



Rules and Procedures for the State Council of the Russian Empire

Committee Format

1. **Membership:** The representatives to this committee will not be the actual members of the historical Imperial State Council. Rather, they will be the leaders of the major power establishments of the Russian Empire—the Imperial Family, the military, the Church, and the political elite. While these men would likely never have been in the same room discussing policy, they were the Russians with the most influence over the decisions of the Emperor.
2. **The Chair:** The Chair of the committee shall be the Emperor's appointment as Chairman of the State Council. The Chair shall facilitate debate and represent the Emperor in his absence.
3. **The Emperor:** The leader of the Russian Empire and father of the Russian people is His Majesty Nicholas II, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias. All power of the Russian state is vested in his person, as proscribed by the will of God. Unfortunately, matters of state make it impossible for him to be present for all of the Council's deliberations, but the Council and its members are responsible directly to the Emperor. Though the title of the autocrat of Russia has been *Emperor* since Peter the Great, those who are particularly slavophilic may choose to refer to him as *Tsar*.
4. **Time:** This Council will convene first in 1902. At the beginning of each session, the Council will be informed of the date. Time will proceed in approximate real time such that no more than a day of time will pass without prior notice.

General Rules of Council Conduct

1. **Decorum:** Members of the Council are to maintain themselves as befits their high offices and must show due respect to each other.
2. **Attire:** All members of the Council are to dress in Western business attire at all times unless given prior permission by the Chair to do otherwise.
3. **Language:** In honor of the Empress, the working language of the Council will be English. If any other language is used, an accurate translation must be immediately provided.
4. **Imperial Family:** Members of the Imperial Family (those with the titles Emperor, Empress, Grand Duke, or Grand Duchess) are to be treated with particular respect. The Emperor, Empress, and Dowager Empress are to be given especial deference befitting their God-given authority.

5. **Roll Call:** At the beginning of each meeting of the State Council, roll will be taken by the Chair. The session will formally begin whenever the Chair has determined that a quorum has been reached sufficient to address the matters facing the Council. Should any member of the Council arrive late, he may not participate in the Council's deliberations until informing the Chair of his presence.
6. **Equity:** During the time of this simulation, Imperial Russia's elite often shared beliefs that would a century later be considered offensively bigoted, misogynistic, anti-Semitic, and elitist. Though delegates are expected to simulate this era as accurately as possible, which may at times require expressing these sorts of opinions, they are expected to do so as tastefully as possible. Should anybody at any point feel that debate has crossed the line from realistic to indecent, that committee member should immediately notify the Chair, who shall take steps to alleviate that member's concerns.

Rules of Procedure

1. **Chair's Discretion:** As the Emperor's proxy as Chairman of the State Council, the Chair shall have ultimate authority over the Council's rules of procedure and may at any time alter them for the sake of expediency. While any delegate may request that the Chair reverse a decision, it is ultimately the Chair's choice.
2. **Format of Debate:** The default form of debate shall be a moderated caucus. No member may speak without first being recognized by the Chair. While no initial time limit will be imposed, the Chair may ask a Council member to cede the floor if his comments are inappropriate or if his speech has become unnecessarily long.
3. **Points and Motions:** The following points and motions may be made during debate and will be entertained in the order the Chair deems most conducive to debate at the point in time that they are made:
 - a. *Motion to Close the Council Session:* If fewer than 15 minutes remain until the end of the Council's allotted time for a given session, the Chair may entertain a motion to close the session. The Council will be out of session until reconvened by the Chair.
 - b. *Point of Personal Privilege:* This point may be made by a Council member whenever he feels that some external factor is impeding the quality of debate. While this point may interrupt a speaker, it should only do so when it is the speaker who is the subject of the point (e.g., the speaker talking to quietly to be heard).
 - c. *Point of Order:* This point may be made to suggest to the Chair that the rules of procedure have been violated.

- d. *Point of Parliamentary Inquiry*: This point may be made to ask the Chair to clarify the rules of procedure.
 - e. *Motion to Modify the Form of Debate*: This motion may be made whenever the floor is open to change the format of debate. The member making the motion may suggest an unmoderated caucus, a round robin, a speaking time, or any other alteration he feels would improve debate. The Chair may either entertain the motion or declare it dilatory.
 - f. *Motion to Introduce a Document for the Consideration of the Council*: All actions of the Council must ultimately be submitted in writing to the Emperor. This motion, if accepted by the Chair, shall place a given written proposal on the table for consideration by the Council. The Chair may make additional rules regarding such proposals to facilitate debate.
 - g. *Motion to Call the Question*: Whenever the floor is open, any member may motion to vote on any document on the table. The Chair will decide whether or not it would be appropriate to entertain the motion at that time. Voting rules are explained below.
4. **Right of Reply**: If a member of the Council feels that another member has made an inappropriate personal attack against him, he may request a right of reply. The Chair shall decide whether to grant such a right.

Council Actions

1. **Available Actions**: The Council may take any action that would be available to the Imperial Russian government. All actions must be approved by the Emperor, but once adopted by the Emperor are considered the will of the entire Russian state. Individual ministers who challenge such an action will be directly disobeying the orders of the Emperor. Potential actions include, but are not limited to:
 - a. *Diplomatic Communication*: The Council may engage in direct diplomatic communication with foreign governments or entities. A diplomatic communication approved by the entire Council and Emperor shall carry the force of a personal communication from the Emperor on behalf of the Empire.
 - b. *Government Plan of Action*: The Council may also initiate broad plans of action to be undertaken by the Russian state. All affected departments will be assumed to be complying with a Council-adopted government plan of action unless the member responsible for that department explicitly orders his subordinates to disobey the orders of the Council and the Emperor.
 - c. *Military Action*: The Council and the Emperor may set broad strategic military plans and order individual tactical maneuvers. The actual

implementation of such strategy, though, will be led by officers in the field.

- d. *Public Relations*: The Council may decide on a public relations campaign, seeking to influence either domestic or international opinion with press releases and official statements. If endorsed by the Emperor, this program may also include personal letters and speeches by His Majesty.
2. **Adopting a Council Action**: Since all legal power in the Empire resides solely with the Emperor, a government-wide action will require his approval. In order to both simulate this absolute autocracy while leaving the delegates as the primary decision-makers, the following decision process shall be in order:
- a. *Voting*: As explained above, the Council may at any time vote on a document on the table. If the proposal receives a sufficient majority as determined by the Chair, it shall be forwarded to the Emperor with the Council's recommendation.
 - b. *Direct Counsel*: Occasionally, for pressing decisions or when the Council is heavily divided, the Emperor will personally consult with the Council to determine the proper course of action. In such a case, advocates from all sides will be able to address the Emperor during deliberation.
 - c. *Emperor's Decision*: Since the Council represents the Emperor's most trusted advisors, he will almost always be swayed by their counsel. Only in extreme circumstances will the Emperor reject a proposal endorsed by a large majority of the Council or enact a policy supported by only a small minority. Where opinion is nearly evenly divided, the Emperor will pick the policy he sees as most in line with his core personal beliefs: absolute God-sanctioned autocracy, the glory of the Russian Empire, and the well-being of the Russian people.
 - d. *Imperial Family's Veto*: Given the close ties within the Imperial Family, the Emperor's close relatives hold particular sway over affairs of state. Should the representatives of the Imperial Family on the Council come to a consensus in opposition to a plan, it is highly unlikely that the Emperor will endorse it.

Individual Member Actions

1. **Historical Note**: Unlike modern governments where clear bureaucratic hierarchies are established and legal powers are spread throughout government departments, the pre-1905 Imperial Russian government was an absolute autocracy and vested all legal authority in the Emperor. As such, individual ministers, military officers, and court officials often took to acting unilaterally, frequently in conflict with general government aims and policy. We will be simulating this state of affairs on this Council.

2. **Actions of Office:** Any member may use the power of his office to whatever extent he wishes. Without the approval of the entire Council, though, that member will be fully responsible for both the successes and failures of his action. A Council member may even choose to disobey a policy adopted by the Council and the Emperor—but will have to suffer the consequences if such actions are discovered. Of course, success can often make the Emperor forget that his orders were violated. Members may not issue orders to departments not under their control but may author Council plans of actions that affect other departments.
3. **Audiences with the Emperor:** Members of the Council may at any time request an audience with the Emperor in order to sway his opinion or to receive his endorsement for a particular action. The Emperor will decide whether to accept such an audience based on the merit of the request and on his personal relationship with the member making the request. Given the traditional Russian value of kinship, the Emperor will give special consideration to members of the Imperial Family. Council members may also request meeting with other non-present individuals such as the Empress and Dowager Empress. Such requests will be considered as they would be for the Emperor.