reform, and workers' rights within a mixed economy framework. Like the People's Alliance, it favors neutrality in foreign policy and diplomatic engagement for international cooperation and peace.

The Liberals & Leftists Party, formed in 1970, is a relatively unpopular party that is already in decline. It leans center-left and supports highly regulated government, prioritizes the common good, and advocates for the expansion of citizens' rights.

Questions to Consider

- What can Iceland do to create a more productive and stable economy?
- How can Iceland leverage diplomatic ties to achieve a favorable and non-militaristic outcome?
- Are more stable fisheries possible while still driving economic growth?
- How can Iceland better manage its fisheries to better serve the nation for the present and future?
- How can Iceland utilize natural resources to develop its economy and create a better standard of living for its people?
- Would expanding the military be wise? If so, how should Iceland go about doing so?
- How will Iceland deal with future conflicts with neighboring nations?

Character List

*Note that this does not guarantee the characters presence during the conference! Expect the unexpected always!

Independence Party (7)

Hákon Gíslason

Ingvar Gröndal

Jóhanna Snorradóttir

Oskar Möller

Oskar Jóhannsson

Tomas Gunnarsson

Ingvar Kristjánsson

Progressive Party (6)

Gísli Þórormsson

Árgils Gunnsteinsson

Jón Arnmundsson

Irene Áskelsdóttir

Páley Þórmarsdóttir

Laufheiður Körmudóttir

People's Alliance (3)

Hrund Eyleifsdóttir

Franzisca Sigbjartsdóttir

Aðalheiður Elinórsdóttir

Social Democratic (2)

Gunnlaug Ívansdóttir

Ingveldur Bjartmannsdóttir

Liberals & Leftists (2)

Hilmir Bambusarson

Elly Svansdóttir



Cod Wars: Iceland

Committee Background Guide

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