



UNSC

HISTORIC SECURITY COUNCIL



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Committee: Historic Security Council

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Conference

HSC

Study Guide

Agenda: Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962

Executive Board

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Letter from the Executive Board

Namaste everyone!

It is our absolute honour and pleasure to be welcoming you to Shishukunj MUN 2015.

The United Nations Security Council is one of the main organs of the UN with immense powers and responsibilities. Its powers include the establishing peacekeeping operations, imposing international sanctions, and authorizing military action through Security Council resolutions; it is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.

Please remember that since we are set in 1962, we will only have 11 countries as part of the committee. The expansion of the UNSC took place in 1965 and hence, we will not have 15 countries. The country matrix has been attached in the Study Guide.

As a result, the votes required to pass a communiqué shall be 7.

We have done our best to provide you with everything that you shall need to get started on the agenda in this Study Guide. However, please do not rely solely on the Study Guide. It is a conference policy to not accept the Study Guide in any citation or as a source. If during the course of your research, you need any help please do not hesitate to contact us at unsc@shishukunjmun.com.

Looking forward to meeting all of you.

Best Wishes,

Executive Board

Historic Security Council

Chairperson – Hasnain Zeenwala

Vice-Chairperson – Anany Sharma



Country Matrix

1. United States of America
2. United Kingdom
3. Republic of China
4. France
5. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
6. India
7. East Germany
8. West Germany
9. Cuba
10. Turkey
11. Italy



Introduction

For 14 days in October 1962 the world stood on the brink of nuclear war. The Soviet Union had secretly stationed nuclear weapons on the island of Cuba, and when the government of the United States discovered them, and demanded their withdrawal, the most dangerous confrontation of the Cold War followed. A single miscalculation made either in the White House or the Kremlin could have precipitated catastrophe.

Events Leading up to the Crisis

The Cuban Revolution

In January 1959, Fulgencio Batista, the brutal, American-backed Cuban dictator, was overthrown by the guerrilla army of Fidel Castro. Initially president Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration welcomed the Cuban revolution, for Batista had long been an embarrassing ally, and a friendly, democratic government in Cuba, addressing urgent social reform, would be far more stable and reliable. Yet such views did not last long.

For America, Cuba provided a naval base at Guantanamo; it was an exotic, but conveniently close, tourist resort; and low paid Cuban labour made it an attractive investment area, much of the island's agriculture and industry being American-owned. Hence governments in Washington had never hesitated to intervene to protect American interests. The problem was that Castro could never tackle desperate problems of poverty, ill-health and illiteracy without harming US interests. Indeed to Castro, and to a large proportion of the Cuban people, American domination was a root cause of Cuba's problems, and it must be ended.



Castro in fact articulated a widespread revulsion against this humiliating position. The United States was deeply detested on the island.

As American property was expropriated by the new government, Castro's defeated enemies were treated mercilessly and elections were postponed while Castro secured his grip on power. Yet as ever more vicious anti-American diatribes came from the new leader, his popularity in Cuba grew. In the United States, however, he became increasingly unacceptable. Eisenhower decided that Castro was a communist. Whether this was true then is debateable, but Castro was certainly to turn to communism in the face of US hostility.

Eisenhower ordered the Central Intelligence Agency to overthrow him, and the CIA orchestrated sabotage raids on Cuba to destabilise the regime. Attempts were made to assassinate Castro, reputedly using the mafia (the first of at least eight assassination attempts was planned as early as August 1960). Economic sanctions were imposed, especially against Cuba's sugar crop, which was its main export. Yet rather than undermine Castro, this hostility made him more secure, and an increasingly bitter and vocal enemy of the United States. In the logic of the Cold War, this made him a potential partner of the Soviet Union. Steadily growing ties with the USSR made him appear a growing threat to US hegemony in the western hemisphere which could not be tolerated.

The Bay of Pigs

Among the steps taken by the CIA to remove Castro, a brigade of about 1,400 anti-Castro Cuban exiles was raised. The CIA decided to use this force in a large-scale invasion of the island, with the backing of its own air force. This, it was assumed, would trigger mass risings and overthrow Castro's government. Yet Eisenhower, who had after all been Supreme Allied Commander at D-Day, recognised the risks



of failure and hesitated. His successor in January 1961, John F. Kennedy, would be left to decide whether or not to launch the invasion.

Perhaps Castro hoped that a new president would be less hostile to his revolution. If so, he hoped in vain. Kennedy had used Cuba repeatedly in the election campaign, accusing his Republican opponents of being soft on communism, insisting that Cuba was America's 'most glaring failure', one that endangered the 'whole Western Hemisphere'. This rhetoric would be difficult to forget once Kennedy was in office. Business interests, alarmed that if Castro was left unpunished he might start a fashion for nationalising US investments in Latin America, and vocal Cuban exile groups, were determined not to allow him to forget it.

Furthermore, Kennedy seems to have been personally offended by Castro, who had defied the might of the United States and refused to be intimidated. Castro's survival was an affront to American pride. Kennedy became obsessed with the fear that Castro might prove able to export his revolution to other Latin American nations. Defence Secretary Robert McNamara later admitted the administration was 'hysterical' over Castro. Kennedy was even more hostile to Castro than Eisenhower had been, and a great deal less cautious.

Kennedy was probably unaware that there were risks attached to the CIA's plan. He approved the project, which was put together in a remarkably slipshod manner. Mass risings were expected on the basis of nothing more than wishful thinking. Virtually nothing seems to have been done to prepare a new government that might enjoy some degree of popular support. If no mass risings occurred, then the brigade of Cuban exiles was expected to withdraw into the interior and launch a guerrilla campaign. But the chosen landing ground, called the Bay of Pigs, led



only to a swamp – and so there was no possibility of this happening. Most bizarrely, Kennedy was convinced it would be possible to launch this invasion without the world being aware of American involvement. He felt he could convince the international community that Cubans were liberating themselves, using only their own resources. Yet as there was already speculation in the press that the CIA was planning an invasion, this belief was quite astonishing. Kennedy appears to have been swept along by a sense of urgency, and warnings that the whole idea was half-baked, for example from Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles, were ignored.

Kennedy was not the only one to delude himself. He made it very clear to the CIA that US forces would not intervene if the plan went awry. Senior CIA officers, however, aware of the weaknesses of the plan, remained convinced that once the invasion was launched, US prestige would be so bound up in its success that Kennedy would have to support it. Perhaps this explains why, in April 1961, they were willing to commit about 1,400 ill-trained, poorly equipped exiles to what became a humiliating fiasco.

Everything that could go wrong, did so. Air attacks failed to destroy Castro's air force completely. Most of the ammunition and communications equipment was destroyed before it could be landed. Castro's forces fought well, and enjoyed massive popular support. There were no risings, and US forces did nothing to support the exiles. Within two days over 100 exiles had been killed and nearly 1,200 had surrendered.

Operation Mongoose

The Bay of Pigs was a shattering blow to Kennedy, who had to face international ridicule for the fiasco. But Castro did not escape unscathed. Any possibility of



mending fences with Washington was lost. He now faced the undying hostility of the United States. A US invasion was not an option in the wake of the Bay of Pigs, since Kennedy could hardly claim to be liberating a people who had rallied to Castro. But the President did authorise the CIA to undertake Operation Mongoose. This amounted to renewed attempts to destabilise the Cuban regime. Sabotage raids multiplied, Castroites were assassinated, foreign suppliers were bribed to send faulty goods to Cuba. Kennedy also warned the Soviet Union against challenging the USA in the western hemisphere. Sending defensive weapons, such as surface to air missiles (SAMs) would be tolerated; surface to surface missiles, which carried nuclear warheads, would not. Perhaps more threateningly, in 1962 a large-scale military exercise was undertaken by US forces in the Caribbean, in which 40,000 military personnel practised invading an unnamed island to overthrow a dictator threateningly codenamed Ortsac. Kennedy wanted to alarm Castro, and he succeeded. But he also alarmed Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

The Soviet government had welcomed the Cuban revolution; and as American hostility to it grew, so did Soviet support. Cuba was never really an unquestioning servant of Moscow, but the state was growing increasingly dependent upon Moscow for military and economic aid. In the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs, Castro had declared his commitment to Communism for the first time. And in Moscow, as in Havana, there was a growing conviction that Kennedy was preparing to invade Cuba. As it was the only communist state in the western hemisphere, Khrushchev could not allow this.



The Crisis Begins

Nikita Khrushchev reached a secret agreement with Cuban premier Fidel Castro to place Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba to deter any future invasion attempt. Construction of several missile sites began in the late summer, but U.S. intelligence discovered evidence of a general Soviet arms build-up on Cuba, including Soviet IL-28 bombers, during routine surveillance flights, and on September 4, 1962, President Kennedy issued a public warning against the introduction of offensive weapons into Cuba. Despite the warning, on October 14 a U.S. U-2 aircraft took several pictures clearly showing sites for medium-range and intermediate-range ballistic nuclear missiles (MRBMs and IRBMs) under construction in Cuba. These images were processed and presented to the White House the next day, thus precipitating the onset of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Kennedy summoned his closest advisers to consider options and direct a course of action for the United States that would resolve the crisis. Some advisers—including all the Joint Chiefs of Staff—argued for an air strike to destroy the missiles, followed by a U.S. invasion of Cuba; others favored stern warnings to Cuba and the Soviet Union. The President decided upon a middle course. On October 22, he ordered a naval “quarantine” of Cuba. The use of “quarantine” legally distinguished this action from a blockade, which assumed a state of war existed; the use of “quarantine” instead of “blockade” also enabled the United States to receive the support of the Organization of American States.



That same day, Kennedy sent a letter to Khrushchev declaring that the United States would not permit offensive weapons to be delivered to Cuba, and demanded that the Soviets dismantle the missile bases already under construction or completed, and return all offensive weapons to the U.S.S.R.

The President also went on national television that evening to inform the public of the developments in Cuba, his decision to initiate and enforce a “quarantine,” and the potential global consequences if the crisis continued to escalate. The Joint Chiefs of Staff announced a military readiness status of DEFCON 3 as U.S. naval forces began implementation of the quarantine and plans accelerated for a military strike on Cuba.

On October 24, Khrushchev responded to Kennedy’s message with a statement that the U.S. “blockade” was an “act of aggression” and that Soviet ships bound for Cuba would be ordered to proceed. Nevertheless, during October 24 and 25, some ships turned back from the quarantine line; others were stopped by U.S. naval forces, but they contained no offensive weapons and so were allowed to proceed. Meanwhile, U.S. reconnaissance flights over Cuba indicated the Soviet missile sites were nearing operational readiness. With no apparent end to the crisis in sight, U.S. forces were placed at DEFCON 2—meaning war involving the Strategic Air Command was imminent. On October 26, Kennedy told his advisors it appeared that only a U.S. attack on Cuba would remove the missiles, but he insisted on giving the diplomatic channel a little more time. The crisis had reached a virtual stalemate.

That afternoon, however, the crisis took a dramatic turn. ABC News correspondent John Scali reported to the White House that he had been approached by a Soviet agent suggesting that an agreement could be reached in which the Soviets would



remove their missiles from Cuba if the United States promised not to invade the island. While White House staff scrambled to assess the validity of this “back channel” offer, Khrushchev sent Kennedy a message the evening of October 26, It was a long, emotional message that raised the specter of nuclear holocaust, and presented a proposed resolution that remarkably resembled what Scali reported earlier that day. “If there is no intention,” he said, “to doom the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war, then let us not only relax the forces pulling on the ends of the rope, let us take measures to untie that knot. We are ready for this.”

Although U.S. experts were convinced the message from Khrushchev was authentic, hope for a resolution was short-lived. The next day, October 27, Khrushchev sent another message indicating that any proposed deal must include the removal of U.S. Jupiter missiles from Turkey. That same day a U.S. U-2 reconnaissance jet was shot down over Cuba. Kennedy and his advisors prepared for an attack on Cuba within days as they searched for any remaining diplomatic resolution. It was determined that Kennedy would ignore the second Khrushchev message and respond to the first one. That night, Kennedy set forth in his message to the Soviet leader proposed steps for the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba under supervision of the United Nations, and a guarantee that the United States would not attack Cuba.

It was a risky move to ignore the second Khrushchev message. Attorney General Robert Kennedy then met secretly with Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrynin, and indicated that the United States was planning to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey anyway, and that it would do so soon, but this could not be part of any **public resolution of the missile crisis**. The next



morning, October 28, Khrushchev issued a public statement that Soviet missiles would be dismantled and removed from Cuba.

The crisis was over but the naval quarantine continued until the Soviets agreed to remove their IL-28 bombers from Cuba and, on November 20, 1962, the United States ended its quarantine. U.S. Jupiter missiles were removed from Turkey in April 1963.

Aftermath

The compromise embarrassed Khrushchev and the Soviet Union because the withdrawal of U.S. missiles from Italy and Turkey was a secret deal between Kennedy and Khrushchev. Khrushchev went to Kennedy thinking that the crisis was getting out of hand. The Soviets were seen as retreating from circumstances that they had started. Khrushchev's fall from power two years later was in part because of the Politburo embarrassment at both Khrushchev's eventual concessions to the U.S. and his ineptitude in precipitating the crisis in the first place.

Cuba perceived the outcome as a partial betrayal by the Soviets, given that decisions on how to resolve the crisis had been made exclusively by Kennedy and Khrushchev. Castro was especially upset that certain issues of interest to Cuba, such as the status of the U.S. Naval Base in Guantánamo, were not addressed. This caused Cuban–Soviet relations to deteriorate for years to come. On the other hand, Cuba continued to be protected from invasion. Castro was angrier with Khrushchev than he was with Kennedy because Khrushchev had not consulted Castro before deciding to remove the missiles.



Khrushchev feared that Castro's hurt pride and widespread Cuban indignation over the concessions he had made to Kennedy might lead to a breakdown of the agreement between the Soviet Union and the U.S. In order to prevent this Khrushchev decided to make Cuba a special offer. The offer was to give Cuba more than 100 tactical nuclear weapons that had been shipped to Cuba along with the long-range missiles, but which crucially had passed completely under the radar of U.S. intelligence. **At the time when the Kennedy administration thought that the Cuban Missile Crisis was resolved, nuclear tactical rockets stayed in Cuba since they were not part of the Kennedy-Khrushchev understandings.**

Anastas Mikoyan was tasked with the negotiations with Castro over the missile transfer deal designed to prevent a breakdown in the relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union. While in Havana, Mikoyan witnessed the mood swings and paranoia of Castro, who was convinced that Moscow had made the agreement with the U.S. at the expense of Cuba's defense. **Mikoyan, on his own initiative, decided that Castro and his military not be given control of weapons with an explosive force equal to 100 Hiroshima-sized bombs under any circumstances.** He defused the seemingly intractable situation, which risked re-escalating the crisis, on November 22, 1962. During a tense, four-hour meeting, Mikoyan convinced Castro that despite Moscow's desire to help, it would be in breach of an unpublished Soviet law (which didn't actually exist) to transfer the missiles permanently into Cuban hands and provide them with an independent nuclear deterrent. Castro was forced to give way and – much to the relief of Khrushchev and the whole Soviet government – the tactical nuclear weapons were crated and returned by sea to the Soviet Union during December 1962.



The Cuban missile crisis stands as a singular event during the Cold War and strengthened Kennedy's image domestically and internationally. It also may have helped mitigate negative world opinion regarding the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. Two other important results of the crisis came in unique forms. First, despite the flurry of direct and indirect communications between the White House and the Kremlin—perhaps because of it—Kennedy and Khrushchev, and their advisers, struggled throughout the crisis to clearly understand each others' true intentions, while the world hung on the brink of possible nuclear war. In an effort to prevent this from happening again, a direct telephone link between the White House and the Kremlin was established; it became known as the "Hotline." Second, having approached the brink of nuclear conflict, both superpowers began to reconsider the nuclear arms race and took the first steps in agreeing to a nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Expectations from the Committee

Delegates, even though the crisis was resolved, we can clearly see that there were several loose ends. Therefore, we would like you to analyse the issues based on hindsight and take decisions to make sure that your country's best interests are served. **Make sure that you pay special attention to the aftermath of the crisis.** This distinguishes a "historical committee" from a "historical role-play".

Our committee will start in the midst of the crisis, a "quarantine" has been imposed on Cuba. There is no end to the crisis in sight. Both the superpowers are seemingly unshakable from their positions. This committee must make sure that the differences between the countries are reconciled and the crisis doesn't escalate.



Since this is a crisis committee we shall be passing communiqués, press releases and directives. Detailed information on their format can be found [here](#).

An oft repeated quote that the wise old men say, “don’t ever go against your foreign policy and never make paper planes of your research.” The message is quite clear, I hope.