US and USSR Joint Crisis Committee

Cuban Missile Crisis

St. John's Preparatory School • Danvers, Massachusetts • 9 December 2017
Letter from the chair

Delegates,

Welcome to the Cuban Missile Crisis joint crisis. My name is Trevaughn and I’m currently a senior at St. John's Prep and this is my fourth year as a member of Model UN. When I'm not involved in Model UN, I spend my time in the Science and Technology Club, while also playing football and rugby. As one of the highest stakes diplomatic crises of the 20th century, the Cuban Missile Crisis holds a unique place in US history. The actions that took place in the Cuban Missile Crisis has shaped America's current foreign policy. I look forward to see how the Missile Crisis plays out in my committee. If you need to contact me, my email is twrightreynolds18@stjohnsprep.org

Sincerely, Trevaughn Wright-Reynolds, Class of 2018

Committee Description

The joint crisis committee on the Cuban Missile Crisis consists of the opposing American Executive committee (Excomm), and the Soviet Politburo. Both of these committees served to advise the heads of state of the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) during times of crisis, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis. Although both groups exist only to advise the respective heads of state of the US and USSR, for the purposes of this committee, all members will have a single vote regarding resolutions and directives. The delegates representing Kennedy
and Khrushchev will have veto power over all resolutions and directives, although this veto can be overridden by a \( \frac{2}{3} \) majority. The Excomm and the Politburo will debate amongst themselves, and can meet in one room to negotiate with the other side at certain times. Delegates can also send messages between the two committees during internal debate. As crisis committees, both the Excomm and the Politburo possess the power to pass directives within the power of the respective executive branches of each nation, but are encouraged to compromise and avoid escalation of the conflict.

**History of the Problem**

The first phase of the Cold War took place two years after the Second World War. The USSR solidified its control over the states of the Eastern Bloc, while the United States strengthened ties with Western Europe by extending military and financial aid and creating the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), beginning the US strategy of global containment to challenge Soviet power. The Berlin Blockade was the first major crisis of the Cold War, which later expanded with the Chinese Civil War and the Korean War, among others (Cold War). The USSR and USA competed for influence in Latin America, and the decolonizing states of Africa and Asia. The expansion and escalation caused by the Soviets stopping the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 sparked more crises, such as the Suez Crisis, the Berlin Crisis of 1961, and ultimately the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.
In 1949, only a few years after the United States tested its Atomic Bombs on Japan, the Soviet Union detonated a nuclear weapon of its own. The Soviets surprised the Americans with the speed at which they had developed an atomic capability, and the realization of American vulnerability to this new weapon helped fuel the Red Scare, a fear of Communism which permeated American society (The Cuban). As both nations developed increasingly more numerous and more powerful weapons, the Eisenhower administration promoted a policy of massive retaliation: the policy that any nuclear exchange would result in a total attack from the U.S. arsenal against the opposing nation (The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited). In 1957, the nuclear arms race took on a new dimension when the Soviet Union successfully launched the world’s first manmade satellite into orbit. At the time, policy makers clearly understood that any missile capable of sending a satellite into orbit could do the same for nuclear warhead, and that unlike aircraft with atomic bombs, there was no defense against a ballistic missile, which introduced the idea of mutually assured destruction with nuclear weapons.

On the planet’s surface, the competition took the form of an arms race, and on June 1, 1961, the US officially started to deploy Jupiter type nuclear intermediate-range ballistic missiles targeting the Soviet Union in Turkey. During a meeting in Vienna on June 3rd, 1961, Kennedy and Khrushchev discussed international relations. Apparently, Khrushchev developed a low opinion of Kennedy on this occasion, which may have contributed to his aggression during the Cuban Missile Crisis (The Cuban).
From June 4th, 1961 to November 9th, 1961, US and Soviet forces engaged in a standoff as the Soviets began construction of the Berlin Wall. Ultimately the tanks were withdrawn and President Kennedy accepted the Berlin Wall lest war break out.

Only a few months after assuming the presidency, Kennedy decided to launch a covert operation to overthrow Fidel Castro’s communist regime in Cuba. The U.S. suffered a massive national security embarrassment in what became known as the Bay of Pigs invasion. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) trained a group of Cuban exiles who attempted to invade Cuba in April 1961 in an effort to trigger an anti-Castro rebellion. Just before the launch of the operation, Kennedy decided not to provide U.S. military support for the invasion. As a result, Cuban military forces caused the exiled Cuban army to route. In addition, few Cubans rose up against Castro and more than one thousand Cuban rebels were captured. This failed U.S. attempt to oust Castro was perceived by the communist regime in Cuba as proof of U.S. aggressive intentions and thus drove the Cuba to cultivate even closer ties to the Soviet Union (U.S. Department of State).

Statement of The Problem

The Cuban Missile Crisis took place during an era called the Cold War, “a state of geopolitical tension after World War II between powers in the Eastern Bloc and powers in the Western Bloc” (Cold War). The Western Bloc consisted of the United States, NATO allies, and other nations,
while the Eastern Bloc contained the Soviet Union and its satellite states. The term "cold" is used because “there was no large-scale fighting directly between the two sides involved in the conflict” (Schwarz). However in the absence of a direct military confrontation, the two global superpowers supported many smaller scale regional wars known as proxy wars. The Cold War split up the previous wartime alliance against Nazi Germany. The USSR was a Marxist–Leninist state led by its Communist Party of the Soviet Union” that controlled other states in the Eastern Bloc, and funded Communist parties around the world, supporting communist regimes in Europe (Hungary, Yugoslavia, Poland, East Germany, and more), Asia (The People’s Republic of China, Cambodia, and North Korea), Africa, and most recently Latin America. According to historian Jutta Weldes, “The Western bloc stood in opposition by being democratic and capitalist with a free press and independent organizations” (Weldes). Both sides never engaged in full-scale combat, but they were both heavily prepared for a possible nuclear war. Each side discouraged an attack from the other side on the basis that it would lead to total destruction (Encyclopedia Britannica). Aside from the development of the two sides' nuclear arsenals and their deployment of conventional military forces, the struggle for dominance was expressed via proxy wars around the globe, psychological warfare, massive propaganda campaigns and espionage, rivalry at sports events, and technological competitions such as the Space Race.
Despite American fears of a “missile gap” between the United States and the Soviet Union, the nuclear balance of power in world as the 1960s began was clearly tilted in the favor of the United States. In addition to possessing over seven thousand strategic nuclear warheads vs. the Soviets’ five hundred, the United States had deployed its nuclear weapons at a set of overseas bases that gave the US arsenal a nearly worldwide strike capability (The Atlantic). It was because of this numerical advantage that Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev first considered placing nuclear missiles on Cuba. He hoped that the strategic location of Cuba would give the Soviet Union the kind of deterrent capability that numbers alone could not. Assured by his generals that the Soviet Union could install the weapons without American knowledge, Khrushchev gave the order to begin the installation of SS-4 and SS-5 Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs) in Cuba (The Atlantic). Fearful of another US invasion of Cuba, Castro readily agreed to accept the Soviet weapons on Cuban territory. Throughout the summer of 1962, Soviet construction crews worked feverishly to prepare the bases and installations that would be needed to fire and store the weapons.

After the failed U.S. attempt to overthrow the Castro regime in Cuba with the Bay of Pigs invasion, and while the Kennedy administration planned Operation Mongoose, in July 1962 Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev reached a secret agreement with Cuban premier Fidel Castro to place Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba to deter any future invasion attempt (The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited).
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. On September 4, 1962, President Kennedy issued a public warning against the introduction of offensive weapons into Cuba (Cold War). 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 (MRBM and IRBM) under construction in Cuba.

On October 15th, 1962, an American reconnaissance flight over Cuba revealed that the Soviets were constructing missile sites in Cuba. For a week after the discovery, debate raged in the highest levels of the US government as to how to respond to the situation in Cuba. On October 22nd, Kennedy announced the discovery of the missiles to a shocked American public (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Questions to Consider

-What is the underlying cause of the crisis, and how can a similar crisis be prevented in the future?

-To what extent should Cuba limit its arsenal of weapons?

-How can the US and USSR compromise their spheres of influence in order to achieve peace?
Works Cited


