



# Reliving the Cuban Missile Crisis

**A Wikistrat Historical Simulation**

September 2022

## Introduction

The world is in a very different geopolitical reality in 2022 than it was in 1962. The Cold War is long gone, the Soviet Union is a thing of the past, and the focus of geopolitical tensions in the past decades has often been the Middle East rather than Cuba or Latin America.

And yet, the basic logic of geopolitical tensions, great power competition, foreign policy decision-making in conflict, and even a **potential nuclear war** are all still relevant to strategists and policymakers in mid-2022.

In light of the upcoming **60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis**, Wikistrat ran an educational simulation in which a selected number of participants were given the opportunity to enter the shoes of historical decision makers to better understand what happened in the 13 days that analysts often describe as **“the most dangerous moment in human history.”**

# Simulation Overview

Each participant was assigned the historical character of one of the decision-makers during the crisis - from Cuba, the US, or the USSR.



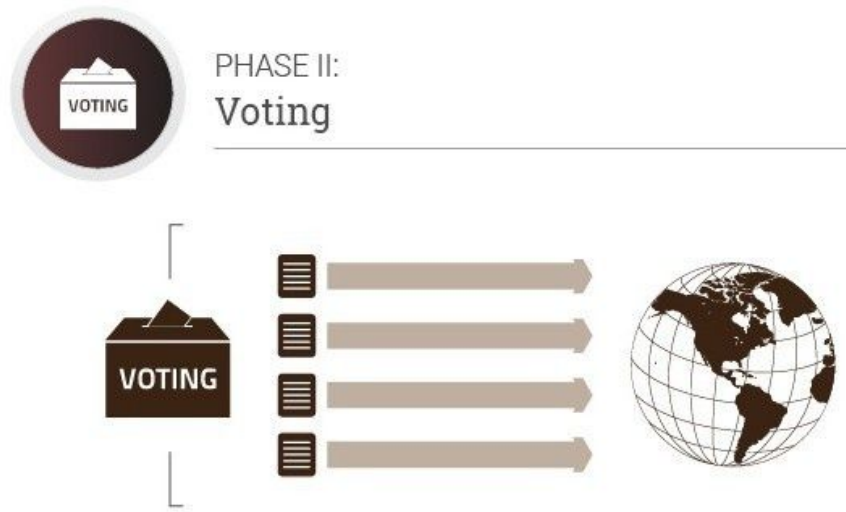
## PHASE I: Collaborative Work

Each team worked collaboratively in its situation room to develop policy proposals. These fit with the actor's strategy at the time but differed from the actions that they actually took. This allowed participants to explore alternatives to the way in which history evolved.

### LIVE UPDATES

- |  |  |   |  |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|
|   |   |    |   |   |   |
| <b>Douglas Dillon</b>  | <b>Che Guevara</b>   | <b>Lyndon B. Johnson</b>  | <b>Ramiro Valdés Menéndez</b>  | <b>Robert F. Kennedy</b>   | <b>Andrei Gromyko</b>  |
|  Enforcing a complete commercial and updated 12 minutes ago • <a href="#">view change</a> |  An Independent State - Security and Economy updated 14 minutes ago • <a href="#">view change</a> |  The great bluff - public announcement of commented 22 minutes ago |  "Ni Un Paso Atras." - Not a Step Back, an commented 32 minutes ago |  JFK beats the war drums commented 47 minutes ago |  One plan, different negotiations commented about an hour ago |

# Simulation Overview



In the final phase of the simulation, the participants voted on the proposed policies. By doing so, they decided how an alternative reality could have evolved.

## The Simulation in Numbers

Throughout the **4** days of the simulation, **27** historical decision makers from **3** countries suggested **27** policy proposals to their leaders. These were discussed and strengthened through **198** comments before being voted on.



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**Background**  
Introduction, goals and an overview

**Analytic Team**  
List of the simulation's participants

**Background Reading**  
Materials for preparatory reading

**Q&A Forum**  
A discussion forum for the participants and Q&A

SEPTEMBER 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Round I		Round II			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	1

Select your team to get started



Cuba



USA



USSR

# Simulation Value

## Participant Feedback

"[What I enjoyed most was] the interplay between leaders and range of advisors advocating for policy options that strike a necessary balance between the challenges and implications of the unfolding crisis from the bilateral and triangular perspectives on one hand and at the broader Latin American, developing world, and global levels on the other."

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"I enjoyed all aspects, sincerely. Of course the policy development and creative part was first as the participants came up with options and considerations. The exchange once the initial set came up was excellent. I felt the ability to freely exchange considerations and ideas on those other options and of course that my own was respectfully and professionally exchanged back and forth."

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"I think the control team did well in encouraging to innovate to develop alternatives, positive or negative, to show how much worse or better the outcome could have been for both sides. Ultimately civilization was lucky there were no mushroom clouds. Scouring for such alternatives may broaden the spectrum of options in the future had it been known in the past. Great work!"

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