



BACKGROUND GUIDE

WAMUNC XXIV

Scottish Independence 2030

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Delegates,

My name is David Sherr. I am a sophomore at the George Washington University majoring in international affairs with minors in political science and geography. I participate in Model United Nations, a variety of other international affairs themed organizations, Chess Club, and Hillel (a Jewish student organization).

I think social sciences are fascinating because while you can study physics, and you can study international affairs, you can't change the laws of physics, but you can change the world of politics. I want to make a difference and to serve the United States government in foreign affairs, maybe as a diplomat, maybe as an intelligence analyst, maybe in uniform.

Model United Nations is a great way to think critically and open your mind to new ideas. Adopting and arguing for positions that we may not hold or feel are important helps us empathize with others and contextualize our own perspectives. I hope that engaging with current events will inspire you to make a positive change in the world in whatever way you think is best.

I want this conference to be a fun, and horizon-broadening experience. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns. My email is dsherr@gwu.edu

Sincerely,

David Sherr

Committee Chair

GW, Class of 2024

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

This committee is the cabinet that is overseeing Scotland's year 2030 independence from the United Kingdom after a referendum and has been charged with writing a new constitution. After the referendum passed, new elections were held and the SNP won big, though there are opposition figures and other parties in play. The committee will pass directives and respond to updates based on the needs of a new state, notably funding (healthcare funding in particular, though not exclusively), defense, and EU/NATO/UN/etc membership. The committee is also expected to work on a proposed constitution. There can be many drafts, but only one will be accepted for a vote at the end of committee. It will consider monarchy vs republic, parliamentary representation, enumerated rights, checks and balances.

All delegates are senior (cabinet secretaries) or junior (ministers) members of the Scottish cabinet.

With such a wide range of issues presented by the drafting of a constitution the committee may address several hot-button issues. Many hot button social issues in the United States rest on constitutional interpretation. Most of these issues are not relevant to contemporary Scottish politics. That said, issues of hate speech and gender identity recognition may come up. All delegates are expected to be respectful towards their fellow delegates and in general.

A large part of Scottish politics centers around the personal followings of certain leaders. Some of these leaders have been accused of sexual harassment and other crimes. In order to avoid personal attacks, making delegates represent figures with which they are uncomfortable, and to focus on the policy aspects, all characters in this committee are fictional. Any similarity to real persons is unintentional.

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Historical Background

During the centuries following the fall of the Roman Empire, Scotland and the rest of the British Isles were converted to Christianity, endured viking raids and suffered internecine conflicts between clans and tribes. Eventually, Kenneth MacAlpin founded the Kingdom of Alba, a predecessor to the Kingdom of Scotland. King David I introduced feudalism and Anglo-Norman customs to Scotland, turning it into a classical medieval state (Baker).

After a succession crisis in 1286, Scottish nobles invited the King of England to arbitrate. He did so, but only after they agreed to English suzerainty (feudal superiority) over Scotland. The King of Scotland did not like this and entered into an anti-English alliance with France. This precipitated a war, made famous by William Wallace. Scotland eventually won de facto independence in 1314 and de jure independence, via papal diplomacy, in 1320. The first Scottish parliament met in 1326; prior meetings had occurred with the first and second estates (clergy and nobility) but without the third estate (burghers). Another Anglo-Scottish war occurred upon the death of the next Scottish King in 1329, ending in 1341 (Baker).

The Stuart Dynasty came to power in 1371. Under the Stuarts, Scotland finished expanding, acquiring the Orkney and Shetland Islands and extending more direct political authority over the highlands and the Western Isles. Universities were established. Protestantism took hold in Scotland, though of a Calvinist (Presbyterian) not Episcopal (Anglican) variety. The Church of Scotland is also known as the Kirk (Baker).

In 1603, James VI of Scotland became James I of England when his first cousin twice removed Elizabeth I died. This created a personal union. Both Scotland and England were independent kingdoms with different parliaments, colonies, and militaries, but they had the same king. England was the more powerful of the two, and came to dominate the relationship. All subsequent kings would rule from London. The publication of the King James Bible and English cultural hegemony would quash Scottish linguistic differences, pushing out minority Brythonic and Gaelic languages and assimilating Scots English speakers into the new standard form (Baker).

The Wars of the Three Kingdoms was an extended period of political chaos and civil war in the British Isles. The main points of contention were the power of parliament and the power of the king to tax, and religious issues. Scottish religion was somewhat similar to the English puritans, but Scotland fought against both the English monarchists and parliamentarians (Baker).

The Glorious Revolution occurred when an unexpected change in the line of succession threatened to enthrone a Catholic dynasty. Nobles in England invited a protestant dutch noble, William of Orange, who was married to Mary of England, to invade and take the throne. He landed with dutch mercenaries and took the throne. William and Mary reigned as co-monarchs of England, Scotland, and Ireland. There was significant support for the dethroned dynasty in Scotland, and even today some support restoration of this dynasty. This is called the Jacobite restoration. Later, a Scottish rebellion in support of this dynasty was quickly crushed (Baker).

Under William and Mary's daughter Anne, the parliaments of England and Scotland passed the 1707 Acts of Union, which ended the independent existence of the Kingdoms and Parliaments of England and Scotland, creating the Kingdom and parliament of the United Kingdom, based in London. Ireland joined the United Kingdom in 1800 (Baker).

Scotland developed as a center of industrialization. The rural highlands were cleared of their inhabitants and turned into large-scale sheep farms. The Scottish clan system was finally broken, just as industrialization ended the last bits of feudalism all over Europe (“The Highland Clearances...”). The lowlands produced textiles, and merchant vessels. Scots, particularly those from the industrialized lowlands became seen as equal to the English and participated in the history of the United Kingdom (BBC, 2014).

In 1979 there was a referendum on whether to reestablish the Scottish parliament, as a “devolved” quasi-federal entity under the United Kingdom. This failed. However, after a second referendum a devolved parliament was established, metonymously referred to by its location, Holyrood. Scottish seats in the British parliament and in its own devolved parliament have traditionally been dominated by the Labor Party. However, since 2011 the Scottish National Party has become dominant, pursuing a pro independence agenda. A referendum on Scottish independence failed in 2014, 55.3% to 44.7% (BBC, 2014). Calls were made for a new referendum after the U.K. as a whole voted to leave the E.U. but Scottish voters were strongly against Brexit (BBC, 2021). A new referendum was authorized in 2029 and Scottish voters chose to leave 65.2% to 37.8%.

Scotland has left the UK, and is currently in a transitional Compact of Free Association with the UK. The compact will be revised in 2035. Scotland has an independent foreign policy, but migration policy, monetary policy, trade policy, and most fiscal policy will remain controlled by the U.K. for the time being. The reasoning is that it will take time for Scotland to establish a separate legal regime for taxation and trade, and to promulgate, should it wish, an independent currency. Scotland’s government is living beyond its means, the national deficit of an independent Scotland would be over 10% of GDP. In 2030, Scotland has a slowly shrinking population of around 5 million. Scotland has crucial military infrastructure for the U.K., U.S. and NATO, the nuclear aspects of which are opposed by locals. Scotland is still a part of all U.K. military institutions, and in case of war or military crisis, will temporarily revert to U.K. control. 40% of Scots have chosen to retain U.K. dual citizenship.

Politically, Scotland is still dominated by the SNP. The SNP created a grand coalition because of the heavy responsibilities of creating a new country; every political party in parliament is represented in the cabinet. That said, the SNP still has a strong majority and can govern on its own if it needs to do so.

Scottish politics have long been left-leaning. Before independence, the largest political issue was independence. Now, politics is refocusing on other issues. In addition to the challenges of forming a new state, these other issues include environmental reform, equity in social policy (notably debates over hate speech laws), and fixing the unsustainably high, or stingily small depending on who you ask, social spending (BBC, 2021).

All members of the cabinet are in safe districts; they are unlikely not to be reelected in new elections. The Westminster system allows parliamentarians to represent any district in an election, so party leaders and cabinet members get the safe districts.

Committee Topics & Possible Solutions

Both of these topics will be navigated simultaneously. Certain issues related to governing Scotland may arise and need immediate resolution, but the committee should also not lose sight of the long term goal of a constitution, either.

New State

Freedom comes with responsibilities. Without the U.K., Scotland will eventually need to take over all government functions. What are the most important freedoms of action to get from a renegotiated CoFA? Scotland is still financially integrated with and dependent on the UK. The U.K. has allowed Scotland to secede, but still has significant leverage. If Scotland wishes to pursue an independent economic policy, for instance joining the E.U. they will have to renegotiate, or potentially unilaterally abrogate, the CoFA. Scotland cannot be truly independent, until the CoFA is ended. But, Scotland *is* dependent, financially and militarily. How will you navigate this transitional arrangement?

Scotland needs more money than it has, particularly to fund healthcare, though many want to use independence to pursue expensive social programs. One option is to exploit North Sea fossil fuel reserves, but this raises sustainability issues and the oil will run out. Scotland has a skilled labor force and can attract investment, but that may be difficult without membership in the E.U., W.T.O. and other organizations.

Cooperation with China is also possible, though fraught. Scotland faces a new Cold War on the geopolitical stage. Many progressives dislike alignment with N.A.T.O. and the United States. In order to get money from the U.K., Scotland might need to make assurances to the U.K. in the security space. The U.K. has no reason to indefinitely support Scotland, so Scotland may need to trade something for money beyond a few years. It could be military basing rights for a fee, reduced sovereignty in exchange for long term funding, or something else entirely.

Constitution

What should the structure of a Scottish government (monarchy vs. republic, parliament vs presidential system)? What powers should be explicitly given to the government? What rights should explicitly be given to the people? Should the constitution even be a single document like the U.S., or should an uncoded constitution

Some constitutions address many topics and can be much longer than the U.S. constitution with which you all may be familiar. Oftentimes, these can be more statements of principle, and include sections on national identity and values, rather than being mere legal documents. However, even if you choose a longer constitution with more specific provisions (a real possibility as many delegates have policy preferences they would like so enshrined) these core principles must be determined.

Bloc Positions

Scottish politics are mostly center-left. The SNP is a left/center-left movement, taking what Americans would call “progressive” stances on gender identity, immigration, equity, and hate speech. However, there is significant dissent within the party, many only supported it as it was the most viable option for Scottish independence. There used to be alternatives, like the party Alba, but they faded. But, now that independence has been (somewhat) achieved, the SNP has lost its *raison d'etre* and many feel less allegiance to the SNP. The SNP needs to stay relevant. The SNP is europhilic (Scottish National Party, 2021).

The Conservative “Tory” party has lost its main cause, union, but will likely continue to represent social and fiscal conservatism, though it contains a populist wing similar to its American counterpart. It is largely eurosceptic. The Tories are the second largest party in the Scottish Parliament (BBC, 2021).

The Green Party and the Liberal Democrat Party have grown close. They are both liberal, support strong efforts on climate change and have acted as coalition partners for the SNP. However, this often leaves them competing for the same voters. One difference is that the liberal democrats oppose some of the progressive social legislation, especially concerning hate speech laws that infringe on freedom of speech. These parties are Europhilic. The libdems used to be unionist but changed their stance after Brexit and the rise in U.K. populism (Scottish Green party, Scottish Liberal Democrats, 2021).

The Labor party is classically center-left. However, they have a large populist streak, and are less amenable to environmental legislation that hurts industry. The party is split on the European question. Labor is also split on independence. Most have acquiesced to the situation, but if a better deal can be gotten for labor and unions with more U.K. support and obligations, they may choose that. Labor is the third largest party (Scottish Labor Party, 2021).

Character List

First Minister, Hailey Angus - SNP

Hailey Angus is the leader of the SNP. She is seen as the leader of independence, an avatar for the nation. She supports independence, in every way. However, she is also pragmatic about the CoFA. Her mythic status can place her above politics, but she is struggling to reconcile internal SNP divisions and keep the unity coalition together.

Deputy First Minister, Nelson Forth - SNP

Nelson Forth is the deputy leader of the SNP. He was a backbencher, but was chosen to appease the more culturally conservative SNP membership and is now their top representative.

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and for the Economy, Wilma Sloan - SNP

Wilma Sloan is a former IMF economist. She is very pragmatic about fiscal policy depending on U.K. subsidies. She is famous for advocating fossil fuel development in the North Sea, using natural resource funds. She is also wary about social issues and mostly sticks to the economy.

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Adela Kozlowski - SNP

Adela Kozlowski is an assimilated Polish immigrant who came as a child under the E.U. migration regime. Due to her background, she supports increased immigration. She is very progressive and supports free college education and vastly subsidized graduate education.

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, David Kelsoe - Labor

David Kelso is the leader of the Labor Party. He is ambivalent on independence, publicly burning his referendum ballot by way of abstention. He supports strong health and social care spending, which often means lots of U.K. support or defunding other areas, like defense. He remains a U.K. dual citizen.

Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Henry Stockard - SNP

Henry Stockard is a former law professor. He is relatively centrist and most concerned with the development of the Scottish legal system. Ignoring day-to-day activities of his post has been an issue in the past. He worries about E.U. supremacy and is Europhobic.

Cabinet Secretary for Veterans and Defense, Anne Wallace - Tory

Anne Wallace is the leader of the Conservative Party. She is a former colonel and bomber pilot in the U.K. Royal Air Force. She is a prominent voice for union. She was given this position to appease unionists and because the SNP wanted to avoid cataclysmically leaving Scotland without any defenses, meaning that continued cooperation with the U.K. is necessary. She remains a U.K. dual citizen.

Cabinet Secretary for the Islands and Rural Affairs, Lloyd McNaught - SNP

Lloyd McNaught is from Shetland Island and supports devolved political autonomy for Shetland, Orkney, and the Isles, seeing the struggle as similar to Scottish independence. He wants more subsidies for rural areas, which have high costs of living due to their small populations and isolation. He is from the progressive wing of the SNP.

Cabinet Secretary for External Affairs, Derrick Singler - Libdem

Derrick Singler is the leader of the liberal democratic party. His main goal in his position is to have Scotland establish diplomatic relations with every country and enter as many international organizations as possible. He strongly supports E.U. membership.

Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and Culture, Henry Rolland - SNP

Henry Rolland is a relatively centrist member of the SNP. His appointment was controversial and seen as a betrayal of the SNP's progressive wing. However, he is very important to the SNP's unity. Without his help keeping the peace on social issues within the party, the SNP might split.

Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government, Finian Alistair - SNP

Finian Alistair is a centrist member of the SNP. He supports helping private developers provide housing, much to the chagrin of many on the left of his party. He opposes the devolution of powers to local governments supported by Lloyd McNaught.

Cabinet Secretary for Cybersecurity, Internet, and Innovation, Esme Stirton - SNP

Esme Stirton is a centrist member of the SNP. She was a tech entrepreneur in Silicon Valley and is a U.S. dual citizen. She is very concerned with cybersecurity and citizen privacy. This has caused friction with major tech companies with lax cybersecurity and those that sell data. However, she is less willing to moderate online speech.

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Net Zero, and Transport, Aileen Cameron - Green

Aileen Cameron is the head of the Green Party. She is pushing to end fossil fuel exploitation in the North Sea. She supports a wide range of progressive social legislation. Due to her environmentalism, she opposes Scottish membership in many international organizations, such as the W.T.O. She is weary of the unity coalition.

Cabinet Secretary for the Compact of Free Association, Duncan Forbes - SNP

Duncan Forbes is a former SNP MP in the British Parliament. He now runs compliance with and negotiations about the CoFA. He is very pragmatic about the CoFA and maintaining good Scottish-U.K. relations. He is very politically ambitious.

Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Mary Carlow - SNP

Mary Carlow is a former law professor and judge. She is very progressive and wants to include provisions on social issues in the constitution. She has been accused of using intimidation to influence citizen feedback on the constitutional process. She was exonerated but many use her as a scapegoat for the progressive wing of the SNP. Because of this, she has risen to become a leader of the progressive SNP.

Minister for Parliamentary Business, Amelia Wilson - SNP

Amelia Wilson is a progressive SNP politician. However, she is known as a compromise-maker and doesn't use her procedural authority to stop legislation with which she disagrees. She works for SNP party unity.

Minister for Higher Education and Training, Noah Scott - Labor

Noah Scott is an unionist labor politician. He wants to fund continuing education for trade workers. He is wary of white collar labor activism and free college for all. He retains his U.K. citizenship and his Barbadian citizenship through his mother.

Minister for Children and Young People, Lyle Ross - Labor

Lyle Ross is a former SNP politician who left because the SNP was not doing enough to support working class interests. He supports subsidizing child care before age 6 at three times the minimum wage. His public pre-school programs have been accused by conspiracy theorists of political indoctrination of toddlers.

Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care, Dr. Alexander Milroy - Labor

Dr. Alexander Milroy a former psychiatrist. He is a progressive member of the SNP. He supports increasing spending on in-patient psychiatric care. He is very well known due to publicity campaigns to reduce stigma.

Minister for Public Health and Epidemic Response, Dr. Gracie Beath - SNP

Dr. Gracie Beath is a pediatrician and epidemiologist who became politically active during the initial COVID-19 outbreak. She is very professional and her comportment resembles a civil servant more than a parliamentarian. However, she is deeply concerned about losing healthcare funding, and is very pragmatic about the CoFA.

Minister for Women's Health and Sport, Fiona Clyde - Labor

Fiona Clyde is the deputy leader of the Labor Party. She is pro-independence. Her main goals are recognition of Scotland through sports and increased funding for women's health. However, Scotland already has its own sports teams and women's health is very well funded due to progressive politics.

Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth, Morgan Said - SNP

Morgan Said is a half-Iraqi former activist. He is very concerned with equity and specifically developing ethnic minority communities. He wants to attract immigrants and counteract Scotland's population decline, which jeopardizes Scotland's fiscal future. In charge of public pensions, he is constantly fighting the CoFA for more funding.

Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise, Rory Kellog - SNP

Rory Kellog is a progressive member of the SNP. He is very controversial. He supports joining the Belt and Road Initiative. He distrusts the "neoliberal" order and relatively successfully, nationalized a failing major hotel chain immediately after independence. What is left now turns a profit as a state-owned corporation and underperforming properties were sold to local governments turned into transitional housing for the homeless.

Minister for Public Safety, Freya Smith - Libdem

Freya Smith is the deputy leader of the Libdems. She is a libertarian-leaning liberal. She was chosen for her position because her political beliefs align themselves with the progressive SNP's American-inspired focus on redirecting police funding towards mental health services. She has advocated simply leaving the CoFA, arguing that Scotland doesn't need fiscal support, saying that cutting government spending will stimulate the economy.

Minister for Drugs Policy, Alexander Thain - SNP

Alexander Thain is a progressive member of the SNP. He is a former addict who supports very progressive stances on treatment, but opposes broader legalizations. He is concerned that broadening legalization will make E.U. accession harder and be politically inexpedient.

Lord Advocate, Alice Ross - Libdem

Alice Ross is not a sitting MP, though she used to be. As Lord Advocate she is similar to the American Attorney's General, she oversees government legal action. She was a libdem. She has been in conflict with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, a progressive member of the SNP. He supports vigorously prosecuting hate speech offenders while Alice Ross has not done so. She wants him to stop infringing on her policy area. She retains her U.K. dual citizenship.

Solicitor General, Ava Smith - Independent

Ava Smith is not a sitting MP. Her position as solicitor general makes her a deputy to the Lord Advocate. She, an independent, was appointed to depoliticize prosecutions. She is outranked by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and the Lord Advocate, but she can also serve as a neutral arbiter in the law. She has been advocating for political compromise as well.

Minister for International Development, John MacVicar - Tory

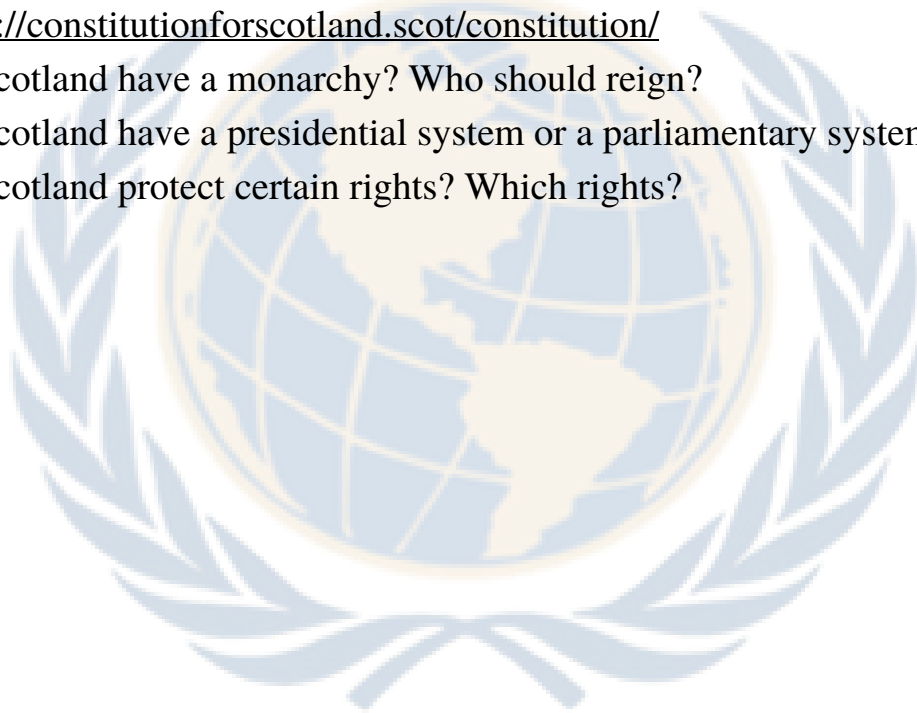
John MacVicar is the deputy leader of the Conservative Party. He is a former U.K. diplomat. International development is a low priority in a tight fiscal situation. He wants to cooperate with the U.K. on development objectives. He remains a U.K. dual citizen.

Minister for Environment, Biodiversity and Land Reform, Ella Gillespie - Green

Ella Gillespie is the deputy leader of the Green Party. She is more business friendly than most Greens, and even most SNP MPs, supporting using bio-tourism to promote business. She is strongly against the continued presence of U.K. military facilities in Scotland, particularly any nuclear capable facilities.

Questions to Consider

1. Does your character support independence? How much independence?
2. What is the most important aspect of governance to separate from the UK?
3. Please skim this website and review, in broad terms, their model constitution.
 - a. <https://constitutionforscotland.scot/constitution/>
4. Should Scotland have a monarchy? Who should reign?
5. Should Scotland have a presidential system or a parliamentary system?
6. Should Scotland protect certain rights? Which rights?



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