



Arizona Model United Nations 64

Joint Crisis Committee 2: Cuban Missile Crisis - U.S. President and Cabinet
Background Guide | Guía de Investigación

Chair Introduction

Greetings! My name is Jordyn Leith Bailess, and I am pleased to be chairing the Joint Crisis Committee 2: Cuban Missile Crisis – U.S. President and Cabinet. I am currently a senior at the University of Arizona double majoring in Global Studies and Political Science with a minor in Chinese language. I originally joined Model United Nations the first semester of my freshman year because it fit in well with my major and career goals, but the vibrant community of passionate and driven students is what made me stay. In previous years staffing AZMUN, I have been involved in Conference Services and chaired the United Nations Environmental Programme last year. I am so excited to move forward to chairing a crisis committee and look forward to meeting all of this committee's amazing delegates. I encourage all delegates to come prepared to committee sessions, actively participate, and collaborate with other delegates. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions!

Committee Introduction and Purview

The Joint Crisis Committee (JCC) 2: Cuban Missile Crisis – U.S. President and Cabinet simulates the highest levels of decision-making within the United States government during one of the most dangerous confrontations of the Cold War. Instead of representing countries as in other committees, delegates will represent prominent characters such as President John F. Kennedy and key members of his Cabinet, including senior advisors responsible for defense, foreign policy, intelligence, and domestic affairs.

The committee is set in October 1962, at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis. After the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, U.S.–Cuban relations deteriorated rapidly, pushing Cuba closer to the Soviet Union. In response to U.S. nuclear missiles stationed in Turkey and Italy, the Soviet Union secretly deployed nuclear missiles to Cuba, just 90 miles from the U.S. mainland.

As a crisis committee, this body operates in real time, responding dynamically to unfolding events, intelligence updates, and actions taken by opposing committees (most notably the Soviet leadership and Cuban government). This committee recreates the intense uncertainty, secrecy, and urgency faced by the U.S. leadership during those thirteen days, allowing delegates to explore how close the world came to catastrophe—and how it might have unfolded differently. Delegates will balance military, diplomatic, political, and ethical considerations while facing intense domestic and international pressure. In order to accomplish these goals, delegates must respond effectively, develop and implement U.S. strategies, coordinate internally, and engage with opposing JCC committees through crisis updates, negotiations, and indirect actions.

For the 65th Annual Arizona Model United Nations Conference, this committee's purview centers around military decision making, both domestic and foreign policy and diplomacy, national security and intelligence, and crisis escalation management. This committee will not follow AZMUN's General Assembly Rules of Procedure. Instead, as a joint crisis committee, delegates will operate simultaneously with the represented opposition committee. Actions taken may provoke responses from other bodies, ensuring that each issue is examined from multiple perspectives.

Topic I: Prevention of Mutually Assured Destruction

As stated in the short research guide:

“Since 1945, the United States of America has possessed the most powerful weapon known to mankind; the atomic bomb, the weapon that destroys a city in an instant and ended the Second World War. Nations with this weapon must use its power with dignity and precision, which our republic has. However, in January 1949, the Soviet Union stole this knowledge and intended to use it to disrupt the global order. Since the day this weapon was tested on Soviet soil, they have begun recklessly producing nuclear bombs en masse, forcing the United States to produce more bombs in response. In the event of a direct conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, atomic bombs will undoubtedly be used, and millions, if not billions, will die. As a result, it is America's utmost responsibility to exercise restraint; otherwise, it risks angering its unpredictable foe and causing a nuclear apocalypse.”

Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) is a policy where states ensure they have sufficient nuclear weapons so that they could respond to an aggressor with even more nuclear weapons. Preventing Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) is important because it concerns the survival of humanity, global stability, and rational decision-making under extreme power. In the context of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and especially for a U.S. President and Cabinet committee, its importance can be understood on several levels: the government's moral responsibility of human survival, strategic rationality, global and domestic stability, and setting the precedent for future crises.

Previous solutions proposed to prevent Mutually Assured Destruction have been: nuclear deterrence (balancing the power of nuclear weapons by developing even further), setting international limitations on arms control, attempting to build confidence and trust through diplomatic efforts, and more. As delegates implement new creative strategies, they will be encouraged to consider Cuba's potential responses beforehand. While the United States prioritized avoiding nuclear war, Cuba's leadership (especially Fidel Castro) held profound distrust of the United States and viewed many of these efforts as self-serving and dismissive of Cuban sovereignty.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are there any ways the United States can weaken Soviet Nuclear capabilities?
2. How can the United States remove or neutralize Soviet missiles in Cuba without triggering nuclear war?
3. What actions will cause a Soviet Nuclear response?
4. What can the United States do to make a nuclear response less appealing?
5. At what point does restraint become weakness, and escalation become recklessness?
6. Would inaction be a better course of action, or is passivity counterproductive?

Topic II. Restoration of American Sovereignty

As stated in the short research guide:

“The United States is a global superpower that deserves respect. The introduction of nuclear bombs in Cuba jeopardizes our nation's safety, with shorter-range missiles now being in range to strike American cities across the East Coast and Gulf of Mexico. American cities deserve their safety to be preserved, and the American government deserves respect. With Soviet missiles stationed in Cuba, neither of these things is possible. Drastic action is necessary to force the Soviet Union to respect our nation's demands; complacency in times like these is unacceptable.”

American sovereignty is not limited to physical borders; it also includes the ability to protect the U.S. population from external threats, control its own security environment, and act independently without coercion from rival powers. Therefore, the discovery of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba represents a direct challenge to American sovereignty and national security. For the first time, a hostile nuclear power has positioned offensive weapons capable of striking the continental United States within minutes, undermining U.S. territorial integrity, deterrence credibility, and freedom of action. If left unaddressed, the missile deployment risks establishing a precedent in which foreign adversaries can directly threaten U.S. territory without consequence, weakening U.S. leadership both domestically and internationally.

Prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the United States relied on several strategies to protect its sovereignty, including: containment, forward deployment of missiles, conventional military superiority, and diplomatic pressure and alliances with NATO and other regional partnerships to reinforce collective security. However, these solutions failed to prevent Soviet missile placement in Cuba, exposing limitations in intelligence, deterrence, and regional influence, particularly in Latin America.

Although this committee represents the United States, understanding global perspectives is essential for anticipating international reactions. Delegates should consider perspectives from United States allies in Western Europe and NATO, the Soviet Bloc and Communist allies, Latin America, and other non-aligned nations who may be alarmed by rising tensions in potential military conflict. Delegates are encouraged to consider solutions in several different dimensions,

including diplomatic mechanisms, military measures, international legal action, security assurances, strategic adjustments, and regional engagement.

Questions to Consider

1. How can the United States gain control of Cuba?
2. Can the Soviet Union be negotiated with?
3. Will escalating the conflict lead to a nuclear response?
4. What level of military force, if any, is necessary to maintain U.S. credibility?
5. How do we respond if U.S. forces or allies are attacked—even accidentally?

Resources for Research

The resources provided are meant to serve as a starting point for delegates to gain a basic level of understanding about their committees. Delegates are highly encouraged to individually conduct additional research and explore more niche areas of interest.

- [AZMUN Short Research Guide: JCC 2 Cuban Missile Crisis](#) (U.S. President & Cabinet)
- [The Cuban Missile Crisis, October 1962](#)
- [Cuban Missile Crisis](#)
- [JFK Address During the Cuban Missile Crisis](#)
- [Managing the Cold War 1962-85: Danger of Mutually Assured Destruction](#)
- [Latin American and the Cuban Missile Crisis](#)

Example Official UN Resolution

United Nations Security Council. *Resolution 2808*. UN Doc. S/RES/2808, 2025.
[https://docs.un.org/en/s/res/2808\(2025\)](https://docs.un.org/en/s/res/2808(2025)).