

STUDY GUIDE



AGENDUM-

The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962

Freeze Date: 21st October, 1962.

(Note - Information beyond the freeze date is only for your reference. Occurrences beyond the freeze date will be considered inadmissible in committee.)

Chairperson: Rasika Agarwal

INDEX

| | |
|---|-------|
| 1 Chairperson's address..... | 3-4 |
| 2 Background of the Cold War..... | 5-7 |
| 3 Cuban Revolution..... | 8-9 |
| 4 U.S. Cuba Relations..... | 10-13 |
| 5 Soviet Motives Behind Missile Deployment..... | 14-17 |
| 6 Discovery of Missiles in Cuba..... | 18-21 |
| 7 Key Leaders and Decision making bodies..... | 22-24 |
| 8 Soviet Military Leadership..... | 25 |
| 9 Thirteen days of the Cuban Crisis..... | 26-30 |
| 10 Militarisation of Cuba by the Soviet Union.... | 31-32 |
| 11 Role of Cuba during Crisis..... | 33-34 |
| 12 Nuclear Weapons and Military Strategy..... | 35-36 |
| 13 Resolution of the Crisis..... | 37 |
| 14 Impact and Aftermath..... | 38 |
| 15 Backchannel Diplomacy..... | 39-40 |
| 16 Fidel Castro and Cuban Sovereignty..... | 41-42 |
| 17 Expectations of the Executive Board..... | 43-44 |
| 18 How the Committee Works..... | 45 |

CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to what will probably be the most unpredictable committee you've ever stepped into.

This is not a committee where you survive by reading out pre-written speeches, overusing diplomatic jargon, or waiting for moderated caucuses to save you. This committee moves fast, brutally fast. Decisions made in one room will alter realities in another within minutes. Every alliance, every betrayal and every delayed response will have consequences.

This Dual Crisis Committee has been designed to test more than just your foreign policy knowledge. It will test your adaptability under pressure, your ability to strategize in chaos, and most importantly, your capability to act before the room catches up.

This committee will revolve around two major alliances- the United States bloc and the Soviet bloc. Delegates of both sides will constantly engage, negotiate, threaten, manipulate and outmanoeuvre one another, all while Cuban delegates remain at the centre of the crisis itself. The committee will function as a covert high-stakes meeting between both blocs, where diplomacy will extend far beyond formal debate. Expect intense backchannel negotiations between the superpowers and Cuban representatives, secret understandings, intelligence exchanges and private bargaining that could shift the direction of the entire crisis within moments. Every decision taken by Washington or Moscow will echo in Havana, and every move made by Cuba can alter the balance between two global superpowers.

Expect covert operations. Expect misinformation. Expect military escalations, political collapses, intelligence leaks, economic sabotage, and situations where morality and practicality stop aligning.

And most importantly, expect the unexpected.

As your Chairperson, I expect delegates who can innovate instead of imitate. Delegates who can take command of situations instead of waiting for someone else to lead. The best delegate in this committee will not necessarily be the

loudest person in the room, but the one capable of shaping the course of the crisis before others even realize what is happening.

For those who know me beyond the dais, you probably know I function somewhere between “abhi time nahi hai” and complete overcommitment. Between organized chaos and “picture abhi baaki hai.” I appreciate sharp humour, straightforward diplomacy, calculated aggression, and delegates who can keep their composure even when the odds are stacked against them.

You will make mistakes. Everyone will.

The difference is whether you recover faster than your opponents.

So enter this committee prepared to negotiate like diplomats, think like strategists, and react like leaders in the middle of a global crisis.

Because once committee begins, history will no longer be fixed.

Best of luck delegates.

The dais looks forward to seeing who rises above the chaos.

Regards,

Rasika Agarwal,

Chairperson of the Dual Crisis Committee,

THS MUN 2026.

BACKGROUND OF THE COLD WAR

ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

The Cold War emerged from the deteriorating relations between two of the primary victors of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union. One of the key origins of the Cold War was the clash between their ideologies, while the US believed in capitalism, the Soviet Union believed in communism. Both feared the spread of the other system which created tensions. The development of nuclear weapons also intensified tensions. This started a dangerous arms race in which both countries were competing for a stronger army. After World War II, Germany was divided between allied powers. The USA wanted to rebuild Germany, while the Soviet Union wanted heavy reparations as they suffered major losses. Tensions increased during the Berlin Blockade, when the Soviet Union blocked the routes to Berlin. During the 1950 war in Korea, the USSR supported the communist North Korea which invaded South Korea backed by the US and its allies. These were the main origins of the Cold War.

IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICT BETWEEN CAPITALISM AND COMMUNISM

The United States believed in democratic governments and individual freedom while the Soviet Union believed in a communist system. The political and economic systems of the capitalist USA and communist USSR were incompatible. In a capitalist state, the economy is largely free from state control, while the government is democratically elected and freedom of speech is valued. Both sides wanted countries to conform to their adopted ideologies for their own gains. The Americans and the British feared the permanent Soviet domination of eastern Europe and the threat of Soviet-influenced communist parties coming to power in the democracies of western Europe. However the Soviets were determined to maintain control of eastern European countries and were intent on spreading communism, partly for ideological reasons and partly for security concerns. Each country felt their ideology to be superior which created tensions.

US POLICY OF CONTAINMENT:

Eventually, the US decided to contain the idea of communism rather than attack the Soviet Union directly. In order to do that, the Truman Doctrine of "Containment" was announced by President Harry S. Truman in 1947. The doctrine was a US foreign policy which pledged American support to the U.S.-aligned nations against alleged authoritarian threats. Under this policy, the USA promised military and economic support to countries threatened by communism, especially Greece and Turkey. When announcing the doctrine, the President pledged to oppose the communist rebels in Greece and Soviet demands on Turkey. More generally, the Truman Doctrine implied U.S. support for other nations threatened by the Soviet Union. It was a contributing factor to the formation of NATO in 1949. The doctrine also increased tensions between the US and the USSR as the Soviet Union viewed this as an attempt to limit the spread of communism and expand American power.

NATO AND WARSAW PACT

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed by the United States, Canada and other Western European countries in 1949. NATO's primary purpose was to unify and strengthen the Western Allies' military response to a possible invasion of western Europe by the Soviet Union. From 1957, NATO deployed American nuclear weapons in Western Europe. It later adopted a "flexible response" strategy to avoid full-scale nuclear war. NATO's flexible response strategy prevented a full scale nuclear war, and allowed it to respond with an appropriate amount of force to any attack.

The Warsaw pact was created in 1955 by the Soviet Union and its allies. Its immediate occasion was the Paris agreement among the western powers admitting West Germany into NATO. It was formed to strengthen communist control over Eastern European countries and counter the growing Western Power. The WARSAW pact allowed the Soviet Union to maintain military control as it permitted them to station troops in Eastern Europe. In 1968, the Soviet Union used the pact to justify sending troops into Czechoslovakia to suppress reforms that promoted greater freedom and closer relations with the West.

NUCLEAR ARMS RACE AND MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION:

A nuclear arms race, a competition of building stronger nuclear weapons was going on between the United States and the Soviet Union. After the USA used atomic bombs in 1945, the Soviet Union developed its own nuclear weapons in 1949. Both countries then rapidly increased their stockpile of nuclear weapons. However, if one country launched an attack then the other would retaliate with possibly greater force which gave the idea of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). Since both countries were able enough to destroy each other completely, MAD would lead to the destruction of both countries. This fear helped prevent a full-fledged war between the two superpowers during the Cold war.

CUBAN REVOLUTION (1959)

Fidel Castro is a controversial figure in the West, where he is heavily criticized, yet across much of the Third World and Latin America, he is widely admired and respected. They consider him as a person who defends the interests of Southern countries in terms of liberation from oppression and the desire for freedom. Fidel Castro remains one of the great liberators in the Americas, because he was always known as a prominent revolutionary. Fidel Castro's popularity exceeds the boundaries of Cuba itself; therefore, he represents twentieth-century anti-imperialism and passes the message of strength that could be useful for everybody. The greatest socioeconomic transformation in Latin America ever happened after the Cuban Revolution triumphed on January 1, 1959.

It seems that Fidel Castro was against the influence of the oligarchy and money in general in the Batista regime. He challenged the existing order and traditional structures, putting people above everything by distributing national wealth among them. He was able to position himself as the leader of a generation of deserving youth, gaining national fame during the 1950s. He was the guerilla leader in the mountains from December 1956 to December 1958; he planned and organized the raid of the "Moncada" and "Carlos Manuel de Céspedes" garrisons in 1953, the Granma venture that left a Mexican port in 1956, and he led the Cuban Revolution until his demise.

Between 1956 and 1958, the forces under Fidel Castro gained control by means of guerilla tactics, propaganda, and the assistance of the rural population. Batista's army was plagued by demoralization, corruption, and lack of support. In late 1958, the forces of the revolution seized control of several key towns and were on the rise all over the country. On January 1, 1959, Batista fled Cuba, while Castro and his followers took control of Havana soon afterwards. This signified the culmination of the Cuban Revolution and began the process of significant political change in Cuba.

Cuba was declared a socialist nation following Castro's principles of Marxism-Leninism in 1961. The political opposition was suppressed, the state took control of most of the private sector industries, and communism was introduced as the political ideology of Cuba.

The USSR found in Cuba its communist ally in the Western Hemisphere. Cuba, on the other hand, found protection from any possible interference from the USA through Soviet backing. The importance of this alliance grew as the Cold War progressed, ultimately culminating in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

US-CUBA RELATIONS

Relations between the United States and Cuba declined rapidly after the Cuban Revolution brought Fidel Castro to power in January 1959. Before the revolution, Cuba's economy was heavily dependent on the United States. American companies controlled large portions of Cuban sugar production, oil refineries, utilities, banks, and tourism. Initially, the United States recognized Castro's new government, expecting it to remain politically moderate and cooperate economically. However, tensions emerged when Castro introduced radical reforms like land redistribution and the nationalization of foreign-owned industries, many of which belonged to American corporations.

In response, the United States began exerting economic pressure on Cuba. In 1960, President Dwight D. Eisenhower reduced Cuba's sugar quota and thus limiting Cuban exports to the American market. Since sugar was Cuba's primary source of foreign income, this action had serious economic consequences for Cuba. Later that year, the United States imposed an arms embargo and restricted trade with Cuba. These measures were intended to weaken Castro's government economically and politically.

The Soviet Union, under Nikita Khrushchev, stepped in to support Cuba by purchasing Cuban sugar and supplying oil, industrial goods, and financial assistance. This increased Cuba's dependence on the Soviet bloc and accelerated its alignment with communism. By January 1961, the United States had severed diplomatic relations with Cuba entirely. Under President John F. Kennedy, sanctions were expanded into a near-total trade embargo, cutting Cuba off from its largest trading partner.

The sanctions had both economic and political consequences. Cuba faced shortages of consumer goods, industrial equipment, fuel, and medicine. Castro used the sanctions as evidence of American hostility and imperialism, strengthening nationalist support for his government. Instead of isolating Castro, the sanctions pushed Cuba further into the Soviet sphere of influence and heightened Cold War tensions in the Western Hemisphere.

CIA INVOLVEMENT IN ANTI-CASTRO ACTIVITIES

After Castro's rise to power, the United States started to view Cuba as a strategic threat. American officials feared that the establishment of a communist government only 90 miles from Florida could encourage revolutionary movements throughout Latin America. As a result, the Central Intelligence Agency became involved in covert efforts to destabilize and remove Castro's government.

In March 1960, President Eisenhower authorized the CIA to organize and support anti-Castro operations. The agency started recruiting Cuban exiles, many of whom had fled the revolution, and trained them for sabotage, espionage, and paramilitary operations. Training camps were established, primarily in Guatemala and later in Nicaragua. The CIA also supported propaganda campaigns, radio broadcasts, infiltration missions, and economic disruption efforts aimed at weakening the Cuban regime.

The CIA underestimated both Castro's popularity and the effectiveness of Cuban intelligence services. Cuban counterintelligence successfully infiltrated exile groups and uncovered many U.S.-backed plans before they could be executed. Nevertheless, covert operations continued to expand throughout 1960 and 1961. The agency's activities were a reflection of broader Cold War fears about the spread of communism. The United States believed that removing Castro was essential to maintain the American influence in the Western Hemisphere. These operations also reinforced the Cuban fears of invasion and regime change, encouraging Castro to seek stronger military protection from the Soviet Union.

BAY OF PIGS INVASION (1961)

The Bay of Pigs Invasion was one of the most significant events in pre-crisis U.S.-Cuba relations. The invasion took place on 17 April 1961 and was carried out by approximately 1,400 Cuban exiles organized and trained by the CIA. The operation had originally been planned under the Eisenhower administration but was approved by President Kennedy shortly after he entered office. Its purpose was to overthrow Fidel Castro's government and trigger an uprising against the revolution.

The invasion force, Brigade 2506, landed at Playa Girón in the Bay of Pigs on Cuba's southern coast. The operation encountered major problems from the outset. Cuban intelligence had already detected signs of the invasion, and Castro's forces were prepared. Planned air strikes intended to destroy the Cuban air force were reduced because Kennedy wanted to limit American involvement and maintain plausible deniability. Without sufficient air support, the invading force was soon overwhelmed by the Cuban troops loyal to Castro.

Within three days, the invasion collapsed. Many invaders were killed, and more than 1,100 were captured. The failure was a major embarrassment for the United States and it damaged Kennedy's international credibility. Soviet leaders interpreted the disaster as evidence of American weakness and indecisiveness. The invasion greatly strengthened Castro's domestic standing. Many Cubans rallied around the government, viewing the invasion as proof of U.S. imperialism and aggression.

The Bay of Pigs Invasion pushed Cuba closer to the Soviet Union. Shortly after the invasion, Castro formally declared the Cuban Revolution to be socialist and deepened military cooperation with Moscow. The invasion therefore became one of the most important events leading to the Cuban

OPERATION MONGOOSE

After the failure of the Bay of Pigs Invasion in April 1961, the Kennedy administration intensified covert operations against Cuba through Operation Mongoose. Operation Mongoose, officially launched in November 1961, was a large-scale secret campaign designed to destabilize Castro's government and remove him from power. The operation was supervised by Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and coordinated by senior officials from the CIA, Pentagon, and State Department.

The program included sabotage, economic sanctions, psychological warfare, and propaganda. CIA-backed operatives targeted Cuban infrastructure such as factories, sugar mills, transportation networks, and communication systems. The operation also became infamous for numerous assassination plots against Fidel Castro, including bizarre proposals involving poisoned cigars and exploding seashells, though none succeeded.

Operation Mongoose increased Cuban fears of another American invasion. Soviet leaders were aware of many of these covert plans through intelligence reports and viewed them as evidence that the United States intended to overthrow Castro by force. Declassified documents later revealed that covert operations and discussions of regime change were occurring at the highest levels of the Kennedy administration.

Operation Mongoose became one of the major reasons why both Castro and Khrushchev believed Cuba required stronger Soviet military protection.

CUBAN FEARS OF ANOTHER US INVASION

After the Bay of Pigs Invasion, Cuban leaders became convinced that another and much larger American attack was inevitable. From Castro's perspective, the failed invasion showed that the United States would not tolerate a socialist government in Cuba and would continue attempting to overthrow the revolution. These fears grew due to ongoing CIA covert operations, sabotage missions, assassination attempts, and Operation Mongoose activities.

The Cuban government believed that the United States had overwhelming military superiority and could invade at any moment. Cuba's geographical proximity to the United States made it vulnerable. Intelligence reports, military exercises in the Caribbean, and continued anti-Castro rhetoric from Washington reinforced Cuban suspicions that preparations for invasion were underway.

These fears were shared by the Soviet Union. Khrushchev believed that if Cuba were overthrown, Soviet prestige would suffer significantly, especially in the developing world. Protecting Cuba therefore became a strategic and ideological priority. Soviet leaders also saw an opportunity to challenge American nuclear superiority by placing missiles close to the United States, just as the U.S. had stationed nuclear missiles in Turkey near Soviet territory.

For Castro, Soviet military protection appeared essential for the survival of the revolution. This led Cuba to accept the secret deployment of Soviet nuclear missiles in 1962.

SOVIET MOTIVES BEHIND MISSILE DEPLOYMENT

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF CUBA

By the early 1960s, Cuba had become strategically significant to the Soviet Union both geographically and politically. Being located only about 90 miles from the coast of Florida, Cuba held a highly sensitive position within what the United States considered its sphere of influence. After the success of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and Fidel Castro's increasing alignment with communism, the Soviet Union recognized Cuba as an opportunity to establish a strong ally in the Western Hemisphere during the height of the Cold War.

For Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, Cuba represented far more than a small Caribbean island, it became a symbol of communist expansion and resistance to American dominance. Supporting Cuba allowed the Soviet Union to demonstrate that socialism could survive and spread even in regions historically dominated by the United States. This had major ideological value during the global competition between capitalism and communism.

Cuba also held enormous military and strategic value. Establishing a presence in Cuba gave the Soviet a rare opportunity to project power close to U.S. territory. Soviet leaders understood that any military installations in Cuba would force the United States to divert attention and resources toward defending its homeland. Cuba provided an important strategic counterweight to American influence near Soviet borders.

Additionally, after the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion, both Castro and Khrushchev believed that Cuba faced a serious risk of another U.S.-backed invasion. Protecting Cuba therefore became a priority for the Soviet Union. Deploying nuclear missiles on the island was seen as a way to deter American military action while simultaneously strengthening Soviet geopolitical influence in the Western Hemisphere.

U.S. MISSILES IN TURKEY AND ITALY

One of the most important motivations behind the Soviet missile deployment in Cuba was the presence of American nuclear missiles near Soviet territory.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the United States had stationed Jupiter nuclear missiles in NATO countries such as Turkey and Italy. These missiles were capable of reaching major Soviet cities, including Moscow, within a short period of time.

This created a serious strategic imbalance. The United States already possessed a ~~long~~ ^{leading} advantage in long-range nuclear delivery systems, intercontinental bombers and missiles. The placement of Jupiter missiles in Turkey was viewed as especially provocative by Khrushchev because Turkey directly bordered the Soviet Union. Soviet leaders believed the United States was effectively surrounding the USSR with offensive nuclear weapons.

Khrushchev frequently argued that if the United States could place missiles close to Soviet territory, then the Soviet Union had the right to do the same near the United States. Deploying missiles in Cuba was therefore seen as both a strategic response and a political statement. It was intended to mirror American actions in Europe and demonstrate that the Soviet Union could challenge the U.S. nuclear superiority.

KHRUSHCHEV'S POLITICAL AND MILITARY OBJECTIVES

Khrushchev's decision to deploy missiles in Cuba was driven by a combination of political, ideological, and military objectives. Khrushchev faced criticism within the Soviet leadership regarding his handling of Cold War competition with the United States. By taking bold action in Cuba, he hoped to strengthen his political standing and demonstrate Soviet strength both at home and internationally. Militarily, the Soviet Union was at a disadvantage in nuclear capabilities during the early 1960s. Although the USSR possessed nuclear weapons, the United States maintained superiority in the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles, strategic bombers, and overseas military bases. Khrushchev believed that placing medium-range and intermediate-range missiles in Cuba would increase Soviet striking power against the United States without requiring expensive expansion of long-range missile systems.

Politically, Khrushchev also wanted to protect Fidel Castro's government. The Soviet Union feared that another U.S.-supported invasion of Cuba would not only destroy a communist ally but also damage Soviet credibility around the

world. If the Soviet failed to defend Cuba after publicly supporting it, communist movements and Soviet allies elsewhere might doubt Soviet reliability. Khrushchev additionally hoped that the deployment would alter global perceptions of Soviet power. The Soviet Union wanted to appear equal to the United States in strategic influence and military capability. Successfully placing missiles in Cuba would demonstrate that the USSR could directly challenge American security interests in the Western Hemisphere, just as the United States had challenged Soviet security in Europe.

Khrushchev also believed that the missiles could be deployed secretly before the United States discovered them. This assumption proved incorrect when American U-2 reconnaissance flights photographed missile sites in Cuba in October 1962.

NUCLEAR BALANCE DURING THE COLD WAR

The deployment of missiles in Cuba must also be understood within the broader context of the nuclear arms race during the Cold War. By the early 1960s, nuclear weapons had become the foundation of superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. Both nations sought to maintain the ability to prevent attack by threatening devastating retaliation.

The United States held a clear strategic advantage in nuclear weapons. It possessed significantly more operational nuclear warheads, long-range bombers and missile systems than the Soviet Union. American military bases surrounded the Soviet bloc through alliances such as NATO. Soviet leaders feared that this imbalance weakened their ability to deter potential American aggression. Khrushchev believed that deploying nuclear missiles in Cuba could quickly and cheaply reduce this imbalance. Medium-range ballistic missiles stationed in Cuba would place the United States within striking distance. This would increase Soviet deterrence capability and create a more equal strategic balance between the two superpowers.

The crisis therefore reflected the broader Cold War concept of the “balance of terror,” where both sides attempted to maintain security through mutual vulnerability. Soviet leaders believed that if both nations possessed the ability to destroy each other, neither side would risk starting a nuclear war.

SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN CUBA

The missile deployment was part of a much larger Soviet military buildup in Cuba during 1962. Under the secret operation known as Operation Anadyr, the Soviet Union transported thousands of troops, military advisors, engineers, and large quantities of weapons to the island. The operation was conducted under extreme secrecy in an attempt to avoid detection by the United States.

By October 1962, the Soviet military presence in Cuba included approximately 43,000 Soviet personnel. In addition to nuclear missiles, the USSR deployed anti-aircraft systems, fighter aircraft, cruise missiles, radar installations, and conventional military forces. Medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs) and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) capable of carrying nuclear warheads were under construction at multiple sites across Cuba.

The Soviet Union portrayed this as defensive assistance intended to protect Cuba from invasion. However, the offensive capability of the nuclear missiles transformed the situation into a direct strategic threat to the United States. American leaders feared that once operational, the missiles could launch nuclear attacks against major U.S. cities with very little warning time.

The discovery of these missile sites by American U-2 spy planes on 14 October 1962 triggered the Cuban Missile Crisis. President John F. Kennedy responded by imposing a naval quarantine around Cuba and demanding the removal of the missiles.

DISCOVERY OF MISSILES IN CUBA

U-2 RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS

The discovery of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba was through American aerial reconnaissance conducted by the Lockheed U-2 spy plane program. During the Cold War, the United States relied heavily on U-2 flights to monitor Soviet military activities and gather photographic intelligence from high altitudes. These aircraft were capable of flying above 70,000 feet, allowing them to photograph military installations while remaining difficult to intercept. Throughout 1962, American intelligence agencies were concerned about the growing Soviet military buildup in Cuba. Reports from Cuban exiles, intelligence informants, and surveillance operations suggested that the Soviet Union was transporting large quantities of military equipment to the island. However, there was disagreement within the Kennedy administration about whether the Soviets would actually deploy offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba. Some officials believed the Soviet Union would avoid such a risky action because of the possibility of provoking direct confrontation with the United States.

As a result, reconnaissance flights over Cuba intensified during the summer and autumn of 1962. On 14 October 1962, a U-2 aircraft piloted by Major Richard Heyser flew over western Cuba and captured a series of high-resolution photographs. These images provided the first definitive evidence that the Soviet Union was constructing nuclear missile launch sites on the island. The photographs marked the beginning of the Cuban Missile Crisis and triggered immediate alarm within the United States government.

Identification of Missile Sites

After the photographs from the U-2 flights were returned to Washington, analysts at the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Photographic Interpretation Center carefully examined the images. Within hours, intelligence experts identified unmistakable evidence of Soviet medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) installations under construction near San Cristóbal in western Cuba.

The photographs revealed launch pads, missile transport vehicles, fuel storage facilities, missile erectors, and support equipment that closely matched known Soviet missile site designs.

Analysts identified the missiles as Soviet SS-4 medium-range ballistic missiles, capable of carrying nuclear warheads over distances of approximately 2,000 kilometers. This meant they could strike major American cities, including Washington D.C., New York, and much of the southeastern United States.

Further reconnaissance flights over the following days uncovered additional missile sites across Cuba, including installations for intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), which had even greater range capabilities. Intelligence reports also identified Soviet fighter aircraft, anti-aircraft missile systems, radar stations, and large concentrations of Soviet troops on the island. The identification of these missile sites changed American understanding of Soviet intentions. Many officials had assumed that Soviet aid to Cuba was defensive in nature. The discovery proved that the Soviet Union was secretly introducing offensive nuclear weapons into the Western Hemisphere. This dramatically escalated tensions and created fears that the strategic nuclear balance between the superpowers was shifting.

The discovery was especially alarming because some missile sites were approaching operational readiness. American intelligence estimated that once completed, the missiles could become fully functional within a matter of days, greatly reducing warning time for any potential nuclear strike against the United States.

INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AND SURVEILLANCE

The discovery of the missiles was not the result of a single reconnaissance flight alone but rather the culmination of months of intelligence gathering and surveillance. Throughout 1962, American intelligence agencies had monitored Soviet shipping activity to Cuba and observed an increase in military deliveries. Merchant ships arriving from the Soviet Union carried large crates, military vehicles, construction equipment, and personnel under conditions of unusual secrecy.

The CIA also received reports from Cuban exiles and informants describing suspicious construction projects and increased Soviet military activity across the island. However, intelligence assessments remained divided. Some analysts believed the Soviet Union was simply strengthening Cuba's defensive capabilities after the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion, while others warned that offensive weapons might be involved.

One important challenge faced by American intelligence agencies was the limited frequency of U-2 flights during certain periods in 1962. After a previous U-2 aircraft had been shot down over the Soviet Union in 1960 during the U-2 Incident, reconnaissance operations became politically sensitive. Concerns about provoking the Soviet Union led to restrictions on surveillance flights, delaying confirmation of missile activity in Cuba.

Once the missiles were discovered, surveillance operations increased dramatically. Additional U-2 flights and low-altitude reconnaissance missions conducted by the U.S. Navy and Air Force provided continuous photographic evidence of missile construction, troop movements, and military installations. These intelligence efforts allowed American policymakers to track Soviet activities during the crisis.

INITIAL AMERICAN RESPONSE

The discovery of the missile sites triggered immediate concern within the administration of President John F. Kennedy. On 16 October 1962, Kennedy was informed of the photographic evidence, marking the official beginning of the Cuban Missile Crisis. The President quickly assembled a group of senior advisors known as the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, commonly referred to as ExComm, to discuss possible responses.

The initial reaction within the administration was one of shock and alarm. The presence of Soviet nuclear missiles only 90 miles from American territory was viewed as an unacceptable threat to national security. Many military leaders advocated for immediate and aggressive action, including large-scale air strikes against the missile sites followed by a full invasion of Cuba.

Kennedy was cautious about taking actions that might trigger a wider war with the Soviet Union. He feared that a direct military attack on Cuba could escalate into nuclear conflict. ExComm debated several alternatives, including diplomatic negotiations, secret pressure on the Soviet Union, targeted air strikes and a naval blockade.

Ultimately, Kennedy chose a naval “quarantine” of Cuba rather than an immediate military assault. The term “quarantine” was deliberately used instead of “blockade” because a blockade could legally be interpreted as an act of war under international law.

On 22 October 1962, Kennedy delivered a televised address to the American public, revealing the existence of the missile sites and announcing the quarantine. He warned that any nuclear missile launched from Cuba would be regarded as an attack by the Soviet Union against the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response.

The initial American response combined military preparedness with diplomatic caution. U.S. armed forces were placed on high alert, naval forces surrounded Cuba, and preparations for possible invasion continued. At the same time, Kennedy sought to avoid immediate escalation and create space for negotiations with the Soviet Union.

KEY DECISION-MAKING BODIES AND LEADERS

JOHN F. KENNEDY AND EXCOMM

John F. Kennedy was inaugurated the 35th President of the United States in 1961 after narrowly defeating the Republican candidate, Vice President Richard Nixon. He was the youngest man ever elected President, at age 43. He took office during a challenging time for the country. Kennedy's foreign policy was shaped by the Cold War, an intense rivalry with the Soviet Union and its allies. In 1961, Kennedy approved the Bay of Pigs invasion, and its failure caused embarrassment to the United States and increased tensions between Cuba, USSR and the US. Since both countries were armed with nuclear weapons, the Cold War led to two major crises, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the escalation of America's involvement in Vietnam but it also led Kennedy to negotiate the landmark Nuclear Test Ban Treaty with the Soviet Union.

The Executive Committee of the National Security Council (EXCOMM), was a special group formed by the U.S. President John F. Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. It was formed to advise the president on further actions after nuclear missiles were discovered in Cuba. The committee chose naval quarantine after discussing more responses such as airstrikes which helped prevent a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. EXCOMM played a major role in managing the Cold war and showed how close the world came to a nuclear war.

NIKITA KRUSHCHEV

Nikita Khrushchev was the leader of the Soviet Union during an important phase of the Cold War after the death of Joseph Stalin. After Stalin's rule to make the soviet system less repressive, Khrushchev introduced De-Stalinization. In 1956, he delivered his famous "Secret Speech," where he condemned Stalin's dictatorship, political purges, and abuse of power. When Fidel Castro adopted a communist government in Cuba, the Soviet Union became Cuba's strongest supporter.

Khrushchev decided to secretly place nuclear missiles in Cuba, 90 miles away from Florida. He placed these to protect Cuba from another American invasion after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. Since the US already had nuclear missiles stationed near soviet territories like Turkey, placing missiles in Cuba helped the USSR to match America's nuclear power. For Khrushchev, it was both a military decision and a way to show that the Soviet Union could stand equally against the United States. When these missiles were discovered, as a response US president, John. F Kennedy imposed a naval quarantine and demanded for the missiles to be removed. For thirteen tense days, the world lived under the fear of a nuclear war as both superpowers prepared for possible conflict. Khrushchev and Kennedy exchanged urgent letters under massive pressure, which ended in Khrushchev agreeing to remove the missiles from Cuba if the US promised not to invade Cuba and the US also secretly agreed to remove their placed missiles from Turkey.

FIDEL CASTRO

Fidel Castro was the leader of Cuba and one of the most important figures of the Cold War. He came to power in 1959 after leading a revolution that removed the Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista from power. Castro promised to create a more just and equal society in Cuba. When tensions with the US increased, he formed a strong alliance with Soviet Leader Khrushchev and the Soviet Union, which brought Cuba in the midst of the Cold War rivalry. Cuba became the base of the Soviet nuclear missiles in 1962. Castro accepted the nuclear missiles in Cuba, as a mode of protection for them after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. He became suspicious of America's intentions as they supported the Cuban exiles in their attempt to overthrow Cuba's government. He believed that standing with the Soviet Union was necessary for the survival of his government. When the missiles were discovered by American spy planes, Kennedy demanded them to be removed. The world was on edge of a nuclear war. Castro prepared Cuba for an American attack. His resistance and the crisis in Cuba became a major flashpoint of the cold war.

ROBERT F. KENNEDY

Robert Kennedy was the US general attorney and the younger brother and closest advisor of John. F Kennedy during the Cold War. Robert Kennedy was always calm under pressure and loyal to his brother, which were qualities that were required during the Cold War. Robert Kennedy was also a key member of EXCOMM. While military officials thought of launching airstrikes on Cuba upon discovering the missiles in Cuba, Robert Kennedy stopped them from doing so as it could lead to a nuclear war. Instead he put forward the idea of a naval quarantine, as it would pressurise Cuba but at the same time leave room for negotiations. He then proceeded to secretly negotiate with Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin and came in direct contact with the Soviet side which helped the US and USSR come to an agreement where Castro removed the missiles from Cuba and the US secretly removed the missiles from Turkey. His calm approach saved the two countries from entering a nuclear war.

SOVIET MILITARY LEADERSHIP

The Soviet military leadership played an important role during the Cuban Missile Crisis and worked closely with Nikita Khrushchev. In order to protect Cuba from another possible American invasion and to match America's nuclear power, they were the ones who were responsible for transporting troops and nuclear missiles in Cuba. During the crisis, Soviet commanders in Cuba were highly prepared towards any American attack on the island and strongly opposed removing the nuclear missiles from Cuba. However, Khrushchev later on agreed to remove the missiles to avoid a nuclear war. The military leaders had a lot of influence during the Cold war.

ROLE OF ADVISORS, INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES AND MILITARY COMMANDERS

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, both Kennedy and Khrushchev were under massive pressure and relied largely on their close officials. Advisors, intelligence agencies and military commanders had a lot of influence during that period. Intelligence agencies were extremely crucial, as it was through these agencies which sent out American spy planes which led to the discovery of nuclear missiles in Cuba after which the CIA carefully analyzed it. The intelligence agencies on the Soviet Side kept track of the American officials and their movements, which helped them understand the seriousness of the situation. When the military officials in Cuba wanted direct airstrikes on Cuba, Senior officials and advisors like Robert Kennedy prevented them from doing so as it would lead to a nuclear war. Soviet military commanders also stood strongly against the removal of Soviet nuclear missiles from Cuba. To prevent the cold war from turning into a nuclear disaster, political leaders largely depended on intelligence agencies, advisors and military officials.

THE THIRTEEN DAYS OF THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Timeline from 14 October to 28 October 1962

- 14 October 1962 – An American U-2 spy plane photographed Soviet missile sites under construction in Cuba.
- 16 October – President John F. Kennedy was informed about the missiles and formed EXCOMM to discuss possible responses.
- 18 October – Kennedy met Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, who denied that the Soviet Union was placing offensive weapons in Cuba.
- 22 October – Kennedy addressed the American public on television, revealed the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba, and announced a naval blockade around the island.
- 23 October – U.S. military forces were placed on high alert, while Soviet ships continued moving toward Cuba.
- 24 October – Soviet ships approaching the blockade slowed down or turned back, reducing immediate chances of confrontation.
- 25 October – Tense debates took place at the United Nations, where the United States presented photographic evidence of the missile sites.
- 26 October – Nikita Khrushchev sent a message offering to remove the missiles if the United States promised not to invade Cuba.
- 27 October – Known as “Black Saturday,” tensions reached their peak after an American U-2 plane was shot down over Cuba. Khrushchev demanded that U.S. missiles in Turkey also be removed. Secret negotiations began through Robert F. Kennedy and Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin.
- 28 October – Khrushchev announced that the Soviet Union would remove its missiles from Cuba in exchange for an American promise not to invade Cuba and the secret removal of U.S. missiles from Turkey, officially ending the crisis.

NAVAL QUARANTINE OF CUBA

The relationship between Cuba and the United States worsened following the failure of Operation Pluto, also referred to as the Bay of Pigs Invasion, to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro. The administration of John Kennedy was planning Operation Mongoose, a covert campaign of sabotage and destabilisation against Cuba, and in July 1962 Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and Castro secretly agreed to put Soviet nuclear missiles on Cuban soil. The Soviets saw the deployment as a way to protect Cuba from another possible American invasion and to counter U.S. nuclear missiles in Turkey and Italy.

On September 4th, 1962, following American intelligence and routine surveillance flights providing proof that a major Soviet military influx on the island, including Soviet IL-28 bombers, surface-to-air missile systems, and increased military shipments, President John F. Kennedy publicly warned against the introduction of offensive weapons into Cuba. By late summer, work was underway at several missile launch sites across Cuba. On October 14, 1962, despite Kennedy's warning, a Lockheed U-2 reconnaissance plane photographed the construction of medium-range and intermediate-range ballistic nuclear missile sites (MRBMs and IRBMs) that could reach large parts of the continental United States. The CIA analysts processed and confirmed the images, and the intelligence reached the White House on October 15, 1962, the first day of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

President Kennedy immediately called together the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, the ExComm, to go over possible US responses and to devise a strategy to solve the crisis. Some of the advisors (particularly the Joint Chiefs of Staff) wanted to conduct air strikes and then invade Cuba, but others wanted to use diplomatic pressure and not risk escalating the conflict into a nuclear war. Kennedy discovered what he thought was a middle course. On October 22, 1962, he ordered a naval "quarantine" of Cuba to prevent any further Soviet shipments of offensive military equipment from reaching the island.

The words "quarantine" rather than "blockade" were used on both legal and diplomatic grounds because the latter suggested the existence of a state of war as per the norms of international law. Using this word was necessary for the United States to win the Organization of American States' endorsement for their actions. On the same day, Kennedy wrote Khrushchev an open letter stating that

America would prevent the delivery of further offensive weapons to Cuba. He insisted upon the dismantling of missile bases and all offensive weapons installed there. With this letter, Kennedy initiated a long list of direct and indirect contacts between the White House and the Kremlin during the period of crisis. In the evening, he spoke to the nation in television broadcasts, disclosing the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba, imposing the naval quarantine, and predicting the disastrous effects that the escalation might bring about worldwide.

DEFCON

The military force of the United States maintains a graded warning system referred to as DEFCON or Defence Readiness Condition that indicates the extent of military readiness in cases where there is international tension or nuclear warfare. The system came into practice in 1959 during the Cold War era where tensions between communism and the Soviet Union on one side, and America on the other side, were escalating very fast. DEFCON alerts are categorized from DEFCON 5, which denotes peacetime military readiness, to DEFCON 1, the maximum state of alert indicating either impending or existing nuclear war.

In a 1959 memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the DEFCON system was introduced to set up "a uniform system of progressive readiness" that would guarantee proper communication in the military chain of command and make sure that the United States' armed forces are ready for quick reaction in case of an emergency or any kind of war.

DEFCON 5 constitutes the usual status in peacetime for the United States Armed Forces and is regarded as the lowest status of alert. In the state of DEFCON 5, there is no special action taken by military forces beyond regular training, observation, and operation. DEFCON 5 is explained by the Joint Chiefs as being a state of readiness where there is equilibrium between readiness and normal military operations.

DEFCON 4 denotes a higher degree of alertness with a greater amount of intelligence gathering. At this phase, extra steps are taken for security, and more attention is paid to political and military activity around the world by military personnel. While tensions are high at DEFCON 4, military activities do not

change significantly and most American troops operate between DEFCON 5 and DEFCON 4 under normal circumstances.

DEFCON 3 is the highest degree of alert in peacetime and is typically seen as a standby level, two steps from conflict. The Joint Chiefs document states that DEFCON 3 is "a readiness posture that requires certain portions of the assigned forces to assume an increased readiness posture above that of normal readiness." Different elements of the U.S. military attended DEFCON 3 during less stressful times throughout the Cuban Missile Crisis. President Richard Nixon placed the American military on DEFCON 3 during the Yom Kippur War in 1973, more than ten years later, because it was thought that Moscow was getting ready to attack in the Middle East.

DEFCON 2 suggests that there is going to be a war in the near future and puts the military in one step from the highest state of readiness. In other words, troops in such a condition are ready to conduct a combat operation, strategic bombers are in standby status, submarines with nuclear warheads are launched, and the missiles are ready for firing. According to the Joint Chiefs' definition, DEFCON 2 requires even more increase in forces' readiness and allows some emergency deployments and civil defense measures. For instance, during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, a part of the U.S. Strategic Air Command went under the state of DEFCON 2, which became one of the most critical points in the modern history of mankind.

DEFCON 1 stands for the most serious state of readiness among the entire system. This state will be applied in case of the imminence or occurrence of nuclear war. At DEFCON 1, armed forces enter the maximum readiness to start a combat operation. No country in the world has ever entered the state of DEFCON 1 since its creation.

As U.S. naval troops started enforcing the quarantine and preparations for a military attack on Cuba increased, the Joint Chiefs of Staff declared a military readiness status of DEFCON 3.

BACKCHANNEL DIPLOMACY

President John F. Kennedy called in his top advisors to devise a plan of action that would end the conflict without starting a nuclear war as tensions rose during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Despite the use of diplomatic contacts through the official channels, the deadlock was resolved through back-channel diplomacy.

John Scali, the ABC News reporter, reported to the White House on October 26 that a KGB agent, whose cover name was Aleksandr Fomin, contacted him. It seemed that if there were an announcement from the USA that it would not attempt an invasion of Cuba, then the USSR might consider the removal of its missiles from the Cuban islands. This was an invaluable chance for the administration of President Kennedy to explore the possibility for a peaceful solution of the crisis without the risks associated with public statements. This idea of Scali was reflected in the personal and emotional appeal from Soviet Premier, Nikita Khrushchev, to Kennedy made later the same night. The plan proposed mutual withdrawal of all types of threats, and he warned about the dire consequences of nuclear war. On the other hand, he made a new condition for the next day, the evacuation of American Jupiter missiles from Turkey.

Kennedy and his advisors were under tremendous pressure to take action as the crisis worsened, which was made worse by the shooting down of a U.S. U-2 surveillance plane above Cuba. Kennedy responded to Khrushchev's first, more accommodative message rather than his second, more demanding one. He used a covert diplomatic route: Attorney General Robert Kennedy met with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin in private. Although the U.S. could not publicly agree to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey as part of the crisis settlement, Robert Kennedy explained in this secret discussion that the weapons were already scheduled to be removed soon.

MILITARISATION OF CUBA BY SOVIET UNION

RATIONALE OF THE SOVIET STOP PUT THEIR MISSILES IN CUBA:

In Khrushchev's opinion, he had legitimate reasons to station missiles in Cuba. For instance, he felt that the Americans intended to invade Cuba soon, and he wanted to protect Cuba from such an attack. Moreover, Khrushchev was angry because, the previous year, the U.S. installed nuclear missiles in Turkey which was next to the Soviet Union. According to Khrushchev, the reason why he stationed missiles in Cuba was to teach Americans a lesson. The missiles stationed in Cuba and Turkey were purportedly intermediate-range missiles. These missiles could reach their destinations more effectively and secretly than the bomber aircraft or early intercontinental missiles. These missiles could target a substantial part of the southeastern part of America, even reaching Washington, D.C. The threat of a nuclear attack by the Soviet Union became more real.

US RECONNAISSANCE AND CONFIRMATION OF MISSILES

Following the crisis at the Bay of Pigs, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, allegedly disturbed by the presence of U.S. nuclear missiles in Turkey, opted to enhance military support for Cuba to supposedly put pressure on the United States. As a step towards a more balanced strategic posture, Khrushchev attempted in August 1962 to construct intermediate and medium-range ballistic missile bases in Cuba because the country was just 90 miles away from Florida, and after becoming operational, such missile bases would be able to target any city in the mainland United States and Canada. After the alleged detection by American intelligence of the activities associated with constructing the missile bases, there was a need to ascertain the same. The Strategic Air Command (SAC) dispatched two individuals from the 4080th Strategic Wing, Majors Richard S. Heyser and Rudolf Anderson, Jr., to conduct reconnaissance flights using U-2 planes to prove that there was indeed the establishment of the missile bases. On

October 14 and 15, 1962, the two planes conducted their missions above the territory of Cuba, and pictures from the flights confirmed the existence of the missile bases. During a follow-up mission above the island on October 27, 1962, Maj. Anderson was killed after his plane was shot down.

On October 21, 1962, the 363d Tactical Reconnaissance Wing transported RF-101 and RB-66 aircraft to MacDill AFB, Florida, from Shaw AFB, South Carolina. The wing conducted its initial low-level reconnaissance missions on October 26. Over the following three weeks, it gathered vital intelligence on the missile sites and discovered the position of IL-28 Soviet bombers along with air-to-air and surface-to-air missile sites. During this period, SAC continued its U-2 missions to collect additional intelligence, kept nearly sixty nuclear capable heavy bombers on airborne alert, and positioned all available intercontinental ballistic missiles on standby for immediate launch. The command also relocated its strategic bombers from the southeastern United States to accommodate Tactical Air Command (TAC) fighter jets, including F-100s and F-105s. Furthermore, the Continental Air Defense Command raised the number of air defense missions conducted along the Gulf Coast. Lastly, the USAF airlifted about 2,000 Marines and 1,400 tons of equipment to Naval Air Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, over a two-day span. As the United States geared up for a potential aerial strike against Cuba, and possibly the Soviet Union, it also instituted a naval quarantine on all military shipments headed for Cuba.

ROLE OF CUBA DURING THE CRISIS

CASTRO'S DEMANDS AND CONCERNS

In the Cuban Missile Crisis, Fidel Castro believed that the measures taken by the United States indicated that an attack on Cuba was imminent. The failed Bay of Pigs invasion and Operation Mongoose campaign were seen as proof of American aggression towards Cuba. Castro supported the deployment of Soviet missiles on Cuban soil to ensure the safety of his country in the future.

With rising tensions, Castro demanded that the Soviet Union show no weakness in the face of American pressure. Castro was very worried about the survival of the Cuban Revolution and the sovereignty of his nation. Castro also condemned any idea of a compromise made by the Soviets that did not consider Cuban concerns.

Cuban Military Preparedness

In the course of the crisis, Cuba activated its military forces and was ready for the contingency that America might launch an attack on it. Cuban military personnel and militia units were put on heightened alert. Defense posts were set up throughout the country, especially around important military installations.

Relationship with Both Superpowers

Cuba kept its allegiance to the Soviet Union during the entire crisis. The Soviet Union offered military security, financial assistance, and missiles to Cuba, whereas Cuba gave the Soviet Union an important geopolitical position that was strategically close to the United States. Although Cuba and the Soviet Union were allied, on several occasions there were disagreements between Castro and Khrushchev due to Cuba's absence in major diplomatic talks concerning the missile issue.

Relations between Cuba and the United States were openly antagonistic. While Cuba considered the United States' actions to be imperialistic, America saw Cuba as a potential communist threat in the Western Hemisphere.

IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON CUBAN SOVEREIGNTY

The Cuban Missile Crisis had an impact on Cuba's sovereignty and standing on the international scene. Even though the military support of the Soviet Union prevented a direct attack on Cuba, the majority of Cuban officials considered that the Soviet Union took some significant decisions about Cuba without considering the opinions of the Cuban government. On the other hand, the Cuban Missile Crisis brought the promise by the Americans not to invade Cuba, ensuring the existence of Castro's regime.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND MILITARY STRATEGY

TYPES OF MISSILES DEPLOYED IN CUBA

During the year 1962, the Soviet Union secretly shipped various types of military equipment, including nuclear weapons, to Cuba. They included:

- Medium-Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBM),
- Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBM),
- IL-28 bombers,
- anti-aircraft missile defense systems,
- tactical nuclear weapons and facilities for launching missiles.

While MRBMs were capable of striking targets in the southeastern parts of America, IRBMs were able to reach most parts of the continent.

Nuclear Deterrence

This situation highlighted the role of nuclear deterrence in the Cold War period. Nuclear deterrence is the policy that prevents any war through the threat of devastating retaliation if attacked. The two nations possessed powerful nuclear weapons that could cause huge destruction, thus deterring either of the sides from launching an attack.

The idea of Mutually Assured Destruction played a vital role in this scenario. According to this concept, both superpowers recognized the devastating effects of a war involving nuclear weapons on both sides.

FIRST STRIKE VS SECOND STRIKE CAPABILITY

The first strike was a surprise nuclear attack designed to disable the enemy's military capability before counterattacks can be launched. The superpowers during the Cold War era were wary of the possibility that the other side would launch a first strike attack. Second strike capability was the capacity of a nation to retaliate with nuclear attacks even after being attacked initially. Second strike capability was boosted by the use of nuclear submarines, bombers, and missiles.

RISKS OF ESCALATION AND ACCIDENTAL WAR

The Cuban Missile Crisis demonstrated how rapidly nuclear conflicts might spiral out of control and turn into world wars. Both countries had their military units set at maximum alert status, and there were instances that might have sparked a war unintentionally. Misunderstandings or any unauthorized activities could have resulted in nuclear conflict. The U.S. moved some of its troops to DEFCON 2 alert level, and its adversary's nuclear units also readied themselves for potential fighting. With nuclear missiles near the American continent, there was a strong possibility of accidents taking place.

RESOLUTION OF THE CRISIS

KHRUSHCHEV–KENNEDY NEGOTIATIONS

As the tension escalated, John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev were trying their best to find means to prevent any nuclear war. Communication was established between Washington and Moscow, whether publicly or privately, during this time. Back-channel diplomacy also became crucial in easing tensions. Eventually, Khrushchev offered to remove his missiles from Cuba in return for guarantees of safety for Cuba by America.

REMOVAL OF SOVIET MISSILES FROM CUBA

The agreement reached on 28 October 1962 was that the Soviet Union would remove its missiles from Cuba. In exchange, the United States would lift its naval blockade and refrain from invading Cuba.

U.S. Non-Invasion Pledge Toward Cuba

In addition, the United States made assurances that it would not attack Cuba, nor would it assist in any other direct military attacks on the regime of Fidel Castro. Such assurances were crucial for Cuba as well as the Soviet Union.

SECRET REMOVAL OF U.S. MISSILES FROM TURKEY

However, one thing about the deal which was kept a secret was the planned withdrawal of American Jupiter missiles from Turkey. Despite the fact that the Kennedy government did not want to connect the deal in Cuba to the missiles stationed in Turkey, it was secretly told to the Soviets that the missiles were going to be withdrawn at a later date.

Establishment of the Moscow–Washington Hotline

This incident proved that delayed communication between the two superpowers could be very dangerous. This led to the development of the Moscow–Washington hot line in 1963 which provided for immediate contact between leaders during any future international crises.

IMPACT AND AFTERMATH

EFFECT ON U.S.–USSR RELATIONS

This event had many impacts on the relationship between the two countries. The leaders understood the high risks involved in such confrontations and became careful with handling future situations. Despite the rivalry during the Cold War period, they all had an increased interest in avoiding war.

The impact of the crisis was that Khrushchev became less favored in his own country despite averting the war.

CHANGES IN COLD WAR DIPLOMACY

In the aftermath of the crisis, Cold War diplomacy was conducted with more prudence, and communication between the two powers was facilitated. Each party began to use diplomacy, negotiation, and dialogue over arms control to handle their differences.

PARTIAL NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY (1963)

The Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was signed in 1963 by the United States, Soviet Union, and United Kingdom. Under the treaty, nuclear weapons tests were banned in the atmosphere, in outer space, and underwater, but not underground.

IMPACT ON CUBA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Post-crisis, Cuba remained staunchly of the Soviet Union and at the same time increased its involvement in revolutionary and anti-colonial struggles in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Cuba came to be seen more and more as an example of anti-imperialism and opposition to the US.

Backchannel Diplomacy:

As tensions during the Cuban Missile Crisis continued to rise, John F. Kennedy and his advisors searched for a way to end the crisis without triggering nuclear war. While formal diplomatic communication between the United States and the Soviet Union continued publicly, some of the most important negotiations took place secretly through unofficial channels.

On 26 October 1962, ABC News journalist John Scali informed the White House that Soviet diplomat Aleksandr Fomin, who was operating under diplomatic cover and linked to Soviet intelligence, had privately approached him with a possible compromise. According to Fomin, the Soviet Union could consider removing its missiles from Cuba if the United States publicly promised not to invade Cuba. This unofficial communication gave the Kennedy administration a chance to explore a peaceful solution without the political pressure of public negotiations.

Later that evening, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev personally sent Kennedy a more emotional and conciliatory message warning about the dangers of nuclear war and proposing a settlement based on reducing threats on both sides. The next day, Khrushchev added another demand, the removal of American Jupiter missiles from Turkey.

At the same time, the crisis became even more dangerous after an American U-2 spy plane was shot down over Cuba. Military officials such as Curtis LeMay and Maxwell Taylor increasingly pushed for stronger military action against Cuba and the Soviet Union. Despite this pressure, Kennedy chose to publicly respond only to Khrushchev's earlier and more moderate message.

Meanwhile, another highly important secret meeting took place between Robert F. Kennedy and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin. During this private discussion, Robert Kennedy explained that although the United States could not publicly agree to remove its Jupiter missiles from Turkey, those missiles were already expected to be withdrawn in the near future. This quiet assurance gave Khrushchev an opportunity to step back from the crisis without appearing weak internationally.

On 28 October 1962, Khrushchev publicly announced that the Soviet Union would dismantle and remove its missiles from Cuba. In return, the United States promised not to invade Cuba, while the understanding regarding the Jupiter missiles in Turkey remained secret at the time.

The Cuban Missile Crisis demonstrated how important informal communication and backchannel diplomacy could be during moments of extreme international tension. These private negotiations played a major role in preventing nuclear war and later contributed to the establishment of the Washington-Moscow Hotline, allowing direct communication between American and Soviet leadership during future crises.

FIDEL CASTRO AND CUBAN SOVEREIGNTY

Fidel Castro remains one of the most debated political leaders of the twentieth century. While many Western governments viewed him as a communist dictator closely aligned with the Soviet Union, many people across Latin America, Africa and the developing world saw him as a symbol of resistance against foreign domination and imperialism. To supporters, Castro represented the struggle for sovereignty, national independence and self-determination.

The Cuban Revolution officially succeeded on 1 January 1959 when Fidel Castro and his revolutionary forces overthrew the government of Fulgencio Batista. Batista's regime had long been criticised for corruption, political repression, inequality and heavy American influence over the Cuban economy. Castro promised major reforms focused on reducing inequality and placing Cuban resources under national control.

Castro had first gained national attention after leading the attack on the Moncada Barracks in 1953. Although the attack failed, it became an important symbol of revolutionary resistance. After imprisonment and exile, Castro travelled to Mexico where he organised the Granma expedition alongside revolutionaries such as Raúl Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara. Returning to Cuba in 1956, they launched a guerrilla campaign from the Sierra Maestra mountains that eventually overthrew Batista by the end of 1958.

After the revolution, Fidel Castro introduced major reforms across Cuba. One of the most significant was the Agrarian Reform Law of 1959, which redistributed land and attempted to reduce the economic power of wealthy landowners and foreign corporations. His government also expanded healthcare, education and social welfare programs, presenting these reforms as efforts to place ordinary Cuban citizens at the centre of national development.

Figures such as Raúl Castro played a major role in organising Cuba's revolutionary armed forces, while Ernesto Che Guevara became one of the leading ideological and economic figures of the revolution. Cuba also positioned itself as a supporter of anti-imperialist movements worldwide, including

providing assistance to newly independent nations such as Algeria in 1962. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, the issue of Cuban sovereignty became central. Fidel Castro strongly believed that Cuba had the right to defend itself against American aggression, especially after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion and ongoing CIA-backed operations aimed at destabilising his government. Although Cuba relied heavily on Soviet military support under Nikita Khrushchev, Castro also wanted Cuba to be recognised as an independent revolutionary state rather than merely a battlefield in the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board expects delegates to approach committee with a strong understanding of both their portfolio and the historical context of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Since this is a fast-paced crisis simulation, delegates are expected to actively participate in debate, negotiations, directives and crisis responses throughout committee.

Delegates should:

- Research their portfolio thoroughly, including political stance, military authority and historical actions.
- Understand the broader Cold War context and the interests of their bloc.
- Be prepared to respond quickly to crisis updates and changing situations.
- Engage actively during moderated and unmoderated caucuses.

The Executive Board values:

- Strategic thinking over repetitive speeches,
- Realistic decision-making over unnecessary aggression,
- Strong crisis planning and execution,
- Diplomacy, negotiation and alliance-building,
- Adaptability under pressure,
- And most importantly, consistency with portfolio policy.

This committee genuinely will not function like a conventional MUN committee. Delegates should understand that things beyond what they generally may have experienced, can happen at any point during committee progression. Crisis developments may completely alter alliances, expose hidden operations, create internal conflicts or shift the balance of power within minutes. Delegates are strongly encouraged to delve deeply into the history surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis, Cold War intelligence operations, military structures and diplomatic developments. Read beyond basic research. Read every article, memoir, archive and historical account you can find.

There may be surprises waiting that only the most prepared delegates will recognise and respond to effectively.

Expect the unexpected.

Be ready.

Most importantly, delegates are expected to contribute meaningfully to committee dynamics rather than remaining passive observers. This committee is designed to reward initiative, preparedness and the ability to make impactful decisions under pressure.

HOW THE COMMITTEE WORKS

This committee will function as a continuous crisis simulation based on the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Unlike a conventional MUN committee, the pace of debate and committee progression will be significantly faster and more dynamic. The committee will broadly be divided into two major blocs — the United States bloc and the Soviet Union bloc. Delegates will represent key political, military, intelligence and diplomatic figures from both sides, alongside Cuban representatives directly involved in the crisis. Delegates are expected to act according to the powers, limitations and interests of their assigned portfolio.

Committee proceedings will primarily take place through moderated caucuses, unmoderated caucuses, communiqués, and continuous crisis updates. Traditional long-form speeches and resolution-writing will be limited. Instead, delegates will be encouraged to focus on strategy, negotiations, decision-making and real-time responses to developments introduced by the dais.

Crisis updates may be introduced at any point during committee and can immediately alter military, political, diplomatic or economic conditions. These updates may include intelligence leaks, military escalation, sabotage, diplomatic breakthroughs, assassinations, invasions, internal conflicts, defections or covert operations. Delegates are expected to adapt quickly and respond realistically.

The committee will also include hidden crisis arcs, intelligence-based developments and special operations integrated into committee progression. Delegates should pay close attention to updates, coded information, statements made by other delegates and subtle historical references introduced during debate.

Most importantly, this committee is designed to reward delegates who actively engage with committee dynamics. Initiative, adaptability, negotiation and strategic thinking will matter far more than prepared speeches alone.