

Berlin Crisis 1958–1963

Dear Delegates,

My name is Dietwin Smoli, I'm a freshman from Miami, Florida and I'll be your Chair during MSMUN. First of all welcome to the committee and I'm very excited to see you debating and finding solutions to our topic revolving around The Berlin Crisis of 1961. Remember delegates that the committee begins with president John F. Kennedy's victory over the 1960 presidential election. His administration and his allies need to address a problem that salient president Eisenhower couldn't solve and that has all the qualities to becoming a major scale global issue. I expect you to be creative in your solutions and although I cannot ask you not to resemble your propositions to those made back in the day, I do ask you not to deliver a exact copy of the historical events as they occurred. This is going to be a test of your creativity and your capacity to analyze the flaws that the original approaches had, and thus a chance to change the course of history and to create your governments in a better position on the international stage. Although this committee spins around collaboration, I want to stress that each of you represent a government official that is looking for the best outcome their country could get out of the situation. That been said, I wish you the best of luck. See you in February.

Best,

Dietwin Smoli

INTRODUCTION:

As summer ends in Berlin, the city still stands as one of the most crucial political focal points in the world. The aftermath of the Second World War has left the city between the victors, with the Western Powers (UK, France, USA) in the West and the Soviet Union in the East. While there are great ideological differences between the two factions, they maintained open borders in the occupied city. This year, all changed. The Soviet Union militarized Berlin far beyond any military strategist could have expected, and demanded that the Western powers immediately vacate the city entirely. They have also blocked off land access to the city from West Germany, meaning that the transportation of goods and people is now impossible. As it stands, half of one of the world's largest cities is now at risk for starvation, malnourishment, and ailment from disease; and on top of this the Soviets have begun activating reservist soldiers and rebuilding barricades in the city as if to prepare for war. The US Cabinet (with representatives from the other Western powers) are now awaiting actions to defend against this aggression and to save the people of West Berlin.

THE CRISIS:

The Berlin Crisis began in 1958 when Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev gave an ultimatum to the United States, United Kingdom, and France to remove their forces from Berlin in the following six months. By this time, the lines that divided East and West Berlin were easily crossable and a clear division of jurisdiction did not exist. The divided city highlighted the sharp contrast between the Communist and Capitalist systems, and the free movement between the sectors had resulted in a mass exodus from the Eastern side. Looking for a way to stop the flow of people from east to West and a means to check the military power of West Germany, Khrushchev insisted in his November 1958 speech that it was time for the United States to pull out of the city. U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower was determined not to give in to Soviet demands¹. By May 1959, a series of meetings took place in Geneva, Switzerland to discuss the situation in Berlin and ways of reaching an agreement between the Western powers and the USSR. These meetings came to an end in August 1959 without any progress and tensions rose again, despite the visit of the then Vice President Richard Nixon to Moscow during July of 1959.

In September 1959 talks resumed with the visit of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev to the United States for a summit at Camp David with President Eisenhower. After two days of meetings,

¹ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/berlin-crises>

the two leaders issued a joint communique. Both leaders “agreed that these discussions have been useful in clarifying each other’s position on a number of subjects.”² They hoped “their exchanges of views will contribute to a better understanding of the motives and position of each, and thus to the achievement of a just and lasting peace.”³ In particular, they believed that “the question of general disarmament is the most important one facing the world today.”⁴ There were no specific agreements or treaties, but both nations agreed to reopen talks about Berlin and issues related to cultural exchanges and trade. Eisenhower and Khrushchev also agreed to hold another summit in the near future and the President announced that he would visit the Soviet Union sometime in the following year.⁵ However, on May 1, 1960, the pilot of an American U-2 spy plane (a special high-altitude plane that flew at a ceiling of 70,000 feet) was shot down while flying through Soviet airspace. The fallout over the incident resulted in the cancellation of the Paris Summit, the possibility of an arms control or test ban treaty, and the relaxation of tensions between the USSR and the United States.⁶

As tension escalated in the Berlin crisis, the United States had its own internal affairs to deal with. President Eisenhower’s Administration was coming to an end, and on November 8th, 1960, the United States elected John F. Kennedy as their new President. This election not only changed the party in power but also changed foreign policy. Kennedy won by a narrow margin in one of America’s closest elections in history. The new Administration, as well as the government officials from allied nations, were tasked the Berlin crisis and challenged to resolve it.

GOALS:

The committee starts on May 30th, 1961, after President Kennedy took office as the 35th President of the United States. Tension is high as you are awaiting for the Vienna Summit between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Khrushchev. It is up to you to come up with a strategy to end the Berlin crisis by any means you deem appropriate and necessary. Bear in mind that the goal of this body is twofold. First, defend the people of West Berlin from malnourishment and starvation through maintaining supply lines despite the Soviet blockade. Second, maintain the strategic value of Berlin militarily through defending it against Soviet aggression (or attempts

² <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/eisenhower-and-khrushchev-meet-for-talks>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/u2-incident>

of sabotage). You will all need to be creative and aggressive in your attempts to resolve this, but should you succeed history will remember your names as champions of liberty and perseverance.

NOTE:

While it is common in crisis committees to use historical events and outcomes as the basis for ideas on resolving the crisis at hand, it is a waste both of our time and yours to attempt to solely use them. Crisis is about being quick thinking and adapting to issues, and you will find quickly that by being unimaginative, you will be less successful in your endeavors. That being said, creativity will almost always be rewarded with support from your friends in the crisis rooms, so do your best!

LIST OF MEMBERS:

1. **Lyndon B. Johnson:** Serves as the 37th Vice President of the United States. He has previously been a member of both houses of Congress representing Texas. During his time in the Senate he served as Minority and then Majority Leader.
2. **Dean Rusk:** Serves as the U.S. Secretary of State. He has previously served as 2nd Assistant Secretary of State on Far Eastern Affairs and 1st Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs.
3. **C. Douglas Dillon:** Serves as the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. He has previously served as U.S. Under Secretary of State, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment and as Ambassador to France.
4. **Robert McNamara:** Serves as the U.S. Secretary of Defense. He has previously worked in the private sector for the Ford Motor Company and served as its President.
5. **Robert F. Kennedy:** Brother to the President and U.S. Attorney General. Like his brother, he has been involved in politics from an early age and developed several connections in Washington.
6. **Stewart Udall:** Serves as the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. He has previously served in the U.S. House of Representatives on behalf of Arizona's 2nd Congressional District. During his time in the House, he was a member of the Interior Committee and the Education and Labor Committee.
7. **Orville Freeman:** Serves as the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. He has previously served as the 16th Governor of Minnesota.
8. **Luther H. Hodges:** Serves as the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. He has previously served as the 22nd Lieutenant Governor and 64th Governor of North Carolina.
9. **Arthur Goldberg:** Serves as the U.S. Secretary of Labour. He has previously worked in the private sector as a labor lawyer, gaining popularity among labor unions nationwide.
10. **Abraham A. Ribicoff:** Serves as the U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. He has previously served as the 80th Governor of Connecticut and as member of the U.S. House of Representatives on behalf of Connecticut's 1st congressional district.
11. **Lyman Lemnitzer:** Serves as the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. He has previously served as Commander of the U.S. Army Forces in the Far East and of the Eighth Army. He has also been a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff representing the Army.

12. **Allen W. Dulles:** Serves as the Director of Central Intelligence. He has previously served as Deputy Director of Central Intelligence and Deputy Director for Central Intelligence for Plans.
13. **Maurice Couve de Murville:** Serves as the French Minister for Foreign Affairs. He has previously served as Ambassador to Egypt, NATO, United States and West Germany.
14. **Pierre Messmer:** Serves as the French Minister of Armies. He has previously served as Governor of Mauritania, Governor of Ivory Coast, Governor of Cameroon and member of the staff of the Minister of Overseas Territories. He also served as the French High Commissioner for French Equatorial Africa and after for French West Africa.
15. **Pierre Chatenet:** Serves as the French Minister of the Interior. He has previously held several diplomatic posts in Tunisia and NATO.
16. **Alec Douglas-Home:** Serves as the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs. He has previously served as Shadow Foreign Secretary, Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Conservative Party. He has also been Lord President of the Council, Leader of the House of Lords, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, and Member of Parliament.
17. **Harold Watkinson:** Serves as the British Minister of Defense. He has previously served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour and National Service and Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation.
18. **Reginald Maudling:** Serves as the President of the British Board of Trade. He has previously served as Paymaster General, Minister of Supply, Economic Secretary to the Treasury and Member of Parliament.
19. **Dick Goldsmith White:** He serves as the Head of the British Secret Intelligence MI6. He has previously served as the Director General of the MI5, which is the British military intelligence and counterintelligence agency.
20. **Peter Thorneycroft:** Serves as the British Minister of Aviation. He has previously served as President of the Board of Trade, Chancellor of the Exchequer and as Member of the House of Lords.
21. **Christopher Steel:** Serves as the British Ambassador at Bonn, West Germany. He has previously served as Ambassador to the United States and NATO.