

**Committee:** Historical Committee

**Topics:** The issue of the Cuban Missile Crisis

**Chairs:** Minnie Lin



**Shenzhen College of International Education**  
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## *Letter from the Chairs*

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the Historical Committee for SCIEMUN 2023.

My name is Minnie, and I am currently a G12 student from SCIE. It is an honour for me to be the chair of the Historical Committee.

As members of the HC, you will be discussing pressing issues involving the security of the international community that occurred in the history, including the Cuban Missile Crisis and Persian Gulf Crisis. Please be prepared for the conference, by doing ample research on the topics, in relation to your country's stance, past international actions and potential solutions.

If you have any questions regarding SCIEMUN or just MUN in general, including but not limited to the topics, researching or writing a position paper - please do not hesitate to contact me by my email s20179.Lin@stu.scie.com.cn. I will try my best to answer them and reply as soon as possible.

I am looking forward to meeting you all at SCIEMUN in November.

Sincerely,

Minnie Lin

Chair of Historical Committee

## *Committee Background and Mission Statement*

The Historical Committee can be considered one of the most special committees in Model UN. Its uniqueness arises from that it is not, in fact, a real committee that exists within the actual UN structure, but rather a simulated committee with topics that discusses pressing issues in the past. The main goal of the committee can be considered to produce resolutions that tackles those topics, ideally in a better response than what occurred in the history. This is significant because it enables delegates to view the

events with hindsight knowledge while plays a role in negotiating for the issue based upon the country's stance, evaluating what could have been the best response for the country's interests. It is in some respect similar to the Security Council, as its topics often incorporate international peace and security, therefore it is highly likely for countries to have contradicting stances, which in turn could provoke intense debates. Moreover, the HC would use the SC procedures, with the whole committee producing one resolution for each of the topics and the Permanent Five would have veto power.

## Topic Overview

### Introduction

The Cuban Missile Crisis which occurred in 1962 can be regarded as the most intense confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Although this crisis only lasted for 13 days, the Soviet Union and the United States were hovering around the nuclear button, bringing humanity to an unprecedented brink of destruction, and the world was at a critical moment. The crisis ended in compromise between the United States, led by John F. Kennedy, and Soviet Union, led by Nikita Khrushchev, and did not result in nuclear warfare, to the relief of the entire international society. So far, the Cuban missile crisis is still considered the most dangerous moment for survival of humanity, as it almost led to use of nuclear weapons.

### Key terms

1. Cold War: ongoing political rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies that developed after World War II, which expressed itself in the forms of arms race, economic confrontation, and proxy wars, but did not result in direct confrontation between the two superpowers.
2. Arms race: a race between hostile nations to accumulate or develop weapons, ever escalating race or competition
3. Nuclear weapon: device designed to release energy in an explosive manner because of nuclear fission, nuclear fusion, or a combination of the two

4. Nuclear deterrence: The act of a country or political group demonstrating nuclear force or preparing to use nuclear weapons to achieve established political objectives, to deter the escalation of enemy military action

## Causes

The Cold War arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union was one of the major causes of the Cuban Missile Crisis. In the context of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a fierce nuclear arms race. In order to gain an advantage in this competition, the Soviet Union deployed nuclear missiles in Cuba, hoping to deter the United States. The Soviet Union was also using this as an opportunity to balance against USA for its placement of nuclear weapons in Turkey, through posing equal threat in USA's sphere of influence and could use this act to pressure USA to remove its nuclear weapons in Turkey in exchange for USSR's removal of nuclear weapons in Cuba.

What lay deeper behind this was the ideological conflict between the USA and USSR, which thereby led to the Cold War's long-term confrontation. After World War II, these two superpowers emerged on the international political stage, and held opposing political ideologies: On one hand, the USA held a capitalistic and democratic view which supported elections, free market, and freedom of choice. On the other hand, the USSR took a socialist/communist approach, which featured collectivisation, command economy, one-party system, and centralised control. Both superpowers spread their influence and formed their sphere of influence. The Soviet Union's deployment of nuclear weapons in the Western Hemisphere was seen by the United States as ideological expansion That extended to US sphere of influence, and exacerbated the severity of the crisis.

The anti-American stance of the Castro regime in Cuba was also a major contributing factor to the Crisis. After the Cuban Revolution in 1959, Castro came to power and implemented socialist reforms. This effectively meant that US political and economic interests were harmed, as communist influence spread to Cuba and US businesses In Cuba were taken over by Castro. The United States thereby implemented diplomatic isolation and economic blockade against Cuba, and the Castro regime turned further to the Soviet Union for assistance and support, which provided conditions for the Soviet Union to deploy nuclear missiles in Cuba, and ultimately led to the Crisis.

Yet another cause for the Crisis was the extensive US intervention in Latin America. For a long time, the United States has continuously intervened in the internal affairs of Latin American countries through various means, which has provoked discontent in these countries. Especially for Cuba, US supported the anti-communist dictator Batista whom the Cuban population opposed, hence when Castro

became in power in 1959, he refused to cooperate with USA and instead turned to USSR and communism. The Soviet Union was able to use this anti-American sentiment to gain a foothold in Cuba, ultimately leading to the Crisis.

### Events prior to the Crisis

During the Cold War period, USA and USSR were tied in intense arms race against each other, spending enormous sums each year in military research and development. In particular, in 1960s, the two superpowers were locked in nuclear arms race, and both developed even bigger, deadlier, and more flexible weapons. USA had more nuclear weapons, but both countries had more than enough of them to destroy each other. Both sides perfected nuclear bombs launched from submarines or airplanes, and developed inter-continental ballistic missiles which were capable of traveling from one continent to another within as short as half an hour. The theory was that the weapons made the countries more secure, through nuclear deterrence.

In 1959, USA placed short-range nuclear weapons in Turkey, one of its CENTO (Central Treaty Organisation) ally. This action immediately alarmed the USSR as it threatened its security.

In the same year, Fidel Castro succeeded in the Cuban Revolution and overthrew Batista, an anti-communist dictator. Batista's government was widely discontented with amongst the Cuban people, for the corruption of his government. Yet despite much opposition that existed in the country towards him, USA provided economic and military support to his regime. The new leader Castro took USA by surprise, but USA quickly decided to recognise him.

However, what followed the Cuban Revolution was the rapid deterioration of the relationship between Cuba and USA. Thousands of Cuban exiles fled to USA and formed powerful pressure groups which demanded action to be taken against Castro. In addition, Castro took over US businesses in Cuba, especially those in the agricultural sector, and land was distributed to Castro's supporters among the farmer population. Moreover, Castro allied Cuba with USSR in 1960 and began reviewing Soviet arms, and this posed threat to USA as communist influence spread to its sphere of influence. Therefore, in 1961 January, the new US president John F Kennedy broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba.

This led to the Bay of Pigs invasion, on April 15, 1961 - under the planning of the United States, Cuban exiles flew B-26 bombers to bomb Cuba for two days. More than 1000 mercenaries boarded the Bay of Pigs in Cuba, attempting to invade Cuba and violently overthrow the Castro government. Within 72 hours, the exiled government army was repelled. Afterwards, the US government continued to exert pressure on Cuba and exercised hostile policy towards Cuba.

## Why USSR placed nuclear missiles in Cuba

Firstly, after John F. Kennedy took office, the failed landing at the Battle of Gironde resulted in Khrushchev losing a diplomatic round. The United States had no sufficient reason to oppose Castro taking all possible preventive measures to deal with another invasion, including receiving nuclear weapons assistance from the Soviet Union.

Secondly, confront the encirclement of the United States. In view of the fact that the United States had surrounded the Soviet Union with bomber bases and missiles, that American missiles in Turkey, Italy and West Germany were aimed at the Soviet Union, and that the important industrial centres of the Soviet Union were under the direct threat of nuclear bombs and strategic bombers, the missiles should be secretly transported into Cuba as soon as possible, and that they should be installed before the United States discovered them for launch.

The third and most important motivation is to restore the balance between the United States and the Soviet Union globally. In the 1960s, during the arms race, the Kennedy administration desperately expanded its nuclear arsenal, putting the United States in a leading position in the Soviet American nuclear race. Therefore, in Khrushchev's view, deploying missiles to Cuba is clearly a quick and cheap once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to restore the balance between the Soviet Union and the United States. From a military perspective, the placement of approximately 60 missiles in Cuba, some with a range of 1000 miles and a few with a range of 1500 to 2000 miles, could avoid the United States' warning system, effectively doubling the Soviet Union's ability to strike the United States, and changing its strategic position.

Fourthly, it can consolidate the position of Cuban leader Castro, control Cuba politically, economically, and militarily, and use Cuba as a bargaining chip for political transactions with the United States to enhance the Soviet Union's deterrence capability. Khrushchev may also know that he may face serious military conflicts but considered it worth of giving a try. Moreover, the new Cuban leader Castro was pro-communist and pro-USSR, therefore consolidation of his power was extension of Soviet influence and was great for propaganda to show the influences of communism even around USA

## History and Current Situation

- 1962 Oct 14th, US spy plane flew over Cuba and took detailed photos of missile sites. It was discovered that despite USSR's reassurances, nuclear missile sites were being built by USSR in Cuba, and the most

developed sites could be ready to launch missiles in 6 days. It was also reported that 20 Soviet ships were on their way, carrying missiles to Cuba.

- 1962 Oct 22nd, US president John F. Kennedy announced naval blockade upon Cuba and called on USSR to withdraw its missiles.
- 1962 Oct 24th, Soviet ships approached the US blockade zone and stopped, and decided to turn around and return to USSR.
- 1962 Oct 26th, Khrushchev admitted for the first time, in his letter to USA, the presence of the missiles and claimed that they were purely for the purpose of defence. In the letter, he also proposed that USA give assurance that it would not attack Cuba and that it would lift the naval blockade, for USSR to remove or destruct the missile sites in Cuba.
- 1962 Oct 27th, Khrushchev sent a second letter to USA and revised the proposals, changing the condition for removal of its missiles to be US withdrawal of its missiles from Turkey. In the same day, an American U-2 plane was shot down over Cuba and the pilot was killed. At this moment, Kennedy was advised to launch immediate reprisal attack on Cuba, however he decided to delay the attack and ignored Khrushchev's proposals in the second letter but accepted the terms in the previous letter, and threatened that attack on Cuba would follow if USSR refuse to withdraw its missiles.
- 1962 Oct 28th, Khrushchev replied that the Soviet government ordered to dismantle the missiles and crate and return them to USSR, in compromise to USA.

## Bloc Positions

### USA

The USA's essential demand is that USSR remove its nuclear missiles from Cuba. The strongest motivation behind this demand was the imminent threat posed by nuclear missiles in Cuba, supplied by USSR - these missiles were ready to be launched in as soon as 7 days and could arrive in USA in as short as 30 minutes and cause mass destruction. USA did not want to remain threatened by such weapon from such a geographically close country, which holds a conflicting political stance and ideology to it. Moreover, in political terms, the nuclear weapon in Cuba reduces the US sphere of influence. USA wants strong control over the Latin American countries to ensure its political security and economic interests. Therefore, it needs to weaken the communist regime of Castro in Cuba to secure its status.

## USSR

USSR is caught in a dilemma between removing or not removing the nuclear missiles which it supplied to Cuba. On one hand, if it removes the nuclear missiles in Cuba, Soviet and communist influence would be weakened in Cuba as it poses smaller threat to USA, and provides USA with the choice of attacking the communist Cuba instead of being threatened by nuclear deterrence. However, on the other hand, if it refuses to remove the nuclear missiles in Cuba, there is the possibility that this would end up in nuclear warfare. The delegate of USSR needs to keep in mind this possibility and make negotiations and decision.

## Cuba

It is clear that Cuba would benefit from keeping the nuclear missiles. This is because it would effectively enable the country to pose nuclear deterrence against USA, and hence limits USA's ability to launch attack on the country, as it would need to consider the possibility of Cuba launching the nuclear missiles against it. As a result, it would be guaranteed that Cuba would stay free from US control like before the Castro regime, as well as staying communist and hence supported by USSR, which would enable it to stay highly armed from the weapons supplied to it by USSR and benefit from the large trade agreements with USSR. However, though this would be the most ideal outcome for Cuba, it is highly unlikely to be achieved for the fear of outbreak of nuclear warfare between the countries. Therefore, it is important that Cuba take into consideration what benefits would it be able to negotiate with the two superpowers, in return for removal of the nuclear missiles.

## Possible Solutions

Delegates can consider how the Cuban Missile Crisis was actually solved in history; however, it is not recommended nor is it necessary to follow the path of history. It is encouraged to propose new, better solutions with regards to this issue, while keeping in mind the country's position and interests.

The central decision is whether USSR retrieves the nuclear missiles it gave to Cuba or not. If USSR decides not to retrieve the nuclear missiles, then it is essential for USA to decide what approach it would take. If USSR decides to retrieve the nuclear missiles, international peace from prevention of nuclear warfare would be prevented, and it is important for delegates of USSR and USA to take into consideration for what conditions would it agree to compromise to one another. The USSR delegate may

want USA to guarantee that it would not attack Cuba and remove its nuclear missiles in countries such as Turkey.

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