



# International Monterrey Model United Nations Simulation

American School Foundation of Monterrey



## Historical Security Council

**Topic:** The Cuban Missile Crisis

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### I. Committee Background

The Security Council (SC) focuses on maintaining international peace and security, accomplishing this task by determining the existence of a possible act of aggression or threat to peace. When such risks are detected, the council must call upon the parties to settle their disputes in a peaceful manner, recommending methods of adjustment or settlement. In extreme cases, the council has the authority to impose sanctions or authorize the use of military action for the purpose of maintaining order. In addition, the SC is also involved in the recommendation of Secretary Generals to the General Assembly (GA) and in the election of the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) judges ("Charter of the United Nations", 2013).

The Security Council is one of the main 6 bodies of the United Nations ("Structure and Organization", 2013). It is made up of 5 permanent member states and ten non-permanent members. The five permanent members, also known as the P-5, are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America ("Members of the Security Council", 2013). These states hold the power to veto any resolution they disagree with. The rest of the SC members are elected by the General Assembly and serve for two-year terms. In the case that a non-member state holds a valuable and relevant position in the issue being discussed by the Council, the nation may participate in the discussion but cannot vote on a resolution. Non-member participation is decided and regulated by the member-states of the SC. According to the UN Charter, decisions made by the SC are binding and member-states of the UN must carry out the resolutions agreed upon ("The United Nations Security Council", 2013). Therefore, resolutions passed by the committee are final. Finally, in order for a resolution to pass in the Security Council, at least 9 of the 15 members need to approve the proposal. The only exception to this rule is when a P-5 country vetoes the proposal, meaning it does not pass ("Charter of the United Nations", 2013).

### II. Introduction

#### Description and Definition of the Topic

The Cuban Missile Crisis was a troubling time in the 20th century where the world's two largest powers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union came close to initiating a nuclear conflict. During the Cold War, newly elected president John F. Kennedy had promised to be tougher with the communist Soviet Union seeing as the 1961 Vienna Summit left him frustrated and unsatisfied. Additionally, Fidel Castro's nationalization of American companies led Kennedy to withhold all aid meant for Cuba and all imports of Cuban sugar, the backbone of their economy. As a result, Castro looked for aid with the USSR and signed an agreement to

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export 1 million tonnes of sugar yearly. America became alarmed by the newly made partnership between the Soviet Union and Cuba which led to the 1961's Bay of Pigs failed invasion and Castro's request of weapons from the USSR for protection of future invasions (Cuban Missile Crisis).

In light of Cuba and the Soviet Union's new military alliance, on October 14, 1962 the United States sent a U-2 spy plane to Cuba and discovered a nuclear missile site being built by the Soviet Union which could be used to target anywhere in the United States. Worried about the repercussions of his past actions on the whole country, Kennedy secretly met with several advisors before October 22nd, and on that day, President Kennedy called a meeting with the National Security Council to publicly announce that American citizens were under threat by both the Soviet Union and Cuba. The Cuban Missile Crisis had officially begun, and now Kennedy had to find a way to protect American citizens and prevent a war from erupting. He could not invade Cuba again, however, he could not let the missile site be completed, therefore President Kennedy talked with his advisors and decided on a "naval blockade to prevent Russian ships delivering the missiles for the Cuban sites." (The Cuban Missile Crisis).

## **The Problem**

The biggest issue with the Cuban Missile Crisis is that it was "primarily played out at the White House and the Kremlin level with relatively little input from the respective bureaucracies typically involved in the foreign policy process." (The Cuban Missile Crisis, October 1962). After the United States failed to overthrow Fidel Castro's regime at the Bay of Pigs Invasion, the Soviet government came to an agreement with Castro in which the Soviets could install nuclear weapons in Cuba due to its proximity to the United States. This was done in order to ensure that the United States would not try to invade Cuba like they had attempted previously. As the ever growing tensions between the two world's superpowers grew, the United States and the allies had a clear advantage when it came to nuclear threats. Due to the large amounts of nuclear presence in and around Western European countries, the Soviet Union "saw the deployment of missiles in Cuba as a way to level the playing field" (Cuban Missile Crisis, 2010). On October 22, 1962, President Kennedy appeared on National television informing the general American public about the things that were currently happening between the United States and the Soviet Union. Kennedy decided to enforce a quarantine in order to keep people safe from potential Cuban missiles (The Cuban Missile Crisis, October 1962). Since the missiles were placed just 90 miles from the south of Florida, the threat of quickly reaching eastern United States hovered over every single American. As tensions between both countries continued rising, Americans faced an omnipresent threat of being annihilated by a nuclear weapon.

## **III. History of the Topic**

### **Chronological History of the Topic**

After the end of World War II, there were a lot of tensions between the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). "The Soviet Union by 1948

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had installed communist-leaning governments in Eastern European countries that the USSR had liberated from Nazi control during the war. The Americans and British feared the spread of communism into Western Europe and worldwide.” (History, 2020). In 1961, the USA failed to overthrow Cuba’s communist government dictated by Fidel Castro with an invasion known as the Bay of Pigs, given the location of the invasion. As a result, Cuba sought out support from the USSR, which they undoubtedly agreed to provide, as they could then secretly transfer nuclear missiles to Cuba. They did this not only to protect Cuba, but most importantly to counter USA’s missiles located in Italy and Turkey. On October 14, 1962, U-2 spy planes controlled by the USA flew over Cuba and took pictures. This revealed medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles under construction. Nikita Khrushchev, former USSR leader who had previously stated that there were no offensive weapons being transported to Cuba, had been caught lying and President Kennedy was furious. Khrushchev had told Kennedy that the weapons were only defensive, that they were only meant to avoid another US invasion, and that it would not include missiles. Initially, Kennedy had pledged to take action if the USSR sent nuclear weapons to Cuba, and because Khrushchev did, he had to do something about it.

Kennedy ordered an emergency meeting on October 16, 1962. The new assembled committee was dubbed *The Executive Committee of the National Security Council (EXCOMM)*. Their Defence Secretary mentioned that if the president decides to send an airstrike, it must occur before the nuclear weapons are functional. The photos of the U-2 spy planes show evidence that the warheads (the tip of the missile) are not yet assembled, nor on sight of the military base. “We have no evidence whatsoever of any nuclear warhead storage near the field launchers. However, ever since last February we have been observing an unusual facility which now has automatic anti aircraft weapon protection.” (John F. Kennedy, 1962). The Defence Secretary believed President Kennedy still had time but the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff disagreed.

The missiles were very near completion, it was only a matter of time until those missiles were used. The Joint Chiefs believed an airstrike would not be efficient because Khrushchev could easily send more missiles to replace the damaged ones. General McNamara said, “General Taylor will wish to comment on this, but the Chiefs are strong in their recommendation against that kind of an attack, believing that it would leave too great a capability in Cuba undestroyed. [...] The capability is for something in excess of 700 sorties per day. It seems highly unlikely that that number would be required to carry out that limited an objective, but at least that capability is available in the Air Force alone, and the Navy sorties would rise on top of that number. The Chiefs have also considered other alternatives extending into the full invasion.” (John F. Kennedy, 1962). In summary, the Joint Chief proposed to send 700 sorties to destroy Soviet power, and then follow with an invasion. Other members of the meeting pointed out that airstrikes are not always fully effective, and that some missiles may survive the damage and be launched to counterattack. As a result of all of the input, three plans were developed.

The first plan was to solve the issue through diplomacy, as President Kennedy described it “I would call the political course of action, in which we follow some of the possibilities that

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Secretary Rusk mentioned this morning by approaching Castro, by approaching Khrushchev, by discussing with our allies. An overt and open approach politically to the problem, attempting to solve it” (John F. Kennedy, 1962). This plan had a low chance of success, but it also had a low risk of starting a war. The second plan was a naval blockade, “A statement that we would immediately impose a blockade against offensive weapons entering Cuba in the future and an indication that, with our open surveillance reconnaissance which we would plan to maintain indefinitely into the future, we would be prepared to immediately attack the Soviet Union in the event that Cuba made any offensive move against this country.” (John F. Kennedy, 1962). Of course, this was a riskier plan. A blockade is usually known as an act of war. That is why it was decided to be called a “quarantine” instead. The third option was the previously mentioned airstrike-invasion on Cuba. On October 17, 12:00 a.m. in the Caribbean, the US sent forty warships just in case they were going to approach with the third plan.

Two days later, on October 19, 9:45 PM, the White House received reports of two finished medium-range missiles. Days prior, EXCOMM had been neglecting the third approach of the airstrike-invasion. The blockade or “quarantine” at least left space for negotiations. The Joint Chiefs were still inclined to war, but Kennedy was not in favor of this because even though they had won a nuclear war, another war could still lead to the death of millions of citizens. President Kennedy decided to go with the second approach, and the blockade started on October 21. The next day, on October 22, President Kennedy alerted and informed Americans on the current situation. In addition, he called on Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev to eliminate the missiles or they would suffer from a counterattack from the United States. Khrushchev saw this and realized that the Americans knew about the missiles. Kennedy was going to broadcast a television statement at 2:00a.m. Moscow time, and the US embassy had also told him to expect a communication one hour before the broadcast. To deal with this, Khrushchev organized a meeting of the Presidium, the highest committee of the USSR. In the meeting, he explained that the missiles were discovered. An invasion in Cuba was very likely to happen.

Khrushchev came up with two options: option one being a two-way defence pact with Cuba. Option two was to give the missiles to Cuba in order to defend themselves. Instead of choosing between one of these options, they waited for the broadcast first. On October 24, when Soviet ships were going to Cuba they were faced with the line of US vessels enforcing the blockade. If the Soviets had attempted to destroy the blockade, it would have likely led to a military confrontation that could have become a nuclear exchange. Instead the Soviets were stopped by the blockade. Although what happened at sea went as planned, the US didn’t do anything to address the problem of the missiles that were already located in Cuba. It turned out that Kennedy was not planning on an invasion, so there would be no war on that day. Still, Khrushchev was furious because of the US blockade on Cuba, he still considered it as an act of war. He wrote an outraged letter to Kennedy, “The Soviet Government considers that the violation of the freedom to use international waters and international air space is an act of aggression which pushes mankind toward the abyss of a world nuclear-missile war.” (Khrushchev, 1962). And so, the most intense six days of the Cuban Missile Crisis began.

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The US asked the USSR to remove the missiles, but Khrushchev insisted they would only be used in self defence. The missiles continued to be armed, so the US prepared for an invasion. On October 27, 1962, a spy plane was shot down by Soviet missiles, killing the pilot, Major Rudolph Anderson. A few hours later, a Soviet nuclear submarine was hit by a small depth charge, from a US Navy ship. The charge was a signal for them to come up. Since the submarine was too deep for radio communication, they thought war had already started so they prepared to launch a nuclear torpedo. The call to launch the torpedo had to be decided by the three officers on board. The captain and political officer decided to launch, but Vasili Arkhipov, who was second in command, disagreed. His decision was called and perhaps saved the day, as it prevented the beginning of a nuclear war, but the crisis was not over yet.

The US Military was put on DEFCON 2, an alert state used by the military to imply that they are one step ready for nuclear war. There were hundreds of nuclear missiles ready to launch from both parties. The metaphor of the Doomsday Clock was not far from reality, and was a minute before midnight. What will happen next could possibly decide the fate of the entire world.

## Historical Case Studies

### The Cuban Revolution

The Cuban Revolution took place from 1953 to 1959 and it was mainly organized by Fidel Castro. The event left him ruling from 1959 all the way to 1976 as Prime Minister and from 1976 all the way to 2008 as a dictator. In 1933 when Fulgencia Batista took control of Cuba through a military coup, he was entirely fascist and benefited from the support of the US. However, in 1944, he lost control of the government and moved to Florida. In 1948, he returned to Cuba and eventually ran for president. His opposing candidate turned out to be Fidel Castro who came from an anti corruption party, something that was extremely needed at the time. However, Batista took power before the election through a violent, yet bloodless coup. It was then that Castro started planning for his uprising. After 2 failed attempts to get political power, Castro built an army and when Bautista lost the support of the Cuban army due to heavy taxes, poverty, and corruption, he fled the country. Castro took that as an opportunity and arrived in Havana two days later giving a presentation to Cubans filled with allusions about a brighter future. The US was not happy at the idea of having a communist government merely 160 kilometers away from their borders. This led to a cold and bitter relationship between the US and Cuba, later causing the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

### Bay of Pigs Invasion

The Bay of Pigs invasion was a failed attempt to penetrate Cuban borders through the Bay of Pigs in April of 1961. US President John F. Kennedy launched this attack in order to remove Fidel Castro, the Cuban leader at the time, from power two years after he “drove his guerilla army into Havana and overthrew General Fulgencio Batista,” who was the American-backed Cuban president before Castro took over (History.com Editors, 2009). The

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invasion was believed to be a fatal strike to Castro's regime by the CIA and Kennedy's administration, seeing as they sent out a force of 1,400 Cubans who had fled from the country and been trained in the US. However, the invasion was largely unsuccessful. Americans were outnumbered by Cubans and they had to surrender after less than a day of fighting.

Castro came to power by highlighting the corruption of Batista in his dealings with American companies and his anticommunist sentiments. He appealed to the people with the phrase "Cuba Sí, Yanquis No," translating to "Yes Cubans, No Americans." (History.com Editors, 2009). After nationalizing many industries previously controlled by Americans and encouraging other Latin American countries to act on their own revolutions, President Eisenhower "authorized the CIA to recruit 1,400 Cuban exiles living in Miami and begin training them to overthrow Castro," given that Castro had begun to establish diplomatic relations with the world's largest Communist power, the Soviet Union (History.com Editors, 2009). After Kennedy was elected President, he decided to launch this invasion of Cuba to prove to the world that he would go all in to win the Cold War.

The invasion was staged not to look like an American attack on Cuba (hence the Cuban refugees being the ones fighting) so it would not look like an act of war. America had their planes painted as Cuban planes so it would look like they were stolen. After a failed attempt to destroy Cuban airfields because of Castro's previous knowledge of the attacks, Kennedy wanted to pull out but it had become too late. Two days later, this brigade arrived on the shore of the Bay of Pigs and was received by Cuban forces and a radio station broadcasting this event to people all across Cuba. After backup arrived in the wrong place, Cuban forces had surrounded the invaders and after less than 24 hours of fighting, 114 of these invaders died at the hands of Cubans and more than 1,100 were taken as prisoners (History.com Editors, 2009).

## Operation Mongoose

The disaster that was the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961, made the young president look weak, and gave initiative to Cold Warriors in both parties who could not stand the presence of a Soviet-aligned, communist dictatorship just ninety miles south of Florida. This passion prompted General Maxwell Taylor to create a special investigation on the faults of the Bay of Pigs. This investigation not only ignited the flame inside the Kennedy administration, but prompted the idea of doing something to undermine Fidel Castro.

Pressure from both political parties in the United States to do something to undermine Castro, prompted "Operation Mongoose" on January 19th, 1962. Brushing aside a CIA National Intelligence Estimate which said that the Cuban dictator enjoyed too much support in Cuba to be overthrown, the operation continued. This operation was organized by Robert F. Kennedy, president John F. Kennedy's brother, and the plan was to create small, specific duties; not large-scale military invasion. Kennedy's idea was described as "counterinsurgency," or "social reform under pressure." He aims at the idea of changing the minds of the civilians in Cuba.

Robert Kennedy chose Edward Lansdale to take charge of this difficult task. His knowledge of fighting communists came from his work in the Philippines in the 1950s.

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Landsdale hatched a series of operations which were to climax in a “Touchdown Play” by October 1962. Although they were highly skeptical of the accuracy of this operation, the CIA spent around 100 million dollars on manpower, and equipment for a spy base in Miami. This operation then became inefficient. All in all, this operation did little to no help in the crisis, and ultimately caused the American people more money. Though this operation was “under the radar”, history has revealed that Operation Mongoose was, in its own way, every bit as disastrous as the Bay of Pigs. It is known as an “expensive and embarrassing failure” (American Experience).

## Kennedy’s Speech to the Nation

After the EXCOMM meeting, President Kennedy and the other representatives had decided to approach the situation with the ‘quarantine’ tactic. This means that a naval blockade, named ‘quarantine’ in order to prevent an impression of an act of war (as the term blockade usually meant war was at hand), will be executed so that all ships bound to Cuba will be inspected and returned if they contain offensive weapons. Now, on October 22, 1962, it was time to say this publicly in a televised speech. During this eighteen minutes, Kennedy startled the citizens of the U.S. by addressing that the “unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island” (Kennedy, 1962). He explained how the intention of these missiles was to “provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere.” (Kennedy, 1962). He already decided the course of action, and the Government would report the crisis in extreme detail for everyone to be informed. He also explained how the Soviets had already supplied Cuba with medium and long range missiles that could destroy any major city in the Western Hemisphere from Hudson Bay, Canada, all the way to Lima, Peru. Kennedy quoted that the Soviet Government had claimed that the missiles were only planned to be used in self defence, and that the Soviets have missiles capable of so far ranges that there would not be a need to deploy these missiles outside the Soviet boundaries. Kennedy claimed that this statement was false.

Kennedy then proceeded to state his plan of action: the quarantine. “All ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation or port will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons, be turned back.” Kennedy stated (Kennedy, 1962). He then proceeded to mention that the U.S. Government will increase surveillance in Cuba, promise a full retaliatory response if a missile is launched, reinforce a base in Guantanamo for extra security, discuss solutions in meetings with the O.A.S. and the U.N., and finally open to Khrushchev to peace negotiations.

This speech caused a great impact internationally. The news was in the front pages of many countries including France that supported America, China that was standing with the Cuban people, and many others. Even more, Pope John XXIII sent a letter to the Soviet embassy in order to be sent to the Soviet Government in which he said, “We beg all governments not to remain deaf to this cry of humanity. That they do all that is in their power to save peace.” (Roncalli, 1962).

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## Past UN Actions

### Secretary-General U Thant

Secretary-General U Thant's impact during the Cuban Missile Crisis is still remembered as one of the most prominent moments of formal diplomacy. Thant sent appeals and messages, and relayed proposals and offers between all parties. He offered reassurance and advanced the "noninvasion for missiles" formula which then formed the basis of the final agreement between the parties involved. Thant was a major player in the formation of a resolution; in fact, he was shuttled to Cuba to mollify Castro, and helped secure a verification agreement for all three parties.

During the crisis, the Kennedy administration relied heavily on the UN Secretary-General for communication and accurate diplomacy. It was until the world was in the midst of a possible nuclear war that Secretary-General Thant had to assume the role of an intermediary. The UN Secretary-General sent the first message on October 24th, only a few hours after the imposed quarantine had taken effect. The message contained an urgent halt of all arms shipments that were on their way to Cuba. This bought time for both the parties in order to create a peaceful solution. In this context, Thant offered to "gladly make [himself] available to all parties for whatever services [he] may be able to perform." (Dorn & Pauk, 2009). The international community hailed Thant's initiative and quick wit, which ultimately gave all parties more time to create a peaceful solution.

In October 1962 the Cuban Missile Crisis was debated in the UN General Assembly. The delegates who participated were Adlai Stevenson, who was confronting the Soviet ambassador Valerian Zorin. The US ambassador, Adlai Stevenson, asked for an urgent meeting of the Security Council. This was done to bring attention to the threat to the Western Hemisphere. Since, the President of the US reported dangerous military developments in Cuba. Mr. Stevenson stated that they could either decide to take action to bring peace, or they could stand by. This is why the US took action and created a blockade around Cuba. On the other hand, Russian ambassador, Valerian Zorin, stated that by placing the blockade on Cuba, the US government was disregarding the rules of international conduct. The delegate declared that there should be a consequence against the aggressive actions that the United States was taking against Cuba.

## IV. Key Players and Points of View

### Soviet Union

The Soviet Union (USSR) is one of the key powers taking role in this situation. Tension between the USSR and the US has been escalating for a very long time. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev states that the missiles are only for self defence, yet that promise can be broken any second. From a Soviet perspective, these missiles really are a form of self defence, since the US has a similar strategy with missiles deployed in Italy and Turkey close to the Soviet Union

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(TED-ed, 2016). Despite being furious, Khrushchev logically does not want war, “The Soviets never thought war was inevitable.” (USNI News, 2013), but Khrushchev will do anything necessary to protect its country. The USSR is open for negotiation, but at the same time ready to unleash all missiles in a call of war. For this reason, the USSR will not remove its missiles from Cuba, until the US removes their missiles from bordering countries (JSTOR, 1964).

## Cuba

After President John F. Kennedy attempted to overthrow Fidel Castro with the Bay of Pigs Invasion, US and Cuban relations diminished while Castro’s power grew stronger. Knowing that the US was against Fidel Castro's communist revolution and might attack again, Cuba allied with the USSR in a secret meeting in July 1962 (Cuban Missile Crisis). In that meeting Castro requested that Nikita Khrushchev place Soviet Union nuclear missile facilities on his island as preparation for future invasions. That was very beneficial for the USSR during the Cold War as the US was now in threat, and Cuba was the route to war between both countries. No matter that resulted from the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, Cuba could be used to attack the US with the USSR.

## United States of America

For the United States, the Cuban Missile Crisis was about much more than a conflict with Cuba. The main problem for the United States was that after the new leftist ruler of the country came to power, and he allied with the Soviet Union which was the largest communist regime at the time and the United States’ rival in the ongoing Cold War. When the Soviet Union decided to install their missiles in the island of Cuba, the United States and President John F. Kennedy immediately thought of this as a threat. The missiles were 90 miles south of Florida and had the capability of reaching targets in eastern states. Up until that point, it seemed that the U.S. had been dominating the nuclear race, but this crisis put the Soviets close to the Americans and severely altered the nuclear rivalry between the two countries. On October 22, 1962, President Kennedy made an announcement in a television broadcast to the American people about the existence of the missiles and made clear that he and the country were “prepared to use military force if necessary to neutralize this perceived threat to national security” (History.com Editors, 2010).

## Turkey

Turkey is playing a significant role during the Cuban Missile Crisis, as a result of its relationship with the United States. They held U.S. nuclear missiles ready to fire at US President John F. Kennedy’s command. Geographically speaking, Turkey is a very close country to the USSR, meaning that it is within missile proximity of destroying all of the country’s important cities. For this very reason, Turkey is metaphorically what the US is using to keep the USSR in check, which is similar to the way USSR is using Cuba. However, “Turkey did not want to be compared with Cuba – a non-Warsaw pact country and a small client state of the USSR.” (Stein,

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2012). Turkey, as well as many other countries in the NATO alliance, were also concerned about the inclination and disposition of the U.S. to use against the Soviets (Seydi, 2010).

## V. Possible Solutions

The main solution which the United States could offer would be to remove the missiles from Turkey. For this to work, the Soviet Union would have to agree to extract their missiles from Cuba as well. Both of these extractions can be done under the supervision of the United Nations for a fair and secure deal. However, in order to do so, both nations would need to agree to the extraction of these missiles in order for this to work, which can be frowned upon by the pride of American and Soviet citizens who do not like their leaders forming relationships with the enemy.

This issue as a whole is one that concerns every single country that is present in this committee, and should be taken with the appropriate seriousness. A nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union is something that would have disastrous consequences on the global community. The casualties that would result from a detonation and the subsequent effects that it has on the population is something that we unfortunately witnessed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Citizens from all countries are terrified by this threat, regardless of their alignment to a certain country. This is an issue that has no borders and should be addressed as such. The committee must come together and be a buffer between the United States and the USSR to de escalate this situation. Both countries must come to an agreement and avoid putting their own and other citizens around the world at risk. Countries within the committee must not be focused on their allegiance to any of the parties involved in this crisis. Seeing as the repercussions for this conflict would affect all citizens of the world. Compromise is the most important thing that all parties will need to consider in order to deal with this issue fairly.

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