

HISTORICAL CRISIS COMMITTEE

BACKGROUND GUIDE

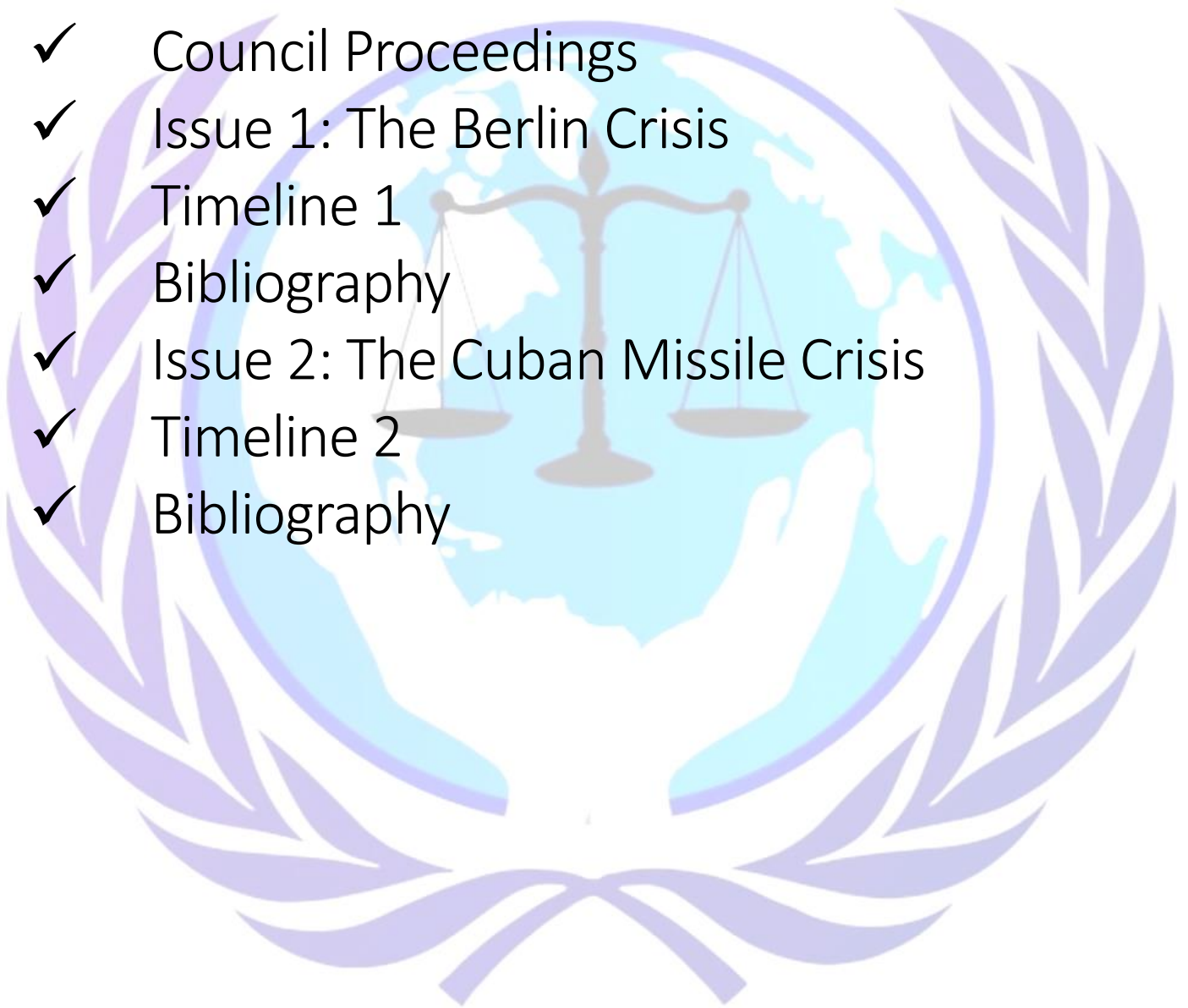


“There is no instance of a nation benefiting from prolonged warfare.”

~ Sun Tzu

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A Letter from the chairs

Greetings,

We extend a warm welcome to all the delegates of the Historical Crisis Committee (HCC) at the NewMUN Chapter V! It is an absolute pleasure to serve you on this committee, which deals with the decisions made in the past. In this council, each of you is representing various delegations from all around the world.

Being a delegate calls for unwavering dedication and diligence. Each of you will be pivotal to how the council proceeds. Being a delegate brings a unique and vital perspective to the issues at hand and all the decisions that are jointly made by you will have major consequences and as, you are supposed to be factually and logically prepared with your topic.

For this council, in particular, research is key. Most of the decisions taken during the time in which the council is set in have been recorded. This background guide is your steppingstone to your research and your research is the most important as it helps to know your country's stance in the committee, your allies and many more and we hope you will not stop your inquiries into the turbulent and intriguing pages of our history.

In HCC, your energy is expected to be focused on being informed about past decisions, and their consequences, and present solutions that are in the interests of the country you have been allotted and for the rest of the world. Every potential solution to a crisis will be met with opposition, and you are supposed to diplomatically address those solutions through effective debate and discussion.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any queries or concerns.

Sincere regards,

Chairpersons

Hiba Imam and Issac John Samuel.

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The Historical Crisis Committee at the NewMUN Chapter V discusses about The Berlin Crisis and The Cuban Missile Crisis. The experience of the people and their land being turned into a warzone after it is heartbreaking and tragic but poses some extremely interesting arguments from both sides.

This is an eccentric and unusual council at a Model United Nations conference, hence, the experience gained by each of its delegates is more unique. Some rules of procedure differ from the normal council (like WHO and NATO). The council proceedings are presented in the later pages of this guide.

This council will be set up in a different time period. So, for the first day, the year will be 1961 onwards and for the second will be 1962 onwards. Hence, keep in mind the chronology of events while researching as any event that has not occurred yet cannot be used as a valid argument during debates.

Finally, as the chairs of HCC, we can assure you that this committee will be a fun, enlightening chaotic, and exciting experience for all of you. This council is, essentially, a MUN council without all the boring bits.

Council Proceedings

Due to the special nature of this committee, the rules of procedure will slightly differ from standard NEWMUN procedures.

1. Crisis Updates:

Crises are the primary focus of this council (as the name suggests). A crisis is a development in the central issue that the delegates did not foresee but they have to discuss it with each other and reach a sound decision that benefits all. An example of a crisis is: "Desert Storm played a role in Bill Clinton's presidency during the war."

Crisis Notes: These are probably one of the best parts of a crisis committee. Crisis notes contain the details of a crisis initiated by a country by the delegate of said country. These notes are sent to the chairperson by the delegate via the runner, which is then read aloud by the chair with the next crisis update. For example, the delegate of India writes that "RAW agents have unearthed a plan by the CIA to assassinate the King of Iran." These notes need not be factual but have to be rooted in reality.

2. Cross-Talking:

Since HCC is a crisis committee, a small amount of crosstalk will be permitted among the delegates, but it is not permitted when the council comes into session. The delegates are not to insult fellow delegates or use foul or unparliamentary language inside the council.

3. General Speakers List:

Since this is a crisis committee and the issues at hand have to be addressed as quickly as possible, there will be no general speakers list.

4. The Setting of an Agenda:

Because there is, virtually, only one agenda item on the table each day, the setting of an agenda will not be done.

5. Directives:

Resolutions are the concluding act of a MUN council. But HCC does not have time to prepare an elaborate resolution for the issues. Hence, directives are the next option.

Directives contain bullet points of how a block or country will act on an issue. They are simple and direct points that act on the crisis at hand. Directives, when made by a bloc of countries during an unmoderated caucus, are called Group Directives. When directives are made by individual countries, they are called Personal Directives.



ISSUE OVERVIEW: THE BERLIN CRISIS

Berlin crisis of 1961, Cold War conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States concerning the status of the divided German city of Berlin. It culminated in the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961. The Berlin Crisis of 1961 was the last major European political and military incident of the Cold War concerning the status of the German capital city, Berlin.

EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE CRISIS

In November 1958, Khrushchev issued an ultimatum giving the Western Powers six months to agree to withdraw from Berlin and make it a free, demilitarized city. He threatened to turn over to a thuggish East Germany, complete control of all lines of communication with West Berlin. These accusations from Khrushchev were nothing new and the three Western Powers responded by rejecting the statements as continued Soviet propaganda.

In May 1959, the Soviet Union withdrew its deadline and met with the Western Powers in a Big Four foreign ministers' conference. The conference failed to bestow any important concessions by either East or West nor reach any general agreements on Berlin; Khrushchev, for his part, specified that he was in general agreement with the President's statement but did not understand how the Soviets' proposal for a free city of West Berlin could affect the U.S security.

THE BERLIN BLOCKADE

One of the first major disputes over Berlin occurred 13 years prior to the building of the wall. On 24 June 1948, fearful about the prospect of the Western Allies combining forces (Britain and the US had just merged their zones to create Bizonia) and taking over the Eastern zones, Stalin cut off the Allies' land access to West Berlin. This decision was not an act of war but intended as a demonstration of the power that the Soviets had in Germany. Supply routes being cut off meant that West Berliners were left with a supply of only 36 days' worth of food, prompting action from the US, Britain, and France. The one year until the Berlin Blockade was ended, the US had to airlift over 2.3 million tons of food, fuel, and other goods to West Berlin.² Whilst the Blockade stopped in 1949, tensions continued over Berlin. It also set a precedent for the USSR making impulsive decisions over the city.

BERLIN DIVIDED

As the new administration of U.S. Pres. John F. Kennedy took office in 1961, the Berlin situation heated up. At the Vienna Summit in June 1961, Khrushchev reiterated his threat that if a Berlin agreement was not achieved by December, the Soviet Union would sign a separate treaty with East Germany. Kennedy made it clear that Berlin was of supreme strategic importance to the United States and that free access to the city had to be maintained.

By July 1961 American officials estimated that over 1,000 East German refugees were crossing into West Berlin each day, an economic and demographic drain that, left unchecked, would spell disaster for the East. On the night of August 12–13, 1961, the East German government, backed by the Soviet Union, began to build a barrier between East Berlin (the Soviet-occupied sector) and West Berlin. The United States did not intervene because the Soviet Union was exercising control over its sector. When Khrushchev's December 1961 deadline passed without incident, the conflict over the future of the city receded with no further Soviet tension concerning a treaty.

THE VIENNA SUMMIT

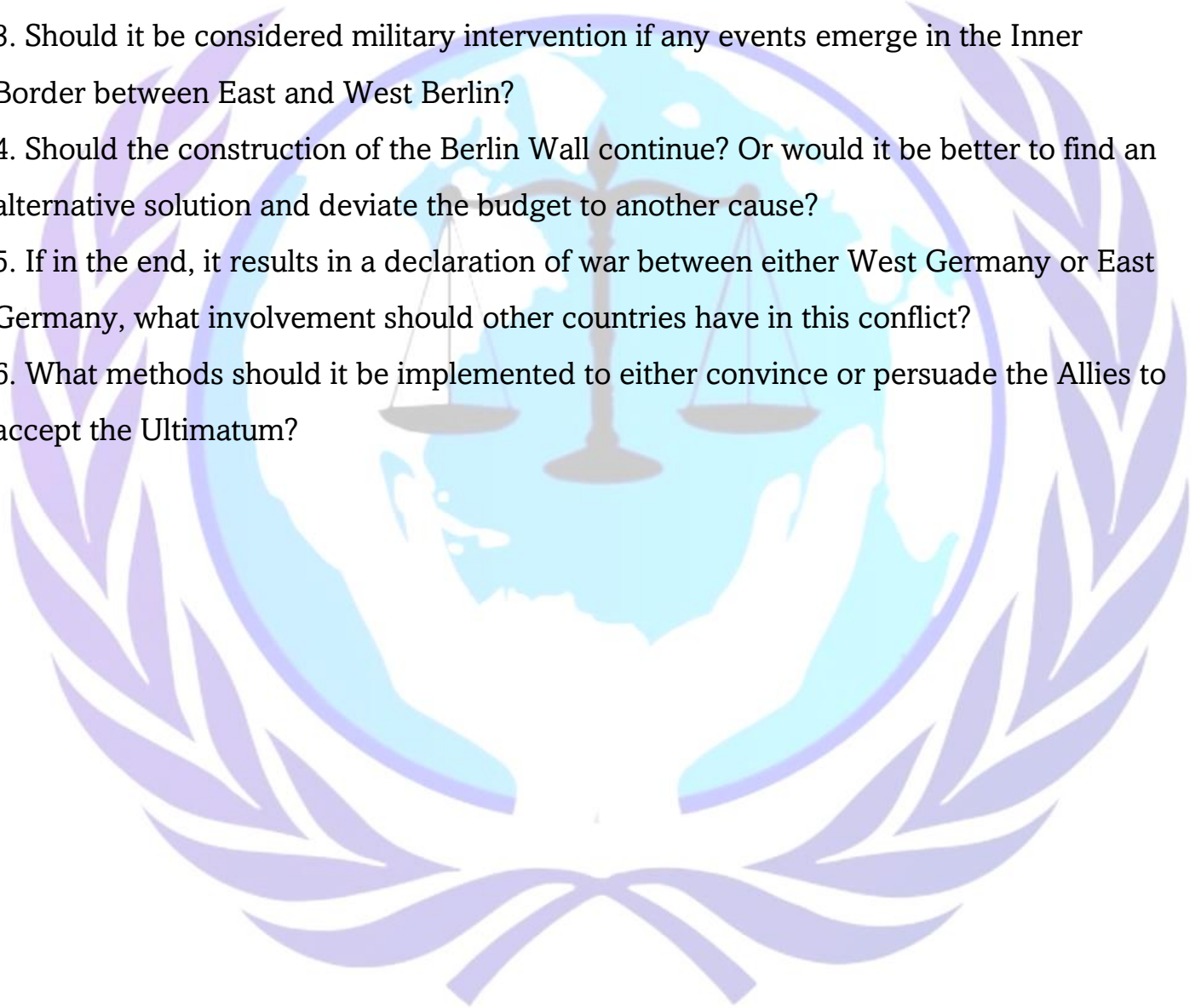
The Vienna summit was a summit meeting held on June 4, 1961, in Vienna, Austria, between President of the United States John F. Kennedy and the leader of the Soviet Union Nikita Khrushchev. The leaders of the two superpowers of the Cold War era discussed many issues in the relationship between their countries. The Berlin Crisis was top of the agenda but Kennedy and Khrushchev's discussions there did not solve it, instead arguably contributing to the Berlin Wall's construction. Prior to this meeting, Eisenhower and Khrushchev had met on several occasions to try and negotiate a deal about Berlin but to no avail. The Vienna Summit ended much the same way. As no agreements were reached regarding Berlin, Khrushchev gave the US another six months to comply, but Kennedy continued to reject his demands. Initially, their meeting seemed to have very few tangible outcomes. However, this summit is often regarded as the catalyst for the building of The Berlin Wall.

SUMMARY

The Soviet Union was desperate for a solution to stop this exodus as East Germany needed these skilled workers to rebuild the economy. Furthermore, people leaving East Germany was bad publicity for the USSR. Khrushchev pushed for the US to remove their troops from the city and hand in the East/ West border responsibilities over to the East German Government (essentially allowing them to deny East Germans passage to the West). Eisenhower, president of the US at the time, refused as he wanted to protect the freedom of West Berlin.

SAMPLE OBJECTIVES

1. What would our immediate reactions if the Berlin Ultimatum is accepted? What should it be if they are rejected?
2. What approach should this committee deliver regarding the acceptance or rejection of the Ultimatum? Should diplomacy reign over military intervention?
3. Should it be considered military intervention if any events emerge in the Inner Border between East and West Berlin?
4. Should the construction of the Berlin Wall continue? Or would it be better to find an alternative solution and deviate the budget to another cause?
5. If in the end, it results in a declaration of war between either West Germany or East Germany, what involvement should other countries have in this conflict?
6. What methods should it be implemented to either convince or persuade the Allies to accept the Ultimatum?



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ISSUE OVERVIEW: CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

The Cuban Missile Crisis is considered one of the most intense and dangerous moments in the Cold War. It was a 13-day confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union in October 1962, which brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. The crisis was unique in a number of ways, featuring calculations and miscalculations as well as direct and secret communications and miscommunications between the two sides. The dramatic crisis was also characterized by the fact that it was primarily played out at the White House and the Kremlin level with little input from the respective bureaucracies typically involved in the foreign policy process.

BACKGROUND

In the late 1950s, Cuba became a communist country under the leadership of Fidel Castro. They also strengthened their relations with USSR, a superpower at the time. This was a major concern for the United States, as it was seen as a threat to their national security. To overthrow him and his regime, The U.S sent 1,400 American-trained Cubans in an invasion called. 'The Bay of Pigs'. However, the Invasion was doomed from the start. The invaders were badly outnumbered by Castro's troops, and they surrendered after less than 24 hours of fighting. After the failed U.S. attempt to overthrow the Castro regime in Cuba with the Bay of Pigs invasion, in July 1962 Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev reached a secret agreement with Cuban premier to place Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba to deter any future invasion attempt and on September 4, 1962, President Kennedy issued a public warning against the introduction of offensive weapons into Cuba. Despite the warning, on October 14 a U.S. U-2 aircraft took several pictures showing sites for medium and intermediate-range airborne nuclear missiles under construction in Cuba. These images were processed and presented to the White House the next day, thus precipitating the onset of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

THE CRISIS

The images being leaked caused Kennedy to hold a meeting with nine members of the National Security Council and five other key advisers, in a group that became known as the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (EXCOMM). Some advisers including the Joint Chiefs of Staff—argued for an air strike to destroy the missiles, followed by a U.S. invasion of Cuba; others favored stern warnings to Cuba and the Soviet Union as the President decided upon a middle course.

The same day, Kennedy sent a letter to Khrushchev declaring that the United States would not permit offensive weapons to be delivered to Cuba, and demanded that the Soviets undo the missile bases, and return all offensive weapons to the U.S.S.R. The President also went on national television that evening to inform the public of the developments in Cuba, his decision to initiate and enforce a “quarantine,” and the potential global penalties if the crisis continued to escalate. The Joint Chiefs of Staff announced a military readiness status of DEFCON 3 as U.S. naval forces began implementation of the quarantine and plans accelerated for a military strike in Cuba.

On October 24, Khrushchev responded to Kennedy’s message with a statement that the U.S. “blockade” was an “act of aggression” and that Soviet ships bound for Cuba would be ordered to proceed. Meanwhile, U.S. reconnaissance flights over Cuba indicated the Soviet missile sites were nearing operational readiness. With no apparent end to the crisis in sight, U.S. forces were placed at DEFCON 2—meaning war involving the Strategic Air Command was imminent. On October 26, Kennedy told his advisors it appeared that only a U.S. attack on Cuba would remove the missiles, but he insisted on giving the diplomatic channel a little more time. The crisis had reached a virtual stalemate.

THE TALKS AND END

The U.S. put all instruments of war on full alert to show the USSR that they were serious. On October 26, Kennedy informed the EXCOMM that he believed only an invasion would remove the missiles from Cuba. He was persuaded to give the matter time and continue with both military and diplomatic pressure. He agreed and ordered the low-level flights over the island to be increased from two per day to once every two hours. He also ordered a crash program to institute a new civil government in Cuba if an invasion went ahead. This led to talks between the U.S. and the USSR which the U.S. dominated. Meetings were held but it still led to no progress.

Castro, on the other hand, was convinced that an invasion of Cuba was soon at hand, and on October 26, he sent a telegram to Khrushchev that appeared to call for a pre-emptive nuclear strike on the US in case of attack and the aerial rules on U.S. aircrafts were tightened. At 9:00 am EDT on October 27, Radio Moscow began broadcasting a message from Khrushchev. the message offered a new trade: the missiles in Cuba would be removed in exchange for the removal of the Jupiter missiles from Italy and Turkey. the aircraft was struck by an SA-2 surface-to-air missile launched from Cuba. The aircraft crashed, and Anderson was killed. Stress in negotiations between the Soviets and the US intensified. Later that day, several US Navy on low-level photo-scouting missions, were fired upon. While the US was considering the deal, they decided to ready their army for an invasion of Cuba if the USSR did not comply.

Later that same day, what the White House later called "Black Saturday", the US Navy dropped a series of "signaling" depth charges on a Soviet submarine at the blockade line, unaware that it was armed with a nuclear-tipped torpedo with orders that allowed it to be used if the submarine was damaged by depth charges or surface fire. As the submarine was too deep to monitor any radio traffic, the captain, Valentin Grigoryevich Savitsky, decided that a war might already have started and wanted to launch a nuclear torpedo. The decision to launch these normally only required agreement from the two commanding officers on board, the captain, and the Political Officer. However, the commander of the submarine Flotilla, Vasily Arkhipov, was aboard and so he also had to agree. Arkhipov objected and so the nuclear launch was narrowly prevented.

On October 28, Khrushchev issued a public statement that Soviet missiles would be dismantled and removed from Cuba. The crisis was over, but the naval quarantine continued until the Soviets agreed to remove their bombers from Cuba and, on November 20, 1962, the United States ended its quarantine. U.S. Jupiter missiles were removed from Turkey in April 1963.

CONCLUSION

The Cuban missile crisis stands as a singular event during the Cold War and strengthened Kennedy's image domestically and internationally. It also may have helped mitigate negative world opinion regarding the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. Two other important results of the crisis came in unique forms. First, despite the flurry of direct and indirect communications between the White House and the Kremlin—perhaps because of it—Kennedy and Khrushchev, and their advisers, struggled throughout the crisis to clearly understand each other's true intentions, while the world hung on the brink of possible nuclear war. In an effort to prevent this from happening again, a direct telephone link between the White House and the Kremlin was established; it became known as the "Hotline." Second, having approached the brink of nuclear conflict, both superpowers began to reconsider the nuclear arms race and took the first steps in agreeing to a nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

TIMELINE

October 14, 1962: Richard Heyser takes hundreds of photos of newly built installations in the Cuban countryside.

October 15: CIA analysts spot launchers, missiles and transport trucks that indicate the Soviets are building sites to launch missiles capable of striking targets across the United States

October 16: President John F. Kennedy meets with a team of advisers to discuss how to respond to the missile threat.

October 22: In a dramatic 18-minute television speech, JFK shocks Americans by revealing “unmistakable evidence” of the missile threat and announces that the U.S will prevent ships carrying weapons to reach Cuba, while demanding that the Soviets withdraw their missiles.

October 23: Khrushchev writes to JFK stating that the missiles will be removed. Kennedy writes back, bluntly reminding Khrushchev that he started the crisis by secretly sending missiles to Cuba.

October 24: Khrushchev sends an indignant letter to Kennedy, accusing him of threatening the Soviet Union. “You are no longer appealing to reason, but wish to intimidate us,” he writes.

October 25: The Soviet arms freighters turn back toward Europe, but the oil tanker Bucharest approaches the U.S. quarantine zone, directly headed for Cuba. Two American warships, prepared to intercept it, which could have led to war. Instead, Kennedy decides to let the Bucharest through the quarantine because it was not carrying any contraband.

October 26: Castro sends a letter to Khrushchev, urging him to launch a nuclear first strike against the U.S, which the Soviet leader disregards.

October 27: U.S pilot Rudolf Anderson is shot down and killed over Cuba. War appears imminent.

On the same day, Khrushchev sends another letter to Kennedy, in which he demands that the United States withdraw missiles from Turkey as part of the deal. JFK responds by offering to promise not to attack Cuba after the Russians withdraw. U.S. also dismantles their own missiles.

October 28: Khrushchev concedes, writing an open letter to Kennedy saying that the Soviet missiles will be dismantled and removed from Cuba.

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