

## Geneva Conference

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*Instructions:* You are representing your country at the Geneva Conference convened in May 1954 to deal with the crisis in Indochina. In attendance are the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (representing the Vietminh forces fighting against French rule), France, the People's Republic of China (communist China), the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union (the conference co-sponsors), delegations representing the Associated States of Laos and Cambodia (both of which have royal governments under French protection), and the Republic of Vietnam (an anti-communist government allied with the French).\*

The outcome of this conference will affect your country's vital interests and shape its future. Your country has invested much in the events leading up to this conference, and now you must achieve specific objectives to justify these investments of money, prestige, and in some cases, lives. To prepare a convincing presentation of your delegation's objectives, read the background briefing material carefully, then answer the following questions. Keep in mind that your presentation should be frank, honest, and direct.

1. What is at stake for your country in this situation?
2. What is your view of the historical events that led up to this crisis?
3. What are the principal objectives that your country wishes to achieve at the conference regarding Southeast Asia?
4. How do you perceive the actions and objectives of the other major participants?
5. What specific decisions, designed to achieve your objectives, will you try to persuade the other delegations to accept?

\*The countries with the greatest influence in deciding the outcome of the Geneva Conference were the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, France, the People's Republic of China, the United States, and Britain. The Soviet Union, an active participant whose objectives were very close to those of the People's Republic of China, frequently played the role of mediator. The remaining three delegations played a secondary role in shaping the settlement.