

#yourvoicetomorrowiskey



HJCC

America's Embargo Against Cuba

EFFLMUN'25

HJCC AMERICA CABINET

STUDY GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Letters from the Secretariat

2. Letters from the Crisis Team

3. Letters from the Chairboard

4. Introduction to the Committee

5. Historical Background

5.1. U.S.–Cuba Relations Prior to 1958

5.1.1. From Liberation to Influence: The Aftermath of Empire (1898–1902)

5.1.2. The Shadow of Freedom: America’s Hand in a Free Cuba

5.1.3. Paradise for the Few: Cuba under the American Gaze (1940s–1950s)

5.1.4. The Iron Fist of Batista: Order through Oppression

5.1.5. The Spark of the Revolution (1952–1959)

5.2. The Cold War Context

5.3. Discovery of Soviet Missiles in Cuba

6. Major Stakeholders

7.1. President John F. Kennedy and the Executive Committee

7.2. The CIA and Department of Defense

7.3. U.S. Allies and the OAS

7. Key Issues and Debates

8.1. Naval Blockade vs. Airstrike Options

8.2. Risk of Nuclear Escalation

8.3. U.S. Credibility and Global Perception

8. International Legal Considerations

9. Previous Actions by the United States

10. Main Characters

11. Bibliography

1. Letters from the Secretariat

Dear delegates,

A warm welcome to EFFLMUN'25. We are truly delighted that you have chosen to spend your time with us, and we aim to make this decision one you'll look back on with absolute satisfaction.

This conference has been crafted with careful thought and unwavering dedication. I feel incredibly fortunate to have a role in shaping this event and to work alongside such talented individuals. The process demanded commitment, yet every step was rewarding because we always believed in the value of what we were building.

EFFLMUN'25 represents so much determination, passion, patience, and countless moments of collaboration that cannot be summed up easily. Above all, it was created to leave you with lasting, meaningful memories.

With great enthusiasm, we come together once more to celebrate dialogue, leadership, and the spirit of democracy. We cannot wait to offer you an exceptional and inspiring experience.

Güneş Uzun
Secretary-General
gunesuzn@gmail.com

Dear Delegates,

We made the EFFLMUN'25 with you in our hearts. We are happy that you joined us. Much thought and energy went into creating this gathering — but most importantly, it started with one idea: talking deeply always links people in unique manners. You picked to stay these days by our side; thus for every bit of time spent getting ready, it is valuable.

EFFLMUN'25 is far greater than the timetable of committees and sessions. It is a space where ideas converge, perspectives widen, and acquaintances happen to strike up. We wish that you are able to muster up enough confidence to speak out your thoughts, interest to look around, and ease just having fun being here.

As this conference kicks off, we want you to feel welcomed and supported as well as encouraged to take hold of any opportunity that comes your way. We are eager to see your drive, your leadership, and the individual marks each of you will make.

Ahmet Furkan Elden
Director General
afurkaneld@gmail.com

2. Letters from the Crisis Team

As the Crisis Team of EFFLMUN, we wish you an engaging, productive, and enjoyable committee experience. Our team has prepared dynamic and unpredictable scenarios to challenge your diplomacy, creativity, and teamwork.

We hope each of you makes the most of this conference—learn, debate boldly, and create unforgettable memories.

Best of luck in your committees.

3. Letters from the Chairboard

Distinguished Delegates,

It is with great pride and anticipation that I welcome you to the Historical Joint Crisis Committee at EFFLMUN'25. My name is Kayra Al, and I have the honour of serving as your Chair in what promises to be one of the most dynamic and intellectually demanding committees of the conference.

This year, we embark on a pivotal moment not only in American foreign policy, but in the broader landscape of global geopolitics: the emerging tension between the United States and Cuba. As delegates, you will not merely observe history — you will shape it. You will confront critical decisions surrounding national security, ideological rivalry, military positioning, and diplomatic strategy during a period of heightened uncertainty.

Your role will demand precision, foresight, and resolve. The policies you enact, the alliances you forge, and the actions you authorize may redefine international balance, alter regional stability, and determine whether this crisis evolves into confrontation or resolution. The weight of these decisions is immense — and I trust in your capacity to meet the moment.

HJCC is no ordinary committee. Crisis updates will challenge your adaptability, your creativity will be tested, and your ability to lead under uncertainty will define your legacy. I encourage you to come prepared both with historical knowledge and with a mindset open to innovation and diplomacy.

Whether you are a seasoned MUN participant or this is your first crisis experience, I am here to support and guide you throughout. Let us work together to ensure that HJCC becomes not only a space for debate but also for learning, growth, and memorable moments.

Looking forward to meeting each of you and witnessing history rewritten by your hands. Please do not hesitate to contact me

Warm regards,

Kayra Al

ekaal265109@gmail.com

4 . Introduction to the Committee

The US embargo on Cuba was one of the longest-lasting economic sanctions of the Cold War. Following the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro in 1959, the nationalization of US-owned companies led to a rapid deterioration in relations between the two countries. In 1960, the US imposed trade restrictions on Cuba, halting sugar imports. In 1962, a full-scale economic, commercial, and financial embargo was implemented by executive order signed by President John F. Kennedy. These sanctions severely impacted Cuba's foreign trade, financial system, and the people's standard of living.

5. Historical Background

5.1. U.S.–Cuba Relations Prior to 1958

In the early 19th century, relations between the United States and Cuba were primarily based on trade. The United States viewed this strategic Caribbean island as an economic partner and a key element of regional stability. Influenced by the "Manifest Destiny" mentality, Americans gradually sought to align Cuba with their own economic and security interests. In this context, the United States made offers to purchase the island from Spain in 1848 and 1854, but these attempts were unsuccessful.

5.1.1. From Liberation to Influence: The Aftermath of Empire (1898–1902)

The Treaty of Paris, signed at the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, liberated the Cuban people from Spanish rule, and the island entered a period of reconstruction under American rule. Although Cuba formally gained independence in 1902, the United States continued to support the island's political stability and economic development.

5.1.2. The Shadow of Freedom: America's Hand in a "Free" Cuba

In the early twentieth century, Cuba stood on a fine line between freedom and dependency. The banners of Spain had been lowered from the fortresses of Havana, but a new power had quietly taken their place: the United States.

Following the Spanish–American War of 1898, Washington promised the Cuban people “liberty, progress, and protection.” American troops had withdrawn from the island, but American influence never left. The Platt Amendment, drafted by Congress, recognized Cuban independence on paper but bound it to America’s shadow in practice. Washington described it as “the guarantor of freedom in the Western Hemisphere.” But for many Cubans, this seemed more like a yoke than protection.

5.1.3. Paradise for the Few: Cuba under the American Gaze (1940s–1950s)

By the 1940s, Havana had become a playground for American investors, mafia bosses, and tourists. Casinos burned until dawn beneath the neon lights of the Malecón, and U.S. media portrayed this as a symbol of prosperity.

To foreigners, Cuba glittered with wealth — modern hotels, shiny cars, and sugar profits. Yet, beyond Havana’s lights, children worked in fields, hunger persisted, and deep inequality festered. This divide between image and reality became the breeding ground for revolution.

5.1.4. The Iron Fist of Batista: Order through Oppression

Amid this fragile prosperity rose Fulgencio Batista — charismatic to some, ruthless to others. Backed by Washington as a “bulwark against communism,” Batista’s regime represented both the promise and decay of U.S.–Cuban relations.

His rule tightened censorship, enriched elites, and deepened the chasm between Cuba’s rulers and its people. Deep within the Sierra Maestra mountains, a different vision of Cuba began to take shape. Young revolutionaries — led by Fidel and Raúl Castro — sought independence not from Spain, but from the foreign dominance that had dictated the island’s fate. Their mission was simple yet radical: to make Cuba truly Cuban.

5.1.5. The Spark of the Revolution (1952–1959)

In 1952, Batista seized power through a coup, crushing the young Cuban democracy. One man, Fidel Castro, first tried to resist through legal means — defending the constitution, appealing to the courts — but when justice failed, he turned to armed resistance.

On July 26, 1953, Castro and his comrades attacked the Moncada Barracks. The assault failed, yet it ignited the revolutionary flame.

When the rebels marched into Havana in January 1959, Batista had fled, and a new dawn rose over Cuba. The old order — and America's grip — had fallen. But as months passed, it became clear that this new Cuba was not returning to the American orbit. The island was charting a new, defiant path — one that would soon bring it face to face with the world's strongest power.

5.2. The Cold War Context

After the Cuban Revolution, global tensions were already escalating between the United States and the Soviet Union. The ideological divide between capitalism and communism had shaped the political order of the world. The United States viewed the Western Hemisphere as its sphere of influence under the Monroe Doctrine, while the Soviet Union sought to expand socialism beyond Eastern Europe.

Cuba's alignment with the USSR marked a turning point in the Cold War. As Fidel Castro deepened ties with Moscow, the island became the first openly socialist nation in the Americas — located just 90 miles from the U.S. coastline. The failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, a CIA-backed attempt to overthrow Castro, further hardened Cuba's distrust of the United States and pushed it closer to the Soviet Union.

5.3. Discovery of Soviet Missiles in Cuba

In October 1962, U.S. reconnaissance aircraft identified Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles being constructed on Cuban soil. The discovery shocked Washington and brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. President John F. Kennedy immediately convened the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (EXCOMM) to assess possible responses.

The presence of nuclear weapons so close to American territory created intense fear and urgency. For the Soviets, the missiles were a defensive measure against potential U.S. aggression; for the Americans, they were an intolerable threat to national security. The stage was set for one of the most dangerous confrontations in human history — the Cuban Missile Crisis.

6. Major Stakeholders

6.1. President John F. Kennedy and the Executive Committee

Kennedy and his advisers were responsible for determining the U.S. response to the missile crisis. Balancing military pressure with diplomatic caution, Kennedy sought to prevent both a nuclear exchange and a loss of American credibility.

6.2. The CIA and Department of Defense

The CIA's reconnaissance efforts provided the first evidence of missile installations in Cuba. Meanwhile, the Department of Defense advocated for immediate military action, including airstrikes or a full invasion of the island.

6.3. U.S. Allies and the OAS

The Organization of American States (OAS) played a key role in legitimizing U.S. actions during the crisis. Many Latin American allies supported the naval “quarantine” of Cuba as a necessary step to protect hemispheric security.

6.4. The Soviet Union and Premier Nikita Khrushchev

Khrushchev's decision to deploy missiles in Cuba was intended to balance the U.S. nuclear advantage and protect the island from invasion. However, his move risked global catastrophe and eventually forced high-stakes negotiations.

6.5. The Republic of Cuba under Fidel Castro

Castro sought to preserve Cuba's sovereignty and defend against future U.S. intervention. Despite being the epicenter of the crisis, Cuba was largely excluded from the U.S.–Soviet negotiations that determined its fate.

7. Key Issues and Debates

7.1. Naval Blockade vs. Airstrike Options

Within EXCOMM, opinions were divided between imposing a naval blockade (termed a “quarantine”) and launching airstrikes to destroy the missile sites. The blockade was ultimately chosen as a measured yet firm response.

7.2. Risk of Nuclear Escalation

Both superpowers understood that any miscalculation could lead to nuclear war. Maintaining communication channels and avoiding direct confrontation became essential to preventing escalation

7.3. U.S. Credibility and Global Perception

Kennedy faced domestic and international pressure to act decisively. Failure to remove the missiles could undermine American power, especially after the Bay of Pigs failure, while overreaction risked war.

8. International Legal Considerations

The Cuban Missile Crisis raised key questions under international law. The U.S. blockade, though described as a “quarantine,” technically violated the UN Charter’s prohibition on the use of force without Security Council approval. However, Washington justified its actions as a measure of collective defense under the OAS framework.

Cuba, on the other hand, argued its right to self-defense and sovereignty, while the Soviet Union accused the U.S. of aggression and imperialism.

9. Previous Actions by the United States

Prior to the missile crisis, the U.S. had already implemented several aggressive policies toward Cuba — including economic embargoes, diplomatic isolation, and covert operations aimed at destabilizing Castro’s government. The Bay of Pigs invasion, in particular, marked a major failure that damaged American credibility and fueled Cuban–Soviet cooperation.

10. Main Characters

Fulgencio Batista – “Authoritarian Ally”



Fulgencio Batista was an authoritarian leader who played an integral role in Cuba's military and political structures for many years, acting in concert with the US. By consolidating Cuba's governance, Batista opened it to American economic and military influence, transforming Havana, particularly through his mafia-backed investment model, into a hub for gambling and tourism. For the US, Batista was not only a head of state but also a significant barrier against the rise of communism in Latin America. However, Batista's style of governance—repressive domestic policies, human rights violations, and a growing lack of social control—threatened the very sustainability of the government. During this period, Batista was forced to employ political and military maneuvers to maintain power against both domestic and US-backed rebellions.

Eulogio Cantillo – “Shaken Loyalty”



General Eulalio Cantillo was one of the most influential military figures in the Batista regime and a commanding officer with authority within the Cuban army. However, divisions within the army and the decline of popular support gradually made Cantillo's position increasingly precarious. Cantillo was forced to act as a military pragmatist, seeking ways to maintain his own position should the political balance shift while maintaining his loyalty to Batista.

Adlai Stevenson – “Diplomatic Strategist”



Adlai Stevenson, the US representative to the United Nations, was one of the most critical diplomats responsible for managing the international dimension of the crisis. Rather than believing that military intervention was inevitable, Stevenson advocated for political and diplomatic intervention as the primary tools.

Robert F. Kennedy – “A Resolute Reformer”



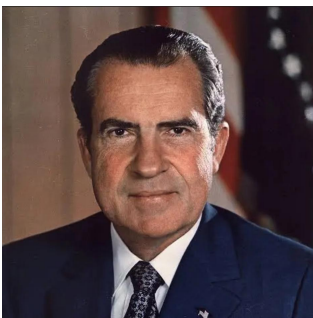
US Attorney General Robert Kennedy was a figure whose political identity was defined not only by his bureaucratic authority but also by his moral stance and reformist perspective. While Kennedy took a tough stance in combating organized crime within the US, he advocated for evaluating political activity in Latin America within the framework of democratic criteria and the rule of law. For Kennedy, the Cuban issue held significance not only in terms of security and strategy, but also in terms of legal legitimacy and human rights.

Meyer Lansky – "The Emperor of Gambling"



Meyer Lansky, one of the most influential figures in the US organized crime world, was one of the architects of the casino and money laundering networks in Cuba. Havana was not only a base for Lansky's operations but also a hub for the complex network of interests established between the US mafia and political actors. His relationship with the Batista administration gave Lansky both economic dominance and political influence. The rise of revolutionary sentiment posed a direct threat to Lansky's interests.

Richard Nixon – "The Pragmatic Power Player"



doctrine.

United States Vice President Richard Nixon was a prominent political figure in the ideological polarization of the Cold War era, with his staunch anti-communist stance. Nixon not only represented official state policy but was also a key part of the decision-making mechanism shaping Washington's strategic approach to Cuba. Central to Nixon's political approach was the goal of preventing the spread of communism in Latin America. Therefore, instability in Cuba was not merely a regional issue for Nixon but a crucial component of American security

11. Bibliography

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_embargo_against_Cuba

