



CALTRAIN' 25

HISTORICAL CRISIS CABINET

STUDY GUIDE

FRENCH EMPIRE

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1. Letter from Secretary General

Esteemed Participants,

As the Co-Secretary-Generals of Cağaloğlu Model United Nations, it is our distinct honor to welcome you all to the 2nd edition of CALTRAIN, which will take place on December 6th and 7th, 2025. It is with great pleasure that we present the study guide for HCC: French Empire, which aims to equip you with the essential knowledge and context for the upcoming two days. After months of preparation and dedicated effort, we are proud to say that we are now just one step away from CALTRAIN 2025. We hope that, by reading this guide, you will feel as ready and enthusiastic as we are. Without a doubt, this conference would not be possible without the contributions of our remarkable academic team. We are extending our gratitude to our Head of Academy, Azra Kaya; our Heads of Crisis, Ahmet Taha Özkul and his deputy Elif Köse; our devoted and hardworking team members; and our motivated trainees. Their commitment and passion have brought this vision to life and elevated CALMUN's academic quality to its peak. Furthermore, I would also like to extend my best wishes to all delegates participating in CALTRAIN 2025. Whether this is your first conference or not, we thank each of you for taking a step forward and joining us. We truly hope that CALTRAIN will be a special experience that you will remember warmly in the future. From our perspective, MUN is about motivation, enjoyment, meaningful discussion, and connection. We wish each delegate an inspiring, engaging, and memorable experience.

Warm regards,

Meryem Sultan Çok, Akay Engin

Co-Secretary-Generals of CALTRAIN'25

2. Glossary

inequality: the unfair situation in society when some people have more opportunities, money, etc. than other people

impose: to officially force a rule, tax, punishment, etc. to be obeyed or received

peasantry: especially in the past, all the people who were peasants

revolutionary: involved in or relating to a revolution

hegemony: (especially of countries) the position of being the strongest and most powerful and therefore able to control others

merchant: a person whose job is to buy and sell products in large amounts, especially by trading with other countries

maritime: connected with human activity at sea

embargo: an order to temporarily stop something, especially trading or giving information

client state: a country that gets support and protection from another larger and more powerful country

sovereignty: the power of a country to control its own government

campaign: a planned group of especially political, business, or military activities that are intended to achieve a particular aim

liberation: an occasion when something or someone is released or made free

blockade: the situation in which a country or place is surrounded by soldiers or ships to stop people or goods from going in or out

acknowledge: to accept that something is true or exists

revolution: a change in the way a country is governed, usually to a different political system and often using violence or war

milestone: an important event in the history or development of something or someone

continental: relating to Europe, but not Britain

duchy: the land owned by a duke or duchess

buffer zone: an area created to separate two countries that are fighting

rivalry: the state of or an instance of being rivals

betrayal: cruel or dishonest behaviour towards someone who trusts you

3. Introduction

The increasing social inequality and economic crisis in the Kingdom of France prepared the ground for one of the milestones in history: the French Revolution. While nobles and priests were exempt from paying taxes, the government imposed strict taxes on the people of France. Moreover, the peasantry and laborers, who were working for nobles, could not get their due, although they worked extremely long hours. As it is understood, the people of France were struggling with increasing poverty and they were facing intolerable inequalities between castes. As a result of all these difficulties the French people rose against the French government and the revolution which would last ten years finally began in 1789.

Napoleon Bonaparte was still a young soldier before the French Revolution began. However, a revolutionary government was formed with the French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte was also one of the people who supported this government. Napoleon's support for this formation was a milestone in his career. He rose to power through his victories in the army of the revolutionary government and he became one of the most famous figures of France. Finally, in 1799 Napoleon became the First Consul of France and then he declared himself emperor in 1804.

After he became the emperor, Napoleon defeated Austria, Prussia, and Russia and forced them to acknowledge the French Empire's superiority over continental Europe. Even though Napoleon defeated his enemies in Europe, he could not defeat Britain decisively since he could not cross the English Channel due to Britain's developed navy. The British Navy has 402 ships in European seas while the French Navy has only 225 ships in total. After Napoleon realized that he could not defeat the British navy directly, he found another way to reach his goal. He established the Continental Blockade(a large embargo) against the British merchant ships across continental Europe. The forced alliances of the French Empire: Austria, Prussia, and Russia also applied the Continental Blockade against Britain.

On the other hand, in 1807 the Treaties of Tilsit were signed between the French Empire and the Russian Empire because Napoleon wanted to have a strong ally on his side against Britain. Instead of forming a formal alliance, the Treaties of Tilsit also strengthened the hegemony of Napoleon in continental Europe since it confirmed that the Russian Empire would apply the

Continental Blockade and be governed as Napoleon approved. However, despite the alliance, a hidden rivalry and distrust appeared between Napoleon and the emperor of Russia, Tsar Alexander I. Since the Russian economy was heavily dependent on maritime trade and British goods, it was affected deeply by the continental blockade. Therefore, in 1810 Tsar Alexander I softened the blockade and refocused on trade with Britain. This was an open challenge and a betrayal to Napoleon Bonaparte. On the other hand, the Duchy of Warsaw, which was founded by Napoleon in 1807, was posing a major threat to the Russian Empire at its border since it served as a buffer state for the French Empire. Napoleon's marriage to Marie Louise, who was the daughter of the Austrian Emperor, also deepened Russia's diplomatic isolation and strengthened France's dominance in Europe.

As of 1810, both sides were becoming more aggressive towards each other's sovereignty. While Russia continued to trade with Britain, Napoleon was focused on strengthening Poland and gathering a strong army. In time the French army expanded uncontrollably and posed a major threat to Russia. The last correspondence between Napoleon and Alexander also did not prevent the invasion, since both sides blamed each other for the situation. After all, on May 9th, 1812 Napoleon's massive army invaded Russia through the Nieman River and one of the largest military campaigns in history was officially launched.

4. Rise of the French Empire

After the French Revolution began, the European states realized that the revolution became a more aggressive and serious issue day by day. Even though the revolution was an internal struggle for liberation, European states were worried that the idea of a revolution might spread to their own countries. Their concerns led them to unite among themselves and form a coalition to conclude the French Revolution and restore the monarchy. Thus the first coalition, which included the Archduchy of Austria, Kingdom of Prussia, Great Britain, Spanish Empire, Dutch Republic, and Kingdom of Sardinia, launched an attack against the Republic of France. At the time Napoleon Bonaparte was a young general in the army and he was assigned to the Italian front. The Republic of France succeeded on the Italian front through Napoleon's clever tactics and strategy. He also contributed effectively to the state treasury by obtaining great spoils of war

from the lands that he conquered. Finally, the first coalition war concluded with French victory and Napoleon became one of the most famous figures in France.

After Napoleon became the first consul of France in 1799, he took action against the second coalition which was formed by the union of Great Britain, the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Archduchy of Austria, Portugal, and Napoli. Even though both sides were powerful, the Second Coalition War concluded with the victory of France, and by the Luneville Agreement which was signed in 1801, European states were forced to acknowledge France's hegemony in Europe. Instead of France becoming the most powerful country in Europe, Napoleon Bonaparte increased his reputation with the Second Coalition War.

In 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte declared himself the emperor of the French Empire. After he declared himself emperor, European states were concerned that Napoleon would take control of all of Europe. Therefore Great Britain, the Austrian Empire, the Russian Empire, Sweden, and the Kingdom of Sicily formed the third coalition against the French Empire. Even though Napoleon's main goal was to defeat Great Britain decisively, he could not reach his goal, and the French navy was defeated by Great Britain. After this defeat, Napoleon focused on land battles against the Third Coalition and advanced his troops towards the Austrian Empire. In 1805, Napoleon's greatest victory came at the Battle of Austerlitz which is also known as the Battle of Three Emperors. The French army decisively defeated the combined forces of Austria and Russia despite being outnumbered. As a result, the Austrian Empire had to withdraw and in 1805 the Treaty of Pressburg, which confirmed France's hegemony over Europe once again, was signed between the French Empire and the Austrian Empire.

In 1806 the fourth coalition was formed by the Kingdom of Prussia, the Russian Empire, Saxony, Sweden, and Great Britain against the French Empire. The French army defeated the Prussian and Russian forces in several wars and as a result of these battles, on 7 July, 1807, the First Treaty of Tilsit was signed between the Russian and French Empire. One of the most important results of this treaty is the Russian Empire's acceptance of the Continental Blockade. Since the British economy is heavily dependent on maritime trade, Napoleon aimed to economically damage Britain by cutting off its trade with continental Europe. After the First Treaty of Tilsit,

the Russian Empire allied with the French Empire and acknowledged the continental blockade against Great Britain along with the other European states.

On July 9, 1807, the Second Treaty of Tilsit was signed between the Kingdom of Prussia and the French Empire. However, the consequences of the second treaty were more severe than those of the First Treaty of Tilsit. The Kingdom of Prussia lost half of its territory with the Second Treaty of Tilsit and the French Empire established client states on these territories such as the Duchy of Warsaw. As it is understood, the French Empire became an unstoppable power after it allied with the Russian Empire and established client states near the Russian border. However, in time these client states would pose a major threat to the Russian Empire and betrayals would show up between the two states.

5. Relationship between the French Empire and the Russian Empire

Napoleon Bonaparte defeated his enemies in continental Europe one by one through his brilliant strategy and clever tactics. In time, his invincibility was accepted by all of the European states and he strengthened France's hegemony over Europe. Nevertheless, he was aware that he had to defeat his greatest enemy, Great Britain to demonstrate France's absolute superiority. Since the British navy had 402 available ships in Europe in contrast to the French navy which had only 205 in total, Napoleon could not pass through the English Channel. Therefore he decided to damage Great Britain by a large embargo and he established the Continental Blockade on November 21, 1806.

According to the Continental Blockade, the French Empire and its allies would not continue maritime trade with Great Britain and the British goods would not go through the blockade. The Russian Empire also accepted the embargo against Great Britain with the First Treaty of Tilsit. However, as time passed, the alliance between the French Empire and the Russian Empire began to deteriorate due to hidden rivalries and betrayals.

In 1808, Napoleon and Alexander met in Erfurt. Although Napoleon was friendly to his ally, the situation was different on Alexander's side. During their meeting, Napoleon indicated that he

sought the Russian Empire's support in case of a war with the Austrian Empire. However, Alexander did not seem eager to support his ally in a possible war. In fact, Alexander did not provide significant support when the expected war between the Austrian Empire and the French Empire occurred. Furthermore, in 1808 Napoleon was rejected when he asked for a marriage with Alexander's sister, Princess Maria.

Although Napoleon was more friendly to his ally at the beginning, Alexander's behavior caused him to examine the alliance between them and he began to take actions to the detriment of the Russian Empire. On December 19, 1810, he declared the annexation of the Duchy of Oldenburg by the French Empire despite its independence guaranteed by the Treaty of Tilsit. On the same date, Alexander Tsar published a declaration which stated that some French goods would not go through the Russian border and some French products would be subjected to high customs duties. On the other hand, Tsar Alexander realized the decrease in export revenues and secretly softened the continental blockade on the Russian border. He refocused on maritime trade with Great Britain and positioned the majority of his troops on the border of the Duchy of Warsaw, which is a client state of the French Empire. Meanwhile, Napoleon was strengthening the Duchy of Warsaw and gaining the support of the people by promising an independent Polish state to them. As it is understood Napoleon's actions were posing a major threat to the Russian Empire therefore Alexander positioned his troops on the border to prevent an attack which would come through the Duchy of Warsaw.

The last correspondence between Napoleon and Alexander also did not prevent the invasion, since both sides blamed each other for the situation. While Napoleon was accusing Alexander of being disloyal to the Continental Blockade, Alexander perceived the increasing French hegemony over Europe as a direct threat to the existence of the Russian Empire. After all, it is clearly understood that a war between the two empires was inevitable. On May 9th, 1812 Napoleon invaded Russia through the Nieman River with one of the greatest armies ever, numbering around 440.000 soldiers in contrast to the Russian army of 150.000. Thus one of the largest military campaigns in history was launched under the command of Napoleon Bonaparte.

6. The Course of the War

In 1812, Napoleon moved the Grande Armée from France and continued eastward through Germany and Poland. At first, the army seemed highly motivated, well-organized, and powerful. But the army's multinational structure, the intense summer heat, illnesses, and food and water shortages became apparent as the troops got closer to the Russian border. Napoleon intended to force a swift, intense battle when the Russian army crossed the Niemen River and entered Russian territory at the end of June, but the Russian army slowly withdrew, destroying infrastructure and stores to slow the advance. This "scorched earth" strategy left the attacking army starving, worn out, and short on supplies as the retreating side destroyed fields, livestock, depots, bridges, and provisions. As a result, Napoleon's army made progress but received heavy casualties during the initial weeks.

This scorched earth policy made the French advance in July and August even worse; the army was vulnerable due to long supply lines, damaged roads, and growing food scarcity. Napoleon was hoping to finally force the Russian forces into a significant battle close to Smolensk. Despite intense fighting for Smolensk, the Russian army chose to completely retreat. Napoleon had to choose to turn east toward Moscow with every step of the Russian retreat.

● Battle of Smolensk (1812)

When Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812, he had a massive army consisting of approximately half a million soldiers from various nations. Even though the French army outnumbered the Russian army, the Russians gained time and weakened the French army by retreating deeper into Russia instead of engaging in a pitched battle. The French army pursued the Russian army as far as Smolensk, but the Russians burned the areas they passed through during their retreat. Therefore, it became impossible for the French army to obtain supplies from the territories they had captured. The Russians' retreat strategy also forced the French army to move away from its supply lines.

Napoleon advanced his army toward Smolensk in the hope that the Russians would halt their retreat and defend the city, since it played a significant strategic role on the way to reaching

Moscow and taking control of the whole country. Two French columns, consisting of Michel Ney's infantry and Joachim Murat's cavalry units, crossed the Dniester River at night without facing any major threat except for Cossack forays. Through this forced march, they came within 30 miles of Smolensk, encountering only minor resistance along the way. When Napoleon reached Smolensk, the French army had approximately 120,000 soldiers while the Russian army was defending the city with 80,000 soldiers. Although Napoleon expected to capture Smolensk rapidly and then advance toward Moscow, the strong Russian resistance delayed the capture of the city. French artillery caused significant damage to the city walls, and Russian resistance started to weaken. Even though the French army captured Smolensk with heavy attacks, the city was in a terrible state when the Russians began to retreat again. The entire city had been destroyed by fire therefore, it became impossible for the French army to obtain supplies from the region.

Although the French army finally conquered Smolensk, its arrival in Moscow was delayed and since the Russian troops decided to retreat, the Russians did not suffer heavy losses, contrary to Napoleon's expectations. The French army also became increasingly distant from its supply lines while it was trying to catch up with the enemy.

7. Cabinet Members

Napoleon Bonaparte



Napoleon Bonaparte was born on Corsica Island on August 15, 1769. His father Carlo Bonaparte was a lawyer who was given the title of nobility after the French Empire conquered Corsica Island. Since his father was considered a nobility by the French Empire, his son Napoleon was entitled to study in France with a scholarship. Thus Napoleon went to France and studied in a military school. Through his distinction, Napoleon was promoted to first lieutenant of the artillery regiment when he was only 16. After the French Revolution occurred Napoleon supported the revolutionary government and advanced in the revolutionary army unstoppably. In 1799, Napoleon became the first consul of the French

Empire, and in 1804 he declared himself emperor. He achieved many victories throughout his reign and put his stamp on history as one of the greatest leaders of all time.

Louis Alexandre Berthier



Louis Alexandre Berthier was born in Versailles on November 20, 1753. He was known as one of Napoleon's 26 marshals and he played a significant role in the military during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars. He served as the Chief of General Staff, in other words he was Napoleon's right-hand man during the Russian invasion. Napoleon greatly trusted Louis's intelligence and always consulted him for his decisions. Furthermore, he expressed his sadness for Louis' death after the Battle of Waterloo, saying "The situation would have been different if Louis was still alive."

Joachim Murat



Joachim Murat was born in France on May 25, 1767. His father was an innkeeper and Joachim also worked as an innkeeper for a while before he joined the French army. After the French Revolution occurred, he became a soldier in the revolutionary army and advanced rapidly. Joachim Murat was declared the Marshal of the Empire in 1804 and four years later he was declared the King of Naples through his remarkable military achievements.

At Napoleon's request, Joachim also served as cavalry commander during the Russian Invasion however he left the army at the earliest opportunity to maintain order in the Kingdom of Naples and was replaced by Eugene.

Michel Ney



Michel Ney was born in France on January 10, 1769. He was one of Napoleon's 26 marshals and he fought with him in nearly every war. He was also known as "le brave des braves" for his courage and military strategy. During the Russian Invasion, he assumed command of the 3rd Corps and he perfectly put his soldiers in order while they were retreating.

Michel Ney was also declared the Prince of Moscow by Napoleon Bonaparte on March 25, 1813, through his brilliant military performance. In 1805, after the Battle of Waterloo, Michel Ney was captured and executed by firing squad in Luxembourg Gardens.



Louis-Nicolas Davout

Louis-Nicolas Davout was born in France on May 10, 1770. Despite his family being noble, he supported the revolutionary government after the French Revolution occurred. During Napoleon's reign, Louis was one of his most disciplined and loyal marshals. He was commanding the 3rd Corps when they faced the Prussian army in Auerstädt. Even though the Prussian army outnumbered the 3rd Corps, Davout's army successfully pushed the enemy back and the 3rd Corps was the first to enter the capital of Prussia. Davout also assumed command of the first Corps during the Russian invasion and progressed successfully. In the Battle of Borodino, he did not leave the battlefield, although a cannonball hit him in the stomach.



Eugène de Beauharnais

Eugene was born into a noble family however his father was guillotined during the French Revolution. After they survived the French Revolution, Eugene's mother Josephine used her connections and reached General Hoche. She asked him to take his son under his wings and Eugène began to serve the General. When he returned to Paris, Eugene met Napoleon Bonaparte to get his father's sword. After a while, Napoleon married his mother Josephine and Eugene became his stepson. In 1812, during the Russian invasion he assumed command of the Fourth Corps and fought against Russian forces on many fronts. Moreover, Eugene replaced Joachim after he left the army early.



Joseph Fouche

In 1792, Joseph Fouche was elected as a Member of Parliament and he voted for the king's execution. He bloodily suppressed royalist uprisings and gave numerous death sentences. In 1799, he became Head of the Police and established an extensive informant and agent network. Joseph mostly served

the French Empire, although sometimes he was suspended from duty due to his untrustworthy behavior. Even when Napoleon assigned him to the Head of the Police again in 1815, he continued to communicate with the dissidents.



Charles- Maurice de Talleyrand

Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand was Napoleon's chief diplomat during the time France's hegemony was demonstrated over continental Europe. Since his aim is to maintain peace between France and other states, he pioneered to make peace with Austria and Great Britain as well. In 1807, he resigned from the foreign ministry and afterward, he secretly contacted the Russian and Austrian Empires to protect France's interests. Although he connected with them in favor of France, his actions conflicted with Napoleon's interests.



Jean- Baptiste Bessieres

Jean-Baptiste Bessieres joined the army at an early age and advanced rapidly during the French Revolution. In 1804, he was declared Marshal by Napoleon and then he assumed command of the imperial guard cavalry in various battles such as Austerlitz, Jena, and Wagram. During the Russian invasion, he commanded the imperial guard cavalry as well. Although he could not attend the Battle of Borodino, he directed Napoleon to keep and not use the imperial guard cavalry. He also directed Napoleon while the French Army was retreating from Russian territory.

8. Resources and Links for Further Research

<https://www.frenchempire.net>

<https://www.napoleon-empire.org>

<https://www.ebsco.com>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xF63hw0yRPE>

<https://www.britannica>

<https://www.worldhistory.org>

<https://warfarehistorynetwork.com>