

YALTA CONFERENCE

The Yalta Conference was a meeting in February, 1945 between the leaders of the three major Allied powers fighting against Hitler's Germany: President Franklin Roosevelt of the United States, Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Great Britain and Premier Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union. Historic animosities and distrust between these allies which had been ignored during earlier stages of World War II, began to emerge at this conference. Anticipating conflict, American and Soviet leaders sought to establish a post-war world in their own best interests. The British, uncomfortable as a second rate power, sought to protect their power base and hoped to emerge as the leader of a powerful post-war western Europe. The decisions that these three men made at Yalta shaped the direction of European History for the next forty-five years. Many Cold War disputes have their origin in the agreements and disagreements that took place at Yalta.

The Yalta Conference took place near the conclusion of World War II. Germany had just used their last reserves in a desperate attack known to history as the Battle of the Bulge and their defenses were disintegrating. The Soviet, American and British armies were poised on the borders of Germany with the outcome of the war no longer in doubt. On the other hand, Japan still controlled vast areas of China, Southeast Asia, the East Indies and numerous islands in the Pacific Ocean. Japanese soldiers were refusing to surrender regardless of the circumstances and American officials expected a long and terribly bloody campaign to defeat them. The Americans were secretly working on an atomic bomb but it would not be successfully tested until five months later.

The military situation in Europe gave the Soviet Union an advantageous negotiating position at the Yalta Conference in contrast to the United States and Britain. German success in the early stages of the Battle of the Bulge was embarrassing to the Americans but, more importantly, it had delayed American and British plans to invade Germany. These attacks were just beginning as the conference commenced and the major obstacle of the Rhine River was expected to further delay the Anglo-American advance. In contrast, the Soviet army during the three weeks prior to the conference had raced 250 miles through Poland to within 100 miles of Berlin. They faced no major obstacles.

ASSIGNMENT:

The members of your group (usually three) will discuss the goals of your "country" at the Yalta conference and select four or five that you will attempt to achieve. These goals could concern such issues as the further conduct of the war, the occupation of Germany, the annexation of territory, the shifting of national borders, the types of governments to be installed in liberated countries/colonies, war reparations and the creation and organization of the United Nations. Each group will create their own list with brief explanations.

BRITISH GOALS

Elevate the position of France to that of a major power
Prevent Soviet domination of Eastern Europe
Secure a role for Eastern European leaders in London
Protect the British and French empires.
Establish a United Nations organization to promote world peace

Points:

10 points for establishment of United Nations
10 points for democratic governments in Eastern Europe
10 points for reestablishment of European empires
5 points for no statement about European Empires
10 points for France on UN Security Council with veto
Lose 10 points for German war reparations
Lose 10 points for division of Germany

AMERICAN GOALS

Secure Soviet support for war against Japan
Establish United Nations organization to promote world peace
Compromise on Eastern Europe-Democratic govern./friendly to USSR
Elevate position of China to that of a major power
Avoid the issue of reestablishing European colonial empires

Points

10 points for establishment of United Nations
10 points for no statement on European colonial empires
10 points for Soviet agreement to enter war with Japan
10 points for Eastern Europe democratic and friendly to Soviets
5 points for placing China on UN Security Council with veto.
Lose 10 points for German war reparations
Lose 10 points for division of Germany

SOVIET GOALS

Retain territory seized in 1940
Establish governments in Eastern Europe friendly to the USSR
Secure war reparations to rebuild the Soviet Union
Permanently weaken Germany
Breakup Empires .Give independence to European colonies.

Points:

10 points for an agreement on friendly governments in E. Europe
5 points for condemnation of European empires
10 points for an agreement dividing Germany
10 points for German war reparations
10 points .for retaining territory seized in 1940
Lose 10 points for a statement supporting European empires
Lose 10 points for giving up territory seized in 1940

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CONCLUSIONS

The following are the agreements actually made at Yalta. Listed below are the points each country would have acquired in the simulation. Calculate the "winner" in the real life negotiations at Yalta. The points in parentheses are for scoring the long term effect of the agreements. Calculate the "winner" of Yalta when one recognizes the long term effects of the agreements. Can you explain the reason that the point scores change in each case when this happens? Why is there such a discrepancy between the point scores for the agreements and the point scores for their effects?

YALTA AGREEMENTS

Bring all war criminals to just and swift punishment
Jointly occupy and administer Germany-establish occupation zones
Establish United Nations with France and China having veto power
Soviets keep the territory that they had acquired in 1939-40
Eastern Europe will have Democ. governments, friendly to Soviets
Soviet promise to declare war on Japan, 90 days after VE day
No agreement on war reparations or European empires

BRITISH POINTS

10 (5) points for establishment of United Nations
10 (5) points for democratic governments in Eastern Europe
10 (5) points for an agreement to reestablish European empires
5 (0) points for no statement about European Empires
10 (5) points for France on UN Security Council with veto
Lose 10 (5) points for German war reparations
Lose 10 points for division of Germany

SOVIET POINTS

10 points for an agreement on friendly governments in E. Europe
5 points for condemnation of European empires
10 points for an agreement dividing Germany
10 points for German war reparations
10 points for retaining territory seized in 1939-40
Lose 10 points for a statement supporting empires
Lose 10 points for giving up territory seized in 1940

AMERICAN POINTS

10 (5) points for the establishment of United Nations
10 (5) points for no statement on European colonial empires
10 (-10) points for Soviet agreement to enter war with Japan
10 (5) points for Eastern Europe Democ. and friendly to Soviets
5 (-5) points for placing China on UN Security Council with veto.
Lose 10 (5) points for German war reparations
Lose 10 points for division of Germany

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This simulation has been designed to stimulate discussion concerning the following questions:

- What were the goals of each country at the Yalta Conference?
- Which goals did you achieve in the Yalta Conference simulation?
- Which goals were actually achieved at the real conference?
- Explain the discrepancies between the actual and simulated agreements?
- How important was each of these agreements to ending the war?
- How important was each of these agreements on the future of Europe?
- To what extent do these decisions reflect global concerns?
- To what extent do they reflect the national interests of the Big Three?
- Whose views were represented at Yalta and whose views were ignored?
- To what extent did personalities affect your simulation?
- To what extent did personalities affect diplomacy during the war?
- The actual Yalta agreements were quite favorable to the US and British point of view but the eventual results were favorable to the Soviets.
How can you account for this discrepancy?
- US achievements at Yalta included a Soviet pledge to enter the Pacific War and a seat for China on the UN Security Council. What historical developments changed US attitudes towards those two achievements? To what extent did historical events change US attitudes toward other aspects of the Yalta agreements?
- Was the Yalta Conference successful? In what ways?
- Did the agreements resolve divisive issues, ignore them or create them?
- How long should an agreement be enforced, when should renegotiation be allowed and by what method could it be accomplished?