Committee:Historical Security Council
Topic A: Cuban missile crisis

Tópico B: Cuban missile crisis

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President: Andres Cobos Tanús
Moderator: Daniela Del Castillo Rodriguez
Official Assistant: Henry Maximiliano Francisco Martinez

Introduction

The United Nations Security Council plays a crucial role in maintaining international peace and security. It is responsible for preventing potential threats and addressing acts of aggression through coordinated global actions. The effectiveness of the council depends on the active participation and collaboration of all member states. Comprising 15 members, the Security Council has the authority to enforce its decisions and, when necessary, can deploy or authorize the use of force to uphold global peace and security (United Nations, 1984)

At the core of the Security Council's functions is the United Nations Charter, which serves as the foundational framework for the United Nations governance and objectives. The Charter includes 111 articles organized into 19 chapters, detailing the United Nations missions to prevent global peace and security. It also defines the roles of the principal United Nations organs, including the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice. They are different key articles that reflect the vision the Security Council has to offer:

1. *Article 24:* It establishes the primary responsibilities and grants the Security Council the authority to take necessary actions to address threats to peace and acts of aggression; it also emphasizes that the Council acts on behalf of the member states, ensuring prompt and effective action by the United Nations in carrying out its duties to uphold global peace and security.

2. *Article 25:* Mandates that all member states of the United Nations must comply with the decisions and resolutions of the Security Council. It imposes binding obligations on member states to accept and implement the decisions made by the Council, thereby reinforcing the authority of the Security Council and ensuring its resolutions are enforced globally.

3. *Article 26:* Assigns the Security Council the task of formulating plans for the regulation of armaments and the reduction of military expenditures. The goal of this article is to promote international peace and security by minimizing the diversion of human and economic resources toward armaments. By focusing on disarmament and arms control, the Security Council aims to foster a more stable and peaceful international environment.

Established in 1946, the Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. Its creation was a response to the failures of the League of Nations, with the

first meeting being held on January 17, 1946. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was an important piece in the Council's establishment (University of Notre Dame, 1984). As a vital organ, the Security Council's resolutions are binding on all member states, which are required to implement them.

The primary aim of the United Nations is to promote international cooperation to ensure global peace and stability. Specifically, the Security Council addresses threats to peace and acts of aggression through measures such as imposing economic sanctions, authorizing peacekeeping forces, and recommending new countries for United Nations memberships (Britannica, 1984).

The Council's responsibilities also include disarmament efforts, oversight of treaties concerning minority groups, and administration of certain territories. The Security Council's functions are categorized into the adoption of resolutions, types of resolutions, and interpretation and implementation. For a resolution to be adopted, it must receive approval from at least nine of the fifteen members, including all five permanent members. In terms of interpretation and implementation, the Council can establish subsidiary bodies like sanctions committees to oversee adherence to its resolutions. In some instances, the Council may use force to enforce its decisions (R2P, 1984).

The Security Council includes two categories of members: *Permanent Members* and *Non-Permanent members.* The Permanent members include The People's Republic of China, The French Republic, The Russian Federation, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and The United States of America, which possesses *the veto* power over substantive resolutions. The Non-Permament Members, who serve two-year terms, currently include the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, the Federative Republic of Brazil, Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Hellenic Republic, Malaysia, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Socialist Republic of Romania, and the Kingdom of Sweden. (United Nations, 1984)

The veto power, defined in Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, allows any permanent member to block a resolution with a negative vote. This power was designed to protect the interests of the permanent members and maintain peace. The veto can be used to block resolutions, prevent the admission or expulsion of member states, influence the council's agenda, and for symbolic reasons (Security Council's Report, 1984)

Non-permanent members also play a significant role. Despite lacking veto power, they contribute actively to discussion, and decision-making, and offer diverse perspectives. Their involvement ensures a comprehensive and inclusive approval of

global security issues, preventing a focus solely on the interests of a single nation or the exclusion of smaller states. (Security Council Report, 1984)

Context of the conflict.

The Cuban Missile Crisis is currently unfolding as one of the most dangerous and tense events of the Cold War, marking a turning point in the ideological and military standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In October 1962, the world was thrown into a state of extreme anxiety due to the discovery of Soviet nuclear missiles stationed in Cuba, a mere 90 miles from the coast of the United States. This has not only brought the Cold War into the Western Hemisphere but has also put the superpowers on the brink of a nuclear conflict that could have catastrophic consequences for the world.

The roots of the crisis can be traced back to the Cuban Revolution in 1959 when Fidel Castro and his revolutionary forces overthrew the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. Castro's victory brought a communist government to power, aligned with the Soviet Union. The U.S. government has since regarded Castro's Cuba as a direct threat to its interests in the region and has attempted various measures to undermine his regime,

including the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. This failed operation, conducted by Cuban exiles with U.S. support, attempted to topple Castro but only strengthened his resolve to align more closely with the Soviet Union (Alpha History, n.d.).

In the background of these events, the Cold War had been escalating on various fronts. The United States had deployed Jupiter nuclear missiles in Turkey and Italy, which posed a direct threat to the Soviet Union. In response to these deployments and as a show of solidarity with Castro's Cuba, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev has taken the bold step of installing medium-range and intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Cuba. This move is seen as a counterbalance to the U.S. missiles in Europe, and also as a means to protect Cuba from further U.S. aggression. The missile sites are staffed by Soviet military personnel, with the intent to make Cuba a fortified outpost of Soviet influence in the Western Hemisphere (JFK Library, n.d.).

On October 14, 1962, U.S. reconnaissance planes captured images showing that the missile sites in Cuba were nearing operational readiness. President John F. Kennedy and his administration have been alerted to this alarming discovery, prompting a series of urgent meetings with the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (ExComm). This group of advisors and military leaders deliberated over the potential responses, which ranged from a full-scale invasion of Cuba to targeted airstrikes on the

missile sites. However, all options carried the risk of escalating the conflict into a full-scale nuclear war (Britannica, 2024).

On October 22, President Kennedy addressed the nation and the world in a televised speech, revealing the existence of the Soviet missiles in Cuba and announcing a naval "quarantine" of the island. This term was chosen deliberately, as a blockade could be considered an act of war. The quarantine aimed to prevent further Soviet military supplies from reaching Cuba. At the same time, Kennedy demanded the immediate dismantling and removal of the missiles already on the island. He made it clear that any missile launched from Cuba would be regarded as an attack on the United States by the Soviet Union, requiring full retaliatory measures (JFK Library, n.d.).

The world has watched anxiously as the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a high-stakes diplomatic standoff. Soviet ships have continued to approach the U.S. quarantine line, while both U.S. and Soviet military forces are on high alert. The U.S. has mobilized its strategic forces, including the deployment of nuclear-armed bombers and submarines, while the Soviet Union has maintained its forces in a state of readiness. During these tense days, the possibility of miscommunication or miscalculation leading to nuclear war has been a real and terrifying prospect (National Archives, 2024).

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Amid this dangerous standoff, diplomacy has played a critical role. Behind the scenes, U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy has engaged in secret negotiations with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin. These discussions, combined with public diplomatic pressure, such as U.S. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson presenting photographic evidence of the missile sites at the United Nations, have created the framework for a potential resolution. The world has been unaware of the secret negotiations regarding the removal of U.S. Jupiter missiles from Turkey, which will eventually prove to be a key part of the deal to end the crisis (Naval History and Heritage Command, n.d.).

On October 28, after days of intense negotiations and the looming threat of war, Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles from Cuba in exchange for a U.S. public guarantee not to invade Cuba. Privately, the U.S. also agreed to remove its missiles from Turkey within several months.

The Cuban Missile Crisis has exposed the fragility of the global security system in an age dominated by nuclear weapons. It has revealed the urgent need for better communication between the superpowers, leading to the establishment of a direct "hotline" between Washington and Moscow to ensure that future conflicts do not spiral out of control in the same way. Moreover, the crisis has illustrated the perilous nature of the arms race and the importance of arms control agreements to prevent the unthinkable

– a nuclear war. Although the immediate danger seems to have passed, the long-term consequences of this showdown are only beginning to unfold (JFK Library, n.d.).

Domestically, President Kennedy's handling of the crisis boosted his standing as a resolute leader who successfully defended U.S. national security against the Soviet threat. However, the secret concessions regarding the removal of missiles from Turkey may generate controversy once they become public. Internationally, Khrushchev's agreement to remove the missiles has been seen as a setback for Soviet prestige, especially in the eyes of Cuba's Fidel Castro, who felt betrayed by the Soviet decision to negotiate with the U.S. without his direct involvement. The crisis has strained the Soviet-Cuban alliance, though Cuba remains an important ally of the Soviet Union in the Western Hemisphere (National Archives, 2024).

In the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis, there is hope that this close brush with nuclear war will inspire both the United States and the Soviet Union to pursue arms control and disarmament more vigorously. The crisis has been a stark reminder of the devastating potential of nuclear weapons, and efforts to avoid a similar confrontation in the future are likely to shape international diplomacy in the years to come.

Implications of having a nuclear war

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As the world stands on the brink of nuclear conflict during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the implications of such a war are dire and far-reaching. Should the current tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union escalate into a full-scale nuclear war, the consequences would be catastrophic.

a. *Immediate Human Suffering and Urban Destruction*

In the event of a nuclear exchange, the immediate human toll would be staggering. The detonation of nuclear weapons over major cities would result in unparalleled destruction. Blast waves would obliterate buildings, while the intense heat from the explosions would ignite widespread fires, incinerating everything in their path. Radiation exposure from the blast and fallout would cause acute radiation sickness, leading to death for many within weeks. The scale of casualties would be unprecedented, with millions potentially losing their lives in a matter of moments (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, n.d.).

b. *Environmental Devastation and Fallout*

The environmental impact of nuclear war would be equally severe. The detonation of nuclear weapons would release massive amounts of radioactive fallout into the atmosphere, contaminating air, soil, and water. This fallout would

spread over large areas, rendering them uninhabitable for years. The contamination would lead to widespread health problems, including cancers and genetic mutations among those exposed. The environmental damage would include the destruction of ecosystems, with long-term effects on agriculture and wildlife. Areas previously rich in natural resources could become barren and unable to support life (Office of the Historian, n.d.).

c. *Global Climate Effects*

In addition to immediate and localized destruction, a nuclear conflict would have profound effects on the global climate. The widespread fires ignited by nuclear explosions could inject massive quantities of soot into the stratosphere, blocking sunlight and leading to a dramatic drop in global temperatures. This phenomenon, known as "nuclear winter," could severely disrupt agricultural production worldwide, leading to food shortages and further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. The potential for long-term climatic changes could alter weather patterns and contribute to global instability (National Archives, n.d.).

d. *Political and Social Consequences*

The political and social ramifications of a nuclear war would extend far beyond the immediate aftermath. The breakdown of international relations and

the potential collapse of global governance structures could result in widespread chaos and disorder. Nations would face the daunting task of rebuilding their societies from the ruins of nuclear conflict. The long-term psychological impact on survivors and the potential for ongoing regional conflicts would pose significant challenges for global recovery and peacebuilding efforts (Britannica, 2024).

In the context of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the threat of nuclear war represents an unprecedented danger with severe consequences. A nuclear conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union would result in immediate and massive destruction, with major cities facing obliteration from the explosive power of nuclear weapons. The intense heat and blast waves would lead to widespread fatalities and the incineration of infrastructure. Additionally, the radiation released from these weapons would cause acute health issues, including radiation sickness and long-term cancer risks, creating a humanitarian catastrophe of immense proportions.

Beyond the immediate devastation, a nuclear war would have long-lasting environmental and climatic impacts. The fallout from nuclear explosions would contaminate vast areas, rendering them uninhabitable and severely disrupting agricultural production. This contamination, coupled with the potential for a "nuclear winter" caused

by soot blocking sunlight, could lead to global food shortages and significant climate changes. The long-term effects on global stability and the potential breakdown of international relations would further exacerbate the already dire situation, making nuclear war not only a crisis of unprecedented scale but also a threat to the future stability of the world (National Archives, n.d.; Office of the Historian, n.d.).

International Community point of view

The international community is closely monitoring the escalating tensions surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis, as the situation carries far-reaching implications for global security. The deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba has sparked widespread concern among Western nations, particularly NATO allies, who perceive this act as a direct threat to the balance of power in the Western Hemisphere. The United States has consistently maintained that the proximity of these missiles to its shores is unacceptable, a stance supported by most NATO members, who fear the destabilization of international peace efforts. In contrast, the Soviet Union argues that the deployment was a defensive measure aimed at protecting its ally, Cuba, from the potential United States. Aggression. This assertion, however, is viewed with disbelief by many in the West, who see it as part of the larger Soviet strategy to expand its influence in the Americas.

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Non-aligned countries and members of the United Nations are attempting to navigate the crisis cautiously, balancing the competing interests of the United States and the Soviet Union. Many nations, particularly in Latin America, are concerned about the possibility of the conflict escalating into a full-scale nuclear war. Countries such as Mexico and Brazil have expressed a desire for peaceful negotiations and have offered to mediate between the two superpowers, emphasizing the importance of preserving global peace. Meanwhile, some African and Asian nations, emerging from colonial rule, view the conflict through the lens of Cold War rivalries and remain cautious about aligning too closely with either bloc, recognizing the potential for regional destabilization.

International organizations, including the United Nations, are playing a critical role in facilitating dialogue between the involved parties. The UN Secretary-General has called for immediate diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully, and various member states have urged both the United States and the Soviet Union to exercise restraint. The Security Council remains a focal point for diplomatic negotiations, though it is hampered by the veto powers of both the U.S. and the USSR. Global opinion is sharply divided, with each side leveraging its alliances to bolster its position, but there is a shared recognition that the outcome of this crisis could shape international relations for years to come.

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Points to Discuss

a. What were the key historical events and developments leading up to the Cuban Missile Crisis?

b. How did the Cuban Revolution and the rise of Fidel Castro impact Cuba's relations with the United States and the Soviet Union?

c. What role did the Bay of Pigs invasion and the subsequent U.S. embargo against Cuba play in exacerbating tensions between the superpowers?

d. How did the establishment of military alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact contribute to the broader Cold War context in which the crisis occurred?

e. How did ideological differences and geopolitical rivalries between the United States and the Soviet Union shape the Cuban Missile Crisis?

    i. What were the contrasting ideologies and political systems of the United States and the Soviet Union, and how did they influence their foreign policies?

f. How did the global struggle for influence between the superpowers manifest in proxy conflicts and regional power struggles, particularly in the developing world?

g. In what ways did the Cuban Revolution and the establishment of a communist government in Cuba challenge the U.S. in the Western Hemisphere and provoke a response from the Soviet Union?

    i. How did the nuclear arms race and strategic considerations factor into the Cuban Missile Crisis?

ii. What were the military and strategic objectives behind the deployment of ballistic missiles to Cuba by the Soviet Union?

iii. How did the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba alter the strategic balance of power and threat perceptions in the Cold War?

iv. What were the implications of the crisis for nuclear deterrence theory and the doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD)?

v. What were the immediate and long-term implications of the Cuban Missile Crisis for regional and global security dynamics?

i. How did the crisis impact perceptions of security threats in the Western Hemisphere and beyond?

h. What were the economic, social, and political repercussions of the crisis for countries outside that directly involved parties?

i. In what ways did the Cuban Missile Crisis shape the behavior and policies of non-aligned states and emerging powers during the Cold War era?

2. Development

a. How did the Cuban Missile Crisis impact economic development in Cuba and the broader region?

b. What were the economic consequences of the U.S. embargo on Cuba and its socialist economic model during the crisis?

c. In what ways did the crisis affect trade relations and investment flows between Cuba and other countries?

      i.   How did the diversion of resources toward military buildup and security measures during the crisis affect domestic development priorities in Cuba?

d. How did the Cuban Missile Crisis impact social development and well-being in Cuba and neighboring countries?

      i.   What were the social consequences of heightened political tensions and fears of nuclear war during the crisis?

      ii.   In what ways did the crisis affect migration patterns and refugee flows within the region?

      iii.   How did government policies and societal responses to the crisis impact social cohesion and resilience in affected communities?

e. How did the Cuban Missile Crisis influence political development and governance structures in Cuba and other countries involved?

      i.   What were the political repercussions of the crisis for governments in the Western Hemisphere and their relations with the superpowers?

f. In what ways did the crisis shape domestic politics and decision-making processes in Cuba, the United States, and the Soviet Union?

g. How did the crisis impact perceptions of leadership and crisis management capabilities among political leaders in the region?

h. What role did technological developments and advancements play in shaping the Cuban Missile Crisis and its resolution?

i. How did advancements in surveillance, reconnaissance, and communication technologies influence crisis management and decision-making during the crisis?

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i. In what ways did the crisis stimulate innovation and investment in defense technologies and strategic capabilities?

ii. How did technological developments during and after the crisis contribute to efforts to prevent similar crises in the future?

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