

Centennial High School Model UN Conference



**Berlin Cold War Crisis Committee
Background Guide**

Chair: Radeen Abree

Co-chair: Holden Rohrer

Letter from the Chairs

Dear Delegates,

We, Holden and Radeen, are pleased and excited to be your dais for the Berlin Cold War crisis committee. Radeen is a junior at Centennial High School, and has been practicing his rhetoric with Model UN since 6th grade. His favorite subject is biology, where he hopes to continue doing research after he graduates. When he's not studying the cutting edge of DNA processing, Radeen rock-climbs, goes on hikes, and plays the guitar. This is his second year at MiniMUN.

Holden is a senior at Centennial High School, and he has been doing Model UN since 7th grade. He will attend Georgia Tech next year for CS and Mathematics, as a continuation of his Dual Enrollment studies. Holden runs on the Centennial Cross-Country and Track teams and likes to cook and code in his free time. This will also be his second year with MiniMUN.

This crisis will look at the opening of the Cold War with the Berlin Blockade as well as some of the crises that occurred afterward. This was an exciting time in history that raised many uncertainties, including the status of Germany after World War II and the future of relations between communist Eastern Europe and capitalist Western Europe. Would they engage in peaceful competition, all-out war, or something in between? As the delegates in this committee, you will be responsible for negotiating a solution to the many crises that emerged as World War II ended and a Cold War began. Whether these relations remain peaceful or gradually degenerate into war will be up to you and your actions!

Best,

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About the Committee

This committee is composed of various officials and representatives from both the West and the East. All delegates will be meeting in a secure and secret location within Berlin. As far as the outside world is aware, this committee does not exist; only those at the highest level in your respective governments are aware of its existence. Your actions will have a direct result on your respective government's course of action. As a result, you may assume that any directives passed by the committee will have a direct impact.

Crisis notes may be addressed to your respective governments or agencies and personnel under your command or control. For example, if you are a general you may order your troops through crisis notes. Additionally, multiple delegates may collaborate on a crisis note. However, this will be limited to two to four delegates. Any more than that and the directive should instead be passed as a committee directive. For example, if France and Britain wanted to coordinate their militaries, the two or more delegates responsible for this would both have to sign off on this note.

Topic Background

In August 1945, nuclear explosions rocked Japanese cities Nagasaki and Hiroshima, finally ending the Second World War. World peace, however, was never to be restored. Soon after the unconditional surrender of Axis powers Japan, Germany, and Italy, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union broke out. In the race to become the most powerful and secure countries, the two world powers fought to expand their ideological spheres of influence as far as they could, in diplomacy, combat, and propaganda.

Three years later on June 24, 1948, the Soviets imposed a blockade in the Committee composed of various officials and representatives from both the West (the United States, France, and the United Kingdom) and the East (the Soviet Union and its client states). While some politicians on both sides advocated for extreme measures, the goal of this committee to reach a compromise regarding the many crises of the period that would later be referred to as the Cold War. With the threat of nuclear war still lingering, delegates must see if a compromise can be reached between the communist-dominated east and the capitalist-dominated west.

Historical Context

Tehran Conference

The leaders of the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States met between November 28 and December 1, 1943 in Tehran, Iran to discuss further actions that needed to be taken against the Axis powers. The Big Three's leaders, Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt, attended the Tehran Conference to effectively negotiate and agree on war strategies to defeat Nazi Germany. For example, at the height of the war, the three agreed that a second front needed to be opened in Western Europe. This would divert German forces from their hold on Northern France, to relieve some of the stress on the exhausted Soviet troops. The delay in opening the Western front contributed to Stalin's distrust of the Western powers and sowed the seeds of the Cold War. Although the Tehran Conference succeeded in making significant war changes, this conference represents the last significant meeting between the Big Three that displayed mutual goals among the Allies.

Morgenthau Plan

By the end of the Second World War, the Allied powers were adamant to never allow Germany to rise to the power or status it had before and during the war. To ensure that Germany would never be a threat, the Allied forces began a rigorous process of demilitarization and deindustrialization. The original plan was that Germany would be partitioned into two separate and independent states. Additionally, the Saar Protectorate, the Ruhr, and Upper Silesia, the main German centers of mining and industry, were to be either internationalized or occupied by bordering countries. Furthermore, all heavy industries within those regions were to be demolished. At the Second Quebec Conference in 1944, Roosevelt and the US Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr. convinced Churchill to accept the plan with the help of the Lend-Lease agreement. However, Churchill made amendments to the plan, and the version with his amendments was the one signed. The plan's main aim was to turn Germany into a predominantly agrarian and pastoral state. In September 1946, the US government formally discarded the Morgenthau Plan, after Secretary of State James Francis Byrnes' "Restatement of Policy on Germany" speech. The four occupational zones that Germany was split into replaced the idea.

The Iron Curtain

On March 5, 1946, Churchill delivered a speech at Westminster College in the United States, claiming that Stalin was building up his belt of satellite states. Russia had been heavily invaded twice in the same century, and Stalin wanted to secure its borders completely. The West, however, saw this as part of his expansionist policy of spreading communism throughout the world. Churchill remarked, “an Iron Curtain has descended across the continent” and that the entire area was under Moscow’s influence. The territory of the Eastern Bloc marked the Iron Curtain. The Soviet Union had already seized Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. By 1945, eastern Poland, parts of eastern Finland, Northeast Prussia, and Northern Romania were also taken. From 1945 onwards, Stalin also annexed The German Democratic Republic, the People’s Republics of Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic became Soviet-dependent states. Many of these states joined the economic and military coalitions called COMECON and the Warsaw Pact. To the west of the Iron Curtain lay northern, southern, and western Europe. All of these regions were run under market economies. Apart from brief authoritarian rule in Portugal, Spain, and Greece, all of these countries were democracies. The ideological split on either side of the Curtain became a tangible reality, frightening to communist, capitalist, and third world countries alike.

Current Situation

Presently Europe is grappling with a multitude of issues. In the aftermath of World War II, much of the most productive farmland in Europe is devastated, factories lie in ruins, and without reconstruction, its future looks bleak. Starvation and food shortages are a real concern, and there is a continuing debate over whether or not to restore Germany to prosperity. From the perspective of the Soviet Union, they have been invaded by Germany twice over the past 30 years, resulting in some of the largest wars and battles in human history. From this standpoint, there is a deep fear in allowing Germany to rebuild and maintain the industry that has enabled it to launch these wars in the first place. France is another country with a history of conflict with Germany and they also fear allowing Germany to rebuild its massive industrial power. Consequently, France has expressed its desire to maintain control of Saarland and for the internationalization of the Ruhr industrial area to de-fang Germany. At the same time, others in the US administration favor a strong and prosperous Germany as a check against communist expansion.

While the allies have made agreements in the past regarding the prosecution of war criminals there has been discord over how far denazification should go. The Soviets who suffered the most are in favor of harsh measures, while the US is more lenient and generally looking for a way to pragmatically govern Germany.

At the same time, there are concerns for the future of Europe. Some believe that a future World War could be prevented by tying countries together through trade agreements that would make war illogical. However, at the same time, there is a deep ideological divide between capitalism and communism, where capitalist countries fear the spread of communism. While the US has articulated the desire for self-determination and democracy for all countries within Europe, the Soviet Union desires the expansion of communism and fears allowing the development of potentially hostile states on the borders. Therefore, the Soviet Union has sought to retain its influence over the countries it has liberated from the Nazis during World War II.

These disagreements have culminated in the Soviet decision to blockade Berlin and cut off all land routes to the city as of yesterday, or June 24, 1948. Militarily speaking, the situation favors the Soviets. Their army is quite large and experienced, having reformed

and fought its way from Moscow to Berlin. The American army, on the other hand, has shrunk dramatically as a result of demobilizing, and many of its veteran troops have returned to civilian jobs in America. At the same time, America is presently the only nuclear power in the world. While it is not known how many nuclear weapons America possesses, it is believed to be anywhere from just a dozen to over a hundred. France and Britain continue to maintain significant armies as well, however, their armies are also caught up in the struggles of decolonization and at the moment they continue to have significant detachments stationed abroad. This leaves open the question of how the present crisis will be decided, as well as how to tackle the underlying divisions between capitalist Western Europe and communist Eastern Europe.

Questions to Consider

1. What will be the future of Germany? Will it be one state, two, or many?
2. How should denazification be handled? What should the economic future of Germany look like? Should a harsh approach be adopted, or should a more lenient approach be taken?
3. How can a balance of power be constructed in Europe to prevent another World War?
4. For the Soviet Union, how can they achieve security from the possibility of another invasion such as occurred during WWII? What measures might be necessary to achieve this?
5. For the Western European countries, how can they prevent the spread of communism and secure themselves from Soviet influence?
6. What will be the future of relations between Communist states and Capitalist states, will they be peaceful, or will it be war?
7. If Europe is to be divided between communist area and capitalist areas, how will it be divided? Will the agreements made at the end of WWII be respected, or should they be changed?
8. Should any new agreements be negotiated governing nuclear weapons and their use?
9. How will Yugoslavia fit into these agreements? Will it be communist, capitalist, or something else?

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