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CALVERT HALL COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE



Historical Crisis: *The Texas Revolution*

Introduction: Historical Crisis - The Texas Revolution

- Mexican independence from Spain in 1821 marked a pivotal moment in history, leading to the establishment of Mexico as a sovereign nation. The region of Texas, under Mexican rule, witnessed an influx of American settlers, drawn by promises of land and economic opportunities. These American settlers are often referred to as Texans.
- During this time of the 1820's, Mexican owned Texas was sparsely populated. Wanting to stake their claim over this territory, the newly found Mexican government offered free or cheap land in exchange for some basic requests including: 1. become a Mexican citizen, 2. learn Spanish, 3. convert to Catholicism, and 4. most importantly to not bring slavery into Mexico. These Texans led by important figures like Samuel Houston and Stephen F. Austin brought American citizens into Mexican owned Texas to receive cheap or free land.
- What began as a plan to grow the population of Mexican owned Texas began to backfire as Texan settlers did not fulfill their part of the agreement, behaving more like American citizens by speaking English, maintaining their protestant ways, establishing trade and diplomatic relations with the United States, and bringing their slaves into Texas which had been outlawed by the Mexican government. Tensions between Texans and the Mexican government began to mount as the Mexican government started the process of gaining control and order over Texas. This brought the Texans into revolt, declaring independence, fighting a war, their independence recognized, and eventually their annexation into the United States.
- This Historical Crisis takes place at the advent of Texas' declaration of Independence. The future and fate of Texas is in the hands of the members of this committee including Americans, Mexicans, Texans, and Native Americans.

Background Information:

- **Mexico Prior to European Arrival**
 - o Before the arrival of the Spanish, the territory of modern-day Mexico was inhabited by diverse indigenous civilizations, each with their own cultural, social, and political structures. These civilizations included the Olmec, Maya, Zapotec, Mixtec, and most predominately the Aztecs. The Aztec Empire, or Mexica Empire, rose to prominence in the 14th century. They established their capital, Tenochtitlan (present-day Mexico City), on an island in Lake Texcoco. The Aztecs built an advanced society with complex social structures, impressive architecture, and an intricate system of tribute collection from conquered territories.
 - o The arrival of the Spanish in the early 16th century, led by Hernán Cortés, marked a profound and disruptive period in Mexican history, resulting in the eventual conquest of the Aztec Empire and the imposition of Spanish colonial rule.
- **Spanish Colonialism**
 - o After defeating the Aztec Empire, the Spanish established New Spain, a vast colony encompassing most of present-day Mexico. They imposed their governance, religion (mainly Catholicism), and culture upon the indigenous populations. Spanish colonists exploited the land and resources, introducing new crops, animals, and technologies. They established haciendas, large estates where indigenous people often worked under harsh conditions. The encomienda system was implemented, granting land and indigenous labor to Spanish settlers in exchange for

their supposed responsibility to Christianize and protect the indigenous population. However, this system often led to exploitation and abuse.

- The Spanish hierarchy placed peninsulares (those born in Spain) at the top, followed by criollos (those of Spanish descent born in the colony), mestizos (people of mixed Spanish and indigenous heritage), and indigenous populations at the bottom. The imposition of Spanish language, religion, and culture gradually mixed with indigenous traditions, creating a unique blend of cultures that forms the basis of modern-day Mexican identity.

- **Mexican Revolution and Independence**

- The struggle for independence from Spanish colonial rule began in the early 19th century and culminated in Mexico's declaration of independence on September 16, 1810.
- The catalyst for independence came with the Grito de Dolores (Cry of Dolores) on September 16, 1810, led by Miguel Hidalgo, a Catholic priest. Hidalgo's impassioned call for rebellion against Spanish rule ignited a popular uprising among Mexicans, primarily driven by grievances against Spanish oppression, social inequality, and desire for autonomy.
- Hidalgo's movement attracted a diverse array of supporters, including indigenous groups, mestizos, and criollos, although the unity among these factions was fragile. Despite initial successes and the capture of several cities, Hidalgo's forces faced setbacks, and he was captured and executed in 1811.
- Following Hidalgo's death, the leadership of the independence movement shifted to figures like José María Morelos and Vicente Guerrero. Morelos led a resilient campaign, articulating demands for social justice, land reforms, and constitutional guarantees. However, despite significant military victories, Morelos was captured and executed in 1815.
- The struggle for independence continued under the leadership of various insurgent leaders, among whom was Agustín de Iturbide, a former royalist officer who eventually switched sides to support independence. Iturbide's Plan of Iguala in 1821 sought to unite various factions under three guiding principles: independence, equality, and Catholicism.
- Iturbide's forces gained momentum and support, leading to the signing of the Treaty of Córdoba in August 1821, which recognized Mexico's independence. On September 27, 1821, the Army of the Three Guarantees marched into Mexico City, effectively ending three centuries of Spanish colonial rule. Mexico officially declared its independence and became a sovereign nation on September 28, 1821. However, the years following independence were marked by political instability, struggles for power, and attempts to define a new national identity amid a diverse population.

- **Governments of Mexico Prior to Centralist Republic**

- **First Mexican Empire (1821 – 1823)**
 - Following Mexico's declaration of independence from Spain in 1821, the country entered a brief phase known as the First Mexican Empire. This period was characterized by the establishment of a monarchy under Emperor Agustín de Iturbide.

- Agustín de Iturbide, a former royalist officer who switched sides to support Mexican independence, played a crucial role in the country's liberation. He became a popular figure and, backed by various factions, including conservatives and liberals, proclaimed himself Emperor Agustín I in May 1822.
- **Monarchy of Agustín de Iturbide (1822 – 1823)**
 - Iturbide's reign was short-lived and faced challenges from the start. His government struggled to address economic issues, regional conflicts, and disagreements between different political factions. There were concerns about the concentration of power and the establishment of a monarchy in a newly independent Mexico. Amid growing discontent and opposition to his rule, Iturbide faced pressure to abdicate the throne. In 1823, facing the threat of a revolt, he voluntarily abdicated and went into exile.
- **Provisional Government (1823 – 1824)**
 - The Provisional Government in Mexican history refers to a transitional government established after Mexico gained independence from Spain.
 - The Provisional Government was formed in 1823, following the collapse of the First Mexican Empire under Emperor Agustín de Iturbide. It was an interim administration that paved the way for the establishment of the First Mexican Republic.
 - This government played a critical role in shaping Mexico's early post-independence period. It sought to establish a republican form of government and lay down the foundations for a new constitution that would define the nation's political structure, rights, and governance.
 - The Provisional Government faced numerous challenges, including regional divisions, political instability, and differing visions for Mexico's future among various factions. Despite these challenges, it successfully transitioned the country towards a more democratic system by convening the Constitutional Congress in 1823.
- **First Federal Republic (1824 – 1835)**
 - The First Federal Republic of Mexico was established following the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of the United Mexican States in 1824. This marked Mexico's transition from a monarchy (the short-lived First Mexican Empire under Emperor Agustín de Iturbide) to a federal republic.
 - The Federal Constitution of 1824 established a decentralized system of government, dividing power between the central government and individual states. It created a bicameral legislature, consisting of a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies, and defined the roles and responsibilities of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.
 - Mexico was divided into states with their own governments, allowing for a degree of autonomy while being part of the larger federal structure. This system aimed to balance the interests of various regions and promote a sense of unity among the diverse populations within the country.
 - However, the First Federal Republic faced significant challenges and internal strife. Political instability, conflicts between centralists and federalists, economic issues, and tensions between different regions led to frequent changes in government and a lack of stability. The central government struggled to assert its authority over the states, and disagreements over the balance of power between the federal and state governments contributed to ongoing political turmoil. This instability ultimately led to the dissolution of the First Federal Republic and the emergence of subsequent periods of centralized rule and political upheaval in Mexican history.

- **Centralist Republic and the Rule of Antonio Lopez De Santa Anna (1835 – 1846)**
 - The Centralist Republic, led by Antonio López de Santa Anna, centralized power in Mexico's federal government, reducing state autonomy. Santa Anna's rule favored a strong central authority but sparked opposition and instability due to his authoritarian approach, leading to ongoing conflicts between centralists and federalists.

- **Situation in Texas**
 - Tensions brewed between the Mexican government and the Anglo-American settlers, primarily due to cultural and political differences, including disputes over land titles, slavery, and the administration's centralist policies. Dissatisfaction among the Texians, as the settlers came to be known, intensified as their demands for greater autonomy and local governance clashed with Mexico City's attempts to exert authority over the region.
 - During this time of the 1820's, Mexican owned Texas was sparsely populated. Wanting to stake their claim over this territory, the newly found Mexican government offered free or cheap land in exchange for some basic requests including: 1. become a Mexican citizen, 2. learn Spanish, 3. convert to Catholicism, and 4. most importantly to not bring slavery into Mexico. These Texans led by important figures like Samuel Houston and Stephen F. Austin brought American citizens into Mexican owned Texas to receive cheap or free land.
 - What began as a plan to grow the population of Mexican owned test began to backfire as Texan settlers did not fulfill their part of the agreement, behaving more like American citizens by speaking English, maintaining their protestant ways, establishing trade and diplomatic relations with the United States, and bringing their slaves into Texas which had been outlawed by the Mexican government. Tensions between Texans and the Mexican government began to mount as the Mexican government started the process of gaining control and order over Texas.
 - The eruption of the Texas Revolution in 1835 was triggered by a series of events, including the Battle of Gonzales, where Texian rebels resisted Mexican attempts to seize a cannon—a symbol of defiance. This escalated into armed conflict, leading to the siege of the Alamo in early 1836, where a small group of Texian defenders, including iconic figures like Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie, valiantly fought against overwhelming Mexican forces.
 - The declaration of Texas' independence on March 2, 1836, culminated in the formation of the Republic of Texas. However, this newfound independence was hard-fought and came at a high cost, notably witnessed in the tragic outcome of the Battle of the Alamo and the subsequent Battle of San Jacinto.

Questions to Consider:

- Should Texas be recognized as an independent nation?
 - Controlled by Mexico? The United States? Other?
- Who does Texas rightfully belong too?
 - Native Americans, Spanish, Mexico, Texas, United States
- Is the partition of Mexico a potential solution to this conflict?
- Is war imminent between the United States and Mexico, if Texas is annexed by the United States?
- Should slavery be allowed in Mexico?

Roles/Positions:

- **The Texans**
 - *Stephen F. Austin*

- Commander of Texan Military Forces
- One of the original settlers of Texas
- All ways supported compromise with Mexico until now.
- Anti-slavery but believed it was beneficial in the short term.
- ***Samuel Houston***
 - General politician
 - Ex-governor of Tennessee
 - Longtime friend and supporter of Andrew Jackson
 - Grew up among natives and has sympathy for them.
 - Moderately Anti-slavery despite owning slaves.
- ***David G. Burnet***
 - President of Texas
 - Aggressively pro independence
 - Wants to secure as much land for colonization regardless of whether natives claim said land.
 - Pro slavery
- ***Davy Crockett***
 - Legendary frontiersman, scout, politician
 - Longtime Political Enemy of Andrew Jackson
 - Strongly opposed the deportation of native Americans.
 - Supported political polices that would help poor farmers.
- ***James Bowie***
 - Commander of the Texas rangers who are supposed to protect Texas from native raids.
 - Known as legendary frontiers man and criminal even before arriving in Texas.
 - Greedy for gold, land, and glory
- ***Juan Seguin***
 - A wealthy Tejano and early supporter of the revolution
 - Competent general
 - Wants an independent Texas with equal rights for Tejanos and Anglos
 - Didn't fully trust Anglos and was willing to work with Mexicans to save the freedom of Tejanos or himself.

- Mexico

- **Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna**
 - Ex-President of Mexico
 - Skilled General
 - Most powerful man in Mexico
 - Popular with most Mexicans
 - Opportunist who fought both for and against Independence and was originally a liberal federalist before his conservative turn
 - Greedy and corrupt

- **Martin Perfecto de Cos**
 - Mexican General
 - Brother-in-Law of President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna
 - Does not want to make any compromises with the settlers he has grown to hate.
 - Greedy and corrupt

- **Juan Almonte**
 - Mexican General
 - Moderate Liberal
 - Political opportunist

- **Jose de Urrea**
 - Mexican General
 - Liberal
 - Dislikes Santa Ana and wants power for himself.
 - Extremely brutal towards opponents

- **Miguel Barragan**
 - President of Mexico
 - Conservative
 - Sickly

- **Lorenzo de Zavala**
 - Vice president of Texas
 - Former liberal Mexican politician
 - Established a colony in Texas and helped write the Mexican Constitution in 1824.
 - Exiled to Texas by political rival Santa Ana
 - Has some interest in returning to Mexico and restoring the 1824 constitution.
 - Anti-slavery

- **United States**

- **Andrew Jackson**
 - President of USA
 - Democrat
 - Strong supporter of annexing Texas
 - Pro slavery but sees the need for compromise.

- **John C. Calhoun**
 - Vice President of the United States
 - Democrat
 - Aggressively pro slavery
 - Willing to start a civil war over slavery.

- **James K. Polk**
 - Speaker of the House

- **Daniel Webster**
 - Anti-slavery Senator from Massachusetts
 - Whig
 - Does not want to annex Texas as it would lead to more pro slavery senators as Texas is pro slavery.

- **Henry Clay**
 - The Great Compromiser
 - Senate leader
 - Whig
 - Wants to maintain the balance between slave states and free states.
 - Supports manifest destiny.
 - Thinks Andrew Jackson has too much power.

- **John Quincy Adams**
 - Ex-president
 - Congressional leader
 - Whig
 - Anti-war
 - Anti-slavery
 - Opposes annexing Texas.

- **Native Americans**

- **Iron Jacket Chief of the Comanche**
 - Comanche Chief
 - Wore chain mail armor which led to many believing he was immune to bullets.
 - Led raids deep into Mexico and Texas
 - Made use of western weaponry and native tactics

- **Buffalo Hump**
 - Comanche Chief
 - Led raids into Mexico, Texas, and other native tribes.
 - Willing to negotiate with Texas.
 - Wants to ensure the safety and freedom of all Comanche regardless of whether they live in Texas, Mexico, or the Comanchero.