Dutch East India Company (VOC)

Day One

The mission for Day 1 is to decide who should be treated as a full and recognized state. The Dutch East India Company and the Zheng maritime network were hybrid enterprises that possessed significant powers. And yet both struggled to take up a place in state-to-state diplomacy. At the same time, the Zheng and the Qing both competed for legitimacy. The Zheng claimed that the Qing were Manchu usurpers with no rights to the Chinese throne while the Qing argued variously that the Zheng were pirates or should take up a place as loyal tributary vassals.

Readings

- Bhawan Ruangsilp, *Dutch East India Company Merchants at the Court of Ayutthaya: Dutch Perceptions of the Thai Kingdom*, c. 1604-1765 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 5-9

Feel free to consult outside sources if you find them useful in formulating your stance.
What you want:

For the VOC, your key goal is to demonstrate that you are a state. You should emphasize that the Governor-General is effectively a kind of king who is widely recognized by other powers. You should stress the wide range of diplomatic connections centered on Batavia and the fact that you possess a powerful fleet and an impressive commercial reach.

What you don't want:

You are in a state of war with the Zheng and are competing with them for profits and market share in Japan and Southeast Asia. You lost Taiwan and are determined to avenge this humiliation. You want to make sure that no one recognizes the Zheng, who are your most determined and dangerous enemy.

What you want to achieve:

1. Siam has traditionally feared your naval strength, and has granted you a monopoly in the purchase of several lucrative products such as deerskins. However, the Zheng are also trading in Ayutthaya, and are cutting into your business. Can you persuade Siam to recognize you?

2. The Qing and you share a common enemy: the Zheng. The Qing want to use your ships to attack the Zheng stronghold of Taiwan, but are also holding out for a negotiated settlement with that island’s rulers. Can you persuade the Qing to recognize you and deny all recognition to the Zheng?

3. Tokugawa Japan is the biggest and most important market for your products. Decades of diplomacy have given you a depressed status but reasonably secure place in the hierarchy of Japan’s political and commercial partners. Although the Tokugawa have always been suspicious of your maritime activity, which they describe as piracy, they are growing increasingly suspicious of the Zheng. Can you persuade the Tokugawa to recognize you?

4. The Zheng is your enemy. Although once a trading partner and ally, they now compete with you for supplies of key goods and markets across maritime East Asia. They want to undermine your monopoly and ruin your business. Can you persuade other powers not to recognize the Zheng?
Day One

Stage 1 (before class) – Do the assigned readings, prepare your position

Stage 2 (before class) – Write a diplomatic letter to the Zheng Maritime Network

Stage 3 (class) – Discuss and deliberate over the letter (10-15 min.)

Stage 4 (class) – Send an embassy to Siam, persuade Siam to reject Zheng (10-15 min.)

Stage 5 (class) – First convention. Present your side’s case. Your group should designate a representative to present your case before the others (15-20 min.) VOTE: OTHER ACTORS WILL DECIDE YOUR FATE

Stage 6 - News arrives

Stage 7 (class) – Send an embassy (10 min.)

Stage 8 (class) – Second convention (15-20 min.) VOTE: OTHER ACTORS WILL DECIDE YOUR FATE
Day Two

The VOC and the Zheng are at war. Both sides want to engage in unrestrained maritime hostilities in pursuit of their interests, while receiving legal guarantees and protection from land-based powers against their enemy. Cambodia, Siam, and Tokugawa Japan are caught up within this conflict. The goal of day 2 is to rule on these questions of offensive maritime warfare and which ships are protected.

Readings

- Adam Clulow and Xing Hang, “Restraining Violence on the Seas: The Tokugawa, the Zheng Maritime Network, and the Dutch East India Company” (forthcoming), draft

Feel free to consult outside sources if you find them useful in formulating your stance.

Your Objectives:

You’re at war with the Zheng. You want the right to wage unrestricted maritime warfare. Your best and brightest jurists, such as Grotius, have devised an elaborate legal framework to justify the unrestrained use of violence by VOC ships. You also want to monopolize the purchase and distribution of goods across maritime East Asia. You want to persuade Tokugawa Japan, Cambodia, and Siam to recognize your unchecked right to police the seas, and to deal with you as their exclusive agent for foreign trade. You want to make sure these three states cut off their ties with the Zheng and do not guarantee the protection of their ships. This will allow you to attack Zheng ships wherever they are encountered.
Day Two

Stage 1 (before class) – Do the assigned readings, prepare your position

Stage 2 (before class) – Write a diplomatic letter to Cambodia

Stage 3 (class) – Discuss and deliberate over the letter (10-15 min.)

Stage 4 (class) – Send an embassy to Tokugawa Japan, persuade Japan to revoke its alliance with the Zheng and recognize your right to attack their shipping (10-15 min.)

Stage 5 (class) – First convention. Present your side’s case. Your group should designate a representative to present your case before the others (15-20 min.)
VOTE: OTHER ACTORS WILL DECIDE YOUR FATE

Stage 6 - News arrives

Stage 7 (class) – Send an embassy (10 min.)

Stage 8 (class) – Second convention (15-20 min.)
VOTE: OTHER ACTORS WILL DECIDE YOUR FATE