



Remember the Texamo

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UMass Amherst International Relations Club & Model United Nations Team
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Introduction

Howdy folks, hope you are all excited for MinuteMun 2020, the premier Model United Nations event in the Pioneer Valley. We hope to provide you all with an engaging and fun crisis committee, where you will be asked to forge the future of Texas as it prepares for war with Mexico. You represent a group of rebels of various backgrounds, with various reasons for taking up arms against the Federal Government of Mexico.

The committee takes place in November of 1835, following two major engagements in the Texan Revolutionary timeline. The consultation of Texas has not been convened, no declaration of independence has been signed, and no coherent governmental system has yet been created. Texas and Mexico are in turmoil, as the Texans want to separate from the authority of Mexico and become independent. What does exist is a scattered collection of militias and various communities throughout the territory, supported by as of yet unestablished supply lines as winter begins to bear down on the territory. How do you address these problems? How will this fledgeling territory survive? These questions and many more await you over the weekend to come.

In all likelihood, our committee will end up diverging from history, so focus your research on your characters and on Texas before the conflict began. The primary focus of this committee will be on the conflict between Texas and Mexico and the struggles that would likely be faced by a newly formed state. Many problems and crises will revolve around the struggles of holding and maintaining a territory with limited resources and people. Given these problems, delegates are encouraged to research not only the scope of power provided by their roles, but also the areas where your role does not have power. Because of the nature of the committee, events will be occurring that you might not have otherwise prepared

for. You should get a good sense of what the role and beliefs of your specific assigned character would be in particular situations.

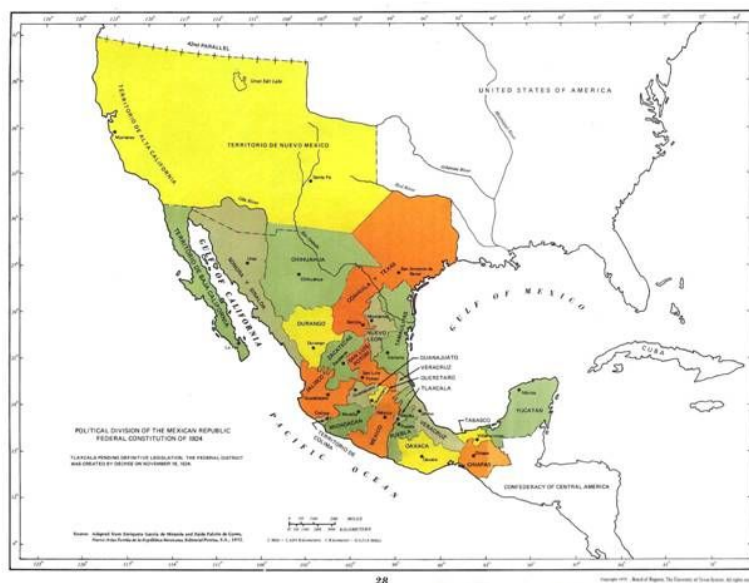
If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to the crisis director or the chair of the committee by email.

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History

In the early 19th century, Mexico was not yet an independent nation and was ruled by the Spanish through a colonial government. The nation was divided into smaller states, each with their own governor, always of Spanish descent. In 1821, Mexico officially declared its independence from Spain.



Map of Mexico in 1821 after independence

The land region of Tejas (Texas) was largely uninhabited and had huge potential for settlement and farmland. In the first 20 years of the 19th century, the region of Texas was occupied by Mexican militias who were seeking to defend the land from southern Americans and indigenous people. Because the territory was large and proportionately unpopulated, there was little economic development. In 1820, a man named Moses Austin negotiated with the Spanish governor of the region to bring settlers into Tejas. The land grant was given to 300 families who settled in the area until 1824. Most of the settlers were American farmers who saw the potential for capital from agriculture and ranching on the Texan land. Most were slave owners and along with their livelihoods, brought their slaves to Texas to work the land.

In 1824, the Mexican government implemented the Coahuila-Texas colonization law, where the Mexican government would only charge \$30 for foreigners to move and settle in Tejas. Also known as the empresario policy, people were drawn to Tejas for its affordable prices and rich uncultivated lands. Immigrants would be promised Mexican citizenship if they learned Spanish and converted to catholicism. Hundreds of Americans were lured to Texas for the good land, and monetary compensation, and soon Tejanos were greatly outnumbered by settlers.

Besides the Coahuila-Texas colonization law, the Mexican government also proposed the Constitution of 1824, aimed to form a functioning government in Mexico, meant to serve all of the citizens. Texans, both Tejanos and American settlers (Texians) were far removed geographically from Mexico City and behaved more independently from the government since they had less representation and no federal government oversight. This created a sentiment that Texas was indeed separate from Mexico, which only grew as history went on, and cultural, racial, and religious tensions between the Anglo-Texan Settlers and the Mexican government and its people were fueled continuously.

In 1829, Mexico abolished slavery, angering Texan settlers, who relied on slave labor for most of their farm and ranch work and was the source of most of their wealth.

In order to avoid dissent towards the Mexican government from the rising Texan population, the Mexican government banned immigration to Texas in March 1830. Meanwhile, they encouraged immigration from Mexico, placed more restrictions on slavery, and increased military presence in the region. The Mexican government was likely intimidated by the onslaught of anglo immigrants since in 1830 the population of Texas had increased to 20,000 inhabitants from about 2,000 in 1821. This population included slaves, which made up a considerable portion of the population.

American settlers to Texas thought of themselves as independent from the Mexican government, especially since they wanted to maintain their sovereignty when it came to owning slaves, and anglo-Texans viewed themselves as a separate identity from the rest of Mexicans. In 1833, Stephen Austin from Texas asked President Santa Anna for Texas to be its own state, in which Santa Anna refused. Then Austin was arrested and jailed by Santa Anna for allegedly planning revolution, which angered Tejanos and Americans living in Texas.

Instead of identifying as Mexicans or Americans, the settlers identified as Texians and garnered a nationalistic spirit for their land. Eventually, with the increased power of the Mexican government on the Texians, they started pushing for statehood and self-rule.

The Rule of Santa Anna

In 1834, Santa Anna became the president of Mexico, and repealed the 1824 Mexican Constitution, in order to establish a more centralized, less representative system of governance. In the new system, called the Siete Leyes, there were no longer individual state legislatures, as they were replaced with "departments"

headed by councils or governors appointed by Santa Anna himself. This new form of government upset many Mexican citizens, especially the Anglo-Texans.

Texas was not actually the first place to take up arms against the new governmental system. Zacatecas, a state in North Central Mexico was able to resist following Santa Anna's repeal of the constitution. In May of 1835, Zacatecas-based militias under the command of Francisco García engaged federal forces led by Santa Anna himself at the battle of Guadalupe. The militias were defeated, and the territory of Zacatecas was ransacked and pillaged by federal forces. To add insult to injury, Santa Anna authorized the separation of Aguascalientes (a prosperous agricultural territory) from Zacatecas. This, in addition to their silver mines having been plundered following their rebellion, meant the area would suffer economically for years to come.

The defeat of Zacatecas sent waves through Mexico, and it was not long before the people of Texas heard of the actions of the federal government. For the bellicose people of the territory, this was yet another reason to resist Mexican authority in the area. It would not be long until the first shots were fired in the conflict in October of 1835, in the town of Gonzales. Making good on their early attempts to disarm many militias of cannons (then used mostly for defense against Indian attacks), Federal forces marched to the town hoping to seize a small artillery piece on loan there. Local volunteers intervened, with a standoff ending in the breakdown of communications followed by a volley of shots being fired at the federal troops sent there. Though only 2 Mexican cavalymen died, this "battle" would mark the beginning of the conflict in Texas.

Later in October, Federal troops would again meet Texan forces as the battle of Concepción. After being sent by the newly elected commander Stephen F. Austin to scout out an area for the newly formed army of Bexár (San Antonio) to camp, James Bowie and 90 other militiamen were involved in a skirmish with federal forces. However, due to the superior Texan position and better equipment,

Bowie's forces only sustained 1 casualty while the Mexican Federal soldiers sustained heavy losses.

Statement of the Problem

This brings us to the time when our committee starts. For the purpose of our simulation, you will all be part of a general war committee. The Texan forces are coming off of two small victories over Mexican forces, and are now tasked with maintaining their power. This will be complicated however by their lack of resources and the growing involvement of Federal troops. Despite their early victories, the Mexican Federal Army is a respected fighting force, with better discipline and training than the largely volunteer forces of the Texian peoples. In addition to the capable military at their disposal, Mexican forces have access to long supply lines as well as pre-existing diplomatic relations with other nations. Worse still, the Federal forces in the area are far from the only interested party in the conflict. Relations with comanches tribes have deteriorated and as a result they often attack settlements and supply caravans near the Texas Plains. All of these add up to make it appear as though a victory is all but assured for Mexico. Indeed, in our timeline it was a partially miraculous capture of Santa Anna which helped usher in a Texian victory in the Revolution.

Timeline

- August 1821: Mexican Revolution ends and Mexico is finally free from colonial Spanish rule after the signing of the Treaty of Cordoba.
- April 1823: Mexico passes the General Colonization Law, opening Texas' borders to the settlement of Americans in order to develop the land and grow the country.

- October 1824: Coahuila and Texas are joined as a single Mexican State. Feeling underrepresented in Mexican politics, Texians sought to increase their share of the population.
- December 1826: The Fredonian Rebellion, a short lived revolution which was unsupported by Texian figures, begins after delegates sign a declaration of independence in Nacogdoches. This event would place Texas on the Mexican Government's radar, an omen of things to come.
- 1829 The Mexican federal government abolished slavery. This abolition goes largely unheeded in Texan Territory.
- April 1830: In response to reports of increased illegal immigration from the United States into Texan territory, the Mexican government puts the Law of April 6th in place. The law prohibited immigration into Texas from the United States, taxed goods coming into Texas from the US, prohibited slaves from the US into Texas, and deployed Mexican troops to occupy Texas.
- July 1832: The Turtle Bayou Resolutions are signed as a means to justify a rescue attempt of William B. Travis, who was imprisoned at Fort Anahuac. The resolutions claim that the men acted in support of Santa Anna.
- October 1832: The Convention of 1832 takes place. Texans set up their state for self-governance by organizing their regions into municipalities and adopting resolutions, including the separation of the states of Texas and Coahuila, which had been the same state since Mexican independence. The Mexican government does not recognize the resolutions since it views the entire convention as unauthorized and illegal. No Tejano delegates participate, as the legality of the meeting is questioned.
- April 1833: The Convention of 1833 occurs (Continuing where the 1832 convention left off) in Texas state constitution is written, Stephen Austin is sent to deliver it to Mexico City. The convention sees both Texian and Tejano delegates participate.
- April 1833: Santa Anna is elected president of Mexico.

- January 1834: Austin was arrested and jailed by Santa Anna for allegedly planning revolution, which angered Tejanos and Americans living in Texas.
- May 1834: Santa Anna repeals the constitution of 1824 and replaces it with the siete leyes, a much more centralized form of government. With this declaration, he repeals both the state and federal governments.
- January 1835: Valentín Gómez Farías, then Vice President of Mexico, is removed from office, and the Mexican Congress is dismissed. Santa Anna convenes a new congress, comprised of his supporters.
- March 1835: A new Mexican Congress passes a bill calling for the reduction of militias to 1 man for every 500 citizens, and also calls for cannons to be moved to central locations. The law would effectively disband state and local militias, leaving the general public exposed and unprotected.
- May 1835: Santa Anna leads a force in quelling the uprising in Zacatecas. Upon defeat of rebel forces, Santa Anna's army sacks the state. Word of the rebel's defeat and the state's brutalization reach Tejas, leading to further calls for rebellion.
- October 1835: The Battle of Gonzalez begins with a standoff between Mexican Troops sent to confiscate a cannon in the town of Gonzalez and a militia which sought to stop them. After negotiations broke down, the militiamen famously yelled "Come and take it!" before firing on Mexican troops who promptly withdrew from the town. This marks the official start of the Texas Revolution.
- October 1835: The Battle of Concepcion marks the first true conflict between Texan forces and Mexican Federal Troops. Taking place near San Antonio, Mexican forces happen upon Texan rebels camped outside a small mission. Thanks to superior weapons and good positioning, Texan troops are able to best the Mexican forces.
- November 1835: The Committee begins as delegates gather to discuss the revolution thus far, as well as plan for the future.

Key Questions

1. What goals might your character have coming into the committee? What other characters might you share goals with?
2. Understanding the role that Mexican Federalists and Texian Separatists played in the Revolution, how might this committee seek a plan to appease both sides?
3. What allies might the Texians leverage in this conflict? How might characters employ unorthodox Strategies to gain the upper hand for their side?
4. Is it possible for the Texian forces to resolve the conflict peacefully with Mexico, or is War the only way forward?
5. What are the costs to potential constituent groups of the Texian government? How will the average person react to war or radical changes in policy?
6. What are the ideals driving your character? What has inspired them to believe in what they do?
7. With few supplies to spare, how can Texas hope to resist the Mexican Government, which is coming into the conflict having already dealt with one rebellion.
8. Does your character believe that Texas is justified in seeking independence? If so, on what grounds? If not, what do they believe is a better course of action?
9. What skills or connections does your character bring to the table that others might not, and how do you think you may be able to use these skills in the committee?
10. What does a successful ending look like to your character, how can that be achieved with the conflict standing where it does as of November of 1835?

Key Players

1. Antonio López de Santa Anna: An Army Officer and Politician central to the conflict in Texas, Santa Anna was deeply embedded in political and military culture of the time. Though he helped to topple both spanish-backed and native governments in Mexico, he was a widely recognized hero thanks to his defense of Mexico against spanish offensives in 1829. He became president of Mexico in 1833 as a federalist, only to later systematically dismantle the government in favor of a centralized government.
2. Stephen Austin: A Texan colonist and advocate for slave owners in the Texas territory, he was active in the politics of Mexico following the revolution. He was a capable statesman, and used his skill with politics to loosen the rules instituted by the law of 1830. He would go on to attempt to negotiate for Texan independence, which was denied. He was then arrested by Mexican Officials in 1833 after recommending the formation of a Texan state without the consent of the Mexican government. He would be released from prison in 1835, shortly before the rebellion began.
3. Sam Houston: The Commander in Chief of the Texan Militia Army, Houston was a colonist who arrived in the area near the beginning of the 1830s. Houston had previously been involved in various political activities in the United States, and was sent to Texas by then president Andrew Jackson to negotiate with the local indian tribes. After settling in the area circa 1833, Houston would emerge as a central political figure.
4. Valentín Gómez Farías: The Mexican Vice-President to Santa Anna, who was largely responsible for the day to day operations under Santa Anna's

early rule. A champion of the rights of the people, Farías is believed to have been removed for his federalist beliefs. His removal from office marks the beginning of the end for the federalist system, and the growth of centralist influence in the Mexican Government.

5. General Martín Perfecto De Cos: De Cos was the general first assigned to handle the situation in Texas in september of 1835. De Cos along with a group of around 300 to 500 troops landed in Matagorda Bay, after which they established a base of operations in San Antonio, before declaring his intention to end the resistance in Texas and arrest several vocal critics of Santa Anna's regime.

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