

BaMUN Conference November 2025 ISB Historical Security Council:  
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***Topic of Discussion: US Naval Quarantine of Cuba (1962) and  
International Response***



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**Topic: US Naval Quarantine of Cuba (1962) and International Response**

## **Central Debate Ideas:**

- Is the U.S. naval quarantine a legitimate act of self-defense or an illegal act of aggression under the UN Charter?
- Should the United Nations endorse, condemn, or mediate the U.S. quarantine of Cuba?
- How can the Security Council prevent this confrontation from escalating into open conflict or nuclear war?
- Does the presence of nuclear weapons in Cuba justify this unilateral action by the United States?
- What role should smaller or non-aligned nations play in de-escalating this confrontation?

## **Introduction:**

The security Council is meeting to address the growing crisis in the Caribbean following the United States' decision to impose a naval quarantine on Cuba. This action comes after the discovery of Soviet missiles on the island, raising fears of a direct confrontation between the world's two superpowers. The situation has sparked urgent debate over the legality of the U.S. response, the role of the United Nations in preventing conflict and the broader implications for international peace and security. Delegates are to consider how the UN should respond to this crisis and what measures can be taken to avoid escalation while upholding international law.

## **Overview of the Topic**

Tensions in the Caribbean have reached a critical point following the discovery of Soviet missile installations in Cuba. Since Fidel Castro's revolution in 1959, Cuba has drawn increasingly close to the Soviet Union, receiving economic aid and military support. The United States, alarmed by the spread of communism so close to its shores, has imposed economic sanctions and supported attempts to overthrow Castro's government; most notably in the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. In response, Cuba has sought protection from the USSR, forming a strong alliance that now challenges the balance of power in the Western Hemisphere.

Recent U.S. reconnaissance flights revealed that the Soviet Union is secretly installing medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles in Cuba, capable of delivering nuclear warheads to major cities across North America. Viewing this as an immediate threat to national security, President John F. Kennedy has announced a "strict quarantine" on all offensive military shipments to Cuba. The United States insists that this action is a defensive measure to prevent further build up of Soviet weaponry. The United States is avoiding using the term "blockade" as it would be an act of war under international law.

The Soviet Union has condemned the quarantine as an illegal act of aggression and a violation of both the United Nations Charter and Cuban sovereignty. Prime Minister Nikita

Khrushchev argues that the weapons in Cuba are for defensive purposes and that the U.S. is using its naval power to intimidate a smaller nation. Meanwhile, Acting UN Secretary General U Thant has appealed for restraint and proposed a temporary suspension of both the quarantine and arms shipments to allow for negotiation. The Security Council now faces the urgent task of addressing the legality of U.S. actions and preventing the confrontation from escalating into a wider conflict that could endanger global peace.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

### **Naval Quarantine**

A limited form of blockade used to prevent specific goods (usually military equipment) from entering a country.

### **Blockade**

A military action that prevents all movement of ships or goods to and from a particular area.

\*Under international law, a blockade is often considered an act of war unless authorized by the United Nations Security Council.

### **The Cold War**

The period of political and military tension after WW2 between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies. \*Often marked by ideological rivalry and nuclear competition.

## **Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

### **1. United States of America (USA)**

The United States was a central factor in this conflict, imposing the naval quarantine around Cuba after discovering Soviet nuclear missiles on Cuba. The US argues that this is a defensive measure to protect national and regional security.

### **2. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)**

The Soviet Union is responsible for placing nuclear missiles in Cuba, claiming they are for defensive purposes. The USSR strongly condemns the U.S. quarantine as illegal and provocative.

### **3. Republic of Cuba**

Under the leadership of Fidel Castro, Cuba has become a very close ally of the Soviet Union following the 1959 revolution. Cuba views the missiles as protection against a possible U.S. invasion.

### **4. United Nations (UN)**

The UN Security Council is meeting in emergency session to address the crisis. The UN's main goal is to prevent escalation and mediate a peaceful solution. Acting Secretary-General U Thant has called for both sides to suspend military actions and begin negotiations.

### **5. Non-Aligned- Nations (NAN)**

Non-aligned nations such as India and Yugoslavia have called for both superpowers to de-escalate and respect the sovereignty of smaller nations rather than using them as proxy states.

## **6. U.S. Allies**

Most NATO allies, including the United Kingdom, France, and Canada, supported the United States' naval quarantine on Cuba, viewing it as a necessary defensive action. Leaders such as Harold Macmillan and Charles de Gaulle backed President Kennedy but urged diplomatic restraint to avoid escalation. Canada also emphasized resolving the crisis through the United Nations.

## **7. Soviet Allies**

The Soviet Union's allies, including East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, strongly condemned the U.S. naval quarantine as an act of aggression and a violation of international law. They supported Moscow's claim that the missiles in Cuba were defensive and accused the United States of threatening global peace. Cuba's leadership, under Fidel Castro, also firmly aligned with the Soviet Union, viewing the quarantine as further evidence of American hostility.

## **Case Study**

### **The Berlin Blockade (1948-1949)**

Following WW German and its capital, Berlin, was divided into occupation zones controlled by the Allied powers (U.S., France, UK). In 1948, tensions between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union escalated when the Soviets imposed a blockade on West Berlin, cutting off all road, rail, and canal access to the city. The Soviet Union aimed to force the Western Allies out of Berlin and gain control over the entire city.

In response, The US and its allies launched the Berlin Airlift, flying in food, fuel, and supplies to sustain the two million residents for nearly a year. This crisis raised an important question about the legality of blockades, and the limits of self-defense and sovereignty. The Berlin Blockade demonstrates how restrained action can prevent open warfare.

## **Useful Sources:**

[Cuban Missile Crisis - Britannica](#)

[The History of the Cuban Missile Crisis - TED](#)

[The Cuban Missile Crisis Explained - The Life Guide](#)