STUDY GUIDE

HCC:

THE VREENIGDE OOST-INDISCHE COMPAGNIE

15-17 MAY

BAALMUN'26

BAALMUN'26 HCC GUİDE

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1. Letter From the Secretaries-General

Dear Distinguished Guests,

As the Secretaries-General of BAALMUN'26, it is our great pleasure to welcome you to the 4th edition of BAALMUN. We are honoured to host you at our conference, which will take place between the 15th and 17th of May at our school.

We have worked tirelessly to organize a conference that offers unique opportunities and brings students together under the ideals of Model United Nations. Our conference aims to create an environment where delegates can engage in fruitful debates, develop diplomatic skills, and collaborate to address some of the most pressing global issues of our time. The academic team has carefully designed the committees and topics to reflect and uphold these ideals.

We would also like to highlight the hard work that our team has put in to provide you with the best possible MUN experience. Over the past months, the academic and organizing teams have worked tirelessly to ensure the quality of our conference. Their dedication and commitment have played a crucial role in making BAALMUN 2026 possible, and we are incredibly grateful for their efforts.

Lastly, we hope that you will enjoy our conference and that it will provide you with new knowledge and unforgettable memories. We wish you a wonderful time and look forward to welcoming you soon.

Best regards,
The BAALMUN'26 Secretariat

2. Letter From the Under Secretary General and Academic Assistant

We are delighted to welcome you to the Historical Crisis Committee of BAALMUN, which will be meeting as the Heeren XVII of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in 1666. As the academic team for this committee, we are proud to be your guides through this experience, which we hope will be one of your most academically stimulating and diplomatically demanding experiences in Model United Nations.

I am Ataberk Ata, the Under Secretary General of this committee. I am an IB tenth grader from Vefa High School, and have been involved in Model United Nations conferences for the past three years. This committee, in every way, was my dream creation I am deeply interested in the VOC and 1666 I believe the scramble for the East Indies was the most interesting part of the colonial history because natives were strong there was an exorbitant amount of sides fighting over the trade monopolies and that means unless you have immaculate strategies and planning you would fail eventually though dutch managed to be the most successful despite being a very small nation in mainland Europe, and working on the design of this committee has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life. I am

looking forward to seeing what you will achieve in this chamber, and I am confident that we will all put together a committee experience that we will never forget .

I am Ali Yiğit Ceylan, the Academic Assistant of the commitee. I am a ninth grader from Vefa High School. I have been attending Model United Nations conferences for the past year. From the beginning of my MUN career I have had interests in wars and crisis' just like this committee has. The VOC has all the drama and crisis you could possibly ask for so I am looking forward for the committee and wish you a thrilling experience you will never forget.

ALİ KENDİNİ TANIT

We aimed to create a guide which is explanatory and inclusive We hope you will enjoy the committee and we will create unforgettable memories. If you have any questions about the guide, the committee's rules, the history or anything else, please feel free to contact me or my Academic Assistants by email at any point.

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Academic Assistant
Ali Yiğit CEYLAN-aliyigitvefa@gmail.com

3. Introduction to Committee

Welcome, Seventeen Gentlemen - the Heeren XVII of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie. You are the board of the most powerful trading company in the world. The VOC is a commercial corporation. It is a state in its own right: a corporation that has been granted by the States-General of the Dutch Republic the unique privilege of waging war, negotiating treaties, founding colonies, dispensing justice and governing the world. Your board rules an empire of four oceans. The Governor-General of Batavia is your representative. You are in command of the VOC fleet. The merchants and factors in Asia, Africa and elsewhere do as you say. Your voice echoes around the globe and through the ages. You are not advisors. You are not petitioners. You are the Heeren XVII and in this room, you speak for sovereign law in the realm of trade.

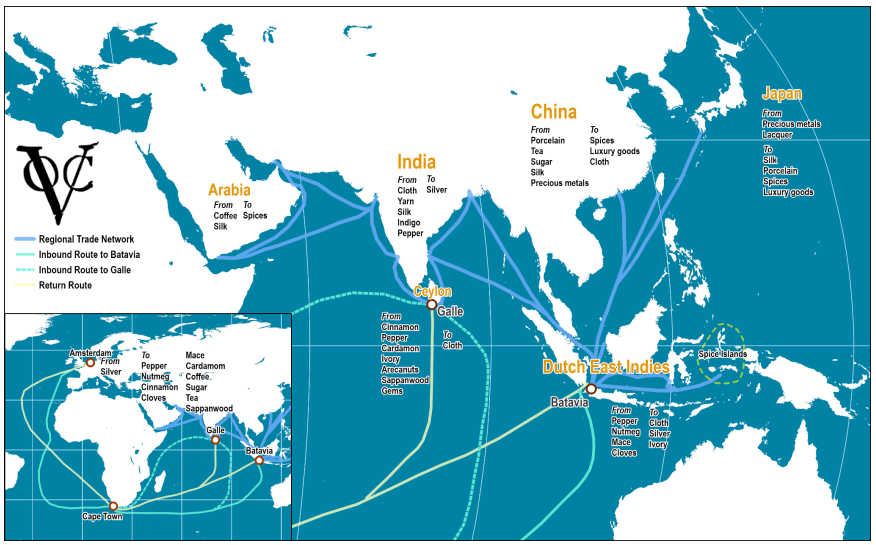
It is 1666 and the Dutch Republic, that great merchant state of capitalism, that improbable nation united by water, trade and the grim determination of the Calvinist ethos, is at a moment of crisis as profound as any in the previous 50 years. It is not yet the end of the

Golden Age of the Dutch economic and maritime empire, that great era when Amsterdam became the most wonderful city of the world. But it is, for the first time in its existence, facing attacks on several fronts. The Dutch have enemies on all sides, with increasing appetites, and the resources of even the greatest merchant empire in world history are not limitless. It is your (this board's, this room's, this year's) choice to determine if the Republic and its greatest creation will survive these multiple attacks or perish.

The VOC was created with the simple but radical proposition that the collective, state-backed monopoly of sea-trade could make more money than any individual merchant, or merchant fleet. For over 60 years this has been shown to be true beyond the dreams of its founders. The VOC has established forts and "way-stations" in the Indian Ocean world, secured monopolies on the most lucrative goods in the world, and earned profits that have made its shareholders the envy of every royal court and merchant house in Europe. It's done so not by selling products but by actively and aggressively using military force, diplomatic persuasion and legal enforcement where it has needed to in order to secure its commerce. The VOC doesn't just trade. It makes the politics of its oceans. That is its greatest glory and its greatest burden - for once an empire is born, it has to be secured, expanded and funded.

This is your cross to bear as Heeren XVII. The committee's goals - expansion of the Dutch merchant empire and security of the Asian trade routes - are typical of the twin priorities that have always been at the heart of the VOC's charter and that are more unbalanced than ever in 1666. Growth suggests capital, danger and the application of military force into contested space. Protection implies consolidation, vigilance and the capacity to retain. In a year which has brought the Company to open war against the English monarchy in Europe, the continued threat to the Company's monopoly in the eastern archipelago, and the expansion of the trade of other nations (such as France) into Asia, you will be asked to serve this board not only as merchants, but as diplomats and statesmen.

You will be required to make decisions of great importance. Issues of war and peace, of military engagement and diplomacy, of trade and colonial administration will be discussed in this chamber. You will decide on the allocation of the Company's precious military and economic resources to different theatres of war and peace, in which dangers and opportunities compete for priority. You will determine the Company's relationship with its European rivals and with the Asian princes whose acquiescence or compliance is necessary for the smooth functioning of the VOC in Asia. You will set trade policy that will shape the Company's revenue for years to come, and you will give directives to administrators and captains who depend on

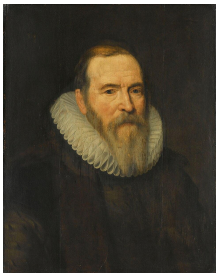


you for leadership to act decisively and with confidence over a months-long silence and distance.
None of these decisions are in isolation. Every action this board will have global implications for the Company's operations. The commitment of naval forces in one theatre is the commitment of Marines from another. A diplomatic win with the former may be a loss of respect with the latter. A decision to emphasise short-term returns over long-term strategy may result in this year's dividend versus the empire of the next decade. The Heeren XVII always have recognised this - it is what distinguishes the governance of a company from its management - and you need to bring this insight to the business of this chamber.
The Company's books need to be balanced. The shareholders who have risked their money in the hope that the VOC will continue to prosper need to be met. The fleets need to be funded, the stockades defended, the spice routes defended. But above all else, the empire must not just survive the crises of 1666, it must be stronger, more united and more powerful than ever before. That is your charge. That is how history shall judge us. The candles are lit, gentlemen. The maps are spread upon the table. The Heeren XVII are convened. The Company awaits your counsel.

4. Historical Background

a. The 1602 Charter and the Unified Monopoly

The establishment of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in 1602 did not occur for commercial reasons only, but because of political ones as well. In the last years of the 16th century, Dutch merchants began their own voyages to Asia, cutting across the Portuguese Estado da Índia, which for a century had maintained a monopoly on the maritime trade with the East. These "pre-companies" or voorcompagnieën demonstrated the route was open and the profits immense. But they also had shown that rival Dutch merchants, competing with each other in the markets of Asia and bidding up the price of spices in their own competition, were driving down their own profits. The Dutch were, in short, their own enemy in the East.



The Advocate of Holland and the Republic's most influential statesman, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, saw that the only way forward was consolidation. After protracted negotiations between the rival merchant communities, the States-General released the VOC's charter of incorporation on March 20, 1602 - a document that was in its scope and significance, unprecedented in European trade history. The charter united the rival voorcompagnieën into a single organisation and gave it a twenty-one year renewable monopoly over all Dutch commerce east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Strait of Magellan. Dutch merchants and ships had no right to ply their trade in this extensive maritime realm without the Company's special permission. It was an absolute monopoly and one enforced by the Company itself.
But what was truly novel about the 1602 charter was not just the award of commercial monopoly but the conferral of sovereign powers. The VOC was given the right to raise an army, to build fortresses, to appoint governors and judges, to negotiate treaties with foreign monarchs, and to wage defensive (and de facto offensive) war on behalf of the Dutch Republic throughout the entire region in which it was empowered to operate. In the

terminology of the modern era, it was a state within a state: a private company granted the powers of sovereignty, answerable to the States-General in theory but de facto independent across the vast geographical gulf that lay between Amsterdam and Asia. No other mercantile entity in European history had been given such extensive rights, and none would be given such extensive rights until the British East India Company was at the height of its power more than 100 years later.

The charter also created an innovative financial structure. The VOC was one of the first and most sophisticated joint-stock companies ever, enabling merchants, artisans and even ordinary citizens of the Republic to invest in the venture and profit from it. The Amsterdam Beurs, the first modern stock exchange, was effectively established to deal in VOC shares, which from the Company's very beginning were bought, sold and speculated on with a fervour that delighted foreign visitors. The VOC's initial capital of more than six million guilders was unprecedented in the history of trade and provided the funding for the Asian empire to be built.

By 1666, the charter has been renewed twice and the Company it has established is far beyond the pale of its original aspirations. The united monopoly that Oldenbarnevelt and his allies proposed as a practical response to destructive competition has evolved into the legal and constitutional framework for a commercial empire of unprecedented proportions. Yet the underlying contradictions of the charter - between the Company's sovereign pretensions and its subservience to the Republic, between the interests of its Amsterdam-dominated board and the ambitions of its provincial chambers, between the interests of shareholders who want dividends and an empire that needs to reinvest in its future - remain as potent in 1666 as they were in 1602. On these foundations, both ingenious and paradoxical, the Heeren XVII must build.

b. The Founding of Batavia (1619)

If the VOC was created in 1602, its heart beat for the first time in 1619 with the founding of Batavia. For the first seventeen years of its existence, the Company did not have a permanent administrative home in Asia - its ships came, they traded, they fought, they went away, but there was no single seat of power in Asia from which the Company's entire eastern operation could be directed with consistency and coordination. Decisions were made on an ad hoc basis, sometimes at cross purposes, by individual factors and commanders. The Company's Asian empire was rich but unwieldy, successful but fragmented. This all changed when Jan Pieterszoon Coen took up his post as Governor-General and imposed on the VOC's Asian empire the territorial underpinning it had lacked from its inception.Coen did not suffer fools gladly. Intelligent, ambitious, and with a vision of Asia that outstripped the commercial interests of the Heeren XVII in Amsterdam, he had long advocated for the need to establish a permanent fortified headquarters, a city rather than a factory, from which the VOC's military, commercial, and administrative affairs could be coordinated. He chose the northwest coast of the

island of Java, on the banks of the Ciliwung River, home of an existing Javanese port town called Jayakarta. In May 1619, after a period of war with both the local Banten Sultanate and a fleet of English ships that had temporarily threatened to steal a march on the Dutch, Coen's troops captured and destroyed Jayakarta and began to build a new city on its site. He called it Batavia, after the Batavians - the ancient Germanic people whom Roman authors had linked to the Dutch - a name that was meant to link the new city to the mythology of Dutch origins and destiny.

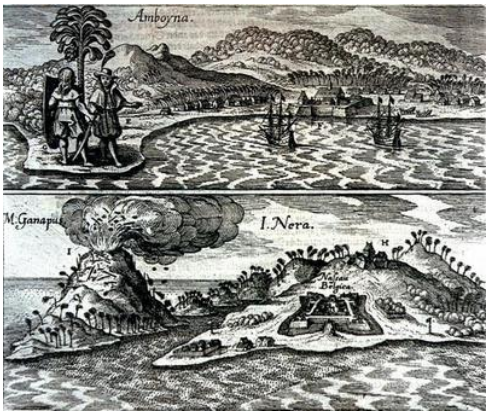
Batavia was to be not just a military outpost but a city, explicitly designed to resemble Amsterdam. Under Coen's direction, the new city was laid out with canals, warehouses, offices, a town hall (stadhuis), a weigh house, and a great castle, Kasteel Batavia (Batavia's castle), the seat of the VOC in Asia, all with the same rectilinear precision and commercial efficiency found in Dutch cities back home. The similarity to Amsterdam was ideological: Batavia was to show that the Dutch way of life could be transplanted in its entirety to the far side of the world, that the qualities of the Republic - its ordered commerce, Protestantism and representative government - were not just European but universal in their value.

Geopolitically, Batavia was well-placed. It was located at the western tip of the island of Java, straddling the Sunda Strait - one of the two major passages connecting the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea - and thus provided the VOC with a choke-point through which much of Asian trade had to pass. The Governor-General was able to exercise influence from Batavia east to the spice islands of the Moluccas, north to the Chinese and Japanese trades, west to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, and south to the portions of the great southern landmass still unexplored, whose existence was already known. It was, in all respects, an imperial city - the heart of the Asian empire that would be, under the subsequent Governors-General, vastly larger than Coen could have imagined.

In 1666, Batavia has ruled VOC Asia for almost 50 years. It is the capital from which Governor-General Joan Maetsuycker rules the Company's sprawling eastern empire and it is to Batavia that the Heeren XVII's instructions make the six-month journey. It is the crowning glory of the first generation of the VOC, and the central reference point for all subsequent action in Asia.

c. The Amboyna Massacre (1623)

There are times in the history of the VOC that cannot be explained by the ruthless calculations of commercial interest - times when violence, paranoia and fear on the part of isolated men on the far reaches of the world had consequences that affected the diplomatic history of Europe for decades to come, and left scars that no treaty ever entirely erased. The Amboyna events of February 1623 are the most notorious of these, and the legacies of this episode are still resonating in the relationship between the Dutch Republic and England that, in 1666, remains one of the most tense in the world.



Amboyna Ambon in the Moluccas was, at the time, one of the key strategic posts in the VOC's Asian

empire, an island fortress at the centre of the clove-growing region that the Company had fought and bled to control. The VOC garrisoned a fortress there with a governor named Herman van Speult, and besides the Dutch garrison was a small group of English East India Company (EIC) merchants, allowed to trade in accordance with the 1619 agreement between the two countries that sought, with mixed success, to norm Anglo-Dutch trading relations in Asia. The English were not particularly welcome - the Dutch regarded the EIC in the Moluccas as a usurpation of territory they felt they owned by virtue of conquest and monopoly, and relations between the two communities were, at every level, characterised by suspicion, rivalry and seething animosity.In February 1623, a Japanese mercenary soldier on VOC payroll was found questioning the garrison about its defences - questions that van Speult construed, or chose to construe, as part of a plot to capture the fortress. Under torture, the mercenary identified his collaborators. This led to the interrogation of more Japanese mercenaries, then, unfortunately, the English merchants of the EIC factory. Following interrogation, which included water torture, ten English, nine Japanese mercenaries, and one Portuguese merchant confessed. They were accused of planning to seize Castle Victoria and surrender it to the English monarchy. On February 27 all twenty were executed - beheaded in the castle yard in front of the remainder of the island's population.

The English response to the news was a rage so intense and so politically volatile that it impacted the Anglo-Dutch relationship for the rest of the century. English pamphlets depicted graphic details of the torture and executions, with accompanying images, that were widely circulated and crystallised the massacre in the popular imagination as a symbol of Dutch treachery and savagery. The EIC sought reparation, restoration and retribution. The States-General and the Heeren XVII, though privately admitting that van Speult's actions were questionable at best, refused to publicly condemn them - that would be to condemn every official of the VOC acting in the name of the Company in Asia. The issue simmered through decades of diplomacy, emerging at every point of tensions between England and the Republic as an issue that England did not completely resolve with its Dutch counterpart.

By 1666, the Amboyna massacre is over four decades old, but it is still very much alive. English propaganda dredges it up as justification for commercial retribution and war against the Republic. It is the hidden wound - the reason that discussions between London and Amsterdam are freighted with a cargo of ill-will that cannot be reduced to commercial considerations, and that the Heeren XVII must factor in to any strategy that involves the English monarchy.

d. The Banda Islands Conquest and Spice Monopoly

To grasp the VOC's devotions to monopoly - the intensity with which it seeks to defend its commercial exclusions, the violence it is prepared to unleash against anyone who infringes them, and the rationale that informs every military venture in the eastern archipelago - one has to understand the Banda Islands. This tiny speck of volcanic outcrops in the Banda Sea, equal in size to a small Dutch market town, produced the bulk of the world's nutmeg and mace in the early 17th century.

Whoever controlled Banda controlled a product for which Europeans would gladly pay prices that made the cost of any military campaign to capture that control seem a mere trifling matter. It was this calculus - simple, bloody, and irresistible - that led Jan Pieterszoon Coen to arrive in Banda in 1621 with a fleet, an army and a plan to settle the matter of monopoly once and for all.The VOC had been trying to monopolise Banda's nutmeg trade since its founding. The difficulty was that the Bandanese - a maritime-oriented, fiercely independent people organized in a loose federation of villages ruled by local merchant-nobles or orang kaya - refused to bow to exclusive dealings with any European trading company. They had sold their nutmeg to Arab, Javanese, Malay, Portuguese, and English merchants for centuries and knew all too well that competition among buyers was the only way to secure a reasonable price for the spice. Not a single agreement signed between the VOC and the Bandanese orang kaya was honoured - not always by the VOC, because the Bandanese political system made it difficult to forge collective agreements, but because the Bandanese were tempted by the higher prices paid by English or other interlopers.Coen's answer was to drop the facade of free trade. In March and April 1621, he dispatched VOC soldiers and Japanese mercenaries to the Banda Islands, and embarked on what can only be described as a campaign of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Houses were destroyed, the orang kaya were slain or forced to flee into the jungle, and a population of tens of thousands reduced, between war, famine and exile, to a few thousand survivors. The islands were then reorganised. The nutmeg plantations were divided into lots (perken) which were granted as hereditary estates to Dutch colonists (perkeniers) who were obliged to sell their entire crop to the VOC at a fixed price. The plantations were worked by African and Asian slaves in conditions of extreme cruelty. In a matter of months, Banda Island had gone from free traders to VOC-owned plantation, and nutmeg was now the Company's monopoly.The impact on the VOC's business interests was long-lasting. The Banda model for monopoly was applied to all other commodities the Company tried to control - cloves in Amboyna and the northern Moluccas, cinnamon in Ceylon, pepper in Sumatra and Java. The lesson from Banda was that monopoly meant not just commercial contracts but territorial control, not just treaties but the removal of options. The principle was one that could be enforced by violence if necessary; that they had no compulsion to exercise restraint in the use of force was, for the Heeren XVII, a virtue rather than a vice.In 1666 the Banda system has been in operation for almost 50 years, and the perkeniers continue to offer their produce to the Company under the conditions that Coen exacted. But the integrity of the monopoly is challenged - by smugglers, by Asian merchants who smuggle nutmeg trees to new planting sites outside the VOC's control - and by the ongoing challenge posed by Makassar, whose open port remains the chief artery through which the spice monopoly leaches. Banda's conquest was the precedent. It now remains the Company's enduring challenge.

e. The First Anglo-Dutch War (1652–1654)

The war that erupted between the Dutch Republic and the English Commonwealth in 1652 was fundamentally about the same thing that was at stake in almost all of the great wars that raged across Europe in the 17th century: sea power, and the conditions for commercial intercourse. It was also, more immediately, a war that neither side quite wanted to fight when

it broke out, the outcome of a series of commercial disputes, legislative insults and naval skirmishes that soon got out of the hands of both states - a scenario that will look all too familiar to the student of Anglo-Dutch diplomacy as he or she looks across the diplomatic landscape of 1666.

It was sparked by the English Navigation Act of 1651, an act of the Long Parliament of Oliver Cromwell, directed at the Dutch carrying trade that allowed the Republic to be the entrepôt of the world. The Act decreed that goods imported to England and the English colonies be shipped in English vessels or vessels of the country of their origin - a rule that if applied would effectively shut down the Dutch entrepôt system, whereby Amsterdam would buy goods from all around the world and sell them on to England, the goods to be shipped back in Dutch ships. It was the Navigation Act that was the commercial death penalty delivered in the form of legislation to the Republic, whose commercial model was based on carrying the goods of other nations. In the months since the tensions had grown and in May 1652 a naval clash between the Admiral Maarten Tromp and English Admiral Robert Blake in the English Channel (it is still unclear to this day who failed to salute, and to whom) was the catalyst that lit the spark for the powder keg of tensions.

The ensuing war was a naval one, fought on the North Sea and the English Channel in a series of naval battles of a size and intensity never previously witnessed. The Dutch Republic had the largest merchant fleet in the world, but often had warships which were smaller and faster than their English counterparts, built for trade rather than for war, and often constrained by their draught (the distance between the bottom of the ship and the water line) to form large fleets for battle. England, with the Commonwealth's policy of a large navy, had built a fleet of men-of-war, and proved more resilient than the Republic had anticipated. The war saw victories and defeats on both sides - the broom which Tromp is alleged to have raised to signal his intention to sweep the seas clear of the English navy became a symbol of the war even if it was not a literal reality - but the impact of the war on Dutch commerce, which was reliant on free trade in a way that England's was not, ultimately told against the Republic.

The Treaty of Westminster which ended the war in 1654 was not a dishonourable one but it was a deflating one. The Republic was obliged to accept a modified version of the Navigation Act and to pay compensation for the Amboyna massacre (the spirit of 1623 lived on) whilst the secret Act of Seclusion, for which the English sought a quid pro quo, temporarily excluded the young William of Orange from the position of Stadtholder. It had established that England was a major naval power to be taken seriously, that the Dutch commercial

empire was more vulnerable to military interference than some had supposed, and that the friendship between the two leading Protestant maritime powers would be more likely to be constrained by the competition for a maritime environment than it would be shaped by shared religious and commercial interests. It was a lesson that the Republic failed to learn before the Second Anglo-Dutch War commenced in 1665 and it is one that the Heeren XVII should remember as they contemplate the possibilities in 1666.

f. The Cape of Good Hope Settlement (1652)

In 1652, the decision by the Heeren XVII to establish a VOC refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope was a pragmatic one, rather than an imperialistic one. The voyage from the Netherlands to Batavia was one of the most arduous in the world - a six-month or longer round-trip journey across the Atlantic, past the Cape of Good Hope, across the Indian Ocean, in which the sailors suffered from scurvy and dysentery, as well as the general debilitating effects of weeks of sailing without fresh food, fresh water, or a decent night's rest. By the time they reached Asia, their crews were exhausted, their food low. The way to solve this problem was a base - a place on the African coast where VOC ships could replenish their supplies of water, vegetables, and meat before making the rest of the journey east. The Cape, with its mild climate, the natural harbour, and its location on the main route between Europe and Asia, was the natural destination. In April 1652 Jan van Riebeeck landed with three vessels and instructions to build a fort, raise a garden and lay down the supply lines. He was intended to make a colony, but not to found one.It became a colony regardless. The process of settlement has a logic of its own and at the Cape, it produced the same arguments as the VOC had found in Asia that the initial commercial beachhead, once established, demands expansion, consolidation and permanent settlement. In the decade after van Riebeeck's arrival, the Company had permitted the release of a handful of VOC servants as free burghers, to farm independently provided that they sold their produce to the Company at set prices. The model was, in all but name, identical to the perkenier system in the Banda Islands - private producers producing commodities on terms set by the VOC, their commercial autonomy illusory and their dependence on the Company absolute. The free burgher population has grown, if slowly, into the productive lands of the Cape hinterland, creating the fledgling agricultural economy that now supports the VOC ships as they pass through the Cape en route to the East Indies by providing the grain, wine and meat that sustain them across the Indian Ocean.The local Khoikhoi population - the original inhabitants of the Cape, whose herds supplied the settlement with fresh meat in the early years, supplying the fresh meat that was essential to the VOC shipping fleet - have increasingly been marginalised and displaced as the settlement reaches beyond the land promised to van Riebeeck. Where relations between the Company and the Khoikhoi started out as a commercial transaction (the Company traded tobacco,

alcohol, and copper for Khoikhoi cattle) they have slowly become more coercive as the European population's appetite for land has stretched beyond the confines of the original fort. The resulting tensions are not only humanitarian issues, but operational ones, as the hostility of a dispossessed indigenous population makes the resupply business more difficult.In 1666, Zacharias Wagenaer's Cape settlement has become something more than a way-station, regardless of the directives that originally established it. It is a small colonial colony, a European settlement on African soil, relying on unfree labor, encroaching on indigenous land and integrated into the VOC's strategic network as a vital node in the network that links Amsterdam to Batavia. Whether, and how, the Heeren XVII might like to recognise this development, and what that recognition might mean, is a question that the growth of the settlement will eventually pose to this board, liked or not.

g. The Siege of Colombo and Portuguese Expulsion (1656)

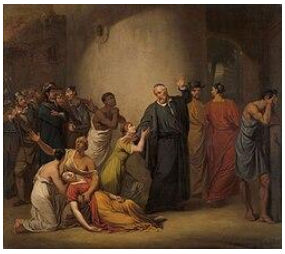
The capture of Colombo in May 1656 marked the end of a campaign that, in any objective terms, was one of the most important the VOC ever fought. Ceylon - the great teardrop island that juts from the tip of the Indian subcontinent - was not simply a new addition to the growing list of colonies that comprised the Company's empire. It was the only source of the true cinnamon, a spice whose value in European markets was only equalled among spices by nutmeg and cloves and whose production was so geologically concentrated that he who owned Ceylon owned cinnamon outright. The Portuguese had learned this lesson more than a century earlier - they had established themselves on the island's coasts in the early 16th century, and extracted the spice from a mixture of tribute agreements with the Sinhalese states lying inland, and from the direct administration of the lowlands. The capture of Ceylon from the Portuguese was not for the VOC an opportunistic act of aggression, but a vital one - as long as the Portuguese retained control of the island and its capital Colombo, the monopoly over cinnamon that the Company needed to complete its conquest of the Asian spice markets was not complete.The alliance that enabled the campaign was not forged in Amsterdam but in the interior highlands of Ceylon, where the Kingdom of Kandy, the last independent Sinhalese kingdom - which had stood its ground against the Portuguese for generations from its mountain citadel - saw in the VOC a possible ally in its struggle for independence from the European power that had tormented its coasts and threatened its sovereignty for a century. As early as the 1630s, the Kandyan king Rajasinha II had solicited the Dutch for trade concessions in return for their help against the Portuguese. It was an offer the Company increasingly accepted as its interests in Asia came into focus and by the late 1640s official collaboration between Batavia and Kandy resulted in a series of military campaigns along the coast of Ceylon that increasingly encircled the Portuguese enclaves.The ensuing siege of Colombo was a battle of attrition. The VOC's commander in Ceylon, Ryklof van Goens, whose ambition and resolve saw the campaign on the island conducted with a vigour that sometimes unnerved the Heeren XVII back in

Amsterdam, blockaded the city to prevent it receiving supplies and reinforcements. The Portuguese defenders were weakened by famine and disease, and endured months of extreme deprivation before the fall became inevitable. When the garrison of Colombo capitulated in May 1656, the Portuguese were allowed to leave with the trappings of war - another decision made by van Goens from pragmatic concerns, for a lengthy siege would have resulted in the loss of men and materiel that the Company could ill afford. The final Portuguese holdout, Jaffna in the north, collapsed the next year, bringing the expulsion of the Portuguese to a close and ceding the entire Ceylonese coastline to the VOC.Amsterdam's counting rooms felt the impact straight away. With cinnamon's monopoly secured, the Company's Asian trade gained a source of income of immense value and certainty. But the agreements with Kandy that allowed the campaign to be mounted have resulted in commitments that are proving awkward to honour. Rajasinha II sought a genuine alliance - the return of territory, recognition of Kandyan sovereignty and, in the event of a future attack against it, military support. The VOC, having got what it needed, has found these expectations less than satisfying. The status quo between Batavia and Kandy in 1666 is a controlled dislike, a relationship that van Goens, now in charge of the administration of the island, knows well and that the Heeren XVII will have to consider in determining the strategic importance of Ceylon.

h. The Fall of Fort Zeelandia and Loss of Formosa (1662)

Some defeats are merely expensive, and some defeats are dishonouring - that cause not only the loss of land and money, but also of the glamour of invincibility that is the underpinning of imperial power. The capture of Fort Zeelandia in February, 1662, and the subsequent expulsion of the VOC from Formosa, falls most definitely into the second. It was the Company's greatest military defeat since its inception, achieved not by a European rival with a fleet of modern naval vessels but by a Chinese warlord leading a fleet of refugees - and it has not been forgotten in the four years that have passed since the fortress's surrender.Formosa - the great island off southeastern China, whose name in the languages of its indigenous population the Dutch did not bother to learn - had been in VOC hands since 1624, when the Company built Fort Zeelandia on a sandbar adjacent to the island's southwestern coast to service the China and Japanese trades. Its location was strategic because the Wanli Emperor's ban on foreign trade with the mainland meant that an offshore entrepôt was essential - Formosa gave the VOC access to the extensive Chinese network of commerce without offending Qing sensibilities about the presence of foreigners on the mainland proper. For the next half century, the island became one of the Company's most profitable Asian possessions, bringing in profits from the China and Japan trades that more than justified the expense of its governance and defence.The threat that brought this trade to an end came not from Europe, but from the fall of the Ming Dynasty on the mainland of China. Zheng Chenggong (known to the Dutch as Koxinga, a corruption of his title) was the son of a Chinese merchant-pirate and a Japanese mother, and had set himself on a quest to recapture the Chinese mainland from the invading Qing Dynasty and restore the Ming

Dynasty. In 1661 his position on the mainland had become untenable. He required a foothold to support his resistance, supply his soldiers and launch operations against the Qing on the mainland across the Taiwan Strait. Fertile, wealthy Formosa, whose VOC garrison he judged to be insufficient to confront a direct attack, was an ideal choice.In April 1661 Koxinga landed at Formosa with an estimated fleet of several hundred ships, and an army of tens of thousands - far in excess of the VOC's capacity to defend itself - and the campaign was, in retrospect, a foregone conclusion. The fortress' governor, Frederick Coyett, with a garrison of less than two thousand men, appealed frantically to Batavia for help. The subsequent relief fleet was small, and timid. After months of siege, bombardment, disease and starvation, Coyett, seeing his situation was hopeless, agreed to surrender in February 1662. The Dutch were allowed to leave with their effects. The fort of Zeelandia, built over decades at great cost, the heart of the Company's northeastern Asian ambitions, was turned over to the troops of Koxinga and the VOC's presence on the island of Formosa was ended.The defeat had consequences for Batavia and Amsterdam. The China and Japan trades were not gone -



Dejima in Nagasaki remained, and other trading arrangements were sought - but the strategic balance of the VOC's northeastern Asian strategy had changed. Worse still was the example: an Asian general, fighting without European assistance or armaments, had defeated the VOC in a protracted campaign and captured its strongest fortress. In 1666, that precedent is still recent, its implications for the Company's position in the whole Asian theatre unsettled and troubling.

i. Outbreak of the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665)

The Second Anglo-Dutch War didn't start in 1665. It began in the merchant houses of London and Amsterdam, in the colonial trading stations of West Africa and North America, and in the halls of the English court where the Duke of York and his supporters had been battling for years over the proposition that Dutch maritime trade was not simply a commercial nuisance but a threat to the very survival of England's empire - and that the peace treaties that ended the First Anglo-Dutch War had been a failure of will rather than a lasting settlement. The formal declaration of war, issued in March 1665, was preceded by more than two years of commercial warfare between the two powers, and the mutual suspicions and accusations that preceded it had long outgrown the possibility of any diplomatic exit.The sparks were lit in the colonies. In 1663 and 1664, the English Royal African Company - operating under protection of the Duke of York, whose ambitions in the Dutch East Indies were equal only to his own belief in the English capacity to acquire them - launched a series of raids in West Africa, seizing Dutch settlements and interfering with the VOC's slave-trading operations that fed the Atlantic plantation system. At the same time, an English force under Colonel Richard Nicolls landed in North America and captured the Dutch colony of New Netherland, renaming its main city after the Duke's pet project, New

York. These were not acts of piracy or opportunism - they were provocations, designed to test the Dutch resolve and to assert English interests in the areas where conflict of interest between the two countries' commercial empires was most acute. The Republic could not afford not to respond without conceding a weakness that would encourage further aggression.The English gamble was based on some assumptions that were logical in 1664, but not entirely straightforward. It assumed that the Republic, having drained its treasury to pay for the world's biggest merchant navy, would be unable to sustain an extensive naval war against a determined enemy. It assumed that the loss of the great admiral Maarten Tromp, who was killed in the Battle of Scheveningen in the First Anglo-Dutch War, had left the Dutch navy without a leader of his caliber. And that the new English men-of-war, bigger and better armed than the merchantmen that had made up the bulk of previous Dutch fleets, would be decisive in the open battle that both sides expected. The English miscalculated dreadfully In the decade between the wars, the Republic's navy had been in constant reform. Michiel de Ruyter had become an outstanding commander, and a cool-headed one at that.

And the Dutch navy that confronted the English in the North Sea in 1665 was a much more effective weapon than its enemies expected.The June 1665 victory of the Battle of Lowestoft appeared to be an early vindication of the war's planners - the Dutch had suffered severely, and for a time the Republic's commercial interests seemed to be in danger. But the momentum shifted. The fleet was reconfigured at lightning speed, and in the summer of 1666 the war had been turned so decisively in the Four Days' Battle that England is now facing a peace on Dutch terms. The war that was supposed to destroy the VOC's commercial empire has instead proven its strength - but the war has also exhausted the Company's resources, destabilised its Atlantic commerce and confronted the Heeren XVII with the question that now animates all of their strategic thinking: whether to push this victory home and destroy the Company's rivals, or to negotiate a peace that will secure their position as the balance of power continues to shift.

5. Political Climate in Dutch Republic and East Indies

In the late 16th century, a Golden Age emerged in the Netherlands following the Dutch Revolt which transformed the Dutch economy. Netherlands became stronger economically

because the country became more stable, trade routes reopened, and money came in from nearby regions.The Dutch Republic quickly became one of the most important trading centers in Europe. The political climate in the Dutch Republic in the 16th and 17th centuries was different from many other European countries. Instead of having a strong king, the Dutch Republic was controlled by provinces and wealthy merchants. Each province had its own leaders, and decisions were made through discussion and agreement. This system is called decentralized government. Because of this, merchants had a lot of influence on politics and economic decisions.

Several trading companies joined and collaborated together in order to form the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1602 and received special rights from the government. The political system, which gave power to merchants and local regions, helped the VOC grow and become very powerful around the world. It had a monopoly on trade in Asia for 21 years. The company was allowed to build armies, make agreements, control lands, and even fight wars. Because of these powers, the VOC acted almost like a country. It became very successful and made a lot of profit, especially after taking control of important areas like the Spice Islands. The company helped the Netherlands become stronger in global trade. The VOC's structure was similar to the Dutch political system. It had six regional groups called chambers, which represented different cities. These chambers chose a central board called the Heeren XVII to manage the company. This system prevented one city from having too much power, but it also caused competition between regions. Like the Dutch government, the VOC used a decentralized system, where different parts had some independence. This allowed flexibility but sometimes led to disagreements.

Trade and business growth created a rich merchant class, especially in the city Amsterdam. This city became a key center for finance and trade. Wealthy merchants had strong influence on politics and supported mercantilism, which focused on earning wealth through trade. The VOC followed this idea by bringing raw materials from overseas and selling finished goods. To keep this system working, the Dutch built colonies in different parts of the world, helping them control resources and trade routes. By times got past, the VOC began to weaken. Changes in global trade reduced the importance of spices, and new products like tea and cotton became more valuable. The British East India Company became more successful in these areas. Wars, especially the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, also damaged Dutch trade. Because of these problems, the VOC declined and was officially ended in 1799. Even so, it remains one of the most powerful trading companies in history.

When the VOC arrived in the Indonesia, they used and expanded the local system of slavery. In places like the Banda Islands in the Maluku region, the VOC removed or killed much of the local population and replaced them with enslaved workers. The ones in the Dutch East Indies worked in many areas; some worked in agriculture and helped grow crops, while others worked in small industries like shipbuilding or food production. However, most slaves worked in homes as domestic servants. They were cooks, cleaners, housemaids, musicians, and personal assistants. Their daily lives depended heavily on their masters, and they had

very little freedom.The VOC got slaves in different ways. Some were bought from local slave markets, while others were captured during raids or wars. The VOC sometimes increased conflict between local groups so they could buy prisoners as slaves more cheaply. Slaves were also brought from other regions, including India and China, creating a large and diverse slave population. At its peak, it is estimated that around 1 million slaves were active in the Dutch East Indies.Public discussion in the Netherlands about colonialism, slavery, or religion was limited and had little impact. Additionally, the Dutch colonial empire was divided between two major companies (VOC and WIC), and their activities were largely separate.

Life for slaves was extremely difficult. They had no rights and were treated as property. Punishments were very harsh. Slaves who tried to escape could be beaten, chained, or killed. Other punishments included cutting off body parts or public executions to scare others. Even though laws said punishments should be decided in court, many masters punished slaves however they wanted.Furthermore, violence and abuse were common among them, refusing made situations even worse. Beatings and whipping were normal punishments for small mistakes. Female slaves were often forced into sexual relationships with their masters.This shows that slavery in the VOC system was not only about labor but also about control and exploitation.

The VOC used slavery to support its economy, especially the spice trade, trade networks depended heavily on forced labor. This helped the Dutch become very rich and powerful in global trade. However, this system caused great suffering for enslaved people and destroyed many local communities. Even after the VOC ended in 1799, slavery continued under Dutch colonial rule. The system remained important for the economy of the Dutch East Indies. Over time, other countries and groups began to criticize slavery more strongly. These pressures slowly pushed the Dutch government to make changes. Slavery was officially abolished in the Dutch East Indies in 1860. However, even after abolition, many former slaves continued to face difficult conditions and inequality.

6. Key Parties Factions

a. The Internal Factions (Heeren XVII)

Heeren XVII or Gentlemen Seventeen was the name for the board of directors of the Dutch United East India Company (VOC), founded in 1602. This central executive body consisted of representatives from the VOC's six constituent chambers, located in cities where previously separate "pre-companies" had been established: Eight were from Amsterdam, four from Middelburg (Zeeland), and one each from the four smaller chambers—Rotterdam, Delft, Hoorn, and Enkhuizen. The seventeenth member was appointed in turn by Zeeland or one of the smaller chambers. In theory, Amsterdam could be outvoted, but in practice the power of this large chamber over the smaller ones was such that it could usually get its way. The Gentlemen Seventeen met two or three times a year in the presiding chamber, either Amsterdam (six years in succession) or Middelburg (two years in succession). The timing of these meetings, which usually lasted four to five weeks, coincided with the rhythms of the shipping traffic between the Dutch Republic and Asia. New directors were to be appointed by the provincial assemblies, the states of Holland and Zeeland, from a short list prepared by the acting directors. This power, however, was soon usurped by the town councils of the respective chambers. Partly as a result of the appointment policy close ties were formed between the ruling oligarchy of regents, members of the town councils, and the company directors.

The founding charter of 1602 permitted the VOC to build forts, appoint governors, maintain soldiers and fleets, wage war, and conclude treaties with foreign powers in Asia in the name of the States General of the Dutch Republic. Instructions to governors had to be approved by the States General, and the top VOC officials had to swear an oath of allegiance in the presence of the States General. In addition, commanders of homeward-bound fleets had to report on conditions in Asia. From a legal perspective, the VOC can be considered an executive instrument of the States General with a restricted mandate. In practice, however, the States General had little effective control and rules were soon ignored. Close informal contacts existed between the government and the company because the directors came from the same ruling regent class, but official control was minimal until the late eighteenth century. The financial report submitted to a committee from the States General every four years was a mere formality. When the company's charter had to be extended, the occasion was seen primarily as a suitable opportunity to extract money from the directors.

Several committees advised the meetings of the Gentlemen Seventeen or carried out preparatory work. There was a committee for checking the bookkeeping, one for preparing

the annual balance, another for attending and supervising the company auctions, a wartime committee dealing with secret routes and signals, and one for dealing with correspondence with the High Government and other company servants in Asia. The latter committee met in the company lodge in The Hague and was therefore called the Haags Besogne. It was formed by ten directors: four from Amsterdam, two from Zeeland, and one from each of the smaller chambers.

An important VOC official was the company's advocate, the secretary to the board of directors. He attended both the meetings of the Gentlemen Seventeen and the Haags Besogne and drafted the resolutions of these bodies. In addition, he participated in the deliberations of the Amsterdam chamber, and carried out numerous other tasks for the directors. The advocate was the only permanent official at the highest level and could sometimes exert a great deal of influence on company policy. Pieter van Dam, for example, occupied this post for more than fifty years from 1652 until his death in 1706. Van Dam wrote his multivolume Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie (Description of the East India Company) at the request of the Gentlemen Seventeen. The work, describing the history and organization of the VOC, was intended to act as an internal reference and policy guide for the directors. Today it serves as an invaluable source of information on the Dutch East India Company in the seventeenth century.

Some controversy exists over the alleged inadequacy of company bookkeeping and the declining quality of management in the eighteenth century. Though bookkeeping in the Dutch Republic could be quite problematical and balances reported by the individual chambers did not provide a complete picture, the Gentlemen Seventeen had inside access to the figures from Asia and additional financial details. At crucial points, the process of decision-making was institutionalized and rational. To compare the company with a modern multinational corporation, however, would be to ignore the restricted technological means available and the different mentality of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The slowness and uncertainty of overseas communications inevitably formed a weak link in the system. Patronage and personal preferences played a decisive part in the appointment of directors and other senior officials. It was accepted at all levels that, to a certain extent, one could enrich oneself through and at the cost of the VOC. Finally, management was not always of consistent quality. Against periods characterized by an active, inspiring, and innovative policy on the part of the directors must be set others in which routine, inertia, and lethargy were dominant.

b. The European Competitors

i. The English East India Company (EIC)

The East India Company (EIC) was an English, and later British, joint-stock company that was founded in 1600 and dissolved in 1874.It was formed to trade in the Indian Ocean region, initially with the East Indies (which included the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia), and later with East Asia. The

company gained control of large parts of the Indian subcontinent and Hong Kong. Originally chartered as the "Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East-Indies,the company rose to account for half of the world's trade during the mid-1700s and early 1800s, particularly in basic commodities including cotton, silk, indigo dye, sugar, salt, spices, saltpetre, tea, gemstones, and later opium.After they have lost most of the domination to the Dutch in Malay Archipelagos companies main mission shifted therefore the company also initiated the beginnings of the British Raj in the Indian subcontinent.

ii. The Portuguese Estado da Índia

Portuguese India,was a state of the Portuguese Empire founded seven years after the discovery of the sea route to the Indian subcontinent by Vasco da Gama, a subject of the Kingdom of Portugal. The capital of Portuguese India served as the governing centre of a string of military forts and maritime ports scattered along the coasts of the Indian Ocean it's height reached far away from india they controlled important islands such as Timor Leste in Malay Archipelagos .

iii. Indias Orientales Españolas

The Spanish East Indies were the colonies of the Spanish Empire in Asia and Oceania from 1565 to 1901, governed through the captaincy general in Manila for the Spanish Crown, initially reporting to Mexico City, then later directly reporting to Madrid after the Spanish American Wars of Independence. The king of Spain traditionally styled himself "King of the East and West Indies"

iv. Compagnie Française des Indes.

Louis XIV's East India Company was a joint-stock company founded in the Kingdom of France in August 1664 to engage in trade in India and other Asian lands, complementing the French West India Company (French: *Compagnie des Indes occidentales*) created three months before. It was one of several successive enterprises with similar names, a sequence that started with Henry IV's first French East Indies Company in 1604 and continued with Cardinal Richelieu's Compagnie d'Orient in 1642. Planned by Jean-Baptiste Colbert to compete with the EnglishEast India Company and Dutch East India Company, it was chartered by King Louis XIV for the purpose of trading in the Eastern Hemisphere.Louis XIV's company became insolvent and was reorganized in 1685, and was again bankrupt in 1706. In 1719, what remained of it was acquired by John Law's Company, which in 1723 became the French Indies Company active during much of the 18th century.

c. The Maritime Southeast Asian Powers

i. The Gowa Sultanate (Makassar)

The Sultanate of Gowa was one of the great kingdoms in the history of Indonesia and the most successful kingdom in the South Sulawesi region. People of this kingdom come from the Makassarese people who lived in the south end and the west coast of southern Sulawesi.

ii. The Mataram Sultanate (Java)

The Sultanate of Mataram was the last major independent Javanese kingdom on the island of Java before it was colonised by the Dutch. It was the dominant political force radiating from the interior of Central Java from the late 16th century until the beginning of the 18th century.

iii. The Banten Sultanate (Java)

The Banten Sultanate was a Bantenese Islamic trading kingdom founded in the 16th century and centred in Banten, a port city on the northwest coast of Java Once a great trading centre in Southeast Asia, especially of pepper, the kingdom reached its apogee in the late 16th and mid-17th centuries. By the late 17th century, it was overshadowed by Batavia and was finally annexed to the Dutch East Indies in 1813.

iv. The Aceh Sultanate (Sumatra)

The Aceh Sultanate, officially the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam was a sultanate centered in the modern-day province of Aceh of Indonesia. It was a major regional power in the 16th and 17th centuries At its peak it competed with the Sultanate of Johor and Portuguese Malacca, both on the Malay Peninsula, as all three attempted to control the trade through the Strait of Malacca and the regional exports of pepper and tin, with varying success

v. The Ternate and Tidore Sultanates (The Moluccas)

The Ternate and Tidore Sultanates, located in the Maluku Islands (Moluccas) of eastern Indonesia, were historically powerful Islamic kingdoms that dominated the global clove trade during the 15th to 17th centuries. Known as the "Spice Islands," they were the exclusive producers of cloves, bringing vast wealth and foreign interest to the region. The two sultanates,Often rivals, they were eventually subjected to Dutch colonial rule by the 19th century, with their influence spanning across the Moluccas, Sulawesi, and Papua.

vi. The Johor Sultanate (Malay Peninsula)

Established in 1528 by Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah II, son of the last Malaccan Sultan, the Johor Sultanate (or Johor-Riau-Lingga) emerged as a major Malay empire after the 1511 fall of Malacca to the Portuguese. It dominated the southern Malay Peninsula, Riau Archipelago, and parts of Sumatra, acting as a regional center of trade and Islamic learning

vii. The Kingdom of Pattani

The Kingdom of Patani (c. 1400–1902) was a powerful Malay-Muslim sultanate located in modern-day southern Thailand (Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat) and northern Malaysia. Known for its trading, it reached its zenith under four successive queens (1584–1688) before becoming a Siamese vassal and eventually being fully annexed by Siam (now Thailand) in 1902.

viii. Ryukyu Kingdom

The Kingdom of Ryukyu was a kingdom located on the Ryukyu Islands between the 15th and 19th centuries. Despite its small territory, the kingdom played a central role in maritime trade networks in East and Southeast Asia during the Middle Ages.

ix. The Kingdom of Tungning (Taiwan)

The Kingdom of Tungning,also known as Tywan, was a dynastic maritime state that ruled part of southwestern Taiwan and the Penghu islands between 1662 and 1683. It is the first predominantly ethnic Han state in Taiwanese history. At its zenith, the kingdom's maritime power dominated varying extents of coastal regions in southeastern China and controlled the major sea lanes across both China Seas, and its vast trade network stretched from Japan to Southeast Asia. The kingdom was founded by Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong) after seizing control of Taiwan from Dutch rule. Zheng aspired to restore the Ming dynasty in Mainland China, when the Ming remnants' rump state in southern China was progressively conquered by the Manchu-led Qing dynasty

d. The Mainland Asian Hegemons

i. The Qing Dynasty (China)

The Qing dynasty was a Manchu-led imperial dynasty of China and an early modern empire in East Asia which existed from 1636/1644 to 1912. The last imperial dynasty in Chinese history. At its height of power, the empire stretched from the Sea of Japan in the east to the Pamir Mountains in the west, and from the Mongolian Plateau in the north to the South China Sea in the south.

ii. The Tokugawa Shogunate (Japan)

The Tokugawa Shogunate was the military government of Japan during the Edo period from 1603 to 1868 The Tokugawa shogunate organized Japanese society under the strict Tokugawa class system and banned the entry of most foreigners under the isolationist policies of *Sakoku* to promote political stability. The Tokugawa shoguns governed Japan in a feudal system under the Tokugawa shogunate. Shougunate was the final period of traditional Japan, a time of internal peace, political stability, and economic growth and urbanization, which led to the rise of the merchant class and *Ukiyo* culture.

iii. The Mughal Empire (India)

The Mughal Empire (1526–1857) was a powerful early-modern Islamic state in India established by Babur, a Central Asian ruler descended from Timur and Genghis Khan. Known for its immense wealth accounting for nearly 24% of the world's GDP in the 17th century the empire united much of the Indian subcontinent through advanced military (gunpowder), efficient administration, and cultural synthesis.

iv. The Kingdom of Ayutthaya (Siam)

The Ayutthaya Kingdom (1351–1767) was a powerful Siamese empire and the second capital of Thailand, flourishing for over 400 years as a global center of commerce and diplomacy. Situated on an island surrounded by three rivers near modern Bangkok, it was known as a "Venice of Asia" before being destroyed by Burma in 1767

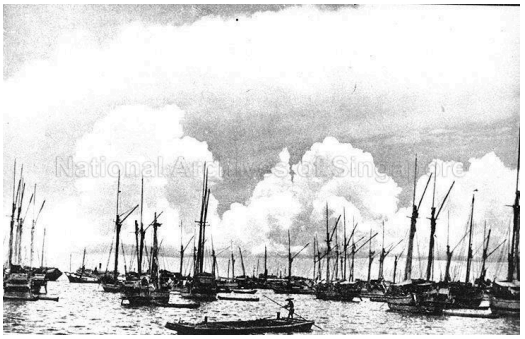
v. The Kingdom of Kandy (Ceylon)

The Kingdom of Kandy was a monarchy on the island of Sri Lanka, located in the central and eastern portion of the island. It was founded in the late 15th century and endured until the early 19th century.Initially a client kingdom of the Kingdom of Kotte, Kandy gradually established itself as an independent force during the tumultuous 16th and 17th centuries, allying at various times with the Jaffna Kingdom, the Madurai Nayak dynasty of South India, Sitawaka Kingdom, and the Dutch colonizers to ensure its survival.

e. The Non-State & Independent Actors

i. The Bugis Sea-Treaders (Mercenaries & Traders)

The Bugis were a prominent maritime people from South Sulawesi in present-day Indonesia. They had a long-standing seafaring tradition and were known for their advanced shipbuilding and navigation skills. Rather than forming a single centralized state, Bugis society was organized into competing kingdoms and communities, which encouraged mobility and adaptability across the region.In the early 17th century, the Bugis were deeply integrated into Southeast Asian trade networks. They transported goods such as spices, rice, textiles, and forest products between islands and major ports. Their ships connected local markets with larger trading hubs, making them key intermediaries in regional commerce, even before European dominance was fully established.At the same time, the Bugis were widely known as skilled warriors and frequently acted as mercenaries. They offered military services to local rulers and, later, to European powers like the Dutch. Their naval strength and combat experience made them valuable allies in regional conflicts, allowing them to gain influence and economic rewards.



Because they were not strictly tied to an empire, the Bugis often shifted alliances depending on opportunity. This flexibility allowed them to maintain a degree of independence, even as larger powers such as the Dutch East India Company (VOC) expanded into the region. However, this also meant they were sometimes seen as unpredictable partners.

ii. The Mardijkers (Freed Slave Militias)

The Mardijkers were communities of freed slaves in Southeast Asia, especially in areas influenced by the Portuguese and later the Dutch. The term comes from a word meaning “free person.” Many were originally enslaved individuals from South Asia, Africa, or the Indonesian archipelago who had been

converted to Christianity and then manumitted.The Mardijkers developed distinct, mixed identities shaped by European, African, and Asian influences. They often spoke a Portuguese-based creole language and practiced Christianity, which set them apart from many local populations. Their communities were typically urban and closely connected to colonial port cities.The Mardijkers occupied an intermediate social position—free but not equal to Europeans. Their security and status often depended on colonial authorities, which encouraged loyalty. However, their mixed heritage and local ties also meant they could act as cultural and political intermediaries between Europeans and indigenous societies.

In the early 17th century, Mardijkers frequently served as militias for colonial powers, particularly the Portuguese and later the Dutch East India Company (VOC). As freed individuals, they were seen as loyal intermediaries and were employed in garrison duties, local defense, and sometimes in expeditions. Their familiarity with local conditions made them effective soldiers.

iii. The Khoikhoi People (Cape of Good Hope)

The Khoikhoi were indigenous pastoralist communities living in the region of the Cape of Good Hope in southern Africa. They are often distinguished from neighboring San hunter-gatherers by their reliance on herding rather than foraging. Khoikhoi society was organized into clans led by chiefs, with strong kinship ties and seasonal movement patterns.The Khoikhoi economy was based on livestock, especially cattle and sheep, which were central to their wealth, diet, and social status. They practiced transhumance, moving seasonally to find grazing land and water. Trade existed both within Khoikhoi groups and with passing outsiders, often involving cattle in exchange for goods like metal tools or tobacco.

The Khoikhoi were not a centralized political power but consisted of multiple independent groups. This decentralization made unified resistance difficult when facing foreign encroachment. However, their knowledge of the land and control over local resources gave them early strategic advantages in dealing with outsiders.

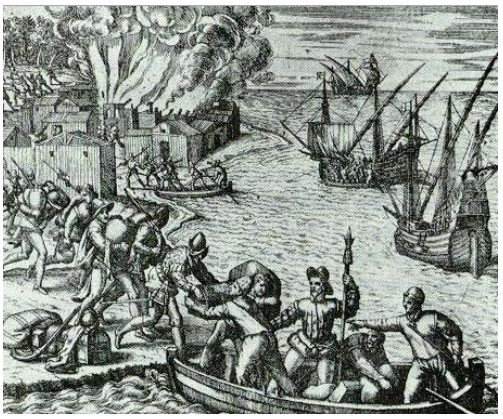
iv. The Overseas Chinese Merchant Diaspora

The Overseas Chinese merchant diaspora consisted of traders and settlers from southern China who had established communities across Southeast Asia. These migrants were not a single political group but were connected through shared language, kinship ties, and commercial networks. Many maintained links with their home regions while adapting to local societies abroad.They played a crucial role in regional trade, acting as intermediaries between China and Southeast Asia. They were involved in the exchange of goods such as silk, porcelain, spices, sugar, and metals. They adapted to local customs and sometimes intermarried with local populations, creating hybrid identities and strengthening their integration.

These merchants usually operated under the authority of local rulers or colonial powers, including the Dutch East India Company (VOC). While they did not hold direct political power as a unified group, their economic importance gave them influence. However, their success could also lead to suspicion or restrictive policies from authorities.

v. The Privateers and Smugglers (The "Interlopers")

The "interlopers" referred to private traders, privateers, and smugglers who operated outside the official monopolies of chartered companies like the Dutch East India Company (VOC) or the English East India Company. Some were independent merchants seeking profit, while others were state-sanctioned privateers authorized to attack rival ships during wartime. Their identity was fluid, often shifting between legal and illegal depending on political context.Their activities ranged from smuggling goods into restricted markets to raiding ships and coastal settlements. Privateers, in particular, blurred the line between piracy and legal warfare, as they operated under government licenses. Smugglers relied on secrecy, local alliances, and hidden ports to evade detection and taxes.While they threatened official monopolies and profits, they could also serve national interests by weakening rival empires.



Interlopers played a disruptive but important role in early global trade. By bypassing monopolies, they created alternative trade routes and offered goods at competitive prices. They traded in spices, textiles, precious metals, and other high-demand commodities, often undermining the strict control that companies like the VOC tried to maintain.

7. Important Figures

a. The Heeren XVII (The Board)

i. Andries de Graeff – Amsterdam

Andries de Graeff (1611-1678) was a regent and burgomaster of Amsterdam. He came from the de Graeff family which played a major role in the politics of the Dutch Republic. He supported republican ideas against the power of the House of Orange. He served several times as the mayor of Amsterdam and is remembered as an important figure of the Dutch Golden Age.

ii. Joan Huydecoper II – Amsterdam

Joan Huydecoper van Maarsseveen II (1625-1704) was the eldest son of burgomaster Joan Huydecoper van Maarsseveen I. He was mayor of Amsterdam for 13 terms between 1673 and 1693 and played an important role in the government of The Dutch Republic. He became an administrator of the Dutch East India Company in 1666 and helped strengthen Amsterdam's position as a leading commercial center.

iii. Gillis Valckenier – Amsterdam

Gillis Valckenier (1623–1680) was a Dutch politician who was Regent and Mayor of Amsterdam from 1665 to 1679. From 1670, he was an Orangist. He was appointed as an administrator of The Dutch East India Company in 1657. After the political struggle of the republican families De Witt and De Graeff in the Rampjaar 1672, Nicolaes Witsen and Johannes Hudde became his opponents in the Vroedschap. He is remembered as one of the dominant political figures of the Dutch Golden Age.

iv. Nicolaes Pancras – Amsterdam

Nicolaes Pancras (1622-1678) was a Dutch politician and a regent of the Dutch Republic in the 17th century. He came from a wealthy merchant family and was involved in the administration of the city. He was a member of the Amsterdam ruling elite and helped manage political and economic affairs during the Dutch Golden Age.

v. Lambert Reynst – Amsterdam

Lambert Reynst (1613-1679) was a Dutch regent and politician of the Dutch Golden Age. Born in Amsterdam, he belonged to the "republican" Dutch States Party. In 1667 he became a governor of the Dutch East India Company and was made mayor of Amsterdam in 1667, 1668 and 1672.

vi. Gerard Aarnout Hasselaer – Amsterdam

Gerard Aarnout Hasselaer (1628-1696) was a burgomaster and counsellor of the city of Amsterdam, and a Director of the Dutch East India Company. He played an important role in the defense and governance of the Dutch Republic during a time of conflict. He served as a regent of Amsterdam and was involved in political decision-making at a high level.

vii. Jan J. Hinlopen – Amsterdam

Jan J. Hinlopen (1626-1678) was a Dutch regent and merchant of a leading Amsterdam family in the 17th century. The Hinlopen family was heavily involved in trade, particularly with the Dutch East India Company. He took a role in taking political and economic decisions in the 17th century in Amsterdam.

viii. Hendrik Dircksz Spiegel – Amsterdam

Hendrik Dircksz Spiegel (1600-1669) was a Dutch administrator and regent in the 17th century. Coming from a respected family, he was involved in local governance during the Dutch Golden Age.

ix. Pieter de Huybert – Zeeland

Pieter de Huybert (1622-1697) was a Dutch statesman from the province of Zeeland. He played an important role in Dutch diplomacy. He was known for his diplomatic skills and maintaining stability in diplomacy.

x. Adriaen Veth – Zeeland

Adriaen Veth (1608-1663) was a successful Dutch diplomat from the province of Zeeland. He was born in Middleburg and he worked as Zeeland's Raadpensionaris' between the years 1658 and 1663.

xi. Jean de Knuyt – Zeeland

Jean de Knuyt (1598-1669) was a Dutch statesman and diplomat, from the province of Zeeland. He was occupied with the highest level of politics. De Knuyt was also engaged in diplomatic missions in a period of complex European conflicts.

xii. Cornelis de Beaufort – Zeeland

Cornelis de Beaufort (1643-1670) was a Dutch regent and politician from the province of Zeeland. He was involved in regional governance and public affairs. As a member of the ruling elite, he contributed to political decision-making within the Dutch Republic.

xiii. Maerten Pauw – Delft

Maerten Pauw (1634-1687) was a Dutch merchant, regent and colonial administrator. He was a director of the Dutch West India Company and a key player in the early colonization of New Netherland in North America. He also aided the Dutch Golden Age in promoting trade and overseas expansion.

xiv. Johan de Witt (Junior) – Rotterdam

Johan de Witt (Junior) (1635-1668) was a Dutch politician, scholar, and collector. He was a powerful political figure of the Dutch Republic and the son of Johan de Witt.

xv. Willem van Vlooswijck – Hoorn

Willem van Vlooswijck (1591-1672) was a leading Dutch statesman of Holland. He served as Grand Pensionary and became one of the most powerful figures in the Dutch Republic. He strongly supported republican governance and opposed the House of Orange.

xvi. Dirck van Loo – Enkhuizen

Dirck van Loo (1648-1689) was a Dutch merchant and navigator. He was involved in overseas trade during a time when the Dutch Republic was expanding its global influence. He helped the economic growth of the Dutch Golden Age through trade and exploration.

xvii. Pieter van Dam – States-General (17th Member)

Pieter van Dam (1621-1706) was a Dutch administrator and historian. He was a secretary of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and had great importance for the management of its records and affairs. Van Dam was particularly known for extensively documenting the history and operations of the company.

b. The Dutch Republic Leadership

i. Johan de Witt

Johan de Witt (1625-1672) was a leading Dutch statesman of Holland in the 17th century. He was one of the most powerful

political figures of the Dutch Republic and a strong supporter of republican governance. He opposed the House of Orange and worked to weaken its power.

ii. Cornelis de Witt

Cornelis de Witt (1623-1672) was a Dutch statesman and the brother of Johan de Witt. He had filled important political and military offices in the Dutch Republic. He took part in naval affairs, helping to defend the Republic. Like his brother, he was against the House of Orange and its power.

iii. Michiel de Ruyter

Michiel de Ruyter (1607-1676) was one of the most famous Dutch admirals. He served the Dutch Republic during the Anglo-Dutch Wars. He was known for his leadership, discipline, and loyalty to his country.

c. The Monarchs & Rivals in Europe

i. King Charles II

King Charles II (1630-1685) was the son of Charles I and king of England, Ireland, and Scotland from 1649 to 1685. He also faced important events such as the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London. The lively and permissive atmosphere of his court has earned him the nickname "Merry Monarch".

ii. James, Duke of York

James, Duke of York (1633-1701) was king of England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1685 to 1688 after the death of King Charles II. He was also Duke of Normandy from the year 1660. He lost his kingdoms in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. He did not succeed in taking them back in a war, and he spent the rest of his life in France

.

iii. King Louis XIV

King Louis XIV (1638-1715) was King of France from 1643 to 1715. He was known as the "Sun King" and strongly centralized royal power in France. During his rule, France became the dominant political and cultural power in Europe.

iv. Jean-Baptiste Colbert

Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683) was a French statesman from 1661 until his death in 1683 under the rule of King Louis XIV.

d. The Colonial Governors & Commanders

i. Joan Maetsuycker

Joan Maetsuycker (1606-1678) was a Dutch lawyer and colonial official. He was Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies from 1653 to 1678. He was an important figure in the development and expansion of Dutch dominance in Asian trade via the Dutch East India Company. His long time as head of the VOC made him one of the most influential people in the history of the company.

ii. Cornelis Speelman

Cornelis Speelman (1628-1684) was Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies from 1681 to 1684. He was employed as an assistant in the service of the Dutch East India Company.

iii. Jan van Riebeeck

Jan van Riebeeck (1619-1677) was a Dutch colonial administrator and founder of Cape Town in 1652. He worked for the Dutch East India Company and established a supply station at the Cape of Good Hope for ships traveling to Asia.

iv. Zacharias Wagenaer

Zacharias Wagenaer (1614-1668) was a German-born Dutch explorer, cartographer, and administrator who worked for the Dutch East India Company. His work gave the Dutch important geographic and cultural information. He was a key figure in the recording and expansion of Dutch overseas activities.

v. Ryklof van Goens

Ryklof van Goens (1619-1682) was a Dutch colonial administrator and high-ranking official of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). He later became Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies and focused on expanding Dutch control over trade routes.

vi. Balthasar Boreel

Blathasar Boreel (1633-1702) was a Dutch official involved in the administration and political networks of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). He helped manage trade policy and colonial governance decisions in support of VOC interests.

e. The Regional Sovereigns & Asian Hegemons

i. Sultan Hasanuddin

Sultan Hasanuddin (1631-1670) was the ruler of the Gowa Sultanate in South Sulawesi. He is

famous for his resistance to the expansion of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the area.

ii. Amangkurat I

Amangkurat I (1619-1677) was the Sultan of Mataram in Java from 1646 to 1677. He cooperated with the VOC but later faced rebellions inside his kingdom. To survive these rebellions, he even asked for VOC military support at times.

iii. Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa

Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa (1631-1692) was the ruler of the Banten Sultanate. He strongly opposed the Dutch East India Company (VOC). He supported resistance against VOC in the region.

iv. Tokugawa Ietsuna

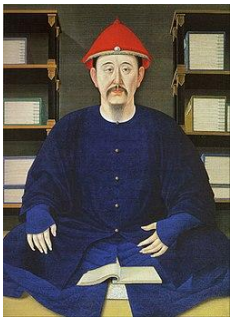
Tokugawa Ietsuna (1641-1680) was the fourth shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan, ruling from 1651 to 1680. Japan continued its isolation policy during his time, with limited contact with foreigners, including the Dutch East India Company (VOC). This meant that the VOC was only able to trade through the controlled trade at Dejima.

v. Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb (1618-1707) was the Mughal Emperor of India from 1658 to 1707. His long wars depleted the empire financially and militarily. In his time, the role of European

trading companies like the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in India's coastal trade was growing.

vi. The Kangxi Emperor



The Kangxi Emperor (1654-1722) was an emperor of the Qing dynasty in China. He restricted foreign contacts, including limited European trade activity. His rule was considered a golden age of growth and stability in China.

vii. Zheng Jing

Zheng Jing (1642-1681) was the ruler of the Kingdom of Tungning in Taiwan. He maintained maritime trade networks, including indirect contacts with European traders like the VOC.

viii. King Narai

King Narai (1632-1688) was the King of Ayutthaya from 1656 to 1688. He expanded foreign diplomacy and trade, especially with European powers like France and the Dutch East India Company (VOC). But he later faced internal conflicts over growing European presence.

ix. Rajasinha II

Rajasinha II (1608-1687) was the King of the Kingdom of Kandy in Sri Lanka. He allied himself with the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to expel the Portuguese from the coast. After the Portuguese defeat, tensions between Kandy and the VOC over control of trade developed.

8. Geopolitics and Warfare Doctrines

The Company did not stumble into empire and there were no accidents in the Company's strategy of building fortresses, monopolies and sovereigns. The Company's doctrine of trade had a clear, if not always well-articulated, plan that set it apart from all other trading companies. This doctrine was founded on one lesson first learned by the Company's founders, and not abandoned: without a sovereign to enforce contracts and to keep out other traders over great distances in the Asian maritime economy, trade and violence were inseparable. Trade required security. Security required force. Force required territory. Territory led to profits to buy more force. It was a virtuous circle, and the VOC followed that with a consistency that its rivals - who were wedded to the older notion that war and commerce were separate activities that required different institutions - did not. The VOC's ideas were geographical. In the 17th century Asian ocean trade flowed along a relatively small number of channels, straits and ports - the Strait of Malacca (between Malaysia and Sumatra), the Sunda Strait (between the islands of Java and Sumatra), the entrance to the Banda Sea, the Strait of Hormuz leading to the Persian Gulf, the waters around Ceylon that controlled the Bay of Bengal. Whoever controlled these channels controlled the commerce through them and the taxes, exclusivity and show-off that flows from there. So the empire building strategy for the VOC was not to conquer lands, but secure garrisons in Asia. Batavia in the Sunda Strait. Malacca (seized from the Portuguese in 1641), in the Strait of Malacca. Colombo and the Ceylon coast, its spices and its access to the Bay of Bengal. Cape Town, gateway to Asia from Europe. These were sites picked not for their land but for their waters. This location called for a particular military skill. The VOC was a maritime power - its weapons of offence and defence were its armed ships and men-of-war, which allowed the Company the ability to threaten and fire lightning-bolt like attacks over vast distances in a way that could only be matched by an Asian power with a navy as powerful. It was a naval power and so the Company could blockade a coastal town, disrupt its trade, protect its vessels and to punish resistance with speed and efficiency that seemed almost miraculous at times, even to the most recalcitrant. It was a military power, as well as commercial - the same vessels which brought cloves and nutmeg to Amsterdam could, when needed, land cannon at the doorstep of a recalcitrant sultan that would blast his officials to smithereens. But the VOC was never simply a naval force, and the military strategy was a concoction of the problems of colonialism, rather than a straightforward European affair. The Company could keep large standing armies in Asia - a multi-ethnic army of Dutch, German and Scandinavian mercenaries, freed slaves (the Mardijkers) and increasingly professional Asian troops from those regions that were dependent on a Company hegemony to maintain their political position. They were required both for the spectacular operations - the siege of Colombo, the attack on Banda, the potential threat posed by Makassar - but also for the more mundane tasks of manning the forts, suppressing smugglers, regulating the exercise of the Company's monopoly rights and ensuring that the threat of the stick was applied consistently enough to ensure that its commercial arrangements did not collapse into noncompliance once the VOC was no longer there to enforce them.

The Company's foreign policy in dealing with Asian rulers was based on a doctrine of escalation that began with the threat of military action and could culminate in armed conflict. The Company liked, when possible, to fulfil its commercial goals through treaties that guaranteed exclusive trading agreements, the establishment of VOC factors in a sovereign's port and a guarantee of monopoly rights in return for military support, or the threat of war. These treaties were cheap in blood and money, and enabled the Company to create commercial empires that exceeded its ability to occupy and manage. When treaties were ineffective - when the sovereign did not ratify treaties, when interlopers found shelter in the independent cities, when the cost of the commercial war was lower than the revenues obtained in defying the VOC - a doctrine of embargo, punitive bombardments and, ultimately, battles followed that aimed to turn reluctant treaty partners into VOC colonies. It is with this doctrine in mind that we should view Makassar in 1666. The defiance of the VOC's monopolies by Sultan Hasanuddin is not, strategically speaking, a small inconvenience to be endured or a weapon to be broken. It is a threat to the entire system of enforcement of the monopolies, it is a signifier, seen by all other Asian rulers and European adventurers, that the Company is not inevitable. Every season that the port of Makassar is open is a season that the credibility of the VOC system of coercion is undermined. So, the Heeren XVII need to balance the short term costs of war with the long term costs of blackening its reputation.Chokepoint control, escalation of coercion and credible power-projection through deterrent threat are not only historical theories that have produced the VOC's empire they are perpetual strategic realities. A deterrent empire needs to be credible. The proof, in 1666.

9. Summarized Timeline of Events

Timeline of Events in Brief

- 1595–1601 The Voorcompagnieën

Trading groups send unregulated voyages to Asia, independent of the Portuguese. Rival Dutch companies compete against each other in Asia, decimating profits and forcing consolidation. In 1601, five Dutch ships repulse 28 Portuguese vessels seeking to regain Bantam - broadcasting the Republic's arrival to all the powers of Asia.

- 1602 VOC is established

On March 20, the States-General amalgamates the rival voorcompagnieën into the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), endowing it with a 21-year monopoly on the Dutch spice trade beyond the Cape of Good Hope, as well as the unheard-of rights to make war, establish treaties and administer territories. The VOC, with a capital of more than six million guilders, is the world's first corporate empire.

- 1605 Seizure of Amboyna

Dutch Admiral Steven van der Hagen takes the Portuguese fort on Amboyna without bloodshed. The Treaty of Amboyna awards the VOC exclusive spice rights on the island and sets the precedent for all future colonial expansion - monopolistic trade rights backed up by territorial conquest.

- 1609 Bank of Amsterdam Created

The Amsterdamsche Wisselbank was founded, which later made substantial loans to both Amsterdam and the VOC. It helps cement Amsterdam's status as the world's financial capital and offers the infrastructure on which the Company's world trade will be built.

- 1619 Founding of Batavia

Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen captures and destroys the Javanese trading port of Jayakarta, building a fortified settlement in its place, resembling Amsterdam. Renamed Batavia, it is the permanent seat of the VOC's Asian empire - the seat of power overlooking the Sunda Strait, and commanding the eastern archipelago.

- 1621 Banda Massacre and Nutmeg Monopoly

With permission from the Heeren XVII, Coen launches a genocide in the Banda Islands. He massacres, enslaves and exiles 15,000 people, leaving only around 1,000 alive. The islands are re-established as nutmeg plantations, staffed by slaves brought from abroad, and become the sole source of nutmeg in the world. The Dutch also attack the English outpost on Rhun, removing the final English presence in the spice islands.

- 1623 The Amboyna Massacre

VOC Governor Herman van Speult has ten English merchants, nine Japanese mercenaries and one Portuguese trader tortured to death on suspicion of conspiracy. The killings pollute Anglo-Dutch relations with a sore spot that emerges in every later diplomatic dispute between the two countries.

- 1637 Peak Dividend

The VOC pays a dividend of 62.5 percent - its highest ever - and the peak of the boom years' optimism and the spice trade's profitability.

- 1641 Capture of Malacca

In a siege lasting ten years, the VOC's army captured Malacca from the Portuguese with the support of the Sultanate of Johor. The Company now controls the strait that dominates the main shipping route between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, completing its Asian chokepoint ring.

- 1648 Peace of Westphalia

The Dutch Republic declares peace with Spain after the Eighty Years' War. The Republic is Europe's most powerful nation, its independence acknowledged and its economy at the height of its glory.

- 1652 Cape Colony Founded

The Dutch explorer Jan van Riebeeck lands at Cape of Good Hope, tasked with setting up a victualling station for VOC ships. Contrary to his orders, the colony quickly evolves from a logistical base to a fledgling colony with far-flung implications which only become more complicated each year.

- 1652–1654 First Anglo-Dutch War

The English Navigation Act of 1651 and a clash between Admiral Tromp and an English fleet sparked the first open conflict between the two maritime powers. Admiral Tromp is killed at the Battle of Scheveningen. The war ended with the Treaty of Westminster in 1654, with England taking 1,200-1,500 Dutch merchant ships. The competition for commerce continues.

- 1656-1657 Siege of Colombo and the Portuguese expelled from Ceylon

VOC, in alliance with the Kingdom of Kandy, defeats the Portuguese on Ceylon, giving the Company complete control of the world's best cinnamon. The Kandy alliance, however, immediately creates more complex obligations than the treaty drafters envisaged.

- 1662 Fall of Fort Zeelandia, Loss of Formosa

Chinese general Zheng Chenggong ("Koxinga") sails for Formosa with a fleet of several hundred junks and surrounds Fort Zeelandia. The Batavian relief fleet is too small, and Governor Coyett retreats in February. The VOC is driven from Formosa - its most important military failure - and the lucrative silk trade with China collapses.

- 1663–1664 English Provocations

The English Royal African Company attacks VOC trading posts in West Africa and English troops capture the North American colony of New Netherland, renaming the capital New York. These calculated provocations make a return of open warfare inevitable.

- 1665 Second Anglo-Dutch War begins

The war was formally declared on March 4. England achieves an early success in the Battle of Lowestoft, and its victory threatens the VOC's operations in the Atlantic, as well as straining the Company's finances.

- June 1666 The Four Day's Battle

The Dutch fleet, under the command of Admiral Michiel de Ruyter, fights the longest sea battle ever in a decisive victory. The English fleet is shattered. The balance of the war has shifted in favour of the Republic - but it is not over, and the question of how to move forward is on the agenda for Heeren XVII.

(Committee will start in 1666 however exact month and day will be given in the committee)

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