



WESMUN 2022

BACKGROUND GUIDE

UNITED NATIONS: JCC/HCC

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS



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Background and History

Background USSR: During World War I, Tsarist Russia experienced military humiliation, famine and economic collapse. The demoralized Imperial Russian Army suffered severe military setbacks, and many captured soldiers deserted the front lines. Dissatisfaction with the monarchy and its policy of continuing the war grew among the Russian people. Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the throne following the February Revolution of 1917 causing widespread rioting in Petrograd and other major Russian cities. At the same time that the Provisional Government was formed, the workers in Petrograd organized Soviets (councils). Both groups ruled for a short period of time, until Vladimir Lenin returned to the country to overthrow the Provisional Government and give all power to the Soviets in the October Revolution. Immediately after this, Russia was thrown into a civil war between the Communist Red Army and the opposing White Army. The US and other Entente powers supported the White Army, because they feared the new Bolshevik regime and aimed to stop the threat of world-wide communism. The Red Army eventually prevailed and the Bolsheviks established the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics in December 1922. After Lenin's death in 1924, Joseph Stalin rose to power as the General Secretary of the Soviet Union. Stalin enacted aggressive policies of collectivization and industrialization, while consolidating his power and cracking down on dissidents. Under Stalin, nationalism replaced the Marxist-Leninist idea of worldwide revolution and the USSR became much more isolationist. Stalin modernized the USSR and turned it into a global superpower.

Background US: Since the beginning of the nation's existence, the delicate balance between isolation, neutrality and foreign involvement proved a contentious issue among leadership. The Second World War drew two relatively isolationist powers, the US and the USSR, into global conflict, contentious cooperation and postwar leadership. The Soviet Union and Germany signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939, which guaranteed non-aggression and the division of Poland between the two countries. This provided the Soviet Union with much-needed wiggle room to restructure its military, which had been devastated by the Great Terror purges. In December 1941, Japan launched an attack on the US navy at Pearl Harbor. This pushed the United States, which had previously attempted to remain neutral, into the conflict. The initial US



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efforts were limited to the Pacific. This infuriated the Soviet Union, which was losing hundreds of thousands of soldiers to German military aggressiveness and thought that the other allies weren't doing enough. Stalin urged that the United States and the United Kingdom start a new front in Europe, and the powers ultimately agreed on an invasion in mid-44. The Nazis were vanquished in May 1945 as a result of the success of US and Soviet operations in Europe. As the conflict progressed, issues of dispute among the allies grew more difficult to overlook. Stalin desired Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe as a buffer against potential German and Western invasion, much to the chagrin of numerous governments in exile who petitioned the United States and Britain to restore them to power. Stalin was likewise hesitant to offer military help to Japan following the German capitulation, but he rapidly changed his mind after the first atomic bomb was launched. Postwar Europe was divided between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union, with Germany divided in two and Berlin divided into four zones (for France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union). The Cold War arose from this precarious balance of power.

Cold War

Before and throughout the Second World War, US-Soviet relations were strained, but tensions erupted in their postwar rivalry. During World War I, the United States sent the 339th Infantry Regiment to reinforce White Russian forces against the Red Army. This action demonstrated to the Soviets that the United States was yet another imperial foe hellbent on destroying the Soviet Union. Across the Pacific, the United States was terrified of Bolshevism gaining ground on its own soil. The destiny of postwar Europe was a major issue of disagreement between the US and the USSR. The Red Army had captured much of Eastern Europe, and Stalin was strengthening Soviet control there. Though not ubiquitous, Soviet dominance was clearly undemocratic. Once again, the United States and its allies were concerned about the development of communism and the demise of the capitalist international order. The Soviets desired security, and the US desired to limit communist growth, but by 1949, both states possessed nuclear weapons. As a result, the Cold War was characterized by a succession of proxy confrontations.



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Death of Stalin

Stalin died on March 5, 1953, from a brain hemorrhage. Nikita Khrushchev ascended through the ranks of the Communist Party of Ukraine to become a member of the Central Committee. In 1953, he was elected First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union after cultivating high-ranking Party leaders who subsequently obtained seats on the Central Committee and elected him to the Central Committee. Following Stalin's death, political reforms ushered in a less restrictive era in the Soviet Bloc. Khrushchev prioritized the welfare of Soviet citizens. To alleviate the Soviet Union's food problems, he launched the Virgin Lands effort, which involved cultivating undeveloped territory in Western Siberia and Northern Kazakhstan. While originally quite successful, yields began to decline after 1959 owing to a lack of machinery and service shops, insufficient grain storage facilities, and climate conditions unsuitable for monoculture agriculture. The Space Program was a major triumph for the USSR during Khrushchev's tenure. The launch of the first artificial satellite (Sputnik 1) and the first human into space (Yuri Gagarin) in 1953 established the USSR as the undisputed leader in the race for outer space domination.

Although he was unpredictable, Khrushchev's foreign policy was more practical and less fanatical than Stalin's. Because he considered that traditional armed forces were using too much resources, he intended to protect the USSR with missiles instead. The United States was also concerned about nuclear missile capability. They sent Jupiter missiles to Italy and Turkey in 1958 and 1959. The missiles in Italy were intended to hinder Soviet's advance into Western Europe. Turkey's rockets may be directed towards the broad Soviet population, perhaps reaching Moscow and other Soviet cities. The presence of these missiles alarmed Soviet officials, putting them under pressure to find an effective counterpart. They would discover an opportunity to threaten the core of the US in the next two years on a peaceful Caribbean plantation island.



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Us Exploit and Batista Coup

Following the 1933 Sergeants' Revolt, Fulgencio Batista became the head of Cuban armed forces and a powerful decision maker behind the scenes in Cuban politics. From 1940 - 1944, Batista carried out social and economic reforms as President. In 1952, when he decided to run for President again, polls put him decidedly in third place. Four months before the election, Batista used his position in the military to stage a bloodless coup d'état and named himself Provisional President. While Cuban industrial workers' wages grew significantly during his rule, Batista's regime was rife with inequality and corruption. Cuba wasn't the only example of a US exploited country in Latin America. The US was involved in Latin America throughout the 20th century. In the early 20th century, US corporations, like the United Fruit Company, took advantage of politically unstable countries with economies based on one resource. The US government would then pressure these countries into adopting policies that were beneficial to those US companies. While President Franklin Roosevelt adopted the Good Neighbor policy, which was supposed to create new economic opportunities in the form of reciprocal trade agreements, many Latin American countries were not convinced this policy would do much.

Cuban Revolution

After Batista's coup, young lawyer Fidel Castro petitioned Cubans courts for Batista's removal to no avail. The revolutionaries staged an attack at the Moncada Barracks and it was a decisive failure; the military imprisoned the revolutionaries and Castro was sentenced to 15 years in prison. In 1955, due to political pressure, Castro was released early from prison and emigrated to Mexico to meet with other Cuban exiles and Che Guevara to plan the overthrow of Batista. The US government was funding both sides for a short period of time until an arms embargo in 1958. As Batista's reign became more and more unpopular, the people began supporting Castro. On January 1, 1959, Batista fled to the Dominican Republic and on February 16th 1959, Castro was sworn in as Prime Minister of Cuba. Castro and his regime were popular with workers, peasants, and students, who constituted the majority of the country's population, while opposition came primarily from the middle class.



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While the US government was initially willing to recognize Castro's regime, they grew to fear that Socialist revolutions would spread across Latin America and eventually severed diplomatic ties with Cuba and froze all American assets in the country. Following this American embargo, the Soviet Union became Cuba's main ally and the countries developed close military and economic relations.

While all this was taking place, the United States was gearing up for a presidential election. Two candidates, John Kennedy and Richard Nixon, were being watched by a nation growing ever more fearful of the communist threat.

Kennedy stressed two key areas in which the US was supposedly failing. The first was in the space race, where the Soviet Union had already sent the first manmade satellite to space. Kennedy was justified in his criticism as the US was lagging far behind the Soviet space program and Eisenhower hadn't given NASA the attention it needed to catch up. The second area was the "missile gap" between the US and USSR. Kennedy claimed that the US had far fewer nuclear missiles than the Soviet Union, and that Eisenhower and Nixon had failed to keep up to ensure US safety. This fear was actually unfounded, as the US was not lagging behind the USSR at all. Regardless, Kennedy won the Presidency in 1960 on a promise to be tougher on communism than the previous administration. The new Cuban regime gave him the opportunity to do just that.

Bay of Pigs Invasion (1961)

In the twilight of the Eisenhower Administration, the CIA had been planning a US backed invasion of Cuba by Cuban expatriates. Kennedy took office while the plan was being developed, but approved the CIA's proposal on the condition that the US would have plausible deniability. Although it would be his first major action against communism, Kennedy did not have a large role in the planning of the invasion.

In mid-April 1961, the CIA put the plan into action. In preparation for the invasion, US B-26 bombers flew missions over Cuban airfields. The CIA exaggerated the bombing's success without complete confirmation (as it did with many other aspects of the invasion plan). When U2 spy plane photos revealed the disappointing results, Kennedy cancelled future US bombing to



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increase deniability of US involvement. This move dealt a critical blow to the invasion effort. The Cuban counter-revolutionaries landed on April 17, and even pushed inland past startled militia units. However, even with their US training and equipment, they could not hold off the Cuban Army without air and naval support. Although the CIA assured Kennedy that the local population would rise up against their dictator, Castro was too popular for the people of Cuba to abandon. After the invasion, the credible threat of US invasion only gave Castro's dictatorship more legitimacy.

The Bay of Pigs Invasion was a humiliation for the United States and the Kennedy Administration in particular. While domestic outrage was scarce, the invasion drew much international ire. Khrushchev was even more convinced that Kennedy was weak and inexperienced, leading to more bold aggression in the ensuing year and closer relations with Castro. Going forward, Kennedy would be more cautious with anticommunist action and more weary of CIA and military advice.

Berlin Wall (1961)

After the establishment of East and West Germany, the East experienced a "Brain Drain" as thousands of young, well educated people fled across the border to the more prosperous West. While it is still unknown whether Khrushchev suggested the idea for a wall or was initially against it, East German Chancellor Walter Ulbricht ordered the construction of a wall between East and West Berlin on August 12th, 1961. At midnight, police and military units installed barbed wire fencing along the entire length of the West Berlin border and on August 17th, the first concrete blocks were laid down. At the 1961 Vienna summit, President Kennedy accidentally admitted that the US wouldn't oppose an actual barrier, which emboldened the Socialist states. During construction, soldiers were ordered to shoot anyone who attempted to cross the border.



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US Circumstances

Kennedy administration's main objectives are to deliver on its campaign promises of being more competitive with the Soviet Union and to redeem itself in the wake of the Bay of Pigs invasion. Congressional elections are fast approaching, and will decide what legislation the administration will be able to pass in the future. Efforts are split between easing escalating tensions to prevent war and maintaining an appearance of uncompromising defense against Soviet aggression.

To be more competitive in space, Kennedy increased funding to NASA for Project Mercury, which sought to put an American into orbit. As of January 1962, this goal has yet to be realized, however the date of completion is fast approaching.

USSR Circumstances

Overall, the Soviet Economy was not doing great in 1962. Following the reforms of de-stalinization in the 50s, the economy began to fall behind schedule on producing its main exports (coal, oil, iron, etc.). A State Committee on Labour and Wages had been formed to investigate and develop new economic strategies. Additionally, the USSR and Cuba just signed a trade pact, which brought the two countries even closer together.

The Soviet Union conducted 57 nuclear tests in 1961 following a bilateral moratorium between the US and USSR from 1958-1960. The Soviets began testing again after the Berlin Crisis in 1961. The Soviets continue to boast of their superior and numerous nuclear missiles, when in reality, this "missile gap" was pure propaganda. The US nuclear program was much better than the Soviet one, but the public perception of the missile gap led to a defense buildup on the behalf of the United States. Soviet leadership is also alarmed at the presence of US Jupiter missiles in Turkey and Italy and seeks to counterbalance this threat. Seeing as Khrushchev prefers nuclear weapons to conventional defense forces, it would be wise to improve the Soviet nuclear program. The Soviet Union is currently winning the Space Race, but with the new, energetic



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President in the White House, the US could catch up. The Soviet successes in Space emboldened the leadership and they believed this prestige would lead to advances in the Third World.

Our Simulation

October 16, 1962: President John F. Kennedy meets with Ex-Comm, to discuss how to respond to the missile threat posed by the USSR while the USSR plans their meetings with Fidel Castro about the missiles and removal of the US from the continent.