Addressing the October Crisis of 1962

AKA the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Growing Nuclear Threat

Historical Committee: United Nations Security Council

NIRAMUN‘20

# Letter from the Chair

Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to the 7th Annual United Nations Crisis Committee at NIRAMUN 2020! Through this Security Council Historical Committee, you will have the opportunity to serve in the best interest of your member state to resolve the issue of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

My name is Janay Joseph and I am a junior pursuing a double major in History and International Studies, as well as the Vice President of NIRAMUN. Researching and competing as a member of the Model United Nations team has taught me about the intricacies of diplomacy that impact billions of people worldwide, and how world leaders have collaborated to solve such issues diplomatically.

The Cuban Missile Crisis and the response of the international community reflects the polarized nature of the world during the Cold War. The event, which lasted for thirteen days between October 22, 1962 - November 20, 1962, tests the patience, decisive, and multilateral policy making that brought both world powers to an agreement. But of course, this is a historical crisis committee, so anything goes! We decided to add both Cuba and Turkey to the Historical Committee, since they were notably excluded from the decision making process of the UNSC at the time.

I hope this will be an interesting simulation that will encourage you to see how the international community came together in a time of global crisis, especially how it more or less relates to current events. If you have any questions about the time period, background guide, or even about the conference itself, just know that we are one email away. Good luck, and we hope to see you soon.

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Director of the Historical Committee: United Nations Security Council

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# Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) originated out of necessity to maintain international peace and security. There are fifteen member states, which include five permanent members with veto status, and ten rotating members. Each member of the UNSC has one vote. The current rotating member states[[1]](#footnote-1) are the Republic of Chile, Republic of Cuba\*, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Ghana, Republic of Ireland, Romania, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of Turkey\*, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The functions of the UNSC under Article 24[[2]](#footnote-2) is as follows: (I) the committee leads member states in detecting a threat to peace or acts of hostility and aggression, (II) implores parties involved to solve disputes through peaceful multilateral solutions, and (III) at times can enact sanctions or “authorize use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security”[[3]](#footnote-3). The council establishes mandates through adoption of a Security Council resolution to oversee UN peacekeeping operations globally.

It is October, 1962, the height of the Cold War. Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations U Thant urges the committee that when responding to the October Crisis of 1962, this committee should seek to reaffirm the commitments made in A/RES/1378 (XIV)[[4]](#footnote-4) and further in UNSC Resolution 135[[5]](#footnote-5). Both of which advise nations to de-escalate tensions peacefully, “refrain from using threats of force”, and nuclear disarmament in accordance with the General Assembly Resolution.

*\*Historical-Fiction Disclaimer: The committee serves both as a reenactment and a “what if” scenario. Cuba and Turkey were not involved in the policy and decision making portion of the UNSC at the time of the actual crisis.*

*\*\*Crisis Disclaimer: The committee may feature a crisis along with information updates regarding the situation. Your role as a member of this committee is to propose and draft a Committee Directive to resolve the issue that best reflects the interests of the member state you are representing.*

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## ADDRESSING THE OCTOBER CRISIS OF 1962

# Introduction

On October 22nd, 1962, President of the United States John Kennedy released a statement that alleges the presence of nuclear-armed missiles in the Republic of Cuba, approximately 140 km away from the mainland United States. The United States of America believes that these missiles were constructed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. American President Kennedy warned that if the missiles were launched from Cuba, they would be able to reach the mainland within a matter of minutes[[6]](#footnote-6). As an immediate response, the United States declared that they would impose a naval quarantine to prevent more Soviet missiles and other military aid from reaching the island.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Both member states have not shown signs of de-escalation based on the negotiations thus far. The world may be on a path to the total destruction of humanity. Acting Secretary-General U Thant urges both member states and the international community to come together to avoid global nuclear annihilation and restore balance to the world.

# Background and History

## Post-Second World War

Following the Second World War, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were left largely untouched by the destruction left by the battles that raged in Europe. Both states developed multilateral systems of foreign aid to help rebuild the region. The United States assisted liberal democracies in Western Europe through the Marshall Plan, while the Soviet Union assisted open communist regimes in Eastern Europe[[8]](#footnote-8). As a result of their grand strategies, this has entrenched a divide in both the developing and the developed world as each of the states emerged on ideology based on capitalism or communism.

Nations in Western Europe who accepted foreign aid from the United States joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) established in 1949, and nations who accepted aid from the Soviet Union later formed the Warsaw Pact in 1955. The Soviet Union has long argued that their alliance system is a viable response to the growing influence of the United States in Europe, establishing a counterweight to NATO[[9]](#footnote-9).

## The Atomic Age

Both nations have greatly expanded their military industrial complexes in order to fulfill the goals of their grand strategy. Notably, the production of nuclear weapons have only exacerbated the divide. Both the United States and Soviet Union have been expanding their nuclear programs since the end of the Second World War. The United States developed several atomic bombs, two of which were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan to end the war in the Pacific in 1945. By 1949, the Soviet Union refined production on their own atomic bomb similar to the stockpile that the United States developed years earlier[[10]](#footnote-10). In response, the United States developed and detonated the first Thermonuclear or Hydrogen Bomb in 1953[[11]](#footnote-11). These efforts to reach Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) began the new era of what political scientists are calling it the Atomic Age, or the “Cold” War.

## The Cuban Communist Movement

Since the overthrow of Cuban President Fulgencio Bautista and the rise of Fidel Castro’s regime, the Republic of Cuba has established a government under communist rule[[12]](#footnote-12). The Republic of Cuba cited the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 and the growing isolation from the United States as justification for developing their own defenses. Cuban President Fidel Castro and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev have met on several occasions since, which has escalated tensions between Cuba and the United States[[13]](#footnote-13).

# Current Situation

The United States alleges that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics placed nuclear missiles in the Republic of Cuba. The nation cited Cuba’s increasing reliance on Soviet aid and military equipment in their concerns that the missiles on their mainland are Soviet-grade. American President Kennedy threatens offensive action, adding additional remarks that “It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union”[[14]](#footnote-14).

Perceived as a threat to their national security, the United States in response have announced that they will install a naval quarantine surrounding Cuba within the next 48 hours to prevent additional offensive military equipment from arriving[[15]](#footnote-15).

The Soviet Union and Cuba have yet to release intelligence information that confirms nor deny these actions in fear of military retaliation from the United States. However, both the Soviet Union and Cuba have condemned the placement of US-grade inter ballistic nuclear missiles in member states allied with NATO, especially their latest installation in the Republic of Turkey citing its proximity to the Soviet Union.

## Actions Taken by the Security Council

Acting Secretary-General U Thant has led private negotiations between American President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, urging both parties to de-escalate nuclear conflict and calls on both leaders to allow more time for the crisis to be resolved peacefully[[16]](#footnote-16). The Security Council has sent a request to Cuba to send a United Nations observer corps to oversee negotiations[[17]](#footnote-17).

Following American President Kennedy’s announcement, Ambassador from the Republic of Cuba and Ambassador from the United States have requested an urgent meeting by the Security Council to discuss the ongoing crisis. The meeting will take place on the 25th of October, 1962.

## Block Positions

### United States of America

The United States alleges that when one of their U2 planes made a high-altitude pass over Cuba on October 14, 1962, they documented the assembly of Soviet SS-4 medium-range and SS-5 intermediate-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs and IRBMs)[[18]](#footnote-18). Ambassador Stevenson urges the council to discuss the matters to

“deal with the dangerous threat to the peace and security of the world caused by the secret establishment in Cuba by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of launching bases and the installation of long-range ballistic missiles capable of carrying thermonuclear warheads to most of North and South America”[[19]](#footnote-19).

The United States demands that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics remove the missiles, dismantle their sites, and cease operations of supplying military aid to the Republic of Cuba. The member state announced that if provoked, it is prepared to use military force if necessary.

### Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The Soviet Union considers the blockade in Cuba to be an act of aggression since it violates the freedom to use international waters and airspace[[20]](#footnote-20). Premier Khrushchev further adds that “[The United States] broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba, have conducted and are conducting subversive activity and established an economic blockade of Cuba”[[21]](#footnote-21). The member state has yet to confirm the presence of inter ballistic missiles in Cuba.

The Soviet Union has defended their previous actions of supplying foreign and military aid to Cuba as a response to the growing power and influence of the US[[22]](#footnote-22). In addition, they have accused the United States of installing their own intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) across NATO allied nations in Europe[[23]](#footnote-23). The Soviet Union wishes to maintain a nuclear balance of power and demands the removal of these IRBMs.

### The Republic of Cuba

The ambassador to the Republic of Cuba has requested a meeting to discuss “the act of war unilaterally committed by the Government of the United States in ordering the naval blockade of Cuba”. The letter also implores that the United States is “creating an imminent danger of war” through its response of placing Cuba under a naval “blockade”[[24]](#footnote-24). President Castro has expressed hostility against the United States government, calling the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion an attempted coup on Cuban soil, and the economic sanctions placed on Cuba in January of this year as further proof of hostility[[25]](#footnote-25).

The Republic of Cuba has yet to respond to the UN’s request to send supervisory forces to oversee ongoing negotiations. The state has multiple military interests in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. Notably, both the Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of Ghana have received military and humanitarian aid from Cuba since 1961[[26]](#footnote-26).

### Europe and the NATO Bloc

In 1957, Europe and the United States began negotiations to equip NATO allied nations with their own IRBMs. By October 1959, these IRBMs were installed in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Italian Republic, and the Republic of Turkey, with the latter hosting fifteen missiles[[27]](#footnote-27). As part of the negotiations, these Jupiter IRBMs remained sovereign to the United States.

The Republic of Turkey has stated that the IRBMs installed were constructed using the taxpayer dollars of Turkish citizens for defensive purposes, and are not directed towards the Soviet Union. Turkey and the Soviet Union are currently under contentious debate regarding this statement[[28]](#footnote-28).

### The Arab Republic of Egypt, Romania, and the Syrian Arab Republic

Tensions between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the United Kingdom still loom following the Suez Crisis (1956-57)[[29]](#footnote-29). In addition, both United Kingdom and United States’ alliance with the State of Israel[[30]](#footnote-30) and their open support for regime change in Iran[[31]](#footnote-31) have angered several Arab nations in the Middle East including both Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both nations have expressed sympathy towards the Soviet Union in response. Romania declared itself a socialist republic following the Second World War and is currently a member of the Warsaw Pact.

# Focus Questions

1. How will your country assess the global nuclear threat?
2. How has your country been impacted by the October Crisis thus far?
3. Is the naval quarantine around the Republic of Cuba an “act of aggression”?
4. How would you utilize your state’s connections, resources, and powers to support the committee and its objectives?
5. How should UN peacekeeping play a role in this crisis?
6. Should the United States and the Soviet Union de-escalate their advances in nuclear technology? If so, how?
7. How should the committee address the future of the growing nuclear threat?
8. How will the committee limit the use and enrichment of these nuclear weapons going forward?

# Additional Reading

<https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/united-nations-and-disarmament-treaties>

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