

**Operation Tiderace, 1945**  
**Chair: Ángela Sophia Pérez**



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# Welcome to Operation Tiderace, 1945,

Dear Delegates,

Hello and welcome to YMUN Singapore 2024! My name is Ángela Sophia Pérez and I will be your Chair for Operation Tiderace, 1945.

I am a senior Political Science major at Yale from Caguas, Puerto Rico. After college, I plan to pursue a career in journalism. During my time at Yale, I have been involved in the Yale Daily News, the Yale Journalism Initiative, and completed various reporting fellowships during the summers. I am currently interning at NBCU in New York City as I complete my degree in order to learn more about broadcast journalism. I have competed in Model United Nations since high school and am also on the competitive Model United Nations team at Yale. Academically, I am interested in Iberoamerican politics and history, so this committee is also a fun experience for me to learn more about history in other regions of the world. For fun, I enjoy traveling, reading, writing, and photography.

Our committee – Operation Tiderace, 1945 – will focused on the British plan to reacquire Singapore following the departure and surrender of the Japanese in 1945. Operation Tiderace was conducted in time with Operation Zipper, another British plan to take Port Swettenham or Port Dickson, Malaya in order to strengthen their attempt to retake Singapore. The renewed presence of the British in Asia would have broader geopolitical implications for the region. I'm excited for this committee to be a space to discuss the intersection of strategy, local politics, and colonialism.



This will be my last time chairing a Model United Nations committee, and I'm extremely excited to hear your creative and well-researched ideas. Please feel free to email me with any questions you may have about committee or the topic guide: [angela.perez@yale.edu](mailto:angela.perez@yale.edu).

My hope for this committee is that you will come ready to debate and negotiate with each other in order to arrive at realistic strategies and plans about the topic at hand. I also hope that this conference is a place where you will be able to gain confidence in your public speaking skills and are able to learn more about MUN. Committee is not a place where disrespect will be tolerated in the name of debate. I'm looking forward to seeing what you all bring to the table.

Welcome to YMUN Singapore 2024!

Sincerely,

Ángela Sophia Pérez

Chair of Operation Tiderace, 1945.

Director



# History

Operation Tiderace was a military operation undertaken by the British Allied forces during the closing stages of World War II in 1945. The operation sought the liberation of Singapore, which had fallen under Japanese control during the war. As part of the broader South-East Asian theatre, Operation Tiderace marked the return of British imperial forces to reclaim territories that had been lost in the early years of the conflict.

The operation was planned soon after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945. By late August, the Allied forces expected a Japanese surrender and sought to reclaim control of their imperial holdings in Southeast Asia. Japanese military stationed in Japan was surprised by Japan's defeat and claimed they would be fighting to the death and refused to surrender.<sup>1</sup> General Saishiro Itagaki, the Japanese commander in Singapore, flew to Saigon to meet with Field Marshal Count Terauchi, the Commander of the Japanese Southern Army. After speaking to him, Itagaki sent his surrender to Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, the Supreme Commander of the South East Asia Command. General Itagaki and General Mountbatten met aboard the HMS *Sussex* in Keppel Harbour to negotiate the terms of surrender.

The operation not only marked the end of Japanese occupation in the region but also symbolized the re-establishment of British control in Southeast Asia. The events of Operation Tiderace played a pivotal role in shaping the post-war geopolitical landscape in the Asia-Pacific region.

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<sup>1</sup> The Sunday Times. "The Real Japanese Surrender." *The Sunday Times*, 4 Sept. 2005, [https://wayback.archive-it.org/all/20080119210334/http://staff.science.nus.edu.sg/~sivasothi/blog/pdf/jap\\_surrender-st04sep2005.pdf](https://wayback.archive-it.org/all/20080119210334/http://staff.science.nus.edu.sg/~sivasothi/blog/pdf/jap_surrender-st04sep2005.pdf).



# Committee Structure

This is a crisis committee, meaning that you will have the opportunity to react to unprecedented events and collaborate with each other to develop solutions and proposals for the issue. This committee will be running as a simpler version of the traditional MUN system. Given our smaller dias size, I have decided to limit crisis notes to [portfolio powers](#).

A portfolio power usually comes in the form of a folded paper and includes a brief list of actionable items that your delegation wants to enact. It's similar to a directive, but simpler. You may send portfolio powers alone or in conjunction with another delegation (which I encourage, as it shows your collaboration and allows you to consolidate powers). You can also denote the portfolio powers as public or private to determine whether we share who was behind the note's action with the committee or not. These actions must be within your realm of power or jurisdiction as a delegation.

I will be paying attention to both your front-room debate and the quality, realism, and creativity of your plans, both in portfolio powers and in debate. I also encourage you to use your portfolio powers wisely and seek to impact the course of committee through your actions.

Please feel free to message me if you have any questions about this format, but understand that many of us will be learning as we go! During committee, we may adapt based on whatever works best for you all. I want to emphasize that this committee is to have fun and lively debate, and that this structure is so you can focus on being in the room and working together.



# Introduction

This committee will take place on Sept. 4, 1945, aboard the HMS *Sussex*, where the delegates – leading military figures of the involved nations – will deliberate upon the terms of surrender of the Japanese and the reoccupation of Singapore by the British. Many factors can inhibit a peaceful surrender: the British expansion into the region, the tentative surrender of the Japanese, the motivations of Singaporean military leaders. Can a peaceful surrender be achieved? How will the future of the Southeast-Asian theatre be shaped by the decisions made here?

## History

### *Early History*

Singapore's history dates back to the 14th century when it was known as Temasek or Tumasik, from the Javanese word for “sea.” Even before this, during the 1000s and 1200s, it was inhabited by seafarers from all over the world, including fishermen and pirates.<sup>2</sup> The island’s strategic location made it an ideal trading post, and it remained so for centuries. In 1819, Sir Stamford Raffles of the British East India Company arrived on the island, claiming it for himself and designating a trading post for the company.

In 1822, Raffles established the *Raffles Town Plan*, establishing various districts in the city and dividing the residential areas ethnically – making a Chinatown and establishing Kampong Glam, for Muslims and ethnic Arabs.<sup>3</sup> The multicultural and multiracial character of Singapore has been characteristic of its development and citizenry since its early years.

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<sup>2</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Singapore - British Colony, Trade Hub, Modern City | Britannica.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Singapore/History>. Accessed 16 Jan. 2024.

<sup>3</sup> “Singapore in the Spotlight.” *The Telegraph*, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/discover-singapore/history-timeline/>. Accessed 16 Jan. 2024.



A treaty between the British and the Dutch in 1824 left both Malaya and Singapore under British dominion. Soon after, the island became part of the British Straits Settlements – a British colony under the British East India Company on the Strait of Malacca that included Penang, Singapore, Malacca, and Labuan.<sup>4</sup> Its place as an essential port was challenged throughout the 1800s by the development of Hong Kong by the British, France’s development of Saigon and Naiphong, and Dutch ports in present-day Indonesia.

Nonetheless, Singapore continued to grow and hold its place as one of the most important trading ports in the world. The Suez Canal’s opening in 1869 coupled with the island’s importance to the trading of natural rubber and tin contributed to its growth and made it an essential port in the region. Trade also increased with the advent of steamships, which made trading faster and made up 80% of trade in the Singapore Harbour by 1880. By that same year, more than 1.5 million tons of goods passed through the island annually.<sup>5</sup> During this time, local governments also invested money and men into tackling piracy in the nearby waters, particularly in fear of the Illanun of the Phillipines and northern Borneo, with raided, stole, and kidnapped on the seas. By the late 1860s, the patrols were largely successful and the numbers decreased.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, multiculturalism and multiracialism have been essential parts of Singapore’s history and identity. By the mid-1800s, there were over twenty British merchant houses on the island, and many other European ones. There were also six Jewish, five Chinese, five Arab, two Armenian, one American, and one Indian merchant houses in the island’s commercial square, each with its own pier and banks, auction houses, and various other

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<sup>4</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Straits Settlements | Map, History, & Facts | Britannica.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Straits-Settlements>. Accessed 16 Jan. 2024.

<sup>5</sup> George P. Landow. “Singapore Harbor from Its Founding to the Present: A Brief Chronology.” *The Literature, Culture, and Society of Singapore*, 12 Aug. 2006, <https://web.archive.org/web/20060812003115/http://www.scholars.nus.edu.sg/post/singapore/economics/harborchron.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Leitch Lepoer, editor. *Singapore: A Country Study*. 1989, <https://countrystudies.us/singapore/>.





amenities.<sup>7</sup> The island continued to develop and its population to grow in time with its prosperity. More laborers and businessmen arrived to the island, growing Singapore's various ethnic communities and diversifying its citizenry. The largest group was the Chinese followed by the Malays, until 1860. After this year, Indians became the second largest group. Chinese businessmen often worked as middlemen for trades, using their knowledge of various languages on the island to help negotiate and settle deals and disputes between traders.

Around this time, the island was a chaotic place. Given the primarily male population, most of whom were both uneducated and transitory, there was a culture of vice on the island. Chinese criminal secret societies were rampant, with fights between different groups leading to confrontations and deaths. There was also prostitution, drug use, and gambling all over the island.

### ***Battle of Singapore***

The Battle of Singapore, fought from February 8 to February 15, 1942, during World War II marks the fall of the British stronghold to Japanese forces. Singapore, considered an impregnable fortress due to its formidable defenses and strong British presence, fell swiftly in what would become one of the largest surrenders of British-led forces in history.

The Japanese invasion of Malaya and subsequent advance towards Singapore caught the Allied forces off guard. Over weeks, Japan encroached on Singapore, entering Malaya and nearby islands gradually. By December 30, 1941, Singapore was under martial law as the Japanese continued to expand their holdings and attack nearby islands and land. On February 8, 1942, the Japanese set foot on Singapore, entering through the northwest.

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<sup>7</sup> Barbara Leitch Lepoer, editor. *Singapore: A Country Study*. 1989, <https://countrystudies.us/singapore/>.



On February 15, the British surrendered after days of fighting throughout the island. The lack of adequate supplies, the overwhelming strength of the Japanese forces, and the exhaustion of the Allied troops led to the decision to surrender. The British assumed that nobody would enter through land or the north to attack Singapore, and erroneously centered their defenses around guarding the port and the north. Lieutenant-General Arthur Percival, the British commander, formally surrendered to General Tomoyuki Yamashita of the Imperial Japanese Army on February 15, 1942. The fall of Singapore had far-reaching consequences, as it not only marked a significant victory for Japan but also shattered the perception of British invincibility in the Far East.

The impact of the Battle of Singapore reverberated beyond the military sphere. The loss dealt a severe blow to British prestige – it remains the largest British surrender in history – and the captured troops endured harsh conditions as prisoners of war. The event triggered a reevaluation of colonial defense strategies and had lasting implications for the geopolitical landscape of Southeast Asia.

### ***Singapore during the occupation***

The Japanese occupation of Singapore, lasting from February 15, 1942, to September 12, 1945, brought significant changes to the lives of the local population and marked a challenging period in the island's history. The occupation was characterized by strict military rule, economic exploitation, and the imposition of Japanese cultural values. Upon their occupation, the Japanese military, led by the Imperial Japanese Army, implemented a regime that aimed to assert control and influence over all aspects of Singaporean society. They renamed the island Shonan and implemented repressive policies that curbed personal freedoms, such as curfews, censored



media, and limited political activities.<sup>8</sup> The Japanese authorities were particularly ruthless in suppressing dissent, leading to the persecution of those perceived as resistance sympathizers.

Economically, the Japanese exploited Singapore's resources for their war effort. The island served as a crucial base for the Japanese military, and its industries were repurposed to support their needs. Forced labor was widespread, with many civilians subjected to arduous working conditions. The occupation also led to a shortage of essential goods, contributing to a decline in living standards for the local population.

Culturally, the Japanese sought to instill their values and beliefs in the occupied territories. This included the promotion of the Japanese language, education system, and cultural practices. The imposition of these cultural elements aimed to assimilate the local population and foster loyalty to the Japanese Empire. This began early after the arrival of the Japanese on the island – by March of 1942, the Japanese began a systematic killing of whatever they perceived as “anti-Japanese” on the island, specifically targeting Singaporean Chinese people.<sup>9</sup> This mass killing became known as the Sook Ching. Military prisoners were treated terribly on the island and many citizens were forced to labor on the Burma-Siam railroad, with many dying due to the arduous conditions.

### ***Operation Zipper***

Operation Zipper was a planned military campaign during World War II that aimed to reoccupy Malaya and Singapore, marking the return of British and Commonwealth forces to territories lost to the Japanese. As the Allies closed in on victory in 1945, the plan for Operation Zipper evolved. The operation was scheduled for late 1945, with British and Indian divisions

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<sup>8</sup> Barbara Leitch Lepoer, editor. *Singapore: A Country Study*. 1989, <https://countrystudies.us/singapore/>.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Leitch Lepoer, editor. *Singapore: A Country Study*. 1989, <https://countrystudies.us/singapore/>.



tasked with landing on the west coast of Malaya, near Port Swettenham, and subsequently advancing towards the capital, Kuala Lumpur. Simultaneously, Australian forces were to land on the northwest coast of Malaya, while British forces were to make an amphibious assault on Phuket Island in Thailand to secure airfields for further operations.<sup>10</sup>

However, the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Japan's subsequent surrender dramatically altered the course of events. The surrender prompted a swift reassessment of military priorities, rendering Operation Zipper unnecessary. The British authorities, aware of the potential cost in terms of lives and resources, decided to cancel the amphibious landings in favor of negotiations with the Japanese for the peaceful reoccupation of Malaya and Singapore.

### ***The Start of Negotiations***

Mountbatten took a risk and sent unarmed ships to Singapore, arriving on Sept. 4.<sup>11</sup> When Emperor Hirohito surrendered, the Japanese forces in Singapore were surprised and unwilling to give in, vouching to fight to the death. General Itagaki flew to Saigon and met with another Japanese leader, Field Marshal Count Terauchi, Commander of the Japanese Army in Southeast Asia, who reiterated the decision to surrender.

By August 20, Itagaki agreed to surrender and on Sept. 4, he boarded the HMS *Sussex* in order to settle the terms of surrender.

### ***Timeline***

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<sup>10</sup> Supplement to the London Gazette. "Modified Operation " Zipper " Goes Forward." *London Gazette*, 19 Apr. 1951, <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/39202/supplement/2157/data.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup>

[https://wayback.archive-it.org/all/20080119210334/http://staff.science.nus.edu.sg/~sivasothi/blog/pdf/jap\\_surrender-st04sep2005.pdf](https://wayback.archive-it.org/all/20080119210334/http://staff.science.nus.edu.sg/~sivasothi/blog/pdf/jap_surrender-st04sep2005.pdf)



1819: British East India Company takes control of Singapore.

1826: Singapore becomes part of the Straits Settlements.

1832: Singapore becomes capital of the Straits Settlements.

1851: Governor-General of India is given control of the island in 1851.

1867: Singapore is made a crown colony under the London Colonial Office.

1842: Hong Kong is given to Britain and becomes a rival port of Singapore.

1869: Suez Canal opens.

1921: Naval base opens on the island.

1922: Singapore becomes the main British naval base in East Asia.

February 8, 1942: Japan invades Singapore and forces the British to surrender.

August 6, 1945: Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Sept. 2, 1945: Japan surrenders WWII.

Sept 4, 1945: HSM *Sussex* negotiations take place.

## Bloc Positions

**UK** – Want to reestablish imperial control over Singapore.

*Lord Louis Mountbatten (UK)*

*Admiral B. Fraser (UK)*

**Japan** – Want to optimize the terms of surrender. The local general is being forced to surrender by his superiors, but soldiers on the ground want to continue fighting.

*Chief of Intelligence and General Saishiro Itagaki (Japan)*

*Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu (Japan)*

*General Yoshijiro Umezumi of the Imperial General Headquarters (Japan)*



*Tomoyuki Yamashita (Japan)*

**Singapore** – Want to be free from Japanese occupation, but some Singaporean leaders and citizens are beginning to wonder whether they want the British to establish control or if they want to be a free nation.

*Journalist Wee Kim Wee (Singapore)*

**Allied Powers** – Want to reestablish imperial control, mitigate Japanese control over the region, and defend their interests abroad in the wake of the war.

*General Douglas MacArthur (US, Allied Powers representative)*

*Admiral C. W. Nimitz (USA)*

*General T.A. Blamey (Australia)*

*Colonel L.M. Cosgrove (Canada)*

*Air Vice-Marshal L. M. Isitt (New Zealand)*

*General Hsu Yung-chang (China)*

*General P. Leclerc (France)*

*Admiral C. E. L. Helfrich (Netherlands)*

*Lieutenant-General K.N. Derevyanko (Russia)*

## Questions to Consider

1. What does your delegation want long-term? Who are they loyal to?
2. What are the factors shaping the conditions of surrender?
3. How can your delegation balance its personal interests with the interests of other nations/leaders?
4. What can inhibit a peaceful surrender?



## Important Resources for Research

1. The Singapore History Wikipedia page is an excellent starting point. It was written citing academic papers and has a lot of useful history and information for you to begin your research.
2. [Barbara Leitch Lepoer's book](#) about Singapore's history is available digitally and is very helpful in understanding specific periods in Singapore's history.
3. [George P. Landow's timeline](#) of the Singaporean Harbour illustrates the economic power and impact of the harbour throughout history.
4. [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#) has a great compilation of information about the island's history that frames Operation Tiderace.
5. [The British Legion's](#) website about their presence in Southeast Asia during the war is very interesting and helpful to understand the military side of the topic.



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